

The Streetscapes Project

Link to creative aspect of project:

www.thestreetscapesproject.org

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UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP

The UCT Knowledge Co-op facilitated this collaborative project between Khulisa and UCT.

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The Streetscapes Project: A reflective paper on my role as a journalist and photojournalist, documenting the challenges of the street homeless people in the city

In 2015, the City's Mayoral Committee Member for Social Development and Early Childhood Development, Suzette Little, revealed that there were currently just over 7 000 homeless people in Cape Town (Bernado, 2015). In February 2017, *The Citizen* (Tau, 2017) published an article a few hours before the State of the Nation address was to take place, mentioning that the city's homeless were reported not to have optimistic expectations of help from the government.

"I wish the government will really start listening to our concerns and problems, and hope that the new government that will take over in the coming years will start reconnecting with the people who vote them into power," said Abrahams, a homeless man interviewed by the news publication (Tau, 2017), while another mentioned that politicians constantly make "empty promises" and only allowed the homeless' voice to be heard when elections approaches.

Indeed, later that day, no mention of the homeless was made in the State of the Nation Address for 2017. Instead, the only hint concerning "radical socio-economic transformation" was the following:

We mean fundamental change in the structure, systems, institutions and patterns of ownership, management and control of the economy in favour of all South Africans, especially the poor... Today we are starting a new chapter of radical socio-economic transformation. We are saying that we should move beyond words, to practical programmes... The State will play a role in the economy to drive that transformation...

(State of the Nation Address, 2017)

In 2016's SoNA (State of the Nation Address, 2016), the poor were also fleetingly mentioned, with no indication of creation of housing and employment opportunities. Although just over 20 years into democracy, South Africa is still largely inflicted with poverty, inequality and

unemployment. According to a 2017 *Mail & Guardian* Opinion piece by Thabang Motsohi (2017), the ‘pro-poor’ rhetoric of the leading political party has failed to translate into meaningful economic policy. Although job creation was one of five priority areas President Jacob Zuma decided to focus on at the beginning of his administration (Davis, 2010), the party has dismally failed at achieving the goal (Munusamy, 2014).

In his 2010 SoNA, the president also promised to alleviate poverty and reduce the inequality gap. At the time, 20% of South Africans lived below the poverty line, whilst today, the figure has dropped to 21.5% (Pityana, 2017). Since then, inequality has also increased, with South Africa ranked as one of the top four most unequal countries in the world (Green, 2017; Musyoka, 2016).

This creative project seeks to document the stories of ten street-based people of the city, exploring and addressing the challenges of the larger social and systemic issues they face on a regular basis, which will be mentioned in the following section. In addition, the project also focuses on the significance of jobs in dignifying street-based people, as well as the importance of businesses coming on board to support local non-profit organisations, such as Khulisa’s (an NPO) Streetscapes project – an initiative developed by Khulisa that aims to provide job opportunities to those on the streets of the city. *The Streetscapes Project*, the title of this MA project, aims to be accessible to the public by having its content published on a website on the 15th of March 2017.

Homelessness: a definition

Homelessness is often associated solely with sleeping on the streets, but this conceals the range and scale of the problem (Firth, 2010: 105). Adopting a strict definition for the term has been a difficult and contentious task among many scholars. Gervais et al. (2013: 1) notes that a lack of access to conventional forms of housing is central to the definition of homelessness, in that one has to consider wide-ranging forms of housing such as shelters, low-priced motels, or transitional housing arrangements that are utilised by people who lack secure housing. Bentley (1995: 1) adds that underlying controversies of the term does not incorporate a broader understanding of the range of definitions on homelessness, and that this consequently makes it a difficult task to measure the homeless population.

Zerger (2002: 8) adds that specific statistics and percentages are complicated by definitional problems of the homeless population, while Patrick (2014: 12) importantly mentions that the term 'homelessness' has different meanings that depend on an individual's identity and perspective. Due to the challenges of contradictory definitions of homelessness, skewed findings are often the result of empirical evidence (Moore, 2005: 6). On the other hand, Ravenhill (2014: 7) indicates that central to all definitions of the term is the definition and concept of 'home':

Home is defined as a central part of any individuals' life. It has the power to affect people's ability to socialise, work and develop ontological security. From these definitions a distinct difference between homelessness and rooflessness is identified...

Gurney (1990, cited in Somerville, 1992: 530), however, suggests that the term 'home' is an ideological construct. The distinction which people make between home as ideal and home as experienced in actuality is itself socially constructed through ideological forms (cited in Somerville, 1992: 530). Outside of these ideological structures, we cannot know what 'home' really is (Somerville, 1992: 530). Botha et al. (2016: 620) stress the importance of a reliable

definition within a South African context so that meaningful comparisons between various studies can be made. In their study, they introduce the concept by suggesting that interrelated cultural, economic, political and social factors which influence homelessness make it a matter of urgency for key role players and stakeholders to develop a common definition and understanding of the concept:

Even with regards to defining the typologies of homelessness, there is diversity and often disagreement amongst researchers. This makes it difficult to implement the national policy framework on homelessness as well as to allocate the roles and responsibilities to the appropriate role players and stakeholders.

(Botha et al., 2016: 614)

For a research report on street homelessness in South Africa, the Tshwane Homelessness Forum added that defining street homelessness in a way that would make sense in the South African context proves to be challenging, adding that definition of the term is imperative for policy, strategy and budgetary purposes (2015). A very narrow definition confining homelessness to people 'sleeping rough' conveys a much distorted view of the extent of homelessness. Instead, it must be recognised that homelessness can take various forms. The reality is that a large proportion of homeless people are families or single people who are not 'sleeping rough' (Firth, 2010: 227–228). Instead, some may be staying with relatives and friends on a temporary basis, whilst others live in temporary accommodation, such as night shelters.

Generally, the government has favoured a restrictive definition that accepts as homeless only those who are literally homeless (Cross et al., 2010: 8) – meaning those that have no place to sleep, and often rely on shelters, but advocates have called for a broader definition that includes people living in abandoned housing, or with people, which becomes temporary shelter, also known as 'sofa surfing' (Firth, 2010: 181). How widely one casts the 'homeless net' has a tremendous impact on the numbers and characteristics of the people included in the definition of homelessness.

For its study, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (Cross et al., 2010: 7) adopted a definition of homelessness that emphasises living 'on the street'. Their interviews and surveys addressed adults and children who live on the streets on a full-time, in true homelessness or 'rooflessness' – the condition of routinely sleeping on the streets without regular access to shelter. The HSRC's results indicate there may be approximately 100 000 to 200 000 truly homeless people living on the streets in South Africa's urban and rural districts together (Cross et al., 2010: 7), including both adults and children, and a study released in 2016 revealed that just over 7 000 people live on the streets in Cape Town (Chiguvare & Gontsana, 2015).

For the purpose of this project, the term 'street-based people' is used to refer to those living on the streets of the city. Although the ten interviewees are not all currently living on the streets, they each slept on the streets of the city at some point in their lives. For most news publications, the homeless is an overused term and is often equated for the often-'invisible' people on the streets. However, this is a term street-based people often find misleading, if not offensive, which was evident with the interviewees, who, when sleeping on the streets of Cape Town at certain points in their lives, did not consider themselves homeless. For example, Jolene and Matthew* chose to live on the streets despite having family members with informal housing in Manenberg. Similarly, Theresa chose to live on the streets for many years, even though her sister had a council flat. Nevertheless, the project focuses on the interviewees' experience of living on the streets, and how this affected their self-esteem, daily struggles and [lack of] opportunities, in addition to exploring other issues.

