RDP HOUSING PROJECTS IN THE CONTEXT OF EMPOWERMENT:

THE CASE OF EMAFLETHINI COMMUNITY,

PIETERMARITZBURG, SOUTH AFRICA.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing projects as sources of empowerment. According to the RDP framework, in addition to distributing houses to the people, they are supposed to get job and business opportunities, gain skills and be included in decision making as part of the empowerment process. The main objective of the study was to analyze if these objectives were met in the projects and if not then come up with some ideas on how they can be achieved. A survey was conducted in Emaflethini community and open-ended interviews were held with Msunduzi Municipality officials in order to get more information and people’s perspective. Based on the survey results, people of Emaflethini community showed a lot of dissatisfaction with the quality of houses. Also, the interviews held with municipality officials showed that they were aware of the problems that were happening in RDP housing projects. These results highlighted that RDP housing projects have to some extent failed to achieve the empowerment objectives. In conclusion, the study discusses ideas on how these objectives can be achieved by employing empowerment principles. These principles include Community Ownership and Democratic Participation, which are crucial principles in ensuring public participation.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>BNG</td>
<td>Breaking New Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPro</td>
<td>Census and Survey Processing system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLISP</td>
<td>Finance Linked Individuals Subsidy Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEAR</td>
<td>Growth Employment and Redistribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZN</td>
<td>KwaZulu – Natal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Member of Executive Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>NHF</td>
<td>National Housing Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHBRC</td>
<td>National Home Builders Registration Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMTT</td>
<td>Niall Mellon Township Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHP</td>
<td>Peoples Housing Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDP</td>
<td>Reconstruction and Development Programme</td>
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<td>SANCO</td>
<td>South African National Civil Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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Chapter 1
Introduction

This chapter describes what the study is about. It covers five subtopics which form guidelines of this study. These include background of the housing context in South Africa, research problem which is important for this study, aims and objectives of the study, research questions, methodology and research structure. This chapter concludes by providing the structure of the entire thesis.

1.1 Background

South Africa was under an Apartheid system from 1948 to 1994. This system institutionalized the discrimination, segregation and oppression of the black majority by the white minority. Rural areas were divided into underdeveloped Bantustan areas and well-developed commercial areas. Residential areas divided into suburbs well-resourced and township areas that lacked infrastructure. There was segregation on education, health, wealth, employment and service delivery (African National Congress, 1994). This was until 1994, when South Africa had its first democratic elections. Africa National Congress (ANC) won the elections and affirmative action had to be done. As a result, Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) framework was established. It contained strategies and policies which were going to be used for meeting basic needs, democratizing the state and society; developing human resource, and building the economy. This study focuses on social service delivery, in which one of the deliverables was to construct housing units popularly known as RDP houses.

During apartheid, the government did not have effective policies in place to ensure effective and equal provision of houses and basic needs to all citizens, particularly the black majority. By 1993 the country had a 1.4 million-house-backlog on formal housing and approximately 5 to 8.2 million people resided in shacks (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1996). As a way to empower and give dignity to life, the government developed different forms of subsidized housing programs for citizens, especially those who were previously disadvantaged. These include RDP houses which have been very popular in South Africa. As part of empowerment, people had to gain skills from housing projects, they had to be involved in decision making, get
job opportunities and they could be awarded with tenders. Most importantly this was to ensure that people had formal sustainable shelter, the program was supposed to put people first in all housing activities.

However, some studies have indicated that beneficiaries were dissatisfied with the RDP houses and this led scholars to focus on user-satisfaction when evaluating housing projects (Molla, Kotze, & Block, 2011). This dissatisfaction is much related to house characteristics and their quality. Dissatisfaction with houses means the projects have undermined the main objective of restoring people’s dignity. This has motivated this study to take a different approach in addressing the RDP housing situation in South Africa. This study went further and in addition to evaluating satisfaction with characteristics and quality, this study focuses on the empowerment of people in RDP houses projects.

When people are not satisfied with houses that bring up the question of whether they are really empowered by these projects? Now this paper aims to emphasize the underlying idea of empowerment in the RDP framework. Focusing on empowerment, the study looks into how it can be better implemented in housing projects. It also gives different tools that can be used to evaluate the implementation of empowerment process in the housing projects. Furthermore, empowerment principles are mostly aimed at satisfying people, for this reason people satisfaction will also be included in this study.

1.2 Research Problem

This study believes government is putting a lot of money in housing distribution. This is because there are many housing projects that are being implemented, especially in Pietermaritzburg. As mentioned in the introduction, the idea behind these houses is to help those who are in need and most importantly is to empower them. Currently the problem in these projects is that despite the consistent construction and distribution of these houses, people still complain about poor living conditions and quality of life. This shows that there is still a lot that has to be done by local government in ensuring that the RDP projects are empowering communities and people are satisfied. Now this study analyzed the level of empowerment attained in RDP housing projects to see if they were effective in bringing change to people’s lives.
1.3 Aims and Objectives
The aim of this study was to evaluate RDP housing projects as a socio-economic empowerment tool. This includes the following specific objectives:

- Examining the implementation of the housing policies.
- Measuring level of satisfaction for the beneficiaries.
- To understand the perception of the participants of the housing project (the recipients and municipality officials).
- Identifying successes and challenges of RDP housing projects.

1.4 Research questions
1.4.1 To what extent do the RDP housing projects empower people?
1.4.2 If the projects empower people to a lesser extent, what are the reasons?
1.4.3 What can be done to improve these RDP housing projects to ensure that they meet their objectives?

1.5 Methodology
1.5.1 Research design
The study utilized a mixed research design, i.e. quantitative and qualitative methods. The qualitative design element was in the form of literature review (previous case studies) on housing as well as semi-structures interviews in Emaflethini community. While the quantitative design of the research was a survey to measure people’s satisfaction with houses and to get their perspective on community participation in housing projects. The survey was conducted in Emaflethini community. The reason for using both these methods is to get a deeper and broader understanding of housing projects in the context of South Africa. Looking at what previous studies concluded and comparing with those of Emaflethini survey deepens the study’s understanding of challenges, successes and most importantly, the empowerment context of housing projects.
1.5.2 Data sources
This paper used both primary and secondary data. Primary data included people’s views with housing projects, personal observations, level of satisfaction with houses in Emafllethini and Msunduzi Municipality officials’ perspectives. Secondary data was collected from policy documents, statistics, books, newspapers and other documents that discuss housing related issues.

1.5.3 Data collection techniques
A number of different techniques were used for data collection in this paper. First to get perspective of municipality officials this study had specific questions prepared and administered through structured interviews. This required the researcher to organize an appointment and travel to South Africa so as to meet them at their offices. Travelling to South Africa was also to facilitate conducting survey in Emafllethini. Responses were recorded and were notes taken to help with analyzing at a later stage.

Second, to measure level of community satisfaction with housing a survey was conducted. The design of the survey followed a 5-Point Likert format, which gave respondents five options to choose from based on their level of satisfaction. The survey also had a section where respondents had to choose if housing projects were effective in empowering the community or not. In the last section it gave respondents an opportunity to give general comments on housing projects in their community. Conducting a survey facilitated personal observation of the housing conditions in Emafllethini. Lastly, all secondary data was collected from libraries, South African government websites, online news platform and academic search engines.

1.5.4 Sampling Technique
Respondent households in this survey were selected randomly irrespective of age, gender, occupation and house ownership status. This was to allow all respondents to answer based on their experiences with housing projects and avoid bias. The total sampling populations of Emafllethini area is approximately 350 housing units, from this, the study randomly selected 90 households for questionnaire distribution. This gave at least 30 percent representation of the community.
Moreover, municipality interviewees were selected based on purposeful basis that they were in charge of a housing portfolio in Msunduzi. This gives them more understanding of the housing context of Pietermaritzburg. For this reason, they gave broader and more informed answers to questions, which was essential for the quality of this research.

1.5.5 Data Analysis Method

To facilitate proper analysis of the data collected in the survey, Census and Survey Processing System (CSPro) and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) were used. CSPro is a program used for entering, editing, tabulating, and disseminating census and survey data (Abelsaeth, 2012). SPSS is also used for data manipulating like CSPro and it common in social and behavioral sciences (Landau & Everitt, 2004). A digital copy of the survey questionnaire was made using CSPro software and was transferred to SPSS for analysis. SPSS was used to group people’s responses into percentages and to put it into tables. These groupings will then be interpreted based on the case study and other academic studies.

1.6 Structure of the Paper

The outline of chapters in this paper is as follows:

**Chapter 2**: Dynamics of South African Housing and Empowerment.

This chapter chronologically discusses South African constitution, policies and Acts that have shaped the housing programs of South Africa. Furthermore, it discusses empowerment and different tools and processes used in its implementation.

**Chapter 3**: Case Study of Emaflethini Community.

This chapter discusses the narrative of the survey results and interviews. It also covers data analysis and interpretation of the results from Emaflethini community survey.

**Chapter 4**: Housing Projects in Comparative Perspective

This chapter outlines previous housing projects and their results. Results of previous studies are later compared to those of Emaflethini community.

**Chapter 5**: Conclusion

This chapter gives a thesis overview and makes conclusion based on the paper findings. Lastly it gives recommendations based on the findings and other academic papers.
Chapter 2
Dynamics of South African Housing and Empowerment

Introduction
This chapter gives historical background of housing in South Africa. The first section covers constitutional provisions, policies and legislations that have shaped the housing context of South Africa. In the second section, it looks into different definitions of empowerment putting more focus on community empowerment. Lastly it outlines processes and mechanism that are used when implementing empowerment in projects.

2.1 Constitutional and Policy Housing Provisions
2.1.1 South African Constitution
According to section 10 of the constitution everyone has an inherent right to have their dignity respected and protected (Republic of South Africa, 1996). In South Africa access to housing is a constitutional right covered in the country’s Bill of Rights. Chapter 2 of the constitution section 26 outlines three important points in relation to housing in the country. Section 26 (1) of the constitution mentions that everyone has a right to have access to adequate housing. Section 26 (2) says the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, with its available resources to achieve the progressive realization of this right. Section 26 (3) then goes further to say no one may be evicted from their homes or have their home demolished, without an order of court made after considering all the relevant circumstances and no legislation may permit arbitrary evictions. All these points cover constitutional rights of South African citizens.

Moreover, soon after Apartheid, housing in South Africa became a crucial issue, this can be seen from the National Housing Vision of the White Paper on Housing commissioned in 1994. The National Housing Vision gives a clear definition of what housing means in the context of South Africa. According to the vision, housing projects are varied processes where habitable, stable and sustainable public and private residential environments are created for viable households and communities. These areas should allow convenient access to economic opportunities, health education and social amenities. Lastly these houses should secure tenure, ensure privacy,
adequate sanitary facilities, electricity and water supply. These form part of the main objectives and guidelines of housing distribution in the country.

