Adam Farkas – Townships In South Africa: Can Design Help Solve The Housing Crisis?

guardian.com. May 2014. On the World Design Capital (WDC) website, Cape Town presents someremarkable shack design projects aimed to solve a nationwide slum problem. Yet even with more than 200 informal settlements and 600,000 residents waiting for formal housing, the Western Cape has been slow to implement the 'transformative design' it celebrates.

The reluctance is not surprising as all those designs respond to the fact that South Africa's housing programme is not coping. Born from a historic pledge by the ANC in 1994, the scheme to provide brick houses to all those in need is too costly and too slow. The backlog hit 2.1m units in 2013 and at least 1.9 million people (more than 10% of all households) live in shacks or other makeshift dwellings.

Throughout the country, hundreds of thousands of shacks make dense townships which grapple with fires, floods and sanitation problems. To bring relief from these everyday dangers, designers are proposing intermediate steps between shacks and brick houses – quick, low-cost, temporary solutions – until the state housing programme catches up on its backlog. Yet political and financial hurdles have so far stood in the way of building modern shacks on a large scale.

Read more: http://www.theguardian.com/south-africa-cape-town-slum-housing?