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A study of public-private partnerships in the development of affordable housing projects: A case of Johannesburg

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ABSTRACT

This research report investigated public-private partnerships in the development of affordable housing in Johannesburg. The study evaluated the success of affordable housing projects developed through the joint efforts of the public and the private sector. It explored how the private and the public sector help each other in development projects to ensure successful projects which benefit low to middle (gap market) income households. To do this, the study utilised two affordable/integrated housing development projects in the Johannesburg area. These were the Fleurhof project on Main Reef road and the Pennyville development on New Canada road. Interviews were also conducted to get information from the different stakeholders involved in affordable housing project developments with regards to their experiences, lessons learnt and propositions for better and more efficient running of future such projects.

Studies and information received from interviews were evaluated using theoretical frameworks around affordable housing and public private partnerships as to determine if these projects and activity happening in the Johannesburg area is in line with theories and policies developed to guide public-private activity and affordable housing development. The findings from the field study analysis (case studies and interviews) were used to provide recommendations as to what can be done for better outcomes in public-private partnership projects in affordable housing delivery.

From the field work it was found that contrary to the study claims and propositions, public-private partnership housing developments are benefiting the intended income group and that the private sector has gained confidence and is becoming more and more interested and involved in such projects. This is not to say that no issues were discovered or raised during the study. This is why recommendations were brought forward and these are mainly directed to the public sector. Recommendations include that public sector needs to increase its capacity when it comes to the area of developing affordable housing projects as lack of capacity results in unnecessarily lengthy application approval periods which become very costly when it comes to development. Other recommendations are for better planning and review of procedures for the public sector to be more efficient as the private sector works on time and need payments and other procedures to occur on time to avoid setbacks and strains on public private relationships.