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The purpose of the *Kuveza neKuumba - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Design, Innovative Thinking and Practice* is to provide a forum for design and innovative solutions to daily challenges in communities.

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Urban Governance for Sustainable Housing Development in Gweru City, Zimbabwe

NYEMUDZAI MLAMBO¹

Abstract

Urbanisation is an unstoppable global phenomenon and it brings with it the challenge of providing sustainable housing for an ever-increasing population. Cities in Zimbabwe, such as Gweru, face enormous challenges and opportunities when it comes to achieving sustainable housing development. This study aimed to investigate the role of urban governance in shaping the urban landscape and the challenges of urban governance in providing sustainable housing development. This study is important in that urban governance is critical to the development of sustainable housing in cities. The article examines the implementation of urban governance strategies to address the housing needs of Gweru residents. The article utilised a comprehensive Urban Planning Sustainability Framework. It utilised a mixed method approach case study of the City of Gweru in Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. The findings were as follows, importance of sustainable housing development in promoting social equity, economic growth and environmental sustainability. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The study recommends that the city should collaborate with non-governmental and international organisations to gain access to funding and technical expertise for housing development initiatives.

Keywords: sustainable housing, housing development, sustainable designs

INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe still experiences housing shortages. Local governments are failing to provide adequate housing due to the country's ever-increasing population (Balie and Horn, 2021).

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This results in the growth of informal settlements that have led to social instability, health problems and civil disobedience (Matamanda, 2020). The article investigated urban governance issues for sustainable housing development in Gweru City. The article aims to discuss the role of urban governance in shaping the urban landscape and the challenges of urban governance in providing sustainable housing development. The provision of sustainable, affordable and high-quality housing requires the coordination of various stakeholders (Soma *et al.*, 2018). Most urban developments in Zimbabwe, have continued to spread in random and uncoordinated patterns (Arku *et al.*, 2016; Karakadzai *et al.*, 2023).

Explaining novel concepts and practices, a study by Roberts (2023) defines urban governance as the sum of the various ways in which individuals and institutions, both public and private, plan and manage the city's common affairs in a continuous process in which conflicting or diverse interests can be accommodated and cooperative action taken. In 1999, the United Nations-HABITAT launched the Global Campaign on Urban Governance to help achieve the Habitat Agenda goal of sustainable human settlements development in an urbanising world. The campaign's goal was to contribute to poverty eradication through better urban governance. The UN-HABITAT (1999) argues that the quality of urban governance helps to eradicate poverty and improves urban life.

Equally, the study by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2011) argues that good urban governance ensures that all residents reap the benefits of urbanisation and that government processes should be participatory, equitable and consensus-driven to ensure inclusivity. A participatory approach may reduce corruption by enhancing transparency and accountability. The development of environmentally sustainable urban systems entails a complex and interdependent set of social and physical factors. These factors can be understood using increasingly sophisticated models (*ibid.*). Mlambo and Chirisa, 2023:136-163 note that governments could solve the housing problems by providing affordable housing to low-income earners. This resonates with the current government of Zimbabwe's policy of not leaving

anyone or region behind. Hence, cities can accomplish this (integrated protection) by implementing policies in four asset categories: infrastructure, people, technology and data (Bollier, 2016). The current government's policy of housing for all leaves no one or no place behind (National Housing Policy, 2011).

Chakunda, cited in Gudhe (2023), endorses that the uncoordinated approach to urban development across Zimbabwe has resulted in a haphazard and unsustainable infrastructure landscape. For this reason, the City of Gweru faces a prevalent lack of water and sewer reticulation systems during urban development.

To explore these emerging ideas on sustainable housing development, Negendra *et al.* (2018) argue that recent urbanisation in the global south has been the primary driver of recent urban growth. The poorest and most vulnerable states, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, face serious challenges of rapid expansion, pollution and poverty. Sustainable urban development necessitates balancing several objectives and opportunities, such as affordable housing, good transportation links, clean air and water, biodiversity and community services (Keeler *et al.*, 2019). Gweru City may engage citizens in housing service delivery by allowing people to contribute new ideas to develop sustainable housing development projects (Adler, 2015; Boiller, 2016).

