Housing Delivery at the Masiphumelele Community

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the housing delivery challenges faced by the Masiphumelele community, a township in the Western Cape Province. The study aims to gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders involved in housing delivery, with the goal of informing effective strategies for addressing housing needs and improving the living conditions in the community. The article further explores the reasons why informal settlements and the degradation of housing persist in the community of Masiphumelele. The article utilised qualitative research methods involving focus group discussions with heads of households and online individual interviews with ward committee members and a ward councillor.

The research findings reveal several key issues. The lack of affordable housing options emerges as a pressing concern, exacerbating overcrowding and inadequate living conditions. Additionally, the participants highlighted overcrowding, flooding, fires, inadequate sanitation, unsafe living conditions and a high rate of unemployment as common challenges experienced by the community of Masiphumelele.

Based on these findings, the article presents recommendations to the City of Cape Town for enhancing housing delivery in the Masiphumelele community. These include the promotion of community-driven initiatives to ensure the inclusion of residents' voices in decision-making processes. The dates, times and places of municipal workshops and meetings must be announced as widely as possible to improve participation and communication with community members. The findings emphasise the significance of holistic and participatory approaches to address housing challenges,

ultimately aiming to improve the quality of life and promote housing development within the Masiphumelele community.

INTRODUCTION

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* of 1996 proclaims the right to adequate housing for all South African citizens. More specific, the Bill of Rights states that all citizens have '*the right to have access to adequate housing*'. The government must take reasonable legislative and other measures within its available resources to achieve the progressive realisation of this right (Constitution 1996:Section 26). It is based on this premise that government should provide low-income households with housing to live in peace and dignity as underpinned in the Constitution of 1996. The realisation of this responsibility laid the foundation for subsequent policies on housing that focus on assisting poor citizens to access this basic need (Sikota 2015).

Housing affects people's health, education and quality of life. Yet, the national housing backlog in February 2022 was estimated at 2.6 million houses, that is 12 million people in desperate need of decent accommodation (GroundUp 2022). Challenges relating to the lack of housing are systemic and continue to compromise the enjoyment of the right of access to adequate housing. After three decades of democracy, there are still households that have no shelter; people are living in informal settlements, shacks and backyards (Segodi 2018:17). The right to housing has been plagued by poor planning, lack of coordination, low capacity, poor monitoring and a lack of political will. The backlog in housing is not only the result of insufficient legislative frameworks, but rather relates to ineffective and cumbersome policy implementation processes (Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI) 2018:5).

In the three years preceding the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a cumulative reduction of R15 billion from the Human Settlements capital budget, while the number of people living in informal settlements continued to rise (Department of Human Settlements 2021). According to South Africa's General Household Survey of 2020 (Statistics South Africa 2020), slightly more than 84% of South African households lived in formal dwellings, followed by 11.4% in informal dwellings, and 4.3% in traditional dwellings with Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces likely to have the largest number of households living in informal settlements (SERI 2018). The Western Cape Province is not immune to this assertion with approximately 19% of households living in informal settlements in the Western Cape. Out of that percentage, 17.6% of the households are located in

the City of Cape Town and are living in inadequate housing that is built with little or no planning for drainage or sewage systems, exposing residents to health risks. According to Brown-Luthango, Reyes and Gubevu (2017:472–474), these informal settlements are also prone to flooding in summer and fires during winter. Segodi (2018:18) and the Department of Human Settlements (2021) warn that backlogs in housing delivery, urbanisation and an increase in population contribute to the mushrooming of informal settlement in the Western Cape and the City of Cape Town. The community of Masiphumelele in the Western Cape is indeed not immune to the challenges brought about by overcrowding and delays in the provision of low-cost housing (Ntongana 2015).

This article focuses on the shortage of low-cost housing in the Masiphumelele community. The specific problem is that, despite the efforts of the City of Cape Town to provide low-cost housing to the residents of Masiphumelele, informal settlements persist and the degradation of housing continues.

In the light of the above problem statement, the following research questions arise:

- What are the main causes and challenges associated with low-cost housing delivery to townships, specifically to Masiphumelele, by the City of Cape Town?
- Why do informal settlements and the degradation of housing persist in Masiphumelele?

The overall aim of the article is to explore the causes and challenges associated with the shortage of low-cost housing delivery at the Masiphumelele community. To put the study in context, the article commences with a brief description of the effect of apartheid on the provision of public housing in South Africa before an overview of the case study, the Masiphumelele community, is provided.

