eNEWSLETTER ▶
EXTRANET LOGIN ▶
SITE MAP ▶

PARTNERS IN CITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

ABOUT SACN   WHAT WE DO   WHERE WE WORK   KNOWLEDGE & RESOURCE CENTRE   SEARCH

CITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY | INCLUSIVE CITIES | PRODUCTIVE CITIES | WELL-GOVERNED CITIES | SUSTAINABLE CITIES

CITIES

BUFFALO CITY | CAPE TOWN | EKURHULENI | ETHEKWINI | JOHANNESBURG | MANGAUNG | MSUNDUZI | NELSON MANDELA METROPOLE | TSHWANE

Home ▶ Who we work with ▶ General ▶ Human settlements not just about housing

Human settlements not just about housing

03 November 2010
Experts discuss various solutions to establishing sustainable human settlements in a new approach to addressing the current housing backlog.

WITH more than 2 700 informal settlements in the country, the Department of Human Settlements has its work cut out trying to address the housing backlog.

The department has wasted no time, acquiring 6 250 hectares of land and already it has started upgrading hundreds of thousands of informal settlement dwellings.

But the department's plans go beyond just providing a roof over the heads of the approximately 12 million South Africans in need of better shelter.

Human Settlements Minister Tokyo Sexwale often stresses that people need to be provided with sustainable human settlements they can be proud of.

"Where people live must be where they can learn and [have] leisure. Where people stay must be where they can play and pray," the minister says.

The department's approach goes beyond building houses and aims to build proper suburbs, villages and towns.

It's an approach that awarding-winning architect, Mokena Makeka, a speaker at a recent Knowledge Week conference, strongly advocates.

The conference, themed "South African Human Settlements 2030 - Rethinking the Spatial Development Trajectory," was hosted by the Development Bank of Southern Africa, in partnership with the Department of Human Settlements.

"Sustainable human settlements are composed not only of housing components but of public infrastructure, amenities and space opportunities that actually make a community," Makeka says.

The aim behind establishing sustainable human settlements is actually making humane and dignified developments, he points out.

"It is absolutely critical that the building not only have insulation and protection from the elements but if we are talking about a sustainable human settlement, we are talking about the safety of that child who is walking home from school at night. Are those streets well lit?

"That child may not have enough books at home but still has to do homework. Is there a library nearby where the child can study? Is there a park where an elderly person can feel safe to walk out into the streets?" he adds.

Human settlements need to be strategically placed - close to city centres where there are economic opportunities for people.

"If we are going to make sustainable human settlements for the majority of our country, we have to imagine the house as more than just a unit. It has to be about the context within which it is in and about making the right choices to allow the people in those areas to have enough opportunities," Makeka says.

For Ronald Eglin of Afesis-Corplan, a non-governmental organisation that focuses on community driven development, the key element in addressing the housing backlog is land.

Eglin says the supply of housing is not keeping up with the demand. It is an observation that Sexwale also acknowledges.

Government has hardly moved in breaking the housing backlog that already exists, never mind the numbers associated with the population growth, the minister admits.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Spatial Transformations: Galleries

Expanding our spatial knowledge: Navigating through the City

INTEGRATED URBAN DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
VIEW MORE DETAILS +

Two SA cities in the running for global sustainability challenge

TENDERS & PROPOSALS

NB!!! All submissions of proposals will receive an email confirming receipt. Please check your receipt of confirmation.

Request for Proposals: Content coordination and production of awareness raising material for climate change and sustainability/ green economy in the City of Tshwane
Close date: Friday, 30 May 2014
Read RFP

Call for proposals: Understanding skills and capacity requirements to effectively plan and manage integrated rapid public transport networks
Closing date: Wednesday, 16 April 2014
Read RFP

Call for proposals:Regulatory framework to promote energy efficiency in municipalities
Closing date: Friday, 04 April 2014
Read RFP

Call for technical papers: Financial implications of transitioning to a green economy and adoption of climate action for cities
Closing date: Friday, 04 April 2014
Read RFP

This increased demand for housing is reflected in the number of informal settlements or slums which have ballooned, he adds.

"They (informal settlements) are not the creation of government. They are, in fact, human parking lots, crammed with people hoping and praying to make it into better housing in the cities," Sexwale says.

Eglin says estimates show that those without houses could be waiting for as long as 30 years to get one.

Although he admits it is a generalisation, Eglin points out the only two options for someone who is in need of land or housing is to either wait out the years for a "break new ground house" or resort to land invasion.

To explore an option in between these two, the concept of LANDfirst or incremental housing was birthed.

It proposes a pro-poor approach to land access, with the emphasis on providing planned secure land with basic services as a first step towards a longer term housing and settlement upgrading process.

The starting point of LANDfirst is to identify and acquire well located land, Eglin explains.

The next step is to provide basic services and allow for settlement on the land, even before RDP houses are built.

Eglin acknowledges that initially people will, in all likelihood, build shacks but that this will be intermediate housing while residents wait for proper housing to be built.

He suggests that over time, the shacks could become registered with the municipality. Eventually, and with upgrading, shack lists can become more sophisticated and develop into lease agreements.

The overall aim is the upgrading of a LANDfirst settlement through the provision of additional services, houses, tenure and facilities.

Eglin recognises that there are likely to be a number of objections to the LANDfirst concept and among the arguments against the approach is that it just moves people from one shack to another; there are no guarantees that the area will be upgraded; and that it encourages sprawl.

But he also points out the strong points of the approach will provide people with land to build their own homes, and in so doing, gives them recognition as citizens.

It will give people the opportunity to start investing in something of their own and at the same time provide an alternative to land invasion, he adds.

Source: BuaNews

PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH

2013 STATE OF CITIES FINANCE REPORT

2013 IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF LGSETA GRANT FUNDED TRAINING INTERVENTIONS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR DURING THE PERIOD 2006 TO 2011

MUNICIPAL IQ BRIEF ON SACN SECONDARY CITIES REPORT

NEW PROVINCIAL PLANNING LEGISLATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES: UNDERSTANDING FROM THE REFORM PROCESS

SOCIAL DIALOGUE SERIES WITH DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

WITS SLUM UPGRADE FIELDTRIP REPORTS

THE SOUTH AFRICAN INFORMAL CITY BOOK.

HOW THE GIS SYSTEM MEETS THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF SPATIAL PLANNING AND LAND USE SYSTEM

THE SOUTH AFRICAN INFORMAL CITY @ PLANNING AFRICA

Produced and maintained by Big Media