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Who has been driving people's housing process?: a case study of Voslorus Extension 28 and Ivory Park Ward 78 PHP Projects in Gauteng Province

Mani, Mkuseli Edward

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Who Has Been Driving the People's Housing Process?
A case study of Vosloorus Extension 28 and Ivory Park Ward 78 PHP Projects in Gauteng Province

Student Name: Mkuseli Edward Mani
Student No. : 0316132
Master of Science in Housing

Johannesburg
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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Science in Housing.
November 2009

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my own work and is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of Science in Housing at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree examination in any other university.

Mkuseli Edward Mani

Date……30th November… 2009

ABSTRACT

This research report seeks to identify the limitations and serious shortcomings in the implementation of the People's Housing Process (PHP) projects. It is argued that these shortcomings may be attributed to the interpretation and application of the PHP Guidelines and Policy. The argument is that PHP projects across South Africa have not been undertaken using an approach of placing the beneficiaries at the centre of the housing delivery process. Instead, what has been happening since the inception of the PHP (in 1998) is that external stakeholders have largely been the drivers of PHP projects and there has been minimal involvement of beneficiaries in real decision-making.

The research report presents two case studies Vosloorus Extension 28 and Ivory Park Ward 78 PHP projects (both in the Gauteng Province) in 2003. The main finding on both projects is that beneficiaries merely became labourers during the construction of their homes and were not directly involved in important decisions and processes.

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ACRONYMS

AIDS	- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	- African National Congress
CBD	- Central Business District
CBO	- Community Based Organisation
FEDUP	- Federation of Urban and Rural Poor
HIV	- Human Immune Virus
HSC	- Housing Support Centre
IDT	- Independent Development Trust
MOU	- Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organisation
NURCHA	- National Urban and Reconstruction Agency
PHP	- People's Housing Process
PHPT	- People's Housing Partnership Trust
RDP	- Reconstruction and Development Programme
UF	- Urban Foundation
UNCHS	- United Nations Centre for Human Settlements: Habitat
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
USAID	- United States Agency for International Aid
SAHPF	- South African Homeless People's Federation
SANCO	- South African National Civic Organisation
SMME	- Small and Medium Enterprises
XHASA ATC	- XHASA Accounting and Training Centre

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The poor quality and absence of a sense of ownership in developer-driven subsidised low-cost housing, popularly called “RDP houses” in South Africa from 1994, has prompted the government to shift its housing delivery approach. According to the Sowetan (16 July, 2009) the houses built from 1994 to 1996 were condemned for being of poor quality and sub-standard and will need to be reconstructed at a cost of over R2 billion. In 1998 the government decided to adopt a new housing delivery alternative that is people-driven called the “People’s Housing Process” (PHP). The main objective of this approach was to ensure that communities are at the centre of the construction of their homes.

The White Paper on Housing published on 23 December 1994 indicates that the government’s overall approach to the housing challenge is aimed at “mobilising and harnessing the combined resources, efforts and initiatives of communities, the private, commercial sector and the state” (Department of Housing, 1994). It seeks to do so through the implementation of seven key strategies. One of these strategies is “supporting the housing process”. It is this strategy that was given meaning though the PHP in 1998.

The PHP is financed through the subsidy scheme under the National Housing Subsidy Programme (Republic of South Africa, 2002). The premise of the PHP is to assist families that want to organise the planning, design and building of their own houses themselves (National Housing Code, 2000). Since 1994, most of South Africa’s housing delivery for low-income earners and the poor has been through private developers using the government’s once-off capital subsidy. This was justified by several factors: firstly, there was an urgent need to accelerate delivery in order to reduce a massive housing backlog inherited from the previous government. Secondly, it was a method to fulfil the pre-election promise by the ANC Alliance of building one million houses within the first five years of governance (Tripartite Alliance, 1994). Thirdly, it was in line with the provisions of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994, which endorses the principle that all South

Africans have a right to a secure place in which to live in peace and dignity, and that housing is a human right (Tripartite Alliance, 1994). Moreover, according to the new Constitution of 1996, the state has a duty to progressively fulfil the right to adequate housing (South African Constitution, 1996).

Goebel (2007: 291) asserts that the new government focused on providing housing for the poor and made this its first priority as soon as it took over the government in 1994. However, according to Huchzermeyer (2001: 306), the housing stock that has been delivered since 1994 fell far short of the dignified house with "a reasonable living space and privacy" as defined in the RDP. Parnell and Hart (1999: 354) are also of the view that the R15 000.00 capital subsidy of 1994 was only enough for a serviced stand and a very small house. According to Parnell and Hart (1999: 354), the only solution is to allow beneficiaries to build their homes themselves.

The Constitution states that it is the government's duty to take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the realisation of this right on a progressive basis (South African Constitution, 1996: 12).

It is a fact that in South Africa the majority of housing has not been provided by construction companies, but by families themselves using any resources at their disposal. Many of these people are among the poorest in the country, yet their resourcefulness is often astonishing. This grassroots self-help activity which is referred to as the "people's housing process" has been recognised by the government.

The recognition takes two forms. The first relates to the importance now given to a formal programme (the PHP), which enables those who have already been allocated a plot to become involved in the construction of the top structure (National Housing Code, Department of Housing 2000).
A real shift to the PHP occurred in April 2002 and is outlined in the strategic plan of the Department of Housing (National Department of Housing, 2002: 26). There is currently a strong drive to deepen housing delivery through the PHP (Tumi Mabalane, Director, PHP Directorate, personal communication).

This research project seeks to investigate the real "driver" behind this housing process in communities where it is has been implemented, particularly during the period 2003–2004. The study further seeks to investigate to what extent communities have actually been involved in the building of their homes and what external forces were at play.

1.2 Rationale and Problem Statement

The delivery of housing in post-apartheid South Africa started under a negotiated housing policy that was launched in 1994. The aim of the housing policy was to address the backlog through a developer-driven housing process. This housing process was financed through the capital subsidy programme with the initial target to provide one million houses in the first years in office (Huchzermeyer, 2001: 312).

However, one of several problems in housing delivery was that the beneficiaries had minimal input in the planning and construction of these units. The result was the building of small and uniform-type houses on the periphery of towns and cities. The beneficiaries were not satisfied with the developer-driven construction approach. Some of the units developed cracks and many beneficiaries expressed their dissatisfaction. Other problems were the size of housing units, location and physical and social infrastructure.

Through its shift in policy to include the PHP, the government has committed itself to assisting those who have already been allocated a plot to build a top structure through the allocation of subsidies and facilitating access to technical, financial, logistical and administrative support regarding the building of the homes on a sustainable and affordable basis. However, during implementation the problem emerged that the PHP is not being carried out in the way it is set out in the government policy, namely being people-driven (Baumann, 2003: 8). This has the result that, in practice, external role players other than the beneficiaries drive the PHP in most communities. In 2003, when I had discussions with the PHP Directorate within Gauteng Department of Housing, interest was expressed in a research study to investigate who "drives" the PHP projects. Fieldwork was conducted in 2003/04, but due to financial constraints I was only able to resume my studies and complete my research report in 2008/09. This gave me the opportunity to contextualise the 2003/04 findings within subsequent policy debates and developments.

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1.3 Aims

The People's Housing Process is a new approach by the government having been officially endorsed in April 1998 as a shift from qualitative delivery of housing in South Africa to a focus on quality housing. One of the tenets of this "self"-build approach to quality housing is that families must be involved physically in the construction of their homes.

The overall aim of this research study is to investigate who has been driving the PHP within communities. Has it really been people-driven, or are there other external forces that have been involved in this process? By addressing this question through two studies of PHP projects in 2003/04, I aim to contribute to the literature and debates that have reflected on the PHP experience and have sought to reform the approach.

1.4 Research Questions

From 1994, most of the low-cost housing provision for the poor in South Africa was by private developers. Bolnick (1996: 154) notes that the new ANC-led government inherited a housing policy that was designed for implementation by the private sector. However, the government had to give space in the new policy to assisted self-help housing. This mode of housing, called the People's Housing Process, requires that the beneficiaries of these subsidised houses have to drive the process of construction themselves.

The overriding research question is: "Who has been driving the People's Housing Process"? For the purposes of this report, I will break down my research questions into the following:

- Who were the role players or stakeholders in the People's Housing Process?
- What motivated them?
- What was their role in relation to the objectives of the PHP?
- How were communities empowered through the People's Housing Process to drive their own housing construction process?
- Were communities involved in making important decisions around costing, drawing up of plans, buying of building materials, etc.?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The National Housing Code (2000) describes the PHP as a viable vehicle to be used in involving people in the provision of their houses by being part of the entire process. The research was motivated by my own concern and that of the Gauteng Department of Housing that there was limited involvement of beneficiaries in the PHP projects of Gauteng Province around 2003. This formed a guiding hypothesis for this research.

1.6. The People's Housing Process Approach to Delivery of Housing for Poor Households

The People's Housing Process must be seen as a form of self-help where communities build or organise the building of their houses. In order to have a broad conception of the process of self-help housing in the South African context, it is imperative to initially examine the current housing policy in South Africa. This policy according to Huchzermeyer (2001: 305) is based on the understanding that housing is a basic need. As already mentioned, the "right to access to adequate housing" was first articulated in the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme in 1994 and enshrined in the 1996 Constitution (South Africa Constitution, 1996: 12). A 1994 Housing white paper (Department of Housing, 1994: 11) gives interpretation to the concept of adequate housing through its vision of "viable socially and economically integrated communities, situated in areas that allow convenient access to economic opportunities as well as health, educational and social amenities".

The white paper further sets out to guarantee a situation in which all South Africa's people will have access to a "permanent residential structure and with secure tenure, ensuring privacy and providing adequate protection against the elements; and potable water, adequate sanitary facilities including waste disposal and domestic electricity supply" (Department of Housing, 1994: 12).

Huchzermeyer (2001: 305) states that this sets out a norm for "housing" that distinguishes itself from the sites and services schemes constructed under the previous government which were popularly called "toilet towns". The government focus on a product that includes a house or "top structure" was reinforced in the white paper by a commitment to "deliver one million houses" in five years (Department of Housing, 1994: 22). The concept of progressive realisation has not sat comfortably with the pledge to deliver a defined product; this was backed by the financial mechanism of a once-off product-linked capital subsidy (Huchzermeyer, 2001: 306).

The "subsidy required home-ownership of a standardised housing unit" and this has seen the construction of "large scale developments of uniform, free-standing mostly one-roomed

houses with individual freehold title in standardised township layouts located on the urban peripheries" (ibid.). Moreover, the houses provided through this project-linked subsidy did not fulfil the promise of a "dignified house with reasonable living space and privacy defined in the RDP" (ibid.).

The government's shift to incorporate the PHP was informed in part by the successes of the Homeless People's Federation group who had embarked on an innovative initiative of assisting and motivating people without homes to build homes for themselves. This can be seen as an early approach to self-help housing development and as an alternative means to housing delivery. According to Huchzermeyer (2001: 322), this approach "has been associated with sustainable housing" as it capacitates communities in many aspects of housing development.

The national government showed its support for this approach by forming the People's Housing Partnership Trust (PHPT) which was based within the Department of Housing. The purpose of this trust was the "institutional capacitation and empowerment at the provincial and local spheres of government and among NGOs to support people's process" (Minister of Housing, 1997, in Huchzermeyer, 2001: 322).

Any discussion of self-help housing would be incomplete without initially defining the term "housing" and "self-help". Drawing from a case study in Botswana, Kerr and Kwele (2000: 131) argue that self-help housing distinguishes itself from other modes of construction in that it enables the families who live in the house to participate during the construction process of their houses. According to Kerr and Kwele (2000: 1 315), the families are enabled to contribute their labour power (sweat equity), administration and also contribute in many other forms.

1.7. Self-help Housing Defined

Turner (1972) became one of the first proponents of the notion that housing is a process and not a product. According to Turner, self-help housing is a process where individuals decide to do something about their housing situation in order to uplift their quality of life. They use their own resources such as labour, savings, material and management ability. For Turner

(1972: 43), self-help requires the investment of both money and physical effort on the part of the participants. “It is upon the personal involvement of individuals that self-help rests” (ibid.).

In the same vein, Turner (1972) points out that self-help is an opportunity for people to explore, use and expand their own strengths and initiatives. As such, it provides people with a certain stimulation and incentive to improve their living conditions themselves. He furthermore asserts that self-help housing encourages human enterprise and gives people emotional satisfaction.

According to Smith (1999: 15), in some developing countries since the 1950s, provision of housing was through self-help. Since the mid-1970s, the issue of self-help has been widely debated from various theoretical approaches. For the purpose of this report, special focus will be given to the liberalist views on self-help housing as pioneered by John Turner, whose framework or approach provides the basis for my research, and, on the other hand, the Marxist views pioneered by Rod Burgess. The general assessment in the situation is that the two approaches failed to reach any common ground due to holding different views or “epistemologies” on the issue of self-help housing (Nientied and Van der Linden, 1988: 39).

Turner regards housing as a “verb”, a gradual process as well as an “activity” where government involves people in various housing activities, such as planning, organising, building as well as maintenance. In counteracting this view, Burgess argues that it overlooks the interest of politicians who manipulate the consumers of self-help housing for financial and political gains (ibid.).

According to Burgess (1985: 271), housing is a “means of subsistence that is necessary for the reproduction of labour force” in a capitalistic social formation. Housing therefore becomes of interest to certain classes of people other than the direct end-user. Burgess (1985: 273) defines self-help housing solutions as essentially those in which the element of wage is eliminated or drastically reduced in comparison with the state-finished housing programmes. It is with this in mind that the South African Housing Policy shifted towards self-help housing provisioning for the poor and low-income families.

Explaining the artisanal mode of production, Burgess (1985: 285) analyses, amongst others, the nature of the labour process which he refers to as “simple” co-operation, in which the family or community participates in the entire production process and invests its labour power (sweat equity) and part of its subsistence income to build its own houses.

Ospira (1981: 158) defines self-help housing as “an effort to eliminate coercion as far as possible from social relations and to replace it with simple execution of orders by participation in decision-making, conflict by discussion, political and other fights by reasoned arguments, domination and political”.

The Urban Sector Network (Built Environment Support Group, 1998: 3) identifies three forms of self-help:

Spontaneous unaided mutual help: a group of people or families work together to satisfy their housing needs without outside assistance.

Aided self-help: people or households work as individuals to satisfy their housing needs receiving any form of assistance from the private sector, government, NGOs or a combination thereof.

Aided mutual help: families work together in groups helping each other to build their houses with supervision from any external body.

