

# THE PEOPLE'S HOUSING PROCESS (PHP) SCHEME IN GAUTENG PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA- LESSONS LEARNT

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose/Objectives:** The paper compares the People's Housing Process in Gauteng Province in South Africa with Organised Self-Help programme in Cuba in relation to community participation and training of beneficiaries towards low cost housing delivery. The paper outlines the challenges of the People's Housing Process in South Africa.

**Methodology:** The descriptive survey method was employed for the study. This is because the research objectives demanded the technique of observation (through interviews, physical observations and questionnaires) as the primary means of collecting data as well as extensive literature review.

**Findings:** One of the primary findings that emanated from the study revealed that one of the vital ingredients for the success of PHP in South Africa is community participation and training of beneficiaries since the programme is not only required to provide houses but also to empower the benefiting families and communities.

**Conclusion:** The study examined Organised Self-Help Programme in Cuba and compares with the People's Housing Process in South Africa. The Cuban experience showed that communities were able to manage and monitor the designing and construction of their houses through active participation which was made possible by training given to the beneficiaries.

**KEY WORDS:** people's housing process, organised self help programme, community participation.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Housing is meant to address basic human need for shelter and security by providing protection against excessive climatic conditions and unwanted intrusion from insects, rodents, and environmental nuisances, such as noise that may be injurious to health and well being (Roderick, 2004). The South African government since 1994 have initiated and implemented several housing delivery programmes and subsidy mechanisms to provide houses to the poor one of which is the People's Housing Process. This is done to fulfill her vision to adequate housing for all as reflected in the National Housing Policy framework: to increase housing's share in the total State budget to five percent and to increase housing delivery on a sustainable basis to a peak level of 338 000 units per annum, within a five year period, to reach the target of the Government of National Unity of 1,000,000 houses in five years (A new national Housing Policy for South Africa, 1994).

## 2 HOUSING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Provision of adequate housing for the homeless and others who are inadequately housed in an attempt

to reduce poverty and improve quality of people's life has been a huge challenge to South African government over the years (Department of Housing, 2004:399). Over the years this provision has been challenged and has resulted in enormous housing backlog with poverty, unemployment, economic stagnation and negative behaviour, together with financial constraints making the task even more enormous (Department of Housing, 2000).

However, a large number of housing projects have been implemented throughout the country to deliver houses to the poor to fulfill her vision to adequate housing for all as reflected in the National Housing Policy framework. Since 1994, housing in South Africa has undergone fundamental changes and about One Million eight Hundred and seventy seven Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty Eight (1 877 958) houses has been delivered (Department of Housing, 2006). Despite the huge delivery of housing to the poor, South Africa still has a significant housing backlog that is being addressed by a comprehensive housing policy.

The vision of the government of South Africa, as stated in the National Housing Code (2001), advocates for "sustainable housing and "sustainable urban environment". It is common knowledge that housing is a major component of the urban environment and that better designed houses contribute to the physiological and psychological well being of the inhabitants. However, the problem lies in the formation of the housing processes that must ensure the delivery of "sustainable housing" (Kangwa 2002:5).

## **2.1 The People's Housing Process**

People's Housing Process is a low-income housing delivery approach promoting the involvement of the beneficiaries in the development of their own houses. In this programme, the government encourages and support individuals, families or groups who wish to enhance their subsidy by organizing, planning, designing and building of their own houses and their contribution is sweat equity as opposed to hiring a contractor although, less than 3% of the total houses built were delivered through the PHP housing delivery programme (Baumann 2002), but it is different to other delivery mechanisms because the PHP scheme encourages the involvement of beneficiaries in the construction of their houses.

The aims of the PHP programme are to mobilize and support community effort, facilitate access to subsidies in appropriate ways to support people's housing initiative, promote the most cost effective use of resources, choice of and trade-offs between options, foster partnership between all levels of government, civil society, the public sector and other players, regularize settlements and create secure tenure options, build capacity and skills whenever required, promote the culture of saving, facilitate maximal transfer of skills for economic upliftment and employment and apply state funding to achieve maximum leverage of non-governmental resources.