In the present day, city governments face challenges of urban expansion, hence the need to bring together various actors and enable value-added collaboration in service delivery, governance and planning (Mlambo and Chirisa, 2023:136-163). The article provides the theoretical concepts and conceptual frameworks of this study. The article utilised the Urban Planning Sustainability Framework as it is relevant to this study. The study reveals that urban governance for sustainable development is critical in the 21st Century. The study concepts and practices can help explain modern growth patterns and the pace of cities in providing sustainable housing development. The article also provides theoretical arguments and practical frameworks for developing policies for urban housing

development. Also, the work will assist local policy-makers, planners and managers in understanding urban governance issues related to sustainable housing development to achieve housing for all by engaging various stakeholders.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Housing delivery policies practised in developed countries and housing markets in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA) and Switzerland are different from housing experiences in Africa south of the Sahara, especially South Africa, Nigeria and Zimbabwe (Mlambo, 2020). Developed and developing countries represent two opposite ends of the spectrum concerning their fiscal and land-use planning policies, different housing policies and institutional settings (Hilber and Schoni, 2016:3; Mlambo, 2020). Developed countries face challenges in housing service delivery, namely housing-related demands of an ageing population; changing housing tenure preferences; pervasive economic and social changes; urbanisation; and socio-spatial segregation of urban areas (Lawson and Milligan, 2007:12). This means that housing policy-makers in developed countries will have to design policies geared towards solving these challenges. The policies will be a guideline for other countries to learn (Mlambo, 2020).

Al-Shareem *et al.* (2014:1-12) explore how governments in developed and developing countries have tried to tackle the problem of housing discrepancy over the last three decades. The article explores the notion of housing problems in most developing countries due to an increase in housing demand. The study concludes by exploring the materialisation of poverty signified in poor housing and depleted living conditions of the urban poor in developing countries, including Yemen.

Jiboye (2011:121) examines the challenge faced by the Nigerian government in making housing adequate and sustainable. According to Jiboye, a rise in population, led to an acute shortage of decent and affordable dwellings, resulting in overcrowding, homelessness, deplorable environment and living conditions, inadequate infrastructure and homelessness.

HOUSING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES IN ZIMBABWE

Policies are courses or principles of action adopted or proposed by an organisation or individual to achieve set objectives (Torjam, 2005, cited in Mlambo 2020:11-45). The definition of policy in politics refers to the basic principles that guide a government, whereas in management, it is a set of basic principles and associated guidelines formulated and enforced by a governing body of an organisation to direct and limit its actions in pursuit of long-term goals (*ibid.*). Policies embrace political, management, financial and administrative mechanisms to achieve objectives. Policy is a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive or voluntary practice.

Chakunda (cited in Gudhe, 2023) alleges that Gweru's rapid expansion has occurred without regard for the existing infrastructure, resulting in numerous challenges and inefficiencies in service delivery. To promote past-driven innovation and sustainable housing development, the city council should align its perspectives and practices with the emerging urban governance culture. To achieve sustainable housing development, Gweru City should be innovative and embrace new technologies.

Another challenge that city governments face is figuring out new ways to navigate the transition from colonial housing to housing for all today (Mlambo, 2020). Gweru's urban growth and sustainable housing development are hampered by political, economic, technological and cultural barriers. To address this issue, entrenched institutional structures must be examined and redesigned. Gweru City's urban governance is affected by the presence of knots within the city structure which must be untangled to achieve long-term housing development (Mlambo and Chirisa, 2023:136-163). To make matters worse, many cities lack resources, resulting in significant housing disparities. Furthermore, governments face resistance to change because they do not believe they can fail, causing them to be more conservative and cautious. Governments may struggle to innovate when their roles are so critical and all local governments rely on them.

