



Leadership Framework for Sustainable Housing Production in South Africa

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Abstract

A primary objective of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-9) is providing quality, affordable, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, for every part of the global community by 2030. This is also a fundamental principle in the New Urban Agenda by the UN-Habitat. Studies have shown lack of adequate and affordable housing in many African cities, evident in slums such as Kyelitsha in Cape Town, Makoko in Lagos, and Kibera in Nairobi which house millions of urban dwellers. In South Africa, Section 26 of the constitution establishes the citizens' right to have access to adequate housing as incontrovertible. In order to achieve this, the South African government put in place several policies to ensure the attainment of the right. However, scholars acknowledge the poor rate of housing delivery by the government and view it as a symptom of an inadequate response to urban populism and a lack of leadership in the housing sector. This paper examines how leadership failures have impeded housing policy and practice implementation in South Africa. The study employs a systematic literature review and case studies in showing how lack of leadership affects the attainment of adequate housing provision. The paper proposes a leadership framework for sustainable housing provision and good governance in the housing sector.

Keywords: Housing production; Leadership failure; Project leadership; SDGs; Sustainable housing

1. Introduction

This paper examines how the failure in leadership impedes housing policy and practice

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information in South Africa. The leadership framework developed for sustainable housing provision and good governance is to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal-11 on sustainable cities and communities and make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Despite the myriad of housing and planning policies, and efforts of the government aimed at addressing the challenges of housing shortages, sustainable housing delivery is still a mirage in South Africa (Musvoto and Mooya, 2018; Fuller, 2014).

Leadership framework is the essential structure underpinning subsidized housing provision, that sets practical and consistent standards for administrative systems, right decisions and governance, towards achieving sustainable housing delivery (Fujihira, 2019; Olanrewaju and Okorie, 2019; UN-Habitat, 2017; Antonakis and Day, 2017; Kertesz *et al.*, 2014; Phago, 2010; Nadkarni and Herrmann, 2010; Ballantyne, 2012). It involves various factors such as developing a vision for the organization; aligning people with the vision through communication; and motivating people to action through empowerment and fulfilment of their essential needs (Antonakis and Day, 2017; Kertesz *et al.*, 2014; Bass and Bass, 2009; Kruse, 2013; Goleman, 2000).

Housing plays a crucial role in physical and economic development, natural disaster mitigation, employment generation and wealth creation of nations – all of which speak to sustainable development (Golubchikov and Badyina, 2012). In South Africa, the government is the primary stakeholder to provide housing, but the record shows that it remains far off the mark in meeting this mandate (Fuller Report, 2014). Despite the efforts of the South African Government to provide adequate housing since 1994 after independence, the housing sector is still beset with challenges that make the attainment of sustainable housing provision unachievable (Ajayi, 2012). While there have been efforts by the government to provide subsidized public housing based on the Reconstruction and Development Programme “RDP” of 1994, there are significant problems regarding the housing design and quality because the houses are generally not up to standard (Phago, 2010). Notwithstanding the rapidly growing body of research on housing, much is still unknown about the causes of its inadequacy, unaffordability and effects especially in the African and sub-Saharan Africa context (UN-Habitat, 2017; World Bank, 2015; Fuller Report, 2014; Ajayi, 2012).

Although the reasons behind this housing shortages are many, and studies have considered different factors for sustainable housing provision including requirements and delivery, affordability gap, community participation, policies and innovative technologies in housing delivery (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe, 2006; Crosby and Bryson, 2005), little is known of the role of leadership in the housing sector and in sustainable housing delivery (Trickett and Lee, 2010; Ward *et al.*, 2010; Judd, 2000).

The reports of the UN-Habitat (2017), World Bank (2015), Ajayi (2012) and Phago (2010) all suggest that leadership influence the success of the housing provision endeavour. This is through the actions of leaders to foster impetus, demonstrate commitment and support alignment and integration. These reports claim that there are very few individuals with expertise both in the leadership of complex organisations and in the complexities of the housing sector. Ward *et al.* (2010) voiced similar concerns and wondered as to whether the social housing sector has the leadership capacity to respond to the challenges and fast-paced changes of the sector, submitting that the complexity, scale and pace of change in social housing makes the leadership activity of

setting direction and aligning activities and people particularly crucial. Also, Ward et al., (2010) argued that the social housing sector is facing a significant leadership development challenge while research on leadership in social housing is limited. Therefore, this paper examines how gaps in leadership impede housing delivery, having a policy and practice implementation in South Africa, towards developing a leadership framework for sustainable housing delivery in South Africa.

