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The National Upgrading Support Programme is a programme of the National Department of Human Settlements

## PART TWO: Communities and Social Change: What happens when an informal settlement is upgraded?

This is the second in a three part series of articles exploring the dynamics in BOYSTOWN – one of the N2 Gateway projects in Cape Town – and how lessons learnt there are being applied elsewhere.

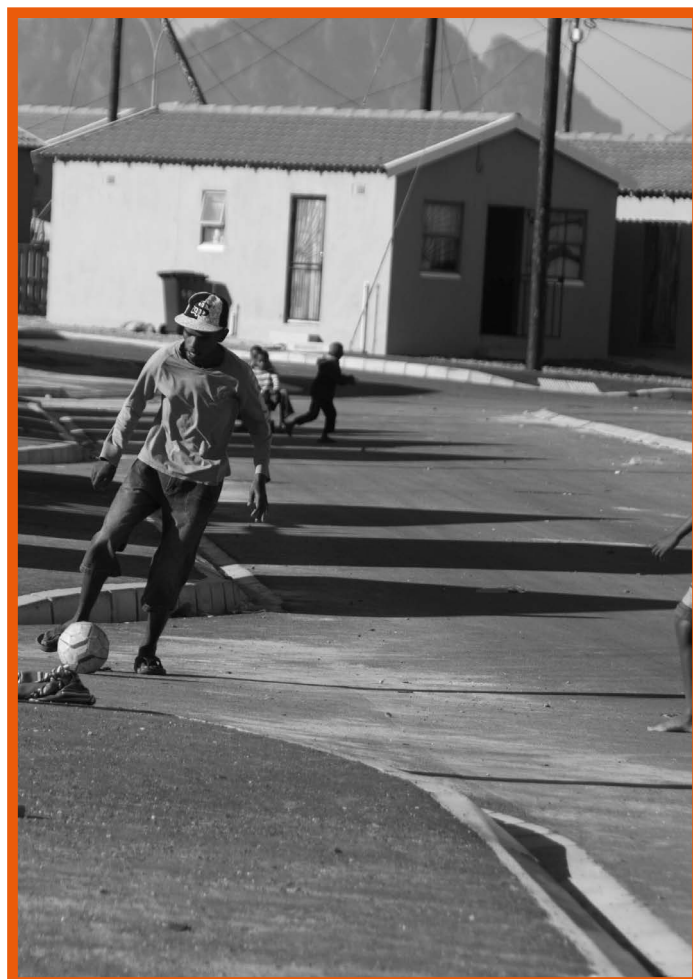
### Boystown

Boystown has been the most violent and contested project in N2 Gateway. Until recently, all attempts to build houses for this community had been unsuccessful due to extreme volatility and people actively opposing the development.

The project is being developed in three phases. Initially, some residents were moved outside the project area to open spaces nearby, including the Phillipi Temporary Relocation Area (TRA), to provide space for development of phase one. Remaining residents were relocated to an adjacent 'triangle' site.

The Boystown community is made up of three groups – qualifiers, non-qualifiers and those not willing to sign up because of resistance to the project. Reasons for refusal to sign up vary but seem to include the fact that some community leaders advise people against doing so. In addition, some residents are aware that they would not qualify for subsidised housing and refuse to sign-up believing that this will buy them more time.

Phase one could only be completed once the formal public steering committee (PSC) meetings were discontinued and Province opted



THE NATIONAL UPGRADING SUPPORT PROGRAMME

THE NUSP was established to provide assistance to provinces and municipalities in their efforts to upgrade informal settlements.



to keep the community informed through written updates. This decision was taken because most of the meetings were disrupted by PSC members who were opposed to the development, which led to little or no progress taking place on site as no decisions could be made.

Disruptions began afresh, however, once the sign-up process started.

Sign-ups are conducted by the housing development contractor who has an office on-site to facilitate the process. In Boystown, the container which housed the office was burnt twice by residents opposed to the development. There were also incidences of intimidation of project staff and HDA staff. In extreme cases some people were shot at, and there are reports that in the early days a contractor was shot dead.

Eventually, City of Cape Town's law enforcement officers were deployed to provide protection and support to deal with the violence. Phase-one was eventually completed because the PSC had disbanded and because the site was under the protection of the City of Cape Town's Law Enforcement personnel. Since August 2012, conditions improved slightly and 503 of the planned 1 329 houses in the project were handed over.

Boystown has now entered phase-two of its development, but the contractor cannot proceed because 135 households are refusing to temporarily relocate so that the site can be cleared and the houses built. There have been various attempts at engagement, and the provincial government has now opted to go the legal route to forcefully relocate them.

A decision has been taken to initially evict 35 households and

to deal with the outstanding 100 at a later stage. This will clear enough of the site so that phase-two can proceed.

Although conditions are clearly not conducive to carry on, at this stage it is not an option to pull out and so law enforcement has been brought on board to keep the project going. It is a strange and absurd situation that law enforcement is required so that the state can improve the living conditions of the community.

The households opposing the development are concentrated in phase-two of the project and so now violent incidents are occurring between residents in phase-one and residents in phase-two.

Intimidation has reached alarming proportions and a contractor's workers were followed to their homes and to church. Law enforcement officers have been shot at, with 17 shots fired at them on one occasion.

Another issue that gives rise to discord is the allocation of jobs on the project. The community does not accept that the project primarily exists to deliver houses, and cannot provide all the employment opportunities for people in need of jobs. An important policy lesson for government here is that services provided by economic development agencies need to be better-integrated into informal settlement upgrade efforts.

#### COMING UP

In the next edition of the NUSP newsletter we look at the final in this three part informal settlement upgrade series of articles - Joe Slovo - and provide a snapshot of lessons learnt on the project.



**human settlements**

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