APARTHEID AND THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC HOUSING IN SOUTH AFRICA

During the first half of the 20th century, black people were severely discriminated against. They were brutally treated and forced to live in hostels or servants' accommodation provided by their white employers. In the period following World War II, some areas in South Africa experienced rapid urbanisation. The government did not build new accommodation or homes to accommodate the influx of new residents to the cities. This led to overcrowding, poor living conditions and the absence of amenities. High rents and overcrowding subsequently led to land invasions and the growth of shack settlements. These difficulties were largely ignored by the government. By 1950, a substantial proportion of the urban black population lived in townships. The living conditions in the shack

township settlements were poor and lacked infrastructure and proper sanitation (Huchzermeyer 2013:295–315).

During the era of ideological apartheid from 1948 to 1994, black people were evicted from properties that were in areas designated for 'whites only' and were forced to move into segregated townships (Mgushelo 2018:28–33). Separate townships were established for each of the three designated non-white race groups, namely black people, coloured people and Indians as per the Population Registration Act 30 of 1950 and the Group Areas Act 41 of 1950. The Group Areas Act of 1950 became the cornerstone of the apartheid policy and played a fundamental role in shaping South Africa's cities by preventing black people from living in certain areas. The Act imposed control over property transactions and occupation throughout the country. Moreover, it empowered the government to dictate residential areas to be group areas inhabited by designated races (Group Areas Act 1950:Sections 2 and 3).

Under colonialism and apartheid, institutionalised racial segregation and entrenched marginalisation of black people were all intended at securing the land and labour for white people. Black people were forcibly removed from their land and homes, and became the main and reliable source of labour for the colonial economy (Letseka and Maile 2008:4). White people continued to own colonially and apartheid acquired land after 1994 despite the arrival of freedom and the dawn of the constitutional democracy. This ownership is premised on the constitutional protection of existing property rights. The fall of apartheid and the dawn of democracy meant that the state of land ownership in South Africa remained dominated by white ownership (Letseka and Maile 2008:6–7).

Addressing the shortage of housing in South Africa is fraught with tension. South Africa is among the countries that are tarnished by colonialism and an apartheid planning inheritance. Areas designated for black, coloured and Indian race groups had different planning legislation. In addition, land-use management fell under municipal jurisdictions established prior to the Municipal Structures Act 117 of 1998. This meant that a single municipality would have multiple land-use management schemes with different definitions for land uses which complicated the finalisation of land development applications. As a result, access to land remains a challenge (Mgushelo 2018:27–33). Since 1994, there have been major policy shifts towards the democratically elected government's housing development mandate and to redress the apartheid misfortune that has disadvantaged the majority of the poor. Section 26 of the Bill of Rights as well as the White Paper on Housing of 1994 paved the way in ensuring that the right of access to adequate housing is realised as a post-apartheid ambition. In addition, the National Housing Forum and the Botshabelo Housing Accord of 27 October 1994 also served as building blocks towards reprioritising housing legislation and the implementation thereof (Phago 2010:86–106).

Other detrimental effects on public housing, include an influx in migration and rapid urbanisation. Migration to urban areas and a lack of access to land through formal means have left many urban residents poor. As a result, the urban poor are resorting to informal processes to address their land and housing needs on their own. This has seen many people dwelling in informal settlements, erected mainly on illegally occupied land (Godehart and Vaughan 2008). As a result, South African cities are characterised by severe housing and service backlogs, spatial inequalities, high unemployment rates and high levels of poverty. The systematic destruction of housing and a lack of low-cost housing in urban areas for non-white people left behind a persistent housing crisis that remains unresolved (SERI 2018:8). Cities across South Africa have remained severely segregated, divided and unequal, despite extensive government policy to reverse socio-spatial inequalities (Rogerson and Rogerson 2015:352; Turok 2020:393).

Since the collapse of apartheid in the 1990s, South Africa has struggled to deal with the social and economic problems stemming from that era. In the informal settlements on the edges of cities, residents continue to build their accommodation from cheap materials. Water and other essentials are hard to come by, violence and crime are prevalent, homes are exposed to flooding, and sanitation is poor. Therefore, housing demands far exceed supply in South Africa, the moving target, which simply refers to a target that is never achieved (Darabi 2018).