1.8. Conceptual Framework

Turner’s liberal idea is one of promoting human use value above material values. The Marxists base their criticism on the “failure to appreciate the dialectical interrelatedness of use value and market values”. Expanding on this point, Burgess (1985: 272) asserts that even if squatters are permitted to construct their own houses, they are allowed doing so within the sphere of capitalist interest (Nientied and Van der Linden, 1988: 139).

The liberalists call for active involvement of government in the delivery of self-help housing and in engaging other stakeholders, namely the community and the private sector, as partners. The Marxists argue that such an assertion reflects the “upholding of a bourgeois view of a

well meaning but misinformed government which supports the interest of politicians" (ibid.: 41).

When exploring other modes of housing production, namely industrial/capitalist, manufactured/petty commodity and self-help/artisanal, Burgess analyses the exploitative relationship between the other modes of production including artisanal. He argues that it involves, amongst others, large-scale organisation, which culminates in "relatively" expensive housing projects (Ward and Macoloo, 1992: 62).

The manufactured mode is, amongst others, seen as benefiting other people at the expense of the actual consumers of the housing objects. Since it is organised by a master builder who subcontracts some of the work to personal networks, it often results in under-payment and exploitation (ibid.: 63).

With reference to the artisanal mode of labour production, Burgess (1985: 285) analyses, amongst others, the nature of the labour process. He refers to this mode as simple cooperation in which the family/community participates in the entire production process and invests their labour power (sweat equity) and part of their subsistence income to build their own houses.

It is however criticised for, among other things, bad designs and inadequate technical knowledge. (ibid.: 286). The above discussion is related to my research questions which are about investigating the real players within communities in driving the PHP. The Marxists, for instance, are mindful of the fact that there may be opportunists in self-help housing. These people take advantage of the vulnerability of the poor. However my study is located with John Turner who regards housing as a "verb", a gradual process as well as an "activity" where government needs to involve people in various housing activities, such as planning, organising, building as well as maintenance.

1.9. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach to research. Creswell (1997: 39) defines qualitative research as an "inquiry process of understanding, based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem". Two case studies that have been involved

with PHP projects in Johannesburg over the past eight years, namely Ivory Park Ward 78 and Vosloorus Extension 28, will be analysed.

The Ivory Park Ward 78 project started with the building of 245 houses in July 2002 whereas the project in Vosloorus Extension 28 started to build in 2003. At the time of my first visit to Vosloorus Extension 28 in 2003, 250 houses had been built through the PHP, 136 of which were completed and 214 had foundations laid (Steering Committee member, personal communication).

An attempt was made to design case studies based on Ivory Park and Vosloorus Extension 28, engaging in an investigation of the entire building process. This involved personally visiting the two settlements and their two Housing Support Centres. In these two case studies it was necessary to find out to what extent the latter were involved in the PHP.

The background for the case studies was compiled from research reports, journals, books and newspapers. It was supplemented with targeted interviews with all stakeholders involved in the projects; I carried these out in 2003. The literature review assisted in developing an insight into the problems around this particular housing process. The choice of the two settlements was based on the fact that they were the first to implement PHP projects in Gauteng Province. The Gauteng Housing Department had in 2003 entered into a partnership with the University of the Witwatersrand on housing issues and had suggested this theme and the two case studies for my research.
The research activity entailed conducting in-depth interviews with 10 beneficiaries, five from each of the two case studies, in 2003. This sample was purposely drawn from beneficiaries whose houses were being built, known as ‘Brigades’, a term that the department adopted from their Cuban technical assistants, involved in assisting families in each of the two PHP projects. The two technical advisors at each of the Support Centres were also interviewed as well as the building materials suppliers serving the two settlements. This was done to find out their involvement and how they engaged with the beneficiaries.

My approach was to carry out face-to-face semi-structured interviews, of approximately one hour each. The questions asked were on the following issues: Who makes decisions regarding the construction of the units in these projects? Who buys building materials? What is each

stake-holder's role in the actual construction of the houses? The purpose was to deduce from the answers to what extent beneficiaries were indeed involved in the building of their homes, and who was actually driving the process. The beneficiaries were assured of anonymity.

1.10. Research Limitations

Although the research study is to investigate the real drivers behind the People's Housing Process, there may have been problems of non-disclosure by the members of the community on some useful facts about the issues under investigation. Beneficiaries being interviewed may have withheld information about the real assistance they received during the building of the houses, for fear of jeopardising secret agreements that may have been concluded between them and the stakeholders. It is likely that the material suppliers were not open about their engagement with the families, thus posing a difficult situation for the purposes of analysis. To limit this problem, I personally attended site meetings to find out how decisions were being taken and by whom.

Due to time and financial constraints, I had to limit my involvement at the two sites to five visits to each settlement. These occurred between June and July 2003. This was prior to a major review by non-governmental stakeholders of the PHP, which was followed by a revision of the PHP policy. Several years passed between my original fieldwork and the final write-up of this research report as my registration for the master's programme lapsed due to my inability to afford outstanding fees as mentioned above.
When I re-registered and reworked the proposal, it was considered relevant to complete the analysis of the 2003 fieldwork and present the case studies as capturing a particular period in the evolution of the PHP. I have attempted to update the research where possible and in September 2008 revisited both case study areas and conducted follow-up interviews. However, the time that elapsed remains a limitation to the research.

1.11. Report Structure

Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter discusses self-help housing in the international context and in South Africa in particular. This is followed by a discussion of the delivery of houses through the People's Housing Process (PHP). The following chapter deals

with the methods and rules that govern the PHP. This is followed by discussion of the two case studies, Ivory Park Ward 28 and Vosloorus Extension 78, and finally the presentation of the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review on Self-help Housing

2.1. Introduction

The inability of Third World governments, including South Africa, to cope with the demand for adequate shelter by the poor and low-income earners has resulted in these people seeking other alternatives, including self-help housing, to meet their housing needs. In this regard, South Africa is no exception. Wilkinson (1998: 215) paints a grotesque picture in 1998 of over 3 000 000 households in South Africa who were still living in what is regarded as inadequate shelter. It is against such a backdrop that Hardie (1987: 28) has supported the endeavours by the poor who resort to self-help housing. He states that "self-help provides people with an opportunity to explore, use and expand their own strengths and initiatives as such; it provides people with a certain stimulation and incentive to improve themselves and encourages human enterprise and it gives people emotional satisfaction" (ibid.).

Turner (1976: 28) states that the concept of self-help requires, on the part of the participants, the investment of both money and physical effort. Turner (1976: 29) further asserts that "it is the user himself who best knows his needs and as such, should be the principal actor in the housing process." In this regard he emphasises that it is on the personal involvement of individuals that self-help rests. However the self-help mode of providing shelter by poor households was not accepted without debates between those who supported it (liberalists) represented by John Turner and those opposing it (Marxists) represented by Rod Burgess.

In this chapter, I review the self-help debates between liberalists and Marxists and discuss the theoretical and conceptual approaches to self-help housing. I also discuss policy approaches towards self-help by international agencies including the World Bank. I then discuss my own position on self-help housing, particularly in the South African context.

As already mentioned in chapter one, from the mid-1970s, the issue of self-help housing has been debated from various theoretical approaches. It is important to look into the theoretical approaches to self-help housing in an effort to understand what underpins it as an alternative housing delivery mode for poor families. Barnett (1988: 12) defines a theory as follows: "a

theory is never true, rather it should be seen as being a very special form of language which sketches out the words we can use to discuss a particular problem about the way in which we can test our language description against our experiences." McDougall (1982), cited in Nientied and Van der Linden (1988: 152), views theory "as developing from a systematic reflection on practice, but also directly contributes to the practice". This position on theory has particular relevance for my research report.

2.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Approaches to Self-help Housing Delivery

In the following sections, I set out the debates between liberalists and Marxists on self-help housing. While I have introduced the Turner and Burgess debate in chapter one, the purpose in this section is to explore more deeply what these two authors have argued with regard to the involvement of people in construction of their own houses, particularly when such construction is state-aided.

Turner (1976: 8) states that traditional and rural communities employed self-help as a mode of providing their own shelter and this became possible when these families used their own resources to build their homes. According to Turner (1976: 7), housing is a continuing and ever-changing process; every household's housing needs change to suit the circumstances of that family. He saw the role of the state as an "enabling" one. In this sense, the state was meant to create conditions suitable for actualisation of self-help. However, authorities often neglect the invisible structures of low-income housing, the planning and allocation of land for low-cost housing development, the support and enablement of people willing and able to organise their own housing and the generation and support of local finance systems (ibid.). He advocates a viewpoint that poor people "know a great deal about their own situation and their own space, time and energy" (ibid.: 15).

Nientied and Van der Linden (1988: 139) state that, in this regard, governments should stop trying to provide standard housing for the poor. Turner (1976: 7) observes that the poor, with scarce resources, were able to produce reasonable dwellings with less money than the government and that the poor can organise themselves and improve their own economic conditions. Turner (1972: 54) refers to people who plan for people's housing needs as supralocal agencies who do not take people's initiatives such as self-help housing seriously.

According to Appadurai (2001: 1) the poor should be given the opportunity to “contest and alter the conditions of their own poverty”.

According to Ward (1982: 1), self-help housing involves the erection of dwelling units by individual households. He adds that self-help housing may also involve groups of households who contribute to the financing, building and maintenance of their housing units. Proponents of self-help housing view this type of housing delivery as most significant as it offers the end-users an opportunity to play a direct role during the construction of their houses.
Kerr and Kwele (2000: 1 315) argue that the most significant difference between self-help housing and other housing developments “is the ability of the end-user to participate in the construction process of the house by making certain contributions such as finance, sweat equity, administration”.

Turner (1976) denounces the direct role played by the state in the provision and production of low-income housing. Housing developments with the direct involvement of the state are usually only affordable to a few people as compared to the majority that they are targeted at. He therefore calls for a minimal role to be played by the state and an increasingly larger role to be played by the beneficiaries to enable them to find solutions regarding their housing needs.

The Marxists saw behind capitalism's facade a struggle of two main classes: the capitalists, who own the means of production, and the proletariat or workers who must work for wages in order to survive. Marxists define housing in terms of three fundamental dimensions. Firstly, as already mentioned in chapter one, housing is seen as a necessary good, a means of subsistence that is necessary for the reproduction of the labour force and whose cost enters directly or indirectly into the production of all commodities (Burgess, 1986: 271). Secondly, Marxists emphasise that a material precondition for production of a house is that it has to occupy land in a specific location (ibid.). Thirdly, “housing is seen as becoming a commodity whose consumption can only be realised by those with a housing need who can afford to purchase it and not only as a use-value but also an exchange value” (Burgess, 1985: 272).

Burgess (ibid.) attempts to clarify the question of the nature of self-help building in terms of the historical development of the “capitalist mode of production with its twin characteristics

of deepening the social division of labour and of generalising its production of commodities". Amis (1995: 147) asserts that self-help housing ignores the basic causes of poverty in a capitalist mode of production but ensures an expansion and accumulation of capital. According to Burgess (1985: 61), self-help is not a good option for poor households.

With regard to Turner's idea of promoting human use value above commercial values, Burgess (1985: 272) bases his criticism on the failure to "appreciate the dialectical interrelatedness of use value and market values". Expanding on this point, he asserts that even when squatters are permitted to construct their own houses, "they only do so within the sphere of capitalist interest". The liberalists in turn call for active involvement of government in the delivery of state-aided housing and to engage in "partnership" with other stakeholders, namely the community and the private sector. The Marxists argue that such an assertion "reflects the upholding of a bourgeois view of a well meaning but misinformed Government which supports the interest of politicians" (ibid.: 141).

According to Ward and Macoloo (1992), when exploring various modes of housing production, namely industrial/capitalist, manufactured/petty commodity and self-help, a high level of organisation results in relatively expensive housing projects (ibid.). The manufactured mode, amongst others, is seen as benefiting private developers at the expense of the actual consumers of the housing objects (ibid.). With reference to the artisanal mode of production, Burgess (1985: 285) analyses the labour power process. He refers to this mode as "simple" co-operation in which the family/community participates in the entire production process and invests its labour power (sweat equity) and part of its subsistence income to build their own houses.

Turner's so-called "Third Sector Approach" places emphasis on the involvement of a third sector, namely NGOs or intermediaries between the government and the beneficiaries. Burgess based his critique of self-help housing on this approach within the broader theory (Smith, 1999: 18). According to Neo-Marxist theory, problems of the poor, including that of the housing crisis, are the result of the state being pre-occupied with promoting capital accumulation and social stability (ibid.).

Smith (1999: 19) observes that while the ideas of Neo-Marxists like Burgess have had no policy translation, Turner's "Third Sector Approach" was relevant to neo-liberal ideas and have influenced the UNCHS (Habitat) and World Bank policies towards housing, resulting in a shift from emphasis on government providing houses to state-aided self-help programmes, site and service, squatter upgrading schemes and enabling strategies. The World Bank supported Turner's proposals. This indicates, as Harris (1999: 248) observes, that Turner's position was for the beneficiaries to be meaningfully involved in low-income housing projects and that this would lead to housing units "that best suit changing needs and circumstances of their occupants" (ibid.).

The problem of relying on the capitalist mode of production and commodified housing is articulated by Smith (1999: 21) when he categorises the limitations of the neo-liberalist theory as having "empirical problems, normative content, and problem with practicability". Under the empirical problems, the neo-liberalist theory attempts to apply a universal solution to housing and places emphasis on Western concepts and ideals (ibid.). The neo-liberalists did not consider that the "trickle down" effect leads to social polarization and entrenches inequality (ibid.: 41).

In terms of practicability, the neo-liberalists ignore the structural characteristics of poverty. Smith (1999: 43) observes that the employers and factory owners should assist the workers to obtain sustainable dwellings, whether they do so by building these themselves or by encouraging and assisting the workers to construct their housing through self-building and by providing them with capital. However, employers do not view housing as their labour force priority. They argue it should rather be left to the state. According to Kemeny (1992: 47), both Neo-Marxists and neo-liberals seem to view the state as "the passive tool of wider societal interests including housing with, at best mediating functions".

2.3 Policy Approaches on Self-help Provided by International Agencies

In the 1970s and 1980s, the World Bank promoted state-aided self-help housing as an approach to be used to address the problem of the scarcity of housing for urban low-income poor households (Baken and Van der Linden, 1993: 2). The World Bank launched its sites, services, and slum upgrading pilot programme in 1977. Its benefit was hoped to be that it

would trigger private investment through self-help housing. The Bank's motivation was that the idea of self-help was a double-edged sword in that, in comparison with the traditional state-developed housing projects, would reduce the running costs and be completely self-sustaining (ibid.). However, most of the sites and services projects which were meant to cater for a large part of the new low-income housing failed to meet their objectives. They instead became "isolated objects" and rarely reached the target groups.

