

Gender Equality Strategy

for the
Social Housing
Sector in
South Africa



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Prepared by
The “Equal Spaces: Social Housing to End
Spatial Apartheid in South Africa” Project



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Introduction

This *Gender Equality Strategy for the Social Housing Sector in South Africa* is the result of an extensive and in-depth process of research and consultation with numerous South African stakeholders. This was carried out under the mandate of the *Equal Spaces: Social Housing to End Spatial Apartheid in South Africa Project* which coordinated the process and prepared this strategy document.

The 2016-2020 Equal Spaces Project seeks to revitalize inner city urban communities using well-managed, affordable and secure social housing developments to provide access to socio-economic opportunities that alleviate poverty and contribute to economic growth. The project is addressing the spatial and economic legacies of apartheid by promoting integration through densification in urban areas, and enhancing the socio-economic status of low and moderate income households through well-located social housing.

The Equal Spaces Project is being implemented in partnership with the following national government departments in South Africa: National Department of Human Settlements (NDHS), National Treasury, and the Department of Performance Management and Evaluation in the office of the President (DPME). It is also being implemented with key stakeholders in the social housing sector in South Africa, notably; the Social Housing Regulatory Authority (SHRA), the National Association of Social Housing Organizations (NASHO), the South Africa Local Government Association (SALGA), provincial and local governments, social housing institutions (SHIs), civil society organizations, financial institutions and the private sector. The partnership also includes support from Canadian organizations with experience in the social housing sector.

The Government of Canada is contributing CAD \$2,500,000 to the Equal Spaces Project through Global Affairs Canada. Rooftops Canada - Abri International is the Executing Agency and it is contributing CAD \$221,300 in-kind.

The Equal Spaces Project seeks to facilitate partnerships and protocols that will allow this diverse group of South African stakeholders to develop, operationalize and manage social housing and urban regeneration initiatives in several South African metropolitan cities. The Equal Spaces Project is also focusing on the institutional strengthening of SHIs to ensure their independent financial viability and to enhance their ability to develop and manage social housing developments. This includes developing and implementing a coordinated sector wide capacity building strategy with the SHRA, NASHO and other important sector stakeholders.



With regard to gender equality, the Equal Spaces Project is working with stakeholders to:

- **Improve** security and socio-economic opportunities for women and children living in social housing;
- **Enhance** women's leadership and employment opportunities in the development, management and maintenance of social housing and related professional and construction sectors;
- **Increase** women's inclusion within institutional dialogues related to urban regeneration projects; and,
- **Facilitate** appropriate knowledge management structures including, monitoring and evaluation, and support.

The Research Process and Outcomes

Qualitative and quantitative research to develop this strategy was completed by a South African consultant, Dr. Marinda Weideman, and her team which included: Mr. Michael Kaplan, contributing author, and field workers, Ms. Livhuwani Bagani and Ms. Clara Fouilland.

Research activities included:

- A comprehensive review of relevant national and international literature;
- A legislative review that informed and provided a legal framework for recommendations;
- An extensive review of relevant and available socio-economic data including statistics available from SHIs, NASHO, the SHRA and other national databases;
- In-depth interviews with 22 key sector stakeholders and representatives;
- Three focus groups with SHI tenants in three Metros; and,
- The completion and analysis of 88 tenant surveys.

It was recognized that the research has methodological limitations:

- The participatory approach may have introduced a sampling bias. At the same time, it gave the necessary stakeholders opportunities to both engage with the data collected and to assist in the shaping of the resultant strategy.
- Existing datasets obtained from the various stakeholders and SHIs were often inconsistent, incomplete or contained inaccuracies. Data had to be interpreted, recompiled, and recalculated. Data was corroborated against comparable data sources, but these sources were not always directly comparable.

- Data from surveys is based on a very small sample – it is indicative, but it is not statistically valid.
- The scope of the work was very wide and it was a challenge to focus.

Regardless, it was felt that the mix of methodologies and the participatory research approach generally validated the research process and results.