2. Overview of Sustainable housing in South Africa

The concept of sustainable housing depicts economically viable, socially acceptable, technically feasible and environmentally compatible housing (Fujihira, 2019; Choguill, 2007). The idea further suggests protection of the environment and sensible use of natural resources, economic growth and social progress as well as practices integrated into more extensive settlement systems. That is, housing is sustainable if everyone has the opportunity of access to a home that is decent, promotes social cohesion, well-being and self-dependence. Sustainable housing ensures a better quality of life, not only for the present but also for future generations (Edward & Turrent, 2002).

The UN Habitat (2013) suggest that adequate shelter means more than a roof over one's head. It has been argued that adequate shelter also means socially enhancing and environmentally friendly housing with adequate privacy, adequate space, physical accessibility, adequate security, security of tenure, structural stability and durability, adequate necessary infrastructure, such as water supply, sanitation and health-related factors; and adequate and accessible location with regard to work facilities as well as adequate lighting, heating and ventilation: all of which should be available at an affordable cost.

In South Africa, sustainable housing remains a contentious political issue. As Osman (2017) notes,

strict social engineering during apartheid meant that black people were disadvantaged. Cities were racially divided, and the black population forced to live far from places of economic activity and without public amenities. However, the new government tried to address these issues through various strategies, initially focusing on building houses, then attempting to shift the focus from "housing" to "human settlements." A new plan was announced in 2004, designed to address problems arising from the policies of the first ten years of democracy but problems have persisted.

Due to the persistent problems of housing inadequacy, there have been protests across the country of South Africa (Davies, 2019; RSA, 2017 and Osman, 2017). Protesters usually contend that they have been on housing waiting lists for many years thus, spotlighting the problem and the role of the government. There are claims that the government's ability to deliver has declined (Osman, 2017). According to Annual Performance Plan (2018/2019), there has been a steady decline in subsidized housing opportunities delivered by the Government between 2007 and 2017, despite the increases of finances.

The Human Settlement Yearbook (2015/2016: 261) indicates that the Department of Human Settlements has delivered 4.3 million houses and housing opportunities since the dawn of democracy. These opportunities include over 2.8 million fully subsidized houses, 121,784 social/rental housing, 6329 Financial Linked Individual Subsidy Programme and 986,608

serviced sites. Whereas the historical milestone has provided a roof over the head of more than 20 million people, the backlog of housing is still estimated to be more than two million housing units, a figure which is rising annually (The Fuller Report, 2014). The same report revealed that while the NDHS targeted to produce 300,000 social houses per annum, it has failed to reach the target due to many challenges and complexities.

3. Methodology

A systematic literature review is used for this research. Relevant literature on housing, housing production, project leadership and sustainable housing were examined based on the objective of this study. This search process covered from 1994 to 2019. It comprises a vast amount of literature from journal articles, conference proceedings, online articles and other related texts these keywords from the ScienceDirect, Web of Science, Scopus and the Google scholar database. Although the research articles in the domains of sustainable housing and leadership is quite broad, generating an initial output of 674,000 articles, the objective of this study – identifying how lack of leadership affects the attainment of adequate housing provision – was used to narrow down the dataset to the appropriate fields of the research in the South African context to an outcome of 117.

Using insight obtained from these literature on housing projects, an instrument was developed to pose questions to twelve (12) different project managers in the city of Cape Town, based on their housing projects to help understand the challenges they encounter during housing delivery with a view to obtaining possible solution to overcome these challenges. The thematic analysis adopted during the coding process revealed some significant themes that highlighted the challenges that the project leaders face during project delivery.

3.1 Challenges Faced by Project Leaders in Housing Delivery

Housing delivery in South Africa has been declining since 2007, while the demand is continuously growing, with Cape Town is no different from the proliferation of informal settlements that are adding to the housing demand. The challenges faced by project leaders in the housing sector can be classified as organisational, social-economic and multi-stakeholder in nature. Each of these challenges is expanded upon in the section following.

3.3.1 Organisational Challenges

The UN-Habitat (2017) observed that most of the agencies, departments and directorates embarking on housing delivery in the sub-Saharan African context face peculiar leadership-related challenges. Notable among these challenges are limited knowledge and lack of capacity due to inability to develop workable policies or inadequate policies, procedures, systems and rules; setting inappropriate standards and lack of capacity particularly in the municipalities, occasioned by a crisis of human capital development, skills shortage across all areas of the housing delivery business.