This led to a new development paradigm which, instead of focusing on basic needs and alleviation of poverty, focused on market efficiency, a reduced role of government as a provider and the private sector as the main driver of development. Huchzermeyer (2001: 308) adds that in South Africa this was facilitated by the Urban Foundation (UF), "which was a business funded think tank on urban and social policy", its objective was to facilitate the emergence, particularly in the African townships, of stable communities of home owning families (ibid.). It was also aimed at "aggressively promoting self-help as an approach to housing provision" (Wilkinson, 1998: 222). This approach in South Africa was based on market efficiency and economic growth which were regarded as "solutions" to poverty alleviation through a "trickle down" mechanism although a capital subsidy was designed to meet the needs of those reached by the market.

The World Bank did not have a direct influence over South African housing policy. However, it is relevant to note that the World Bank's premise supported Turner's theoretical viewpoints of promoting housing development (bringing supply costs down). According to Nientied and Van der Linden (1988: 147), the World Bank was driven by a different strategy which was more premised on the economic theory. The World Bank's position towards self-help housing was based on the fact that the state providing housing at scale was not feasible given the limited resources available.

The World Bank explains the housing deficit in market terms, recognising the fact that there is sufficient demand for housing but numerous constraints contribute towards a weakness on the supply side. It argues that as long as the supply side keeps providing conventional permanent housing only, it will continuously fail to keep up with that enormous existing demand (Datta and Jones, 1999). This was the debate on "depth versus width", with width rather the depth being promoted by the World Bank. This was based on Turner's empirical

position so that housing and services would become accessible to larger parts of the population, previously excluded from the formal housing market (Nientied and Van der Linden, 1988: 147).

2.4 Position on Self-help for Low-income Households

My insight into the PHP at the time of my fieldwork on the two case studies in 2003 was mostly that of a researcher. I align my own position in this study with the ideas of Turner and support the construction of houses through self-help for low-income and poor households as being a viable and cost-effective option for government's housing delivery strategy. However, I will argue that not all the activities of construction should be left to the end-users. The government should provide funding and expertise where it is needed in an attempt to assist the beneficiaries. The involvement of intermediaries in the form of NGOs is also very important in assisting beneficiaries with those tasks that they cannot perform.

My motivation for self-help housing is that it offers some benefits including the realisation of human potential for people to build for themselves. Volbeda (2000: 167) observes the following benefits as the key advantages of self-help housing: community cohesion and formation of community networks. Drawing from an international case, reference can be made to the women of Vila Communitarian in the slum areas of Brazil where they formed "survival network". After migrating from the same rural village, they engaged in many other support and development projects in the community including "mutual building activities" (Volbeda, 2000: 167 – 168).

Self-help housing construction should involve a meaningful partnership among the community, government, private sector and other non-governmental organisations. The government should also see to it that self-help development occurs within an integrated development plan, which is inclusive of transport, health services, employment opportunities, recreation and other social services. Chambers (1995: 203) emphasises that in self-help housing the government should be participating in people's schemes and not vice versa. Turner (1986: 18) states that the role of the government in self-help housing is to assure access to land, infrastructure and finance.

The combined role of private sector and government in self-help housing consists of financial support, e.g. the "appropriate" allocation of subsidies (government) and making loans available for low-income housing non-discriminately without any redlining protocols (Mayekiso, 1996: 179–180). Self-help housing can also be used as a tool for promoting gender equality. Drawing on a study in Botswana, Kerr and Kwele realise that "people actively participate in shaping everyday life and involved in this process were women acquiring housing" (2000: 1 317).

To sum up my viewpoints on self-help, I see self-help housing as offering a meaningful shift from "Welfarism" or reliance on charity, e.g. through the South African government's so-called "free RDP" houses; self-help housing construction is a genuine community participation initiative. The limitation of the state-aided self-help process in South Africa, which becomes evident in my case studies in the following chapters, suggests a relevance of Burgess's critique of Turner's position. However, I do not undertake a Marxist analysis of self-help housing in South Africa as done by Kerr and Kwele (2000: 1 317) for Botswana; I focus my analysis on self-help housing as it is practised in South Africa, with a perhaps naïve intention of contributing to an improvement of this practice.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the debates around the need by government to shift from developer-driven housing delivery to that of self-help in housing has been discussed. The concept of self-help, as it was initially implemented by the international agencies such as the World Bank, is viewed by the South African government as a viable alternative in terms of providing quality and affordable houses through the Subsidy Scheme for low-income and poor households. I support this view but aim to expose its limited implementation in the recent past.

The next chapter traces the origins of the People's Housing Process as a housing delivery route in South Africa as an alternative to the developer-driven route, which is viewed as not delivering the expected houses. The chapter unpacks the shift in government's policy to include the PHP as one of the housing delivery routes.

CHAPTER THREE

3. The People's Housing Process (PHP) and its Structure in South Africa

3.1. Introduction

In South Africa, self-help housing was formally adopted in 1998 in the form of the People's Housing Process, which was seen as empowering communities in the various aspects of the housing delivery process. The PHP is understood as a way of enhancing the housing subsidy to go further by eliminating profit in housing delivery, and allowing beneficiaries to exercise a large degree of resilience, ingenuity and ability to look after their own housing needs (National Housing Code, 2000).

This chapter sets out the inclusion of the PHP in the South African housing policy. First, it discusses the introduction and the dominance of private developers in the delivery of low-cost housing through the capital subsidy scheme and secondly the introduction of PHP as a housing delivery mode, and the discussion of various role players in the PHP. The chapter then gives insight into the institutional structures that have been put in place for the PHP, reviews the funding mechanisms, briefly reviews the social and economic challenges and closes by introducing organisational structures and application of the PHP in Gauteng Province in 2003.

3.2. The Dominance of Project-linked Housing Delivery in South Africa

The delivery of housing in post-apartheid South Africa started under a negotiated housing policy that was launched in 1994 at a summit in Botshabelo near Bloemfontein. The summit was attended by a wide range of stakeholders including private developers who signed a Record of Understanding for housing delivery in the country. The main objective was to address the enormous housing backlog (Huchzermeyer, 2001: 312). From this summit it became clear that the government was set to use private developers to implement housing projects to meet the huge demand for housing for poor families and low-income earners. Bond (1996: 23) contends that subsidised housing in South Africa was largely dependent on the actions of private sector developers in the early post-apartheid years. In adopting this

housing delivery route the government had little space in the 1994 policy for community involvement in the provisioning of housing.

However, Jenkins (1999: 431) explains that the principal part of the policy was a capital subsidy whose mechanisms were vaguely aimed at allowing communities to be involved in the delivery of houses through what was called the project-linked subsidy. Under this policy, the private developers enter into an agreement with the government to construct houses and community based organisations are merely consulted to make sure that the implementation of the project runs smoothly (Huchzermeyer, 2001: 67). This approach therefore cannot be viewed as a genuinely empowering community participation in housing development. According to Khan and Haupt (2006: 45), if community participation is to be embraced, community representatives must be included as "partners in decision-making". Lizarralde and Massyn 2008:1) state that it is vital that for low-cost housing to work, communities must be part and parcel of the decision-making in the implementation of the project. The beneficiaries possess appropriate knowledge about their area and are know what is "best" for them (ibid).

According to Huchzermeyer (2001: 306), "the housing product delivered through the capital subsidy scheme fell far short of the dignified house with reasonable living space and privacy" mentioned in the 1994 Housing White Paper. Zack and Charlton (2003: 26), reviewing housing delivery perceptions close to a decade after 1994, note that a sense of indignation comes through when beneficiaries feel they have been offered poor quality construction just because they are poor. In the absence of appropriately skilled government personnel available to assist communities in improving the housing delivery, beneficiaries of subsidised housing have few options but to turn to private sector developers. Private developers took advantage of this situation the government found itself in, namely needing to deliver housing at scale to fulfil the promise providing housing to poor families.

The early delivery of subsidised houses was not as was anticipated as houses that were built were very small and of inferior quality. As a result, the recipients of these houses produced through the project-linked subsidy became dissatisfied with these houses. Huchzermeyer (2001: 307) observes that on the basis of the above, it is evident that by actively engaging the private sector in the formulation of the housing policy, the government continuously

embraced capitalist strategies. The state unwittingly continued to discriminate against the poor and unemployed sectors of the community by offering them housing units on the peripheries far from places of economic activities on a take-it-or-leave it basis (ibid.). Turner (1972: 142) notes that houses built on the peripheries in other countries were not wanted by recipients. He quotes examples from Calcutta and Delhi, where people chose to sleep on the streets near work opportunities rather than accept subsidised houses in the peripheries.

Mabin (1997: 43, cited in Huchzermeyer, 2003: 5) also refers to South African housing delivery since 1994 as having resulted in poorly located so-called "housing opportunities" and also calls this a "process of peripherisation". It is worthwhile to note that generally these free give-aways were units that were decided upon by authorities without the involvement of the beneficiaries who are the real end-users of these units. There is a general consensus at the end of first decade of democracy that the project-linked subsidy scheme has so far delivered poor quality houses. Gilbert (2004: 34), comparing Chile, Colombia and South Africa, concludes that none of the three countries has been able to produce good quality houses and attributes one of the reasons for this situation to being limited housing subsidies.

3.3. The Introduction of the People's Housing Process (PHP) in South Africa

As pointed out earlier in this report, the provision of housing for the poor and low-income households in South Africa has always been in the hands of private developers appointed by the government. However there was an outcry by individuals, NGOs and progressive academics about the inadequate housing delivery, as well as efforts by UNDP to replicate Sri Lanka's People's Housing Process in South Africa. These Ngo's were cautious and hesitant in their expectation of what type of housing product would be offered to the poor.(Muller and Mitlin ,2007:439). This led the government in 1998 to incorporate an aided self-help housing scheme called the People's Housing Process (PHP) into the housing policy. Huchzerrmeyer (2001: 323) notes that the pressures from the NGO community contributed to the government's change in housing policy to include the PHP approach. The PHP is based on maximum beneficiary involvement during the building of their houses as an alternative housing delivery with the aim of supporting people's initiatives. The PHP was introduced by the government to assist those beneficiaries who wish to enhance their housing subsidies to build or organise the building of their homes. Pottie (2003:1) states that there is an element of

community participation on the part of beneficiaries in contributing unpaid labour to " make their subsidies to go further and allowing them to drive development in their area".

The PHP was incorporated into the Housing Code of 2000 as a housing delivery route for beneficiaries who wished to use their subsidies and build or organise the building of their homes with technical assistance. However, the National Housing Policy of 1994 had already called for self-help housing. The National Housing Code (2000) emphasises that the intention of the PHP policy is to support specifically the poorest of the poor families who usually only have access to the capital housing subsidy. In introducing the PHP, the government believes that this approach has advantages such as saving on labour costs and avoiding having to pay a profit to private contractors.

The PHP was also to allow beneficiaries to make decisions in relation to the size of the house and be involved in the construction process (National Department of Housing, 2003: 9). In justifying the PHP policy, the National Housing Code (Department of Housing, 2000) states, "experience has proved that if beneficiaries of subsidised houses are given the chance to either build their houses themselves or organise the building of their hoses, they can build better houses for less money". The most important principles behind the PHP policy were partnerships, a people-driven process, and skills transfer and community empowerment. The government believed that if communities are given appropriate institutional support and financial assistance they could improve their housing needs (National Housing Code, 2000). South Africa's second minister in the ANC government concluded in 1998 that self-building through the PHP could be seen as one of the most effective strategies in producing quality housing (Gauteng News, 2001). She also stated that most of the houses that are built through this process are of better quality and bigger than those delivered through pure subsidy grants" (ibid.). However, Huchzermeyer (2006: 51), in comparing the PHP with private contractor-driven housing delivery, notes that the PHP approach did not necessarily involve communities in the housing process, but rather "focused on the size and quality and not the process". According to Huchzermeyer (ibid.) the PHP housing delivery approach is "partenalistic and delivery oriented".

An NGO called the People's Dialogue (since disbanded) and the South African Homeless People's Federation (SAHPF), a membership-based federation of credit and savings group

renamed in 2006 the Federation of Urban and Rural Poor (FEDUP), were a lobbying force even before 1994, calling for the government to involve the beneficiaries rather than developing housing through the project-linked capital subsidy schemes, which were driven by developers (Huchzermeyer, 2003: 322).

According to Huchzermeyer (ibid.), the government recognised the work of the federation but did not view this delivery route as being viable. After the Habitat II conference in 1996, endorsed by influential organisations such as UNCHS (Habitat), UNDP, USAID and many country governments including South Africa, the South African government decided to support self-help construction through Housing Support Centres. This was the semi-official adoption of the People's Housing Process, though at this stage it was receiving its funding from international donors. The National Department of Housing recognised the need for more specific support for the PHP over and above the donor funding. In 1997, the People's Housing Partnership Trust (PHPT) was formed and was based within the National Department of Housing (ibid.). The main function of the PHPT was to capacitate and empower municipalities and provinces (Department of Housing, 1997: 3). However the PHPT failed to carry out this task. Most municipalities embarked on a "managed" PHP because communities were not capacitated to manage PHP in its intended form. As a result, many projects were deadlocked and were taken over by private contractors. At the time of my research in 2003, there were only three staff members at PHPT to service nine provinces. One was the acting CEO and one of the staff members was responsible for the finances of PHPT so only one was involved in fieldwork.

Later, in 2007 subsequent to my case study data collection for this research report, the PHPT was disbanded and the PHP incorporated into a new Directorate for Rental Housing of the Department of Housing. When the PHPT was closing down, the chairperson of its management board resigned, citing disagreement with the process of dealing with the assets of the PHPT. In an interview she explained, "I felt undermined as a chairperson when I disagreed with the extent and content of disposing the assets of the PHPT" (Sarah Charlton, personal communication).

It has earlier been articulated that the PHP is a programme designed at national level to assist families that want to organise the planning, design and building of their own houses with

technical assistance.

The Gauteng Department of Housing defines the PHP in exactly the same way as the National Department of Housing. In 2002 the Gauteng Department of Housing established a new directorate that was going to implement only PHP projects throughout Gauteng Province. The new directorate had its own 30 staff members and a R20 million budget for the 2003/2004 financial year to establish 60 Housing Support Centres and to build 60 000 houses (Manie, 2004: 8). To assist with capacity and technical skills, 20 Cuban architects and engineers were seconded to the directorate (Gauteng PHP Directorate, Business Plan, 2003). There were also local professionals who were employed in the directorate. However a research study on the implementation of the PHP commissioned by the PHPT and undertaken by Ted Baumann in 2003, showed that the PHP was not implemented according to its policy guidelines.