Street homelessness in the city – the beginning stages

When opting for an MA creative project, my intention was to find an under-researched topic involving human subjects, specifically relevant to South Africa or Cape Town, and to document it on a platform that is accessible to the wider public so that they would have easy access to the project and consequently be enlightened on the subject. I specifically wanted to opt for a topic

that had mostly negative perceptions held of a 'group' of people, and I believed a documentation of the human subjects' stories of a will to be uplifted from their situations would change these perceptions.

After receiving an email from my student email account in 2015 from the Knowledge Co-op, I decided to look into the available topics that were offered to academics and postgraduate students attending UCT. The UCT Knowledge Co-op provides academics and postgraduate students with the opportunity to engage with society and address the needs of communities by offering various dissertation topics, wherein it becomes a collaboration between the academic/student and a community partner, such as an NGO/NPO. These community partners are facilitated through the UCT Knowledge Co-op and the academic/student is required to liaise with the Co-op about this before applying for the thesis topic.

I set up a meeting with Barbara Schmid, Project Manager of the Knowledge Co-op, to discuss a possible topic for my creative project. This was a process of going back and forth, as there were three topics I was interested in at the time: exit strategies for prostituted women, elements of change for prisoners, and the rehabilitation of street-based people. After spending time at an NGO that empowers prostituted women, I found the women to be unapproachable so decided against taking up that project. By then, the second project had already been claimed by a student; hence, I decided to adopt the third one. After meeting with Schmid, I was asked to choose a specific angle for the topic so that it would relate to my (BA) Media Theory and Practice degree. A subsequent meeting between myself, Schmid, Mpho Phoba (Administrative Officer of the Knowledge Co-Op), Jesse Laitinen (Manager of Strategic Partnerships at Khulisa) and Dr Martha Evans (my supervisor), was held at the Baxter restaurant wherein a general consensus about the focus of the topic was reached.

I was advised to spend some time at Khulisa's Streetscapes garden opposite Food Lover's Market in Zonnebloem and to get to know the street-based individuals and possible participants that would be the subjects of my project. Hence, I spent a few hours on multiple days getting to

know them, their histories, witnessing their daily tasks and life skills activities such as yoga that were offered at the Service Dining Rooms at one point in 2015. When I approached them about being involved with the project, they happily agreed. However, as a few months passed by, some of them left the rehabilitation and reintegration programme at the garden, and so, I was left to find 'new' individuals. Whilst eight of the ten participants have been working at the garden for the past few months, Gideon Harris is the only participant that was a part of the previous group. However, after spending the most time with him, I was still eager to have him be a part of the project. I also approached Magadien Wentzel, former gang leader of the 28s, and subject of Jonny Steinberg's award-winning book *The Number*, since I believed he could offer a unique angle to the project, telling his story of exiting the gang, sleeping on the streets of the city, and finally leading a reformed life of motivating and aiding the vulnerable, such as the youth in gang-ridden areas and those living on the streets of the city.

Justification of subject for a creative project

Essentially, the goal of the project was a written and photographic documentation of street-based people that would be published in a platform that is easily accessible to the wider public; hence, a web developer was employed to design a website about two months before the deadline. When in the process of research of homelessness in a global context, a large number of literature was discovered. Some examples which this project has employed includes Bunis et al.'s work on the expression of sympathy towards the homeless in the United States and England (1996); Osgood et al.'s (2010) paper on services offered to vulnerable (including street-based) adolescents, and Overnes' (2000) anthropological fieldwork with nineteen street people in Cape Town, among others. It was noted that majority of literature encountered of an academic nature was based on international studies, and was especially in the fields of psychology, health and social sciences. Local literature on street-based people, specifically within Cape Town, is scarce, where majority of the narratives of those on the streets of the city are published by news publications.

The *Cape Argus' The Dignity Project*, a 15-part daily series of homeless people that documented their daily survival struggles, and aims to debunk stereotypes about homeless people (www.iol.co.za/capeargus/the-dignity-project), was the only lengthy series found, whereas multiple credible articles featuring street-based people were published by the *Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian* and *GroundUp*. However, although these articles discuss some of the issues of the challenges street-based people face, the articles are either outdated or do not reveal the issues in great detail which is what this project aims to uncover: for instance, the encouraging difference that a business' support can make to programmes such as the Streetscapes urban garden project. It was also noted that although *The Dignity Project* explored the various and important challenges experienced by street-based people, it did not feature opinions from expert or official sources. Hence, this creative project has taken objectivity into account, and sought the opinion of officials in different fields, including law enforcement, the Central City Improvement District (CCID), and social workers, among others.

Furthermore, and in relation to the abovementioned on the subject appearing in fields other than journalism, this project fills a gap in narratives of street-based people within a local context, within journalistic studies. Narrative storytelling, Brockmeier (2000: 54) says, is a way of attributing meaning to human experiences, and Cameron (2001: 7) argues that life story interviews has the ability to provide important insights into how people experience and process social events, and it is their stories that adds value to existing knowledge by helping us expand our understanding of what these events mean in the lives of people. It is narratives, Cameron (2001: 8) says, that acts as vehicles in enabling people to understand the ways in which others construct meaning in their lives.

Timbs (2003: 24) notes storytelling as the key to 'good journalism', whilst Barkin (1984: 29) says journalists, as storytellers, perform an explanatory function and help make sense of the world, and that it is this practice of journalism that conveys stories at an emotional level. Although Emde et al.'s (2016: 608) paper focuses specifically on adolescents, they interestingly argue that storytelling, as an alternative to traditional news formats, improves the understanding of news,

in that it induces more involvement (than traditional news) from the reader. Knobloch et al. (2004) similarly suggests that because storytelling appeals to the interest and emotions of the audience, narratives have a great potential to foster involvement, especially via empathic reactions.

It is this discourse and format of journalistic storytelling that will allow the subject of street-based people to stand out from others from different fields, such as social sciences, making it easily accessible to readers. Although, as aforementioned, there are several journalistic representations of people living on the streets in South Africa, this project identifies a gap in storytelling combined with research on the strategic barriers related to their daily lived experiences. Schneider (2011: 71) notes that work that produce quotes from street-based people promote a narrative of homelessness that surprisingly marginalizes the very people that experience it, thereby contributing to their social exclusion. Hence, to avoid this, *The Streetscapes Project* seeks to expand on their stories by exploring larger issues they face, such as a concern around foster care (linked to Lee Stemmet's story), substance abuse issues and its effects on people living on the streets (linked to Achmat Salie's story), the effect of short-contract jobs, especially for the poor (linked to Razaan Lucas' story) etc.

The perspectives of the street-based people do not simply contribute towards an explorative look at their lives, and this project does not intend to portray them as victims. Instead, it simply wishes to broaden society's perspective on the challenges they face by telling their stories and linking it to systemic barriers that are subject to their lived experiences. Hence, the project is an attempt to access the personal stories that shed light on structural challenges faced by street-based people, and considers the role of journalism as crucial in doing so. Hrast (2008: 115) points out that it is often argued that the media are one of the most important actors in the 'construction' of the social problem of homelessness.

This was somewhat evident with a few locally published stories, wherein street-based people often made news when tragedy struck them, and they were consequently positioned as victims

in need of help. Examples include *EWN's* 'R700 000 set aside to assist CT's homeless during winter', *Times Live's* 'Engineer bags old billboards for homeless', and *News24's* 'Two killed after woman crashes into group of sleeping homeless people'. The available news articles on street-based people suggest they only make the news when tragedy occurs and they are in need of assistance. Apart from this project, *The Dignity Project* is possibly the only other project available that focuses on portraying the city's street-based population in a positive light.

