

The Provision of Low-Cost Houses in South Africa: The Case of Khayelitsha Township in Cape Town

NM Zonke*

Department of Public Administration, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa

Abstract

The aim of this article is to assess challenges experienced by the beneficiaries of low-cost houses in the housing provision in Khayelitsha Township in Cape Town. Democracy that was conceived in 1994 in South Africa brought about changes in all the spheres of government regarding the provision of affordable basic services. A mixed method approach was employed in order to collect data using both qualitative and quantitative instruments. A sample of 30 participants was interviewed and 125 questionnaires were distributed with 85 returned back from the residents of Khayelitsha in Site C, Cape Town. This study revealed that there was limited community involvement in the housing trends in Khayelitsha settlements. Also, the housing back-log with steady progress, lack of knowledge and understanding of housing policies and projects, poor infrastructure and land provided for these houses and poor quality of houses built and exposure to risks. The study argues that participatory development can be an ideal approach to drive housing projects, especially when communities are involved in all stages of housing development. The study recommends that the national and provincial government must adopt a participatory development approach towards the implementation of housing developments in order to accommodate the community's views and make them to benefit in the process when they raise their voices.

Keywords: Community • Participatory democracy • Housing • Inclusion

Introduction

The problem of providing low-cost houses is accepted as a critical problem that should be addressed in various government levels. Even though there are various strategies that have been applied by government in addressing the issue of housing, the inclusion of communities and affected groups in planning and implementation of housing projects is still at an incipient stage. In the post-apartheid South Africa, democratic participation is the fundamental right in the provision of basic needs like housing and shelter. Public participation is concerned about creating democratic spaces where stakeholders and communities are involved in the planning and implementation of housing policies and in decision-making [1]. Even though there are development efforts in Khayelitsha, this township is still faced with a serious problem of living in poorly designed and unhealthy housing conditions that exacerbate poor conditions that make people to be most vulnerable. The main purpose of this study is to assess the challenges of providing low-cost houses in Khayelitsha.

The 1994 new democracy and 1995/6 local government elections and Act 108 of 1996 promoted democratic system of governance that required elected representatives to act in an answerable and transparent manner. While the involvement of the communities is

encouraged in the prioritising of resource planning through IDP, there is less community involvement in the implementation of housing projects and programmes. Up to date, the national and provincial governments are faced with a backlog on housing provision. This study notes the limited participation of the ordinary people in the Khayelitsha Township. To this end, local government and the Western Cape Housing Department need to encourage consultation, public report back, transparency, accessibility and accountability as well as inclusiveness with less implementation on from the community.

The legacy of the apartheid urban policies left a highly unequal distributed of housing infrastructure within municipalities infrastructure in black townships characterized by inadequate and poorly maintained services [2]. Posing the greatest challenge are the informal settlements growing daily in and around South African cities, where the most basic water and sanitation services are absent. The government approach on the housing issues was to form partnership with service providers from the private sector and secured housing subsidies for the low-income people and the poor [2]. It is projected that about 164 000 new households per annum are established in urban areas each requiring access to water supply [3]. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, in which this article is based on, the researchers provided an analysis of; the

*Address for Correspondence: Dr. NM Zonke, Department of Public Administration, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town, South Africa; Tel: +0733110553; E-mail: zonkem@cput.ac.za

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housing development trends; theories informing the study, interpretation of findings and conclusions and recommendations.

Literature Review

Problem statement

The primary objective of this study was to analyse how the challenges of providing low-cost houses in the Western Cape in South Africa. In keeping with the hypothesis of this study – that the provision of low-cost houses in South Africa is at the incipient stage, the study argues that various strategies have been applied to alleviate the housing backlog but up to now there is less success in including the affected groups in planning and implementation of those strategies. The South African government is faced with a continuous problem of addressing the housing backlog, and provides affordable houses to the poor. However, this major responsibility cannot be achieved alone by government but by private sector, non-governmental organisation and the communities through collaborated efforts. The study employed a mixed method for data collection using both qualitative and quantitative methods for collecting data. The primary objective of this study was to assess the challenges experienced by the beneficiaries of low cost houses in Khayelitsha during the housing development. The intention of the study is to recommending a workable approach for implementing housing development initiatives in South Africa.

