

Challenges of Providing Affordable Human Settlement in a Selected Township in the Western Cape, South Africa

L. B. Juta¹ and N. S. Matsiliza^{2*}

¹*Department of Public Management, Tshwane University of technology*

²*Department of Public Management, Cape Peninsula University of technology*

**E-mail: MatsilizaN@cput.ac.za*

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ABSTRACT The Government of National Unity (GNU) in South Africa has been enormously challenged with the provision of affordable human settlements since its inception. Basically, various policies have been developed to address the housing problems that would improve the living conditions of all South Africans. The purpose of this study, therefore, is aimed at addressing the challenges facing the implementation of the Breaking New Ground (BNG) 2004 housing policy which is aimed at providing affordable human settlements in South Africa. The study adopted a mixed methodology to capture the primary and secondary data. The challenges in the N2 Gateway housing project included improper planning and unavailable land, structural problems inherited from the apartheid regime, poor quality of houses built, limited community participation and improper supply chain management and mismanagement. The findings of this study contribute towards a workable approach to the improvement of policy implementation in South African Housing sector.

INTRODUCTION

The government provision of human settlement is broadly provided by various policy documents that have received much attention in South Africa. The post-apartheid policies and laws are aimed at addressing the imbalances of the past by providing basic needs to the poor and needy people in South Africa with much attention to comfortable and affordable human settlements. Affordable houses encompass all the low cost houses that are subsidized by government and provided to the poor people that cannot afford to get Bank home loans from private banks. The provision of comfortable and affordable housing units is a right that must be accessible to the majority of people. Specifically, these housing units should be built in an environment that creates a physical, social and economic well-being and quality of life of inhabitants. Kang'ethe and Manomano (2013: 98) asserted that the dissatisfactions and complaints by beneficiaries indicated that indeed the government has failed to meet the expectations of the beneficiaries to provide qualitative infrastructure that meets humane needs and rights as well as promoting the RDP housing program and its objective. The challenge facing the rest of the poor South Africans in need of houses is to access affordable human settlements due to various reasons such as segregated housing policies, enormous housing backlogs, complicated

bureaucracy and red-tape inherited from the previous government. Even though the government has provided affordable houses to the poor people, the playing field has not been leveled yet in the post-apartheid South Africa. Turok and Borel-Saldan (2014: 183) notes that the housing back logs has swollen from 1.5 million in 1994 to 2.3 million and currently, with informal settlement ballooned to 27000 mostly in the cities. Similarly, Govender et al. (2011: 335) affirmed that designs of low-cost houses should not force the inhabitants to live on unsafe and poor conditions because of the poor layout and provision of basic amenities. Low cost houses should be built with recognition of safety and health conditions so as to protect the dignity of the inhabitants.

The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) guarantees a fundamental right of access to housing and the state is compelled to take measures to honour this right. In addition, the Housing Act (Act 107 of 1997) provides for the facilitation of sustainable housing development processes, while recognising "that housing as adequate shelter fulfills a basic human need" as stipulated in the White Paper on Housing (2010). Central to the realisation of the housing right is participation of communities in the initiatives and development which is the key to the success of implementation of the National Social Housing in South Africa in different stages.

Consequently, the failure by government to provide people with houses and the communities' dissatisfaction with existing houses, have led South Africans to mobilize themselves in a protest against poor workmanship, lack of housing and corruption, as well as irregularities in allocation of houses nationwide. Newton and Schuermans (2013: 579) contended that the pressure on the government to respond to the demands for affordable houses resulted into fixed subsidy for housing units constructed, did not only have to meet the costs of construction, but also the cost to purchase land and the provision of the necessary infrastructure. Besides, having time pressures and financial restrictions, most of the new houses were located in large developments on the outskirts of the cities. Several cases on the provision of affordable houses highlight a need for a workable approach in the implementation of this project.

The purpose of the present study is aimed at addressing the practice of effective, appropriate and meaningful implementation of the Breaking New Ground (2005) housing policy in the Western Cape Province, South Africa. As the human settlement issue was receiving much attention from various stakeholders, BNG was targeted to provide for the strategic development of sustainable human settlements that would address the needs of the poor in a period of 5 years contract. The study location is Langa Township, where the authors solicited data from a sample of evicted residents of Joe Slovo community, who were to occupy the houses after the construction of the N2 Gateway housing project in 2009.