This project also attempts to increase awareness and sensitivity around the subject, in an effort to combat stereotypes. In so doing, it hopes to:

- *Avoid stereotyping street-based people by grouping them into one category of 'homeless people' – this will therefore be included under a tab that explains the problematic meaning around the term 'homelessness'.

- * Illuminate the structural challenges facing street-based people.

- *Include the viewpoints from officials mentioned in their stories, such as law enforcement, the CCID, etc. and will also explore why businesses have decided to support Khulisa's Streetscapes project and the effect it has had on the project, etc.

Street portraits & interviews as an inspiration

The structure of the project was widely influenced by Brandon Stanton's *Humans of New York*, a photography project that began in 2010. Stanton's project, commonly referred to as HONY, started as a street photography portfolio (Bow-Bertrand, n.d.), and has since grown into an international humanitarian project. From having "no big ambitions" (Stanton, 2013) in the beginning, his Facebook page now currently boasts just over 18 million likes after six years. Although at its outset, Stanton's objective was to capture photographic portraits of 10 000 New Yorkers on the streets, he eventually ended up interviewing them in addition to capturing their photograph. He has also worked all around the world Their short stories appear alongside

their portraits. Stanton's goal is simple: "I interview my subjects in addition to photographing them. And alongside their portraits, I include quotes and short stories from their lives."

His work has faced much criticism over the years, such as viewers getting the sense that "all New Yorkers are, at their core, kind of... the same... quirky and voluble, and a story that's both interesting (enough) and what we'd have expected," (D'Addario, 2014). Stanton has also received flak for documenting nothing more than his own perspective by reducing his subjects to "whatever decontextualized sentence or three he chooses to use along with their photo," (D'Addario, 2014). Boyle (2016) also argues that although Stanton's Syrian refugee campaign in 2016 offered donors the opportunity to raise funds for Syrian refugee families, and raised more than \$500,000, it has encouraged "sentimental, individual acts of charity over support for systemic political change," which consequently does "more harm than good," further noting:

The quotations accompanying each image are not real. Clearly, each Syrian refugee does not prepare a speech for these encounters, making sure to have a carefully orchestrated narrative flow. The quotations — based on his conversations with each subject — are a creation of Stanton, who limits and conditions the possible interpretations that the viewer can have. This act of delimitation makes each refugee's story Stanton's own. Stanton operates as a filter between each Syrian refugee and each American viewer, sharing only those parts of the conversation that he wants us to hear.

About the Syrian refugee campaign, Boyle (2016) argues that majority of the HONY viewers view its portraits and then immediately forget about it, "because what these portraits do, and do very well, is articulate things that viewers already know (i.e., that life over there is really awful, and way worse than our lives over here)." Nevertheless, despite the criticism Stanton's work has faced, he continues to draw in an increasing audience day by day, citing social media as the catalyst for reaching a global audience:

Humans of New York is an amazing story, and it's a story that could not have happened 10 years ago. Without social media, I'd probably just be a quirky, amateur photographer with a hard drive full of photos. I'd be cold calling respected publications, begging for a feature. I may have even quit by now. Instead, I've discovered a daily audience of nearly a million people. Or should I say they discovered me. On Facebook.

(Stanton, 2013)

With a photo, his fans agree that he manages to encapsulate the spirit of place, the ardour of his subjects' emotion, and, on the whole, the essence of humanity. Currently, he's photographing people and documenting their stories in several South American countries as part of his February 2017 tour. The following portraits were captured in Buenos Aires, Argentina:



"I'm looking for a tall man. 85 to 90 years old. Preferably a professional. Needs to have a good mood. But other than that I'm pretty open. If you know anybody, let me know."



“Even if we have equal rank, a man always tries to take charge of the situation.”



“I’m the link between him and the rest of the world. It can be an exhausting role. When things go well, I feel an increased sense of responsibility. It felt like the audience was clapping for both of us when he graduated from primary school. But I also feel an increased sense of responsibility when things go wrong...”

Stanton's large-scale international work has become the inspiration for many small-scale photographers with the same aspiration. For example, *Humans of Cape Town* (www.facebook.com/Humans-of-Cape-Town-586338468067730), *Coloureds of Cape Town* (www.facebook.com/colouredsofcapetown) *Humans of Paris* (www.facebook.com/HOPAIP), and *Humans of Bombay* (www.facebook.com/humansofbombay), among many others, have been created, with the latter two garnering more than 100 000 likes on their Facebook pages respectively. *Humans of Cape Town* currently has just over 8 000 likes on its Facebook page. However, it is infrequently updated with portraits.

In trying to avoid similar criticism that Stanton has received, as above-mentioned, the project will not simply include portraits of the ten interviewees with short quotes. Instead, the series of portraits will include their biographies and will explore the larger issues, i.e. structural challenges they come across on a regular basis. Considering the 'hyper-digital culture' of internet readers who are easily distracted and do not want to read lengthy chunks of information, the biographies will be edited to avoid readers from leaving the site without a completion of reading, although it will still attempt to relay detailed, relevant and informative material. Each story will be limited to 2 000 words.

On the obligation and purpose of journalists, Munir (n.d.) notes that journalists must focus on writing people's issues and provide a forum for public discussion. Therefore, the project also aims to serve as a platform for opening up discussion to the wider public, especially concerning particular areas of focus, such as access to shelter services and their battles with law enforcement. For example, the CCID uses ratepayers' money to manage the streets and provide street-based people with alternative methods of survival, such as the Streetscapes garden project. In trying to achieve this objective, the project will also be published on the UCT Knowledge Co-op's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/UCTKnowledgeCo.op/>), as well as Khulisa (<https://www.facebook.com/Khulisa/>) and Streetscape's social media pages (<https://www.facebook.com/streetscapescp/>), the latter page having over 2000 'likes'. In so doing, the objective of opening up the subject for discussion will hopefully be achieved.

The purpose of this project is not to garner sympathy for those living on the streets, but to rather create a basic understanding surrounding structural barriers that prevent them from uplifting themselves. Hence, the project gathered research and was subsequently divided into three segments during the process of completion. The first segment being interviewing, photographing and documenting the stories of street-based people, the second compiling two features pieces on the benefits of gardening, especially for vulnerable people, as well as an article on the importance of businesses and society's role in helping the marginalized group. Finally, the third segment constituted interviewing formal and informal sources from the various fields explored in the project, including law enforcement, the CCID, social workers and shelter services, so as to provide a perspective on the issues that is in the form of a discourse easily understood by the ordinary citizen.

Research and Interviewing Methods

Qualitative methods, such as in-depth semi-structured or unstructured interviewing, are best suited to investigating sensitive topics. The decision to interview people about sensitive topics stems from the epistemological and ontological stance that knowledge and reality can only be sought from those who experience it (Crotty, 1998), and knowledge about a particular phenomenon may be gained through face-to-face interviews. Face-to-face interviewing is seen as a way of exchanging information that can be difficult to obtain through other methods of data collections such as questionnaires or surveys (Kvale, 1996; Creswell, 2007). Taking the abovementioned into account, the primary method of research in this project was face-to-face interviews with all ten participants, and secondary research included both qualitative and quantitative methods, for example, interviewing officials, researching articles, facts, statistics, etc.

Qualitative interviewing involves entering the life-world of participants (Opdenakker, 2006), and, according to Liamputtong (2007), one of the most important elements of data collection

during in-depth interviewing on a sensitive topic is the ability for the researcher to develop a rapport with participants. This, Dickson-Swift et al. (2007) suggest, will enhance the researcher's access to the interviewees' lives. In this study, the process of building a relationship with participants started with visiting the garden about a year before the interviews took place, so as to familiarise myself with participants' environment at the Streetscapes garden, as well as for them to get to know me, which initiated the building of rapport.

