



maximising positive  
social impact

# **Impact of living in a formal house on quality of life in South Africa**

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# Housing in South Africa



- SA constitution enshrines housing as a right
- Current access to housing continues to reflect the inequalities of the country's history
- Severe backlog in housing provision: in 2007, approx 7 million people (about 14.5% of the South African population) were living in informal dwellings
- Corruption in low cost housing sector
- Highly politicised area



# Description of the housing project



- International property developer established NPO to build high quality low cost housing (higher quality than normal RDP houses)
- Also engages in construction of community facilities, skills development
- Recruits international volunteers to raise money and build houses for a week

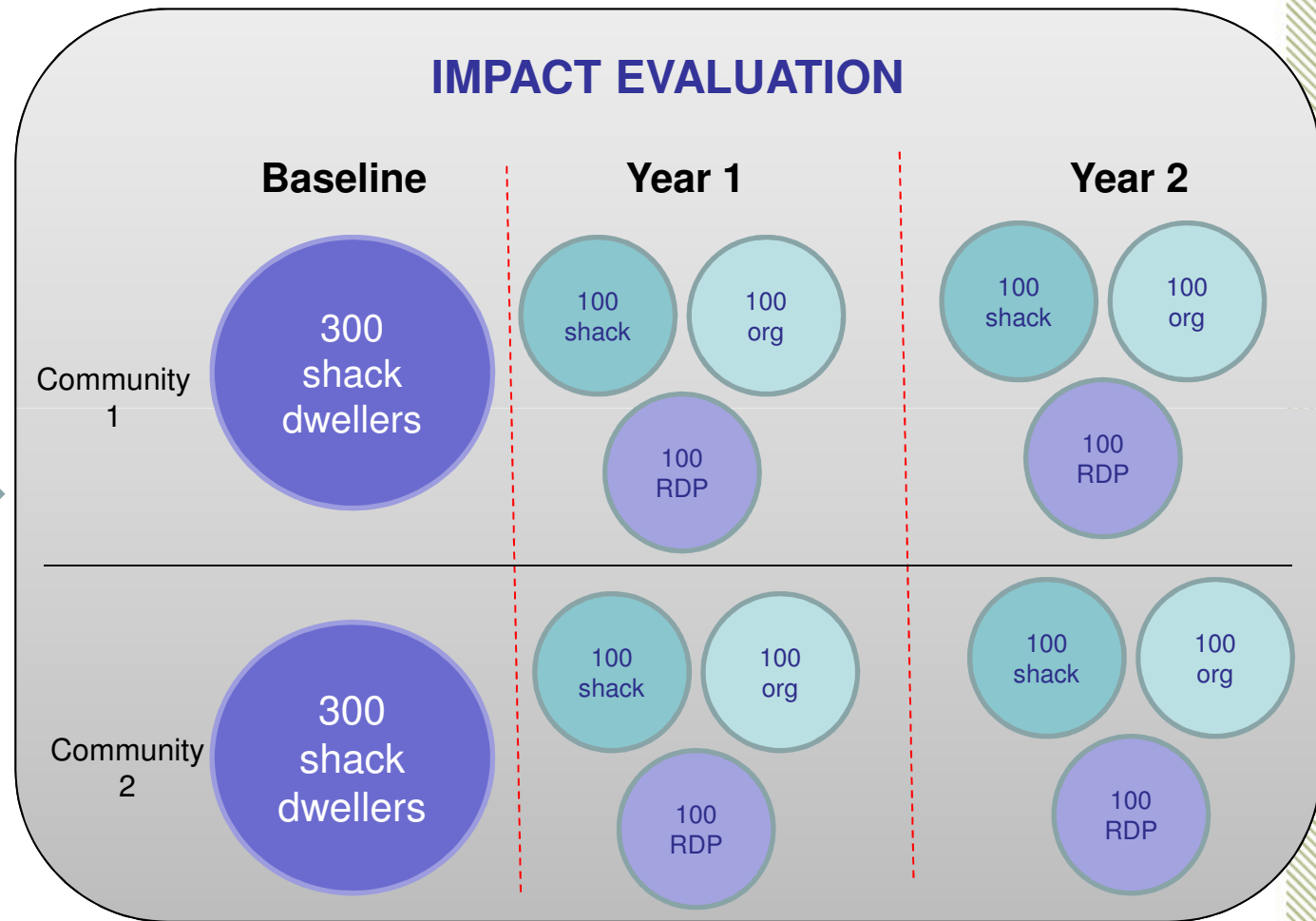
# Motivation for the study



- Literature: studies on adverse effects of NOT living in a house but no rigorous broad studies on the positive effects of living in a formal house, none in Southern Africa
- NPO and donor wanted to document changes in people's lives and have evidence of the impacts of their product
  - for fundraising
  - for volunteer recruitment
  - to put pressure on the sector for better quality houses

