

Breaking New Ground: Perceptions of RDP house beneficiaries of the Mavuso settlement in Alice, South Africa

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Background: The South African democratic governments adopted the provision of low-income housing as one of the ways to redress the injustices of the past Apartheid government. Thus, the development of housing legislations and programmes initiated, such as the reconstruction and development programme (RDP) and the Breaking New Ground (BNG).

Aim: This study sought to investigate the perceptions of low-cost housing beneficiaries of the new BNG housing programme in Mavuso settlement.

Setting: The study is conducted in Alice Town Mavuso location under Raymond Mhlaba Municipality, Eastern Cape province.

Methods: A qualitative approach using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

Results: The findings of the study reveal that beneficiaries of low-cost housing in Mavuso are not satisfied with the quality as many of the houses were left incomplete.

Conclusion: As per the findings of the study, housing challenges in South Africa stretch beyond the BNG programme which was implemented by the Department of Human Settlements to improve housing delivery. The findings highlight the lack of monitoring and evaluation together with corruption as the major contributor to the challenges of housing delivery.

Contribution: Thus, this study seeks to present the voices of beneficiaries and raise awareness to the Department of Human Settlements on the challenges experienced by beneficiaries and the need for monitoring and evaluation. The study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on BNG and settlement development.

Keywords: Breaking New Ground; RDP; quality; human settlement; South Africa.

Introduction and background

Provision of adequate housing in South Africa is a national agenda to rectify the injustices of the past. In a bid to restore the imbalances caused by the apartheid, numerous housing legislations, policies and programmes were initiated by the post-apartheid government (Mafukidze & Hoosen 2009). Reconstruction and development programme (RDP) is one of the programmes initiated by the post-apartheid government in 1994 to restore the imbalances of the past; its major goal was to address the housing provision challenge in the country (Republic of South Africa, Housing White Paper 1994). According to the (1994) white paper, this development policy framework for socioeconomic progress had five key initiative areas (Republic of South Africa 1994). The initiative areas were to satisfy basic needs, develop human resources, democratise state and society, expand the economy and lastly implement the RDP according to the goals and objectives set (Republic of South Africa 1994).

In the housing white paper of 1995, it is stated the RDP had targets that had to be met; one of those targets was to build one million houses by the year 2000 and needy South Africans had to get access to habitable, dignified and safe houses (RSA 1995).

Mafukidze and Hoosen (2009) assert that there were gaps in the implementation of the development programme. These views are backed by the fact that in South Africa there is still a huge number of people who live in unsatisfactory housing conditions. Even those who were privileged enough to receive the RDP houses complained about the standard of quality of houses they received and the inability of the houses to meet their needs.

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The government of South Africa acknowledged the gaps within the RDP implementation as other development strategies and programmes got initiated such as the Growth Employment Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) of 1996 which was an attempt to improve the efficiency of the RDP programme. This policy comprehended most of the social objectives of the RDP.

Legislations to support the RDP goal of building low-cost houses for the needy people were introduced by the government, for instance, the introduction of the 1996 Constitution and the 1997 *Housing Act* (Mafukidze & Hoosen 2009). In South Africa, housing is a constitutional right. According to Section 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No. 108 of 1996, 'Everyone has the right to access to adequate Housing'. Also, the Constitution of South Africa asserts that 'Everyone has inherent dignity and has the right to have their dignity respected and protected'.

The RDP had its many challenges and thus a call was made to re-address housing provision in South Africa. In 2004, the Department of Human Settlements in partnership with other stakeholders such as the private sector and NGOs announced the Breaking New Ground (BNG) programme which was and is still viewed as a new improved programme from RDP in addressing the provision of houses for the people of South Africa.

