

# Community Participation in Housing Development Trends

## A Selected Case of Khayelitsha Township, Cape Town, South Africa

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### **Abstract**

*The aim of this article is to assess the extent of community participation in housing development trends in Khayelitsha Township in Cape Town. Even though the 1994 democracy ushered in new directives on housing provision by the state, there is still a backlog in providing affordable houses to the poor and needy. A mixed method approach, using both qualitative and quantitative instruments, was employed to collect data in Khayelitsha. Findings from this study reveal that community participation in the housing development trends in Khayelitsha has, so far, been limited. The study recommends that both the national and the provincial government must adopt a participatory development approach towards the implementation of housing provision, so as to legitimise housing development projects in the eyes of beneficiaries.*

### **Introduction and Background**

This study assesses the extent of community participation in housing development trends in Khayelitsha, Western Cape province, South Africa. In post-apartheid South Africa, democratic participation in the provision of such basic needs as housing and shelter is a fundamental human right. Public participation is concerned with creating democratic spaces, in terms of which stakeholders and communities are involved in the planning and implementation of housing policies, and in taking related decisions. Even though development efforts are currently being

exerted in Khayelitsha, township inhabitants are still faced with the on-going problem of having to live in poorly designed and unhealthy housing, which exacerbates the poverty that renders them some of the most vulnerable in the country.

The democratic government that was first elected in 1994, the local government elections that first took place in 1995 and the Constitution (originally implemented as Act No. 108 of 1996), were aimed at promoting the establishment of a democratic system of governance that required elected representatives to act in an answerable and transparent manner. The above-mentioned structures were also intended to promote the involvement of citizens and community groups in the design and delivery of municipal programmes. However, to date the national and provincial governments have been faced with a debilitating backlog in terms of housing provision. This study notes the limited participation of ordinary community members in Khayelitsha Township.

In seeking to provide greater insight into the above issue than has been available in the past, the current researchers employed a case study methodology to collect and analyse qualitative data. Khayelitsha means 'a new home', and it was one of the first areas to benefit from low-cost housing development in the Western Cape. The study provides an analysis of housing development trends in terms of policy development and implementation, the theoretical framework, analysis and interpretation of findings, conclusion and recommendations. The data obtained were collected from a sample of residents living in Site C of Khayelitsha Township. Rather than generalising the findings made, the intention of the researchers with this study was to collect and analyse data, so as to provide valuable insights into the prevailing situation, and thereby contribute to the field of Public Management in this respect.

## **Trends in the Provision of Low-cost Housing in South Africa**

This section notes the various housing trends in South Africa, as provided for by the Constitution and by policy development in the post-apartheid era. The application of such policy trends in relation to housing provision implicates various roles of the state within the multi-level governance framework.

### **The Redistribution Policies**

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) served as a perestroika for development in South Africa. The RDP indicated broad national objectives as the government intent, as positioned in the agenda for transformation regarding the provision of such basic services as low-cost houses. The RDP policy framework provided for the establishment of the RDP coordinating structures. The implication was that multi-party and intersectoral structures would be involved in planning, coordinating, facilitating and implementing the RDP projects, thus giving effect to the RDP objectives.<sup>1</sup> Early participatory effort emerged through the RDP forums that were envisaged as creating positive strategies regarding the participation of the role players, and as prioritising their specific needs, in alignment with the mandates of the stakeholders.

Similarly, the Local Government White Paper<sup>2</sup> (LGWP) was endorsed by the national government as the guiding vision that applied a developmental approach towards the servicing of the people within differentiated urban and rural areas that were inherited from the apartheid legacy. Both the LGWP and the RDP stress the importance of community participation in responding to the housing shortage. The LGWP advocates a people-centred process, in terms of which communities, through their representatives, can play a role as partners with the government and with private developers, in relation to public and private partnership projects. Furthermore, the Urban Development Strategy (UDS)<sup>3</sup> was issued as the most comprehensive statement of how the legacies of apartheid in cities and towns would be addressed. Two years later, the Urban Development Framework (UDF)<sup>4</sup> modified the UDS, as the former's objectives were embedded in the adoption of a neo-liberal approach, especially with regard to: state financial capacity and viability; the roles of the market and the state; civil society; deconcentration policies; the quality and cost of housing and related services; and the reform of urban finance and transport systems.<sup>5</sup>