Self-disclosure, described by Peters et al. (2008), is the process of revealing information about self to the participant. Before the interviews, I shared thoughts and information with participants when appropriate, such as divulging why I chose the topic of documenting and exploring the issues that street-based people face in the city. I discussed my goal, i.e. to enlighten the public about numerous issues surrounding chronic homelessness, which assisted in reaffirming them that most citizens are, to some extent, ill informed about the issue, should be enlightened on it, and that they should not experience their battles in isolation. This self-disclosure, I believe, created a less intimidating environment during the interviews and enhanced the reciprocal nature of interviewing.

Lee (1993) warns that conducting research into sensitive topics can result in the researcher developing a closeness to participants that confuses the roles of friend and researcher, but that demonstrating care and empathy during research is essential when interviewing subjects. This is particularly important when studying vulnerable participants and sensitive topics (Kavanaugh et al. 2006). This ethical rule proved to be a grey area during the process of conducting some of the interviews, and even though I tried to limit expressing my empathy, to avoid blurring the roles of researcher and subject, it was particularly difficult and seemed uncompassionate not to do so when they unveiled certain sad events of their lives. Theresa's interview serves as an example, since, when mentioning the passing of her husband and the effect it had on her, it somewhat made her continue her interview in a melancholic tone for a few minutes.

The participants chosen for the project were based on them currently working at the Streetscapes garden, and included the following: Achmat Salie, Lee Stemmet, Jolene Daniels,

Razaan Lucas, Matthew* Jasmine (pseudonym employed), Theresa Solomons, Andre Solomons, Magadien Wentzel, Gideon Harris and Zamuxolo Masabalala. Although Magadien is seen as 'more empowered' than the rest of the interviewees, since he's their supervisor and mentor, I thought that including his story would provide an interesting perspective on the project, i.e. a reformed former gang leader that spends his days trying to uplift the vulnerable of the city. In addition, Magadien's story reveals that he also spent many years on the streets of the city after his release from prison.

Creation of a comfortable interview environment was thought through carefully, especially since personal stories were told. It is important for the participant and the researcher to feel safe (McCosker et al 2001), and the more comfortable participants are, the more likely they are to disclose information and reveal the nature of their lived experiences (Speziale and Carpenter, 2003). To reduce the participants' sense of vulnerability, they were asked to choose places where they could most comfortably participate in an interview. Options provided were the wendy house situated on the garden premises, my car which was parked in Food Lover's Market's parking lot and was next to the garden, and Chop Chop – a cosy food restaurant situated close by. Most opted to be interviewed in the wendy house, whilst two (Matthew* and Zamuxolo) chose to speak in my car after noise outside the wendy house distracted them.

All participants were interviewed during the early hours of the morning, and a lunch meal and cold drink was provided after every interview. Each interview, besides Andre's and Achmat's, lasted for just over an hour and a voice recorder was used. All recordings are safely stored and protected on a personal USB flash drive that was bought for the purpose of this project, and is password-protected, therefore inaccessible to anyone besides myself. Concerning the reason for using a voice recorder, I explained to participants its purpose, and clarified that I will be the only one with access to it. The requirement of informed consent is a cornerstone of ethical research intended to enable persons to be treated respectfully; hence, about ten minutes were taken before the start of each interview to introduce the purpose of the project and to discuss the

end-result and presentation of it. Following that was participants signing their consent form. In addition, they were informed of their unreserved right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Surprisingly, all interviewees showed no reluctance in being included in the project. This was possibly due to their high level of trust that they have with Jesse, whom they spend a lot of time with, and also who many look up to, as was revealed in their interviews. Jesse spent one morning in my and their presence discussing the project and emphasised their voluntary participation in it, which I later did too. Quite a few of them, including Theresa and Achmat, are generally quite chatty and eager to share their stories with others.

Early morning hours were also specifically chosen to carry out the interviews as the participants finished their job at the garden at 1pm, and want to head home as soon as they have completed their jobs for the day. Hence, I did not want to inconvenience them as well as have them potentially rush through their stories so that they could end the interview quickly. What also possibly assured them of the aim of the project was showing them examples of previous projects, such as The Dignity Project and printed screenshots of a few of Stanton's HONY portraits, explaining that this project would take a similar approach. Gideon's story also featured as part of The Dignity Project, so he, and a few others who read his story, seemed to be at ease, knowing what its presentation would be like after completion.

That the project's intended audience was specifically for the general public instead of an academic institution, also seemingly interested them as they expressed interest in wanting their stories to reach many people. Some of them, like Matthew*, interestingly attached negative connotations to stories of street-based people appearing in most newspaper publications, citing that the stereotypical view of those living on the streets were often portrayed, and that they were "used" by reporters, only to never see them again. I promised him and every other participant to return with a printed copy of each of their stories after the project submission date.

A set of questions were prepared prior to the interviews taking place, and were used during the interview, simply as a guiding means. These included questions such as:

What was your life like growing up? How does being homeless and jobless make you feel? What do you enjoy the most about your job at Streetscapes? Do you think that it's society's responsibility to help the homeless, and what can they do to help? How do you cope with being on the streets [coping mechanisms]?

In attempting to put participants at ease before and during the interview process so that they may answer comfortably and without feeling intimidated, I allowed the participants to guide the interview instead of the other way round. This technique, as well as "playing dumb", is what McCracken, (1988: 38) suggests so that interviewees don't feel threatened in interviews. McCracken (1988) suggests a 'middle road', in that the interviewer should appear professional and generally knowledgeable, but less knowledgeable than the interviewee on the particular topic under discussion. Hence, when issues of shelter services, employment opportunities for the homeless, etc. were brought up, I allowed the participant to give his/her side of the story without interrupting or introducing facts or opinions on the matter.

Concerning the questions, Leech (2002: 666) discusses the order as a significant component of interviews. He and Weinberg (1996:85) both recommend that the interviewer should 'move from the nonthreatening to the threatening', i.e. to ask the 'easy' questions first. With this in mind, I started with a very open-ended question: 'Tell me a bit about yourself – what was your life like growing up?', and then moved to questions that required them to consider their opinions, such as 'what do you think of the current state of South Africa – is there hope that things will improve for the country, and, specifically, for the street-based people?' According to Seidman (2006: 10), a researcher can approach the experience of people through examining documents, through observation, through exploring history and through a review of existing literature. However, if the researcher's goal is to understand the meaning people make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry.

Knox & Burkard (2009: 10) further discuss participants' reasons or motivation for being interviewed, including agreeing to be interviewed because they expect to gain from the interview (Bloom, 1996), possibly finding the interview interesting and rewarding (Berg, 2001), validating of personal experiences (Hiller & DiLuzio, 2004), or enabling them to altruistically help others (Lowes & Gill, 2006). Concerning this project, the first reason was not experienced, especially because they knew from the outset what the aim of the project was and that they would receive a meal, but that no monetary amount would be received. Most of the participants seemed to be merely interested in having their story told to many people whom they believe do not understand their daily struggles, whilst three participants, i.e. Magadien, Matthew* and Gideon, told their story with the aim of it motivating others in similar positions to changes their lives for the better.