The central government is constantly meddling in local government politics. Politics harms local governments because the political parties that run local governments hardly agree on many issues (Chigwata, 2019). Their disagreements contribute to poor housing development and affect council business. Puchol-Salort (2020) asserts that sustainable urban development is critical for reducing pressures on the natural environment as well as existing urban infrastructure systems such as water, energy and land. The resulting disruptions force governments and societies to seek ways for their cities to become more humane, ethical, inclusive, intelligent and sustainable (Repette *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, to provide an innovative approach to addressing urban housing problems, cities should embrace and implement the concept of urban governance for sustainable housing development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THE URBAN PLANNING SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK

The Urban Planning Sustainability Framework (UPSUF) is a theory that aims to integrate sustainability principles into the urban planning process (HM Government, 2015; Clark *et al.*, 2019). By utilising this framework, urban planners can ensure that their decisions align with sustainable development goals, thereby creating cities that are environmentally friendly, socially inclusive and economically viable. The framework is relevant to this study because it helps explain the city and urban dynamics, growth and innovativeness for sustainable housing development.

The framework emphasises the importance of incorporating sustainable design principles into housing developments, such as energy efficiency and green spaces. Pandit, *et al.* (2017) argue that the city should be looked at holistically to achieve a sustainable urban design and it should be viewed as a “system of systems of systems” (Johnson, 2012). Systems thinking lies at the core of UPSUF. The framework focuses on improved urban development design and evaluation process through the integration of the built and natural system components and improved system understanding and decision-making through

the integration of multiple stakeholder perspectives in the planning and co-development process.

The UPSUF is based on the UK's planning system and addresses city councils' desire to grant more planning applications for 'sustainable' urban development projects (HM Government, 2015; Clark *et al.*, 2019). By considering three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic), urban planners can work towards addressing challenges and creating cities that meet the needs of both present and future generations (Puchol-Salor *et al.*, 2020). Sustainable urban planning has become increasingly important in recent years, as cities around the world face numerous challenges such as rapid urbanisation, climate change, resource scarcity and governance problems (Bera *et al.*, 2023:1310-1318).

The UPSUF incorporates five key principles: integration, participation, resilience, adaptability and innovation (Puchol-Salor, *et al.*, 2020). UPSUF is useful in this study as it recognises the importance of social equity in urban planning and the need for inclusive decision-making processes, where the voices of all stakeholders are heard and considered. The framework is useful because it fosters a sense of ownership and pride in the community, leading to stronger social cohesion and a higher quality of life. Implementing the UPSUF requires collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders, including urban planners, policy-makers, community organisations and residents. By embracing this framework, cities can become pioneers in sustainable and resilient urban development, setting an example for others to follow. Resilience and adaptability are essential components of the UPSUF. In an era of increasing uncertainty and change, cities must be able to adapt to new challenges and bounce back from shocks and stresses (Rauws, 2017).

Cities should be innovative to recognise the importance of new ideas, technologies and approaches in finding creative and sustainable solutions to urban challenges. The UPSUF is relevant to this study because it encourages planners to embrace innovation and explore new ways of doing things, such as using green building materials, adopting renewable energy

sources and implementing smart city technologies. Climate adaptation is influenced by urban form and infrastructure, which is critical for achieving sustainability (Ford *et al.*, 2019). Sustainable construction, on the other hand, makes efficient use of local materials and natural resources (water, energy, etc.) during the construction process and throughout the building's lifetime. Early collaboration with the planning system and local stakeholders is critical for achieving sustainable urban development (UNISDR, 2017; Clark *et al.*, 2019). Developers typically create and submit urban development projects with the help of designers and urban planners, as well as a team of engineers and architects with expertise in urban systems design and infrastructure (Clark *et al.*, 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Urban governance refers to how government (local, regional and national) and stakeholders such as community actors and leaders, the private sector and civil society organisations (CSOs), decide how to plan, finance and manage urban areas (Slater and Crispin, 2022). In both developed and developing cities, there is a growing recognition of the need for inclusive governance. This involves engaging citizens in decision-making processes through various mechanisms such as townhouse meetings or online platforms. By involving residents, cities can better address the former's needs and aspirations. Inequality and exclusion give those with means, resources, power or status outsized influence over policy-making and decision-making processes (Menacol, 2020).

