



A Unique Framework for Helping the Homeless in Baltimore City Regain Livelihood

According to the Baltimore Sun, an estimated 600 people sleep on Baltimore streets on a typical night, and thousands lack stable housing. According to National Institute of Health, without holistic supportive services, housing is often not enough to end homelessness. The homeless, who may be veterans and/or persons with mental health problems, substance use disorders, substance use and mental health problems, may not be in good command of the life- and/or soft-skills needed to cope with stable work and housing. Also, some homeless people exhibit *separation anxiety*, not desiring to and/or care to move off the street. Therefore, in addition to the prevailing homeless integrated services, and supports, such as the Continuum of Care, there is a need for a uniquely designed and implemented Homeless Transformation Framework (HTF) to enhance the homeless' coping resources, and personal and social competencies to transition to self-sufficiency.



Education is regarded as the only instrument through which the society can be transformed. It has a vital role to play in engaging and empowering individuals, organizations and communities to unlock development potentials in poor communities. Schumacher (1973) has described education as "the greatest resource" in this endeavor. This recognition led to the concept of "Education for Sustainable Development".

In this instance, a "Special Education" in the form and process of *asset-based* Transformation Vocational Entrepreneurship Education and Training (*TVEET*), where strong start due to initial qualifications will not matter, can equip the homeless with the life- and/or soft-skills needed to cope with stable work and housing, and the abatement of relocation anxiety.

Homelessness / poverty is a community-wide problem, therefore, it requires a community-wide solution. In this regard, the *Center for Community Excellence* is re-purposing *asset-based TVEET* to foster HTC in Maryland's Central Region. *TVEET*, along with its supporting *Community-Tools*, which is a unique tool and strategy to mobilize the private sector on behalf of public efforts integrating social purposes with business methods, provides a nurturing environment for the homeless' economic, social, spiritual and physical rebirth. *Community-Tools* is structured with public funding and private or shared public-private delivery of program-services and with public accountability structures. The concept of *asset-based TVEET* that addresses related business systems more suitably addresses context-specific community / market needs via both practical and transferrable life- and/or soft-skills. The impetus is to introduce private-sector competition or innovation and to improve efficiency and performance. These mobilization efforts are designed to draw the attention of foundations, individual philanthropy, or private investors who provide additional resources and bolster further improvements. Resulting unique *Community-Tools*, and the use of their activities for learning/teaching, training, mentoring, conducting research, providing public services, and promoting relevant policy evolution, beginning as *best practices* actions for homeless transformation, are envisioned to be extreme-poverty purging tools in communities.

In the light of HTF integrated-solution, the logic model is that, when a community supports social enterprises for the benefit of the poor, a large enough buying power is created to really make a difference contributing to the enduring transformation of the homeless. It is one of the best returns on an investment a community can realize from any socioeconomic development perspective.

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