In 1997, the Housing Act 107 was passed. The purpose of the act was to help facilitate a sustainable house creation process through outlining principles of housing development, and also to define the functions of national, provincial and local government in housing development (Department of Human Settlements, 1997). There are many functions given to the governing bodies, however, this study discussed main or those that are relevant to our objectives. Part 2 of the Act, section 3 (1) cover functions of national government with regards to housing. According to the Act national government through Member of Executive Council (MEC), must after consultation with every MEC and national organization representing municipalities establish and facilitate a sustainable national housing development process. This gives national government the authority to lead the housing process in the country. Part 3 of the Act, section 7 (1) outlines that every provincial government through it MEC, must (after consultation with its provincial organizations representing municipalities) do everything in its power to promote and facilitate the provision of adequate housing in its province within the framework of national housing policy. Part 4 section 9 (1) outlines that all municipalities must, as part of the municipality and process of integrated development, take all reasonable and necessary steps within the framework of national and provincial housing legislation and policy.

The above-mentioned functions are in line with section 163 (a) of the South African constitution which says an Act of Parliament passed in accordance with the procedure establishment by section 76 must provide for the recognition of national and provincial organizations representing municipalities. Many other laws and policies were enacted by government to facilitate housing distribution and making sure that ordinary people have adequate options to choose from. These have played an important role in shaping the country’s housing sector and for this reason some of them will be briefly discussed.

White Paper on National Housing 1994
This is a policy that was used for the county’s housing development after 1994. It contained plans for subsidized housing, which included buying land, securing land tenure and providing infrastructure for those in need (Department of Human Settlements, 1994). This was established with understanding financial constrains facing citizens and as a result prioritized housing
distribution. The white paper was in line with ANC’s plan of providing houses for all and it outlined strategies for effectively achieving this. It further set out critical points to be considered when formulating policies in the country. This will be discussed in more details in part 2.1.2 of this chapter.

*Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) 1996*

The enactment of RDP framework faced fiscal challenges which affected its implementation. To address this, GEAR was implemented. Its objectives included, among other things, reducing fiscal deficits, lowering inflation, maintaining exchange rate stability. (Department of National Treasury, 1996). Even though this was macroeconomic document, subsection 6.3 highlighted challenges in provision of houses, land acquisition and farming result of finance and emphasized the revision of related policies.

*Peoples Housing Process (PHP) 1998*

It emphasized self-help approach to housing provision where beneficiaries played a huge role. It objective was to eliminate the domination of housing provision by private sector which predominantly focused on profit-making (Newton, 2013). Due to this, there were outcries from civil society that private developers have continued to marginalize the poor instead of empowering them. This policy allowed beneficiaries to control the projects, to contribute in planning and the provision of their houses. According to the policy this approach was going to save on labour cost and further avoid paying profit to private sector.

*Rental Housing Act 50 1999*

This act explains the role of government in rental housing property. It’s also emphasizes developing of strategies to promote rental housing property. Other objectives include ensuring that rental housing market is working well and access to housing is adequate for all. (Department of Human Settlements, 1999). The list is longer; government gazettes in relation to this Act can be consulted for more details.

*Breaking New Ground (BNG) 2004*

The policy’s main objective was to expand state subsidized housing to support lower-middle income people (Department of Human Settlements, 2004). Other objectives of this policy included creating sustainable communities with houses built close to essential facilities and to
provide basic infrastructure. This policy also emphasized partnership between government and private sector to generate finance and to increase construction capacity of the housing developments. It further aimed to integrate informal settlements into the mainstream society by removing challenges of spatial, social and economic exclusion.

Social Housing Act 2008
Its objectives, according to the governments gazette included establishing and promoting a sustainable social housing environment. Moreover it defined functions of national, provincial and local governments in respect of social housing. It was also going to establish the Social Housing Regulatory Authority in order to regulate all social housing institutions obtaining or having obtained public funds. Lastly, it was to allow for the undertaking of approved projects by other delivery agents (Department of Human Settlement, 2008). The list for this Act is also endless; government gazette can be consulted for more information.

National Development Plan 2012
The importance of housing development in South Africa is emphasized by the National Development Plans established by commission in 2012. Chapter 8 titled Transforming Human Settlement and the National Space Economy outlines five challenges facing housing in the country. Namely these are the transforming national space economy, differences and inequalities within rural areas, urban inefficiencies, the accommodation conundrum and weak capabilities for spatial governance (National Planning Commission, 2012). It further proposes three solutions, which included setting overarching principles for spatial development, process of vision building through development of national spatial framework and national discussion on the future of towns, cities and rural settlement.

As mentioned earlier in the paper most of these policies, laws and plans have played a crucial role in shaping the current housing context in the country also it must be noted that some of them have been amended over the past years since 1994. In the following section, more attention will be given to the RDP framework as it is the focal point of this dissertation.

2.1.2 Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)
As already alluded to, as part of national transformation in 1994, a White Paper on Housing was established, this reflected the RDP framework which was a guideline on how this process was
going to be handled and what the main objectives would be. For this reason, it is essential to properly discuss what the RDP framework is and what it says with regards to housing. As defined in the white paper, this was a policy framework to ensure an integrated and coherent socio-economic progress. Its aim was to mobilize people and the country’s natural resources for eradicating of Apartheid outcomes. According to the gazette this framework was needed because of the country’s history, which among other things was reflected by poverty, racial division, and economic deprivation. So, the objective of the RDP mainly was to recognize all these issues and come with solutions as part of the empowerment process.

The framework had six principles which were important in making sure that the transformation of the country followed a coherent process. These principles are outlined in Chapter 1 (1.3) of the white paper on housing and are briefly discussed separately as follows:

**Integration and Sustainability**
This principle argued for an integrated and sustainable programme, where RDP will organize state resources with strategies that will be implemented from national to local government. Most important it encourages collective action from businesses and civil society in ensuring the success of the RDP framework.

**People - Driven**
According to this principle people had to be at the center of the programme. People must be able to shape their development regardless of their race, sex and religion. It mostly emphasizes the empowering of people through involving them and ensuring that there is transparency in the development projects.

**Peace and Security**
For an integrated and people-driven process first there must be peace and security. The aim of this principle was to end violence in communities and abuse directed to women. It promoted human rights, fairness and equality in society. In a place where proper action is taken to deal with lawlessness, drug trafficking, women and child abuse and all other issues that threaten safety and security of the society.

**Nation Building**
Following peace and security, this principle argues for nation building. It encourages creating unity in the county, with no racial and political division. Where people recognize that they are one community, one economy and led by one government. It also promotes the protection of all ethnic groups and cultures as a process of creating unity.

Meeting Basic Needs
After building unity within the country then it will be easy to reconstruct and develop the country. According to this principle RDP framework combines growth, development, reconstruction, redistribution and reconciliation. Yet the link between these processes lies with infrastructure development and meeting basic needs. It further emphasizes revitalization of previously oppressed economic and human potentials.

Democratization
This principle encourages that democracy must be at the core of development programme. People must participate not only through voting but by also being involved in the reconstruction and development process. It directs the state institutions to be organized in a way that will help meet the objective of the RDP framework.

Assessment and Accountability
All these principles should inspire people to accept that all is done to achieve the goals of RDP program. Also, they must be structured and organized in a way that the society is able to measure its progress.

These principles were supposed to be at the core of the country’s transformation and should be reflected in all developmental projects. Most importantly they should form the basis of all policies and strategies that are aimed at reconstructing and developing the country. Moreover the framework had five important programs which formed part of its objectives. However, for the purpose of this dissertation a focus will be given to meeting basic needs because it is much more related to housing provision. The main objective of this program was to give basic needs to the people. These included jobs, health and educational facilities, housing and social welfare. To facilitate this, people were going to be involved in decision-making and management of the projects.
According to the RDP document, housing in the country was at a crisis situation during this period. This situation was a result of lacking effective housing policies that equally provided for all citizens. Based on the RDP plan, addressing housing problem was going to create job opportunities, skills development and economic activities, and ensure peace and stability. This also included incorporating small-enterprises owned by black people in the housing program. These were the empowerment objectives of the RDP framework, where people were expected to benefit from projects through participation. Many other important factors were outlined as subtopics with regards to housing in the Basic Needs Program.

Firstly, there was the Right to Housing which argued that everyone had a right to a secure place and to live in peace and dignity. Secondly, there was the component for Housing Standards, based on this all houses had to provide protection from weather, have a durable structure with reasonable space and privacy. Thirdly, Legislation had to be adjusted to meet housing needs and communities to participate without any discrimination. Lastly, Community Control, according to this principle, people had to be involved in decision making processes and project implementation. Other benefits included employment, training, awarding of contracts, capacity building and adjusting education institutions to ensure skills development. These were all important as they were part of the transformation and empowerment of South Africa.

The White Paper on Housing formed the basis for most of the housing policies that were established later. One of the most notable policies is the Breaking New Ground (BNG) (briefly discussed earlier). This policy was built mostly on top of the objectives of the White paper on housing and as a result it has been perceived as a subsequent substitute of the 1994 White Paper on Housing. It must be noted that since 2004 when BNG was enacted, it has been amended over the years until now. In the next section we will discuss financial side of housing distribution in South Africa.

2.1.3 Government Housing Subsidies
When the Group Areas Act was repealed in 1991, people still could not afford to move to places that were previously reserved for white people. By 1993, South African formal housing was approximately 1.4 million and 5 to 8.8 million people were residing in shacks. As a result, Housing Minister at that time, Mr. Louis Shill passed a capital discount of R7500 ( R1.00 is an equivalent to 9 Japanese Yen) which was going to help people in buying flats, getting loans and
formal houses (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1996). The idea was to assist with 330,000 housing acquisitions annually to meet the backlog. Some of the minister’s propositions were rejected by African National Congress (ANC) because they believe he never consulted with National Housing Forum (NHF) and still a lot of people were not working and could not qualify for this subsidy. However, the final decision on the matter was from the minister, there was little to be done in influencing it.

When the White Paper on Housing was enacted, Ms. Mthembi Nkondo was the new Minister of housing department and all previous subsidies were abandoned. On the 5th of June 1995 the minister announced that fully subsidized houses for households earning less than R3 500 per month will be available (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1998). This was eligible for people over 18 years of age and mostly targeted adults with over 40 years in townships and rural areas. It was agreed on national level that both project-based and individual-based subsides will be provided for. Despite that provincial housing boards approved only project based. This allowed houses to be built for collective groups in specific areas, instead of people to acquire their properties in any place they preferred. According to Mr. Marius Spies, who was the Chairperson of provincial housing board, this subsidy was going to assist in dealing with the backlog by building starter houses that were later to be improved by owners.

In December 1997, under the national subsidy policy it was approved by the cabinet that low-income groups qualifying for housing will be merged these were people earning from 0 – R800 and R801 – R1500. The minister argued that this was going to help poor families to qualify for maximum housing subsidy of R15 000 or consolidated subsidy of R7 500. However, under normal conditions people’s eligibility for subsidy was separated based on individual income. Table 2.1 shows subsidy eligibility by income groups.