This can be attributed to the fact that the original PHP policy was rarely followed and this resulted in PHP projects being changed into managed PHPs. During the implementation of projects through the managed PHP system, the beneficiaries' contribution was reduced to sweat equity with minimum choice, which is in total conflict with the Code and Policy Guidelines of the PHP (ibid.). The managed PHP delivery route is basically a contractor being appointed by a local authority to undertake a project, with no need for brigades or any involvement by beneficiaries.

3.4 Role Players in the PHP

3.4.1 The Government

The government plays a vital role ensuring that the PHP is a success and providing all necessary support to the targeted households. Baumann (2003) explains that the government has since 1994 given some support to the delivery of self-built houses by the people themselves with state assistance in the form of subsidies. This was evidenced by a grant of R10 million given to the South African Homeless People's Federation by the first Minister of Housing, Mr Joe Slovo, in 1994. This role was only formalised in 1998 through the

introduction of the PHP. One of the government's roles in the PHP is to release funds for those beneficiaries who qualify for subsidies.

The provincial Housing Departments approve projects where local authorities are available in certain aspects of administration. According to PHP policy, it is the community groups that are directly involved in the management of the projects, providing a measure of public accountability (National Housing Code, 2000). In essence, the main function of the government is to play an enablement role for PHP projects.

Baumann (2003: 12) states that "the PHP is not a housing delivery route to be implemented but is a housing practise that needs to be supported and facilitated". In this regard the existence of role players cannot be overemphasised**.** This section is based on the situation at the time of my fieldwork in 2003.

The Gauteng Department of Housing recognised around 2002 that in every PHP project there have to be role players other than the beneficiaries who provide input during the construction of houses. Gauteng Housing officials became critical role players during the initial stages of a PHP project until completion. Their main role was to "champion" the PHP, provide provincial guidelines and to support and facilitate access to subsidies and information. The local authority was another role player which was involved in approving house plans drawn up for the beneficiaries by the Cuban technical advisers. These Cuban technical advisors were employed by the Gauteng Department of Housing to train beneficiaries in construction and to transfer other construction skills. In the case of Ivory Park Ward 28 and Vosloorus Extension 78, their role will be discussed in more detail in the case studies in chapters 4 and 5 of this report.

There were also NGOs such as Planact in the Vosloorus Extension 28 and Rooftops Canada in the Ivory Park Ward 78 that were involved in these projects. Their involvement was also to capacitate beneficiaries with relevant skills. The Support Organisation and its account administrator managed the funds of the project and this included maintaining monthly cash flows. The project certifier became the core of any PHP project as one who advised beneficiaries on technical matters and certified their houses in order for subsidy funds to be released. The Support Organisation played an important role in PHP projects. Its main task

was to render technical and administrative assistance to the projects. The account administrator controlled the budgets and monthly reconciliation of the funds (Housing Code, Department of Housing, 2000).

The Housing Code of (2000) does not specify any particular form of beneficiary organisation but, in practice, almost all PHP projects in the various provinces organise themselves into community-based organisations (CBOs), trusts, project committees or other community structures. These structures can form themselves into a legal entity and become a Support Organisation for the project. The beneficiaries can either identify a Support Organisation or form themselves into a legal entity and become a Support Organisation.

In most cases, these structures are formed by concerned members of the community on behalf of the beneficiaries. It is not very common that beneficiaries alone form such a structure. Sometimes an existing structure within the community will be used for this purpose (Housing Code, Department of Housing, 2000). The main functions of the Support Organisation are the following:

- All necessary planning, including layout, design or upgrading of services and design of houses.
- Determination of the total subsidy amount.
- Preparation of a cash flow and stages for progress payments.
- Applying to the housing authorities for project approval.
- Assisting beneficiaries to complete the subsidy application forms and submit them to the local authority.
- Prepare building plans and get them approved.
- Monitor building work.
- Certify construction, through the certifier.
- Operate the specified account, through the account administrator.
- Advise the beneficiaries about building material.
- Give general advice and assistance.

(Baumann, 2003: 11)

However, Baumann (2003: 12) states that a Support Organisation does not have to undertake

these tasks but can appoint other service providers. He further states that whatever arrangements the Support Organisation makes must satisfy the relevant housing authorities.

The Housing Code requires that the Support Organisation be legally constituted in accordance with Section 21 of the Companies Act, or as a trust, voluntary association or co-operative. Beneficiaries are required to enter into a formal contract with the Support Organisation. According to the Housing Code (National Housing Code, 2000) the following can be potential Support Organisations:

- Provincial government
- Local authorities
- Community groups, provided they are legal entity
- Non-governmental organisation
- Parastatal organisations
- Development corporations
- Private sector institutions and developers

The Support Organisation is also required to set up an office that is convenient for the beneficiaries, to be called the Housing Support Centre. They also appoint the staff that is to work at the Housing Support Centre for the duration of the project (Department of Housing, 2000).

3.4.3 Profit-Seeking Role Players

Baumann (2003: 13) points out that role players such as the private sector have an "ambiguous role in PHP projects besides their role of supplying goods and services to these projects". Some of these role players exploit the poor who usually possess low levels of education and therefore cannot comprehend some of transactions involved in the project. The introduction of the managed PHP by some municipalities paves the way for private developers to benefit in exactly the same way as with project-linked subsidy projects discussed earlier in this report.

3.4.4 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

The NGO community has played a meaningful role in promoting self-help housing in South Africa, even long before the government officially endorsed this type of housing delivery. According to a Planact publication (2009: 1), the South African NGOs were the first to understand the concept of PHP as early as the 1980s when they began working with poor communities and "developed community based and people-centred approaches to access land and to build houses". However Baumann (2003: 44) states that the South African NGO community has been critical of South Africa's housing policy and of the role of the PHP in it. During the early inception of the PHP, the government encouraged community-based organisations to function from the Housing Support Centres (National Department of Housing, 2000). Manie (2004: 5) emphasises that in any development there is a need for the inclusion of NGOs who focus not only on housing but also on environment, energy, greening issues and SMME development. The guidelines for Housing Support Centres stress the obligation of these organisations to comply with technical requirements, and their need to satisfy the relevant authorities in terms of capacity.

Most PHP projects, especially those undertaken by newly established NGOs, have resulted in the construction of similar housing products as conventional developer-driven housing with limited choice in respect of design and layout. Baumann (2003: 10) argues that to a large extent the Housing Support Organisations followed a locally based contractor-driven approach. In reality, NGOs together with beneficiary CBOs have ended up acting as developers.

Manie (2004: 12) observes that local authorities tend to work with NGOs who sometimes do not fully understand the process. According to Manie (2004: 10), NGOs and CBOs tend to develop their own flexible approaches to the PHP. The lack of well-qualified NGOs saw the rise of an array of fly-by-night NGOs who stepped into the vacuum though they lacked understanding of the PHP (ibid.).

3.4.5 Beneficiaries and Volunteers

The People's Housing Process has been touted by the government as the "key delivery method for low-cost housing for those who prefer to build their own homes" (Ministry of Housing, 1997). The tenets of the PHP, as it is understood and interpreted in the People's Housing Process policy, are its reliance on the labour of the beneficiaries to build their own homes. Thus, the PHP is assumed to be a housing delivery process that is aimed at reducing costs by using the labour of beneficiaries as a contribution to the process.

The National Department of Housing is of the opinion that if beneficiaries are given the chance either to build houses themselves or organise the building of their homes, they can build better houses for less money (National Housing Code, 2000). In essence, one of the major objectives of the PHP is for the beneficiaries to build or organise the building of their houses. This can be done in the form of sweat equity or a contribution in the form of contributing own labour. This means that beneficiaries over and above being involved in decision-making also take part in the actual construction of their houses. In successful PHP communities, there are volunteers who also join in the construction of the homes of kin, friends or neighbours.

The PHP policy as per the Housing Code (ibid.) recognises beneficiaries as the main drivers of the PHP. The policy is designed to "accommodate involvement in human settlement development, through beneficiaries' choice in key housing decisions". According to Baumann (2003), in this respect "the PHP is not a housing delivery route to be implemented, but a people's housing practice to be supported and facilitated".

Gilbert (2002) notes that the success of a capital subsidy is dependent on some form of personal investment. As a result of a similar realisation, the Gauteng Department of Housing announced in 2001 that it was doing away with the standard RDP housing in which 30 square metre houses are built by developers. Instead it would focus on the PHP in terms of which households control the construction of their homes.

The government's new emphasis on the PHP came at a time when it had given up all its expectations that the private sector would deliver better quality houses (Rust, 2002: 10). The PHP in essence is a process where people involve themselves in decision-making and

construction of houses, acquiring technical and administrative skills. Households who qualify for the government subsidies were, from 1 April 2003, required to participate actively in the financing of the construction of their houses either by making a payment of R2 479 in the case of RDP houses or a contribution in labour in the construction of their houses.

However, Minister of Housing at the time Sanki Mthembi-Mahanyele, had also stated that those who could afford the new requirement of a contribution of R2 479 in the case of RDP houses, but chose not to be physically involved in the building of their houses, could accumulate savings by participating in the National Savings Programme which was launched by the National Department of Housing in June 2001. The programme was to be administered by Nurcha, a government-sponsored housing financing parastatal. However, this savings programme it seems was never implemented as intended.

The PHP policy allows beneficiaries to build their houses themselves, hire artisans or appoint contractors, or a combination of all three. They can also build together or individually. They can produce their own building materials, buy them from suppliers or let contractors provide them. The limited extent to which this had been enabled by 2003, was a key motivation for my research into who is actually driving the PHP.

3.4.6 People's Housing Partnership Trust (PHPT)

The PHPT was independent of the government with a statutory recognition and was governed by a Board of Trustees. According to the Housing Code, the PHPT was to focus on capacity building. According to Baumann (2003: 18), the PHPT was established in 1997 to drive the implementation of the government's capacitation programme in support of the PHP. The PHP support activities were to be carried out at provincial and local levels. However, according to Bauman (2003: 17), there was never a good relationship between the Department of Housing and the PHPT as the latter is responsible for formulation of policy and therefore tends to "discourage" a PHPT role.

Some of the tasks of the PHPT were the following:

- "Advocacy, promotion, and creation of support for the PHP.

- ❖ Promotion of streamlined operational procedures for the delivery of land, finance and infrastructure services.
- ❖ Assistance to local organisations (CBO, NGO, etc.).
- ❖ The development and promotion of technical skills and association developmental support skills at all levels of government, CBO, NGOs communities, and private implement support for the PHP. This includes the training of facilitators from these organisations to conduct workshop as part of the housing support project preparation and implementation process.
- ❖ The facilitation and promotion of housing support functions and arrangement. In line with these objectives, the PHPT has concentrated on workshops, presentations, meetings, and with provincial and local authorities, CBOs, NGOs and beneficiaries"

(Baumann, 2003).

However, as mentioned, the PHPT was dissolved in 2007 by the National Department of Housing and all its functions have been taken over by a new PHP Directorate which has formulated a new Enhanced People's Housing Process (E-PHP) policy to be implemented nationally. The new E-PHP guidelines were launched on 1 April 2009 (The E-PHP Policy, Department of Housing, 2009). It is believed that one of the reasons for the PHPT's disbandment was that the PHPT had done little to promote the PHP nationally. The formation of the PHPT did not help in fast-tracking the delivery of houses through the PHP. This resulted in the PHP not delivering as was expected in terms of scaling up housing delivery. From its inception, only 3% of the houses delivered were though the PHP (Baumann, 2003: 1).

3.5 Funding Mechanism for the PHP

PHP projects are funded by three systems, namely a capital subsidy, a facilitation grant and an establishment grant. The capital subsidy can take the form of a green-field development where beneficiaries are allocated serviced sites and a top structure or a consolidation subsidy for beneficiaries who reside in serviced sites without top structures. In both cases, the facilitation and establishment grants apply (National Housing Code, 2000).

The facilitation grant is used for preparing work for the project. The amount of this grant depends on the discretion of the MEC for a particular project. The establishment grant is used to pay the Housing Support Centre staff and other service providers on the project. Every approved beneficiary is entitled to a sum of R570 towards this grant over and above the capital subsidy amount. A geotechnical investigation amount is also paid out, depending on the condition of the soil where a house is to be built, separate from the allocated beneficiary subsidies (National Housing Code, 2000).

A PHP project can either be undertaken as a green-field housing development or an upgrading of existing serviced sites, which is very common in Gauteng Province. In the case of an upgrading project, beneficiaries who own serviced stands can access a consolidation subsidy and those in a green-field housing development will qualify for a full once-off subsidy. The provincial Housing Department is responsible for receiving, processing and approving projects and subsidy applications.

Many searches are done before a subsidy is approved. The first one is the national database search, to investigate whether the applicant ever obtained a housing subsidy elsewhere in the Republic of South Africa before. The second is the deeds search with the Registrar of Deeds office to investigate whether the applicant is an owner or was an owner of a property within South Africa. These criteria would disqualify the aspirant beneficiary. In 2003, the capital subsidy for PHP was R14 102 and R16 581 for able-bodied and physically challenged people respectively, to build a top structure.

The National Housing Code (2000) stipulates that when subsidies are approved by a provincial Department of Housing a once-off facilitation grant has to be paid to the Support Organisation. This grant is used to assist communities to register as legal entities and to prepare a project proposal to the province. In some instances, it is also used to build a Housing Support Centre. The application for this funding is done by the Support Organisation (National Housing Code, 2000).

The funds are also meant for community workshops which are aimed at assisting communities to form themselves a new or enter into an agreement with an existing Support Organisation. The amount for this grant is not uniform in all projects in Gauteng. In some

instances, it depends on the size of the project. Some provinces do not release this grant at all, as it also depends on the discretion of the Housing MEC of a particular province. At the time I was conducting the fieldwork in Gauteng Province, the facilitation grant was R117 000.00. The National Housing Code (2000) specifies that in order for a Support Organisation to meet all financial obligations, it can access an establishment grant of R570 per approved beneficiary, which is additional to and separate from the subsidy. These funds are paid out by the province to pay all the costs of the Support Organisation and the fees for the account administrator and the certifier. The establishment grant is also used to pay the salaries of the Housing Support Centre staff until the completion of all the houses (National Housing Code, 2000).

3.5.1 The Housing Support Centre

A Housing Support Centre is a structure that can be built by the Housing Support Organisation or an existing building may be used. This centre must be situated at a place that is central and easily accessible to all beneficiaries (National Housing Code, 2000). All PHP projects should have such a facility, as it is where all functions pertaining to the project are performed. In the case of a new structure, the provincial Department of Housing provides an amount not exceeding R117 000.00 to build such a structure (ibid.).

The Housing Support Organisation is expected to apply for funds, which are separate from the beneficiary subsidies I set out under the funding mechanisms. Another requirement is that a full-time staff should operate the Housing Support Centre during office hours during the week and on agreed times over weekends so that the beneficiaries can be assisted (ibid.).