The public sector in South Africa is split into national, provincial and local spheres. It is the responsibility of provincial and local organizations to provide service delivery. As shown in the Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, both province departments and municipality have functional organizational structure dedicated to a specific function, and specialists are grouped in accordance to their profession. The status quo in the provision of subsidized housing is that municipal-level project

managers are entrusted with the responsibility in the public sector environment through various programmes. These project managers are responsible for rolling out infrastructure and housing developments to the communities in need.

The result of these structures is that the project leader does not staff a project, as this is a functional line responsibility. Hence, the project leader is required to request resources from a line manager that has the authority. The project leaders submitted that this status quo in the provision of subsidized housing is not only demanding but also very challenging as housing delivery needs to be quick and efficient with minimal bureaucracy and delay such as the existing organisational structure provides.

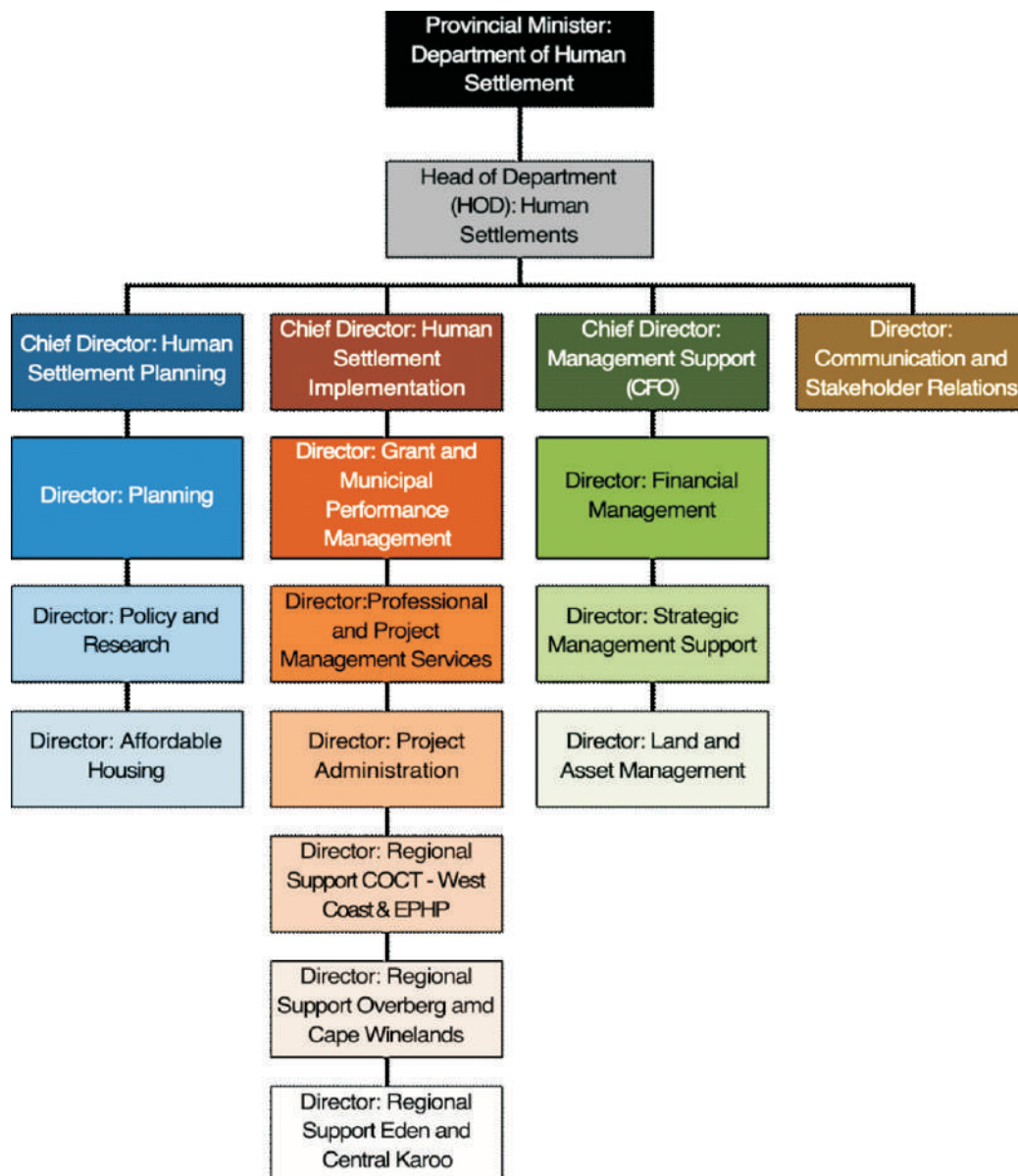


Figure 1: Department of Human Settlements: Provincial Organogram

Source: WCDHS, Annual Performance Plans 2018/19

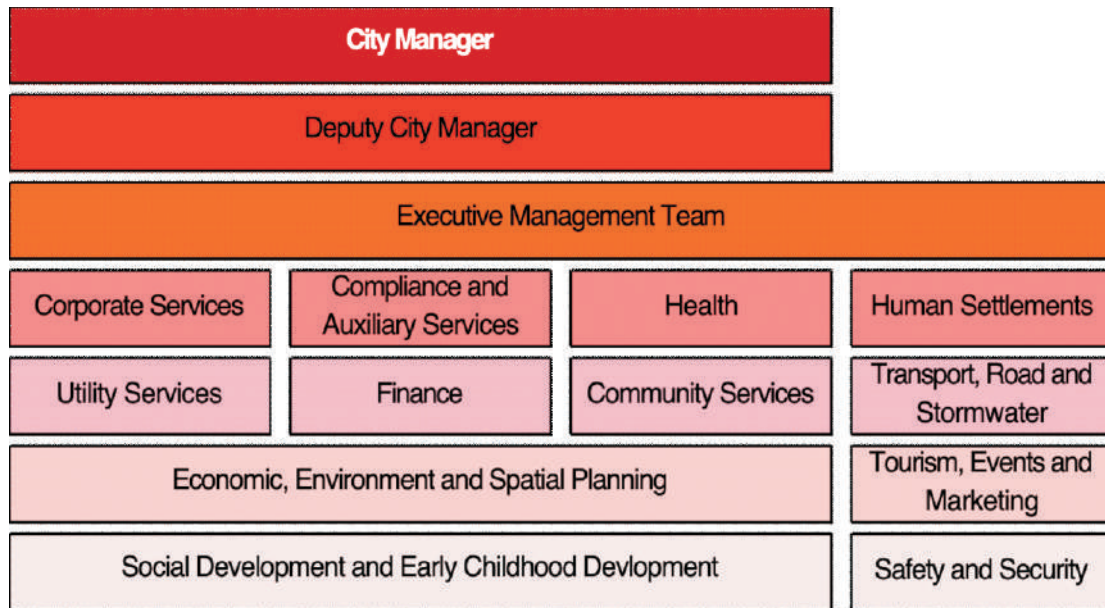


Figure 2: City of Cape Town Organogram

Source: City of Cape Town (2019) Integrated Development Plan 2012-2017 (IDP)

3.1.2 Multi-Stakeholder Management