Urban planning plays a crucial role in shaping the cities of tomorrow. As urban areas continue to grow and face new challenges, it is imperative to develop sustainable strategies that promote long-term environmental, social and economic well-being (Chan and Chan, 2022). For the city to address urban governance housing problems, there is need for re-imagining urban governance and administration that entail a variety of new municipal institutions, new attitudes about the proper role of government and political leadership that seeks to facilitate and empower, rather than dictate and control (Boiler,2016).

There is a gap in the literature as local authorities are mandated to be transparent and embrace new technologies to provide sustainable housing developments. In addition to addressing housing affordability, urban governance also plays a crucial role in ensuring social equity in housing development. This involves providing housing opportunities for vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as low-income individuals, the elderly and people with disabilities (Mubiru *et al*, 2022). Urban governance can facilitate the provision of social housing and the implementation of policies that promote inclusivity and accessibility in housing development. Furthermore, urban governance can contribute to the economic viability of sustainable housing development.

By promoting public-private partnerships and creating a favourable business environment, cities can attract investment and encourage the development of sustainable housing projects (Stadtler, 2012). This can not only create employment opportunities, but also stimulate economic growth and development. Urban areas have witnessed unprecedented growth, leading to an increase in the demand for housing (Chirisa, 2023). However, this rapid urbanisation has often resulted in the proliferation of informal settlements, inadequate housing conditions and the exclusion of vulnerable populations from accessing affordable housing.

Equally important is the establishment of effective regulatory frameworks and policies that promote sustainable housing development. This includes the implementation of building codes and regulations that ensure the safety, durability and energy efficiency of housing, as well as the enforcement of land-use regulations and zoning policies (Davis, Martinez and Taboada, 2020). Additionally, governments must create favourable conditions for the private sector to invest in affordable housing, such as providing incentives and subsidies, streamlining approval processes and establishing transparent mechanisms for public-private partnerships.

Furthermore, urban governance requires effective mechanisms for citizen participation and engagement. The involvement of local communities and residents in decision-making processes

is crucial to ensure that their needs and aspirations are included. This can be achieved through participatory planning processes, where citizens are actively involved in shaping the development of their neighbourhoods and cities. Additionally, governments must establish channels for regular dialogue and feedback, enabling residents to voice their concerns and contribute to the improvement of housing policies and programmes.

METHODOLOGY

The mixed-methods research approach and case study method were used in this study. The information was gathered through the distribution of five-point Likert Scale questionnaires to 30 council officials (quantitative) and individual interviews (qualitative) with five department heads. This sample size of 30 participants allowed the study to establish and maintain a good rapport with all of the interviewees and achieve saturation. This study's population includes all urban local authorities in the Republic of Zimbabwe. The study's target population was the Gweru City Council in Zimbabwe's Midlands Province.

The qualitative data in this study was gathered through purposeful sampling, specifically interviews and the sampled participants are relevant to the research questions. Managers were specifically chosen for their in-depth understanding of the organisation's urban growth issues. There were separate quantitative and qualitative analyses. The study analysed both data sets, combining quantitative and qualitative data and results (Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011).

THE GWERU CONTEXT

Gweru is a city in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe that has experienced rapid urbanisation, resulting in increased demand for housing and infrastructure. As a result, the city is dealing with a variety of housing-related issues, such as informal settlements, housing shortages, insufficient services and environmental degradation. To address urban governance issues, the city must prioritise sustainable housing development projects.



Figure 1: *Gweru City, Midlands Province (Google Maps)*

The Midlands Province of Zimbabwe has a population of 1 614 941 according to the 2012 population census. The capital of the province is Gweru, with a population of 161 294 (ZIMSTAT, 2022). The Midlands Province is centrally located and has Shona, Ndebele, Tswana, Suthu and Chewa people. It is divided into seven (7) districts, namely Chirumhanzu, Gokwe, Gweru, Kwekwe, Mberengwa, Shurugwi and Zvishavane.

