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Relocation of Backyard Tenants, Walvis Bay

Namibia

Award Winning

New for 2002

Categories:

Social Services:

- education
- health and welfare
- public safety

Environmental Management:

- environmental health
- monitoring and control
- pollution reduction

Infrastructure, Communications, Transportation:

- safe water provision
- sanitation

Level of Activity: Village

Ecosystem: Coastal

Summary

Overcrowding in the traditional black suburb of Kuisebmond (a legacy of apartheid) in Walvis Bay resulted in mounting pressure on urban and social infrastructures. The problems associated with this phenomenon reached an acute stage between the mid-90s and 2001. Some of the major problems included an overflowing sewer system, rapid spread of diseases such as Tuberculosis, and fire hazards. Of particular concern was the mushrooming of informal housing structures (shacks) made of non-traditional building materials in backyards.

The congestion brought about by overcrowding meant that sewerage network in those areas exceeded its carrying capacity. The result was blockages and overflowing of sewerage water, which in turn would flood streets and houses. By 1998/1999 the situation reached a state of unacceptability and something drastic had to be done.

The relocation of backyard tenants to a resettlement area that would offer people all the basic municipal amenities such as clean water, electricity, and sanitary services seemed to be a logical step. Together with the affected communities the new area, Tataleni Village, was planned over a period of two years. The suburb comprises nearly 1,200 plots of 300 square meters each. A plot is subdivided into four wet core units (cement slab, ablution facility and sink). Families have the freedom to complete their dwellings using prescribed building materials.

Narrative

Situation Before The Initiative Began

Walvis Bay is one of the leading industrial centers in Namibia. Due to its well-developed fishing industry the town has through the years, and particularly the last eight years, attracted a number of job seekers from all over the country.

Kuisebmond, the historical residential suburb for blacks in Walvis Bay, now serves as reception center for new entrants looking for jobs. This development plus the natural population growth has resulted in an acute housing shortage in Kuisebmond, resulting to the phenomenon of "backyard tenants". Informal structures mushroomed in recent. The result is a multitude of problems ranging from overcrowding and fire hazards to overflowing sewers - which has led to the occurrence of flooding of houses and streets

Towards the end of 1997, the following problems were highlighted:

1. Of the total number of 2, 126 dwellings in the suburb of Kuisebmond, half of them accommodated shacks.
2. The number of shacks at that time stood at 3, 278, housing 8, 253 people. As many as 13 shacks and 43 squatters were found on one single plot.
3. An average of 359 people shared a single toilet, creating very unhygienic conditions

Establishment of Priorities/Objectives & Strategies

In the month of March, 2000, the Management Committee of the Municipal Council resolved that a plan of action be devised for the implementation of the relocation of "shack dwellers" to a designated informal settlement area complete with policies, financial directives, rules, regulations and administrative procedures.

Various meetings were held between Municipal Councilors and Municipal officials to address the sewerage problems in Kuisebmond culminating in the decision to establish an informal settlement area where residents would be allowed to erect informal structures built of prescribed, non-conventional building materials.

Process/Mobilisation of Resources

The Municipal Council approved, subject to certain conditions, the implementation of "The Programme" in 2000. The purpose of "The Programme" was to solve the problems experienced with the illegal "shacks". A Structure Plan and an Action Plan that involved various activities were approved. One such activity was the establishment of a Tataleni Relocation Steering Committee, consisting of community members; especially those directly affected by the problem, and officials and councilors of the local authority.

The plans and recommendations of the Tataleni Relocation Steering Committee required, among many other actions, ministerial approval for a maximum of four units per erf (plot) and the identification of new sites for future extensions. Block Erf 3007 in Kuisebmond was then subdivided into 289 residential erven (plots) with an average erf size of 300 sq. m. No relevant legislation existed that would allow the Municipal Council to establish a "resettlement" area that is excluded from the provisions of the Town Planning Scheme. As a result, to permit the development proposals as a "special" development area, the Town Planning Scheme had to be amended to allow for four units per plot. No other similar zonings had been permitted in Walvis Bay, or elsewhere in Namibia. In the rezoning process the proposals were advertised in the local newspapers for public comment and public meetings were held to explain the proposals.

The Tataleni Steering Committee also had the role of monitoring and co-ordination of the

implementation and future management of the Tataleni Project. Two other committees were also established within the Steering Committee - the Technical Sub-committee and the Administrative Sub-committee - which were to be overseen by the following officials of the municipality: General Manager of Roads and Building Control and the Manager of Housing and Properties, respectively.