Theoretical framework

This study is informed by participatory democracy [4]. Asserts that the departure to develop societies is by understanding how the past economic and social history gave rise to the existence of their problem. Diverse nations are clamouring for an inclusive approach in development and social transformation [5, 6]. Assert that proponents of dependency theory see societal ills emanating from the international exploitation, as explained by the dependency theory of [4]. However, the failure of the developed theories to address the problems of under-development has resulted to a new focus of human-centred development. Similarly, people-centred development incorporates some aspects of modern development with dependency theory [6]. Nations to development efforts that are aiming at addressing the needs of the people must be people centred. South Africa's colonial and apartheid legacy disempowered local communities and endorsed a top-down approach in decision-making.

The democratic government in the post-apartheid era provided the Bill of Rights to recognise human rights by entrenching it and participatory democracy within the South African Constitution [7]. During the early stages of post-apartheid South Africa, two important components for successful community participation in housing development processes were in place: a democratic government that recognised the significance of communities' contributions to housing development processes and a strong grassroots movement motivated to take part in development processes. In 1994, when the democratic government of National Unity led by the African National Congress (ANC) came to power, its new constitution recognised housing as a priority and a human right for all. Assert that the South African government's commitment is to correct the injustices of the past and provided its housing policy

with a mandate to provision affordable human settlement for the poor and historically oppressed majority in South Africa [8]. The government's policy documents stressed a people-centered approach: significant community participation in housing processes and an active role for low-income groups as partners with government and the private sector in developing housing Department of Housing 1994 a. According to Kotze and Kellerman participation has become part of the development lexicon [9]. Similarly, affirm that participation should be understood in the sense of decision-making, implementation of development projects and programmes and in sharing the fruits or efforts of development process [6]. However, participatory democracy relates to the purpose of inclusion of ordinary people in housing development in South Africa. Therefore, this study addresses the issues on housing provision using the lenses of participatory democracy.

Self-reliance is considered as a principle of survival in community development where that promotes independence on communities in development efforts by gaining full potential of their skills and local resources [10]. Not surprisingly, up to date, there are still challenges when communities participate with the intention of realising their needs for affordable houses [8]. In the study conducted by [11]. It was realised that the houses for the poor are located in areas that exposes them to health risks. Similarly, assert that considerations for promoting sustainable development can also be another choice in providing affordable houses that are ecologically sound [12]. Argues government has compromised human settlements in as far as risks and exposure to diseases and the natural deprivation of the ecology [12].

Notable, participatory democracy is observed in South Africa with minimal progress on development efforts. According to, community participation should be a permanent fixture of participatory development, and it needs to be located in the broader sustainable human development, democratisation, good governance and co-operative governance debates [10]. In the context of this study, participatory development is suitable for the long-lasting positive change as a result of housing development. If government can properly apply participatory democracy in housing provision, there would be improvement in the social status and economic status of ordinary people, with shared governance that yield better management of resources.

Phases in community participation

Identification of appropriate stakeholders: The public involvement of stakeholders in development projects is widely recognized as a fundamental element of the process [6]. Timely, well-planned and well-implemented public involvement programs have contributed to the successful design, implementation, operation and management of proposals (United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). For instance, the range of stakeholders involved in the housing provision typically includes:

- The people, individuals, or groups in the local community
- The proponent and other project beneficiaries
- Government agencies
- Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Others, such as donors, the private sectors, academics, service providers and so forth.

In participatory development, it is significant to consult stakeholders during the planning, implementation and evaluation of the housing projects. The successful and lasting relationship among these stakeholders influences the achievements of objectives in housing development projects.

Needs identification and goal determination: Participation of the masses in development activities implies enhanced capacity to perceive their own needs. Through participation, local people identify their needs as well as the relevant goals of a program [5]. Assert that people should be included in the identification of their basic needs and goal determination. By participating in decision-making and implementation activities, local people help project officials identify (1) needs, (2) strategies to meet those needs, and (3) the necessary resources required to implement the various strategies (UNEP). For example, community participation will be discouraged if environmental issues are given priority in agendas without addressing issues such as poverty, homelessness, health and other basic necessities perceived to be more important by the coastal communities.