Table 2.1 Subsidy Eligibility by Income Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly income of beneficiary</th>
<th>Subsidy Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to R1500</td>
<td>R15 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1 501 to R2 500</td>
<td>R9 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 501 to R3 500</td>
<td>R5 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, by 2004 all beneficiaries had to pay R2479 as a contribution to qualify for housing subsidy. This was not a success because a lot of people still could not afford. This requirement was reviewed when the Breaking New Ground policy was implemented in 2004. They realized that a lot of people were still excluded in housing distribution. As a result, the new policy was approved which meant that households earning less than R3500 could now qualify for full subsidy. In addition, the subsidy was extended, those earning R3501 – R7000 could also qualify for credit & savings-linked subsidy. This was going to help this group in acquiring bonds by depositing R10 000 in advance. Initially this group was not able to get the R3500 subsidy since they were earning more but they still could not meet the needs for acquiring bonds.

The above-mentioned requirements have not been changed since 2004 but rather government has been introducing other housing plans to help enhance the distribution. For instance, in 2012, government introduced the Finance Linked Individual Subsidy Programme (FLISP). This subsidy was going to make a once-off capital contribution of between R20 000 and R87 000 depending on household income, being added to a mortgage to purchase a new or an existing house (Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, 2017). Initially, the government had planned to build 1 million houses by 1999. In 1997 houses built or under construction were 323 000 and by 2004 they were approximately 1.6 million housing opportunities with 500 000 title deeds. By 2015 4.3 million households have benefited from the delivery of 2.8 million governments subsidized houses. In 2016, Statistics on South African housing showed that 79.3 people households lived in formal dwellings. As of 2007 government approved a budget of R5.0 billion per annum for housing distribution (Statistics South Africa, 2016). According to the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa 2017, South Africa’s residential house construction and rental sector was a R152.6 billion per annum industry. Lastly, cost for each house unit differs with provinces, based on how much they decide to invest on housing and contractors that were awarded the projects.

2.2 Empowerment in Context

2.2.1 Empowerment as a Concept

To begin with, the concept of empowerment is used in different disciplines so its meaning tends to change with the context to which it is applied. For instance, women empowerment has its own
definition which differs from that of workers empowerment. Also, individual empowerment has a different definition to that of community empowerment. However for the purposes of this study more focus is on community empowerment. Rapport (1981) defines empowerment as a construct that links individual strengths and competences, natural helping systems, pro-active behavior to social policy and social change. This is more of an individualist definition of empowerment because it mostly relates to how one’s physical and intellectual capacity is connected to social interventions. In community empowerment the definitions are much broader because they mostly relate to collective action and collective interests. Before looking into definitions of community empowerment it is important firstly to give a brief description of what a community is. According to Maclver (1924), community refers to a social unity where the locality in which they reside is an integral part; within which members interact together to do things and achieve what they want. Basically, this means that a community is a group of people in one location that work together in achieving collective goals. This definition also argues that the focus of a community is on social life and common living of social beings, which makes it different from associations which are usually established for specific tasks.

Moreover, let’s look at some of the definitions of community empowerment. In Knowsley framework community empowerment is referred to as the important role that people have in shaping and improving their own areas (Knowsley Council, 2010). This definition means for community to be empowered there must be an important part that they playing in changing their areas for better. In a paper written by Perkins and Zimmerman, community empowerment is defined as collective action to improve quality of life (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995). They further outline that community empowerment does not mean a collective of empowered individuals. Their definition highlight that community empowerment means people must work together to bring change to the conditions of their area. Another broad definition is given by Kahn and Bender. They say collective or community empowerment is when local resources are mobilized, integrated, utilized and coordinated into self-help effort for community change as one collective (Kahn & Bender, 1985). Basically, this translates into the use of resources for the benefit of the community as a whole.

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1 Knowsley is a community in Liverpool, United Kingdom. The governing council of Knowsley formulated a Community Empowerment framework and came up with five themes that are discussed in details in this paper.
This section has covered a number of definitions to empowerment. It looked into how the definitions change with context. In the following section, the paper will look into different processes that are used in applying empowerment.

2.2.2 Processes and/or frameworks of Empowerment
When analyzing literature on community empowerment, one thing that is common is the emphasis of public-participation or public involvement in social projects. However, empowerment is applied in different processes depending on the context in which is being used. In this section we look at some of the processes, mechanism and frameworks that scholars, researchers and government use or refer to when exercising the concept of empowerment.

Dickson and Prabhakar focus on the design of the process and the context when analyzing community empowerment. Firstly, on the design they look into whether the empowerment mechanism that is being used is open to all citizens, if the mechanism gives any knowledge or technical training to locals and how the initiative will be used by those taking decisions. Secondly, they look into the context of where the empowerment intervention is being applied by understanding the socio-economic status of the focus area and analyzing the target group of the intervention. (Dickson & Prabhakar, 2009). Also, they look into the political buy-in of the intervention, that is as to whether it is locally supported and that the initiative is dealing with issues that are of concern to the whole community. Their analysis is related to the ‘logic model’ of empowerment represented by figure 2.1.

This model starts by looking at the conditions that led to the establishment of the initiative, which is basically the context. Thereafter it goes into setting the objectives of the initiative and these should be measurable to the difference. When the objectives are set, then the model looks at the essential inputs that are necessary for the initiative to be successful, which can be financial or non-financial. This is said to be crucial because it helps to compare costs of different interventions that have been done. When inputs have been analyzed, the model then looks at how

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2 ‘A logic model connects the outcomes with programme activities/processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the programme. The model facilitates thinking, planning, and communications about objectives and actual accomplishments. It is a systematic and visual way of presenting and sharing understanding of the relationships among the resources operating a programme, the planned activities, and the anticipated changes or result’ (Dickson and Prabhakar, 2009).

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activities and processes of the intervention are done. It further looks at how the intervention is managed, if there are any challenges or success cases.

**Figure 2. 1 Logic Model,**

![Logic Model Diagram]

Source: An analytical framework for community empowerment evaluations (Dickson & Prabhakar, 2009)

Lastly, the logic model looks at output, outcomes and impacts of the intervention after it has been completed. However, these differ depending on the type of intervention. For this reason, evaluators of initiative are encouraged to set short-term and long-term effects to examine changes.

Another interesting process of empowerment is that which was proposed by the council in Knowsley community (2010). This framework emphasizes five themes that are said to be
essential in community empowerment. In the following part the paper will separately discuss these themes in more details.

**Theme One: Forging a New Relationship**

This theme focuses on the creation of new relationships between government representative and local communities. With reference to the research done in Knowsley community, it became apparent that a lot of people like to have influence on decisions that affects them. Now this theme encourages the change of relationship from paternalistic model of providing services to a more open model where government is seen as facilitator for communities to do things for themselves. According the Young Foundation, changing of the relationship will make locals feel that their participation is valued and can help unlock further the potential of the community. However, the change of relations to more inclusive model requires commitment from both public agencies and communities.

**Theme Two: Understanding the Community**

There is a lot of diversity and inequalities in communities so a “one size fit all” approach cannot be effective because it overrides the uniqueness within the neighborhoods (Knowsley Council, 2010). To effectively deliver services, this theme emphasizes better understanding of communities and proposes three techniques that can be used. First it the Narrative Capture, this technique emphasizes understanding communities through listening to their stories. Secondly in the Value Modes Analysis, this analytical technique focuses on understanding community values, beliefs and attitudes, levels of cohesion, strength and resilience from the community’s perspective. Lastly it the Appreciative Inquiry Methodology, this technique encourages people to focus on what is working for communities rather than what is not, which will give them a positive approach to solving problems. This helps public agencies to understand what works for which communities. With better understanding of communities, it will be easy to design and deliver services effectively.

**Theme Three: Local Leadership**

With the understanding that community empowerment is about solutions from within, this theme emphasizes leaders to adapt to local social networks which will help them understand cultural changes. By adopting informal social networks local leaders can support development of cultural change that can benefit the community. This theme further looks into three areas that facilitate
adapting to local networks, according to the Knowsley community. These are Community Champions, Elected Members and Frontline workers, which are important in achieving change from within.

Theme Four: Shaping Services
This theme emphasizes the importance of including service users in planning and organizing services. Through this approach solutions for services come from the community instead of the public service actor. What makes this type of approach effective is that community members help shape services in a way that best suits them. This theme further encourages the support and creation of opportunities for communities in different sectors that want to be involved. However for this form of service delivery to be successful there is a need for infrastructure development and it should be led by communities and volunteer sectors.

Theme Five: The Community Conversation
This theme focuses on improving the conversation and interaction between public service agencies and communities. It emphasizes the importance of communication through using different platforms. These platforms include social networks and other modern technologies that spread information efficiently and allow communities to give feedback. One important point of this theme is increasing of platforms where public service agencies and communities can engage. Furthermore, another framework of community empowerment and participation is discussed by Samah and Aref (2011) in the Malaysian context. The form of empowerment discussed in Malaysia is underpinned by the premise that community development cannot be achieved if there is no public participation. Community participation in this case is perceived as the level to which people are involved in decision-making and how much control they have in projects done for their development. In further analyzing the process of community participation, it is divided into two. First as means, secondly as process (Oakley & Marsden, 1984).

Participation as means is defined by people’s voluntary contribution to programs but with no power to shape how the program is designed or to criticize it. This form of participation follows a top-bottom approach since government decides how people will have input on development programs, which is why some scholars define it as manipulative participation (Samah & Aref, 2011). For this reason, participation as means is not fully perceived as an effective approach to
community development. On the other hand, participation as process is defined by people having control over development program done for them. What makes process different from means is that it is citizen-originated not government-centered like the former. In this form of participation people are directly involved in shaping, deciding and taking part in development program in a bottom-up setting.

Richardson (1983) further argues that participation as process is more than sustaining the project but it contributes to individual fulfillment, personal development, self-awareness and immediate satisfaction of people. Even though means approach takes a different approach to that of process, it is still perceived as a form of participation because it also focused on the level of community involvement in deciding on their projects. For this reason, means approach is perceived as a continuum of participation process. Figure 2.2, shows different models established by a number of scholars to measure community participation.

