

Creating Sustainable Human Settlements: An Analysis of Planning Intervention in Addressing Informal Settlements in South Africa

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Abstract : The proliferation of informal settlements remains one of the major planning challenges in democratic South Africa. In spite of the various local, national and international initiatives to promote the creation of sustainable human settlements, informal settlements continue to exist as spatially marginalised societies characterised by poverty, unemployment, squalor conditions and disaster risks. It is argued that, in practice, intervention is mainly directed at achieving set quantitative targets and goals rather than improving the lives of the inhabitants. The relevant planning instruments do not adequately address the integration of informal settlements into the broader planning framework. This paper is based on the analysis of the informal settlement intervention within the North West Province. Financial constraints, bureaucracy in housing delivery and lack of horizontal and vertical integration in spatial planning and programme implementation are amongst the major factors that caused stagnation in some of the upgrading programmes which in turn hindered the attainment of the target set as part of the Outcome 8 Delivery Agreement. Moreover, the absence of distinct indicators for the assessment of the qualitative progress of upgrading programmes indicates shortcomings in the intervention policies and programmes to promote the creation of sustainable human settlements. Thus, this paper seeks to proffer an assessment toolkit as well as a framework for the implementation of a Sustainable Informal Settlement Programme.

Keywords : formalization of informal settlements, planning intervention, sustainable formalization indicators, sustainable human settlements

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