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Investigating benefits of renting out backyard shacks in Kuisebmond, Walvis Bay (Namibia)

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Abstract

Walvis Bay town and port in west-central Namibia, situated along the Atlantic Ocean was constituted an enclave of South Africa until 1992. Industrial expansion which was driven by the rapid growth of the fishing industry saw the town growing at an exponential rate. In 1959, the Kuisebmond township was developed to accommodate the black Namibians along South Africa's apartheid townships. Not only was this separation by race, but also by income and education levels. Consequently, over the years, homeowners have relied on income-generating strategies through an informal rental market of backyard shacks. With modest research done, little is known and understood about Walvis Bay's backyard shack phenomenon. This research investigated the benefits of accommodating several backyard shacks per household for landlords in Kuisebond. The research's assumptions were that backyard shacks in Kuisebmond are associated with income generation and that small-scale landlords tend to be elderly people that moved to Walvis Bay many years ago from rural areas and allocated municipal housing they could not afford. The findings of this research reveal that the income from the backyard rental accommodation plays an important role in the lives of the small-scale landlords. Small-scale landlords' attributes are diverse thus backyard shacks renting in Kuisebmond is not associated with housing type or individual occupier attributes but rather demand-driven. Additionally, revenue collection is not the only aspect to backyard shack renting, the presence of tenants provides a sense of safety and security. The research aimed to contribute to the general understanding of backyard shacks phenomenon in Namibia, it further interrogates academic literature and policy makers on potential research on wider benefits as of backyard shacks as well as potential policy interventions.