While the Human Settlements Development Grant allocations have generally grown, the delivery of subsidised housing and serviced sites have both been declining steadily over the last decade. From a peak delivery of 235 000 houses and serviced sites in 2006/2007, the delivery has declined to under 175 000 houses, sites and subsidised rental units in 2020/2021. Over the last three budget years, the delivery has dropped below 100 000 fully subsidised Breaking New Ground houses and 75 000 serviced sites. Subsidised rental housing delivery has also declined. Reasons for declining delivery of subsidised housing include institutional capacity constraints in municipalities, provincial departments and in state entities involved in housing delivery and finance, as well as project planning and implementation delays due to the shift of focus to mega-projects. Also, limited capital budgets and constraints limit the scale and effectiveness of social housing delivery. In addition, responsibilities for financing land and housing services gradually shifted from human settlements subsidies to additional financial responsibility of metros (Hornby, Kingwill, Royston and Cousins 2017:4–6).

Access to urban land in post-apartheid South Africa is therefore complex. These complexities arise from the past in which race was used as a basis to relegate most people to the margins of financial power and property ownership. According to these margins, people accessed land and housing in very different ways from those required by the formal property system (Hornby *et al.* 2017:3). It

is particularly for this reason that history matters, and the colonial and apartheid legacy should not be forgotten, ignored or exempted from the current land reality and discourse. The opposite, arguably, leaves apartheid acquired white land privilege and injustice to perpetuate unacknowledged and without remedy. In the end, forgetting, ignoring or exempting history allows for the dispossessor to continue to thrive and the historically dispossessed to be resentful. South Africa therefore needs to resolve its land issue as it hinders government's basic service delivery, particularly the delivery of housing (Oyeranmi 2011).

CONTEMPORARY HOUSING REALITIES AND CHALLENGES

Since 1994, various policies, strategies and programmes have been formulated by the post-apartheid government to address housing delivery challenges. Yet, the poor remain landless and homeless due to a lack of access to well-located land for housing. To this end, informal settlements and urbanisation in South Africa have drastically increased since 1994. The provision of public housing is commonly characterised by a slow rate in delivery due to ineffective policy implementation capacity and skills. Community unrests are also contributing to the lack of implementation capacity or the inability of the government to implement a housing policy (Isaac-Martin 2009:147–149). Nengwenkulu (2009:344) states that the scarcity or skills shortages alone, cannot reduce the public service delivery inertia. Nengwenkulu (2009:358) concluded that there are several factors that result in the slow pace of service delivery. Among other factors are shortage of skills, corruption, nepotism and the political agenda within the administration of departments. In addition, Burgoyne (2018:25) and Samson and Hall (2023:459) identified financial constraints, underspending due to capacity constraints, insufficient resources allocation and the lack of sustainable land as the key variables that influence the slow rate of housing delivery.

Despite South Africa's housing programme, urban housing backlogs keep on increasing. The growth in urban housing backlogs calls on government and the private sector to find and create solutions for the shortage of skills, community unrests and the lack of implementation capacity. There is indeed a need for private housing developers to cooperate more closely with government authorities and agencies at local, provincial and national spheres to address and shape the living conditions of the poor (Burgoyne 2018:24–26).

Transition from housing to human settlements

Following the former President, Mr Jacob Zuma's proclamation in 2009 to change the Department of Housing to the Department of Human Settlements, the focus

shifted from housing being just a roof over people's heads, to providing sustainable and integrated human settlements where people can work, pray, play and have access to amenities required for their day-to-day living. The transition from 'housing' to 'human settlements' represents a shift in the approach and understanding of providing adequate shelter and living conditions for the entire population without any discrimination (South African History Online 2022). There are several reasons behind this move:

- **Overcoming apartheid legacy**: South Africa's history of apartheid resulted in spatial segregation and the unequal distribution of resources, including housing. The move towards human settlements aims to rectify these historical injustices by promoting integrated and inclusive communities that are well-connected and provide equal access to amenities, services, and economic opportunities (Turok 2020:392–395).
- **Holistic approach**: The concept of 'human settlements' encompasses a broader perspective compared to 'housing'. It recognises that providing housing alone is not sufficient to address the complex challenges faced by communities. Instead, it emphasises the need for integrated planning and development that considers social, economic, and environmental factors to create sustainable and inclusive communities (Pieterse and Dubresson 2022:12–19).
- **Addressing informal settlements**: Informal settlements, also known as slums, are prevalent in South Africa. The human settlements approach recognises the need to address these settlements by providing formalised housing options and improving living conditions through upgrading programmes, basic services provision and infrastructure development (Samson and Hall 2023:457–459).
- **Sustainable development**: The concept of human settlements aligns with the principles of sustainable development, emphasising the efficient use of resources, environmental conservation, and promoting social and economic well-being. It seeks to create communities that are environmentally sustainable, economically vibrant and socially cohesive (Frayne and Karuri-Sebina 2020:79–83).
- **Integrated service delivery**: Human settlements encompass not only housing but also the provision of essential services such as water, sanitation, electricity, healthcare, education and transportation. By considering the broader spectrum of services, the approach aims to create self-sustaining communities that cater to the diverse needs of residents (Ntloko-Gobodo 2023:133–136).

