



HIV/AIDS AND SUSTAINABLE HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

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August 2007

The link between housing, vulnerability, and HIV/AIDS

- Housing can positively or negatively impact on a family's right to health and welfare.
- The right to housing influences a household's access to basic services and amenities, and security.
- We shall examine these premises in the context of low income households who are the most susceptible to infection by HIV/AIDS

A basket of issues

- Access to lifeline services (water & sanitation)
- Space standards & overcrowding
- Health & welfare in house design
- Tenure security & child headed households
- Poverty reduction initiatives, e.g., access to social grants, free basic services
- Livelihood security programmes – health & safety in & around the home, food production & nutrition
- Safety and crime reduction in township design

Housing policy framework

In terms of section 26(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, “everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing”.

The “early” years: 1994 Housing Amendment Act:

- Introduction of the national housing subsidy scheme.
- The RDP commitment (1 million homes in 5 years).
- Freehold tenure, other alternatives (e.g. rental)
- Eligibility criteria
- The struggle for well located land and supporting infrastructure (schools, police stations, health facilities, etc.)

The regulatory environment

Housing as an incremental right

- Provision of services and “basic shelter”
- No minimum standards for services or top-structure

Pressures mitigating against an adequate top-structure:

- Municipal concerns over maintenance and sustainability, resulting in the bulk of subsidy being committed to high quality infrastructure.
- Reliance on developer-driven housing and their need to maintain profit margins in the face of escalation and a fixed quantum of subsidy.

(Illustrations: Thembalihle, RDP house 2 &3)

The new regulatory framework

Introduction of national norms and standards (1 April 1999) -- principles:

- Shift from services to meeting housing needs in a population with very scarce personal resources.
- Establishment of minimum space standard (30 m²) for a permanent dwelling.
- Establishment of cost norms; escalated annually w.e.f. 1 April 2002.
- Establishment of basic levels of service applicable nationally; with municipalities having the discretion to “fund the gap” for higher service levels (gravel or graded roads, VIP latrine, standpipe).

Township design

- Tensions between the Red Book (Guidelines for human settlements planning and design -- CSIR) and the drive for profitability by maximising yield
- Use of non-residential areas for health & community facilities, recreation, food gardening
- Understanding transport and communication patterns in crime reduction

House design

- Household size & composition
- How the 30 sq.m. rule is applied
- Internal/ external sanitation
- Damp-proofing (mandatory – National Building Regulations)
- Insulation
- Ventilation
- Partitioning
- Extending (the “incremental” house)

Sustainability – does housing relieve or entrench poverty?

- Rates, services, and maintenance costs
- Transport costs
- Health care costs
- Access to social grants
- Access to rates relief
- Access to free basic services/ lifeline tariffs
- Livelihood security programmes: Food gardening & nutrition, energy & safe use of electricity

Tenure security

The Deeds Act vs. customary law

- Respect for property boundaries & servitudes
- Rights of succession and the protection of women
- Resistance to taking out a will
- Child headed households

The framework for an integrated local government response

- The Municipal Systems Act 2000, Public Finance Management Act 1999, and the development mandate
- Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS in service delivery
- Combating denialism and stigma; political and administrative leadership
- Partnerships
- Support systems

<http://www.dplg.gov.za>

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Part of the Child Advocacy Project funded by DFID via
Child Hope UK

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