

Lack of Housing within the Johannesburg CBD

Nombuyiselo Zigana

Release date: 26 August 2023

Houselessness is one of the biggest issues we face in South Africa, and there are various reasons why people end up unhoused.

During interviews with some of the city's homeless people, it became clear that a common reason that young people run away from home is because of drug abuse. "Mina, ngahamba ekhaya ngoba ngingasakwazi ukuphanda khona ngizobhema," ("I left home because if I could no longer hustle anymore so that I could smoke."), said a young girl who is living under a bridge in the Johannesburg Central Business District (CBD).

Manqoba Mtshali from Naledi, Soweto, has been living on the streets for years and said that he is so used to being there that even when his family tries to bring him back home, he refuses. He states that the streets are now his happy place and that life is much better for him there.

Home environments are also a large factor leading to some youth running from their homes to becoming houseless. A lot of people, especially in the townships, already struggle to make enough money to put food on the table, as a result, many of those with drug addiction see crime as the quickest and easiest way to make money so they can satisfy their cravings for drugs. This in turn leads to an influx of unhoused people into the CBD where it is easier to rob people of gadgets to be pawned.

Though many make quick money through criminal activities, it is not all rosy because if they get caught, they could face mob justice or arrest. Those who use drugs are also more likely to be affected by diseases because of unhygienic practices around drug use.

"Given the chance, I'd definitely go back home and further my studies, because I matriculated with [a] Bachelor's degree. I'd also open a support group to help those that are in the same situation as me," said a young man who asked to remain anonymous.

This article was submitted on 17 August 2023. You may republish this article, so long as you credit the authors and Karibu! Online (www.Karibu.org.za), and do not change the text. Please include a link back to the original article.