## The Housing Subsidy Model

The South African Department of Housing's (DoH) White Paper<sup>6</sup> also provided some relief on housing shortages, by providing a strategy whereby the qualifying beneficiaries are compensated with a subsidy to take full ownership of RDP houses. According to Bond and Tait,<sup>7</sup> the Housing White Paper (HWP) introduced a new principle, whereby the government was to attract private investment, with housing being provided within a normalised market. Clearly, the affordability of such housing for ordinary people was an issue, hence the national government organised a joint capital arrangement with the banks, leading to the hiring of private companies to manage housing projects, with less accountability having to be assumed on the side of government. Accordingly, the government, in partnership with housing institutions, communities, the private sector and non-governmental institutions, has, so far, provided subsidies for more than 1 334 200 houses, with secure tenure thus being supplied to the poorest of the poor in both the urban and rural areas.

The rate of delivery was low compared to what was feasible, witnessed by the growth in the housing backlog, and by the fact that, of an estimated one million subsidies that were granted between 1994 and 1999, only 60 per cent were actually taken up, with only 16 per cent of them having received credit, due to bank reticence.<sup>8</sup> According to the Housing Act, No. 107 of 1997,<sup>9</sup> different roles and responsibilities were assigned to various government levels. In principle, the inclusion of other stakeholders such as civic representatives was mandated through public participation, with the national government being mainly in charge of funding, and playing an oversight role on policy implementation through the national DoH, at both the provincial and local government levels. Later still, the National Housing Code (NHC) of 2000<sup>10</sup> was formulated to address the housing shortage in South Africa. In 1997, the DoH estimated that the number of families without adequate housing was 2,2 million. At the time of the democratic elections, South African cities were characterised by dire housing and services backlogs, inequalities in municipal expenditure, spatial anomalies associated with the 'apartheid city', profound struggles against apartheid local government structures, high levels of unemployment and the existence of many

poverty-stricken households.<sup>11</sup> The NHC shifted from its RDP objectives, since it was committed to maintaining an ‘up-front capital subsidy’ approach in terms of having a great deal of money available, on credit, on which lower interest rates can be spread over a period of time. According to Bond and Tait,<sup>12</sup> the shift in focus violated the objectives of the RDP, which insisted that ‘government funds and private sector funding must be blended in order to make housing finance affordable’.

The Government of National Unity (GNU), which had adopted a neo-liberal approach in addressing the imbalances of the past, predicted that adopting a macro-economic strategy towards policy development would increase economic growth and improve the living conditions of the poor, by providing more job opportunities than had been available in the past, and by addressing the needs of ordinary people. The government then adopted the macro-economic policy frameworks known, respectively, as Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative – South Africa (AsgiSA) and the New Growth Path (NGP), with features of a neo-liberal economic paradigm. The purposes of the micro-economic policies were: to deliver rudimentary services to the poor; to ease the strain of poverty; to achieve economic growth; to decrease the national debt; to stabilise the increase in inflation and unemployment; and to give effect to service delivery mandates formed in partnership with the private sector.<sup>13</sup>

From 2002 to 2003, the DoH compiled a comprehensive review of the housing programme that was in place at the time, after having recognised a number of unintended consequences of the existing programme. In 2004, the government launched a new initiative called Breaking New Ground (BNG),<sup>14</sup> which was meant to be a comprehensive plan that would be implemented by the Department of Sustainable Human Settlements.<sup>15</sup> The main purpose of the plan was to shift the focus of the housing policy away from mere delivery of vast numbers of houses, towards the creation of sustainable human settlements. The unforeseen housing problems that the policy targeted included: peripheral residential development; poor quality products and settlements; lack of community participation; a limited secondary low-cost housing market; corruption and maladministration; a slowdown in delivery; under-spent budgets; limited, or decreasing public sector participation; an increasing housing backlog; and the continued growth of informal settlements.

The Inclusionary Housing Policy (IHP)<sup>16</sup> is a national initiative that aims to achieve a more balanced outcome of built-environment that is suitable for racially integrated and affordable residential environments. The goal of the IHP is to incentivise, or compel, the private sector to provide accommodation for low-income and lower-middle income households in areas from which they might otherwise be excluded, due to the dynamics of the land market. The IHP also seeks to increase the supply of affordable rental and ownership housing. The twofold approach of the IHP is set to examine what would: firstly, encourage the private sector to enter the government’s housing market, either in response to sanctions or incentives; and secondly, to encourage legal mechanisms through provincial legislation, supported by municipal by-laws that set the minimum standards of compliance in relation to new residential buildings, conversions or major renovations.