Several staff members, usually from the community, are employed at the Housing Support Centre to assist the beneficiaries with technical and administrative skills. In PHP projects, beneficiaries were trained in these skills so as to equip them for employment opportunities later, after the project has been completed. It is the Housing Support Organisation that employs an office administrator who manages all the activities at the Housing Support Centre. This is one of the most important positions within a PHP project as the incumbent has to manage everything and everybody involved in the project. The other important person is a technical advisor who advises beneficiaries on technical support functions. The Housing

Code (ibid.) dictates that the technical advisor should possess tertiary qualifications in building and related fields. If the Support Organisation employs anybody who does not have these qualifications, the quality of the houses will be compromised.

A community liaison officer is also employed to work directly with beneficiaries and attend to their queries regarding the building of the houses and delivery of building materials. The Housing Support Centre also functions as a facility where other technical functions are performed, such as choosing of house designs by beneficiaries, costing of these designs and submitting house plans to the municipality for approval. It is important to note that house plans in PHP projects are not paid out of beneficiary subsidies but from the facilitation grant. It is the Housing Support Centre staff who must develop a construction programme, form and supervise building teams, record progress made, etc. (ibid.).

3.5.2 The Housing Support Organisation

The National Housing Code (2000) stipulates that a community of beneficiaries who choose to build their houses through the PHP has to identify a Housing Support Organisation. The Support Organisation can be local authority, trust, project committees or any other community structure. The Housing Support Organisation has to be a legal entity. In the case of Gauteng, the Department of Housing issued a directive in 2002 that “local authorities should become Housing Support Organisations for PHP projects within their jurisdictions”. However, this does not stop community-based organisations from being a Support Organisation if they form themselves into a legal entity or a Section 21 (non-profit) company. In most cases, these structures are formed by concerned members of the community on behalf of the beneficiaries.

It is not very common that beneficiaries alone form such a structure. Sometimes an existing structure within the community will be used for this purpose (Department of Housing, 2000). A Support Organisation performs several functions that are aimed at ensuring that the PHP project is implemented successfully and beneficiaries are involved in the process of building houses for themselves. It is vitally important that the Support Organisation does all the necessary planning with the beneficiaries. This can include issues such as house design or the upgrading of services and determining the total subsidy amounts for a particular project. The

Support Organisation should also apply for subsidies from the provincial Housing Departments on behalf of the beneficiaries (ibid.). When provincial Housing Departments release funds for the projects, the Support Organisation should oversee how these funds are utilised. It is also the task of the Support Organisation to organise the procurement of building materials and it is their duty to advise beneficiaries about building materials and render assistance where necessary (Baumann, 2003: 11).

3.6 Economic and Social Challenges to PHP

The government decision to introduce the PHP as a housing delivery mechanism in 1998 and to mainstream it in 2001 was also to address the issue of economically and socially challenged communities. It is really a programme aimed at the poorest of the poor members of our society (Department of Housing, 2000). Furthermore, there are numerous socio-economic issues that are involved in the PHP but the most critical are affordability, income generation and financial sustainability. These are critical considering the housing situation and the need to address poverty and inequality. The PHP is only financed through the capital subsidy scheme under the National Housing Subsidy Programme (ibid.).

For instance, in the two PHP projects under review in this research report, there exists rampant unemployment and poverty. This phenomenon leads to social degradation and other related matters such as HIV and AIDS. In fact, most of the participants in the PHP in these projects are from backyard shacks or other rented accommodation or those living with an extended family. In most cases, it is the women who take centre stage from the initial stages of the projects. This must be understood in the context that they are always at home and look after the household while men are away working, usually at faraway places.

The subsidy scheme and the involvement of the beneficiaries in the actual construction ensure affordability. By their involvement in the building of their homes, the beneficiaries avoid having to pay profit to developers. In the preparation stage of the PHP, it has already been noted that although the PHP was meant to be people-centred, several different approaches were possible. In one approach, developers use beneficiary labour for the building of houses and pay them a wage. The money used to pay the beneficiaries for their labour is drawn from their subsidies and this further affects the size and quality of the house.

3.8. Conclusion

In conclusion, it has become evident that the South African government developed an elaborate structure and mechanism for self-help housing. At face value, it appears to be a viable option to reduce the South African housing backlog for low-income households and to produce better quality housing. To ensure self-help housing delivery reaches these household, the government has stated a commitment to putting the community at the centre of low-income housing development, particularly self-help housing, since it is the poor who actually know what they want. In this chapter, I have already reviewed some shortcomings with the roles assigned to various role players and structures and the direction that PHP implementation tended to take.

My case studies from 2003 of the PHP five years after its official adoption in the two chapters that follow show that there certainly were cracks in the PHP. The case studies question the extent to which communities were able to drive state-assisted self-help housing in South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Case Study of Vosloorus Extension 28 PHP Project

4.1. Introduction

The Gauteng Department of Housing had prioritised housing delivery through the PHP as a strategy to build quality housing and to increase the housing stock. The ultimate objective was to build 60 000 houses within three years through 60 Housing Support Centres throughout the province (Gauteng Department of Housing, PHP Directorate, 2002). The two projects under review in this and the next chapter were the first PHP projects the department had undertaken. The PHP project to be discussed in this chapter is that of Vosloorus Extension 28. This is the first project that I visited in June 2003 for this research report. From my early impressions, the project seemed to be well implemented with all systems in place, but a series of contraventions to the PHP guidelines and policy became evident. It dawned on me that much beneficiary education about PHP had to be conducted in all communities in the province as people seemed to have a poor understanding of this housing delivery process.

This chapter first traces the background of the Vosloorus Extension 28 project. Secondly, I look at the composition of the Vosloorus Steering Committee and how it managed the project. Finally, I discuss the involvement of Planact, a non-governmental development organisation working mainly in urban areas of Gauteng, and how it had to finally take over the implementation of this project.

4.2. Project Background

Vosloorus Extension 28 is an informal area with 1 350 sites that were serviced under the Independent Development Trust (IDT) scheme; it is situated approximately 25 kilometres from the Central Business District (CBD) of Boksburg on the East Rand. The project falls under the jurisdiction of the Boksburg Service Delivery Centre in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (Vosloorus Extension 28 PHP Progress Report, 2003). During my visit to the site in 2003, I observed that most people were unemployed. According to a Planact Annual Report, (2002: 17), a survey conducted by the local council in 1997 revealed

that 60% of the residents have no formal jobs. The survey also showed that residents of Vosloorus Extension 28 were surviving by informal means, such as running of spaza shops, selling fruit and vegetables, selling scrap metals and growing little backyard vegetable gardens. However, 40% of the community members were formally employed, mostly as domestic workers and factory workers. The community was relatively poor with no educational facilities such as schools, library, shopping complexes, etc. (Planact Annual Report, 2002).

In 1987 the Vosloorus branch of SANCO, after being approached by backyard dwellers, single-sex hostel dwellers, Extension 25 squatter camp dwellers and homeless people about housing needs, decided to start the process of identifying land that could accommodate those people. A site allocation committee was elected with the mandate to engage the council and the Independent Development Trust (IDT) about a suitable land in and around Vosloorus (Planact, 2002: 18). A community office was established by the IDT for potential beneficiaries to register, with a R110 registration fee being administered by a law firm. A piece of land was identified where Ext. 28, Phase One is now situated. Infrastructure was installed in 1990 through the IDT capital subsidy scheme (Planact, 2002: 17).

Over time, high masts, lights and electricity were installed and proper roads and a clinic were built in response to pressure from the community. Over the years, the community of Vosloorus developed strong social networks. They organised themselves into Block Area Committees, Community Development Forums and Ward Committees for Ward 28. In 1997, Vosloorus residents were largely living on serviced sites with no top structures (ibid.).

The community elected 11 Vosloorus Steering Committee members with the aim of assisting the residents in their endeavour to improve the quality of life of the residents in the area, with land and housing as the first priorities. Planact facilitated the process and conducted a needs assessment to establish community priorities. Part of the needs assessment was to determine the viability of the PHP as a strategy to meet the community's housing needs (Planact, 2002). After wider consultations with the community, it was agreed that focus was to be on housing construction for people living on serviced stands. It was also agreed that the PHP was a viable housing delivery route for the project. Another objective of choosing the PHP route was to use local labour. The first group of 300 subsidies was submitted to the province in

June 2002, and the first 250 PHP subsidies were approved by September 2002, so that the first phase of the project could begin (Planact, 2002).

I conducted my fieldwork in Vosloorus in June 2003. At that time, the project was not performing as was anticipated. There seemed to be problems linked to the implementation of the project.

4.3. Organisational Structure

This project did not have a distinct organisational structure as such. The members of the Steering Committee were the people who made decisions on behalf of the beneficiaries. The 11 members had organised themselves into a board that was implementing the project. However, the organisational team at the time of my fieldwork in 2003 consisted of the Vosloorus Steering Committee, Planact, key local authority officials and officials from the Gauteng Department of Housing. The Steering Committee was meeting with Planact twice a week to deal with internal issues. As per the directive of the Gauteng Department of Housing for all municipalities to act as Support Organisations for these PHP projects around Gauteng, the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality became the account administrator for the project (Steering Committee member, personal communication).

4.3.1. Steering Committee

A Housing Steering Committee consisting of 11 members was formed by the community and was linked to the area and a block committee structure throughout the area. The main purpose of the Steering Committee was to work on strategies for the upgrading of the community. In the case of Vosloorus Extension 28, the committee was considered representative and accepted by the larger community as legitimate, as the entire election of the committee was entirely left to the community (Planact, 2002: 19).

Prior to the election of the committee, numerous consultations with interest groups and mass meetings with the community were held. Specific attention was paid to gender and geographical representation. The role of the Steering Committee was to facilitate every facet

of the project in conjunction with the other community structures. (Steering Committee member, personal communication).

4.3.2 The Support Organisation

The Support Organisation for the Vosloorus PHP project was the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, partly because the latter already is a legal entity as outlined in the basic requirements in the establishment of a Support Organisation. In Vosloorus, establishing a relationship with the municipality and securing their support for the PHP was critical to the success of the project, especially given the province's policy to appoint the local authorities as the official Support Organisation to manage PHP projects within their jurisdiction. The council took a resolution to support the project and give input into the business plan. It also provided technical support and management support to the project (Beneficiary 1, personal communication).

4.4 Role Players and their Motives in the Vosloorus Project

Apart from the Ekurhuleni local municipality and the Vosloorus Steering Committee, there were other role players who became involved in the Vosloorus PHP project. The first was Planact who was brought in to support the Vosloorus Steering Committee in implementing the project. According to the Planact project officer, Mike Makwela, Planact operated under the understanding that the core elements of the PHP must be continuously preserved and implemented to their full extent, based on the needs and aspirations of the community. The organisation also capacitated beneficiaries throughout the project life cycle (Mike Makwela, personal communication).

4.4.1 Beneficiaries and Volunteers

In Vosloorus, beneficiaries refused to work for free although the houses being built were to belong to them. The beneficiaries only got involved when they were needed to discuss the allocation procedure and to decide who would be the first to get houses. The Steering Committee came up with criteria to allocate houses: they were to start with the elderly

people, to be followed by the sickly, then the children-headed homes and finally the rest of the beneficiaries.

When the actual time for construction of their houses arrived, some beneficiaries just did not make themselves available. I was informed by one of the beneficiaries that people do not want to work for free (sweat equity) but would rather be employed as a labourer during the building of his or her house. “We are unemployed, and this is an opportunity for us to earn some money” (Beneficiary 2, personal communication). They argued that the emerging contractors are paid and that also want to be paid even if the houses belong to them.

Some of the beneficiaries assisted (sweat equity), but would have preferred to be employed and be in the building teams of the emerging contractors. Other beneficiaries were just not interested in the building of the houses. Volunteers and some from other areas become involved also as labourers, digging the slabs, and were paid by the building material supplier who was contracted by the Steering Committee to lay the slabs. According to one Steering Committee member, there was a tender process at the Housing Support Centre and three companies were invited. It was AFNJ material suppliers who was selected to lay the slabs, because their prices were lower than the other companies who were invited. As I have pointed out earlier, the material supplier employed beneficiaries who wanted to work and other people from other areas who wanted to lay the slabs in the project. At the Vosloorus project, there were building teams who used local labour including beneficiaries to build houses.

4.4.2 Steering Committee Members

The Steering Committee members seemed to do a lot of work in the project. They worked closely with Planact. However, only one member of the committee worked full-time at the Housing Support Centre, carrying out duties of a treasurer and bookkeeper. He looked after the project expenditure such as keeping track of all payments that were made by the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, the Support Organisation for the project. He also invited quotations from the various suppliers, screened them and recommended suppliers with a fair price. It was also one of his duties to identify emerging contractors and monitor the product. On top of this, he also kept track of the costs of the houses. He informed me that

he was not paid as a Steering Committee members but was paid an allowance of R20 per completed house (Steering Committee member, personal communication).

4.4.3 Housing Support Centre Staff

The Housing Support Centre for the Vosloorus Extension 28 project was an old office building that was used by the Municipal Council as offices and was donated to the PHP project (Peladi Municipal PHP Housing Officer, 2003, personal communication). As prescribed by the National Housing Code, this facility had to employ staff to render assistance to the beneficiaries. In the case of the Vosloorus Extension 28 project, the Housing Support Centre staff consisted of an office administrator and a site foreman/certifier who was a registered building instructor and owned his own company. There was also a community liaison officer who acted as a security guard as well. The office administrator in the Support Centre informed me that the Support Centre staff were not part of decision-making as they were employed by Planact, though some of them were also beneficiaries. Their salaries were paid by Planact (Community Liaison Officer, personal communication).

The office administrator began as a Steering Committee member and when the project started became an office manager. Her job description entailed filling in of subsidy application forms for the beneficiaries, identifying which stands to start digging for foundations and checking deliveries when building was to start. The certifier in turn ensured that houses were of good quality. He also allocated work to emerging contractors and checked their work.

4.4.4 The Account Administrator

Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Council acted as the project account administrator. This was because the beneficiaries were not considered qualified to handle large sums of money. The municipality had to wait until the funds were transferred from the province before it could start paying for the PHP project activities. This situation resulted in unnecessary delays in paying service providers and the suppliers of building materials (Steering Committee member, personal communication).

Most PHP projects find themselves in this unfortunate position when the provincial Housing

Departments take a long time to pay for building materials, resulting in projects having to be halted for brief periods. The Gauteng Department of Housing also experienced delays when payment had to be effected. The prolonged completion of these projects can be heavily attributed to these payment delays (PHP Directorate, Annual Report, Gauteng Department of Housing, 2003).