This new BNG programme, which is a comprehensive plan for the provision of sustainable human settlements, aimed at redirecting and intensifying existing systems and techniques to move towards more responsive and effective housing delivery (DoH 2004). It provides programmes that promote the enhancement of the entire economic and social development. These include development of low-cost housing. The aim is to change spatial patterns of the past by building spatially, economically and socially sustainable integrated human settlements (GCIS 2009/10: 308). The BNG program focus is not only on addressing the issue of RDP program but also to find strategies to mitigate housing challenges experienced by the middle class in securing shelter. Thus, the introduction of SOCHO flats, Gap housing etc. which are aimed at addressing and catering to all South Africans, the premise being that all South African citizens have a right to shelter.

The BNG policy is currently the housing delivery programme in South Africa that is operating in housing delivery, and all these programmes (RDP, social housing) are undertaken under the Department of Human Settlements which is tasked to house the citizens of South Africa. Much of the studies conducted around human settlements and sustainability of houses in South Africa pay little attention to beneficiaries and their perceptions. For instance, in a study conducted by Burgoyne (2008) looking at the issue of housing delivery and allocation, not much attention is given on the perceptions of the beneficiaries.

In this study, researchers seek to examine the perception of RDP beneficiaries in Mavuso Location regarding the house allocation process and standard of their RDP houses.

Literature review

Historical overview and transformation of human settlements, from reconstruction and development programme to Breaking New Ground

South Africa's history is a bitter one widely dominated by colonialism, racism, apartheid and oppressive policies. During the apartheid period, the apartheid government implemented several policies and legislations that were instrumental in racially discriminating, oppressing and segregating black South Africans; from their native land (Sharpely, 2018).

According to Zungu (2016), legislations such as the *Group Areas Act of 1950*, which was created by the Apartheid government, divided the urban areas into racially segregated zones where members of a specific race lived separately. This legislation excluded black people from owning land and properties in certain parts of the country. The native population were placed in townships located in the peripheries or Bantustans without any access to basic services or infrastructure. The land dispossession and deprivation are where most of the housing problems in South Africa were originated from because the lack of access to land denied black South Africans access to adequate housing; this led to the mushrooming of informal settlements (Mbambo 2013).

Challenges to access to housing and land ownership for many black south African is viewed as one of the major effect of the policies implemented by the apartheid government. In 1994, the new democratic South Africa formed a housing white paper of 1994 in an attempt to deal with the housing problem in the country; this is where we saw the development of the RDP which outlined a comprehensive plan to redress the injustices of the past, particularly the social and spatial challenges; this was done under the newly formed housing department which is now known as the Department of Human Settlements. Also, the 1996 Constitution declared access to adequate shelter as a right (South African Constitution 1996).

The RDP, which is a policy framework drawn up by the African National Congress and its alliance partners namely COSATU and SACP, was initiated with the aim of redressing the injustices of the past, particularly spatial and social challenges (Cedras 2021). The implementation of the RDP revived hope and expectations of improved life for the people of South Africa, as promises to deliver 1 000 000 houses within a 5-year period were made. Manomano (2013) argues that the delivery of such number of houses in a short period of time clearly indicates that government's focus is quantity over quality. According to Dunn (2017), RDP houses in their implementation were well received by the people of South Africa however overtime the quality and size of these houses was questions as many were falling apart, further more the size of the houses wee two small to accommodate families. On the other hand, Ogunfiditimi (2008) cited in Dunn (2017) clearly states that even though the RDP housing was

implemented, poor black people still resided on the periphery of cities and towns far from economic opportunities, as the RDP houses provided were built on the outskirts. This has resulted in many housing beneficiaries illegally renting out and selling their low-cost houses and moving back to informal settlements. This is caused by the lack of economic opportunities in the areas where most of the low-cost houses are built.

To address the shortcoming of the RDP in 2004, we saw the introduction of the BNG framework by the human settlements department in partnership with other stakeholders such as the private sector. The BNG was and is still viewed as a new improved programme from RDP in addressing the provision of houses for the people of South Africa. The BNG is a policy guiding the human settlements department to improve its housing delivery through the provision of socioeconomic services. The BNG aimed at realising the right to adequate housing as well as creating good quality and sustainable communities (Moraba 2013). The BNG is in line with SDG goal 11 which speaks to sustainable cities and communities.