The Social Housing Act, No. 16 of 2008,<sup>17</sup> which was passed in 2005, provides for the establishment of the Social Housing Regulation Authority (SHRA). The stipulations pertaining to the SHRA were recently included in the revised NHC of 2009.<sup>18</sup> Kang’ethe Manomano<sup>19</sup> asserts that

the provision of RDP houses is always associated with the existence of poor living standards. Similarly, there is more compliance with the NHC by property developers that sell houses for purposes of business and investment, than there is among the private service providers that are contracted by the government to build low-cost houses for the poor. The state defines social housing as a rental cooperative housing option for persons who can only afford to pay a low cost, and which is provided at a level of scale that requires institutionalised management. Such housing is supplied by accredited social housing institutions, or in the form of accredited social housing projects, in undesignated restructuring zones.<sup>20</sup>

The social housing institutions (SHIs) have developed social housing units using the institutional subsidy that is provided with loan funding from the National Housing Finance Corporation (NHFC), and they have relied on donor funding, and on local authority grant funding to cover set-up and operational costs. This system has spawned an unsustainable situation, in which the majority of the SHIs depend on donor funding, in addition to the government's institutional subsidy in the form of a capital grant. The delivery models employed by SHIs have been a mixed bag, varying from pure rental to cooperative housing, instalment sale options, and hybrids of these delivery models.<sup>21</sup> The macro-economic strategy can be argued to have emphasised the need to build the state's capacity to deliver through expenditure on social programmes such as social assistance, health, public works, and other services to the poor, including low-cost housing.

## **Participatory Development and Community Participation**

So far, the dialogue on community participation in housing development has elicited both positive and negative comments from stakeholders. The democratic principles and the Bill of Rights entrenched in the Constitution<sup>22</sup> imply that there should be an increased community/citizen involvement in decision-making regarding issues affecting them. According to Theron,<sup>23</sup> community participation should be a permanent fixture of participatory development. Such participation needs to be located within the sphere of broader sustainable human development, democratisation and good governance debates. The fundamental issues emphasised in relation to participatory development relate to long-lasting positive change as a result of development efforts focused on improving the social and economic status of ordinary people, with shared governance yielding improved management of resources. Similarly, cooperative and multi-level governance are promoted in order to achieve improved objectives relating to openness, transparency and accountability in policy management, in all spheres of governance.

Similarly, participatory democracy is visible at the local level, since local government officials are, in effect, closest to the people at grassroots level.<sup>24</sup> During participatory budgeting and the integrated development planning (IDP) process, a link is formed between local government and the communities, in order to foster development and service delivery. However, the central role of local government is to build up a system of local democracy, in terms of which the local municipalities develop strategies and mechanisms, including participative planning, so as to be able to engage continually with citizens, and with business and community groups. This implies that participatory democracy should be conducive to the involvement of communities in housing

development, since the maintenance of such a system entails the involvement of the people at grass-roots level in decisions affecting them. In a democracy of this nature, all beneficiaries should have the right to participate in decision-making pertaining to them. A case in point is the Brazilian model of participatory development, in terms of which the communities involved meet with other stakeholders for purposes of participatory budgeting, and so as to be able to highlight the priorities that must be satisfied in order to meet the basic needs of the communities concerned.<sup>25</sup>

The tenets of democracy allow for representation to occur as a process, in terms of which the communities involved elect their own representatives to make decisions on their behalf. In such a democracy, the local government also includes political appointees that represent their own interest groups, and the government. Action groups and social structures also elect their own representatives to make decisions on their behalf in relation to community needs. In addition, an effective local democracy is required to conform to a combination of representative and participatory democratic principles. While elected councillors make the ultimate decisions involved, the residents concerned should be consulted as often as possible. Participatory approaches are considered to be at the core of development practice and efforts that increasingly promote people-centred development, state-society interaction, participatory democracy and grass-roots development.<sup>26</sup>