METHODOLOGY

In the present study, the researchers employed a mixed approach where data is triangulation between quantitative and qualitative methods. de Vos (2007: 361) viewed that triangulation is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population consisted of the Langa (Joe Slovo) residents and government officials. The purposive sample frame was extracted from the residents of the informal settlement of Joe Slovo in Langa Township and that of the newly developed N2 Gateway project settlement. Interviews and questionnaire was obtained from stratified sampling which the researchers believe addresses the

problem of non-homogeneous populations. It represents the population better than can be done with random sampling. The sampling was done from both gender and specific age groups. A total of 500 questionnaires were administered with 475 returned questionnaires, 275 (58%) were male and 200 (42%) were female. In terms of age demographic, 16 per cent of the respondents were between 15 and 25, 41 per cent between 26 and 35, 20 per cent between 36 and 45, 18 per cent were between 46 and 55, and 5 per cent were between 56 and 65.

Further, the observations determined how participants react in specific circumstances, either natural or artificial and how information on the implementation of the project can be gained from all participants and research site. Literature was reviewed from secondary sources such as books or articles from accredited journals by the experts in the field that directly relate to the topic. This contributed towards a better understanding of the research problem and also guided the researcher in the selection of data and indicated what information needed to be discarded from the study (Brynard 2014; Hannekom 2014).

The Context of Housing Provision in South Africa

In South Africa housing policies have been amended and continuously being improved from the RDP policy and the Breaking New Ground (BNG) of 2004. The formulation and implementation of housing policies in South Africa is based on the incremental approach (Bond and Tait 1997: 20). Anderson (2006: 125) asserted that incrementalism is seen as realistic because it recognizes that decision-makers lack time, intelligence and other resources to engage in comprehensive analysis of alternatives. Incremental decisions are geared towards ameliorating present and social imperfections than on policy goals. Lindblom (1959) noted a weakness on incrementalism due to its disjointment to rational approach and its failure to capture all the decision alternatives required for policy options. They can predict the future of citizens based on the previous history and existing situations.

Further, the RDP policies were adopted in 1994 with a goal inspired by the Kynesian approach towards reconstruction of the economy to improve every sphere of life in a society. Bond and Tait (1997: 20) affirm that the failure in im-

plementing the incremental housing policy in South Africa emanates from the fact that Urban Housing Forum initiatives in the dawn of democracy was dominated by experts with probusiness interests. Further, housing projects apply public and private partnerships with a joint of capital from both government and private sector. The incremental approach is further criticised as limiting in addressing housing needs of especially those in the rural areas who are unable to secure mortgage bonds because of the complexities of the tenure land security system built on the traditional communal rights, while their income levels disqualify them from benefitting from low-cost free subsidised houses (Mokgadinyane et al. 2012: 435). The adoption of the neo-liberal approach on policy development has not been favorable for the low-cost housing service delivery since 1996. The introduction of the growth, employment and redistribution or (GEAR) strategy, was a cause of failures in addressing sustainable habitats in urban areas. Expert's contestations are on the marginalization of poor people that resulted to high rates of unemployment. Similarly, Phago (2008: 79) explored that South Africa is facing a housing backblock due to lack of skills in areas such as tendering and procurement, municipal management, and engineering, as well as town and regional planning, and that has impacted negatively on the municipal developmental agendas.

Numerous technical, urban, social and economic factors have been associated with service delivery of low-cost housing projects in South Africa. The Western Cape project strategy is adopted from the National Housing Policy (1997) to speed up and save cost to manage resources well, while outsourcing and contracting out the services with the aim of managing achieving the outcomes. Along the lines of social democracy, the viability of government policies on housing are related to the macro-economic approach that focuses on politics, economy and society. The provision of housing is regarded as an empowerment process that provides a sense of ownership to beneficiaries in Townships with a greater sense of belonging to their community (Gunter 2013: 278).

Western Cape sustainable human settlement strategy employed an incremental approach in providing houses for the poor including upgrading of some of the existing informal settlements via a capital subsidy for the land and services,

support for a People's Housing Process (PHP), incremental housing development within Greenfields developments and Social housing units. Besides, along with the same line, the national government has been criticized for failing in the delivery and facilitation of the housing provision that will ensure that the housing needs of all citizens are adequately met in various provinces. Provincial government relies on the support and the mandate from the national government and that does not guarantee a full autonomy on the oversight of their projects. In addition, the interdependence between the public and the private sector is not always convenient because of their different interests and values. However, the mandate of the provincial department within the province is to take practical, necessary steps to support and strengthen municipal capacity to exercise its power and perform its duties relating to housing development. Usually, a Member of the Execution Council (MEC) for Housing in each province is obliged to report to the provincial legislature. This council sits annually to review policy decisions by allowing Members of Executive Councils from each province to represent and forward mandates from their provinces (BNG 2005: 4).