Due to broad interest groups involved in housing project delivery, project leaders are responsible to align and manage diverse interests towards, the project objective. The management of a project is mainly about definable goals, measurable outcomes and to ensure that the project output are realised by utilising the project team and managing the inter-relationship between all stakeholders and role-players (Der Waldt, 2001). The housing delivery process has multiple stakeholders within the project life cycle with individuals or groups who are implicated by the outcomes of the project. Most of the project delivery activity takes place at local government level, and the Human Settlement department has an appointed Project leader to manage the delivery process. Due to this multi-stakeholder nature of the housing project environment, the project leaders face several challenges and bottlenecks both within the community, Government agencies and other professionals for which they are often not prepared.

As Hao and Yazdanifard (2015) note, an understanding of “people” is important as project leaders are responsible to take communities, organisations, societies, etc. through change and eliminate the comfortability that change brings. The most remarkable thing about multiple stakeholders in human settlement project is that they all have an invested interest due to public funds being utilized (Verma and Wideman, 1994). Therefore, they manage all stakeholders that are related to each project, to ensure that the intended outcomes can be achieved within the anticipated timeframe. Kerzner (2017) notes that to manage these stakeholders is challenging, regardless if they have a stake in the project or not. However, it is the project leaders' responsibility to integrate the efforts of all project stakeholders to achieve the project goal. For instance, lack of communication, inadequate communication and breakdown in communication channels between project leaders and stakeholders especially the communities are key issues noted by UN Habitat (2017) as mostly responsible for delay in housing delivery in sub-Saharan Africa.