The high level outcomes of the overall research include the following:

- The three spheres of South African governments have a legislative and regulatory imperative to ensure gender equality including access for women to affordable housing and other socio-economic opportunities.
- Safety and security is a key reason women opt for social housing but gender based violence is prevalent and generally underestimated by SHIs.
- Women tenants in social housing have fears about tenure insecurity. SHIs are interested in the option of tenant rent protection mechanisms that can promote temporary rent stability for vulnerable tenants.
- There is mixed evidence on whether social housing provides tenants with improved access to social and community services, and whether it is a catalyst for upward socio-economic mobility.

- Women want on-site services for their children, access to social welfare services, good parenting workshops and assistance with substance use and substance users.
- Community development is crucial to improved quality of life for women tenants, overcoming isolation, and building social cohesion.
- SHIs create employment directly but there is no data available on indirect job creation.
- Women’s engagement in leadership and employment in the management of social housing is not gender equal but it outperforms the private sector in South Africa.
- Women living in social housing have strong concerns about safety and security for themselves and their children related both to building design and to broader precinct planning.
- Stakeholders have favorable attitudes to the promotion of gender equality but believe this work should be linked to a broader transformation strategy for the sector.
- A key barrier to developing an appropriate gender strategy and to measure the extent to which gender equality is being achieved is the lack of available gender disaggregated data for the social housing sector.

The research process resulted in drafting a proposed gender equality strategy for the social housing sector. This draft strategy was presented to key stakeholders at a national workshop in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town in July 2017 using the video conferencing “learning hubs” developed as part of the Equal Spaces Project. Workshop input helped both to validate the research outcomes, and to re-draft the strategy. A further workshop was held with key stakeholders in Johannesburg in November 2017 (with video participation from Durban) to finalize the strategy and to discuss its implementation.

The result is a complex strategy for the social housing sector, with multiple points of application and multiple implementing agents. It is, nevertheless, a strategy, that if implemented in stages over time will enhance the quality of life of women in social housing.

The resulting draft of the gender equality strategy for the social housing sector was then presented and reviewed with the SHRA and NASHO. Their engagement in implementation of key elements of the strategy is indicated below.

Gender Equality Strategy

The Strategy's Key Intervention Areas

The *Gender Equality Strategy for the Social Housing Sector in South Africa* is comprised of the seven Key Intervention Areas (KIAs) which follow. The priority assigned through the stakeholder process is indicated for each KIA - either medium or high priority. Each KIA also indicates how responsibility for taking action will be distributed among the Equal Spaces Project and other key stakeholders. The intention is to respond to these recommendations in the final two years of the Equal Spaces Program, April 2018 to March 2020. In general, high priority KIAs will be addressed in 2018-19, and medium priority ones in 2019-20.

The KIAs are resource efficient and implementable recommendations that are intended to bring positive changes in the lived reality and socio- economic status of women living and working in social housing projects.

Additional input from the November, 2017 national workshop to further direct the work related to each KIA is indicated in Annex 1.



3.1 KIA 1

Improving Security

Actions:

- 1.1 Develop a pilot project with at least two SHIs to:
 - (a) Conduct safety audits with women tenant representatives, key SHI staff, and other stakeholders (e.g. local police) in one or two buildings and immediate surroundings; and implement adaptations and maintenance focused on priority changes to ensure and increase women and children's health, safety and security;
 - (b) Develop ongoing feedback mechanisms and outreach program for front-line SHI staff and residents to report safety issues and monitor results;
 - (c) Develop women and child-friendly building security and access policies, procedures, personnel, and equipment; and,
 - (d) Disseminate these experiences for broader use in the social housing sector.
- 1.2 Develop and disseminate policies and practices to ensure that women's tenure and leasing rights are secure including: improving understanding of social housing and leases; lease signing by women; income and rent protection related to periods of economic distress; and, strategies to support women who are undergoing eviction.

Priority:

High for the first action and medium for the second action.

Responsibility:

NASHO with support from the Equal Spaces Project to develop, coordinate and fund the implementation of both proposed actions.