Even though the BNG programme was created to try and rectify the shortcomings of the RDP programme, it seems like there have been shortcomings persisting even on the housing projects undertaken under the BNG. For instance, in a study by Moolla et al. (2011), most of the housing beneficiaries expressed dissatisfaction over the quality of the houses they received. This dissatisfaction over quality is contradicting the mandate of the BNG which is to focus more on quality than quantity unlike the RDP.

Access to basic services in low-income housing

The UN Habitat 2009 argues that adequate housing is the housing that has all adequate services and facilities that are needed in the daily lives of people, such as clean water, electricity, and proper sanitation. However, there seems to be a worldwide problem with adequate services with regards to social housing (Manomano 2013 and Wahab 1993). A study by Vanderhoren (2000), as cited by Manomano (2013), revealed that there are water shortages that continue to hinder the standard of living of people in Poland as there is no water in some of the social housing units. On the other hand, Wahab (1993) cited in Festus and Amos (2015) stated that rural housing in Nigeria is incomplete as social services are not linked, that is, services such as electricity, water supply as well as transportation facilities.

The South African government is generally faced with a slow rate of service delivery, and one of the biggest service delivery problems that South Africa is faced with is the allocation and provision of housing. Manomano (2015) argues that the poor location of housing projects as they are in the outskirts of the economically viable places is a huge challenge for beneficiaries because they must travel long distance to access educational and health facilities. This is against the mandate of the BNG which speaks to creating integrated settlements.

Housing allocation

Housing allocation, according to Shange (2018), is the concluding process in any housing project that includes awarding someone ownership of a newly built housing unit. It consists of registering people who need housing on a housing waiting list, or the database known as the National Housing Needs Register. According to Patel (2015), eligibility determines whether a person deserves to be allocated a house or not.

Housing allocation, as argued by Tissington (2013), in practice is a problematic and conflict-ridden process. Even though there are policies by the government in managing the process of allocation, many challenges still exist within the process of housing allocation (Tissington 2013). This is evidenced by the fact that there is a lack of concise and coordinated process by all the spheres of government in allocating RDP houses effectively. These challenges lead to slow progress in the delivery of housing units.

A study by Maluleke (2019) argues that corruption is prevalent in South Africa and it is unfortunate that the allocation of low-income houses had to experience the challenge. This study states that there are investigations ongoing, and already more than 2000 officials in various spheres of government and from different departments have been found guilty and convicted of corruption linked to housing allocation.

Conceptual framework

The study is guided by the BNG framework. In 2004, the Housing Department now known as the Department of Human Settlements introduced the BNG, which is a plan that aims to provide sustainable human settlements and which aims at redirecting and improving existing housing mechanisms to move towards more responsive and effective housing delivery (DoH 2009). It further aims to redraw the spatial settlement patterns in South Africa by building spatially, economically and socially integrated human settlements (GCIS 2009) the BNG program is viewed as an updated and better version of the RDP program as it is grounded in the foundation of the RDP framework, as articulated in the housing white paper of 1994. However the strategic focus of the programme is not like the one of the RDP which was simply ensuring the delivery of affordable low-cost housing, but the programme ensures that housings that are delivered to the people are of good standard and they are sustainable; so in other words, this programme aims at providing sustainable and habitable human settlements (DHS 2004).

Research methods and design

Research site

The study are is Mavuso location situated in the Eastern Cape province under the Raymond Mhlaba local Municipality. the Mavuso settlement was founded in 2018. Mavuso location is

in ward 5, which is one of the 23 wards in Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality. According to the Gaga Traditional Council, Mavuso location has a population of about 1210 with 30% of the population being unemployed, 40% of the Mavuso population being employed, 10% of the population being pensioners and the remaining 20% being children (Gaga Traditional Council 2021). According to the Raymond Mhlaba Local Municipality, Integrated development plan (IDP) 2020–2021 indicates that the population of Raymond Mhlaba Municipality is dominated by youth and women aged 22 years – 44 years. The Mavuso site was chosen as it is relatively new and thus constructed and implemented under the BNG framework. The researcher sought to examine improvement to the housing allocation and standard of housing as advocated by this new BNG programme.

