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The misalignment of policy in the implementation of upgrading of Informal Settlement Programme, with examples from the Slovo Park upgrading process in City of Johannesburg

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Abstract

South Africa has been struggling with the processes of upgrading informal settlements. This despite effort to enhance in situ upgrading of informal settlements and access to housing through relevant policy. Evaluation studies have found a mismatch between policy and what transpires in practice in relation to upgrading informal settlements. Contestation and polarisation between different priorities are recognised to ultimately inform what transpires on the ground in informal settlements. Building on these insights, my research interrogated the gap between policy and practice on upgrading of informal settlements in different government departments, and the implications of this. To gather information for this research, I analysed policies on upgrading of informal settlements from different government departments. I also conducted interviews with politicians, government officials from different departments and residents of Slovo Park, an informal settlement in Johannesburg. The finding of this study is that the gap between policy and practice is determined in part by a misalignment between national policy and the policy practiced in the municipality, evident in the inability of officials to commit and deliver objectives or goals set in national policy.