Within this broader vision, the Department is committed to meeting the following specific objectives:

- To employ housing as a key strategy to accelerate service delivery.
- To create jobs in the province using the housing provision strategy.
- Ensuring that property can be accessed by all as an asset for wealth creation and empowerment.
- Leveraging growth in the economy.
- Combating crime, promoting social cohesion and improving quality of life for the poor.
- Supporting the functioning of the entire single residential property market to reduce duality within the sector by breaking the barriers between the first economies residential property boom and the second economy slump.
- Utilizing housing as an instrument for the development of sustainable human settlements, in support of spatial restructuring. However, these objectives can only be achieved in the long run; hence, the target time for project implementation was 5 years.

Legislation and Policy Framework for Housing

South Africa's new democracy ushered in a new era in addressing poverty and housing issues in South Africa. The Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) endorsed by the ANC in 1994, was geared towards a broad transformation agenda reconstructing and developing the broader South African society (African National Congress 1994). One of the main objectives of the RDP was to address the massive shortage of housing units because it acknowledged that housing is a basic need and a human rights issue affecting all South Africans. In addressing the basic needs, the RDP provides procedures and guidelines for location of infrastructure that will enable construction of affordable homes with services such as water, and land funded by the RDP office. However, as the implementation of the RDP was fraught with inefficiency, the RDP office was closed and the RDP projects reverted to the executive institutions like the departments of Housing, Water and Land Affairs (African National Congress 1994). Kang'ethe and Manomano (2014: 11) investigated that the spirit of ownership in the RDP house has been devalued due to unattainable social amenities, poor water and sanitation facilities linked to the distributed low-cost houses. Bond and Tait (1997: 21) submitted that the market centered RDP policy's critique is the devolution of authority to local government with no devolution of resources. The inter-governmental relations among the three spheres of governance are also tested during implementation of housing projects. There are more constitutional mandates and financial resources concentrated on the national government, while local government has limited autonomy with no financial base. In addition, provinces depend on the national budget to be able to implement houses policies and strategies in their provinces.

The housing responsibility forces the three spheres of government to relate and communicate for the mutual benefit of the society. The White Paper acknowledges that a housing program cannot be restricted to housing, but it also needs to promote viable communities (Republic of South Africa 1999). This means that a holistic approach to housing delivery needs be adopted, that includes the socio-economic aspects

related to the housing problem in South Africa. The South African Constitution 1996 (Act of 1996) provides for the access to adequate housing as a basic human right for all citizens. The state is tasked to take reasonable measures using its available resources, including the introduction of legislation, to ensure that all South Africans enjoy this right provided for in Section 26 (2). Section 26 (3) of the South Africa Constitution states that no one can be evicted from their home or have their home demolished without a court order. No legislation may permit arbitrary eviction. The Housing Act (Act No. 107 of 1997) provided for the roles of the spheres of government in providing housing through service delivery mandate. As the state increasingly took responsibility for low-cost housing delivery, a parallel process was under way to entrench beneficiary participation in the process. The People's Housing Process (PHP) was adopted by the Minister of Housing in 1998 to assist communities to supervise and drive the housing delivery process by building their homes themselves.

When these policies are developed and implemented, strict measure should be encouraged to add value for money and efficient regulatory measures for the housing provision. The Public Financial Management Act (PFMA), 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999) lays down the regulatory measures for efficient management of public funds by public sector officials, including those heading public entities. The PFMA gives guidance on financial management and places a greater responsibility for implementation of programs and projects by managers while focusing on accountability measures and performance. The Department of Human Settlements is required to report on the adherence of its housing entities to the PFMA on regular basis. From 2002 to 2003, the Department of Housing (DoH) compiled a comprehensive review of the housing program after having recognized a number of unintended consequences of the existing program. In 2004, the government launched a new initiative called Breaking New Ground (BNG), which was meant to be a comprehensive plan to be implemented by Department of Sustainable Human Settlements. The main purpose of the plan was to shift the focus of the housing policy away from the mere delivery of vast numbers of houses, towards creating sustainable human settlements

(Department of Housing 2008). The unforeseen housing problems that the policy targeted includes peripheral residential development, poor quality products and settlements, the lack of community participation, the limited secondary low-cost housing market, corruption and maladministration, a slowdown in delivery, underspent budgets, limited or decreasing public sector participation, the increasing housing backlog, and the continued growth of informal settlements. The review process aimed at providing a new policy direction and establishing a research schedule to inform and support policy decision-making within the housing programme, particularly to counter the spreading of incorrect information that had occurred over the previous decade (Department of Housing 2008). The provision of the pre-BNG policy did not cover for the overall housing system and its complex dimensions and modalities, as a result contextual specificities were largely ignored. This policy framework replicated the apartheid spatial pattern because the cost of land needed to be covered by the subsidy, which inevitably meant the poor would get housing opportunities where land was cheap on the urban periphery. Racial apartheid spatial forms persisted, the poor ended up far from centres of employment: a situation that thus undermined employment-generating growth and environmentally unsustainable urban sprawl was encouraged.