Overall, the move from housing to human settlements reflects a paradigm shift towards a more comprehensive and holistic approach to address the housing needs of the population. It acknowledges the importance of creating sustainable, inclusive and integrated communities that go beyond providing mere shelter and that strive for improved quality of life for all residents (Buhlungu 2021:18–21).

OVERVIEW OF THE CASE STUDY: MASIPHUMELELE COMMUNITY

Masiphumelele is a township in Cape Town, situated between Kommetjie, Capri Village and Noordhoek in the Cape Peninsula. It was initially known as 'Site 5' and later renamed by its residents as 'Masiphumelele', an isiXhosa name meaning 'Let us succeed'. In the early 1980s, about 400 to 500 people first settled in the area. The dusty, overcrowded and mainly black suburb of Masiphumelele is surrounded by the affluence of Noordhoek and the other predominantly 'white' Southern Peninsula suburbs. In 1950, the Southern Peninsula, in which Masiphumelele is located, was declared a whites-only area while coloured communities who previously occupied the area were moved to Ocean View (Mascorp 2020).

Regarding the history of Masiphumelele, Ocean View is situated approximately 5km on the main road from where Masiphumelele is located while no nearby alternative was provided for African people. As a result, African people had to travel long distances in search of job opportunities. It became difficult to sustain transport costs with the meagre income that they earned. Unlawful occupancy of vacant land began to spring up. On 1 January 1987, the apartheid government made plans to forcefully remove the informal dwellers. This resulted in brutal actions by the police. In response to this treatment, concerned groups such as the Surplus People Project, the Black Sash, and a few white residents lobbied the apartheid government on behalf of the squatter communities and their case was heard in the Supreme Court division in 1988. The judgment was favourable, and the land was then allocated for a residential township in December 1990 (Mascorp 2020).

Only in 1992, did Masiphumelele become the permanent home for the Noordhoek and Fish Hoek informal communities, with Site 5 being the first serviced area. It was the first black squatter community to win the right to land in a white area, and the first community to have the power to exercise control in decision-making in the land and housing development process in the Western Cape. Later, approximately 8 000 people relocated after the initial allocation of land in 1992.

To date in June 2023, Masiphumelele has changed dramatically since the first arrivals in the early 1990s and its population has increased at a very fast rate which is currently more than 50 000 people and 23 000 households. The arrival of foreign nationals in Masiphumelele has been steadily increasing since 1994. In 2023, Masiphumelele represents a diversity of people from different parts of South Africa and across the African continent. Zimbabweans make up the largest share of the population, followed by Congolese, Ethiopians, Ghanaians, Malawians, Mozambicans, Nigerians and Somalis (Freedomhouse 2022:4–8).

The Masiphumelele community is made up of different types of dwellings that include formal housing and the Wetlands informal settlement. Masiphumelele has a clinic, a primary school, one high school and basic health services. The informal

dwelling is the area that is the subject of this study, though most of the shacks have been replaced by the Reconstruction and Development Programme houses. While it is a jungle of corrugated iron shacks and electrical wires, the wetlands informal settlement of Masiphumelele is home to over 20 000 people. Among the many problems the residents are facing, is a lack of toilets and a shortage of water taps. Like many South Africans who live in informal settlements, community members of Masiphumelele have to carry 25 litre buckets to fetch water from faraway taps. The smell of sewage and rubbish fills the air, and fire during winter and windy seasons holds a direct threat to the residents. Most shacks are deep in the informal settlement, and have layers of bricks and concrete as foundation to prevent groundwater flooding (Mascorp 2020).

The people in the informal settlement are likely to be there for the next 30 years. Unfortunately, poor access to housing in Masiphumelele increases the risk of health conditions, particularly in children, pregnant women and the elderly. The City of Cape Town failed to adequately address the dreadful unhygienic conditions in the Masiphumelele township, which are affecting the health and well-being of the residents. Illnesses like diarrhoea, respiratory tract infections and pneumonia are prevalent. The quality of life for many people in Masiphumelele is marked by poverty and high levels of crime and violence. There is undeniably a shortage of land, and where there is land, it cannot be used because it is privately owned (City of Cape Town 2013; Mascorp 2020).