Dauids, Theron and Maphunye<sup>27</sup> concur with other scholars, by defining community participation ideally as a people-centred effort, which is characterised by a process and proactive learning that is achieved through engaging with communities, so as to be able to meet their needs. Such participation is, therefore, a development process that involves social learning pertaining to local governance at the grass-roots level, with different actors aspiring to protect their interests through securing patronage and a coalition of interests. Furthermore, community involvement and participation in common activities is a key element in identifying the existence of social capital in practice, and in facilitating community development, with the communities concerned being at the centre of the debate and the decisions that affect them.<sup>28</sup>

Discussion of the principle of community participation in the low-income housing process tends to lead to the expression of such vague utterances as 'the will of the people', 'people's democracy', 'the people shall govern from below' and 'the common good' – by both the government and local community representatives. However, it is still not clear what is meant by 'participation', nor how best to implement it. Evidently, although the principle of participation has been popularised and institutionalised, development theorists and practitioners have underscored the principle of decentralisation and participation of ordinary people in their own development, as an article of faith. Community participation in housing development should be seen as the direct involvement of the average person in the affairs of governance, and in the overall housing development programmes at grass-roots level. Similarly, Juta, Moeti and Matsiliza<sup>29</sup> assert that South Africa inherited a monumental national housing crisis, which was fundamentally complicated by a long-standing culture of a lack of both popular and community participation in matters of governance and service delivery.

Community involvement and participation has been noted as being located in different contexts, with the intention of:

- increasing the efficiency, and minimising the costs, of managing housing projects;
- improving effectiveness, and achieving policy objectives aimed at providing human settlements for the poor; and
- empowering communities to participate in decisions affecting them, and in striving to improve their living conditions.

Notably, community participation might serve to ameliorate the local community's immediate problems, and it can also be a means of addressing community problems in the long term.

## Research Methodology

The main purpose of this study was to assess the extent of community participation in housing development trends in the Western Cape, using the case of Khayelitsha Township. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the researchers employed a mixed methodology, using both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The Khayelitsha local area was the unit of analysis, from which the sample was extracted for data collection. Reflections on the observations made of Khayelitsha's social, economic and physical environment were also used in the data analysis. The researchers collected data during 2014 and 2015.

The primary sources of data included questionnaires, interviews and observations; the secondary data included document analysis and a review of the relevant literature. Participants in the study included government officials from the City of Cape Town, project team members, and ward councillors, as well as residents living in Khayelitsha, and the beneficiaries of low-cost housing in Khayelitsha (Site C). Numerous other stakeholders were also included in the study.

Secondary data were obtained from a review of relevant articles in accredited journals, books, monographs, electronic journals and policy documents. Government sources consisted of reports from the DoH and Department of Provincial and Local Government, as well as from the Office of the Auditor-General. The researchers obtained ethical clearance from the City of Cape Town and the university's Ethics Committee, so as to be able to conduct the study. In addition, the principle of informed consent was applied when the aims and objectives of the study, and the researchers' credentials, were declared to the participants and government officials involved. The principles of honesty, respect and privacy regarding the identities of the participants were observed throughout the study, including during data collection and report writing.

## Interpretation of Findings

### Introduction

This section focuses mainly on the interpretation of findings from the data gathered from the primary and secondary sources. The authors used a quantitative and a qualitative data analysis approach. The main focus of the study was on investigating the extent of participation by the Khayelitsha community in the development of housing trends in post-apartheid South Africa.

### Biographical Data of Respondents

The personal details obtained from the respondents included their gender, age, educational status, employment and occupational status. With regard to the actual participants in the survey, in terms of gender: 42 per cent were male; 58 per cent were female. Most of the households that participated in the survey were female-headed. In relation to marital status: 46 per cent of the participants were single (and had never been married); 34 per cent were married; six per cent were divorced; six per cent were cohabitating. Of the participants, 40 per cent had lived in Khayelitsha for a period of between one to two years, with 30 per cent having lived there for 15 years, and 25 per cent having lived in the area for only a year. The majority of respondents indicated that they had lived in Khayelitsha Township for a period of from one to two years.

The findings made in this respect were not surprising, since the informal settlements are regarded as a fall-back for those who lack sufficient funds to buy a house for themselves. Some of the participants involved were in the process of migrating from one informal settlement to another, so as to access the best opportunities available to them. However, the residents who were found to have stayed almost 15 years in Khayelitsha reflected a sense of belonging to the area.