NUANCING THE EVIDENCE ON THE GROUND TO TRUTH

The article turns to key components of urban governance for sustainable housing development. The study produces several key findings and discusses the various challenges that Gweru City Council faces in providing key components of urban governance for sustainable housing development.

THE NEED FOR INTEGRATED URBAN PLANNING

Qualitative study evidence reveals that Gweru City Council is committed to community engagement and participation in housing development decision-making processes and is a key component of its approach. The Acting Director of Housing said that regular consultations with residents, community-based organisations and other stakeholders ensure that their input and feedback are considered. This inclusive approach yields more sustainable and people-centred housing solutions that meet the needs and aspirations of residents. “Gweru City has embraced innovative technologies and materials to promote sustainable housing practices,” said the Acting Housing Director. Housing projects encourage the use of renewable energy sources such as solar power to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and minimise environmental impact (Adedeji *et al.*, 2023).

The city encourages the use of locally sourced and environmentally friendly construction materials, which benefit the local economy, while lowering carbon emissions associated with transportation. Gweru City also prioritises infrastructure development. A major emphasis is on improving basic amenities and services in housing areas, such as ensuring residents have access to reliable water and sanitation systems. Inequalities in access to safe water and sanitation services remain a major barrier to making urban informal settlements more inclusive and safe places to live (Tumwebaze, 2023:136). Zimbabwe's waste management system has virtually collapsed, resulting in chaotic and rampant waste dumping that endangers residents' health (Makwara and Magudu (2013:66-98).

Chakunda, cited by Gudhe (2023), asserts that the problem with most local authorities like Gweru, is that development is politically based as local authorities turn to private contractors for physical planning and other expert services, yet they do not have the capacity. Integrated and inclusive planning approaches should be scalable and range from national or regional spatial planning to strategic master plans and action plans at city, zonal or area levels (AFDB, 2022). As a result, city managers often rely on external expertise to design sustainable urban development strategies. This can mean city governments have limited ownership of the planning process, with tools that

are too complex or require robust technical inputs ill-suited to low-capacity local governments in Africa that risk reinforcing top-down planning dynamics (IIED, 2019).

Sustainable housing development requires integrated urban planning that considers land use, infrastructure and housing. Gweru City must ensure that land allocation is transparent and that zoning regulations are strictly enforced to prevent informal settlements and encroachment into ecologically sensitive areas. A well-thought-out city master plan is essential. Gweru City has made significant strides in promoting integrated urban planning, particularly in the development of housing. Recognising the significance of housing safety and quality, the city has collaborated with non-governmental and international organisations to secure funding and technical expertise for housing initiatives (Abiddin, Ibrahim and Abdul, 2012).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Respondents agreed (68.7%) and strongly disagreed (31.3%) that lack of public participation has an impact on the provision of sustainable housing development projects. Gweru City's integrated urban planning efforts, particularly in the realm of housing development, rely heavily on public participation. The Acting Housing Director revealed that recognising the significance of housing safety and quality, the city has actively collaborated with non-governmental organisations and international organisations to secure funding and technical expertise for housing initiatives. Others believe that management will improve as citizens become more involved and empowered to shape their local services (de Weger 2018:18:285). Residents' associations, such as the Gweru Residents and Ratepayers Association (GRRA) and Gweru United Progressive Residents and Ratepayers Development Association (GUPRARDA), should be used to engage residents in Gweru City.

Consultative meetings allow residents to participate in decision-making processes and contribute to discussions about housing issues, problems and the types of house services they require. Because the public lacks trust in the local government, ratepayers are reluctant to pay for municipal services

(Musekiwa and Chatiza, 2015). This has harmed urban governance issues related to sustainable housing development.