In implementing the PHP, the Department of Housing has listed the advantages as saving on labour costs; avoiding having to pay a profit to contractors, optimizing decisions in terms of trade-off with regards to materials procurement and the choice of beneficiary related to product house type, size, specifications, construction process and the contribution. (Department of Housing, 2003:9).

### **2.1.1 PHP Housing Support Organization**

The Housing Support Organisation is a developer that has transformed itself into the People's Housing Process support group (Napier, 2003). According to Department of Housing, a support organization must be established or identified. It must be a legally registered entity and shall carry out the technical, financial and administrative support to families building their own houses.

The functions of the support Organisations include technical and administrative support, where

appropriate, to beneficiary families. They assist in the preparation of various house plans and cost, ensure that materials are ordered and delivered on time, assist with preparations of a project application pertaining to housing subsidies as well as the establishment grant and submit to Provincial Housing Development Board (PHDB) for approval. In addition, the support organisations in conjunction with the Department of housing organise training for the beneficiaries, they supervise and support beneficiaries who have been trained to build their own houses and arrange for inspections to be done by building inspectors of Local Authority.

### **3 SELF ORGANISED HOUSING IN CUBA**

Organised self help programme requires the knowledge and competence in planning and implementing of housing, particularly concerning the responsibilities and roles of the households and the facilitating organisation and authorities. Organised self-help housing is not only a method of meeting housing shortages, it enhance organisation of resources and also promote community participation in housing development. When communities and families are involved in organized self help housing, the expectations usually exceeds what can be achieved with the amount of credit they can obtain (Rodriguez & Astrand, 2000). According to Rodriguez & Astrand (2000), the implementation of organized self help projects are in four stages:

Stage 1 – is the social stage where there is increasing participation and involvement of the residents in solving their problems. It is important to create monitoring mechanisms to anticipate problems of relationship and leadership.

Stage 2- is the construction stage which focuses on all activities, integrating, defining training needs so as to ensure quality control by families themselves and monitoring plans and schedules by the communities.

Stage 3- is concerned with the administration which involves materials procurements, distribution and control of expenses.

Stage 4- is the financial activities stage which is concerned with cash flow control and monitoring the budget against the expenses and the progress of work.

The local and regional authorities of Cuba facilitate organized self-help housing. They provide appropriate land at a reasonable cost and then it be prepared by either the municipality or the facilitating organisation.

The facilitating organisations are responsible for convincing the banks and other credit institution and any other donor. Housing finance depends only on limited resources from the national and local authorities which implies that the facilitating organisation must prove to the national decision makers that use of local resources in organized self-help housing is efficient and reliable (Rodriguez and Astrand, 2000).

Training is organized to transfer technical, legal and management skills to the communities. The aim of the training is to enable the community members to participate actively in the construction process and improve their management skills in negotiating and solving conflicts. Training must be practical in common areas such as social developments, construction, management of housing in relation to projects, programming and budgeting techniques (Rodriguez and Astrand , 2000).

### **4 Research Methodology**

The descriptive survey method was employed for the study. This is because the research objectives demanded the technique of observation (through interviews, physical observations and questionnaires)

as the primary means of collecting data as recommended by Leedy, (1997) ; Easter-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe (1991). This method was also used because the data required for the research is ordinal in nature. This means that data in this research was sourced from the opinions of respondents rather than from empirical sources or experiments (Leedy, 1997; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 1997).

The primary sources of information for this study include textbooks; databases, peer-reviewed articles, journals and conference papers; government documents, policy reports; professional bodies' publications and internet sources – web pages. The information obtained provided an in depth understanding of the topic and was used for the design of the interview questions in the *second phase* of the *first stage* (Mbachu, 2003).