Research design

A research design is a plan of action highlighting the process of conducting the study; thus, it needs to be precise, clear and straightforward to the reader (Opie 2004:74). A research design ensures that the implementation of the study is appropriate and so the study can have accurate results or findings (Bruns et al. 2001:223). This study employed a qualitative approach, as the researcher sought to explore Mavuso community members' perceptions of the housing delivery and the standard of the housing. This design ensured that the researcher could collect primary narrative findings and allowed the researcher an advantage to probe for clear understanding.

Sample

This study used a purposive sampling technique as this study targeted the RDP beneficiaries in Mavuso; therefore, the purposive sampling allowed the study to get expert sample as the people who were sampled are beneficiaries of RDP houses who received their houses under the BNG framework. The study had a sample size of 50, there were two focus group discussion of ten members each which were held with the Mavuso community members. one focus group consist of Mavuso community member who had already been allocated their house and two another focus group were held with members awaiting allocation whose houses were not complete yet.

Ten in-depth interviews were held with six steering forum members who were tasked with interacting with the human settlement department and the contractors building in the Mavuso area. In-depth interviews were also held with the ward councillor and the traditional leader in the community. The study further aimed to interview two officials from the contracted company; however, by the time of data collection, the contractor company had left the site and could not be reached. The population of the study included participants or beneficiaries between 18 years and 80 years including both females and males. Recruitment of participants was through the help of the ward councillor and traditional council.

The aim to include the aforementioned participants was to ensure that all stakeholders were given a platform to contribute to the housing provision process in the Mavuso settlement.

Data collection

The study utilised data obtained through qualitative approach with the use of four focus group discussions of 10 members each. Two focus group discussions were held with community members who had already received their houses and were residing in these houses. While two other focus group discussions were held with community members who were awaiting completion of their houses; the study further adopted the use of in-depth interviews which were held with steering forum members, ward councillor and the traditional leader. A semi-structured interview guide was compiled to assist the researchers in data collection. Consent was obtained from participants for the use of a recording device during the data collection sessions.

Data analysis

The data were analysed through a thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2012). Thematic analysis refers to a method used in qualitative research to identify, analyse and interpret themes in the data collected. Therefore, the themes in the study were identified by highlighting core concepts through familiarisation. These concepts were categorised into codes that highlight the themes in the study. Driven by the insight of the conceptual framework of the BNG, data were coded, and themes were abstracted from in-depth interviews and focus groups for analysis.

Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the University of Fort Hare, Faculty of Research Ethics Review Committee on 14 December 2021.

Results

The themes presented in the following sections are from both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. For the purpose of the study, FGD means focus group discussion; the number next to FGD, for example, FGD 1, means that this participant was from the focus group discussion 1. (FGD1, P1) means that this participant was from the focus group discussion 1 of four as indicated from the sampling, and P1 means that this was the number allocated to this individual participant, e.g. (FGD 4, P8).

Findings are discussed through the conceptual framework and literature lens.

Provision of housing units in Mavuso

The study findings revealed that the RDP houses in Mavuso were built in 2018, indicating some delays in the provision of RDP housing units in Mavuso as beneficiaries indicated that they applied for RDP house a long time ago that they do not

even remember when they applied. Beneficiaries indicate that the location of Mavuso was selected as it was a vacant area with many beneficiaries residing and having grown up in the area:

'I applied for an RDP house a long time ago I do not even remember when I applied for it. The housing list was getting lost every now and then therefore I had to apply several times.' (FGD1, P1, Male)

Housing allocation, as argued by Tissington (2013), in practice is a problematic and conflict-ridden process. Even though there are policies by the government in leading this process, challenges are still experienced within the process of housing allocation (Tissington 2013). This finding argues against the mandate of the implementation of the BNG programme which aimed to fast-track the provision of houses to the people. However, the Mavuso participants indicated that they have been waiting for a long time for their houses.