Information dissemination: Sharing information is an important aspect of stake-holders preparedness and empowerment during the planning phase of community development. Project managers and the ward councillors should disseminate information in all the project phases in order to provide sufficient and relevant information about the project scope, project beneficiaries, the costs of implementation, the potential for financing and implementation and any feasibility study that was conducted and possible risk factors.

Stakeholders should be given enough time to read and consult other stakeholders if it's necessary to do so. Lack of transparency and consultation can result to a project being rejected by the community members and can result to misunderstanding between project authorities and local communities (UNEP).

Consultation: Consultation involves inviting people's views on the proposed actions and engaging them in a dialogue. It is a two-way flow of information between the proponent and the public. Consultation provides opportunities for the public to express their views on the project proposal initiated by the project proponent.

Rigorous planning and implementation of projects should be undertaken only after considerable discussion and consultation. Consultation includes education, information-sharing, and negotiation, with the goal being a better decision-making process through organizations consulting the general public [13]. This process allows neglected people to hear and have a voice in future undertakings.

Depending on the project, various methods are used during consultation such as public hearings, public meetings, general public information meetings, informal small group meetings, public displays, field trips, site visits, letter requests for comments, material for mass media and response to public inquiries.

The knowledge of local people should be recognized and they should be enrolled as experts in designing development projects. Participants should be encouraged to articulate their ideas and the design of the project should be based on such ideas.

Project implementation: Therefore, participation needs to be considered as an active process, meaning that the person or group in question takes initiatives and asserts an independent role [13]. The project should encourage a maximum number of people in the participation of development projects and create job opportunities for them. Such involvement should give participants full inclusion in designing, organizing, and implementing activities and workshops in order to create consensus, ownership and action in support of environmental change in specific areas. It should include people and groups by hiring them and by transferring skills to those who are learning to work rather than exclude any individuals. Public involvement is a process for involving the public in the decision-making of an organization [13]. Participation brings the public into the decision-making process.

According to, public involvement can take place at several stages in the establishment and management of marine protected areas [14]. These stages are: (1) the recognition of a need; (2) discussions with interested parties and integration with the community; (3) baseline studies and monitoring; (4) education; (5) core group building and formalization of reserves; and (6) enforcement. In the event where the community share the ownership, self-reliance and accountability can be meaningfully achieved.

Accountability: The requirement of accountability applies to all parties involved in the project such as project management, external organizers, and traditional leaders, as well as any emergent leadership from the ranks of the poor and the disadvantaged [13]. The authors note that the agencies involved in project management and implementation are procedurally and periodically answerable to the people in the project area, as well as the citizens of the country in general. All people should be aware of their roles in the project and the planning of activities of the project. Accountability of concerned community members must be ensured, particularly after the decision is taken.

Information feedback and evaluation: Project managers and Often there is interaction at the beginning of the project but no dialogue or any other form of interaction occurs during the project. This ultimately creates a gap between proponents of the development projects and the communities. Consequently, the local people abandon a project based on such an idea. Therefore, it is suggested that there should be on-going communication throughout the project period [14].

Ownership and management: Participation as a principle encourages stakeholder management and the management of development efforts by the project team and the communities. Ownership and control of resources have a profound impact on participation in development projects [15]. Emphasized four areas to be worked toward in a participatory coastal resource management program as; greater economic and social equality, better access to services for all, greater participation in decision-making and deeper involvement in the organizing process resulting from the empowerment of people.

Sharing benefits: Housing projects that involve public and private partnerships struggle to share the benefits with communities. In South Africa, government hires contractors to build low-cost houses and it is evident that without sharing the benefits of the project, participation is a frustrating process for the poorer

people. However, victory is realised when beneficiaries from local communities receive their keys for the low-cost houses that are different from the shacks. United Nation Environmental Programme 2013 notes that there should be a fair and equitable distribution of benefits, as well as redistribution of goods and services, to enable poorer people to get a fairer share of society's wealth and to participate fully in the development process. The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) 1984, a regional rural development organization in South Asia, alluded on three distinct processes of participation as based on; (1) the involvement of the people in decision making, (2), eliciting of their contribution to development programs and in the sharing of benefits acquired through the development process.

