

Summary of Tshwane/Pretoria Symposium

The symposium provided a valuable platform for sharing knowledge about the current state of the Tshwane city centre, the people who inhabit it and their experiences and challenges. The human aspect of the discussions captured three key groupings that can be termed as follows:

- Potential beneficiaries, relating to which people the city centre might be for, which links to the local government's vision and subsequent plans to build a city of the future.
- Unintended populations, relating to those who by circumstance and necessity have migrated to the city centre and currently occupy parts of in a growing 'poverty band'.
- Current community, relating to those inhabitants who have chosen to live, work and play in the city centre and who are economically active beyond a subsistence level/ poverty band.

Tshwane inner-city rejuvenation programme

Clear challenges were reported: The inner city is not yet inclusive and accessible to all; remnants of South African segregated political past; many buildings are in a poor state and old infrastructure constrains new and further development; great deal of traffic congestion and inadequate provision for public and non-motorised transport – resulted in illegal taxi ranks and illegal parking; many informal traders and subsequent difficulties in enforcing the bylaws; there are differing needs and not always consensus: In terms of the public sector, the municipality must share the inner-city space with national and provincial seats who have their own initiatives which don't always align. The private sector also has their own agenda to which the municipality does not always concur.

Positive initiatives to deal with challenges: A vision of the Tshwane rejuvenation was developed by government and includes significant public sector plans to revitalise the city centre; there are private sector investment commitments to inner city rejuvenation projects.

The informal settlements question - women access to the City

Direct narrative for women - a more direct way of accessing the city lies in informality; the whole idea of informal dwellers is to be able to access the available (informal) trading spaces in the city, thus the decision for women to settle in informal settlements is strategic; informal settlements are located in close proximity to the city and near transport routes into the city where potential employment or money-making opportunities lie; informal settlements are done through land invasions and facilitated through illegal connections to power; service delivery protests are done in order to quickly access water, sanitation and housing; illegal occupation compels authorities to grant informal dwellers the permission to occupy and requires them to negotiate with private owners to allow informal dwellers permission to stay on the land; Government-led settlement programmes don't adequately address the practicalities for women when accessing the city centre to find employment opportunities; currently available housing programmes isolate women due to lack of access to social and economic activities; when accessing the city centre, women are faced with challenges - from road accidents to crime - which constrain them from attempting to access and engage in city-based activities; and there are strong indications to suggest that social housing initiatives that are developed in an inclusive process could minimize the challenges facing women.

Informal settlements – an albatross to city centre development

A closer look at informal settlements in the city centre speak to the growing need of marginalised populations that are drawn to the city centre for the potential opportunities there in terms of earning money and finding a place to live. There is a clear need for an appropriate social housing strategy with policy formulation rooted in good practice and translated into replicable, funded programmes.

Social housing provides a compelling alternative - from a cost, safety and health perspective - to shack dwelling for homeless communities that seek accommodation in the city centre.

The question of trading in the city

While informal trading is acknowledged as a reality in the city centre, there is enough evidence to suggest that informal trading is a growing problem fraught with challenges (for the city and the traders alike) which the City is attempting to contain. Strategies that the City has embarked on include supplying safer and healthier places to trade in order to encourage by-law adherence, more streamlined licensing processes to encourage formality and business training to empower traders. Informal trading is seen by the City as a 'temporary' form of economic activity, from which traders should eventually be able to progress beyond this to other forms of employment.

Immediate challenges for the informal sector include: Limited business or entrepreneurial skills which leads to illegal trading; no access to finance; a manual licensing system combined with a lack of available time to go through the process, leads to unregistered businesses and illegal trading; highly competitive environment and overcrowding; lack of resources including the storage facilities for traders goods, given that almost 99% of them travel by bus out of the city and need a secure place to store their goods overnight; and health and safety challenges: lack of basic amenities; trading in open spaces that are unhealthy and dangerous or harsh environments; experiencing high rates of crime, and intimidation and harassment by law-enforcement agencies.

The city 'is for all' dilemma – the rural poor question of gaining access to the city in future

The space economy demographics is a reality: A spatial perspective on migration and settlement processes provides a lens through which to examine how the central city relates to the rural population inflow. There is no stable residential area on the city periphery, in the poverty band. For migrants, there is no owned housing in the central city and as people are either on their way in or out of the city, they exist in transitory settlement. As people move in and out of the core zone, there is a tipping point for the housing need: people who move into the central city are usually single or young couples who don't have children. It is not customary in African society to raise your family if you don't own your own place. This means that the core zone comprises predominantly young people who are looking for work, and are not looking for permanent housing.

The city centre as a tourism magnet

There are strong indications to suggest that tourism has huge potential for the city centre. Tourism activities could be leveraged as economic opportunities for informal traders in the city centre. Although the city essentially shuts down early at night there is potential for extending the city's hours into night life through markets and activities that draw communities to converge and socialise.

There are challenges towards making the city centre a tourism Mecca. These include: Vagrancy, drugs and homelessness; industrial action resulting in part from informal, transient and poor populations which experience the city centre as a site of struggle; main challenges for tourists are mobility in and out of the city, and safety; a lack of night-time economy and activities; and derelict buildings and old infrastructure.

Transforming - creating dynamic and real community assets

What do the people want?

This is a critical question confronting the city centre authorities. Based on research it could be argued that people know what they want. *Salient answers include:* A sense of place which is created through their voice and they should be listened to; city is losing a lot of the existing community as no opportunities are being created for people to flourish; a response to the challenges of the city centre such as dirt, crime and the disrepair of buildings, people require a lighter, cheaper, quicker solution; and there are 40 key ideas (detailed elsewhere) for the city centre's rejuvenation, including aspects such as utilising existing buildings and creating natural community spaces.

There are activities of building inner city rejuvenation initiatives, but communities involved in this are not necessarily talking to one other. In many instances, one group's problems are another group's offering. If there is more collaboration, information sharing and conversations, solutions could be found in a very short period of time.

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