3.2 KIA 2

Improving Access to Community and Social Services, and Enhancing Economic Mobility of Women SHI Tenants

Actions:

- 2.1 Research and document best practices and existing programs among SHIs that provide on-site, secure, quality, affordable services directly or in partnership with relevant civil society organizations and government departments in the short, medium and long term including:
 - Early childhood and after-school programs;
 - Links to social work services for parents and children;
 - Support for women tenants to generate income providing such services;
 - Empowering women tenants by providing information and building social capital.
 - Creative and affordable examples of enhancing women's economic mobility that other SHIs can duplicate. These might include promoting WIFI availability and computers in SHI communal spaces, and assisting tenants with resume development and job applications.
- 2.2 Develop and implement a small pilot project to assist with developing business plans to provide on-site community services. For example, pair a more and less experienced SHI together to facilitate the development of the business case and plans to establish a community based service for an SHI.

Priority:

High for improving access to community and social services, and medium priority for enhancing economic mobility for women SHI tenants.

Responsibility:

NASHO with support from the Equal Spaces Project to develop, coordinate and fund the implementation of both proposed actions.

3.3 KIA 3

Responding to and Preventing Gender Based Violence

Actions:

- 3.1 Develop and distribute a package of information including templates and training modules to all SHIs. The package will include:
 - Models of policies and practices that SHIs can easily adopt.
 - Basic overall training and resources for SHI boards and staff.
 - Customized training and education for front line staff dealing with GBV issues regularly.
 - Template and “how to” instructions to develop tenant information packages on available community resources including any second stage or transitional housing.
- 3.2 Work with one SHI as a pilot project to implement the approach and workshop the outcomes with other SHIs profiling the elements of the information package and how best to replicate the approach.

Priority:

Empowering SHI staff and tenants to take safe and responsible action on GBV is a high priority.

Responsibility:

NASHO with support from the Equal Spaces Project to develop, coordinate and fund the implementation of both proposed actions.

3.4 KIA 4

Policies and Practices for Women’s Leadership and Mobility in the Sector

Actions:

- 4.1 Develop policies and programs to promote women’s recruitment, participation and leadership on boards and all levels of SHI management to ensure a standardized approach in the sector linked to KPIs and compliance criteria for gender equality with clear consequences for non-compliance.
- 4.2 Develop mentoring programs for women working in social housing both within and between SHIs.
- 4.3 Target women in middle management who are future leaders to be part of workshops, exchanges and study visits related to the Equal Spaces Project.

Priority:

Medium for all three proposed actions.

Responsibilities:

- 4.1 The SHRA with inputs from NASHO, the Equal Spaces Project and other stakeholders.
- 4.2 The SHRA and NASHO with support from the Equal Spaces Project to develop and implement coordinated mentoring initiatives.
- 4.3 The Equal Spaces Project in consultation with the SHRA, NASHO and other Metro and social housing stakeholders.

3.5 KIA 5

Promote Women’s Leadership and Employment in Related Professional and Construction Sectors and Address Sexism in the Social Housing Sector

Actions:

- 5.1 Carry out a national workshop with participants from the National Home Builders Registration Council’s Women in Construction Program, the South African Women in Construction Association, Women for Housing and other groups that promote and represent women service providers in the housing construction sector. The workshop will develop relationships and explore practical ways to promote use of women service providers including women owned companies within the social housing sector. The workshop will also identify strategies to address sexism in the sector.
- 5.2 Ensure that gender sensitization and women’s empowerment strategies are built into all social housing sector workshops.

Priority:

Medium for both proposed actions.

Responsibilities:

- 5.1 The SHRA will take the lead with support from the Equal Spaces Project to plan and develop the workshop. The Equal Spaces Project can provide a contribution to the overall cost of the workshop and if appropriate, assist with research on other countries experience and success in this area and recruit international speakers to participate in the workshop.
- 5.2 The Equal Spaces Project with the participation of other project stakeholders.

3.6 KIA 6

Gender Sensitive Building and Precinct Design, Development and Management

Actions:

- 6.1 Continue to promote policies and strategies with each Metro and related stakeholders to: engage women in urban regeneration precinct and project steering committees and all processes related to precinct and project design, development and management; and, develop and disseminate a case study with lessons learned, related gender equality results, and tools to guide these processes based on emerging experiences in Salt River/Woodstock, Cape Town.
- 6.2 Develop and disseminate gender-sensitive precinct level, neighborhood, project site, building and unit planning and design guidelines that contribute to improving socio-economic opportunities, health, safety and security, especially for women and children taking into account South African and international research and best practice recommendations. These should include: access to transportation, schools, child care, health care, other social services; and, accessibility considering women with young children, elderly women, and people living with disabilities.