The analysis of Malaysian empowerment context goes deeper than community empowerment and discusses individual empowerment. In this case, individual empowerment is referred to as a process where individuals exercise their ability and capacity effectively to achieve certain goals, and to further develop those capabilities (Samah & Aref, 2011). Samah and Aref’s paper argues that when individuals are able to use their capabilities, it is then when they can organize themselves as collective to work together to solve common problems. By working together through participation in bringing change to the community, it then becomes collective empowerment. However, for collective empowerment to be consolidated there needs to the interpersonal empowerment, where individuals within the group are able to positively influence each other. Thereafter when communities or groups are responsible for implementing their own choices and decisions, accountable for actions they take then that where collective empowerment is exercised (Samah & Aref, 2011).
2.2.3 Evaluation Principles

There are a number of principles that are used to evaluate empowerment. This section of the study discusses what empowerment evaluation is and briefly outline ten principles of evaluation. According to Fetterman and Wandermans (2005) empowerment evaluation is an approach that aims to increase the probability of achieving program success. This is done by firstly providing program stakeholders with tools for assessing the planning, implementation and self-evaluation of their program and secondly, by mainstreaming evaluation as part of the planning and

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**Source:** Samah and ref (2011).
management of the program or organization”. They further argued that empowerment evaluation is essential for development purposes. These principles are as follows:

**Principle One – Improvement**
This principle values program improvement so as a result it allows stakeholders to give comments on what needs to be done. Moreover, it uses qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate program planning, implementation and outcomes.

**Principle Two – Community Ownership**
According to this principle program stakeholders must take decisions with regards to planning, implementation and evaluation. It therefore emphasizes capacity building which will enable community to effectively evaluate the program. It encourages self-determination and sense of responsibility instead of dependency for community members.

**Principle Three - Inclusion**
This principle argues for direct participation in decision making. According to inclusion principle, lack of inclusivity result to poor communication and undermining of behavior. It further argues that solutions come out of inclusive consultation with stakeholders and most importantly this facilitates community ownership of the program.

**Principle Four – Democratic Participation**
For community to buy-in on the program’s plans and strategies, this principle emphasizes deliberation and authentic collaboration with communities. This will then allow the program practitioners to use community knowledge and skills in ensuring that the programs best fit the needs and values of the participants.

**Principle Five - Social Justice**
Due to social inequalities, this principle advocates for the development of intelligent judgement and actions of individuals by supplying empowerment tools and techniques. This will then make people more confident, self-determined and ready to take control of their lives. It will also help them confront inequalities and improve programs.
Principle Six - Community Knowledge
This principle argues that community members are experts in their community. It recognizes community knowledge and synthesizes it to new knowledge. Due to this it values and promotes community-based knowledge and wisdom. It further argues that community-based knowledge is a better source for contextualizing science and program practices.

Principle Seven – Evidence Based Strategies
In this principle more value is put on evidence-based information and it is utilized in the early stages of program planning. Empirical data from scholars and intellectuals is used to understand what best suit certain areas and adopt accordingly. In the end it combines both community based and evidence-based data from scholars in planning of the program.

Principle Eight – Capacity Building
This principle emphasizes that people must learn skills and basic steps of evaluation so that they can be in a better position to shape and improve their lives. Moreover, it enhances stakeholders conduct so they can improve program planning and implementation. It encourages giving user-friendly evaluation tools so stakeholders can monitor activities.

Principle Nine – Organizational Learning
Based on this principle, processes and structures of organizations should be framed designed in such a way that they allow people to learn. It then highlights four things that should be followed for organizational learning to take place. Organizations should:

• Support learning and be open for change.
• Value continuous improvement and strive for ongoing improvement.
• Engage in systematic thinking for long term solutions.
• Promote new knowledge for problem solving.

Principle 10 – Accountability
This principle is committed in accountability to administrators and the public. It emphasizes clear description of program process and allows for accountability at process and outcome level. This then help stakeholders to have meaningful understanding of outcomes. Most importantly it encourages self-driven accountability of all stakeholders.
This part of the paper has covered ten different principles of empowerment evaluation as discussed by Fetterman and Wandersman (2005) in their book. It must be noted that these principles do not follow any hierarchical steps. As explained earlier these are crucial in planning, implementation, outcome evaluation and continuous improvement for quality.

2.2.4 Satisfaction and Empowerment
As part of this study a survey was conducted to understand people’s satisfaction with the houses built for them. Even though user satisfaction is not the main focus of this research it is essential to understand it because it contributes to why people get empowered. This part briefly discusses what user satisfaction is and look into factors that determine satisfaction. This sub-section concludes by showing the link between user satisfaction and empowerment with regards to RDP housing projects.

Satisfaction is a contested concept because scholars argue on whether it is a process or an outcome and as a result there is inconsistency in its definition, which is also the case with empowerment. However most of the definitions have certain aspects which are common. For instance they all highlight that satisfaction is a response which can be emotional or cognitive. Some of these definitions include that of Tessier, Crouch and Atherton (1977) who said satisfaction was “ultimately a state experienced inside a user’s head and therefore a response that may be both intellectual and emotional” (Tessier, Crouch, & Atherton, 1977). This study also perceives people’s satisfaction as both an emotional and cognitive response.

Moreover, different factors determine user-satisfaction and those include emotions and cognitive processes. Other crucial factors are expectations, product quality and consumption experience. In relation to housing projects, one of the determining factors is user-characteristics, specifically the socio-economic status of participants. People’s level of education, employment status and living conditions are important in influencing their level of satisfaction. For this reason it is quite difficult to argue that people are empowered if their level of satisfaction is low.

The discussion so far has highlighted that satisfaction is of great importance in empowerment even though it not much discussed in empowerment discourses. Most of empowerment principles aim to satisfy the end users. For instance, when we look at the principles of community ownership, inclusion, democratic participation and community knowledge, they all
seek to ensure that people are satisfied with the end product. This is by involving them in the planning, designing, implementations and outcome evaluation. In that way people will support the projects and most importantly they will also take responsibility. When people are involved in programs related to their lives, they are more likely to immediately be satisfied with the outcomes. As a result, people should be empowered at all levels of the program until the end product. This is based on an understanding that empowerment is not an outcome, especially in the housing projects, but it includes both process and end product.

This section has discussed what user-satisfaction is and highlighted that emotions and cognitive processes play a huge role in people’s level of satisfaction. It also covered other influencing factor such as expectations and product quality. Lastly it analyzed the link between empowerment and satisfaction, where it highlighted that empowerment principles aim for user satisfaction in their processes and outcomes.

Conclusion

This chapter was divided into two sections. Section One “Constitutional and Policy Housing Provisions” was divided into three parts; first it looked into what the constitution says about housing distribution and other policies that have played a critical role in shaping the housing context of the country. Secondly, it analyzed the White Paper on Housing of 1994, which reflected the RDP frameworks. It looked into the RDP principles and programmes that were going to be done, which included meeting basic needs. In the last part of this section, government financial subsidies were discussed in more details. This part covered subsidies from as early as in 1993, where people were subsidized with R7500 to currently where people earning less than R3500 qualify for full subsidized houses. It further looked into extended housing subsidy that came with the implementation of the Breaking New Ground Policy in 2004, which was aimed to assist those earning between R3501 – R7000 to get houses in the lower middle market. There has been many other measures taken by government in trying to meet housing demands, some has failed and some were a success.

Section two “Empowerment in Context” covered a number of different definitions, processes and/or frameworks of empowerment. One notable aspect in the definitions of empowerment as a concept is the emphasis on ability to take action; it may be individual or collective as a
community. When looking into different processes or frameworks of empowerment, the emphasis is on public participations as form of empowerment. However, participation takes different forms; it can be top-down approach and can also be bottom-up approach. No matter what form it takes, the most important thing with public participation is giving communities the ability to take ownership of projects relating to their lives. Emphasis on community participation also appears on the ten principles of community empowerment. Some of these crucial principles include inclusion, democratic participation, community knowledge and others that believe on people’s involvement as important in designing, planning and implementation of programs.
Chapter 3
The Case Study of Emaflethini Community

Introduction
As part of this research, a survey was conducted in Emaflethini area to measure people’s level of satisfaction and to get their perspective on RDP houses. The study also had open-ended interviews with two Msunduzi municipality officials to get their opinion on housing and related issues. This chapter gives an outline of how they responded to the survey questionnaire and interviews that were conducted. It covers details about the level of satisfaction with the characteristics of the RDP houses and about their closeness to amenities. This section also explains information about the effectiveness of projects in empowering communities, and the views of the Municipality officials. Responses are later grouped and put into percentages for further analysis.

3.1 Brief history of Emaflethini Community.
The area of study is located in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province which is in the middle-east of the country (see figure 3.1). This province was divided into KwaZulu homelands and Natal Province under the Apartheid government until 1994 when the country had it first democratic elections (South African History Online, 2018). In 1994 KwaZulu homelands and Natal were combined to form KwaZulu-Natal province. During the division Ulundi was the capital city of KwaZulu homeland, under the leadership of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and Goodwill Zwelithini as a traditional representation of Zulu people (African National Congress , 1994).

KZN experienced a lot of political conflicts and violence during apartheid, to some it was perceived as the epicenter of tensions in the country. Most of the violence in the province was because of the competition between the two dominant political parties, Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and African National Congress (ANC). IFP enjoyed a lot of support from traditional leaders in the homelands and supported National Party (NP) federalist system. On the other hand, ANC had support in urban areas and was gradually moving to rural areas.
IFP used traditional leaders and their headman to intercept ANC from moving into rural areas. During this time chieftaincy played a huge role in political activities as it was affiliated with IFP. Political violence in the KZN is said to have led to half a million people displacement and approximately 20000 deaths (Beall, Mkhize, & Vawda, 2005). To facilitate calmness and national transition to democratic election in the province, political parties compromised by giving cabinet posts to their rivals and promising to accommodate traditional leaders in the new government.

![Map of KwaZulu-Natal province](_rooms_for_africa_2018_.jpg)

Figure 3.1. Map of KwaZulu-Natal province (Rooms For Africa, 2018).

IFP narrowly won provincial legislature in 1994 and was in power until 1999 when ANC won with two-seat majority. This came after member of IFP crossed seats to ANC and as a result IFP dominancy in the province was dismantled (Letsholo, 2005). After the 2004 elections, ANC government believed Ulundi was not the best place to have capital city because it lacked infrastructure. The capital city was official changed from Ulundi to Pietermaritzburg, which is
under Msunduzi local municipality. Pietermaritzburg is the second largest city in KZN and is the economic hub of UMgungundlovu District Municipality. It is also rich in history and has a number of old buildings as heritage. Msunduzi municipality contains 39 wards and is dominated by urban, semi-urban and rural areas (City of Pietermaritzburg Surrounds, 2018).

As a result of Apartheid system Pietermaritzburg is still facing challenges of unemployment, poverty, development inequalities and deteriorating infrastructure. Seventy percent of the population in the city are black Africans and the rest are white, Indians and colored people. Most of the challenges mentioned in this study are mostly experienced and affect the black majority. Emaflethini is a residential area of RDP houses which is also affected by these challenges. It is found in ward 10 of the municipality (officially registered as Unit S). Most of the people in this area rely on government pension and housing subsidies. This area is one of the target areas for local government’s socio-economic development programs as evidenced by several housing projects already implemented this far. A significant number of people have benefited from housing subsidies and they have lived in them for a long time. For this reason, it made sense to get their perspective on whether these houses have brought change, and have they empowered communities according to the objectives of the government’s housing policies. In the following sections the study gives a narrative discussion of the people’s responses and later gives a quantitative analysis of the survey.