### Respondents' Knowledge of Community Events and Existing Housing Projects

The respondents were asked whether they knew of any community events and housing development projects, and whether they had participated in any of them. The importance of this question lay in it being intended to probe the respondents about their methods of communicating about, and participating in, local activities, through which they might be able to develop a sense of belonging and unity. Social gatherings and public meetings provide residents with opportunities to come together, to interact and to participate in community gatherings.<sup>30</sup> Instead of participating in any municipality-sponsored events, 74 per cent of Khayelitsha occupants indicated that they functioned independently of the state. However, they asserted that they did engage in social gatherings collectively.

Almost 20 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that they were aware of the existence of one dominant organisation, called the Kuyasa Development Project, although some of the other respondents expressed uncertainty regarding this issue. However, 22 per cent of the respondents disagreed that there was a development project available to them. Most of the respondents from the focus group claimed that they had not heard of a project that was to be developed in their area. They noted that a few notices regarding the holding of forthcoming public meetings had been circulated by their civic representatives and leaders.

One of the respondents noted:

There used to be a very beneficial programme for the youth in Khayelitsha, which was administered by Khayelitsha Development Forum (KDF). It used to organise games for us, but that programme is not there anymore. That programme helped us to spend time playing, and stopping us from doing crime and drugs (March 22, 2014).

Community members alluded to the fact that they only saw developers coming to their areas to build houses, without them being notified of what precisely was going on. They expressed concern about the fact that the companies and developers involved in the housing project did not seem to be accountable to anyone. Even the ward counsellors asserted that they were only mandated to make an announcement about the new housing development, and stated that they were not party to the decisions taken by the DHS.

## Community Participation in Development and Housing Projects

Participation in informal community activities and in civic associations is a form of social networking that enhances the prospects for sustainable communities.<sup>51</sup> When the participants were asked if they were aware of any existing housing development projects, 80 per cent indicated that they had attended meetings at which they were informed that they would be moved from the squatter camps to RDP housing, to which some had already moved. Of the respondents, 30 per cent expressed a negative feeling regarding the existing community structures, due to their political affiliations. Even though there was ignorance and disappointment regarding the actual state of affairs, 40 per cent of the respondents indicated that they had built the shacks in which they were living at the time of the study.

The respondents also noted their dissatisfaction regarding the fact that, during the planning phase of the RDP housing development in Khayelitsha, the residents were not consulted, in any shape or form, by government officials and ward councillors. Such lack of consultation implied that no community input or local expression of views had been incorporated into either the planning phase or the implementation of phases 1 and 2 of the RDP housing construction programme. Hence, when they were asked if they felt encouraged to participate in the planning phase of housing development programmes in the future, none of the respondents was positive in this respect. However, none of the residents indicated any involvement in any state-initiated, or state-driven, project. Instead, all the residents claimed that they had been totally excluded from any engagement

in community development initiatives, and that this absence of engagement had effectively destroyed any prospects of them having a sense of community belonging, identity or pride in such a project. In short, Khayelitsha residents expressed a feeling of isolation and exclusion from the state. One 42-year-old male participant noted:

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

According to the respondents, the municipality only told them that the houses were going to be constructed, but they were not, at any stage, involved in the planning process related to such construction.

One member from the Directorate of Human Settlement Planning noted:

[The] problem of Khayelitsha in general is the density of the area. That result[s] to [i.e. in] the high [i.e. a] shortage of houses, and this makes it difficult to reach everyone in [i.e. through] communication. Our strategy is to put notices on the community newspaper and [to] have [an] extended sub-council meeting. We also rely on the ward forums . . . they are political dominant. All this makes us not to be fruitful in executing our planning to reach more people. When we do our planning, we do it in the council chambers, and, as far as our thinking is concerned, we cannot do planning with [the] communities, as this might take [too] long [May 27, 2014].

A few of the respondents maintained that, if community involvement was properly controlled regarding input on a housing project, the project providers and the government would experience major success with their projects. This means that the communities concerned were willing to be involved in the development projects that relate to them, and especially in terms of housing projects, because they regarded housing as a basic need.

## The Physical Quality of the RDP/Low-cost Houses

The government appears to have failed to live up to the dream of providing quality houses for Khayelitsha residents. The government clearly seems to have been challenged in its intention to provide and create a social and sustainable human settlement in Khayelitsha (as has happened elsewhere in South Africa) and to construct building units of good quality that can be highly valued by their owners. The respondents have come to realise that they are living in low-income and affordable houses of compromised quality that fell far below acceptable standards. Most RDP and low-cost housing structures had been found to have fundamental construction faults, due to the use of poor workmanship and poor-quality building materials, which has led to some becoming seriously dilapidated. The respondents indicated that many of the RDP houses were faulty, with them having experienced difficulties with accessing electricity, with the flushing toilets, and with the clean water supply connected to their houses.