Challenges facing housing provision as presented by participants in Mavuso

Poor housing standard

One of the mandates of the BNG framework is to prioritise the quality of the houses as opposed to the RDP programme which prioritised quantity over quality at the time. Thus, it was essential for the researchers to explore beneficiaries' perceptions on the standard of their houses. As such, participants expressed concerns about the quality of the houses provided, indicating that they were of poor or low quality. They raised concerns about houses not being complete, doors and windows not installed, and having to use their own money to install doors and windows as the contractor left without completing some of the houses. Beneficiaries complained about poor plastering that led to bricks being exposed. There were also complaints with regards to leaking roofs that is caused by the falling roof tiles when it is windy posing danger to the beneficiaries:

'The house is not painted; the doors were not installed the doors that you see there I bought them by myself, and I hired someone to install them.' (Indept interview, P4, Male)

'The plastering of the house is too weak you can see the bricks are exposed but since it's a free house I have no choice but to accept it.' (FGD1, P2, Male)

These findings raise questions as the Mavuso settlement was built in 2018 because these houses were built under the BNG programme which is an upgraded policy which sought to address the many challenges of the RDP, with one of those challenges being the quality of housing. These findings seem to align with those of Moolla et al. (2011) in her study on Braamfischerville, a settlement developed under the BNG framework. The findings stated that the majority of housing beneficiaries in Braamfischerville, Gauteng, had issues with the quality of their houses. They complained about leaking roofs, walls that were improperly built, and doors that were not professionally installed making it difficult to open and

close. Therefore, these findings make us question the effectiveness of the BNG framework in addressing the challenges of the RDP as the BNG framework housing beneficiaries still experience challenges with regard to the poor quality of their newly built houses.

Mavuso settlement location

Inadequate access to basic services: Beneficiaries express their dissatisfaction with access to basic services in the area of Mavuso in terms of access to medical health facilities, schools, water, among others:

'We do not have access to water taps run dry, we need a clinic in this community because the clinic that we have is very far.' (FGD 2, P7, Female)

'This house does not have electricity I am forced to cook outside even if it is raining. The electric cables that you see over there I connected them myself to light inside the house sometimes I use candles because the globes are not working because of a faulty connection and its risky. When they installed the electric boxes, they said if a person wants electricity they must go to ESKOM and ask for electricity.' (FGD2, P5, Female)

Beneficiaries' dissatisfaction raises concerns because Mavuso settlement was developed in 2018 under the BNG framework housing policy which advocates for integrated holistic settlements where all services are easily accessible; however, this is not the case in Mavuso. Findings further align with Nkambule's (2012) argument who stated that the residents of Hlalani Township in Makhanda were not satisfied with the provision of services in their newly built settlement as they would not have water for weeks and there is no electricity and that makes it difficult for them to go on with their day-to-day activities.

Participants' views on the causes of the challenges in housing allocation and delivery in Mavuso

Corruption in the allocation of reconstruction and development programme houses in Mavuso

The findings of this study revealed that there is problem with regards to the allocation of RDP houses in Mavuso. Most of the participants indicated that there are people who received RDP houses who were not supposed to receive it because they are working for the government. It was indicated by the beneficiaries that there is corruption taking place in the administration of these houses as some participants complained that they have been waiting years to receive houses from government having applied long time ago, but the ones who recently applied, they received houses, and their houses are complete:

'Not everyone who received a house deserves it, for instance I know someone who received an RDP house whereas they receive substantial amounts of money from the government and RDP house is finished unlike our houses that are not finished.' (FGD2, P3, Male)

'People who were supposed to receive these houses are the poor people, but you will find that there are people with big, beautiful homes who have received the RDP house whereas there some people who are really in need of these houses did not receive them.' (FGD3, P10, Female)

These findings validate the conclusions of a study by Marutlulle (2021) who argues that corruption severely affects housing distribution as officials get bribes from the people who are not on the housing waiting list to give them preference in the allocation of houses. These findings clearly indicate that there is a lack of transparency and accountability as those who happen to be guilty of such actions never get prosecuted.