Along with the same objectives of the Breaking New Grounds and the Social Housing Act, the 'Isidima' Western Cape Sustainable Human Settlement Strategy was adopted to deliver sustainable and quality housing for the needy people. Isidima, when translated from isiXhosa refers to "enabling dignified communities". It builds forth on the visionary work done by the Breaking New Ground policy, from National Department of Housing. It also guides in putting to work various Policy Frameworks such as the iKapa Elihlumayo and related strategies devised by the Western Cape Provincial Government as part of its obligation to house our people in sustainable communities. However, the strategy is aimed to implement a range of interventions like the improvements on the upgrading of some of the existing informal settlements via a capital subsidy for the land and services, support for a People's Housing Process (PHP) in the development of Greenfields. Social housing units and rental units and formalised backyard tenancy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Project Implementation in the N2 Gateway

The purpose of the study was to assess challenges of implementing the Breaking New Ground (BNG) housing policy in the Western Cape Province, using the case of Langa Township. The BNG was implemented along the features of public and private partnership through different project portfolios. Further, from the foregoing analysis, the present study examined the challenges of the implementation of the projects phases in the Langa Township and the N2 Gateway. The N2 Gateway was developed as a pilot to implement the BNG of 2005. The problems associated with the provision of houses are the complicated bureaucratic administrative system and institutional framework inherited from the previous government, and inability to develop a user-friendly and efficient model to serve the housing needs of all South African people.

At provincial level there is a continuous process in hiring and training staff, however, thus also present significant challenges to build capacity, particularly at provincial and local spheres of government and maintain the rate of housing delivery. The new demands of public and private partnership necessitated additional work and increased red tape for supply chain and procurement in the departments of housing. National policy and provincial allocations have not always been able to respond to the changing nature of demand deriving from urbanization pressures amongst others from rural former homelands to the cities. The Western Cape demographics and social pressures are not matching the allocated sufficient resources to address the demand of housing. There are ranges of benefits acquired by residents when they are moved to urban areas ranging from job opportunities, change of socio-economic status and commuting using public transport. This has a range of implications with regard to time spent away from home; time spent travelling to and from work, and the related cost implications (Burgoyne 2008: 43).

Institutional Arrangements

Policy implementation is a complicated stage where the initial policy plans are put into actions. There is considerable uncertainty about

what a policy will accomplish, and how effective, will it be in terms of accomplishing its goals (Anderson 2006: 200). The national and provincial housing department is responsible for steering the program of action and takes a lead in organizing and coordinating the provision of housing need by launching different projects in different areas. A public and private partnership (PPP) model has been adopted by the South African government in the post-apartheid era with the intentions to re-invent the government performance in all the national departments and improve service delivery. However, research findings revealed major challenges in the implementation stage. Participants echoed their dissatisfaction on poor project communication strategies. There were delays in organizing and coordinating community meetings. In addition, the issue of available land in Western Cape Province, particularly in Cape Town, presents a huge challenge in processing the land that will match the houses to be built. The substantial growth in population since 1994 is an added factor to desperation of people moving from the rural areas to the cities to seek job opportunities.

The introduction of new policy measures, legislation, guidelines and procedures and their application, including a lack of institutional coherence around key aspects such as the introduction of beneficiary contributions resulted to gaps and lack of coherence. The Auditor General's Report for the 2009-2010 periods revealed finding on the poor project management on resource use. (Auditor General Report 2009). The report further stated that the problems arose from the fact that the business plan had not been finalized and approved before construction began. This revealed lack of readiness and preparedness by the department of housing, with no records created on time to manage the project. Similarly, responsibility and oversight role shifted more towards the awarded public company and less accountability on the efficiency regarding the use of resources.