The Masiphumelele community is characterised by a lack of formal tenure, public space and public facilities, inadequate access to municipal services, a lack of convenient and safe access to services, and non-compliance with planning and building regulations. Poor access to roads and road infrastructure also affects access to health services, and clinics (City of Cape Town 2013:2–5).

The problem of sanitation in Masiphumelele is critical and complex because of high population density, poor infrastructure, lack of space, lack of secure tenure and sustained poverty.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design. For the single case study of the Masiphumelele community focus group discussions and individual interviews were identified as data collection instruments. Three focus group discussions were conducted with purposively selected heads of households from the Masiphumelele community. Individual interviews with four selected ward committee members and one ward councillor was scheduled thereafter. All the interviews, focus groups and individual interviews, took place through the online platform MS Teams. The interview questions posed to both participant groups

focused on the causes and challenges associated with the shortage of low-cost housing delivery to the Masiphumelele community by the City of Cape Town. The reasons why informal settlements and the degradation of housing persist in Masiphumelele were also perused.

The sample size was fixed, but room was also left for possible increase to ensure that a sufficient number of participants were accommodated. Table 1 lists the target groups, nature of each group, the site population per group as well as the relevant sample sizes.

Table 1: Target groups, population and sample sizes

Target group	Nature of group involved	Site population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Group A: Focus group discussions	Heads of Households who are permanent residents at the Masiphumelele community.	150	Three focus group discussions consisting of five participants per focus group 3x5 = 15	Purposive sampling
Group B: Personal online interviews	Ward committee members and one ward councillor	10	5	

Source: (Author's interpretation)

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

To obtain the findings of the research, the collected data needed to be analysed using thematic analysis to get an in-depth opinion from the participants.

Focus group discussions

The data analyses for the focus groups are presented by quoting the interview question followed by the analysis of the data.

'What challenges are encountered by the community of Masiphumelele due to lack of low-cost housing?
Please motivate your answer.'
The challenges raised by the focus groups include overcrowding, flooding, fires, inadequate sanitation, unsafe living conditions, a high crime rate and high rate of unemployment. The general view was that these challenges are caused by the rapid increase of urbanisation. As a temporary housing solution, people end up building shacks while they are searching for employment in urban areas. These

shacks are often built in areas that are not suitable building areas. Frequent fires and flooding in the wetlands result in poor living conditions.

'Is there a need for low-cost housing in Masiphumelele? Please motivate your answer.'

All three focus groups agreed that there is a dire need for low-cost housing. The first and second group participants responded that they are faced with devastating fires which aggravate poverty and congested living conditions. The other challenge is the wetlands which impact poor sanitation infrastructures and flooding during winter. The third group raised the issues of poverty that leads to a high crime rate due to unemployment and an increase of immigration that leads to overcrowding. Overcrowding results in no spaces and entries for emergency and fire-fighting vehicles between the shacks.

The lack of access to land and the increase of the Masiphumelele population is a cry for basic services, such as water and electricity. Basic services would serve the interest of the community by ensuring a decent standard of living. Inadequate sanitation systems hold high health risks to the community. Access to sanitation and toilet facilities will advance the physical health of the inhabitants and will also provide the residents with a sense of human dignity (United Nations 2015:26).

'What can be done to increase the rate of housing provision?'

All the focus group members agreed that the City of Cape Town must purchase land to build adequate houses for the Masiphumelele community. They hinted that the City of Cape Town is not using the municipal budget appropriately and that this matter must be addressed through official channels. The provincial government and the municipality must spend the total budgets received from the national government and not return any unspent money. The participants affirmed that the municipality must stop making promises and rather deliver on previous unfinished undertakings. The participants also felt that the community is often wrongly blamed for delays in implementing housing projects.

The participants from the second and third groups raised an additional aspect when referring to issues of internal strife among political leaders. They stated that frequent changes in political leadership harm the community because it causes unnecessary delays in housing delivery. For this reason, informal settlements and the degradation of housing persist in Masiphumelele.

'Are councillors involved in housing development? If so, can you please explain their role?'

All the groups agreed that the ward councillors are involved in housing development projects, however, various explanations of the extent of their involvement were provided. The first group responded that some of the councillors are not

in touch with the community needs. They are often absent from meetings and appear not to understand the municipal processes and requirements. The participants recommended that training be provided to the ward councillors to expose them to the operational requirements of the municipality. It was concluded in the first focus group's discussions that despite being involved in housing development, the councillors seem not to understand their core roles.