3.2 Narrative of Survey and Interviews

3.2.1 House Characteristics

During the survey respondents were asked to rank the level of satisfaction they felt with respect to the characteristics of the RDP houses. From the responses given, it became apparent that most of them were not really happy. In addition to ranking their satisfaction through a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, respondents still felt they had to give more comments about different characteristics of the house.

Some of the participants complained about walls of the house. They argued that during heavy rains, water seeps in through the walls; some will come up of the foundation of the house from the ground to form cracks. One respondent said that behind his house, there is a broken drainage pipe so when it rains, the pipes release water in his yard and it seeps into the house through the
wall and the foundation. He has reported it a number of times to the community leader but nothing has been done. Other respondents also reported walls that seeped in water because not enough cement was used on them. It became clear most people were not satisfied with the walls, even though some did report having any problem.

Another characteristic that was of great concern to the respondents was the roof of the houses. Some participants mentioned that there have been cases where their roof got blown away by the wind during heavy thunderstorms. They reported that they had to re-enforce the roof by placing huge stones on top in an effort to secure them against being blown away (see figure 3.3). This has become a health and safety hazard for them because they felt that if the roof gets blown, stones and blocks can fall on them. They also mentioned that there had been follow-up projects that were done by the local councilor to fasten the roofs. Moreover, some participants complained that since the roof is made of iron sheets, thus the house becomes too hot on sunny days, and also this is worsened by the short walls of the house.

Furthermore, when asked about satisfaction with house sizes participants gave mixed responses. Some families with many members were not happy with the sizes of the house, while others with less did not have any problem. Families that complained about the size often argued that there is no privacy. They said it was difficult to share the house with children if you are adults, there are things that they could not do, which is why families that had space in their yard and could afford it were able to ‘extend’ their RDP houses (construct additional separate rooms). Others felt that even though the size was not really satisfying, it was better than staying in a mud house. The general understanding from the responses was that their level of satisfaction with size was much influenced by the family size and economic status.

Moreover, participants gave different views about the sanitation, basically the toilet system. All toilets in the study area did not have flushing system. Figure 3.2 shows pictures of some of the toilets in the study area. This was one of the concerns for the participants as they argued that since there is no sewer system, when these pit toilets fill up, they have to put water or buy some chemicals to facilitate sludge decomposition so that the level will drop. Some families said they have never had toilets. This has forced them to make their own toilets covered with iron shacks or maybe use their neighbors. They also said they have reported to different councilors that have come into leadership but still nothing has been done to date. Even when a new project for toilets
was implemented they were still left out. One participant complained about the condition of the toilets. He argued that these toilets were built long before the housing project even started. So, because of this reason by the time people are given houses already these toilets are starting to be old and some have been used by passerby.

Figure 3. 2 Left picture shows old toilets and right picture shows news toilets. Source: Study results (2018)

Lastly, one characteristic that seemed to be of great concern and participants were not satisfied with is that of the design of the houses. RDP houses in the study area are designed in such a way that two different families have to share the same building, one outside toilet and same yard. Figure 3.3 shows the type of house design found in the study area.

Figure 3. 3 Picture of the house and design found in Emaflethini. Source: Study results (2018).
Some participant argued that because of this type of design, they were not able to extend their houses because they do not have full access to yard. They also mentioned that since the sizes of these houses are small they did not feel any privacy because they could hear everything that is happening on the other side. What was also of great concern is that in some part of the area since the houses were designed in this way, they had to share the payment of the utility bills. In houses with one water meter and one electricity box, different families therefore had to split the bills. According to the responses given in relation to house characteristics, most participants showed dissatisfaction.

3.2.2 Proximity to Amenities
Participants were also asked to rank their level of satisfaction in terms of the distance of their houses to different essential amenities. The following section discusses some of the findings.

First let’s look into proximity to health facilities. Most of the participants seemed to be satisfied with the distance between their houses and the nearest clinic (Approximately 3 kilometers to Pata clinic and 1.6 to Azalea clinic). They said clinics were close and they were lucky because they were between two clinics, one in Azalea and another one in Pata location. However older people complained that for them these distances were not walkable. When asked about proximity to hospitals, most participants seemed to be satisfied. Even though some argued that it is too far and it becomes difficult to go there because transport is expensive and they are unemployed.

Secondly, we discussed level of satisfaction with proximity to education facilities. Most participants were satisfied with the distance between their houses and primary school. They said the walking distance to primary school was not bad and children walk easy. However, they showed dissatisfaction with the distance from their houses to high schools. They complained that there is no high school in the area so children have to wake up early in the morning so that they can walk the long distance in order to avoid being late for school. One parent argued that she had to pay more money for school transport every month to avoid her child walking long distance to school. Some argued that during sunny and rainy days, walking to high schools can be difficult given the fact that too much sun heat can be dehydrating and exhausting for children and when it rains the walkway becomes muddy making it hard to walk.
The study also asked about the participants’ level of satisfaction with the distance to mall and the Central Business District (CBD) of the city. Participants seemed to be satisfied with the distance because they had a choice to choose whether they wanted to go to the mall or town. They said Edendale Mall was close for them and if they cannot find something it was easy to go to the CBD. Those that worked in town said the distance to town was not bad because it takes between 30 to 40 minutes to get to town, so it did not give them any problem. During the discussion I also noticed that even though they did not complain much about the distance, they were concerned about the expensive transport system.

For other facilities like taxi rank and pension payout point, participants showed satisfaction even though there were some complains. They said the waiting area for public transport was close but it was not good because it did not have proper shelter to protect them from rain and heat. Also, with pension payout point, they showed satisfaction but argued it was not good for older people since the area had a steep gradient, so they are forced to hire transport.

3.2.3 Level of Empowerment
In this section participants were asked about the effectiveness of the housing projects in empowering the community. The empowerment section is divided into three parts. First it asked about the effectiveness of the housing projects in promoting capacity building. Secondly, it looked into the effectiveness of these projects in creating job or business opportunities for community members. The third section measured the effectiveness of the projects in promoting public participation during project implementation. The following part discusses these sections in more details and it discusses some of the participants’ perception on RDP houses.

When participants were asked about the effectiveness of the projects in promoting capacity building, most of the people reported low effectiveness because they did not have any understanding of building houses. This was because they had never worked in housing projects. One respondent said if there are any skills gained in these projects then they would not be making houses of poor quality. However, some of the participants said they have worked in the housing projects and gained some building skills like plastering, brick laying and wall rough-cutting.
Furthermore, we discussed the effectiveness of projects in creating jobs and businesses for the community. In this respect, many participants said these projects were not creating jobs for the community members. They argued that during projects the contracting companies that are selected by the councilors sometimes bring their own workers. Also, they mentioned that, mostly people who get to work in the projects are relatives and friends of the committee and councilors. Some said they do not even know when and where the call for prospective employees for these projects is done. One participant shared a story that happened to her husband. She said at one-time community members were asked to submit their curriculum vitae and after sometime of waiting to be called their papers were found thrown in a dustbin in another area. She further complained that people selected to lead in some of the projects have neither skills nor experience, but because they are friends of the councilor they get deployed to positions. The general perception that was apparent from the participant’s responses was that the projects were not effective with respect to empowerment.

Moreover, we talked about the level of public participation in the planning and implementation of the projects in the area. In this part most of the participants argued that leaders and contractors do as they please they do not involve community members. They said in general the leaders do not communicate with the community in taking crucial decisions that affect them. They argued that because of poor public participation that is why contractors are building houses in mountainous areas that are even difficult to access and some house have to be destroyed and built again. One participant said even the current councilor most people disapprove of him but because of deployment he got the position. Another said there is very little to no public involvement in the project because the councilor and his committee are rude so it difficult to even communicate with them. They added that as a community they are not taken seriously, even when they report problems they are neither given attention nor responded to. In addition, for the reason that there is lack of community involvement, there is a lot of corruption in the awarding of these houses. However, some participants said community meetings are publicly announced but people do not attend them. Even though some people said the projects were effective in promoting public participation, most of the participants disagreed.

Lastly, participants were asked if they felt empowered and to give their general perception on RDP houses. Most of the participants said they felt empowered by the houses that government
has built for them. When asked why they felt empowered, usually the answer they gave was that these houses have brought change to their lives because they used to stay in mud houses but now they have brick houses. Some said it was better than not having any shelter, adding that other people are sleeping in streets but I have a home. Others said they are grateful because not every government can build houses and give them for free to it citizen. Table 3.1 gives presentation of people’s responses with regards to projects effectiveness.

Table 3.1 Projects Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Capacity building</th>
<th>Job/business</th>
<th>Public participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very effective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Study results (2018)

However, some participants disapproved of the housing projects. These participants said instead of these houses empowering and bring change to their lives, rather they have brought more oppression. One participant further said, initially when he got the house they knew he was not working and relied of government pension fund, but once he started living in the RDP house, he has to pay for utilities. Some said they were better off staying in the mud house because it was easy to fix when there is a problem but with the poor-quality brick houses built for them it is expensive since they are not working. Another respondent said there is no empowerment in these projects as the bad quality houses are just imposed on them because they are poor and cannot say anything. One woman said these projects are a waste of money, instead of giving houses they should be creating job opportunities. She said even if they build houses, people are still poor and suffering from poverty.
3.2.4 Perception of Municipality Officials

An open-ended interview, guided by 15 questions was conducted with one official of the Msunduzi Municipality, Mr. Dlamini³ and Mr. Sehole⁴ was also there assisting him. The purpose of the interviews was to get the governments perceptive in relation to RDP house project. The following part covers some of the responses the official gave to the questions.

To begin with, the official was asked to give his general view about RDP houses. He responded by saying the RDP project was a good initiative as it was building for those who cannot afford. He mentioned that “RDP houses differ from province to province. This is in terms of material, workmanship and size”. However, he said “I do not understand why there are different houses in one area. It would be easy if there were standard housing design because we would compare it to other provinces and see where we need to improve”, he added.

When asked about the conditions of the houses, he said the earlier houses which were built after the implementation of the RDP framework were not in a good condition. He made an example of the RDP houses at Unit 18 in Imbali, which were too small that the place was mockingly nicknamed “’Kwavezunyawo’”. This meant the houses were so small that only one foot could fit in. Furthermore, he argued that the RDP houses differ based on the budget. Stating that in the beginning one house unit was built at a budget of R12 500, unlike the latest projects which can even reach more than R120 000 per unit. Even though more money is allocated you still find that the amount used is not equivalent to the standard.

Moreover, when asked if the municipality was doing anything to rectify the conditions of the RDP houses. He said nothing is being done because municipality leaves everything to councilors and that is why there are a lot of projects not finished. The official made reference to a housing project done in Imbali 13, Phase 4, where walls of the houses had steel wire inside them had to be destroyed because they were not safe. A new project after was implemented but for a long time now, it has not been finished. He highlighted that this project has become a campaign tool for political parties in phase 4 because they ask people to vote for them by promising to finish the old housing project.