Researchers such as Knox & Burkard (2009: 13) also caution researchers to avoid responding therapeutically to participants for two reasons:

First, such interviewer responses can cause role confusion for participants, perhaps leaving them uncertain whether they participated in a therapeutic or research interview. So interviewers must ensure that they are keeping the boundaries between their roles as researcher clear for participants, thereby managing any ethical dilemmas (Haverkamp, 2005). Second, some researchers (e.g., Rennie, 1995; Seidman, 2006) believe that therapeutic responses may influence participants' interpretations of such events, perhaps compromising the integrity of the data collected during an interview. Thus, interviewers should refrain from therapeutic responses to avoid imposing their views and biases on the area of interest.

With this in mind, my responses were brief, although, as mentioned earlier in the paper, it was difficult not to express sympathy or empathy at times.

Scholars such as Hall (1988) and Sue & Sue (2003) also point to participants' cultural background and values that can have an important effect on interview relationships; that an influence of cultural differences in communication styles is common, particularly with regard to how information is communicated to others. This was evident with most participants, whose first language is Afrikaans. Initially, I started communicating to them in English, but I witnessed some struggling to express themselves, including Matthew*, Jolene, Lee and Theresa. For example, they often used terms and phrases like *skarrel*, *gemines* (which refers to their daily struggle of searching for food and other items) etc. and struggled to find the English equivalent. Because of this, I later expressed that they should respond in Afrikaans, since I am bilingual and could therefore understand and translate it to English.

Ethical Challenges

On interviewing

On the subject of interviewing, Seidman (2006: 7) notes 'stories as a way of knowing'. The root of the word *story* is the Greek word *historia*, which translated to one who is "learned". Storytelling is essentially a meaning-making process, wherein the storyteller selects details of their experiences from their stream of consciousness, and in order to give the details of their experience a beginning, middle and end, people need to reflect on their experiences (Butcher, 1902). It is this method of selecting constitutive details of experience, Seidman (2006) says, i.e. reflecting on them, giving them order and thereby making sense of them that makes telling stories a meaning-making experience. Interviewing, then, is a basic mode of inquiry (Seidman, 2006: 8), and this process of recounting narratives of experience has been the major way throughout history that humans have made sense of their experiences (Seidman, 2006).

On this subject, Reason (1981, cited in Seidman, 2006) notes:

The best stories are those which stir people's minds, hearts and souls and by so doing give them new insights into themselves, their problems and their human condition.

On the purpose of interviewing (Seidman, 2006: 9) says in-depth interviewing's goal is not to get answers to questions, nor is it to test hypotheses. However, its purpose, at its root, is an understanding of the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. Being interested in others is the key to some of the basic assumptions underlying interviewing techniques, and requires the acknowledgement of interviewers that an interest in other individuals' stories is of worth.

Although there is some controversy regarding the identification of what constitutes a sensitive research topic, many scholars focus on aspects of life that may be considered sensitive (Enosh & Buchbinder, 2005). Scholars including Lee and Renzetti (1990) and Corbin & Morse (2003) argue that it is possible for any topic to be sensitive, although some topics may be more likely to cause distress than others. Cowles (1988) says that sensitive topics are those that have the potential to cause harm to participants, eliciting powerful emotional responses such as anger, sadness, embarrassment, fear and anxiety – emotions that were, although not to a great extent – expressed by some participants during the interviews, such as Achmat's interview wherein he expressed his anger at the government failing to provide him with a house.

Nevertheless, conducting research into sensitive topics can be challenging, as posited by Anderson and Hatton (2000), especially if the researcher has limited expertise in interviewing about topics of a sensitive nature. Since qualitative research is the study of subjective experience, it is difficult for researchers to distance themselves from studies and cannot remain 'faceless' interviewers (Dickson-Swift et al. 2008), which I experienced during the process of carrying out the project.

Another concern that was taken into account was participants recounting stories from their past that could have possibly evoked trauma. The level of disclosure by participants was kept in mind, as it may have been influenced by the emotions they experienced while recounting past events. In particular, the retelling of powerful experiences, as discussed by Adler & Adler (2002),

may elicit intense affect, which can influence participants' mood and emotional state during the interview. They argue that the interviewer should consider that participants are often asked to discuss experiences that they may have disclosed to few others. Hence, sharing such information, and more specifically allowing interviewers to hear about their feelings of shame, embarrassment, fears and anxiety, may increase feelings of vulnerability (Birch & Miller, 2000; Sinding & Aronson, 2003) and participants may manage these feelings of vulnerability during the interview in multiple ways. For instance, they may respond minimally, offer vague or unclear information, or change the focus of the interview (Hutchinson & Wilson, 1992).

While rarely, these issues *were* experienced in some of the interviews, such as the ones with Achmat and Andre. When willingly describing his childhood in Athlone, Achmat suddenly jumped to describing his relationship with a former partner. However, after a few minutes he decided quite abruptly to conclude that part of his life story. Similarly, Andre was extremely hesitant to open up about his past, and instead gave short snippets of his life without mentioning anything in detail.

With this in mind, I chose to accept their choice of not delving further into their stories, for fear of evoking upsetting behaviour and possible trauma, especially since a social worker or psychologist was not on hand during the interviews. This issue was discussed with Jesse prior to the interviews, and because they attend weekly appointments with their counsellor, Paul Schnider, and social worker, Mehnaaz Essop, she suggested that it would be acceptable for me to ask them about their past, unless they feel uncomfortable doing so. Hence, with this in mind, my intention was to gain their autobiographies, but not to do so at the cost of the interview and project upsetting them at any stage.

Corbin and Morse (2003) cite the potential benefits of interviewing, in that individuals that share their life experiences and tell their stories to an interested listener can experience positive and therapeutic effects from participation. Participants may find telling their stories to be cathartic (Carlick and Biley, 2004), since participants undergo a reflective process, which is a

possible way of gaining closure. Other scholars like Leseho & Block (2005) note that telling someone your experiences and sharing your story can contribute to healing, and express a sense of empowerment from being listened to and heard. Peters et al. (2008) noted that participants who tell their story as part of qualitative research may have a sense of being valued, whilst some may also be inclined to share their experiences to gain a sense of purpose and contribution through increased awareness of their experience. Such is the case of Matthew*, who often stressed that he would like the central theme of his story to focus on his religion playing a significant role in him changing his lifestyle for the better.

On the ethics and challenges of the photography aspect of the project

On photographing the homeless

In her collection of essays, titled *On Photography*, Susan Sontag (1977: 55) draws on the moral dangers of becoming photo-hungry:

Social misery has inspired the comfortably-off with the urge to take pictures, the gentlest of predations, in order to document a hidden reality, that is, a reality hidden from them. Gazing on other people's reality with curiosity, with detachment, with professionalism, the ubiquitous photographer operates as if that activity transcends class interests, as if its perspective is universal.

Sontag (1977: 56) further remarks that to capture photographs of people was seen as a “social documentation” and was considered “curious and indifferent”, finding “slums the most enthralling of decors”. In Sontag’s (1977: 111) view, photographs have the ability to stir strong emotions in the viewer, but ultimately the difficulty is that they seldom guide the viewer’s emotional power to practical ends, which she appears to define as compassionate action: “Despite the illusion of giving understanding, what seeing through photographs really... promotes [is] emotional detachment” (Sontag 1977: 111).

In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, she polishes her arguments about what constitutes a moral response to these images while softening some of her judgments and expectations. Sontag concludes that “people don’t become inured to what they are shown... because of the quantity of images dumped on them, and it is “passivity that dulls feeling” (Sontag 2003: 102). She argues this deadening of feeling in the face of photographs is heightened by the way the media circulates images and drains them of content (Parsons, 2009: 205).