The second focus group emphasised that housing development in Masiphumelele relies solely on the Integrated Development Plan of the City of Cape Town. The councillors are therefore required to call quarterly community meetings to provide feedback on any development and to discuss possible hindrances. During these meetings, the residents would be granted the opportunity to raise their concerns on infrastructure maintenance. The items emanating from these meetings are carried over to the municipal housing budget after rigorous approval processes. Unfortunately, organising and attending council meetings over the last five years has become a tick box exercise with no or very limited effect on the municipal budget and housing development in the community.

The third group explained the role of the councillors is to be the link between the community of Masiphumelele and the City of Cape Town. It was confirmed that the councillors are close to the communities and should be helpful and knowledgeable about the community needs. Regrettably, there is limited or no communication between the community and the councillors. As a result, the community is not consulted about housing needs in their areas.

Individual interviews

The data analyses for the online individual interviews are presented by quoting the interview question followed by the analysis of the data.

'What are the problems that you experience in terms of planning for housing development?'

The interviewees agreed on increased migration to find job opportunities and the lack of access to land for development. The ward councillor confirmed that the attraction of economic opportunities in metropolitan areas causes the erection of temporary shacks as people seek work in the richer metropolitan areas while staying in informal housing structures.

'Does the municipality organise any workshops on housing development? If so what kind of workshops and what groups of people participate mostly?'

The ward committee members agreed that Integrated Development Plan meetings are being organised, but that the community do not attend these meetings. They

were not certain about the reasons for the community not attending information sharing meetings. The ward councillor revealed that workshops are organised by the municipality. He confirmed that councillors attend these workshops, and that they are knowledgeable about the needs of the communities. These workshops aim to obtain information on how the municipality can resolve housing development challenges. However, one of the interviewees believed the community does not show interest in what is happening in their local area.

'What would be the best way to involve all community members in decision- making during housing development?'

The ward councillor agreed that not all community members are involved in decision- making about housing development. Some community members do not show an interest in local government issues. The ward committee members responded that the influences and roles of various role-players must be clearly outlined. Protocols should also be established to ensure that all opinions are raised, heard and considered. Further opportunities for engagement must be explored and lobbying processes for the items and money on the municipal budget must be enhanced. The City of Cape Town needs to extend opportunities for inclusion in its communication and housing development processes.

The ward committee members agreed that the City of Cape Town needs to establish common protocols and standards that can be clearly understood and upheld by all parties that operate within the informal settlements space. They confirmed that viewing public participation as critical for civil society cohesion is an important departure point for any communication process related to human settlements development. They also emphasised the importance of involving community members in decision-making during the housing development, as confirmed by Zondi and Reddy (2016:3).

'In your opinion, why is there invasion of land? Please elaborate on possible mitigation plans.'

The ward committee members responded that land invasion is caused by the huge housing demand and the backlog in delivering low-cost housing by the municipality. Overcrowded households, insufficient delivery of housing stock and invasion are the direct result of these backlogs. The ward committee members also responded that the reasons behind unlawful land occupations are being investigated by the City of Cape Town, but it appears that overwhelming density, problems with urban management and a lack of available services in informal settlements are the main contributing factors. The ward councillor raised delays in basic service delivery as the reason for the invasion of land.

The ward committee members further commented that the City of Cape Town must execute its Constitutional mandate by acknowledging the right to housing

and by the provision of housing while ensuring compliance with the Prevention of Illegal Eviction and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act 19 of 1998. Alternative accommodation must be provided to immigrants. Unfortunately, this dynamic takes place within a resource constrained environment aggravated by unemployment and poor service delivery. The land should be developed by the City to acknowledge and support the different types of informal settlements.

'In your opinion, does the municipality have the capacity to meet the housing demands?'

The ward committee members responded that the delivery of housing development is considerably constrained due to a lack of funding for housing development solutions. They stated that state-led housing delivery will never meet the total demand for housing opportunities. The ward committee members further confirmed that the City should establish effective intergovernmental relationships with other spheres of government, as well as improving the coordination of integrated human settlements management projects. They added that there is not a dedicated national government funding instrument that the City of Cape Town can utilise to provide emergency housing when responding to disasters.

The ward councillor responded that the City of Cape Town does not have capacity due to an under-budget from the province. The ward councillor also highlighted that considering the high levels of illegal land occupation and the evictions taking place from private residences, there is a danger that a shrinking local government fiscus will divert resources away from human settlements projects and interventions.