Also, the official said the reason for so many problems with the RDP projects is the fact that there is no proper planning and surveying. If they planned properly and surveyed the areas where these houses are built there would not be situations where units are on top of sewers or on steep slopes difficult to reach. The official also said he believed these problems were deliberately caused by the municipality since it does not carry out project follow up after handing-over to the councillors. Adding that the municipality has its own land surveyors, engineers and building inspectors but they are not involved in RDP projects to monitor if the contractors are doing the right thing. Another thing that was mentioned is that councilors do not submit any reports to the municipality after the project is finished so they are also not monitored and they do their own allocation. The official blamed the municipality for being weak and how that has led to the failure of the housing projects in the city.

We further discussed how housing projects can be improved to ensure that there is more empowerment of the community and the official gave a few suggestions. First, he said councilors must involve the people from the early stages of the projects. Unemployed skilled and unskilled laborer must be collected so that they can benefit from the project. Secondly, for beneficiaries to be happy, municipality must ensure quality by deploying inspectors from their side to monitor and pass houses that are built accordingly. In addition, he said there must be a standard plan for housing from the provincial housing department with procedures that contractors will follow when building houses. He said having different types of RDP houses in one location can divide the community. So, to ensure community cohesion there must be standardized housing. Lastly, to ensure that there are sustainable and good communities, the official said different departments must come together during the planning of the RDP projects and have input on what needs to be done. In that way, there won’t be situations where RDP houses are built far from essential facilities like schools, clinics and hospitals but rather they will be included in the initial plan.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

Ninety households were visited during the survey in Emaflethini. During analysis of the results, similar responses were grouped. This section displays survey results in a numerical form and gives more discussion. All tables are discussed separately and unusual trends will be highlighted.

| Table 3.2 Characteristics of Houses |
Most people showed dissatisfaction in terms of the characteristics of the housing units. Approximately 72.2% of the respondents were dissatisfied with the doors, while 65.6% with walls, and 62.2% with the design of the houses. Overall 56.7% people were dissatisfied with houses and most dissatisfaction was because of poor quality.

Table 3. 3 Proximity to Amenities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenities</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Highly satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Highly dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi rank</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension pay-out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Study results (2018)
Most respondents were satisfied with the distance from the houses to the amenities within Emaflethini location. About 82.2% of the participants were satisfied with distance to primary school; they said it was close enough for children to walk to. Also there was high satisfaction with distance to taxi ranks, pension payouts points and town/mall. However they were dissatisfied with the distance to clinics and high schools. They argued that clinics are too far so they had to use public transport, which they think is expensive. About 60% participants were dissatisfied with high school distance, they complained that it too far for children to walk and there are no proper walkways. According to them, there need to be a local clinic and high school.

Table 3.4 Do you feel Empowered?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empowered</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Empowered</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Study results (2018)

Approximately 82.2% of the participants believed these RDP houses brought change to their lives and further explained that this was better that staying in a mud house. Others argued that these houses instead of bringing change to their lives it has brought them problems because it expensive to repair it poor quality faults. It must be noted that there is no direct translation of the Empowerment concept in IsiZulu language that is the general language spoken by participants. As a result, people were asked if these projects and houses have brought change to their lives, which is in context of the RDP houses is an empowerment objective.

Table 3.5 Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When given the questionnaire some participants just answer the question without filling in their gender, status of ownership and gender so only 85 was recorded down. Of the 85 participants, 72.9% were unemployed and most of them relied on government grants. For this reason they argued that’s it was more costly for them to fix poor quality houses. About 80% of the participants owned the houses they stayed in, others were tenants or given to them by relatives.

Table 3. 6 Satisfaction by House Ownership Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership Status</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Not Owner</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Study results (2018)

The responses were further narrowed down to people who owned the houses with idea that they have more experience and understanding of the houses and projects than tenants. Of the 68 people that were owners only 41.2% of them were satisfied with houses and all its characteristics, which meant majority (58.8% of the respondents) was not satisfied. The only housing characteristics that many owners showed satisfaction with were unit sizes and windows. Even those who were not owners were also satisfied with windows and units sizes. This brings up the question of what exactly the problem with these housing characteristics that makes people to disapprove of them so much.

Table 3. 7 Proximity by House Ownership Status
During the planning of housing projects, communities are usually consulted and told about where the houses will be located. For this reason, their level of satisfaction can be different to that of people who were not involved in the beginning (such as tenants), so also here focus was given to owners’ perspective. Most of them were highly satisfied with distance to some amenities. All 68 of the owners were satisfied with distance to primary school; they also showed satisfaction with taxi rank, pension payout points and town/malls. They argued that the distances were convenient for going to work. However, they were not satisfied with distance to high school and clinics. Only 35.3 % was satisfied with distance to clinics and 16.2% of the owners were satisfied with distance to high school. This highlights that there is serious need to local high school and clinics because education and health are crucial for community sustainability.

Table 3. 8 Effectiveness by House Ownership Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership status</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Not Owner</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi Rank</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension pay out point</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town or Mall</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Study results (2018)

According to the housing policy, during projects people are supposed to gain skills as part of capacity building, projects should create job opportunities and community must be involved in decision making as part of a transparent political process. For these reasons it was essential to ask owners if, in their own opinion, these projects really met the set objectives. About 57.4 % of the owners answered that the projects were effective in giving people skills, these included
plastering, brick laying and roofing. However, this was not formal training because people did not get any certification after the project was finished. Overall 60% of all participants, including those who did not own units, argued that the projects were effective in capacity building.

Moreover, only 36.8% of participants said housing projects were effective in creating job and business opportunities. Most of the people complained that they do not even know when the contractors are hiring because community committee members and councillors only tell their friends and families. When asked about community involvement in decision making, only 8.8% said projects were effective. Only 9.4% of the participants, with non-owners included, argued that people are involved in decision making. The rest of the participants, which made up 90.6%, said these projects were not effective in involving the community in decision making. Some complained that the committees and councillors take decisions by themselves and tell community their final plans. According to some participants this has resulted in corruption and favouritism during the housing distribution process.

Table 3. 9 Satisfaction by Employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Employed No.</th>
<th>Employed %</th>
<th>Unemployed No.</th>
<th>Unemployed %</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Study results (2018)

Since most participants complained about not having enough money to fix their houses when they developed faults, the study then analysed the satisfaction of those that were employed. This was to see if satisfaction with housing characteristics was going to change if people were working. From this it apparent that even people who were employed were not satisfied, 12 (52.2%) people of the 23 employed were satisfied with overall houses. This highlights that people are not satisfied by house characteristics because they don’t have money to fix it but
because of the poor-quality problems that existed. This was also supported by almost half of employed participants (47.8%) who also were not satisfied with the houses.

Table 3. 10 Satisfaction with Distance based on Employment Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi Rank</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension pay out point</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town or Mall</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Study results (2018)

The number of employed participants who were satisfied with distance to amenities was high. About 52.2 % percent of those employed were satisfied with distance from house to the clinics. This highlights issues of affordability. People who are employed would be able to pay for public transportation to distant amenities so for this reason their level of satisfaction can be high to those who were unemployed. Even though many employed people were satisfied with most house characteristics, only 26% of 23 people were satisfied with the distance to the high schools. Overall out of the 85 participants, only 17 of them were satisfied with distance to high school. This means serious attention has to be given to the shortages of high schools since people showed high dissatisfaction in this regard.

Conclusion

This chapter gave a historical background of the study area where the survey and interviews were conducted. Moreover, it gave a narrative discussion of the survey results and the perspectives of beneficiaries of RDP housing projects and that of municipality workers. In the last part, data analysis and interpretation were done to people’s responses to quantitatively understand the significance of the reasons behind their responses.
Chapter 4

Housing Projects in Comparative Perspective

Introduction

To further our understanding of RDP housing projects in South Africa, this chapter focuses on some of the studies done on the same and related topics. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and compare previous studies with the case study of Emaflethini. The first section separately summarizes three case studies and the last section does a comparative analysis of crucial issues that are common between previous studies and the one in Emaflethini.

4.1 Previous Housing Projects

4.1.1 RDP Houses in Braamfischerville, Gauteng.

When the RDP housing project began in the area in 1996, it was divided into four phases. Two of the last phases were implemented in 2002. All houses in the area had same structures and the government had promised to provide basic services and essential amenities. Five years in the project there was still no basic needs and the area lacked basic infrastructure. In 2008 a study was conducted in the area to get people’s views about the houses (Molla, Kotze, & Block, 2011). Five-point Likert scale was used for data collection on a questionnaire distributed to 200 interviewees. It focused on measuring satisfaction on three issues. These are quality of housing units and standard, availability of amenities and quality of life.

Looking at the characteristics of the RDP project in Braamfischerville, the study found that all the houses were 36 square meters and they had a plot of 250 meter squared available for building. The houses in this area were an open-plan building, with iron roof, metal doors and two to three windows. It was also found that very few of these houses had complied with standard building regulations. There were questions of safety and sustainability of communities as they lacked infrastructure. Due to quality 55% of the respondents argued that RDP houses were not good enough for people to live in. Despite high dissatisfaction with houses’ attributes, the average satisfaction with the house was high because some people had been staying in slums so these houses brought change to their lives. Generally dissatisfaction with the houses quality was associated with poor design and government authorities cost cutting.
Moreover, most respondents were not satisfied with access to essential facilities like schools, clinics and workplace area. They complained that housing units were far from important services forcing them to spend more on transportation, increasing level of poverty. For this reason the projects was blamed for inconvenient housing location. The study further analyzed the quality of life in the area. The project was located close to a mine dump site so resident argued that this was a threat to their health because they were in the dust zone. Moreover, the size of the units was small so people complained of overcrowding and argued there was no privacy.

In conclusion the study found that houses were not in ideal condition. It also found that high dissatisfaction with houses was a result of poor design, bad location, poor craftsman and cost-cutting from the authorities. Despite all these, the author concluded that even though these houses were of minimum accommodation, they provided residents with secure tenure. The author further recommended that to improve quality of live in this area, government had to ensure that there are necessary services and adequate infrastructure. These will then help to make sure that housing units are livable. According to the author this will be better than only putting roof over people’s heads.

4.1.2 Golf Course Estate in Alice Town, Eastern Cape.

Due to a number of complains and concerns from communities, a study was conducted in Golf Course Estate to validate as to whether houses meet the needs of the beneficiaries (Manomano, 2013). According to this study some of the crucial concerns in the area included quality of the houses, shortage of basic infrastructure and maladministration by the officials in charge of housing distribution. A survey was conducted in the area and it targeted 50 beneficiaries.