ACCESSIBLE HOUSING FINANCE

According to the findings, 89.7% of respondents agree that housing finance has an impact on the provision of sustainable housing development projects, while 10.3% disagree. This suggests that a lack of financial resources harms urban governance for sustainable development. One of Gweru City's key strategies is to form partnerships with financial institutions. By collaborating with banks, such as CABS, and microfinance institutions, such as Shons Financial Service, the city ensures that housing loans and mortgages are more readily available to its residents, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. These collaborations not only broaden residents' access to financing options, but also offer competitive interest rates and flexible repayment terms (Nguyen and Canh, 2021). The city Finance Manager added that Gweru City should form alliances with financial institutions to develop a framework for accessible housing finance, ensuring that residents of all income levels have equal access to affordable housing-term housing development.

Gweru City Council (GCC) has recognised the importance of improving its residents' financial literacy in addition to financial partnerships. Through capacity-building programmes, such as workshops and training sessions, individuals are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the housing finance landscape. This enables them to make informed decisions and make the best use of available resources, ultimately increasing their chances of obtaining affordable housing.

To promote transparency and accountability, the GCC has implemented policies and regulations to ensure the safety and quality of housing projects (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2021:1545-1567). Strict standards are enforced to ensure that structures meet standards, allowing residents to live in a safe and comfortable environment. There are also mechanisms in place to monitor the allocation and utilisation of housing funds (Thakral, 2016).

There are relatively few local governments with the scale and autonomy to directly take on loans and the capacity to implement them given limited devolution of powers and authority, lack of own-source revenues, poor staffing, education and skills gaps (AFDB, 2022). Mortgage stress has resulted in an increase in distressed property listings in low-income suburbs. By partnership with banks and microfinance institutions, Gweru City has made housing loans and mortgages more accessible to its residents, particularly those from low-income families. These partnerships not only increase residents' access to financing options but also offer competitive interest rates and flexible repayment terms (Falchetta, *et al.*, 2022). The GCC can address the housing needs of its diverse population by working closely with financial institutions (Morris, 2023).

The city implemented capacity-building programmes such as workshops and training sessions to improve financial literacy. Individuals who complete these programmes have the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the housing finance landscape. Financial independence empowers residents to make informed decisions, resulting in financially inclusive societies in which everyone has the tools and resources to achieve their goals and dreams.

Communities should prioritise financial education and encourage ongoing learning and engagement in personal finance (Munshi, 2023). Improving infrastructure to meet demand in today's economy is a prerequisite. While "traditional" infrastructure, such as roads, railways, electricity, water and sanitation, is still fundamental, "new" infrastructure, such as highways, high-speed trains and broadband internet, has become necessary for an economy to fully participate in global value chains and move up the ladder of economic structure. Infrastructure constraints or the benefits of improving a specific infrastructure, vary across industries, businesses and regions within a country (Hoda, 2023).

Gweru City's approach is notable for its unwavering commitment to community engagement and participation in

decision-making processes related to housing development. Through regular consultations, the city ensures that valuable input and feedback from residents, community-based organisations and other stakeholders, are taken into account (de Weger, van Vooren, Lwijkx, 2018). This all-inclusive approach encourages the creation of long-term, people-centred housing solutions that effectively address residents' needs and aspirations. Everyone should contribute to issues such as solid waste management, garbage collection, chemical gaseous emissions, construction and demolition materials that are likely to have an impact on the environment and how to reduce their impact.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

The Director of Engineering Services said,

“Infrastructure development is key to sustainable housing development and the city should provide quality water supply and accessible transport infrastructure. Gweru City's infrastructure development is critical to its growth and prosperity.”

The city should form alliances with financial institutions to develop a framework for accessible housing finance, ensuring that residents of all income levels have equal access to affordable housing.

Gudhe (2023) argues that the failure to integrate urban expansion with essential infrastructure systems has resulted in overstressed utilities, water shortages and compromised sanitation networks and the oversight has increased the strain on existing resources, hampering the ability to provide adequate services to burgeoning urban populations. Eliminating infrastructure constraints is an essential prerequisite for providing a window of opportunity for an economy to flourish based on its comparative advantage. With the correct conditions, effective infrastructure may help an economy, especially that of a developing country, enjoy the advantages of global value chains and update its economic structure. The estimates demonstrate the potential contribution of infrastructure development to African growth and equity (Hoda, 2023).