CONCLUSIONS

The following themes emerged during data analysis to find answers to the research questions 'What are the main causes and challenges associated with low-cost housing delivery to townships, specifically to Masiphumelele, by the City of Cape Town?' and 'Why do informal settlements and the degradation of housing persist in Masiphumelele?'.

Community participation

The focus group discussions reveal that there is a lack of public involvement in housing developments and community programmes. In most cases, ward committees are being used for public engagement and to build mutual understanding with community members from different backgrounds. The focus group discussions clearly indicate that there is a lack of public involvement, despite the

legislative and policy provisions encouraging and promoting meaningful participation in community areas.

It was concluded that some of the councillors are not in touch with the community needs. They are often absent from meetings and appear not to understand the municipal processes and requirements. Unfortunately, organising and attending council meetings over the last five years has become a tick box exercise with no effect on housing development in the community.

Community development

According to Steyn-Kotze (2010:146), the reality of democracy lies in the expectation that lives will improve towards better quality of life. The focus group discussions as well as the individual interviews confirmed that the Masiphumelele community must continue to champion their community needs to eventually improve their standard of living.

The interviewees maintained that the City of Cape Town is allegedly not using the municipal budget appropriately and that this matter must be addressed through official channels. In addition, frequent changes in political leadership harm the community and cause delays in housing delivery. For this reason, informal settlements and the degradation of housing persist in Masiphumelele.

Access to land

Land is a complex challenge in South Africa, and not only in the City of Cape Town. Land in South Africa is irreversibly tied to the history of dispossession and oppression. The government's response to land claims by black people focuses on land restitution, redistribution and redress in rural areas (South African Cities Network 2015). The Masiphumelele community do not enjoy their human right to housing as stated in Section 26 of the Constitution of South Africa of 1996. The delay in housing delivery directly leads to the increasing number of informal settlements and land invasion. The City of Cape Town must thus be committed to ensuring that those requiring housing in the Masiphumelele area are accommodated on-site or within close proximity to the site. However, there are households that are willing to relocate outside of the valley. In addition, land should be made available to accommodate an expanding urban population.

Housing provision

Housing services are aimed at improving the quality of life of the less privileged members of society. South Africa has different spheres of government: a national, a provincial, and a local sphere of government. The *Constitution of the Republic*

of South Africa of 1996 sets out the powers and the utilitarian value of each sphere of government. The Constitution of 1996 also enshrines the right of everyone to have access to adequate housing. The Housing Act 107 of 1997 provides for the facilitation of sustainable housing development processes. It lays down general principles applicable to housing development in all spheres of government and defines the roles and responsibilities of national, provincial and local governments in respect of housing development (Ntloko-Gobodo 2023:134–136).

The Masiphumelele community has been neglected for a long time by the City of Cape Town. Most of the participants felt hopeless due to slow service delivery and delays in housing provision. The community is faced with devastating fires which aggravate poverty and congested living conditions. The other challenge is the wetlands which impact poor sanitation infrastructures and flooding during winter. High levels of poverty lead to a high crime rate due to unemployment. An increase of immigration also leads to overcrowding. Overcrowding results in no spaces and entries for emergency and fire-fighting vehicles between the shacks.

The focus groups revealed that there is significant under-spending on budget items for low-income housing owing to a lack of capacity by the City of Cape Town to implement housing projects. However, the individual interviews with the ward committee members and the ward councillor confirmed the opposite. They stated that the municipality must work with minimum funds from the provincial government. A conclusion on this matter could not be reached through the interviews.

The qualitative data undeniably confirmed that there are several constraints that hamper the provision of housing. A decline in the number of units constructed per annum is also evident in the Masiphumelele community. The lack of collaborations between community members, City officials and ward councillors negatively affect any current or future housing policy measures. The constant expansion of informal settlements with little or no access to basic services and infrastructure, poses difficulties to any housing project.

Social conditions

The community of Masiphumelele is densely populated. The study showed that there is a dire need for access to land and adequate housing in Masiphumelele. The residents of Masiphumelele are staying in shacks, in the backyards of houses and in Reconstruction and Development Programme houses because they are unemployed and cannot afford to pay rent. Many of the participants felt that the government, particularly the City of Cape Town, makes empty promises to better their lives.