Looking at the demographics of the area, the study found that 62% of residents were female and also that black people dominated. Furthermore, the study found that only 32% of the beneficiaries were employed and 52% were unemployed, the rest were students or self-employed. The author argued that there is a need from government side to come up with strategies that will get people employed or help them start small business to help them survive. According to the author this was of great importance because unemployment is associated with high crime rates. Lastly, out of the 50 people used in this study only 24 (48%) were owners and 17 (34%) were staying as accommodation given to them, the rest were tenants (18%).
Moreover, when examining the quality of the houses many participants were dissatisfied with some of its attributes. For instance, 74% of the people were not satisfied with the windows, 58% dissatisfied with toilets, and 72% were not happy with toilets and 82% were not satisfied with doors. According to the findings people generally complained about the walls, they said less cement was used and walls were weak, which was supported by 76% of them not satisfied with the walls conditions. The author argued that the houses never met the expectations of the beneficiaries and those of the RDP policy.

Evaluating people’s perception on the size of the houses, Manomano (2013) found that 80% of them thought they were too small, 16% said they were adequate and 4% said they were very adequate. People were not happy with the fact that house were an open-plan that is not divided into rooms. They complained that the size was too small and they were overcrowded. There were concerns over the health conditions and they thought the conditions were inhuman. In this regard, the author argued that government should improve the standards.

The study further analyzed people’s perception with regards to proximity of house to social services. Many participants complained about houses being far from social services. According to this study 54% of participants said houses were far and 18% said they were very far from social welfare. Also, 74% of participants argued that houses were far or very far from RDP administration offices. A lot of participants said houses were far from schools, health facilities and malls. Based on these results, the researcher said government could not meet its objective of empowering the people. According to the researcher, RDP houses should have their own facilities. Lastly, the researcher found that 64% of people reported that they were consulted by housing official to discuss building projects proceedings. However, some people did not know who the officials were and where their offices are located.

In conclusion this paper argued that RDP projects failed to provide adequate shelter, since houses were very small. After analyzing people’s views, the researcher concluded that incompetent contractors were used which made the quality of the houses poor. The paper found that there was no democratic dispensation, people’s complains and concerns were not taken into consideration. About 80% of the people were dissatisfied with administration and felt they were not empowered. The author recommended a reexamination of construction and maintenance
plans of the housing projects. For economic empowerment, the author recommended government to invest in vocational education that will help people to be independent and self-sufficient.

4.1.3 Niall Mellon Housing Project in Imizamo Yethu, Western Cape.

Hout Bay was reserved for the white people during apartheid era in South Africa; this was until 1991 when Group Areas Act was removed. After the removal of this Act people from other races were allowed to reside in the area. Hout Bay was divided, white people stay in the Valley, colored stayed in Hangbed and black people in Imizamo Yethu. Over years there were land disputes within the area. South Africa National Civil Organization (SANCO) and Hout bay civic association advocating for housing development, while the opposition Sinethemba and Rate Payers Association were concerned over security and decreasing housing prices of estates.

Initially when Imizamo Yethu was founded in the 1980s it was agreed upon by the authorities of the time that out of 34 hectares of the total area, 16 hectares was going to be for community facilities and 18 hectares for 455 housing units (Sikota, 2015). However, because of migration, number of people in the area was rising rapidly. By 2011, there were 6009 households in the area and 15 538 people. Development was delayed by white people from the Valley as they were in opposition of growing informal settlements. Also, there was division within the groups representing black people, for instance SANCO was divided into two groups. One group was for members supporting community facilities and another for those in favor of housing development. Division within SANCO further led to disputes of which faction was eligible to represent the needs of the community.

Development in Imizamo Yethu was delayed until 2002 when an Irish business man, Niall Mellon decided to support in building houses for the poor. Mellon set up, Niall Mellon Township Trust (NMTT) and promised to build 450 households in 3 years. The project was going to be done in collaboration with SANCO and was done under the Peoples Housing Process (PHP) which emphasizes community participation. As a result Imizamo Yethu community contributed with 488 labourers to the Makukhanye Housing Project, which was the official name of the project.

This was not necessarily an RDP project but rather what brought attention to this study is the emphasis of community participation even though the paper looks at it from the representation
point of view. According to this study, for communities to participate properly in development projects they needed effective representation. In this study participation was perceived as a constitutional right of the community and it was mandatory for municipalities to ensure that people were involved. The paper also discusses the link between democracy and participation, it outlines that for democracy to be meaningful participation is required.

To emphasize participation, this study objectively looks into participation and housing projects. It uses Arnstein’s (1969) participation ladder to measure community involvement in projects (see figure 4.1).

![Participation Ladder](image)

**Figure 4.1 Participation Ladder. Source: Arnstein’s (1969)**

This section further defines participation as redistribution of power to allow those who don’t have it to be consciously involved in future. Participation is also perceived as an approach that will give the poor some power to have influence over policies related to their lives.

In conclusion Sikota (2015) found that development is still a major source of contestation and continued tensions in communities. Especially housing is said to inspire protestation. Moreover, it outlined that it is essential for communities to have effective representatives for communities
to properly participate in their development project. The paper demonstrated this by using the case of Imizamo Yethu to show the importance of representation and participation.

4.2 Comparison to Emaflethini

In the previous sections, the study has discussed a number of cases on housing distribution. The following section compares those case studies with the case of Emaflethini. The focus is on the similarities that these case studies have and they are analyzed separately. The main purpose of this section is to show how challenges in the housing sector have existed over a long period of time and in different housing projects.

All the projects discussed above have similar a historic background because they all came as an initiative to alleviate the problems left by the past Apartheid system in the country. Another important issue to note is that all these housing projects are done in black people dominated areas. First let us look at the similarities between the study done in Braamfischerville, Gold Course Estate and that of Emaflethini. All these studies analyzed the effectiveness of housing projects based on beneficiaries’ perspectives. One common aspect of these studies is that they all found that people were not satisfied with the characteristics of the houses. In Braamfischerville more than 55% participants said these houses were not in livable conditions and in Gold Course people were generally unhappy with most of the characteristics. This is similar to the results found in Emaflethini, 56.7% of the participants were dissatisfied with the houses characteristics. Both in Braamfischerville and Golf Course Estate participants showed more dissatisfaction with the doors. This is common to the result found in Emaflethini, 72.2% of the participants were dissatisfied with doors. Most case studies showed that people were not happy with the quality of houses, except in Imizamo Yethu because the project was still in progress.

Moreover, looking at proximity to amenities, participants were not happy with the distance between them and social services. In Braamfischerville, people complained about being far from services and forcing them to spend money. In Imizamo Yethu case not much is said in the paper about amenities since the projects in the area were delayed until Niall Mellon came to help. Results of the study done in Golf Estate Course showed that people were not satisfied with the distance to social welfare services and schools, in the end the researcher recommended that government should build these communities their own facilities. These were in different to the
result found in Emaflethini, most people in this area were happy with the distance to between their houses and facilities. However they showed much dissatisfaction with distance to high schools and health institutions.

Another common aspect within these case studies is that of the quality of life that people are living. In Braamfischerville, 63.6% of the interviewees were unemployed. According to the study the area lacked infrastructure, people had health problems and they complained of overcrowded houses with no privacy. In the case of Imizamo Yethu not much was said about the demographics of the community, either than the fact that there were social inequalities in the area. Golf Course Estate results showed that 52% of the participants were unemployed, they said they were living in inhuman conditions and they also complained about overcrowded houses. Manomano (2013) recommended a change of housing standard to suit many family members. Similarly to these results, the case of Emaflethini also showed that 72.9% of the participants were unemployed. People also complained about privacy as these were open-plan designed houses and they were concerned over their safety because of weak roofs. All these results brought up the question of whether housing projects really bring positive change to people’s lives.

One last aspect to look into is that of community participation in their housing projects. Not all case studies discussed above analyzed this aspect, only the case of Imizamo Yethu and that of Golf Course Estate. Participation is very crucial for this particular study (in Emaflethini), because it is perceived as a form of empowerment which is the main focus of this paper. Even though the housing project in Imizamo Yethu area was a People Housing Process (PHP), not under RDP policy, it is still comparable to this study. The reason for this argument is that, it also emphasizes community involvement, similarly to RDP projects. Imizamo Yethu project showed that the community was involved, as mentioned earlier in the paper that 488 people contributed with labour. In the case of Golf Course Estate, 64% of the participants complained of less consultation about housing projects. This was similar to the result of Emaflethini; most participants felt they were excluded in decision making and the processes of the projects.
Conclusion
The purpose of this chapter was to give more understanding of housing projects by looking at previous studies and comparing them to that of Emaflethini. The chapter has covered a number of common aspects, from housing characteristics to proximity, to amenities and quality of life in these communities. Based on the results of previous studies and those of Emaflethini, it is safe to assert that housing projects in different provinces of the country are facing similar problems, most importantly poor housing quality, poor quality of life and lack community participation. Due to these reasons, the objective of empowering South African citizens with housing has not been met. Rather people, as highlighted by these studies, are still excluded in decision making and instead of bringing change they have bought more problems.
Chapter 5
Conclusion

5.1 Thesis Overview
RDP housing projects were initiated as a solution to housing shortages after the apartheid regime. Throughout the projects, the idea was to empower those who were previously oppressed. According to RDP framework these houses were going to restore people’s dignity by giving them decent shelters (African National Congress, 1994). Most importantly, as part of empowerment, these houses were going to create job and business opportunities, people were going to gain skills and also be involved in the decision making of the projects. However, based on previous studies this has not been the case, instead people are not satisfied with projects operations and house units they are awarded. Housing distribution in most cases has followed a top-down approach without communities being involved in the process of decision making, less employment opportunities and little skills have been gained. Due to these reasons the purpose of this study was to explore the empowerment context of RDP houses and find how this can be better implemented in these projects.

In chapter two, the study discussed constitutional provisions, the RDP framework and laws that shaped the context of housing in South Africa. Starting from the 1994 White Paper on Housing, to the 2004 Breaking New Ground policy, which both played a crucial role in subsidized housing distribution (Department of Human Settlements, 2004). It also looked into the definitions of empowerment concept and highlighted that it’s meaning changes with the context it is being applied on. This section emphasizes public participation as a process of community empowerment. However, this takes different forms, it can be as means and also as a process. In conclusion of chapter two the paper highlighted a positive shift in housing distribution in country, compared to the apartheid regime. Also, it emphasized that whichever empowerment forms is used, community ownership of the projects should be at the core of the process.

Chapter Three focused on Emaflethini community survey, where people gave their opinions on housing distribution. This was to measure their level of satisfaction with houses and characteristics. Mainly, this survey was to get their perspective on whether these houses have brought change to their lives and empowered them, through job opportunities, skills and
businesses. Even though many respondents believe that these projects have brought change to their lives, they are highly dissatisfied with the houses. Most dissatisfaction with houses is because of poor quality, which has worsened their living conditions. Since peoples’ satisfaction is influenced by the implementation process of empowerment, if people are not satisfied it difficult to argue for their empowerment. Furthermore, limited job opportunities, low availability of business deals or low levels of capacity building in these projects also highlights the ineffectiveness of these projects in meeting RDP framework objectives. In Chapter Four a comparative analysis of different RDP projects was done, here peoples’ complains were generally associated with poor quality houses, poor quality of life after being awarded an RDP house and the general exclusion of communities in decision making processes. All these highlight a common problem with government housing projects that need to be addressed.