Concerns were also raised by the occupants that their houses even posed a serious health risk. Some RDP house occupants in Khayelitsha suffered from ailments that could be linked directly to the conditions of the housing, including influenza, asthma and pneumonia. Rainwater, as noted, often came in through the cracks in the exterior walls, making the houses wet and damp. The RDP houses, in many ways, were no better than the informal structures and shacks, in terms of their impact on living conditions; in winter, for instance, it was not unusual for Hlalani residents living in RDP housing to have to sleep in their daywear. When it rained, the occupants had to move around from spot to spot in the house to avoid the rain that falls in through gaps in a leaky roof. One 40-year-old female occupant stated that the cracks:

... allow cold to come through; my son is suffering from asthma, so he is strongly affected by the cold weather. The houses are a total disaster when it rains; it is like a waterfall inside the house, because of the cracks and the leaks (March 1, 2014).

Of the respondents, 28 indicated that they were experiencing problems with the quality of the houses that they had received. They highlighted the following concerns: the house was small, and not sub-divided; the roof leaked; the walls were cracked; and the ventilation was very poor. Of the occupants surveyed in Khayelitsha, 50 per cent indicated that they had had to renovate their houses by mending the cracks in them at their own expense. As well as installing new outside doors, they had had to repair walls, roofs, water taps, window frames and toilets. Some had also extended their RDP house, since the original one was too small for their needs. Those residents who had not undertaken any structural repair work or improvements recognised the need to do so, although they had no money for such work to be done. A few of the residents indicated that they had benefited from the project consolidation efforts during the administration of the former minister, Tokyo Sexwale. At that time, a few of the houses were demolished, and built afresh. Others believed that it was the government's responsibility to fix their houses, because the promise had been made of the provision of decent housing for all. In this regard, they claimed that, prior to the housing delivery, the government had not consulted them, either regarding housing design, or the quality standards required. When asked about the quality of their RDP house, 88 per cent of Khayelitsha respondents expressed deep concern about how small it was. Although the government had built RDP houses in Khayelitsha, some of the respondents also had backyard shacks on their plots. While the shacks were normally made of corrugated iron, some were made of sticks and mud, or plastic.

## **The Role of Local Government Officials in Engaging with the Community in Khayelitsha**

The White Paper on Local Government<sup>32</sup> and the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act (MSA), No. 32 of 2000<sup>33</sup> promote and guide public participation at the local level, with local councillors being responsible for steering the process, for conducting dialogue, and for organising public

participation. The respondents reiterated their disappointment, claiming that their local councillors were not readily accessible most of the time. This study has placed an appropriate emphasis on local government support of community involvement in relation to housing development trends. In this case study, the voices of the ordinary people were ignored. The MSA was intended to guide the relations between citizens and local government, specifically in terms of the provision of services. It was implemented to articulate the values of accountability, transparency, efficiency and consultation in municipal affairs, notably through the generation of dependable structures that enable community participation in the affairs concerned. Through improving service delivery on a participatory basis, this piece of legislation is aimed at advancing the plans and programmes of developmental local government, and of good governance, by putting 'people first'.<sup>54</sup>

In this regard, the emergence and existence of civic organisations that serve as a conduit for the voice of the people is seen as being crucial for the building of linked capital (specifically in terms of networks that arise between ordinary citizens and those in authority). Accordingly, ordinary people are empowered to influence, and to become engaged in, decision-making by the state structures that directly affect their community.<sup>55</sup> In practice, the adoption of such a participatory development approach seems, in terms of policy, only to be at the national level, with the very opposite situation often being the case on the ground. The experiences of the respondents in the Cape Metro, including in Khayelitsha, seem to bear this out.

## **Accountability and Responsiveness of Officials to Housing Service Delivery**

When the Khayelitsha community members were asked if they had observed any responsiveness and accountability of public officials on matters of housing provision, 64 per cent of them answered 'yes', and 36 per cent answered 'no'. One respondent stated that no accountability and responsiveness was seen, and the respondent commented:

Our municipality just uses us to vote; that's all. They don't care about us. Once we have voted for them, they neglect us. The meetings that they call are not beneficial to us (16 April 2013).