3.1.3 Social-Economic Challenges

The journey of housing delivery is further stretched by the individual's need, not for house or place to exist alone, but to be part of the socio-economic environment. Acknowledging that sustainable human settlements must include socio-cultural amenities and jobs, Osman (2017) notes the South African Government's approach to housing delivery has given rise to rows upon rows of "one-size-fits-all" houses located at the periphery of cities, far from work opportunities and services, reinforcing apartheid's spatial patterns. Project leaders acknowledged that the social, as well as the economic aspects of housing places, further burdens on them to achieve the housing delivery objective. The Fuller (2014) reports that although South Africa has a policy and legislative regime that covers the norms, standards and regulations related to servicing the housing market, the consumers are frustrated and angry with the delivery and provision of housing.

While the government is aware of this challenge and have announced a programme to deliver corridor developments and mega projects, this bring new layers of complexity which may prove difficult to manage (Osman, 2017). The management process of organisations is engaged to reduce uncertainty and stabilize the organization. In contrast, the leadership process creates uncertainty and change in the organization since it involves various factors such as developing a vision for the organization; aligning people with the vision through communication; and motivating people to action through empowerment and basic need fulfillment (Antonakis and Day, 2017; Bass and Bass, 2009; Kruse, 2013; Goleman, 2000).

Housing project itself should create job opportunities for individuals in the communities. However, due to pressures on the government to deliver, and lack of leadership in this sector to drive the required change, this process is highly influenced by politics. Projects in the public sector are identified or emanate from political decision making in the context in which public sector operates (Der Waldt, 2001). Communities rely on political leaders to address their immediate service delivery needs, and the leaders convey the demands to the public sector forums resulting into the needs being addressed in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).

A study by Marrian, Smith and Webb (2010) revealed that with regards to locational aspects in the city of Cape Town, majority of the respondents in the Pelican Park community (89.29%) and (53.33%) in Eerste Rivier have never had the opportunity to voice their ideas to a government institution or an NGO previously regarding their housing needs before it was delivered. Whereas 10.71% Pelican Park community and 46.67% have never had an opportunity to voice their opinions. In Kleinmond, the majority (58.11%) had a chance to express their ideas to a government institution or an NGO in some form in the past, and only 41.89% of the respondents have never had the opportunity to voice their concerns as communication remains key to satisfying end-user requirements and subsequently, quality and sustainable housing provision.

4. Leadership Framework for Sustainable Housing Production in South Africa

Using the understanding of contextual factors and challenges faced by project leaders in the housing delivery process, the leadership roles and actions required as evidenced in the literature were used to develop the proposed leadership framework for sustainable housing in the Cape Town metro.

In the Fig. 3, the hindering factors to sustainable housing delivery is linked to leadership failure

whilst the required leadership roles for sustainable housing delivery is noted as helpful factors. The awareness of the hindering factors which represented the challenges faced by project leaders interviewed and noted by different scholars and the helpful factors, based on same, will bring about sustainable housing delivery. The following section further expatiates on the helpful factors and the implications. The role of the government is to match the housing development process with the Project Management process.

As Gido and Clements (2012: 324) observed, the project manager provides leadership to the project team to accomplish the project objective. Project leadership is therefore a skill that is critical for the project manager to inspire the team. A main difficulty is in the complexity of the project environment and decision making for organisational and project leaders in the social housing sector; whether housing experts, are appointed and developed into senior management roles or go with experienced senior managers from other sectors, recognising that it may take time to get to grips with the social housing scene (Kertesz *et al.*, 2014). In order to accomplish a project objective, the project leaders are to create a balance between the proactive planning, communicating and provide leadership to the team constraint factors. Gido and Clements (2012:324) point that the project leader provides leadership to the project team to accomplish the project objective. Similarly, Pulmanis (2013) notes that “Government and organizations usually embark on different projects with the aim of creating new service or improving the functional efficiency of the existing ones. Project leaders are thus relied upon to co-ordinate and synchronize the various factors whilst managing various multi-stakeholders to achieve service delivery.

The project manager appointed by the municipality (city of Cape Town) is responsible for managing the housing project delivery process. This is done through managing the project team and coordinating the efforts of other professionals, construction company, subcontractors and suppliers. However, this does not include community management. In the public sector arena, this project leader is faced with various challenges including the management of the project team, community, politicians and senior public sector officials, which often creates conflict and negatively affect the project performance in terms of the cost, quality and time.

The role and responsibility of project leaders in the human settlement environment need to be embedded in the management of housing public sector delivery to ascertain their unique skill of leadership. Human Settlement Project leaders are unique in nature as they deal with projects within a holistic context and thus educational institution to identify these gaps and address them accordingly with an educational framework. Furthermore, the dynamics that exist within the public sector project implementation process, guided by organisation policies need to be additionally investigated in order to understand how they relate to agile HSE.

