

South Africa - The Psychological Strain of Living in Tin Can Town

Irin Global - Cape Town - 30 October 2012 (IRIN) - A recent academic study has identified a range of mental health disorders suffered by shack dwellers in South Africa's Western Cape Province, from chronic insomnia to low self-esteem.

The study, *The Impact of Living in Transitional Communities; The Experiences of People in Blikkiesdorp and Happy Valley*, was conducted by the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). Because of budget considerations, the study was constrained to two settlements.

"The researchers did not have the resources to do large-scale interviews, so instead we set up four different focus groups of between 10 and 20 people living in Blikkiesdorp and another similar transit camp called Happy Valley. And we found there was a high level of correlation between the findings in each case," Shaheed Mahomed, a CPUT civil engineer lecturer and Blikkiesdorp community activist told IRIN.

Among the mental health issues identified were depression, anxiety and panic attacks, chronic insomnia, anger and low self-esteem.

Read more: [The Psychological Strain of Living in Tin Can Town](#)

Irin Global - Humanitarian News and Analysis - A Service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Subir Roy - How to House the Urban Poor

Business Standard - October 30, 2012 - A new way of calculating the urban housing shortage in the country has yielded a remarkable insight. Urban India faces a duality. Even as there is a huge shortage, of 18.67 million houses, as many

as 11.09 million are lying vacant and their number is growing. The latter is largely because many who are better off have barely-used second homes — some are holding on to houses for purely speculative reasons and many will not rent out for fear of being unable to get them back, courtesy rent control laws.

The good news is that in the last decade the urban housing stock has grown by 51 per cent. The bad news is that over 95 per cent of the housing shortage is accounted for by those at the bottom of the pyramid — economically weaker sections and low-income groupings. It is possible to argue that if you take care of urban poverty, the housing shortage will take care of itself.

But urban poverty is not easily banished. Poor people migrate to urban areas in search of jobs and remain there to get a higher income than what they would get in rural areas.

Read more: [Subir Roy-How to House Urban Poor](#)

Avi Friedman: Thinking Outside The Box On Affordable Housing

The SFU Centre for Dialogue presents renowned international housing expert Dr. Avi Friedman, in collaboration with the Urban Development Institute, City of Vancouver, Social Planning and Research Council of BC, BC Non-Profit Housing Association and other partners.

Lecture Description:

Metro Vancouver's many attributes make it a highly desirable place to live and invest. Unfortunately, that makes housing, whether rental or ownership, unaffordable for many of the region's citizens. The need to think outside the box about lower-cost residential options has become an urgent priority. Renowned international housing expert Dr. Avi Friedman speaks about what's making housing unaffordable in Metro Vancouver — as well as the direct and indirect contributions that affordable housing makes to communities. He describes

potential housing strategies, including examples of local and international projects, that offer innovative affordable housing solutions for this region.

Keynote biography: Avi Friedman, Professor, McGill University School of Architecture

Dr. Avi Friedman received his Bachelor's degree in Architecture and Town Planning from the Israel Institute of Technology, his Master's Degree from McGill University, and his Doctorate from the University of Montréal. In 1988, he founded the Affordable Homes Program at the McGill School of Architecture where he teaches. He is known nationally and internationally for his housing innovation and in particular for the Grow Home and Next Home designs. He is the author of ten books and was a syndicated columnist for the CanWest Chain of daily newspapers. He is a practicing architect and the recipient of numerous awards including the Manning Innovation Award and the United Nations World Habitat Award. In the year 2000 he was selected by Wallpaper magazine as 1 of 10 people from around the world "most likely to change the way we live".

Moderator biography: Peter Ladner, Fellow, SFU Centre for Dialogue

Peter Ladner is a Fellow of the SFU Centre for Dialogue, promoting the project "Planning Cities as if Food Matters." His book *The Urban Food Revolution: Changing the Way We Feed Cities*, was published by New Society Publishers in fall, 2011. He is a former Vancouver City Councillor, Metro Vancouver director, and publisher of *Business in Vancouver* newspaper.

Pop Up Housing in Garages by Levitt Bernstein

www.dezeen.com. October 25, 2012- Levitt Bernstein have recently been announced as winners from over 400 entries of the open international HOME competition run by Building Trust International.

The winning proposal uses temporary 'pop-up' structures to occupy redundant

garages on existing housing estates in east London. HAWSE (Homes through Apprenticeships With Skills for Employment) was designed by Georgie Revell and Sarah Jenkinson in collaboration with a homeless charity and training academy. The intention is for the project to be delivered through an apprenticeship scheme with components manufactured off-site as a kit-of parts. The structures are quick to assemble and can be inhabited immediately with the components being demountable and reusable. The proposals not only offer a home but education opportunities in construction techniques, a way of regenerating street frontage and a practical interim solution between other development possibilities.

The competition brief asked for proposals to focus on low cost, single occupancy housing solutions in urban areas to respond to the deficit of affordable housing options. The competition had over 400 entries for both the professional and student categories and the judging panel was chaired by Building Trust, YMCA, Habitat for Humanity and Crash. Building Trust International launch their next humanitarian design competition on the 15th Oct focusing flood resistant housing in Cambodia.

Read more: [Levitt Bernstein - Pop Up Housing](#)

Thashlin Govender Et Al - Living in Low-Cost Housing Settlements In Cape Town, South Africa—The Epidemiological Characteristics Associated With Increased Health Vulnerability

by Thashlin Govender, Jo M. Barnes & Clarissa H. Pieper

The aim of this study was to assess the epidemiological characteristics of a representative sample of subsidized low-cost housing communities in the City of Cape Town in relation to their living conditions and their health status. Four subsidized low-cost housing communities were selected within the City of Cape Town in this cross-sectional survey. Structured interviews were administered in 336 dwellings on 173 plots.

Data was obtained from 1,080 persons with a response rate of 100%. Almost all of the state-subsidized houses had one or more shacks in the backyard, increasing the occupation density and putting the municipal sanitation infrastructure under pressure. In 40% of main houses, one or more cases of diarrhea were reported during the two weeks preceding the survey, in contrast to 23% of shacks ($p < 0.0007$). Of the total group, 1.7% willingly disclosed that they were HIV positive, while 3.5% reported being tuberculosis (TB) positive. One of them reported having multiple drug-resistant TB. None of the HIV positive or TB positive persons was on any treatment. A reported 6.3% of the families admitted regularly eating only one meal per day, whereas 18.5% reported having only two meals per day. The shack dwellers had significantly higher education and employment status ($p < 0.01$), since they had to pay rent. Improvements in health intended by the rehousing process did not materialize for the recipients of low-cost housing in this study. The health vulnerability of individuals in these communities had considerable implications for the curative health services. Sanitation failures, infectious disease pressure, and environmental pollution in these communities represent a serious public health risk. The densification caused by backyard shacks, in addition, has municipal service implications and needs to be better managed. Urgent intervention is needed to allow the state-funded housing schemes to deliver the improved health that was envisaged at its inception.

Read more: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/>

Chicago - The National Public Housing Museum is Now Virtual

☒ The National Public Housing Museum and the Center for the Study of Housing and Society promotes and fosters the deep cultural understanding through artifacts, photos, archival documents, social history, public policy, and other material objects spanning seven decades. It is the first institution dedicated to interpreting the experience of public and social housing and the illumination of resilience of poor and working class families of every race and ethnicity. The Museum is slated for a phased opening beginning in 2013.

<http://www.publichousingmuseum.org/>