Based on what was covered in these chapters this study believed these projects have failed to meet the two fundamental objectives, which are to provide decent shelter and empower communities. Even though more than 80% participants of Emaphethini community believed these houses brought change to their lives, this study still argues against that. This study believes that just shelter alone is not enough to argue that these projects have empowered communities. For two reasons, first a number of factors contribute to the quality of life in general these include good health, decent employment and better living conditions which in this case were not achieved. Second, the housing units in Emaphethini community failed to achieve neither of the RDP projects objectives so it cannot be said to have empowered people. However, it understand people’s response because their understanding of the empowerment concept differs from those who have deeply analyzed it, especially in the context of housing and also because there is no translation of the empowerment concept to isiZulu. Therefore based on what the results have highlighted, it is safe to assert that the projects have failed to empower people but rather have created communities that are still dependent on government subsidies and pension.

These are challenges left by the apartheid government and they are still reflected by the socio-economic status of people in Pietermaritzburg (South African History Online, 2018). However, looking at the South African housing policies and how they have evolved over time, this study believes it has transformed for better. Initially under apartheid very little attention was given to housing provision for black majority. There were no effective policies put in place to address the
housing backlog and most decisions in relation to housing were market based. Hence government mostly relied on donors and even the World Bank (WB) advised developing countries to increase their housing investment by 8% (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1994). As from 1994, the approach to housing demands changed when the white paper on housing was implemented, this showed a huge shift from previous governments system and it put housing as a priority. Housing became a crucial issue that government aimed to address, even though this was not a huge success because of financial challenges. Moreover, the implementation of the Breaking New Ground policy also proved to be a good approach to housing demands. It covered people who were excluded from previous housing subsidies and most importantly emphasized involvement of private sector to ensure financial assistant (Department of Human Settlements, 2004). Based on these, the study believes government housing policies are changing for better even though they are many flaws with regards to implementation and growing market influence.

5.2 Way Forward
The first objective of this study was to outline the concept of empowerment within the national housing policies, especially the RDP framework as reflected in White Paper on Housing. Secondly, it aimed to analyze if housing project implementation meet the objectives outlined in these policies, which included people-driven, meeting basic needs and democratization programme. Based on what has been discussed in the paper, these housing projects have not met the objectives of policies. In the following part ideas will be given on how crucial issues highlighted in the paper, with regards to empowerment, can be addressed. These issues will be divided into themes and addressed separately.

5.2.1 Theme 1 – Satisfaction with Houses
This theme is divided into two, people’s satisfaction with houses characteristics and their satisfaction with distance to amenities. Both these saw a lot of dissatisfaction, as it was discussed in the paper. A number of factors contribute to people’s dissatisfaction with houses characteristics. For the purpose of this study, focus is on political interest and further examination from the municipality as major causes of dissatisfaction. To begin with, housing distribution in many areas has been attached to political interest. Political parties usually
campaign for votes by promising people that they will build houses if they vote for them (Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, 2017). As a result when that party wins the election they focus on mass housing production, which ends up ignoring the quality aspects of the issue. Of course, some will argue that poor quality of houses is because of limited budget; this is true in some cases but the level of corruption in these projects highlight that funds are adequate but they are stolen or not used appropriate.

As a solution to this, housing distribution must not be used as a political tool but rather be perceived as means to effectively change people’s living conditions. In that way councilors and subcontractors in charge of projects will focus on building sustainable and quality houses. Even though this might slow production, it will ensure that they do not have to go back and fix housing faults and gradually all people in need will be awarded with satisfying houses. Moreover, people’s dissatisfaction with houses is not an immediate problem that happens at implementation stage. Rather, it is a problem that results from the lack of accountability and further examination from the municipality that approves these projects. Municipalities should have follow up programs on housing projects; this will allow them to ensure that houses are of quality and good standards. There are many professionals working in municipalities they can be assigned to evaluate and supervise projects, in that way subcontractors will be held accountable for what they do. Accountability is important; it is one of the empowerment tools that can help ensure peoples satisfaction.

Lastly, people’s dissatisfaction with distance from their house to amenities is a clear presentation that there is a shortage of facilities. This problem is a result of a number of issues, these include the availability of land and the fact that usually houses are built in areas of political representation. However, based on the survey and interviews with municipality officials it became apparent that another important factor contributing to people’s dissatisfaction is lack of collaboration between different departments for housing projects. Collaboration of different departments at planning stage will ensure that land is allocated for all necessary facilities like health, education and social recreation. However, one challenge that might come with this is choosing which one to prioritize given limited land, facilities or mass housing production. Also on the other hand, if these facilities are not accommodated for, they run a risk of creating
unsustainable communities with poor living conditions, lack of social cohesion and most likely to become ghettos.

5.2.2 Theme 2 – Empowerment in Housing Projects

Chapter two of this paper gave definitions of empowerment and highlighted that they can change depending on the context that it is being applied on. In the context of RDP houses in South Africa empowerment comes in a form of skills development, creating of job and business opportunities and the political process of project implementation (Department of Human Settlements, 1994). Based on the case of Emaflethini these projects have not been fully effective in ensuring that these objectives are met. In the following section possible solutions will be given on how these can be solved.

a. Skills Development

In addressing, this we can employ two empowerment tools, evidence-based strategies and organizational learning (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005). First, for skills to be developed in communities it is essential to know what skills people already have, especially those related to building houses. This will assist companies in charge of the projects to know which skills are lacking and hence which ones need to be developed. Based on this reason, research needs to be done on communities before project implementation. This will assist companies in establishing training frameworks that meet skill shortages of that specific community.

Secondly, organizational learning structure must be one of the requirements for company selection. If companies are framed in such a way that allow people to learn new knowledge, value continuous improvement and emphasize systematic thinking for long term solutions, people in communities will develop and gain skills. This is in line with the evidence-based strategies tool because in order to know which companies possess effective organizational learning there needs to be understanding of their structure and operations. This can be done by the National Home Builder Registration Council (NHBRC) which is in charge of registering companies that want to bid for house construction projects in the country (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1998). During the process of registration, companies can also be reviewed if their structures facilitate skills development.
Lastly, when formal training frameworks are established based on evidence and there is organizational learning in companies, projects will effectively develop people’s skills. Thereafter gaining those skills and experience, people must be awarded with certificates. These will allow them to apply for jobs in future. Most importantly these activities emphasize that empowerment is an ongoing process so even after projects, with certificates people be able to get jobs and sustain their lives, especially if they have passion for building houses.

b. Job and Business Opportunities

According to the RDP framework, programmes implemented in communities should generate job and business opportunities. This however, as discussed in the paper and highlighted by the Emafelthini community case study, has not been fully achieved. First, looking at job opportunities, people complained of sub-contractors sometimes coming with their own workers and not employing community members. Also, they highlighted that usually its committee members and those close to councilors that get employed in these projects. Secondly, in terms of business opportunities, it is argued that sub-contractors normally come with their own material suppliers so local businesses are not consulted and do not benefit. Both these challenges are a clear result of not including community in planning process.

In dealing with these issues we can employ two empowerment principles, the democratic participation and the community knowledge principles. Implementing the democratic participation principle will ensure and emphasize transparency in the hiring process. Most importantly it will ensure that due process is followed. In that way people will be informed of available job opportunities and how they can apply for them before projects begin. Also, councilors must make sure that community members are priority to sub-contractors by not allowing them to bring their own workers. However, it must be noted that job opportunities created by these housing projects are equal to the amount of work that needs to be done so not everyone in a community can benefit. As much as job opportunities are crucial, these projects are not sustainable tools that can be used effectively to create job opportunities.

Moreover, in addressing the issue of lacking business opportunities, we can employ the community knowledge principle. This principle emphasize that people are experts in their community needs. Therefore, it embraces community skills and businesses. In order to know community skills and business research needs to be done in these respective communities. Based
on data collected, community leaders and sub-contractors can be able to know which local businesses can be involved as suppliers or for any other assistance and consult with them. Also, local businesses must take initiative to come together and formulate strategies on how they contribute in housing projects in their communities. However, two challenges that can possibly come with using local business as suppliers may be shortage of material for large amount of house units and also the fact that these are low-cost projects, so profit margins might not be too much. These problems can delay projects and possibly destroy business for local entrepreneurs.

c. Political Process of Housing Distribution

Public participation in projects is a crucial factor of empowerment. Results of the survey conducted in Emaflethini community showed that 90.6% of respondents believed that there was no meaningful participation in these projects. They were not involved in planning, decision making and implementation but rather they were told about what was going to be done. This highlight that in this case public participation was used as means not as process (Oakley & Marsden, 1984), as discussed in chapter 2. Based on this it is safe to assert that the process followed in distributing houses in Emaflethini area did not effectively empower the community people. In the following part we will look at two empowerment principles that can be used in promoting public participation.

In addressing the issue of public participation we must start by changing the relationship between councilors or leaders and communities. It is apparent that the relationship between these two follows a paternalistic model, where decisions are taken at the top level by councilors and imposed on communities. We must create new relationships that will give equal value to communities and their leaders, in that way everything will be done as a collective. This was also done in Knowsley community (Knowsley Council, 2010). When new relationships are forged then we can employ empowerment principles.

The first principle we can use as a solution is community ownership. This principle can be implemented in all structures and plans of the project. Community ownership principle ensures that community involvement is valued at all levels of the project. It gives the community control over the project by allowing people to decide the design, direction and implementation process (Fetterman & Wandersman, 2005). This is very crucial because, while it reinforces public participation, it also gives sense of responsibility to people and holds them accountable.
Community ownership also values democratic participation as it allows people to vote with all stakeholders in decisions related to projects.

Secondly, this study believes lack of public participation is because leaders tend to forget that these projects are also social interventions aimed at fixing previous injustices. As much as these projects may be business oriented, the social factor attached to them must be kept at the center of all processes so that people are involved. To fix this we can use the social justice empowerment principle. This principle emphasizes justice, equity, transparency and fairness in solving previous injustices (Fetterman and Wandersman, 2005). Using social justice principle will act as a reminder that these projects are for the people. It also promotes self-evaluation in projects to see whether they are contributing to social good. With respect to social factor attached to these housing projects, leaders will be compelled to put public participation at the core of the processes.

In closing, one point I want to emphasize is that in community empowerment projects public participation must be at the core of the processes. If these housing projects are really aimed at changing people’s lives, then it is time for leaders to change how they perceive their communities. It is time for communities to have control of projects in their areas. When communities are empowered they are more likely to be satisfied with projects. Most importantly, this develops a culture of self-help in communities and allows them to take initiative in solving their own problems in future.
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