Corruption in appointment of contractors

The findings of this study revealed that the selection or appointment of contractors was irregular. Human settlement department together with municipalities is mandated to implement housing projects and commissioning construction companies through tender process to build the houses; but in the case of Mavuso, this was different:

'The contractor was appointed in Bisho by Human Settlement. The municipalities were not involved in that project, only Human settlement, Mavuso Tribal authority, and the ward Councilor were involved and were decision makers.' (Indepth interview, Ward councilor, Male)

'The contractor disappeared; hence the houses were incomplete. Few RDP houses that were completed out of 300. The beneficiaries had to complete the houses themselves. Those who have no means to finish their houses are still waiting for the newly appointed contractor to come and finish what the first disappeared contractor started.' (Indepth interview, P6, Female)

Irregularities in appointment and awarding on tenders seem to contribute to the many challenges of housing provision. As stated by the above beneficiary, ward councillor and the traditional authority indicate that they were not involved in the selection of the contractor assigned to build the Mavuso settlement.

Lack of monitoring and evaluation

Due to the lack of monitoring and evaluation, the complaints from the community of Mavuso varied, as some complained about roofs that were leaking, walls that were improperly built, and doors that could not be opened or closed properly. All these needed the full attention, project management, evaluation and monitoring from the Municipality and Human Settlement Department and by all stakeholders involved (Manomano and Kang'ethe 2015).

According to Lefuwa (2016), lack of monitoring and evaluation resulted to the Department of Human Settlements awarding the building contract to contractors that do not have the capacity, appropriate skills and workmanship to undertake the housing projects, hence the issues encountered regarding the quality of houses provided. Mahachi (2021) made similar observations related to poor building material

and ineffective monitoring of contractors, on contractors operating in government-subsidised houses, thereby resulting in poor-quality construction work and loss of building materials and with hundreds of houses left incomplete.

Huchzermeyer (2011) states that the lack of monitoring and evaluation led to some government employees getting involved in corrupt activities which lead to people not on housing waiting lists or people who do not qualify for government houses, like foreigners to be granted preference in the allocation of houses. Such conduct contradicts that of Cloete (1997) who states that every public official should display a sense of responsibility while performing official duties; in other words, the conduct should be above reproach. According to Jeffery (2010), corruption has become widespread, particularly in granting of housing subsidies, selection of building contractors and allocation of completed RDP houses:

'I would recommend the government to monitor the process of construction of RDP houses by these constructors.' (Indepth interview, P2, Female)

'The government must monitor the administration of the RDP houses provided to the people because what is happening now is that when these houses are provided to the people there is no monitoring taking place.' (Indepth interview, Traditional leader, Male)

'The government does not have control measures at all because if the government had control measures the houses that were built for us would have been complete, but they are not meaning that there is corruption taking place either by government official in charge in administering these houses or by the contractor that builds these houses.' (Indepth interview, P8, Male)

The Housing Act (Act 107 of 1997) places the responsibility of monitoring to the Minister of Human Settlements in order to produce meaningful information on the implementation, progress, outcomes and impact of the National Human Settlements' policies, programmes and projects. As part of the mandate, the National Department of Human Settlements has a monitoring and evaluation and impacts assessment policy and implementation framework for the human settlements sector. However, even though this monitoring and evaluation policy exists, it seems like it is not functional because there are reports that people are selling their RDP houses illegally and some are even renting them out (Sabela 2020). It is evident that monitoring and evaluation within the human settlements sector is lacking, hence beneficiaries can get away with such illegal acts.