Results Achieved

The creation of Tataleni Village has greatly contributed towards solving some of the problems related to backyard squatting. The affected community and the Council are therefore pleased with the results achieved thus far. More than 800 families have been relocated successfully and now enjoy amenities that a little more than a year ago seemed unattainable. In addition to the provision of potable water, electricity and refuse bins, other amenities for each unit include a shower and basin, indoor toilet and an open cement floor that can be enclosed with non-conventional building material or cement bricks. The units are situated in such a way that they are at least five meters away from those on the adjoining erf, in order to allow movement during emergency situations such as fires.

The unbearably unhygienic conditions that once prevailed in some parts of Kuisebmond as a result of an overflowing sewerage system, has now been extensively solved by the establishment of Tataleni Village. In the words of Walvis Bay's Mayor, Mrs. Theresia Samaria:

"Tataleni has been hailed as a breakthrough by Namibian society in general. Undoubtedly the acceptance of this project has been a highlight due to the support this municipality received from the private sector. Many employers in town have provided housing or materials to their workers to build houses in Tataleni. Businesses, residents and Council, driven by principles of social equality and economic growth, must work together to achieve this. Many of the challenges we have to confront can only be solved at a local level. This Council is committed to working together with our residents and business community, along with other levels of government, to make Walvis Bay a shining light in Africa."

Tataleni Village as a reception area is to remain a municipal property because it is believed that there will always be people who will not be in a position to own houses or who simply prefer to rent rather than own a house. The building materials will remain the property of the beneficiaries, which they can sell or remove when vacating the units. The beneficiaries can stay as long as Tataleni is there, although the idea is to encourage people to own houses.

Because the Council is responsible for the wellbeing of all Walvis Bay residents, and because the Tataleni Project is not a moneymaking business, Tataleni was found to be the best solution for the escalating problems created by the large number of informal dwellers.

Tataleni residents who have already moved to the area have no regrets because their living conditions have improved, insofar as they have their own accommodation that offers all the basic facilities.

The Tataleni Project has its share of problems as some of the tenants are in arrears with monthly rent and some of the tenants are running businesses or selling. Such activities are prohibited by the terms in the Lease Agreement entered into between the Council and the individuals. Presently the council is looking for ways and means of solving such problems in an amicable way.

Of the 1,010 structures erected on the 1,094 units allocated, 237 are brick structures.

Sustainability

The project, which will be treated as an ongoing project, will be sustained through the joint efforts of the resettled communities, the local authority and the private sector. The recovering of funds by the Council is based on the income levels of tenants, the size of the families, current interest rates, and inflation rate among other factors. In the case of Tataleni, the recoupment period will be 20 years, at a fixed interest rate of five percent instead of a market rate of above 14 percent. A fixed monthly rental

charge of less than US\$ 10 is applicable to each family.

Lessons Learned

One of the primary lessons is certainly the fact that progress, of whatever nature, goes hand in hand with consultation and transparency. From the word go, it was decided that the affected community would have to be involved. Although the initial request for a "squatter area" came from these communities, the concept had to be refined in order to fit the standards that the local authority would prescribe. For example, initially the informal dwellers were quite prepared to settle for an area where virtually no municipal services would be provided, as long as they would be 'free to be in charge of their own piece of land'. This mindset began to change as municipal departments conducted various educational campaigns on health related matters, as well explaining the general benefits associated with an area such as Tataleni.

Transferability

There have been several enquiries from other local authorities in the country and the region about transferring the concept to suit the conditions experienced elsewhere. There is no doubt that the project can also be successfully implemented elsewhere. The Municipality of Walvis Bay is prepared to assist any local authority in Namibia, or anywhere else, with the planning and implementation of a resettlement area such as Tataleni Village.

Key Dates

1994 - Walvis Bay becomes part of Namibia again after decades of South African administration. The first democratic local government elections are held.

1995 until present - Rapid growth and development of Walvis Bay as the key industrial town in Namibia.

1998/1999 - severe sewerage and other social problems experienced in parts of Kuisebmond suburb.

2000/2001 - relocation of backyard tenants to Tataleni Village.

2002 - Continuous monitoring of living conditions at Tataleni Village.

References

1. <http://dubai-award.dm.gov.ae/awardsbp98.cgi?cmd=1&key=Eppyfgjbkdfdag>
2. <http://www.bestpractices.org/cgi-bin/>
3. Walvis Bay Housing Demand and Affordability Study (Vol. 1)
4. Structure Plan: Sewerage and Informal Housing Problem in Kuisebmond.

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Type of Organization: Local Authority

Nominating Organization

same as above

Partners

fishing and salt industries

Community-based organisations

Type of Organization: Community-based organisation (CBO)

Financial Profile

| YEAR | US\$ | PHASE |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 2000/2001 | 100 000 | (Pre-construction phase) |
| 2001/2002 | 988 000 | (Construction phase) |
| To be approved for 2002/2003 | 500 000 | (Second phase) |
| TOTAL | US\$ 1 588 000 | |

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