



***Family Digest 12***  
***14<sup>th</sup> November 2016***

**Those of no fixed address**

More and more people are living on the streets of our cities. Homelessness, which may be temporary, episodic or permanent, translates into lack of access to almost all amenities including shelter; sanitation; water for drinking, washing, cooking and laundry; electricity for cooking, lighting and heating. Homelessness is a complex psycho-social and socio-economic phenomenon. Psycho-social factors include: substance abuse; family dysfunction and conflict; mental and physical health issues; and, in some instances, criminal affiliation. Socio-economic factors include: poverty; unemployment; lack of social security; and housing. An individual's circumstances would be determined by a complex interplay of these contributing factors.

According to Stats SA, there are two categories of homeless people. The largest is made up of those individuals who come from peripheral areas and who move to urban areas in search of employment. They sleep on the streets or in temporary shelters to save money while looking for work. They may not find work and thus join the other category of homeless people – those who have no alternative accommodation and live on the streets permanently. (People living in informal settlements are not considered homeless as they have a fixed address and access to some services and amenities such as electricity and water.

In general, more men than women live on the streets.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, it is black and white people who make up the majority of the homeless. The incidence of homelessness among the combined Coloured, Indian and Asian population groups amounts to slightly more than half of the incidence among the white population. Historically, there have always been homeless whites, typically men, who have inhabited the benches, parks and bridges of our cities. The Group Areas Act effectively ensured that only whites could be homeless in our town- and city-centres. While apartheid spatial geography no longer determines who can sleep on the streets of our towns and cities, the reasons for so doing have not changed.

Below please find some links to various articles regarding the above.

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[http://www.universityofpretoria.co.za/media/shared/249/ZP\\_Files/homelessness-report-2015.zp70613.pdf](http://www.universityofpretoria.co.za/media/shared/249/ZP_Files/homelessness-report-2015.zp70613.pdf)  
<http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/homeless-choose-streets-over-shelters-1829353>  
<http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/research-data/view/4916>  
[http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0037-80542015000100001](http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0037-80542015000100001)  
<http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/ceres-cop-drapes-blankets-over-slumbering-street-people-20160503>  
<http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/cape-town-has-over-7-000-homeless-people-1896558>  
[http://www.capetownmagazine.com/social/please-sir-have-you-got-some-change-how-you-can-really-help/118\\_22\\_19113](http://www.capetownmagazine.com/social/please-sir-have-you-got-some-change-how-you-can-really-help/118_22_19113)  
<http://accountabilitynow.org.za/homelessness-new-south-africa/>  
<https://www.enca.com/south-africa/south-africa-not-safe-young-people-stats-sa>

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<sup>1</sup>The SA institute of Race Relations Survey 2013, p696