Another resident stated:

The municipality does not care about us; there are a lot of things which are not okay about these houses. We can't like such RDP houses. It's like they were doing for us just to hide our heads. The people who were responsible for building these houses cheated [us out of] the funds allocated to build houses (16 April 2013).

Another respondent, in referring to the former officially white part of Somerset West, claimed:

The municipality respects the educated doctors, professors, and so on staying in town (16 April 2013).

The residents stated that they did, at times, seek to raise their concerns with the local municipality. As a result, 64 per cent of the research participants expressed mixed feelings about the role of officials in responding to their needs, and in them being accountable for the provision of RDP houses. However, it appears that reporting any problem to the municipality is generally seen as being a waste of time, with their complaints not being addressed, let alone acted upon. One of the participants had the following to say with particular reference to the RDP houses:

We do call the municipality to come fix a problem, but they don't show up. The government promised us decent houses, but these houses are of poor structural quality, and when we go and report them, since we do not have money to repair them, they don't show up (16 April 2013).

Khayelitsha community members expressed their dissatisfaction with the existing infrastructure in their local area. As was previously noted, Khayelitsha residents observed the quarry latrine system as leading to illness and disease, as well as contributing to a loss of dignity. The residents also claimed that the municipality rarely responded with any urgency in terms of emptying the pits when they were full. At the time of the current study, the process of communication seemed to be a one-way process, rather than a genuine dialogue. Even though problems were reported, the municipality did not provide satisfactory feedback. Makhaza and Nkanini residents' clear loss of trust in the Cape Metro (i.e. the Unicity) was expressed in their impatience and anger over the government's inability and apparent unwillingness to provide basic transport services to Khayelitsha.

The loss of pride and dignity felt by the respondents is manifested in the following utterance of a female Khayelitsha resident:

I can't be proud of the house, since it has cracks, no ventilation, [the] floors are just a mess [-] they were not properly done. The house was also not properly plastered. The government which built the houses for us should come and assess the situation of the houses. The Municipality does not care about us; there are a lot of things which are not alright about these houses. We can't like such RDP houses. It's like they were doing this for us just to hide heads. The people who were responsible for building these houses defrauded the funds allocated [by the government] to build houses (16 March 2013).

Such sentiments express not merely dissatisfaction with the government's failure to provide for residents' basic physical needs (in the form of housing and infrastructure), but also failure to facilitate the building of social relations that empower local citizens. Such failures run contrary to the emergence of sustainable human settlements. Meeting the physical and social needs of lower income groups is a critical function of the post-apartheid state. Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa<sup>56</sup> encourages 'the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government'. In this context, Khayelitsha and its municipalities have a duty to facilitate the emergence of sustainable settlements by encouraging institutional and infrastructural development on a sustainable basis, by providing adequate services to its citizens, and by encouraging local RDP house beneficiaries to work together to improve one another's living conditions. Many Khayelitsha respondents expressed a belief that working collectively as

a community would be good for the development of the community, but, as was earlier indicated, serious problems of disrespect, mistrust and disunity persist in Khayelitsha.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The main aim of this study was to assess the extent of community participation in housing development trends in Khayelitsha Township, Cape Town. It is clear from the findings and the interpretation of the data obtained that there was little participation by the Khayelitsha community participated in comparison to what was envisaged. Community members were not involved in the planning and implementation of housing development in relation to the RDP, the BNG and the current housing subsidy. The study also revealed some challenges in regard to their participation, such as inconsistencies in representation, and the paucity of resources that were provided to them. Such setbacks undermined their ability to make a contribution to the decisions on issues affecting them. The respondents drew attention to their lack of information and power, and to their vulnerability to socio-economic and political conditions in their area of jurisdiction.

Surprisingly, social relationships were found to exist among the community members at Site C, whereas there was less, or limited, ad hoc participation of such members in the ongoing housing development projects. It is highly recommended that public officials, home builders and private service providers include communities in the planning and implementation of housing projects, and that they encourage the participation of grass-roots organisations in eradicating the persisting top-down approach in terms of decision-making. The national and provincial DoH must develop strategies that will enhance an inclusive implementation of housing development projects that can promote participatory development in human settlement.

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