

Chapter 21

Housing Citizenship Through the Federation of Urban Poor in South Africa: A Human Capability Development Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the notion of housing citizenship through the Federation of Urban Poor (FEDUP) among the poor and homeless in South African townships. Through the Federation of Urban Poor, the poor people have been instrumental and pragmatic in promoting housing citizenship self-funded and with the help of the Department of Human Settlement both locally and nationally. The chapter makes use of human-capability development framework to draw lessons for active participation and empowerment in the delivery of services such as houses. The chapter found that the people involved in FEDUP managed to transform their dire situation from marginalization to empowerment and have managed to further outsource both government and private sector resources in the form of finances and human expertise. The data in this chapter are collected through face-to-face interviews, document analysis, and observations.

INTRODUCTION

Housing in both developed and developing is a basic need hence governments' development is measured on their capability to deliver affordable houses to their citizens especially the poor and homeless. Thus, housing reflect demographic and social trends including government policy and private sector market influences (Phillips, 2015, p. 314). With the prevalent of poverty, unemployment and inequality globally, the demand for the delivery of affordable and quality housing has become a human and social justice issue. In the developing nations, the delivery of housing and other services are often frustrated

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by outdated strategies employed, corruption and lack of financial resources. the delivery of housing borders the supply and demand hence according to UN-Habitat (2001), the right to adequate housing that is safe, secure, healthy, available and inexpensive is a global call for human settlement and shelter (UN-Habitat, 2001). On the supply side, various government strategies in the past have been formulated towards overcoming the enormous shortage through several housing reform programmes hence new housing was subsidised for those who meet the criteria while on the other hand, demand-side approach provides families with needed housing and shelter through government assistance (Phillips, 2015, p. 317). However, Makinde (2013, p. 50) argues that despite these past efforts, housing continues to be a surmountable obstacle to most of the people especially the poor in the African continent. The right to adequate housing that is safe, secure, healthy, available and inexpensive is enshrined in the Habitat Agenda the global call on human settlement and shelter (UN-Habitat 2001). The existing various housing delivery programmes were facilitated through affordable housing schemes that make use of strategies such as the public–private partnership effort and numerous private finance initiative models in an attempt to make housing accessible to the people.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the delivery of houses remains a challenge. The RDP (1994, p. 22) confirmed this challenge by highlighting that the lack of adequate housing and basic services in urban townships and rural settlements has reached crisis proportions hence the service delivery protests. The housing service delivery embedded challenges persist despite the existence of laws and policies aimed at housing the South African population. These policies include the Constitution (1996) where housing is declared as a right, the White Paper on Housing (Act of 107 of 1997) and the national Housing Code as the principal instruments enacted to give effects to the constitutional obligations towards the housing development. This crisis is also aggravated by the skewed legacy of apartheid and mushrooming of informal settlements. Attempts aimed at redressing this situation saw the emergence the RDP houses, the Breaking New Ground policies including national housing programmes such as the emergency Housing Programme, Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme, Social Housing Policy, Community Residential Units Programme and Integrated Residential Development Programme (Community Law Centre & SERI, 2013, p. 13). Underpinning these housing programmes is the delivery of housing through the involvement and empowerment of communities, thus taking gender equality in the process (RDP, 1994, p. 23). Supporting gender equality is premised on the reality that mainly women are often marginalized in participating in community development programmes such as housing (Ndinda, 2009; Todes et al, 2010 & UN Human Rights, 2012). With reference to the delivery of housing as a basic human need, it is observed that dependency has been created which deepens the culture of entitlements as opposed to self-reliance and interdependence between the people and the government. The Freedom Charter (1955) states that all people should have houses, security and comfort, hence the author argues that lack of administrative, human and financial capacity and resources as well as corruption are counted among the major challenges to effective and efficient service delivery for housing.

The democratic government inherited a backlog in terms of services in general and housing in particular (Amtaika, 2013). Under the apartheid model of separate development, services were provided based on racial and ethnic grounds hence the majority of the citizens were relegated to either in the ‘Bantustans’ or townships (Johnson & Jacobs, 2012). Due to the apartheid’s spatial planning, whites resided in the suburbs, other races such ‘Coloured’ and Indians and black Africans had their own separate residents. However, ANC (1994, p. 22) argued that apartheid had created the housing problems, which are further aggravated by the limited range of the capitalist housing markets and lack of a coherent national hous-

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