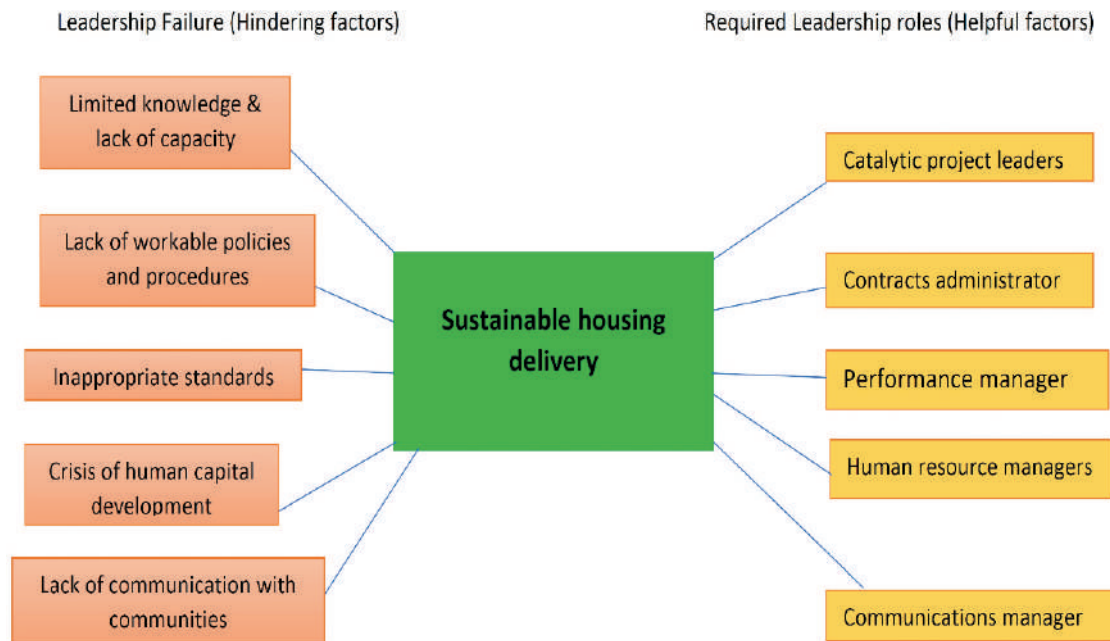


Figure 3: Proposed Leadership framework for Sustainable Housing Production

Source: Developed from (Authors' Fieldwork; Toomer, et al., 2018; UN-Habitat, 2017 and Kertesz et al., 2014)

The limited knowledge and lack of capacity of majority of the project managers undertaking housing delivery projects can be tackled by developing catalytic skills in the project leaders (Toomer, *et al.*, 2018). As noted earlier, the complexity and dynamism of the housing development environment often makes the leadership role and activity required to be more challenging. Within this perspective, the project leaders in this environment require certain skills and behaviours that is helpful to elevate team performance as submitted by Toomer *et al.*, (2018). There are four main cornerstones to such catalytic skills which include *creating cohesion*, *generating momentum*, *building credibility* and *amplifying impact*. The project leader in the housing environment requires a high level of emotional intelligence in order to connect emotionally with the different stakeholders and develop camaraderie. Further, communicating clearly and acting with integrity will inspire trust in other project team members. In order to amplify impact, the project manager must pursue excellence, mentor other team members and proffer imaginative solutions to problems as the need arises.

Lack of workable policies and procedures and inappropriate standards in the public housing sector requires contracts administrators and performance managers to prepare and negotiate contracts that involve various agreements to make sure all parties' needs are met and subsequently monitor and evaluate progress from time to time. Engaging human resource managers who are knowledgeable about who does what, will help tackle the crisis in human capital development in this sector. Lack of communication with communities is one of the greatest challenges in the public housing sector. Whereas sustainable housing delivery is for communities, it is ironical that the community engagement part comes later in the process of housing delivery and often too late. As such, there is usually communication breakdown which negatively impacts on the entire process. This framework recommends the usage of communications' manager to bridge this important gap.

Limitation

While there are justifications for the framework proposed in this study, it is noteworthy that the framework is specific to overcoming the housing challenges in the City of Cape Town-based on the evidence available at the time of this research. Other provinces in South Africa with similar housing challenges may find the recommendations useful. However, further studies using a cross-sectional survey will be required for the generalisability of results.

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