Gweru's urban governance should prioritise infrastructure development in both existing and new housing areas. Improving road networks and public transportation options, as well as reducing waste and promoting renewable energy sources, are all part of the solution. Gweru City's infrastructure development is critical to its growth and prosperity. A qualitative study reveals that infrastructure development is crucial to achieving growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Gweru City Council prioritises environmental sustainability and is taking several steps to achieve its goals. The Director of Engineering Services said, "One of the primary strategies is to install renewable energy sources, such as solar panels and wind turbines, in public buildings and facilities." This shift to clean and renewable energy will not only help the city reduce its carbon footprint, but will also help the environment. A qualitative study reveals that Gweru City should be committed to natural resource preservation and conservation, as well as renewable energy and the city should also be involved in projects to protect its rivers, forests and wildlife habitats. This includes the establishment of protected areas and the promotion of responsible tourism practices. By conserving natural resources, Gweru City not only protects its biodiversity, but also ensures the availability of essential resources for future generations.

The Acting Housing Director said,

"Gweru City's sustainability journey is dependent on education and awareness. To educate residents about the importance of sustainable practices, the city should organise workshops, seminars and awareness campaigns."

Gweru City encourages active participation in environmental conservation and sustainable development by providing individuals with knowledge and skills.

Environmental management is a critical component of living a sustainable lifestyle. The subsidiary principle is important because there is greater interest in the outcome, better local awareness, greater legitimacy, flexibility and adaptability. In

environmental management, the subsidiary principle had some flaws. Conflicts of interest, limited capacities and bias are examples of these. However, the Director of Finance said:

“There are other important environmental management principles that the City of Gweru should implement, like the precautionary principle, the user pays principle, the polluter pays principle, the effectiveness and efficiency principle, the proportionality principle, the participation principle and the responsibility principle.

Collaboration and partnerships are also critical elements of Gweru City's environmental sustainability strategy. The city actively collaborates with stakeholders, including the government and non-governmental organisations. Gudhe (2023) argues that there are over 1 000 housing units but there is no environmental assessment impact explaining why the whole suburb has those housing units without environmental assessment.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Acting Housing Director indicated that,

“My mandate, as a Housing Director, is to implement and monitor the Gweru Council housing strategy, including sub-strategies, delivery plans and housing policies to ensure sustainable housing development projects.”

Poor monitoring processes affect sustainable housing development projects, according to 39.7% of respondents, 39.7% disagree and 10.3% are undecided. Gweru City also understands the significance of monitoring and regulating businesses and industries that operate within its jurisdiction. By instituting licensing and permit requirements, the city ensures that businesses adhere to legal and safety standards. Inspections are conducted regularly to ensure compliance and to address any violations as soon as possible. This proactive approach fosters a business-friendly environment, while protecting the interests of the community.

A qualitative study reveals that, as a city, it is critical to monitor and evaluate policies that adhere to the highest standards to ensure the community's well-being. The city understands how important it is to incorporate environmentally friendly practices into infrastructure development. Pollution levels are being

reduced using renewable energy sources and the implementation of efficient and sustainable practices. Gweru City also enforces strict waste management regulations, encouraging proper disposal and recycling (Makwara and Magudu, 2013). This not only benefits the environment, but also makes the city healthier and more livable. Air and water quality monitoring is also a priority to protect residents' health and well-being. Gweru City should be committed to monitoring and regulating its infrastructure, waste management and businesses to create a safe, sustainable and thriving community.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

A lack of new partnerships is a major challenge for Gweru City Council, according to 50% of respondents, while 30% disagree. Mlambo (2020) observes that private-sector partnerships with non-governmental organisations are required for housing projects to be successful. Local authorities are failing to attract new players in housing provision, according to the Acting Housing Director.