#### 4.1 Survey

A total of forty questionnaires were distributed among the stakeholders of the People's Housing Process (PHP) with respondents drawn from drawn from the City of Johannesburg in Doornkorn, Diepsloot, Orange farm and Masisizane women organisation in Ivory Park. Twenty one were completed and returned which were used for the analysis. The results indicated sixty eight percent of effective response rate.

A total of one hundred and twenty questionnaires were intended to be administered among the beneficiaries of PHP but Eighty one questionnaires were later administered and this indicated sixty eight percent effective response rate. The respondents were drawn from Kanana Zone 12, Rieger Park, Doornkorn, Orange farm and Ivory Park.

#### 4.2 Survey Results

4.2.1 Stakeholder's responses to the administered questionnaires

**Table 1.1 presents the respondents analysis of training of beneficiaries by the Department of Housing**

<b>Does the Department of Housing train the beneficiaries on different building trades before the commencement of construction?</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Yes</b>	19	90.5	90.5	90.5
	<b>Not Sure</b>	1	4.8	4.8	95.2
	<b>No</b>	1	4.8	4.8	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	21	100.0	100.0	

90% of the respondents said the Department of Housing offered training to the beneficiaries of PHP houses. About 5% said they were not sure whether the Department offered training to the beneficiaries or not and about 5% said the Department did not offered training to the beneficiaries.

**Table 1.2 shows analysis of number of days the beneficiaries were being trained**

<b>If yes to Q12, how many days of training do the department offer beneficiaries?</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>1-3 days</b>	9	42.9	47.4	47.4
	<b>4-6 days</b>	5	23.8	26.3	73.7
	<b>10-12 days</b>	2	9.5	10.5	84.2
	<b>More than 12 days</b>	3	14.3	15.8	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	19	90.5	100.0	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	2	9.5		
<b>Total</b>		21	100.0		

73.7% of the respondents said the beneficiaries were trained for less than 7 days. 10.5% of the beneficiaries indicated that the beneficiaries were trained for about 12 days and 15.8% said the beneficiaries received more than 12 days training from the Department of Housing.

#### **4.2.2 Beneficiaries responses to the administered questionnaires**

<b>Does the Department of Housing train you on a building trade before the commencement of construction?</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>Yes</b>	16	19.8	20.0	20.0
	<b>Not Sure</b>	3	3.7	3.8	23.8
	<b>No</b>	61	75.3	76.3	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	80	98.8	100.0	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	1	1.2		
<b>Total</b>		81	100.0		

76.3% of the respondents said they were not being trained by the Department of Housing before the commencement of the construction of their houses. 20% of the respondents said they were trained.

**Table 1.4 shows analysis of number of days the beneficiaries were being trained**

<b>How many days of training does the department offer to you?</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Valid</b>	<b>1-3 days</b>	15	18.5	88.2	88.2
	<b>4-6 days</b>	2	2.5	11.8	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	17	21.0	100.0	
<b>Missing</b>	<b>System</b>	64	79.0		
<b>Total</b>		81	100.0		

Only 17 respondents answered this question. Out of these 17 respondents, 88.2% indicated that they were trained for not more than 3 days. 11.8% indicated that they were trained for about 6 days.

### **5 Value of Paper**

The South African experience of the PHP revealed that the community participation during the planning, deigning and construction of PHP houses was not well defined. The communities depend solemnly on the support organisation to do virtually everything towards the delivery of there houses. This lack of taking responsibility can be seen as a result of inadequate or no training given to the benefiting communities by the Department of Housing which should have enabled the beneficiaries to take active decisions during the construction of their houses. One of the aims of PHP programme is to transfer skills to the historically disadvantaged blacks so that they will not only participate in the construction of their houses but they will also develop skills in a particular trade in which they are trained. In accordance with the literature reviewed, it is recommended that the Department of Housing investigate how community participation in housing delivery works in Cuba. The whole idea of PHP is to engage families and communities in the delivery of their houses which is stated as one of advantages of PHP programme by the Department of Housing. The engagement of families and communities in this programme will enhance construction of good quality houses which will fulfill the main objective of PHP programme.

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