Priority:

Medium for both proposed actions.

Responsibilities:

NASHO with support from the Equal Spaces Project for both proposed actions working with local consultants and possibly Canadian short-terms technical advisors.

3.7 KIA 7

Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Support

Actions:

- 7.1 Improve collection, shared availability, quality, validity, and reliability of data collected in the social housing sector. Ensure that all collected data from the tenant application, tenant satisfaction survey and exit survey is gender disaggregated during analysis.
- 7.2 Develop impact indicators to measure the effectiveness of gender equality interventions for reporting by SHIs, the SHRA and NASHO.
- 7.3 Ensure that all SHRA data design and collection is informed by stakeholders. Create a sector based reference group to work with the SHRA to provide input into all research tools, and to monitor and evaluate the results of collected data.
- 7.4 Work with SHIs to ensure that their internal research tools include collection of gender disaggregated data that can provide the necessary empirical evidence to support good decision making.

Priority:

High

Responsibilities:

The SHRA in concert with NDHS and DPME to take responsibility for all of the proposed actions while involving: NASHO, the Equal Spaces Project, SHIs and other relevant stakeholders in the reference group. The Equal Spaces Project can assist with facilitation of the process.



Annex 1

Additional Inputs to the KIAs

This Annex includes additional inputs from the November 2017 national workshop to be considered when implementing each KIA.

KIA 1

Improving Security

- The selection of the pilot SHIs should ensure a mix of building types and reflect the sectors diversity which may require more than two SHIs.
- Training should include passive, active and reactive interventions.
- The work should include mechanisms to ensure communal/shared space such as kitchens and bathrooms are safe for all tenants.
- It is especially important to develop clauses in security services contracts to clarify employment expectations and service standards such as how often security guards will rotate. The need to participate in gender equality training should also be included in all contracts.
- Gender sensitive security related questions should be included in the SHRA's "Tenant Satisfaction Survey."
- Develop a standardized mechanism targeted to Housing Supervisors to get their feedback on potential problem areas.
- There is an overlap with KIA3 – staff need to have a standardized way to deal with social issues including violence – they need to know where and when to act and who to involve in the problem(s).
- JHC has a social incident reporting system which allows them to identify issues on a building by building basis. They develop onsite workshops (often gender specific) for tenants based on this data.
- Need to include insights into cultural norms that may prohibit women from signing leases, attending meetings on their own, or allowing maintenance people into the flat without their husband or another related male being present.
- One of the SHIs, JHC, noted that operational, maintenance and utility costs associated with communal kitchen and bathroom facilities are significantly higher than in rental housing without these shared facilities. One suggestion was to study these costs, possibly as a step to eliminating this type of housing in the future. (This would not be under this gender equality strategy.)

KIA 2

Improving Access to Community and Social Services, and Enhancing Economic Mobility of Women SHI Tenants

- Female tenants have different and varied levels of education and income which would require different programmatic interventions. Further research is necessary to better understand the range of woman tenants and their respective needs.
- A needs assessment is critical in order for an SHI to frame the type of services to develop on site or nearby.
- Partnerships with existing services is a viable way for SHIs to make available additional services and supports for their tenants. One example given was partnering with a university where social work students are placed in the SHI to work with tenants as part of their practical training.
- A data base of SHI experiences in developing services and/or partnering with external service providers should be web based and easily searchable to facilitate sharing of different approaches among SHIs.
- Explore availability of company/services to provide hot spots for tenants if the SHI cannot provide WIFI in an accessible area.
- A skills register within a SHI is a good way to cross promote tenants skills and availability. For instance, supporting a tenant with financial skills to work with other tenants who are interested in developing better financial skills.