Poor stakeholder participation is a major barrier, according to the respondents (79.3% and 20.7%, agreeing and disagreeing, respectively). According to qualitative interviews, there is a lack of stakeholder participation in entities such as the three levels of government, the private sector, community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Local governments, private developers, NGOs and international organisations can work together to develop sustainable housing projects. Gweru City should actively seek partnerships and resources to support housing initiatives, relying on outside expertise and funding when necessary. This helps improve collaboration and communication across sectors as a starting point towards more joined-up governance (AFDB, 2022).

Monitoring and evaluation processes and results can illuminate, inform and make sense of a complex contextual environment, but they also have the potential to obfuscate, complicate and/or oversimplify complex situations and practices (Mlambo and Govender, 2021). Monitoring and maintaining high-quality

evaluations are critical to ensuring the community's well-being. The city understands how important it is to incorporate environmentally friendly practices into infrastructure development. Pollution levels are being reduced through the use of renewable energy sources and the implementation of efficient and sustainable practices. Bornstein (2011) stated that collaboration as a collective impact was gaining momentum in business settings. Partnering through collaboration is about getting the right people together to work on projects that will bring positive change and success into communities through the librarian's interest and involvement.

The city of Gweru has also put in place several policies and regulations to promote the development of sustainable housing. These include establishing a housing and engineering department in charge of overseeing housing projects, implementing affordable housing schemes and enforcing building standards to ensure residents' safety and security.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the implementation of effective policies, collaborating with stakeholders and actively engaging the community, Gweru City can pave the way for inclusive and sustainable urban development. Transparent decision-making processes, affordable housing promotion and basic service provision are all critical components to the city's success in this endeavour. By prioritising these factors, Gweru City can create a thriving urban environment that meets the housing needs of its residents while fostering sustainability for future generations. Achieving sustainable housing development in a city like Gweru, is a complex, multi-faceted endeavour.

Urban governance plays a critical role in addressing the unique challenges that cities face in providing adequate, affordable and environmentally responsible housing. By embracing integrated urban planning, public participation, accessible housing finance, infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, monitoring and collaboration, Gweru City can work toward a brighter future where housing is more than just shelter. In an increasingly urbanised world, this strategy could serve as a model for other cities facing similar housing

challenges. The involvement of stakeholder engagement, participatory decision-making processes and the need for integrated planning approaches are essential for creating sustainable housing solutions that meet the needs and aspirations of residents, while minimising environmental impacts. The article offers valuable insights into how effective urban governance can contribute to sustainable housing development and serves as a useful resource for policy-makers, planners and researchers interested in creating more liveable and environmentally friendly cities, thereby promoting a greener future and improving quality of life.

The following recommendations are critical for Gweru City's long-term housing development projects. The GCC must create and implement policies that prioritise sustainable housing development. These policies should address land use, building standards and environmental conservation. By establishing clear guidelines, the city can ensure that housing projects are designed and built in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner.

- Gweru City should encourage the use of sustainable design and construction practices in residential development. Incorporating energy-efficient technologies, sourcing materials locally and adhering to green building standards are all examples of this. By embracing sustainable practices, the city can reduce its environmental footprint while creating healthier and more resilient communities.). Gweru City should see things differently and a new culture should emerge, whereby residents should be allowed to participate in public fora. To address these issues, urban governance must play a key role in promoting sustainable housing development. Gweru City should promote local governance through sustainable housing development projects.
- Gweru City must monitor and evaluate housing projects' community and environmental impacts. This can be accomplished by assessing and evaluating housing projects regularly to ensure that the intended goals and objectives are met. Through monitoring and evaluation,

the city can identify any issues or challenges and take appropriate measures to address them. This will help to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of housing development initiatives.

- Gweru City's regulatory frameworks and housing development policies should be reviewed. Reviewing and updating existing regulations, establishing clear guidelines and standards, and enforcing compliance are all part of this process. By establishing strong and effective regulatory frameworks, the city can ensure that housing projects are carried out responsibly and sustainably. This will help to prevent issues like substandard construction, overcrowding and inadequate infrastructure.

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