Planning and Initiation of the Housing Project

The problems of the project come down to poor planning and implementation. Overall, from the above presentation of findings of the present study, it can be deduced that the beneficiaries' need for engagement was evident in the context of their eviction to Delft only, but at every stage

of the project. Intended beneficiaries should have been consulted when Government was planning for the Langa (Joe Slovo) community. That could have prevented the situation and experiences that Langa (Joe Slovo) community has to endure. These findings expose many gaps in the planning and implementation of the N2 Gateway housing project. A question is raised about whether government overlooked the participation of people living in poverty, or whether government saw them as non-descript and unproductive. Government pretends to have everything under control despite the fact that the project was a massive failure. Ignorance of legislation, policies and practical democracy could be the causes. There was a challenge in the procurement regarding the identification, acquisition, assembly and release of state-owned and private land. Similarly, the PPP financing of the project negotiations resulted in a compromise of culture and values between the performing government department and the Banks. Some of the requirements for the agreement for PPP imply accountability and a business joint venture as detailed in the Business Plan with clear indicators of deliverables, time frames and estimated resource requirement. In addition, there were less environment concerns regarding urban development concerning the influx of people into cities and changes in the land use.

Stakeholders Involvement

The present study employed participatory democracy as a theoretical approach that informed the study. However, participatory democracy emphasise involvement of citizens in their own affairs. It is opposed to a top-down approach. Citizens have to be actively involved in all matters that concern them. In the case of the Langa (Joe Slovo) community, decisions were centralised. An elite project team decided what the community needed and community was dissatisfied. To avoid dissatisfaction from community decisions have to be decentralised. The findings of this study revealed that community was not as involved as it should have been in the planning and implementation of N2 Gateway housing project, though government officials did not agree. The researcher stresses that community participation in housing projects is essential and participatory approaches must be recognised by the Government of the new de-

mocracy in South Africa. These will prevent conflict between government and communities and promote good governance that works for the people.

The Effects of the BNG Policy

The majority of beneficiaries of the N2 Gateway housing project did not receive the houses promised in the project plan because the intended objectives were not fully realized. Instead, there were delays in occupation of these houses and conflicts erupted between the Housing Department, intended beneficiaries and the contracted company. The project was earmarked for a 5 year roll-out plan. Unfortunately, the inefficiency on the use of resources as a result of bad planning and new social investment in the long-run became a hindrance to the attainment of the objectives of the project. The project implementation in the Western Cape low-income Housing Development initiatives was hindered by economic, social and political challenges. The analysis revealed that beneficiaries of the N2 Gateway housing project were the victims of poor management by the Government. To worsen the situation, the community had no access to information on the planning and implementation of the N2 Gateway housing project and this impacted negatively on the project. As a result of this, intended beneficiaries experienced forced removal to unfamiliar places and this impacted adversely on their lives. Specifically, most of the intended beneficiaries lost their income to build houses.

Further, transcribed notes from interviews reflected a negative feeling from the participants, who were beneficiaries. They alluded their dissatisfaction and how the government failed them by not providing them with affordable homes. This was because the demand for the houses is greater than the supply from the government side. Further, beneficiaries of the N2 Gateway housing project felt that the project did not deliver enough houses according to their target of 30 000 houses, which was unrealistic (Development Action Group 2008). According to the analysis, beneficiaries' votes are only important at election time. The planning and implementation were done by inept state officials, with limited resources and lack communication. Participation in community projects requires the full co-operation of all stakeholders and sufficient resources.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to evaluate challenges of planning and implementing the BNG in the Western Cape Province, using a case study of the Langa Township. Further, through the findings of the present study, implementation of BNG through project did not fully realize the objectives of the policy. In addition, the Langa (Joe Slovo) community did not participate fully in the early stages of the planning and implementation of the N2 Gateway housing project as expected to be the case in community projects. The victory of the beneficiaries was attained when some of them received new homes in the N2 Gateway even though there were mixed feelings about the involvement of all stakeholders during the planning and implementation stages. However, the N2 Gateway low-income housing project was a good project choice as one of the strategies used to develop a better human settlement for people. However, its objectives to alleviate poverty in poor communities, create job opportunities and improve the standard of living were not fully realized. The study revealed some un-intended inadequacies of stated objectives such as inefficiency, cost, time and the quality and poor performance caused major delay in the project. There is no evidence of records indicating acceleration of service delivery for the house built in the N2 Gateway and leveraging of economic growth and job creation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that housing development projects should be properly monitored and assessed from the initiation until the closure of the project in order to realize their objectives. Stakeholders should be involved in policy development to promote transparency and accountability.

Government on their part should apply community participation approaches to facilitate community involvement in the projects. This can be used to eliminate inequality and build a democracy that creates new opportunities and fosters the ability for communities to look at community participation in a new light. To achieve this objective, there is the need to set clear objectives of the project. That will be the driving force that will make the project achievable within the shortest possible time.

2. Housing projects should serve also as a poverty alleviation initiative to change communities' social living conditions. Therefore, government should conduct an investigation into service delivery to establish a platform to encourage meaningful communication between communities and government. There is also the need for an agreement between communities and government to be transparent so that the housing initiative of the government can easily be implemented.

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