On the subject of photographing vulnerable people, such as street-based people, careful consideration must be taken to avoid the very “compassion fatigue” and “emotional detachment” that Sontag discusses in her work. On the subject of exploitative photography, Gampat (2015) argues there is the notion that taking photos of the people living on the streets is exploitation of their current situation. However, he goes on to mention that the action could be justified depending on your intentions: “Why are you taking the picture of the person? What are you hoping to achieve by taking this photo? What do you intend to do with this photograph? Where is this photograph going to be displayed?” If any of the answers to those questions are for selfish reasons, he says, then the photographer is being exploitative.

The NPPA Code of Ethics guides photojournalists and summarises this practice quite simply:

Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see.

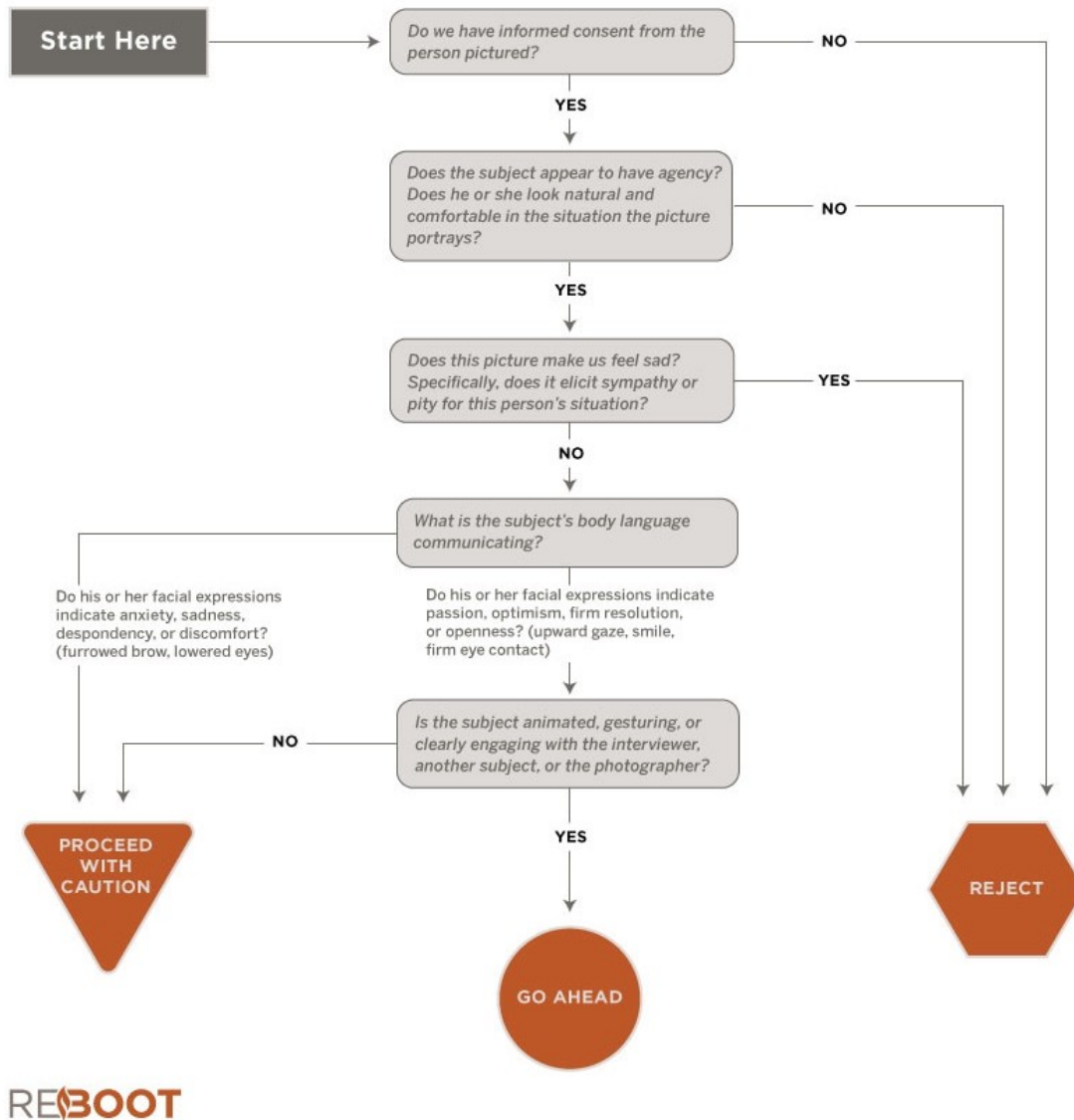
The aim of this project’s photography was not to reinforce destructive stereotypes of street-based people, which typically sees them as a social menace, drug & alcohol addicts, criminals, lazy and a willingness to be on the streets. Hence, photos of the participants were taken solely in the Streetscapes garden, as opposed to the streets where some of them sleep. They were also told when the photographs would be taken, so that, if they wanted, they could wear clothing of their choice. It was quite evident that many of them took pride in their appearance.

For example, Theresa put on lipstick for her photo, and Lee sported his Khulisa t-shirt because he wanted a 'professional look'. Similarly, Razaan decided to wear an elastic headband and Andre asked if he could keep on his sunglasses for his photo.

Elsewhere in Sontag's (1977: 19) work, she argues that in order for photographs to awaken the conscience, viewers must already have a context in which to place them. Hence, the very autobiography from all ten participants serves to provide a deeper context, instead of simply providing a portrait shot with a short quote. In order to avoid a lack of control over their story content, I asked them which images they liked, deleting the ones they did not approve of. Magadien, Zamuzolo and Matthew* were content with not looking at the photos, and gave permission for me to use any of the ones I had captured.

(Photographic) Challenges encountered

The following photography policy chart from Reboot, a social impact firm, was used (to some degree) as a guiding tool on the days of capturing the participants' photos:



Consent to have their photos taken were sought and obtained from all participants. However, a challenge experienced was achieving photographs wherein each of them appeared to be at ease, so as to give off a 'natural-looking shot', as well as having agency. The main objective was to avoid images that portrayed sadness and elicited sympathy from viewers and readers of their

stories. However, this proved to be a bit difficult at first, since some of the participants posed for their photos, which did not result in the desired 'natural' look I was aiming for. One of the big challenges professional photographers, such as Denny (2015: 58), faces is putting people who are not professional models at ease right from the start: "Most people have trouble being the centre of attention, when they're not used to being in front of a camera," she says. Denny advises that photographers should consciously avoid being intimidating, which will allow people to be at ease around you.

For those that looked slightly awkward in their shots, I decided to capture a few more images in their workplace with them being unaware. This decision brought about 'natural' shots, where the participants appeared more photogenic. A method titled 'The Attraction of Distraction' coined by Norton (n.d.) and employed by other photographers, such as Grecco (2015: 61), requires the photographer to distract their subject by engaging in conversation with them whilst capturing their portraits. This guidance also served as a helping mechanism to get a few participants, such as Theresa and Jolene (who were fairly shy to be in front of the camera) feel at ease. Encouraging subjects with praise, like telling them, 'That's a beautiful shot', 'This one looks almost perfect' also helped to reduce their nervousness.

In order to gain crisp, clear images, a tripod was used when taking photos for the second time, since it was noted with the first set of photos that its quality was slightly blurry or out of focus. The tripod helped kept the camera stable and was used every time after that. Minor editing was done to most of the images, such as adjusting lighting, contrast, hue, cropping and framing to produce an overall picturesque gallery. The two editing programmes used were Photoscape and Adobe Lightroom.

