

Elias Masilela - Affordable Housing In South Africa

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Section 26 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution enshrines a citizen's right to adequate housing.

According to the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in relation to adequate housing, the article reads: "the right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one's head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity. Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity."

The Government in an effort to realise this right for all South Africans has built over 3 million subsidised housing units since 1994.

Not only is this a constitutional requirement, it is just simple human dignity.

However, due to the massive growing demands, on the one hand and decades of degradation of housing conditions, on the other hand, the backlog remains difficult to eradicate.

Current estimates of the backlog stand at about 2.1 to 2.5 million units.

As at September 2011, it was estimated that approximately 12 million people were still without adequate housing.

Though consistent and reliable statistics on housing are somewhat patchy, according to the 2009 General Household Survey, 12.8 percent of South African households lived in a RDP or State-subsidised dwelling and 13.5 percent of households have at least one member of the household on a demand database or waiting list for State subsidised housing.

International human rights law recognises principles on basic housing.

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The Department of Human Settlements has recognised that the backlog in South Africa is not being reduced fast enough and has committed to increasing the rate of delivery with a view to wiping out the backlog by 2030.

At current levels, over R16 billion is earmarked by Government for housing each year.

But still this is not enough and has led Minister Sexwale to say that *“We need all hands on deck to sort this problem out and to create a better South Africa for all.”*

Read more: <http://www.property24.com/affordable-housing-in-south-africa>

Elias Masilela is the chief executive officer of the Public Investment Corporation.

Patty Russell - “To Build or Not to Build” - That is the Question

Forbes India, October, 16, 2012 - Blog. Here’s a dilemma: You are the owner of a construction company and to expand your market, you need to go into neighborhoods where clients can’t pay the typical construction costs; where there is a dearth of skilled labour and where it is nearly impossible to transport the materials typically associated with your conventional construction methods. You ask yourself: Why make the effort - is the ‘juice worth the squeeze?’

This was the situation faced by Moladi, a South African family-owned business. Sure, there was a demand for new construction - after all, affordable housing in low-income areas can provide a pivotal asset and source of stability that can pull a family out of poverty. In fact, many families were trying to build houses on their own, leading to sub-standard construction and often dangerous living conditions.

Moladi, however, was ready to rise to the challenge. They put a lot of ‘skin in the game’ from a technological innovation perspective, and in the process designed a new construction material to meet the constraints of the target market - a removable, reusable, recyclable, and lightweight plastic formwork mould, which when filled with aerated mortar, could form the wall structure of a house in as

early as one day. Better yet, each set of Moladi formwork panels could be reused 50 times, without electricity, and by unskilled labourers.

Read more: [Patty Russell -To Build or Not to Build](#)

Extreme Urbanism 1: Reimagining Mumbai's Back Bay

A Collaborative Studio and Research Project, Spring 2011

Rahul Mehrotra, Chair of Urban Planning and Design at Harvard Graduate School of Design, provided the leadership for this studio and research project with collaboration from

Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Harvard Business School, Real Estate Academic Initiative at Harvard University and the Loeb Fellowship at the Graduate School of Design.

David Satterthwaite - Rethinking Development Finance for City "Slums"

Policy Innovations. October, 15, 2012. Very little aid is actually available to low-income urban groups and grassroots organizations. If it is, it is subject to the conditions and priorities established by the aid provider. The Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA) is challenging this funding model by providing small grants to low-income communities for the initiatives they choose and supporting

these communities to work together and work with their local governments.

Around one in seven of the world's population lives in informal settlements in urban areas. City economies would collapse without their labor and the goods and services from informal enterprises—yet city governments often ignore them or see them only as a problem. In the absence of support from local governments, aid agencies, or development banks, they have had to manage by themselves. They've built a high proportion of all new housing in informal settlements with insecure tenure because they cannot get land legally and have often built on land ill-suited to housing because they were not allowed to settle on good quality land. They struggle to cope with problems such as regular flooding, and face high levels of fire risk (caused by widespread use of candles, kerosene lamps, and stoves in houses constructed from flammable materials located very close together). They face the constant threat of eviction—or actual eviction.

The Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA) sees these people, and the grassroots organizations they form, as the basis for urban development.

Read more: [D. Satterthwaite - Rethinking Development Finance for City "Slums"](#)

A Omenya - A Networks Approach To Understanding The Role Of The Market And The State In Housing

The Cases Of Nairobi, Kenya And Johannesburg, South Africa

ajol.info This paper presents an outline case for use of 'housing networks concept' to unpack housing problems in the context of Johannesburg, South Africa and Nairobi, Kenya.

It begins by defining housing networks and outlining areas of knowledge where the 'networks concept' has been used. The paper then develops a case for application of 'networks' in understanding urban housing problems, focusing on the roles of the state, the market and civil society.

It explores resource origins, allocation, flows and destination in low-income housing in Nairobi, Kenya and Johannesburg, South Africa. The paper argues that the networks for land delivery make land inaccessible for the low-income in both cities. The means of accessing finance for housing available to the poor tend to be exploitative despite government regulation in the case of Johannesburg. Provision of infrastructure, services and social amenities ignore the collective resources of the low-income. Labour and sweat equity concepts are misplaced in light of cheap labour and unemployment, particularly in Nairobi. Building standards, materials and technology favour the upper-income despite allowance in both cities for lower building standards.

Key lessons and conclusions are drawn at the end.

Download full text: <http://www.ajol.info/>

Cities Alliance - About Slum Upgrading

citiesalliance.org - Slum upgrading is a process through which informal areas are gradually improved, formalised and incorporated into the city itself, through extending land, services and citizenship to slum dwellers. It involves providing slum dwellers with the economic, social, institutional and community services available to other citizens. These services include legal (land tenure), physical (infrastructure), social (crime or education, for example) or economic.

Slum upgrading is not simply about water or drainage or housing. It is about putting into motion the economic, social, institutional and community activities that are needed to turn around downward trends in an area. These activities should be undertaken cooperatively among all parties involved—residents, community groups, businesses as well as local and national authorities if applicable.

The activities tend to include the provision of basic services such as housing, streets, footpaths, drainage, clean water, sanitation, and sewage disposal. Often, access to education and health care are also part of upgrading.

In addition to basic services, one of the key elements of slum upgrading is legalising or regularising properties and bringing secure land tenure to residents.

Ultimately, upgrading efforts aim to create a dynamic in the community where there is a sense of ownership, entitlement and inward investment in the area.

Read more: [About Slum Upgrading](#)