The Masiphumelele community is faced with poverty, unemployment, shortage of low-cost houses and a snail pace of implementing housing projects. The community is known for the wetlands which causes poor sanitation infrastructures

and flooding during winter. Also, fires occur often in summer and during windy weather. There are limited facilities for children, sport fields are occupied by temporary structures and crime is growing daily. Although the City of Cape Town has made good progress in decreasing the service delivery gap in informal settlements, the organic form of informal settlements makes it difficult to provide municipal utility services, such as water, sanitation and electricity.

The main concern remains housing and a lack of accommodation. Housing delivery is taking place very slowly and some elderly people have been waiting for almost 20 years while the younger generation have already received low-cost housing from the City of Cape Town. Therefore, the municipality must improve its administrative processes as a matter of urgency.

Low-cost housing

The lack of low-cost housing will persist for as long as public participation is low, limited and not encouraged. Proper shelter and housing for every citizen, especially the poor, provides a crucial foundation for any economic development. The Masiphumelele community's living conditions are extremely unhealthy, and the high rate of unemployment makes it difficult for the City of Cape Town to generate economic development. Also, the housing backlog remains a challenge due to frequent changes in councillors and political leaders. Much remains to be done to overcome the housing backlog and to develop sustainable settlements. Looking ahead, integrated housing development and cooperation with all relevant stakeholders should be strengthened.

Urbanisation

The increase in urban migration is a challenge for the City of Cape Town to provide more low-cost housing. The surge in informal settlements is making it difficult for the municipality to speedily eliminate the poor housing conditions. The provision of low-cost housing is not adequately addressing the issue of rapid urbanisation and urban land issues. Some interviewees felt excluded from the quest for access to shelter, basic services and the employment opportunities from the City of Cape Town.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to the City of Cape Town on how to address problems associated with housing delivery at the Masiphumelele community:

- The heads of households from the Masiphumelele community revealed that there is limited communication between them and the City of Cape Town. The municipality can only improve people's lives if it produces and implements co-decisions between the community, the City and other relevant stakeholders.
- The City of Cape Town should speed up the identification of available land to build houses.
- The dates, times and places of municipal workshops and meetings must be announced as widely as possible to improve attendance, participation and communication with community members.
- Protocols should be established to ensure that all opinions are raised, heard and considered. Further opportunities for engagement must be explored and lobbying processes for the items and money on the municipal budget must be enhanced. The City of Cape Town needs to extend opportunities for inclusion in its communication and housing development processes.
- The wetlands areas must be secured to curb the recurrence of informal settlements.
- The City of Cape Town must deliver housing development projects by spending all the grants that it receives from national and provincial governments.
- The councillors are close to the communities and should be helpful and knowledgeable about the community needs. Training must be provided to the ward councillors to expose them to the operational requirements of the municipality.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, this article sheds light on the housing delivery challenges faced by the Masiphumelele community in the Western Cape Province and presents valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of key stakeholders involved in housing delivery. The findings of the study highlight the pressing issues of a lack of affordable housing options, overcrowding, inadequate living conditions, flooding, fires, inadequate sanitation, unsafe living conditions, and a high rate of unemployment in the community.

To address these challenges, the article provides recommendations to the City of Cape Town for enhancing housing delivery in Masiphumelele. These recommendations emphasise the importance of community-driven initiatives that prioritise the inclusion of residents' voices in decision-making processes. It is crucial to announce the dates, times, and places of municipal workshops and meetings as widely as possible to improve participation and communication with community members.

Moreover, the research underscores the significance of holistic and participatory approaches to tackle housing challenges effectively. By adopting a comprehensive perspective that considers the socio-economic factors influencing housing delivery, policymakers and stakeholders can develop strategies that promote the improvement of living conditions and foster housing development within the Masiphumelele community.

While this article provides valuable insights, there is still a need for further research to deepen our understanding of the housing issues in Masiphumelele and explore potential solutions. Future studies could investigate the specific barriers that hinder the provision of affordable housing options, such as land availability, financing mechanisms, and regulatory frameworks. Additionally, research could focus on the long-term impacts of community-driven initiatives and participatory approaches in addressing housing challenges and improving the quality of life for residents.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial to explore innovative approaches and best practices from other similar contexts or regions to identify transferable strategies that could be applied in the Masiphumelele community. Comparative studies and case analyses can provide valuable insights into successful housing delivery models that have effectively addressed similar challenges.

In conclusion, addressing the housing delivery challenges in Masiphumelele requires a multi-faceted and collaborative approach that involves the active participation of residents, policymakers, and stakeholders. By building on the recommendations provided in this article and conducting further research, it is possible to develop more effective strategies to improve housing conditions and promote sustainable development in the Masiphumelele community.

NOTE

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