Although an external flash was attached to the CANON 600D used for capturing the photographs, it did not entirely help, as the lighting still seemed harsh in some images. This proved to be one of the greatest difficulties of the photography segment of the project, since I did not have a soft box to diffuse and create even lighting in the images. A contributing factor to

the challenge of the lighting was that the garden only opens up at 08h00, and, by then, the sun has already hit the garden area, which makes soft-lighting effect images almost impossible without the correct photographic lighting devices, such as the soft box. Hence, I tried capturing the images in shady areas or during the early afternoons. The white backing of a foam board were used to bounce light off shadows appearing on subjects' faces for some images that were captured a bit later during the course of the project, however, a big difference was not noted.

Visual literacy

Different angles were also used to create visual interest, especially when photographing the garden. For the garden, mostly long/full shots (to set the scene and give an overall picture of the participants' workspace) were used, along with close-ups of the produce for a more dramatic effect. Straight angles (which creates a neutral attitude) and partial high angles were also used.

For the participants' photos, high angles were deliberately avoided, since the use of high-angle shots results in the subject appearing vulnerable, powerless and inferior by allowing the viewer to look down on them. Instead, straight angles and low angles (which demonstrate the superiority of and make the subject lofty and inspiring) were employed. Interestingly, when photographing events for clients, such as weddings, high angles are often used as it makes for aesthetically pleasing imagery, however, in this case, the complete opposite effect is brought about by using the same angle.

Regarding the types of focus, both soft and partial sharp focuses were used, the latter mostly of the garden so that the produce portrayed clarity. Three types of lenses were also used when photographing participants and the garden.

On paying participants

Checkbook (or Chequebook) journalism, can be defined as a controversial practice of paying sources for their information (Sanders, 1995: 41), and has become a common practice in newsgathering. It is seen to undermine journalistic independence, and is therefore often frowned upon. An editorial from *Editor & Publisher* (1975) phrases the consequences of the practices well:

If the principle of paying newsworthy people for an interview is permitted to spread it will mean that news will belong to the medium with the largest checkbook and the public will suffer.

Similarly, the Society of Professional Journalists (SJP) Ethics Committee argues:

First, paying for information immediately calls into question the credibility of the information. Readers or viewers have a legitimate right to wonder whether the source is disclosing this information because the information is important or because the source is getting paid for it.

For studies with a prospect of benefit, Grady (n.d.) argues that payment may be unnecessary as an incentive, but it does not follow that payment is unethical. In contrast, she says, it may be unfair not to compensate or reimburse participants for their time. She categorises payment in several forms: money, gifts, free meals, travel vouchers, gift certificates, etc. Similarly, Burke (2016) argues that “often subjects deserve to be paid”. Fernandez (2016) also argues that the greater the public interest in the particular story, the greater the justification for paying them for their information.

Interestingly, several scholars make the argument that failing to reimburse participants can also be considered unethical. Thompson (1996:3) suggests that making payments (or ‘gift-giving’)

becomes a mark of ethically sound research, while Goodman et al. (20014: 821) has argued that making payments can be a way of 'beginning to equalise' the uneven power relationships that exist between interviewer and interviewee: 'on the one hand... it seems obvious that they [research participants] should be compensated for their time, especially since the researchers themselves are likely compensated through salaries or other external rewards'. From this viewpoint, then, the act of payment serves to overcome some of the power imbalance between the researcher and the participant, so that the former is not the only individual in the relationship to benefit directly (Head, 2009: 337).

Since all participants agreed to be interviewed without any expectation of any form of reimbursement, an incentive was not considered necessary to serve as a persuasive tool in obtaining the willingness of participants to be interviewed. Nevertheless, it felt a bit unfair not to reimburse them for their time, and, more importantly, for sharing something so personal and unique, i.e. their life stories. Hence, they were aware of receiving a meal and a cold drink of their choice purchased from Food Lover's Market after their interviews, but were unaware of receiving a gift and money, as an expression of thanks, which was given to them in January 2017, about two months after their interviews had taken place. The gifts comprised of handbags and lipsticks for Theresa, Razaan and Jolene, as well as a wedding album with a few of her printed wedding photos (for Jolene), whilst each of the male participants received a t-shirt, a pack of socks and a cap. Each participant also received R100. Providing them with these gifts and money after the interviews and without their knowledge of receiving it for participating prevented any ethical dilemmas that may have arisen if they had knowledge of it prior to the interviews.

Upon reflection, participants being unaware of the gifts and money they would receive after their interviews was a good decision, since, when I gave the photo album with their weddings photos to Matthew* (who is Jolene's husband), he had suddenly changed his mind about requesting a pseudonym in his story. The gift and money most likely influenced his decision, since he was very insistent in the beginning that his name should not be published. I explained

that it was completely fine for me to use a pseudonym, and he and I both agreed that it would be used in the final submission. Furthermore, I somewhat later regretted giving them money as a token of gratitude, because a few days later, Jolene had mentioned that Lee is unfortunately back to living on the streets of the CBD because he is involved in drug use. She and Matthew* welcomed and provided him with a room in their home in Manenberg for a few months in 2016. However, Jolene explained that he prefers to be on the streets since he is free to consume drugs, which they will not allow in their home. Although I did not question or confront Lee about it, since Jolene requested that I do not, I took her word for it and the possibility of it being true bothered me as I hoped the money would not be used to encourage his habit. In hindsight, I felt like a food or clothing store voucher would have been a better option, along with the gifts.

Contradictory requests from Matthew*

Matthew*, one of the participants of the project, requested that I employ a pseudonym for his story. He asked that his name be changed to Matthew* Daniels, and explained:

“I don’t want my face to be shown because I’ve been on the streets for 15 years and I used to stay in Manenberg with my family, and now I just feel like my life here is not their business. I feel like they don’t care really.”

This was agreed on and was mentioned in his consent form. Towards the end of his interview, he began discussing his wedding day in a joyous tone – he and his wife, Jolene, expected to get married in a very simple manner by a commissioner of oaths in August 2016, however, with the help of a few people, their special day developed into a big event. The *Cape Argus* photographer and Pick n Pay came on board to capture photographs and provide them with savory platters and a wedding cake. Matthew* mentioned that I could include the event in his biography, since it was a positive and happy time in their lives. Nevertheless, when I explained that it could defeat the purpose of using a pseudonym, since readers could easily link the story to his wedding event (published online by the *Cape Argus*), he explained that he does not want his

photograph visible on the website because of the association with the subject of living on the streets, in addition to his abovementioned reason of not wanting his family to find out that he is working at the garden. I told him he could take a month or so to decide on whether he would be okay with me providing details of the wedding event, and he eventually decided that he is happy to have it included, but that he would still like a pseudonym employed and does not want his face to be included in his photograph. Instead, I asked him to hold one of his wedding photographs, hiding his identity, and captured an image of that to be included in his story.

On working with Stepping Stone

As part of UCT's social responsiveness projects, UCT TV produces four 5-minute non-fiction films (documentary/promotional videos) with a human interest to it, on an annual basis. This forms part of the UCT Stepping Stone community engagement video training course. During October 2016, Barbara Schmid, project manager of the UCT Knowledge Co-op, sent an email to all individuals involved in the Streetscapes Project, asking whether we would be willing to participate in a short documentary clip produced by the Stepping Stone team. The Stepping Stone Outreach Programme was initiated as a way to provide aspiring filmmakers access to the knowledge, facilities, equipment and skills required to make a start in video production. During October, they had publicized the 'Call for 5-Minute Promotional Documentary Proposals UCT TV'.