Summary of key findings

1. The findings of the study point to challenges with the BNG framework. The main objectives of the framework are as follows:

Accelerating the delivery of housing as a key strategy for poverty alleviation; Utilising housing as an instrument for the development of sustainable human settlements, in support of spatial restructuring; and that BNG houses are supposed to be larger than RDP houses, with two bedrooms, a separate bathroom with a toilet, shower and hand basin, a combined kitchen and

living room area and electricity installation, where electricity supply is available in the township.

With the case of Mavuso, these stipulated objectives of the framework seem to be neglected, as participants indicated long waiting periods of the houses and further housing conditions. These question the objectives of the framework and its aims to rectify the challenges experienced by the then RDP programme. Thus, this calls for the need to reexamine the framework and address its shortfalls. This study therefore seeks to contribute to the literature and improvement of house allocation and further bridge the gap between beneficiaries and the human settlement department.

2. Irregularities in RDP house allocation: Findings reveal that administrative challenges such as corruption in the allocation of houses, awarding of tender contracts, a lack of involvement of stakeholders such as traditional authority, ward councils and beneficiaries in the planning up to implementation phase in Mavuso. A lack of communication has thus created many misconceptions and pointing of fingers between the participants, human settlement department and the contractors, thus resulting in the lack of accountability in the quality and standard of housing. Contractors have expressed that they have not been paid for the job, which thus led to the poor standard of houses and incomplete Mavuso settlement, while the human settlement department points to irregularities of the contractors. In all this finger-pointing, beneficiaries are the people who are severely affected as they await delivery of their houses.
3. The findings further reveal the lack of monitoring and evaluation of programmes by the human settlement department. Monitoring and evaluation has been viewed as a priority for all government departments as a means to address misuse of funds and corruption. Thus, it is clear that there is a lack of monitoring and evaluation by the human settlement department of the Mavuso settlement. Had it been done, many of the problems highlighted by beneficiaries would have been picked up during risk assessment and addressed before they escalate.

Recommendations

In a manner conforming to the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Department of Human Settlements must implement quality control mechanisms to assure that the houses that are delivered to the people through the BNG are of good quality. There should always be quality assurance inspectors on site where these housing projects are taking place, and from the inception of a housing project, these inspectors should be visible on site up until the housing project is complete to avoid having incomplete housing projects.

The government through the Department of Human Settlements should ensure that the construction company

and its builders responsible for building houses for the people are recognised by the National home builders registration council (NHBRC), which regulates and directs builders to build good-quality standard housing. Also, the NHBRC as a major body that regulates the quality standard of houses built in South Africa in partnership with the Department of Human Settlements should improve its way of conducting quality inspections, and its quality inspectors should regularly visit all housing projects done by the Department of Human Settlements.

In accordance with the findings, this study recommends that when contractors are being appointed, the process must be transparent, and a thorough background check of any contractor appointed to build low-cost housing should be done to avoid cases of appointing contractors who have a history of not completing their projects. Also, contractors who are appointed must have a proven record of accomplishment of building low-cost houses and completing the projects that they have undertaken.

Based on the findings, this study recommends that with regards to the size of the house, the government with use of the National Department of Human Settlements should consider increasing the number of rooms that the house has; also, the government should be lenient with the beneficiaries in terms of extending the house once a person gets financial muscle to do so.

Conclusion

Provision of adequate housing is a major priority for the South African government. Several housing programmes have been developed in order to deliver houses to the people of South Africa, but shortfalls of those programmes have been experienced; for instance, when RDP had shortfalls, the BNG was developed to address the shortfalls of the RDP; but judging from the findings of this study, it seems like the BNG has not addressed all the shortfalls of the RDP as there are still complaints over housing quality, corruption, monitoring and evaluation and housing allocation. The government could use some of the recommendations proposed in this study as they could assist in the provision of good-quality houses in South Africa.

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Authors' contributions

T.K.-Q and N.T contributed equally to this article.

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Data availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, T.K.-Q., upon reasonable request.

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