Partnerships: Partnership in development processes allows stakeholders to work, talk, and solve problems with individuals who are often perceived as the masters. Collaborations and public and private partnerships (PPP) are encouraged in the provision of human settlements in South Africa resulted. These kinds of partnerships in South Africa are not pro-poor, and have failed to sustain development in some local communities [8].

An expression used by the Latin American activists to describe their relation with the people (communities, groups) with whom they are working is accompaniment, or "accompanying the process". Wilson and Whitmore identified a set of principles for collaboration in a variety of settings and situations. These include non-intrusive collaboration, mutual trust and respect, a common analysis of what the problem is a commitment to solidarity, equality in the relationship, an explicit focus on process, and the importance of language.

Research methodology

The study design employed mixed methodology for collecting and analysing data. A mixed methodology is the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research methods where data was triangulated from both qualitative and quantitative sources [16]. The research project was conducted between 2014 and 2015. The study drew respondents from the beneficiaries of the houses built from 2008-2010. Stuart and Wayne 2009:29 describe a population as any group that is the subject of research interest. It refers to any whole group of subjects or things which have the characteristics identified for research purposes. The primary sources of data were extracted from the transcripts of questionnaires, individual and focus group interviews and observations. Participants included government officials from the City of Cape Town, project team members, and ward councillors, residents and beneficiaries of low-cost houses on Khayelitsha (Site C) and stakeholders. Secondary data was obtained from the literature review of relevant articles in accredited journals, books, monographs, electronic journals, policy documents, and reports from the Department of the National Housing, Department of Provincial and Local Government and the office of the Auditor General (AG).

Publications covered a diverse range of discourses including community participation, project management, Implementation of Housing policies and case studies on public housing. In addition, ethical requirements were observed. Permission to involve participants and use resource material from government offices was

granted. Moreover, one of the authors served as an intern in the Western Cape Housing Provincial Government. Observations were conducted by the researcher in Khayelitsha. Informed consent was applied when the aims and objectives of the study and researchers credentials were declared to the participants and government officials. Honesty, respected and privacy for identities of the participants during data collection and report writing was observed.

The Presentation of Findings

Factors affecting the provision of low cost Housing in Khayelitsha

The following section will present and interpret of findings from the responses of the participants.

Understanding of housing policies and projects: When participants were asked to respond to the question on whether they knew and understood the current government policies on housing in South Africa, 60% of the participants indicated that they knew the RDP policy that was formulated by the ANC government, and that's why they also received the RDP policy. It was difficult for some participant to remember any policy after the Mandela administration. The participants showed distrust to the current government in implementing housing policies. They indicated that they are only told about government policies during elections, so that they can go and vote for the new government or when they are being evicted.

In analysis, the views of the participants revealed that there is a need for education on policy development in housing through community participation. The majority of the respondents strongly agree with the above statement as they wish to have their own healthy environment where there are no dumping sites close to their dwellings and rampant diseases that affect them and their children. On the other hand business community members say their businesses will collapse because once the residents have been moved to houses they will not have enough space to operate their business.

The 20% of participants indicated that they were aware of housing development projects and in their local area. However, about 30% were not certain, and 50% of the respondents disagree. Most of the respondents that claimed that they were not aware of the project indicated that they have been living there for few years and they have no interest of staying longer. The existence of Kuyasa non-profit organisation Khayelitsha benefits the area; by mobilising the poor and train them to be pro-active in development projects and to be self-reliant. They stated poor communication among project managers, Government and the Khayelitsha (Kuyasa) steering community meant that there was a need to strengthen ties between the community, Kuyasa and the local councillors and work together in decisions affecting the community.

Extent of participation in community events and housing projects: Community involvement and participation in common activities is a key element in identifying the existence of social capital in practice and facilitation of community development projects [17]. In opposition to this, social nonconformity undercuts community solidarity and cohesion. Participation in informal community activities and in civic associations is a form of social

networking which enhances the prospects for sustainable communities [18]. The research findings found out that only low levels of participation exist, such as cultural activities and sports. Indeed, when asked openly about belonging to community-based organizations, 80% answered in the negative.