KIA 3

Responding to and Preventing Gender Based Violence

- It will be important to develop approaches that are not necessarily paper based – that is, dependent on high levels of literacy. JHC for instance, does not rely exclusively on paper documents when working with tenants and any such materials include info graphics.
- JHC employs Community Development Officers – tenants who are recruited and paid a stipend to facilitate building based discussions. A standard approach is to bring in relevant NGOs to speak to tenants about available resources.
- Any training on GBV needs to include consideration of children – for example, when and when not to leave children alone.
- Any training needs to recognize that there will be a variety of approaches necessary based on the size and location of the SHI.
- Include the issue of GBV as part of the initial tenant training and induction. One SHI completes their tenant induction two weeks after move-in. They focus on empowering tenants, and also outline the potential consequences of anti-social tenant.
- SOHCO has experience running campaigns to heighten understanding and awareness among tenants.
- There is a need for training on the legal framework. The role of NASHO will be to simplify the issues and process in its training materials for SHIs.
- Any training needs to include front-line staff (e.g. cleaners, maintenance workers and security) as part of the response to GBV.

KIA 4

Policies and Practices for Women's Leadership and Mobility in the Sector

- Unless KPIs with clear mandatory compliance criteria are developed by the SHRA very little change will take place in the sector.
- Carry out an audit among SHIs to see who is interested in mentoring and being mentored.
- Mentorship programs can be considered as part of a broader leadership development and capacity building approach. Both the UK and Canada have formal mentorship programs within their affordable housing sectors that could serve as a model in South Africa.

KIA 5

Promote Women's Leadership and Employment in Related Professional and Construction Sectors and Address Sexism in the Social Housing Sector

- Need to "sell" the benefits of employing women based businesses – for example, women architects have been very successful in developing SHI projects.
- More research is necessary to identify appropriate participants, e.g. the South African Property Owners Association and TUHF.
- Consider establishing woman based co-ops to work on both development and management of social housing.
- Allocate 50% of all precinct based construction work to woman.

KIA 6

Gender Sensitive Building and Precinct Design, Development and Management

- Gender equality must find its expression in municipal request for proposal calls. Guidelines for this that can be replicated in RFPs would be useful for the Metros.
- Include in precinct design and development concepts the need for a multi-purpose centre that operates on a gender sensitive basis. Such a facility can be a safe space for empowerment related activities targeted to vulnerable groups within the community
- To ensure that SHI tenants have access to necessary social services, a standardized approach is needed to assess relevant social services and social amenities as part of the SHRA's funding and project evaluation process. Consideration might be given to a nodal review tool used in Johannesburg to identify land for development that is well located and service rich.
- It is important to get local woman residents involved in project steering committees.
- Best practices must be shared between Metros.
- In Cape Town where they have City Improvement Districts, consider hiring women to operate in this space.
- Gender issues need to be normative in all dialogue. Text should state woman, men and children.

KIA 7

Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Support

- For this data to really be of use, it must be related to monitoring and evaluation of critical KPIs that come top-down from the policy makers (NDHS primarily, also DPME and Treasury), bottom up from the on-the ground implementers (NASHO, SHIs, TUHF), and are managed in between (mostly the SHRA and the DPME to some degree). This is basic to Results Based Management, Logic Model Frameworks and Performance Measurement but important.
- It is very important for all these stakeholders to get together and develop/modify and add to the existing data collection protocols, so everyone understands and agrees on why particular data is collected, what data does not need to be collected, and the best ways to collect different bundles of data in terms of timing, regularity and technology.
- It was noted in the discussion that there is presently a bias towards collecting financial and institutional sustainability data (for obvious Treasury and risk related reasons). But, it is very important to pay more attention to socio-economic data because the program is all about improving tenants' lives through well-located social housing. The biggest critique of the current data SHRA collects is that it does not include: resident socio-economic mobility, health, education, household composition and looking into why women choose certain localities and not others. In addition, data is not consistently updated, especially on a gender differentiation level.
- There seemed to be a general consensus that the SHRA should take the lead on this on the basis that all stakeholders need to be engaged. It was also suggested that some sort of partnership with TPN, the credit bureau of choice for social housing rentals, might be worth exploring. They seem to be very good at managing information and if privacy related issues can be addressed, might be a good source of information on economic mobility.

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