In the Vosloorus PHP project, the procedure for payment was one that caused delays in building of houses as beneficiaries had to wait for the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality to process payments for building materials. Beneficiaries had the perception that unscrupulous developers and private builders took advantage of this situation and cashed in by promising "quick fixes", in some instances offering beneficiaries materials without payment and, in the process, inflating the prices of materials and thereby exploiting the people (Beneficiary 3, personal communication).
The Gauteng Department of Housing made a decision in May 2003 to create an finance controlling institution called XHSA Accounting and Technical Centre (ATC) that was to manage all funding of PHP projects within the Gauteng province.

4.4.5 The Project Certifier

The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality Engineering Department provided a suitably qualified person with experience to act as the project certifier. This person was assisted by a representative from the Steering Committee and a representative from the Support Organisation. In most cases, I observed that these local representatives lacked the in-depth knowledge and understanding for this job and entirely relied on the professionals from the municipality who gave them instructions on how to do the job. These officials were supposed to transfer skills to the community members as per the PHP Policy.

The people who carried out some of the duties were perceived by beneficiaries to be acting as mere gatekeepers at times when these officials were not present (Beneficiary 4, personal communication). In most instances during the implementation of this project, a former builder was called in to certify some of the houses. On checking some of the completed houses myself, I could tell that the houses were not properly built and defectiveness and poor workmanship in the brickwork could be observed.

There were also concerns about the certifier's competency from the beneficiaries: "I wonder why the municipality does not send one full-time building inspector to oversee what this man is doing?" (Beneficiary 5, personal communication).

4.4.6 The NGO Planact

Planact had earlier been involved in the Vosloorus Extension 28 community and had capacitated the residents around housing issues and other community needs from the late 1980's. The Provincial Housing Department and the local municipality then brought in Planact to further assist the Steering Committee to implement the PHP housing project (Planact, 1985-2009).

According to Planact project officer Mike Makwela (July 2003, personal communication), Planact had to take over and put systems in place so that the project could be a success.. This commitment by Planact resulted in the construction of 250 homes between January 2003 and September 2003 (Planact publication,,2004). The involvement of the Housing Support Centre staff was more of an intermediary role and was a link between the community and the Steering Committee. The Housing Support Centre staff did not get involved in contract administration and technical matters. Planact ran a daily spreadsheet on all the houses being built which included costs, materials ordered, etc.

Planact worked with the Steering Committee members and the service providers, such as AFNJ Supplies, a building material supplier. The Gauteng Department of Housing officials worked closely with the Project officer from Planact and the latter in turn informed the Support Centre staff of any changes that needed to be made. The Support Centre staff reported to Planact as their salaries were being paid by them (Housing Support Centre staff member, personal communication).

It also emerged that beneficiaries were not involved in decision-making regarding the buying of building materials. According to Alfred Sithole, the security guard at the Support Centre (personal communication), the orders for the building materials were placed by the Ekhurleni Metropolitan Municipality and Planact. Alfred Sithole's role was to receive the orders from

AFNJ Supplies and deliver them to the respective beneficiary houses where building was taking place. It was clear that beneficiaries did not take part in the procurement of materials for their houses.

As I have pointed out earlier, the material supplier or contractor employed beneficiaries to work as labourers during the building of their houses. The leaders of the building teams, of whom some were themselves beneficiaries, were also paid by the supplier or contractor. According to Gladys (personal communication), a Support Centre staff member, the beneficiaries did not want to work for free even if the houses belonged them. They asked, "The contractors are getting paid, why not us?"

4.4.7 The Private Sector

The private sector was heavily involved in the Vosloorus project, especially in the form of the building material supplier, AFNJ Supplies, who acted as a contractor for some of the work. This company seemed to be involved in almost everything pertaining to the project. For instance the house plans were drawn up by this company and the beneficiaries were charged R30 per plan (Housing Support Centre, minute book, 2003). This was a deviation from the PHP policy which is contained in the National Housing Code of 2000. The plans were supposed to be drawn up by the Cuban technical advisors or architects either from the provincial Department of Housing or the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality and the beneficiaries were not expected to pay for these plans.

However, AFNJ Supplies only drew up two different plans which the beneficiaries could choose from, called A&B Plans, which meant that the choice of house was limited since all the beneficiaries chose the same plan. I observed that AFNJ Supplies were actually the sole implementers of this project. They carried out all the work and submitted their claims to the Support Centre staff who forwarded the claims to Planact to effect payment. This scenario is prevalent in so-called PHP projects. In another PHP project in which I was personally involved in 2005/06, at Etwatwa in Daveyton in the East Rand, a building material supplier called Marnol who supplied building material to this PHP project became an implementer of that project and hired beneficiaries as labourers. In the Etwatwa PHP project, the beneficiaries were employed as labourers and semi-skilled builders who worked for a wage.

4.5 PHP Activities

According to the National Housing Code (2000), one of the key activities in the PHP is to ensure that people develop skills in organisation, administration and management in order to be able to own the PHP. It should also put beneficiary empowerment at the forefront. The PHP should be accountable to the community. It is also critical that the PHP contribute to the overall improvement in the skills and opportunities of the community members. In the sections below, I examine the limitations of this in the Vosloorus project.

4.5.1 Building Programme

Altogether 10 emerging contractors were directed by the site foreman to assemble construction teams. Each team was made up of 10 members, three of whom had to be women and preference was given to those beneficiaries who had received training from the Department of Labour.

The site foreman was responsible for deciding which teams would work on which stands. This procedure minimised unnecessary conflict. The project commenced with the building of 260 houses in the first phase from 2003 to 2004, and subsequently 500 beneficiary subsidy applications were approved for Phase Two. The project was at this stage in the hands of Planact and AFNJ Supplies as implementers of the project. When I visited the area for the second time in 2008, the project was completed and the former Housing Support Centre was being used as a small business facility.

4.5.2 Training of Beneficiaries

After the capacity of the community was assessed by the Steering Committee and a skills audit taken, the beneficiaries whose subsidies were approved were offered building skills training through the Department of Labour. They were trained in various skills such as brick-laying, welding, carpentry, electricity, painting, plumbing and administration. Some were also trained in slab reinforcement for the foundations. All this skills training was offered free as the PHP Directorate within the provincial Department of Housing signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Labour in 2002 to offer beneficiaries free

skills training in construction (Mpendulo, housing official, personal communication).

The training was for a period of 45 days in 2003. This training, though not enough, could equip the beneficiaries to work with qualified builders and thereafter learn more skills to be able to build their own houses with minimal external assistance (Department of Housing, 2000). However, the PHP in Vosloorus did not fully meet the requirements that are stipulated in the PHP guidelines. There seemed to be an element of exploitation of beneficiaries by outside stakeholders to which I return below. As mentioned, there were 10 building teams, comprising 10 people per team. The teams would have been capable of completing 20 houses per week if there had been no problems with payments and delivery of materials. In each building team, three women worked as labourers. The other team members were men.

4.5.3. Activities and Functions of the Support Organisation

The tasks of the Support Organisation set out in Housing Code of 2000, as presented in chapter 3 of this report, include financial management, training of the Steering Committee, design of administration systems for the Housing Support Centre, putting together of the construction programme, assistance to and negotiation with contractors and help in the design of the accounting and administration systems to be used by the account administrator.
However, at Vosloorus these functions seemed to have been ceded to Planact who not only trained the Housing Support Centre staff, but also paid their salaries. The National Housing Code (2000) stipulates that the Housing Support Centre staff must be paid out of the establishment grant. It was not clear whether the grants were administered by Planact or the staff were paid from their own coffers. However, Planact was according to their report was not keen in managing the finances of the project but with the absence of qualified staff were forced to be involved (Planact, 1985-2009). This was before the introduction of the housing department of XHAHA ATC in 2003 to administer all PHP funds within the Gauteng province.

4.5.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The construction programme was monitored by Planact who were also carrying out the project management function of the project. Planact was also monitoring the project certifier

and ensuring that all terms of the implementation of the project went according to the planned schedules. There was rarely a report-back to the beneficiaries about monitoring and evaluation of the project. It was Planact who picked up problems and applied corrective measures where necessary.

During my visits in 2003, it became clear that the monitoring and evaluation was solely done by Planact, assisted by the technical advisor. Perhaps due to lack of capable staff, the Ekurhuleni Municipality did not monitor the project. The provincial Housing Department deployed Cuban technical advisors to assist in the project but no proper monitoring or evaluation of the construction of the houses or the entire project was carried out. Planact also brought in skilled architects and engineers to monitor the work. However the volunteers and workers were not performing their duties as was expected of them. Some of the semi-skilled labourers would leave the site and do private jobs in the same area where construction work was in progress (community liaison officer, personal communication). There were no mechanisms for monitoring the payment of workers, hence some of them would abscond. AFNJ Supplies hired and fired the workers as they wished and sometimes this resulted in conflicts. In some site meetings that I attended at Vosloorus in 2003, workers would be quarrelling with the project certifier about the latter's competence to certify houses, etc. If the certifier did not approve the quality of a completed house, the workers would complain because this meant that they were not going to be paid. Although the Housing Support Centre was well secured, there were reports that building materials were being stolen (Alfred security guard, personal communication).

4.5.5. Beneficiary Involvement and Contribution

The involvement of beneficiaries in the actual construction of their houses at Vosloorus has already been discussed in this report. Beneficiaries of this project were not interested in the process itself, but rather in getting a house. This meant that who actually built the house was immaterial. Apart from beneficiaries who refused to work on site, some of the beneficiaries were not even present when the construction on their own houses started. This situation meant that whoever was on site would make decisions on behalf of the beneficiary. The presence of the beneficiary during construction is very important as he/she could contribute in many ways during the building of his/her house. They might contribute building materials

that could be used to build a bigger structure. The beneficiaries at this project showed an unwillingness to be involved in the actual construction of their houses without being paid.

Martin Mokwena, treasurer and member of the Steering Committee, agreed that the traditional theory of *Ilima* or *Letsema*, where traditional and rural communities would pool all their resources collectively to address certain needs for their community and help each other, does not work in urban areas: “In practice it does not happen, not every beneficiary would physically be involved, because some want to occupy the house regardless of having participated during its construction” (Martin Mokwena, personal communication).

From the beginning, beneficiaries demanded an assurance that they would be employed when the project started even if the houses to be built were theirs. Out of the five beneficiaries that I interviewed, only one helped a little when her house was built, even though she worked during the day. She would use her shanty as a storeroom to keep the materials during the night and take them out when workers started in the morning. The others told me in no uncertain terms that they never took part in the construction of their houses and that only the emerging contractors built their houses. It became clear to me that some of the beneficiaries mistook the emerging contractors as employers as they were operating in the same way as private contractors. The participation by beneficiaries was subject to being paid.

They also stated that they were not involved in the planning, costing and organising of the project. These functions were all carried out by the Ekurhuleni Municipality and Planact together with the Steering Committee. The beneficiaries also did not have a say in the design of their houses except for choosing between Plan A and Plan B. On top of this, not all beneficiaries were given technical know-how and therefore could not be expected to do the actual building of their houses: “People who were trained are those who are now owners of the emerging contractors are therefore building the houses, we are only labourers here" (Beneficiary 5, personal communication).

The only people who were in contact with the officials were the Housing Support Centre staff. The majority of the beneficiaries were given feedback by members of the Steering Committee but were not afforded the opportunity to question the officials from the Department of Housing, Planact or the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Council. For instance, the

issue of two house plans drawn up by a private individual for the entire project could not be addressed. The emerging contractors decided with the Steering Committee, without the involvement of the beneficiaries, to use the private company to draw up the house plans. In most municipalities implementing PHP projects, the plans are drawn up by the Department of Housing or a local authority. The beneficiaries do not have to pay for them, but also do not have a say in the design. In Gauteng Housing Department, as indicated earlier, there were 20 Cuban professionals who could draw up these plans as some of them were architects. However they were not given this role.

When I visited the project, the beneficiaries were unable explain where the house plans were coming from. The PHP policy states that the beneficiaries must be able to have a wide choice when they decide on the house they want to build. In this instance, they were being constrained because there were only two plans.

On this project, three categories of persons were interviewed, namely five beneficiaries, staff members at the Support Centre and other stakeholders who interacted with the community, in this case Planact. At the Housing Support Centre, there was also Mr. Petro Khuzwayo who was the project officer as well as the certifier. He is a registered instructor of some 8 years' experience and once owned his own building company. However, his role here was to ensure the quality of every completed unit by the emerging contractors was of an acceptable standard before payment. Before he could certify a house, Planact would be called in to verify the quality of the house. He also approved the units and allocated units to be built by the emerging contractors. It was not clear whether he did this task alone or in collaboration with the Steering Committee. Nevertheless, this practice was open to abuse as the Steering Committee members were just a few members who could allocate jobs to their favoured friends or accept bribes. The project officer attended all meetings with the other stakeholders and was present when tendering was done for the buying of building materials although he had no influence in the actual buying.

4.6. Discussion and Conclusion

The Vosloorus project was a typical example of a PHP project that was totally driven by outside stakeholders and not by the beneficiaries themselves. The involvement of Planact as

an NGO is not questionable, however the extent in which they ran the project seems also to defeat the objectives of the PHP of a people-driven housing delivery. The Housing Code does not refute the use of service providers in PHP projects, but the critical point is that the beneficiaries must be at the centre of their housing development. On the Vosloorus project, everything seemed to be in the hands of firstly Planact, who was the major role player, and secondly AFNJ Supplies. Specifically, since they were material suppliers, it was not their function to draw plans and charge beneficiaries R30 per plan. It is evident that they were drawing plans that would suit their building materials.

It is also questionable that the same company was used for engineering services and the laying of foundations. They did this by training the same beneficiaries and charging the maximum amount for each foundation. In the meantime, beneficiaries who were employed by the company were paid far below the market value for the job they were doing. Thus, the supplier was making an unfair profit.

The Steering Committee members seemed not to be fully involved in the project except those who were in the project as employees. It can be concluded that this project was clearly a managed PHP programme given the involvement of the two dominant stakeholders. The beneficiaries also viewed the project as providing employment opportunities and not as a people-centred housing development where decisions could be taken by them. Planact confirmed that they managed the project on behalf of the Steering Committee. Through their involvement, 650 houses were completed.