During the planning phase of the RDP housing development in Khayelitsha, residents were not consulted by the state in any shape or form; no community input or local expression of views was incorporated into the planning phase. Hence, when asked if they were encouraged to participate in the planning phase of the housing development programmes, all respondents claimed that no such encouragement was forthcoming from the state. In addition, no residents indicated involvement in any state-initiated or state-driven project. In fact, all residents claim that they have been totally excluded from any engagement in community development initiatives and that this absence of engagement has effectively destroyed any prospects of a sense of community belonging, identity or pride. Khayelitsha residents feel isolated and excluded from the state. One male participant noted:

We are not proud of how the streets and the houses were built; they should have asked us what is good for us. As a community we feel excluded by the municipality May 22, 2014.

The municipality only told them that houses were going to be constructed but they were never involved in the planning process.

One member from Human Settlement Directorate Strategy and planning noted: Problem of Khayelitsha in general is the density of the area. That result to the high shortage of houses and this makes it difficult to reach everyone in communication.

Our strategy is to put notices on the community newspaper and have extended sub-council meeting. We also rely on the ward forums which we have realized that they are political dominant. All this makes us not to be fruitful in executing our planning to reach more people. When we do our planning we do it in the council chambers and as far as our thinking is concerned, we cannot do planning with communities as this might take long.

Lack of capacity: The legacy of the past resulted in a depressed housing sector which lacked capacity, both in terms of human resources and materials to provide housing speedily. The last strategy is that of supporting the People's Housing Process (PHP). The PHP offers training and technical support to families who own undeveloped, serviced property and who want to apply for a housing subsidy to build their own homes Cape Gateway, 2007.

By contributing their labour, as opposed to paying someone else to build their home, these families are able to use their Housing Subsidy and personal contributions to build bigger or better houses for less money. This is because, by contributing labour, the money that would have been used to pay someone else to build the house can instead be used to buy more building materials. Houses built through the PHP are larger (36 m²) than those built by the Council (30 m²) Cape Gateway, 2007. It is important to note that The PHP is not a subsidy. It is an agreement between groups of people who qualify for housing subsidies to pool their resources and contribute their labour to the group, so as to make the most of their subsidies Cape Gateway, 2007.

Insufficient land: Slow and complex land identification, allocation and development processes resulted in insufficient land for housing

development purposes. Land on the periphery is cheaper and therefore more 'affordable' for low income development. The subsidy does not adequately provide for land costs in the Western Cape: typically only up to about R1000 of the subsidy amount can be used for the cost of raw land, whereas the actual cost of raw land for subsidy housing in Cape Town, even in peripheral locations and for small plots less than 100 m², has been up to R3000 per beneficiary Department of Local Government and Housing, 2005: 17. These developments are usually mono-functional settlements, removed from employment, economic, social and transport opportunities. This consumes a variety of insinuations with respect to time disbursed away from home, time roving to and from job openings, and related cost inferences Department of Local Government and Housing, 2005: 17. indicated At the time of the democratic elections, South African cities were characterised by dire housing and services backlogs, inequalities in municipal expenditure, spatial anomalies associated with the 'apartheid city', profound struggles against apartheid local government structures, high unemployment and many poverty-stricken households [19].

Inappropriate housing standards and quality of life: Infrastructure, service and housing standards are inappropriate to the needs of a low-income market, resulting in difficulties in providing affordable housing products. As per the Subdivision of Housing 2004, there are a number of limitations hindering the provision of housing that has added to the weakening in the number of units built per annum. The South African government entered a new phase of the housing programme in 2002, aimed at addressing many of the inadequacies in sustainability of housing provision. The chief shifts in policy and programme focus were, first, a shift from the provision purely of shelter to building habitable and sustainable settlements and communities, and second, a shift in emphasis on the number of units delivered towards the quality of the new housing stock and environments. This was due to the poor configuration of housing plans and funding streams at all levels of government, as well as the generally poor quality and peripheral position of low-income housing projects.