They wanted UCT social responsiveness projects that had a human interest angle to it. Schmid wanted to submit a proposal for having a video made on the work of the Knowledge Co-op, especially since the Co-op is unfamiliar to most academics, including staff and students at the university. Schmid had hoped that the video would serve as promotional material that would make more academics aware of the Co-op and the opportunities they offer. Since Schmid and Phoba had to focus their proposal on a student whose work was connected to the Co-op, she and Phoba agreed my creative project would make 'an excellent case study to show what the Co-op is about' (pers. comm., 3 October). She explained the process of filming, which included

showing some of the individuals I was connected to for the purpose of the project. Two weeks later, they received the news of the proposal being selected.

Filming for the video took place over the period of four days, and locations included the UCT Television Studio at the Baxter Theatre Centre, UCT Upper Campus, and the Streetscapes garden in Roeland Street. Participants involved in the video were myself, my supervisor, Dr Evans, Schmid and Phoba from the Co-op, Jesse Laitinen from Khulisa, Nontsikelelo Nzula, a Masters student in Social Development studies that was also involved with the Co-op and Khulisa, and Zamuxolo Masabalala and Theresa Solomons, two of the participants that are employed at the Streetscapes garden. The filming of the video was both tiring and exciting, and the end result was wholly worthwhile. As of March 2016, the video received 756 'likes' on the UCT Knowledge Co-op's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/UCTKnowledgeCo.op/videos/216704912068669/>) and continues to serve as good exposure for both the Knowledge Co-op and the project in itself, almost serving as a kind of preview to the final product.

The website

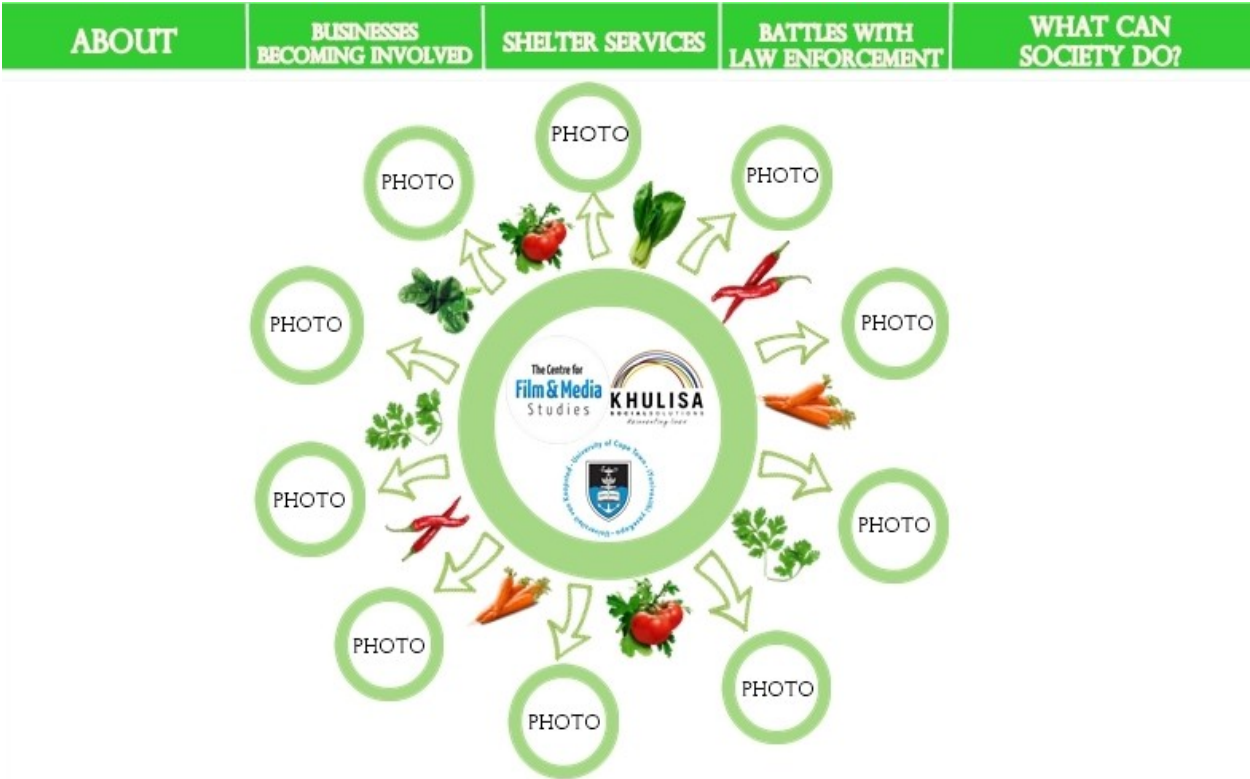
Once the website was complete and all material (text and photos) was uploaded, and prior to it being published, I asked three friends and family members to browse through the site, read the material and offer any suggestions and advice on information that seemed unclear in any way. This was done so that someone that has no knowledge of the project, and that could offer a viewpoint from a fresh perspective, could possibly find flaws with the presentation of the material. The need to do so was realised after my supervisor, Dr Evans, browsed through a draft template of the website layout, and noted a few aspects that should be included or altered, such as the name of the website on the homepage (that was not present in the template), and a subheading or short introduction for the title of the project, so that it would give readers a basic idea on the subject and purpose of the website.

The initial design and layout of the website (see image below) was changed a bit. This was because the final layout seemed more visually pleasing, as the featured photos of the ten participants were fuller and therefore more visible to viewers. The first template's photos were quite small and I decided to change the layout after two of the three respondents that I had asked to look at the site suggested a change in the design. The order of appearance of participants' stories on the homepage was randomly placed.

For the segment on the systemic barriers that includes law enforcement, the CCID, the City of Cape Town and access to shelter services, one long feature article was initially intended to be included under a tab titled 'systemic barriers'. However, due to the detailed length of information, the feature piece would have been more than 2 500 words long, which, although quite normal for a feature article, I hoped to avoid since I did not want the appearance of a lengthy article to steer readers away from the page. Hence, I decided to divide the sections into three relatively shorter pieces, allowing readers to click "next" at the bottom of each section to read the next structural challenge. These three sections all features under the 'structural challenges' tab.

The aim of the design of the website was to keep it as simple as possible, so that it is easy for users to navigate their way through each participant's story. Hence, I had requested the landing page to feature the ten photos of all participants, since it forms the main component of the project, with the tabs displayed above to enlighten readers on issues relating to the stories. The web developer also included footnoted information in the form of a box on the right side of some participants' stories, at my request. This information was provided so that it could take readers to different sites to read more about the particular issue mentioned in the participant's story, for example, Jolene's story briefly mentions her time in Pollsmoor Prison, and a footnote in the information box leads readers to a *Mail & Guardian* article on the state of the Pollsmoor's female prison. Having the website designed was a process of going back and forth with the web developer, though it was exciting to see the final product.

On the whole, carrying out this project has been completely meaningful and, I believe, worthwhile. It is a project I thoroughly enjoyed and in the end changed my own perspective on the difficulties street-based people face in the city, and I hope that the publishing of the website will educate the larger public as well. That being said, this project also notes that it is limited in its findings, and that the issues explored in it are certainly not generalisable to all street-based people in the city or country. This was proven in that each participant had a unique angle to their story, such as the difficulty of overcoming drug or substance abuse, the pain of losing a loved one, the foster care system in South Africa, the pressure and strain of accepting contract-jobs, etc. as it relates to people living on the streets. A small sample of ten participants that are either living or have lived on the streets of Cape Town is not large enough to conclude definitive findings, however, this project is an attempt at providing the less fortunate of the city with a platform, with the aim of enlightening the general South African public on their fellow citizens' difficulties experienced on the streets, and how they can help to allow them to live with and maintain their dignity.



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