

## Where Else Should We Go?

By Naobi Dube

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“Where else should we go?” were the words of one of the homeless after the Ekurhuleni Metro closed all the openings the homeless use to enter the grounds around the area in Germiston. All the small gaps that they had opened to access the ground stalls have been closed. The homeless used the stalls as a hiding place at night.

For some time now the homeless have been using the Germiston grounds as a place to sleep, although it is in plain sight. It helps that at the grounds there is water flowing from the lake close by which the homeless group use to bath early each day to remain a little more representable. They can even wash their clothes by the river. They had created their own little sequence, most say this was a great spot for them as it kept them out of trouble.

“They chase us away from the street so the ground was a perfect place. Here my sister no one can steal your stuff because we know each other and can easily trace who stole what and when. We have created our own little family and we protect each other. The securities have been chasing us out of the grounds and I don’t understand why because in our group we don’t steal. We come to clear up the place as we are looking for things to recycle and that’s it, we know that there are children here and well we know that people don’t like us hence we come at night”, Fisto said.

These grounds are sometimes never used according to Fisto and his group. Even when they try to stay away from people there is always something negative that happens.

They used to build shacks next to the water but it gets very hard to sleep there during winter because of the cold. It is even worse during the rainy season because there is a lot of grass and it is not safe they said. The group says they cannot speak on behalf of all the homeless people but they know that for them the space is safer than going back to the river banks.

The river has some opportunities like washing people’s cars but most people around there prefer doing it themselves because they do not trust the homeless. Fisto’s homeless group say they have been accused of a lot of things there hence they do not wish to go back.

Their main plea is for the Ekurhuleni Metro to allow them to sleep under the stalls as they have been chased away in a lot of places.

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