Planact left the project in 2004 when the Gauteng Department of Housing established a Section 21 company called XHASA Accounting and Training Centre (ATC) which was to oversee and control all finances of PHP projects in Gauteng province. The XHASA ATC proved to be incapable of this task of being financial administrators as service providers and emerging contractors would wait for several months for their payments. This was despite guarantees by XHASA ATC during their road-shows to all municipalities in Gauteng province implementing PHP projects that payments would be made within three days after receiving documentation.. However there were certain requirements set by this company before paying out. For instance XHASA ATC wanted a certain number of houses to be completed before the HSC staff and contractors could be paid. This resulted in shoddy work

by contractors who were chasing the number of houses completed and thereby compromising on the quality of houses. There was also a problem on how payment should be done.
The emergent contractors and laboures preferred to be paid in cash not by cheques as they did not have identity documents or were very far from the city to cash the cheques. However XHASA ATC was required to follow the Public Finance Management Act (PMFA) in dealing with state funds and identity documents had to be used. All these requirements resulted in the final collapse of the project in 2006. However Planact as an intermediary between the beneficiary and the government was very instrumental in the success of the project at its early stages albeit their dominant role in managing the project. In all this discussion beneficiaries did not play a meaningful role in decision-making processes concerning the project.

In conclusion, it can be deduced from the above discussion that there were many stakeholders that were involved in the Vosloorus project. It seems that from the beginning was not meant to be community-driven but driven by stakeholders who had other interests in the project.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Case Study of the Ivory Park Ward 78 PHP Project

5.1. Introduction

The Ivory Park Ward 28 PHP project was the second case study in this research report. It is a unique project as from its inception women were at the forefront. The project was managed by the Masisizane Women's Housing Co-operative, a membership-based savings organisation which acted as the Support Organisation. In 2002, it was also one of the first PHP pilot projects of the Gauteng Housing Department. In this chapter, I discuss the roles that were played in the project by stakeholders other than the beneficiaries, especially an NGO called Rooftops Canada and the private sector.

5.2. Project Background

Masisizane Women's Housing Co-operative was started as a community-based organisation in 1999 in Ivory Park by a group of seven women who got together and started saving R20 weekly. Later, the women of Ivory Park organised a savings scheme for the purpose of building houses for themselves. The membership of the savings scheme rose to over 4 000 (Planact, 2004). Its founder, Anna Mofokeng started the organisation with the aim of uplifting the quality of life of the residents by building homes and related amenities (Planact, 2004). They also had the vision of creating sustainable jobs and alleviating poverty. The Masisizane Women's Housing Co-operative managed to build 300 houses over a period of two years through a pure self-help process. They also established a brick-making project intended to build skills and provide income for the participants, as well as contributing to the improvement of housing in the area.

In 2003, the organisation turned its attention to building housing through the PHP, using the government's consolidation Subsidy. By the time they submitted their business plan to the Gauteng Department of Housing, they had already built a Housing Support Centre without government assistance and had secured training in construction skills for a number of community members through the Department of Labour: "We had to train our people first so

that they could build their own houses themselves" (Thembi, Housing Support Centre manager, personal communication).

The Masisizane Women's Co-operative also initiated the process of getting the government to grant title deeds to families who had previously only had site allocations. 20 subsidies were approved as a first project. At the time of my fieldwork in June/July 2003, the Masisizane Women's Co-operative had been awarded 250 more subsidies for Phase 1 of the project.

5.3. Organisational Structure

The Ivory Park project, unlike the Vosloorus project, never had a Steering Committee as such. As mentioned, it was started as a *stokvel* by seven women who pooled their R20 weekly contributions and gave the proceeds to one of them on a weekly basis. Perhaps it can be concluded that the seven were Steering Committee for the project.

The Gauteng Department of Housing had, from the inception of the PHP as a housing delivery alternative, used local authorities to act as Support Organisations for all its PHP projects. However, in the case of Ivory Park it was different, as Masisizane converted its stokvel savings scheme association into a housing co-operative as a legal entity.

5.4. Role Players and Their Motives in the Ivory Park Project

The Masisizane Women's Housing Cooperative was also managed by outside stakeholders, especially the Canadian NGO Rooftops. There was also a Black Empowerment Equity (BEE) contractor that supplied and installed all glassware. A company called Van Zyl, Le Roux & Hurter attorneys from Pretoria was appointed the account administrator for the project. They were supposed to visit the site regularly, but apparently neither attended any meetings nor visited the site. They were supposed to check whether materials that had been paid for had been delivered on site (Thembi, personal communication). The beneficiaries relied on the Housing Support Centre staff to certify that material had been delivered. A further problem was that materials were sometimes not delivered on time, resulting in delays (beneficiary 1, personal communication). Most of the time, the Support Centre manager Thembi had to take

a bus or taxi to Pretoria to meet with the account administrator for matters pertaining to the Support Organisation (Thembi, personal communication).

In terms of the National Housing Code (2000), the account administrator is responsible for ensuring that a specified account to accrue subsidies is opened and that the material suppliers, the builders as well as the Housing Support Centre staff are paid. He/she must also prepare monthly financial reconciliation for all materials ordered to date and those that have been delivered and paid for.

However, with the account administrator not present, all these tasks remained incomplete. This also resulted in Rooftops Canada taking on all these functions. During my fieldwork in 2003, no evidence was found to confirm that beneficiaries had verified that a bank account, which was supposed to be opened by the Support Organisation so that the Housing Department could deposit money into such an account, had been established. Evidence of a formal appointment of the account administrator was not readily available, although the Support Centre manager confirmed his existence. The non-existence of a formal letter of approval of the appointment of the account administrator could create the situation where no one can be held liable for any financial misrepresentation. At the meetings that I attended at Ivory Park in June and July 2003, there was only the Support Centre manager, a representative from Rooftops Canada and one official from the Gauteng Department of Housing. These meetings were meant to report on the status of the project and sort out any problems pertaining to the project. I never had an opportunity to engage with the officials from Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, as they did not attend.

The other members of the Housing Support Centre who were also beneficiaries did not attend the meetings. This indicated that beneficiaries' input was not required. All decisions were taken by the representative from Rooftops Canada and the Support Centre manager (beneficiary 2, personal communication). For instance, the decision to replace the account administrator, who was never available and not doing his work, was taken by Rooftops and the Support Centre manager. The material supplier who did not deliver materials on time suffered the same fate.

5.4.1. Beneficiaries and Volunteers

The role of beneficiaries at the Ivory Park project was similar to that in the Vosloorus Extension 28 project. The beneficiaries who were trained by the Department of Labour also formed building teams consisting of 10 people. When they started building the houses, some members of the community came in as volunteers and assisted, although they expected to be paid. The beneficiaries and volunteers worked as labourers whilst the actual construction was done by semi-skilled builders from Ward 78.

In most cases, builders were paid in stages. The site foreman and the beneficiary were asked to approve work that had been done, after which payments were processed. Payments were made at regular intervals based on the claim processing cycle at the financial section of the provincial Department of Housing (Thembi, personal communication).

Sometimes when payment was delayed at the province, the beneficiaries and the volunteers stopped working and waited for their money beneficiary 3, personal communication). It was also interesting to note that in most cases the volunteers came from other areas around Ivory Park rather than Ward 78 itself. This situation arose as a result that these people viewed the project as a providing much needed jobs for the local not as a PHP as it is supposed to be implemented.

5.4.2. Steering Committee

As already mentioned above, at the Ivory Park project there was no a Steering Committee. The project was started by seven women as a community savings-based membership organisation whose major vision was to uplift the community by building homes and related amenities for its members and their families, whilst creating sustainable jobs and alleviating poverty in the process.

The organisation, later registered as Masisizane Women's Housing Co-operative, was awarded a project to drive a PHP housing development in Ward 78 using state subsidy for people who qualified in that area. At the time of my fieldwork for this research report, the Support Centre manager seemed to be the one who facilitated the development of the project,

assisted by a representative from Rooftops Canada. It also seemed that if she did not do this job, the project would collapse. The reason for the Housing Support Centre manager to be like running the project alone was that she was the only person who worked closely with the founder of Masisizane Women Housing Co-operative, Anna Mofokeng who had since died. The Centre manager therefore knew everything concerning the project (beneficiary 4, personal communication).

5.4.3. Housing Support Centre Staff

The Masisizane Women's Housing Co-operative obtained accreditation in November 2002 from the Gauteng Department of Housing to become a Support Organisation. This enabled it to access housing subsidies for its members and receive support from the PHP Directorate established by the Department of Housing. They also received a capacitation grant from the department to build a Housing Support Centre. The Masisizane Co-operative thus acted as the Support Organisation for the Ivory Park project. There was a "management team" consisting of the Support Centre manager, technical advisors, representatives from the community, an official from the province and representatives from the council and political parties. Four staff members, who were drawn from the beneficiaries, worked at the office and were paid from funds from the PHP establishment grant. They were the Support Centre manager, a technical officer, a general worker and a security guard who also performed the duties of a Liaison Officer. The project itself was similar to that of Vosloorus in that the Ivory Park project was led by an architect from Rooftop just as the Vosloorus project was led by Planact.

5.4.4. The Account Administrator

As mentioned, the account administrator for this project was an attorney Braam van der Berg who was charged with the task of administering the project funds. This independent consultant lived in Pretoria. The Support Centre manager worked closely with him when building materials had to be ordered or payments needed to be made. The consultant was also responsible for the costing of the houses and the payment of the construction groups. It was clear from my observations during my visit that not even the Masisizane Women's Co-operative members had any input in the procurement procedures. Almost all these decisions

were made by the consultant, although he was seldom seen at the Support Centre (Thandi, Housing Support Centre staff, personal communication).

During one of my visits to the site in September 2003, work had virtually stopped as a result of the non-availability of the account administrator and non-payment of service providers. The material suppliers were agitated about not being paid for a long time for materials that had long been delivered. “It is not our fault these people are not paid, it is the work of the account administrator” (Thembi, personal communication). In fact, when I was there, the Support Centre manager complained about the non-availability of the account administrator and how it affected the project.

5.4.5. The Project Certifier

The National Housing Code (2000) requires that the support organisation appoint a certifier who is suitably qualified and experienced in this type of work. The certifier fulfils a critical function in the management of a project by evaluating progress during the different stages of the construction and certifying that the quality of the houses is acceptable.

The project certifier for this project was an external person and was not a resident of Ivory Park. He was employed by the project to approve the quality of the houses that were being built by the local builders. The project paid him R250.00 per unit for this work. On top of this, an external technical supervisor was also paid R110.00 per unit for doing the same tasks. At the Vosloorus PHP project, the local certifier was supervised by building inspectors, either from the Gauteng Department of Housing or the municipality. Planact would not pay if quality of the houses was not guaranteed.

Another technical supervisor was employed on the basis of having worked with the project’s external technical supervisor for some time. He then started practising as a technical supervisor though not qualified to do the job. He was paid R40.00 per completed house.

5.4.6. The NGO Rooftops Canada

Rooftops Canada is an international non-governmental organisation that was involved in building projects in South Africa. It worked with local partners and with non-governmental organisations including community-based organisations. Rooftops became involved in the Ivory Park project when Masisizane Women's Housing Co-operative requested assistance in accessing government subsidies to start a PHP programme. When the project started, Rooftops featured in almost every decision that was taken by the Support Organisation (community liaison officer, personal communication). In fact, the role that Rooftops played within the project was more that of an advisor. The project was being managed by this organisation on behalf of the beneficiaries.

5.4.7. Purchase of Building Material

The Housing Code (2000) stipulates that beneficiaries have a wide choice of securing building materials. They can manufacture their own or form co-operatives that can manufacture or may want to negotiate with suppliers of building materials for reasonable prices. It is the beneficiary prerogative to choose the best option of sourcing building material. The consensus had been to first look for local suppliers before going out and look externally. This is not a unitary decision by certain individuals as the subsidies belong to the beneficiaries. It is the beneficiaries how their subsidies are to be used.

In the Ivory Park PHP project, the Housing Support Centre manager and Rooftops Canada did all the negotiations and buying of building materials. It is not clear whether any discounts were offered by these building material suppliers For instance Cash Build with high transport costs. was used. One of the complaints about the suppliers was that they did not deliver the materials on time causing unnecessary delays in the building of houses (Isaac, personal communication).

5.5. PHP Activities

According to National Housing Code (2000) the PHP approach is a community-based form of housing delivery in which beneficiaries take responsibility for managing the provision of their houses with assistance from a community-managed Housing Support Centre. In a PHP project, it ought to be the people themselves who initiate almost all the activities from the first stage until the completion of a project. When these activities are taken by outside bodies then the project ceases to be PHP, although the term “managed PHP” has been applied.

In the Ivory Park case, the sections below show that the even the Housing Support Centre staff did not understand what underpins the PHP model. Another noteworthy factor I observed during my visits to the area in 2003 was that most of the beneficiaries of the Ivory Park PHP project were elderly women with low levels of education. The beneficiaries at this project only wanted their houses to be built and it did not matter to them who built them. Unfortunately this situation, it appeared, was reverting back to the private developer mode of housing delivery where recipients of government houses would not even know who had built their houses. The opportunity for increased beneficiary satisfaction that comes from beneficiary involvement was therefore lost.

5.5.1. Building Programme

In the Ivory Park project, the building programme that was followed was that of building houses first for the elderly, then progressing down to the youngest beneficiary. This augured well with the beneficiaries because it was also a cultural value to start with the elderly in everything that is done in the community. The Support Organisation and the beneficiaries agreed that elderly women and especially pensioners and the health-challenged should receive first preference (Community Liaison Officer, personal communication).

However there existed another problem with the builders at the Ivory Park Ward 78 project where builders demanded a better rate per completed house. They demanded a rate that was paid by a project-linked developer who had an ‘RDP; project around Ivory Park. They threatened to leave the PHP project and worked at that project if their demand for an increased rate was not met by the Support Organisation (Thembi, HSC manager, personal

communication). This was despite the fact some of these builders received free training in building skills which was organised by the Support Organisation (Thembi, HSC manager, personal communication).

5.5.2. Training of Beneficiaries

Before the project started, 123 beneficiaries including women were trained by the Department of Labour in various skills for construction work, such as bricklaying, carpentry, painting, glazing and plumbing, similar to the Vosloorus project discussed in chapter 4. The training was also for a period of 45 days and after completion, the beneficiaries were presented with certificates. According to (David, personal communication), they were also trained in site planning, although he stated that this aspect of work was difficult to get right: “In this type of work, you have to be very careful of what you are doing, because everything may go wrong”.

It was reported that some of the beneficiaries left the project and sought better-paying jobs with building contractors, once they received their certificates (Jotham, personal communication). It seems the Support Organisation was not prepared for this occurrence, as nothing was done to stop this from happening.

Similarly to the Vosloorus project, the beneficiaries who underwent training were required to form 10 construction groups, each consisting of 10 members. There was also a requirement that these building teams be gender representative. In fact, a directive from the Department of Housing was that one third of building teams had to be female-headed (Thembi, personal communication). There were 14 people in each team.

One team was able to finish one house within two days. This amounted to 40 completed houses per month. However, there was a delay in releasing funds for completed houses. This resulted in builders who underwent training leaving the PHP project for nearby project-linked projects that were not experiencing this problem.