The participants raised serious concerns about the low-standards and quality of the low-cost/ RDP houses they were living in. They assured that there was a relationship between these hardships and some of the illnesses they were suffering from. They assured the researchers that some of the people living in the RDP houses in Khayelitsha suffer from ailments which may be directly linked to the conditions of the housing, including flu, asthma and pneumonia. Rainwater, as noted, often comes in through the cracks in the exterior walls making the houses wet and damp. These RDP houses in many ways then are no better than informal structures and shacks in terms of their impact on living conditions; in winter, for instance, it is not unusual for Hlalani residents in RDP housing to sleep wearing their clothes. When it is raining, occupants have to move around from spot to spot because the roofs are leaking. One female occupant aged 40 stated that the cracks: Allow cold to come through; my son is suffering from asthma so he is strongly affected by the cold weather. The houses are a total disaster when it rains; it is like a waterfall inside the house because of the cracks and the leaks March 1, 2013.

Poor management of housing dwellings by owners: It has been revealed that some occupants had little or no knowledge of managing their own houses because they were not aware about

housing policies and other local government policies in as far as renting and owning a house. Some occupants/ beneficiaries make mistakes by selling their houses at a lower cost as compared to the value of the houses. Some don't have money to pay lawyers and turn to unscrupulous operators for help who in turn steal their money. Furthermore, there is significant under-spending on budget for low-income housing by responsible housing departments, due to the lack of capacity particularly in municipalities, the sluggish transfer of state land to municipalities, a lack of collaboration from traditional leaders and the recent implementation of new housing policy measures Department of Housing, 2004. Housing provision in South Africa is also a paradox, the constant presence and expansion of informal settlements (through increased migration), which have little or no access to services or infrastructure, does not only indicate a backlock on the government side but it also indicate unlimited needs of the community.

Housing backlogs and basic services Lack of adequate housing and basic services in urban townships and rural settlements has reached crisis proportions. The urban housing accumulation in 1990 was predictably estimated at million units. Between hostels and rural areas, the backlog rose to approximately 200 000 new households each year. Nearby is little examination obtainable on the countryside housing condition and the Bantustans. Lack of access to even the most basic municipal services, limited or no access for the poor to land for housing, and a highly destabilized housing environment, added to the housing crisis. At the time of the democratic elections, South African cities were characterized by dire housing and services backlogs, inequalities in municipal expenditure, the spatial anomalies associated with the 'apartheid city', profound struggles against apartheid local government structures, high unemployment and many poverty-stricken households [19].

Around 50 000 houses were constructed in South Africa in years before. This figure can practically be increased to over more units each year. These units should be exactly envisioned for low-income households and should include the township areas. The housing glitches created by apartheid, and by the incomplete variety of the capitalist housing markets, have been intensified by the nonappearance of an intelligible national housing policy. A frame housing programme can help produce occupation, skills and economic activity, both directly and indirectly, and should help ensure peace and stability. A single nation housing department should help to amalgamate the previously disjointed approach. The isolated sector and civil society can also have long lasting despair and rejection of government policies and programmes which have now lead to continuous social protests in South Africa [20-22].

Discussion

This study was intended to analysis the challenges faced by Khayelitsha residents during housing developments. It was found that there was less acknowledgement and importance of community participation on housing trends. Even though government has provided legislation and policies over the years, there are still some gaps on the implementation of those policies. The challenges discussed in this article provide additional convincing evidence for government officials to improve in their efforts of project management and service delivery regarding the housing provision and other government-driven initiatives, which are meant to improve the well-

being of communities. Challenges experienced by the community residents of Khayelitsha included; lack of information about housing development of low-cost houses, limited participation of community members, improper provision of land, poor quality of low-cost housed and poor infrastructure that is not pro poor.

Conclusion

It is further recommended that these findings serve as a frame of reference for the government to recognise the importance of including grassroots groups and communities in agenda setting and policy forums in order to recognise the needs and demands of these communities.

The integration of participatory strategies in policy planning and the implementation of housing projects for the poor are imperative for participatory democracy and sustainable development to be a reality in South Africa.

It is recommended that government of Western Cape and National government should recognise the existing community structures in development efforts and promote bottom-up approach instead of top-down approach. The researcher's findings contribute to the knowledge area of participatory democracy and sustainable development within the context of Public Management.

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