



Alignment in strategies for housing development in South Africa.

Implementing partners: VNG International, the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

Reasons, goals and methods. Social housing to fight back log.

The housing back log in South Africa is very high and ever increasing. Although home ownership is very common and desired by those who do not own a house, there is a need, especially in urban areas, for rental houses that are affordable. Therefore the local governments made use of the capacity development programme LOGO South. In South Africa the main theme of the LOGO South programme was social or rental housing.

A very practical toolkit on Social Housing Policy was developed by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) with the assistance of VNG International. The toolkit for social housing played an important role in addressing the issue and to guide local governments in policy making. Over 50 experts from the Netherlands contributed to the capacity development of their colleagues in South Africa.

Cooperation & alignment: local, national and international.

The decision to take up social or rental housing as the topic of the LOGO South programme in South Africa was made in a participative manner by all involved local governments. Because the concept of rental or social housing was new in South Africa, the local South African governments cooperated with local governments from the Netherlands.

The eight participating local South African governments developed projects dealing with social housing development that all were in line with the national strategy of South Africa in trying to overcome the huge housing back log. Furthermore, the project was a combined effort with a VROM (the Dutch ministry for housing, spatial planning and environment) programme. Activities and experiences were shared to increase the projects' impact.

Project Outcomes and Lessons Learned

In South Africa renting was not common and the experiences with rental housing were mostly negative. The willingness to pay rent was low. Therefore not all activities within the project have been comparably successful and some even failed, mainly due to external factors including high staff turnover and the lack of political support for social housing development. The high staff turnover has especially decreased the effect of capacity development efforts.

Yet other project activities were successful. Joint analysis of the local housing situation were made, clear strategies were discussed, and every step in the implementation have been taken together with the participating Dutch local governments. This resulted into the development of structured plans regarding social housing, the setting up of housing institutions, the conversion and upgrading of hostel dwellings into family units and the building of many new houses. There have even been processes of cross subsidizing, through which the high income groups pay indirectly for the low rent of the low income group. In addition local staff has learned how to draft spatial plans independently. South African municipalities have also benefited from sharing experiences amongst themselves and they have copied successful activities or plans.

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