5.5.3. Activities and Functions of the Support Organisation

The Gauteng Department of Housing required that local authorities should act as Support Organisations for projects within their area of jurisdiction. According to the department, this is done because these local authorities have the capacity and are already a legal entity as stipulated by the National Housing Code (2000). By making the Co-operative a PHP Support Organisation, they could access housing subsidies for members, provided these qualified for the subsidy.

The Support Organisation submitted the project proposal to the Department of Housing. They were required to make revisions to the proposal and the business plan until these were approved. They also submitted the subsidy forms to the Gauteng Department of Housing. The Housing Support Centre staff was appointed by Masisizane Women's Co-operative to assist beneficiaries.

5.5.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The PHP depends heavily on community initiative and beneficiary involvement in the delivery process. In the case of Ivory Park, monitoring and evaluation of the project and beneficiary involvement was not done at the time of my fieldwork in 2003. The absence of this activity resulted in the Gauteng Department of Housing being unable to identify the reasons for the bottlenecks that were causing delays, and thus not being able to take corrective measures.

No evaluation process was undertaken either by the funding agent (state) or the Support Organisation. In any event, the latter would not have the capacity to perform this task. The Department of Housing occasionally commissions private consultants to report on the performance of Support Organisations in the implementation of PHP programme (Thembi, personal communication). However, these are impromptu monitoring evaluations to report on the status of the PHP projects, especially when there is a problem. Monitoring and evaluation should be done as it serves as a measuring instrument to test if expected goals have been met

and if not, why not. When the Ivory Park project was not doing well, Rooftops Canada commissioned Planact to conduct an evaluation of the Ivory Park PHP in March 2003.

5.5.5. Beneficiary Involvement and Contribution

As I indicated earlier, beneficiaries viewed themselves as labourers since the Department of Housing had set the payment structure during the construction of the houses. The department issued a directive to both the Vosloorus and Ivory Park PHP projects to inform them what amounts should be paid to the workers for each stage of construction of a house (Tsie, personal communication). This created problems for the Support Organisation in the Ivory Park and in Vosloorus PHP projects.

The PHP policy does not mention paid labour for beneficiaries. The policy only refers to "sweat equity" as a beneficiary contribution. This also contributed to some houses being incomplete because the payment for the workers was being taken from the subsidies which were only directed to build houses. The workers often refused to go to work if there was no payment, not being aware that the department paid per the stage of construction. Some of the women builders did not go to the sites if the Support Centre manager, who was also a leading member of Masisizane Women's Co-operative, was not present. This resulted in delays and some of the houses being left incomplete. They wanted to make sure that she was aware that they were at work and should be paid.

5.6. Discussion and Conclusion

In the Ivory Park case study, the PHP was not followed directly as per the guidelines or policy. The Support Organisation did not perform its roles and responsibilities as required by the National Housing Code (2000). The project did not have many stakeholders other than the representative from Rooftops Canada, who seemed to be in direct control of the project as the Housing Support Centre staff, including the Support Centre manager, allowed key decisions to be taken by him.

The beneficiaries and volunteers viewed the project as providing employment rather than getting involved in the entire process, including decision-making, with a view to the end

product of providing a home. The Support Organisation itself lacked capacity, hence its reliance on Rooftops to manage the project.

The implementation of the two PHP projects shows similarities in terms of the two projects being managed by other stakeholders. The Vosloorus Extension 28 PHP project was driven by a Steering Committee and the NGO Planact and the latter taking important decisions for the beneficiaries. In the case of Ivory Park Ward 78 PHP project the centre manager and Rooftops Canada did the same. In both projects the involvement of the communities being assisted was minimal or they merely consulted on certain issues especially when there was a problem with other beneficiaries.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

The People's Housing Process intends to provide both quality and affordable sustainable housing for low-income groups in South Africa. It is also a delivery programme aimed at the involving the beneficiaries from project initiation until the completion of all the houses. The involvement of beneficiaries ensures that quality control and monitoring is assured through the housing construction and a host of other things.

However, the findings in the two case studies in this research report indicate that in both these two projects beneficiary contribution, by way of sweat equity or by any other contribution, was minimal. Although the PHP principles insist on beneficiaries being the drivers of the projects, it was noted that in both projects this was not the case.

6.2. Comparison of the two case studies

The two PHP projects display similar approaches in implementing the project; in terms of applying PHP policy guidelines, there was a clear movement away from these. The Ivory Park project shows that the implementation of these PHP projects were not followed the same way at any given project around 2003/2004. However, this should not have been the case, as the same PHP guidelines and policy should apply across the board. It is well understood that communities are not homogenous and therefore every community responds to its housing needs in a unique way. The Vosloorus PHP project was better project than that of Ivory Park in that the Steering Committee for the project did take meaningful decisions, though minimally.

The case studies show that in both these PHP projects there were similarities in the way they were initiated and later controlled and managed. They were similar in that they were originally products of community-based organisations: the Vooslorus PHP was initiated by a community-based Steering Committee whose aim was to improve the living conditions of the

residents of Vosloorus Extension 28; the Ivory Park Ward 78 project was initiated by a community-based savings club whose objective was to build houses for its members and later the entire community living on serviced stands at Ivory Park Ward 78.

The two projects differed in relation to beneficiary involvement, but both could not be said to be a people-led housing delivery once they embarked on the PHP as a vehicle for the building of houses. In both projects, the original Support Organisations lacked project management capacity and ended up being driven by outsiders. The initiators of the projects and beneficiaries did not manage the projects and were not centrally involved in managing these projects. For instance, in the Vosloorus PHP project, the NGO Planact was asked to assist when the project was about to collapse. In essence, it was not Planact's intention to take over the project, but their aim was to ensure that the PHP did not collapse altogether. Planact became part of the project until the Gauteng Department of Housing appointed a department-created NGO called Xhasa ATC to manage the project. When Planact pulled out of the project, they had already built 650 units. By creating the new NGO, the Gauteng Department of Housing had realised that the PHP in its purest form was not going to perform as was anticipated.

During Planact's involvement in Vosloorus, Extension 28, part of the construction was carried out by a building material supplier called AFNJ Supplies. The company also drew up house plans, charging beneficiaries where these plans should have been drawn for free by the Department of Housing or the municipal architects. In this these projects, beneficiaries were employed as labourers during the building of their own houses. At the Vosloorus project, Planact virtually managed the project on behalf of the Vosloorus Steering Committee and the beneficiaries. Planact further employed the Housing Support Centre staff, some of whom were members of the Steering Committee. Thus, all important decisions were taken by this NGO on behalf of the beneficiaries.

The Masisizane Women's Housing Co-operative, though it was the Support Organisation for the Ivory Park project, lacked capacity and management skills. The manager at the Housing Support Centre, together with Rooftops Canada, took all important decisions on behalf of the beneficiaries. Just like Planact at the Vosloorus project, Rooftops also managed the Ivory Park project. Masisizane Women's Co-operative relied on Rooftops in everything concerning

the project. The housing officials from the Gauteng Department of Housing also allowed these NGOs to run the projects.

The beneficiaries in both projects viewed the projects as providing employment during the construction of their houses. At both projects, beneficiaries refused to work for free when their houses were built and insisted on being paid when assisting during the construction of their own houses. The Housing Support Centre staff functions in both projects were not clearly spelled out. The non-delivery of material was a common problem to both projects and the staff at the Housing Support Centre did not know what to do in such cases. This happened especially when roofing material was to be delivered. The supplier would deliver trusses that were not straight and this resulted in the corrugated iron not put on correctly.

6.3. Who has been driving the PHP in the Vosloorus and Ivory Park projects?

The PHP strategy as a housing delivery method is to allow communities to be the real drivers of the process. The process in two case studies was driven by outsiders and other role players who were brought in to assist beneficiaries, as in the case of Planact in the Vosloorus PHP project.

In 2000, when the Vosoorus wanted to embark on a PHP housing route, the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Council enlisted Planact to support the Steering Committee in setting up the mechanisms for a PHP project to be implemented since the community did not have a developer to run the project. However when the project commenced, Planact was running the project without even the help of the Housing Support Centre staff. In fact, the staff became employees of Planact, which indicated that the latter was running the project. The contractors that were working at the project were contracted by Planact. The latter was also the certifier in the project. The Ivory Park PHP was no exception, as this project, although it had a management team, in practice was managed by Rooftops.

The National Housing Code (2000) emphasises that the beneficiaries themselves must be at the centre at the PHP programme. The method that it was followed in these cases was not as stipulated in the Code, namely that communities should be capacitated to drive the process.

The former Director-General of the Gauteng Department of Housing, Sbu Buthelezi, remarked in November 2003 at a departmental meeting that the PHP in Gauteng Province was not being followed the way it should be followed. He said that PHP in Gauteng has still to be introduced in its proper form for the communities to be able to drive it themselves. The Ivory Park and Vosloorus projects were clearly managed projects and partly contractor-driven.

6.4. Who should be driving the PHP?

The PHP policy and guidelines recognise beneficiaries as the main drivers of the PHP National Housing Code (2000). The PHP guidelines and policy were designed to accommodate maximum beneficiary involvement through their exercise of choice in key housing decisions. In South Africa, three approaches are utilised in housing development for low-income families. According to Sowman and Urquhart (1998: 6), one of the processes of housing development involves housing being initiated, planned, built and managed by the communities themselves. However, my case studies suggest that this was not been happening in PHP in Gauteng Province in the period of 2003/04.The communities ought to be the real owners of the PHP. However, the question remains, how to achieve this.

The two Gauteng Province PHP projects under review, were clearly driven more by outsiders than by the beneficiaries themselves. The control and management of these projects started from initial stages where outsiders came to offer some form of assistance. Despite early training in both cases, the beneficiaries were not capacitated to run the PHP project themselves and ultimately depended on these outside “experts” to run the process on their behalf. What the beneficiaries lacked from the beginning, before the start of the project, was successful training to manage the project themselves.

Thus in the Ivory Park and Vosloorus projects, beneficiaries were not aware of their roles and responsibilities during construction of their houses. They viewed the process as an employment creation strategy by the government. In other words, they did not differentiate between the developer-driven housing construction and the PHP in that both required labour. These communities barely understood that they should have been the drivers of the PHP. According to PHP’s intentions, they should take possession of the process, taking command

of their future and be capacitated in doing things for themselves in a sustainable way, well beyond the construction of houses.

6.5. Recommendations

The PHP is currently one of the only ways that the poorest of the poor members of our communities can gain access to housing through government subsidies. At the time of my fieldwork in 2003/04, the PHP was the only process that exempted poor households from paying the R2 479 contribution. However, the PHP was viewed by beneficiaries only as a means to be employed and to receive a house. There must therefore be a clearer understanding of the PHP concept, which is to embark on a process of communities building their houses themselves and being empowered in the process. The objective of the PHP should be based on the understanding that the main benefits of the PHP arise from allowing beneficiaries to make choices and exercise control over the housing process. The beneficiaries as ultimate users of the houses should be the real controllers of the process in terms of the choice of Support Organisation, technical support, house design, building materials, etc.

Therefore, community groups embarking on PHP projects need constant support and expertise to develop community involvement skills and management so that they can have real control rather than limited participation in their projects. Firstly, there needs to be a policy environment that is supportive of the concept. Even more so in this type of housing delivery, all stakeholders and participants have to understand the concept. The concept has to do with the “freedom to build” (Turner, 1972: 142), the ability to support rather than to instruct, to accommodate rather than to impose. The PHP requires a mind-shift, both among beneficiaries and among professionals, from a technical to a “people’s process”. The provincial and local governments impose control over the PHP as they view the PHP only as “sweat equity” with the beneficiary choice limited thereto.

6.6. Conclusion

This research report discourse has shown that the direct beneficiaries in the two case studies did not control or manage their PHP projects, but that these were rather controlled by external

stakeholders. Both the case studies under review, namely Ivory Park and Vosloorus, have shown that the programme as it was being practised was far from a PHP as per original intention. In the case of Vosloorus, Planact was brought in to help out and Ivory Park it was Rooftops. Although Cuban technical advisors from the Gauteng Department of Housing were deployed on these projects, it can be deduced from the discussion that the PHP in Gauteng was not practised. Instead, management of the projects was in the hands of the two outsiders.

Since my 2003/04 research on the PHP in Gauteng, it seems that the challenges still exist. In fact, managed PHP has taken over completely. This was the main concern of a group of NGOs that lobbied Department of Housing for a revision of the PHP policy (Planact, 2009). The main challenge is still to resolve the issue of enabling a community of beneficiaries to lead and control the housing process. Subsequent to my research, the PHP programme has been abandoned in Gauteng Province, the PHP Directorate disbanded and staff distributed in the various Gauteng regions to embark on escalating project-linked housing projects (Nkosi, personal communication). The province is presently trying to unblock old PHP projects.

Although my research was conducted six years ago, the findings are still relevant as they pose a challenge also to the wider aided self-help debate of how to ensure “dweller control”, to use Turner’s terminology. Turner’s ideal aided self-help process was premised on the understanding that the beneficiaries will be centrally involved from beginning to end, though with a role assigned to the government and to a “third sector” or NGO. According to Turner (1972), there are certain roles that may be played by the government, and certain roles by intermediaries (NGOs). The roles played by the beneficiaries should be those that count more.

My findings for the two case studies have revealed that PHP in its purest form has not been implemented in the same way that is contained in the PHP guidelines and policy despite the fact that these have been redefined from time to time. The fact that beneficiaries should be in the forefront was not realised in both test case projects as outside stakeholders were brought in, albeit with good intentions of supporting the beneficiaries. This had a negative result, however, as beneficiaries tended to take a back seat and allow these stakeholders to drive the projects on their behalf. This happened despite, in some instances, beneficiaries being allowed some space to be involved in the running of the projects.

It is hoped that the new Enhanced PHP policy which was introduced in 1 April 2009 will allow this housing process to be truly people-driven. This may provide the chance to push beneficiaries to drive the PHP, as for the first decade of the programme this was not realised.

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Beneficiary 10: female resident, Ivory Park, 25, July 2003

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Alfred, security guard, Ivory Park, project.	23 July 2003
Charlton Sarah, former PHPT Board Committee Chairperson,	25 September 2008
David, a builder, Ivory Park,	20 July 2003
Gladys, HSC Administrator, Vosloorus,	28 July 2003
Jotham Community Liaison Officer, Vosloorus,	18 July 2003
Khambule Thembi, HSC manager, Ivory Park,	11 July 2003
Mabalane,Itumeleng, Director, PHP Directorate, National Department of Housing	22 February 2009
Makwela, Mike, Planact project officer, Vosloorus project,	10 July 2003
Peladi Mojapelo, Ekurhuleni Metro PHP officer,	30 July 2003
Radebe Mpendulo, Gauteng Department of Housing PHP official,	23 July 2003