# Evaluation design

**Rapid evaluation**  
to identify domains of change:  
  
grounded,  
exploratory,  
qualitative



Quantitative: Household survey with impact indicators

Qualitative: MSC stories, focus groups, informant interviews

# Domains of change

<b>Quality of life</b>	<b>Physical environment</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Health</li><li>2. Education</li><li>3. Economic well-being</li><li>4. Psychological well-being</li><li>5. Safety and security</li><li>6. Social cohesion</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Water supply and sanitation</li><li>2. Energy usage</li><li>3. Refuse collection</li></ol>

# Sampling

- **Community 1:** Cape Town's biggest informal settlement, second largest in the country with 64% of households classified as 'informal' dwellings and many lacking basic services
- **Community 2:** 85% of households classified as informal

## Quantitative

	Households			Individuals		
	2008	2009	2010	2008	2009	2010
	Shack	574	151	149	2088	533
Gov	-	153	149	-	600	474
Org	-	299	304	-	1244	958
<b>All</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>2088</b>	<b>2377</b>	<b>1897</b>

## Qualitative

		Evaluation activity	Number of participants
2009	<b>MSC focus groups</b>		
		Learners	12
		Men	9
		Mixed	9
		Women	18
		Labourers	4
		Subcontractors	14
	<b>Individual interviews</b>		
		Clinic	2
	Police	2	
	School	2	
2010		Development forums	2
		Housing project	1
		Church	1
		Community workers	2
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>78</b>

# Brief summary of findings

CHANGE DOMAIN	QUANTITATIVE	QUALITATIVE
<b>HEALTH</b>	No clear trends. Some improvements over time in organisation houses, but not significantly different to 2010 shack.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Shorter-term ailments, such as colds and flu, have decreased due to the improved living conditions that the formal houses provide.</li> <li>•Better HIV management</li> <li>•Better sanitation leads to less diarrhoea and impetigo, better cleanliness</li> </ul>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	<p><b>Community 1</b> – no clear change</p> <p><b>Community 2</b> - People in formal housing are more likely to be attending an educational institution</p>	Community leaders suggested that education is a long-term outcome which may not be realised in the current generation, but there are stories of better school attendance and kids more able to study.
<b>ECONOMIC WELL-BEING</b>	Survey results are mixed and do not show a significant change in the intervention group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation’s building process does have some impact on community economic well-being through job creation and skill acquisition</li> <li>•Formal address makes it easier to get employment</li> </ul>
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING</b>	Significant improvements in happiness, dignity and personal autonomy for those who live in formal houses, especially those living in the organisation houses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Beneficiaries are definitely happier since they moved into a house and they have a greater sense of pride and dignity.</li> <li>•In terms of personal autonomy, the sense of ownership that comes with having a house is important for planning for the future.</li> </ul>
<b>SAFETY &amp; SECURITY</b>	Significantly fewer reported incidents of crime in organisation households, significantly more occupants of the organisation houses report feeling safe in their homes than do their shack counterparts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Personal safety from not having to walk alone at night to a communal toilet or tap and break-ins</li> <li>•Less fear of burglaries, fires, floods, wind</li> </ul>
<b>SOCIAL COHESION</b>		The houses have had both a positive and negative effect on social cohesion.

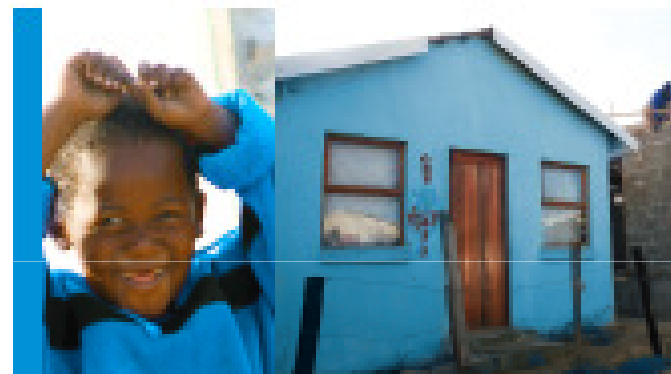
# A day in the life of Thandi and Siphoh

## SHACK



Thandi is an 11 year old girl who lives in a shack with her mother, her grandmother and her 10 year old brother. Thandi's mother is unemployed but she is actively looking for work. Her grandmother is HIV positive and stays at home most of the day because she is too weak to work. Her brother has completed his matric but is currently also unemployed. Thandi speaks Xhosa at home.

## HOUSE



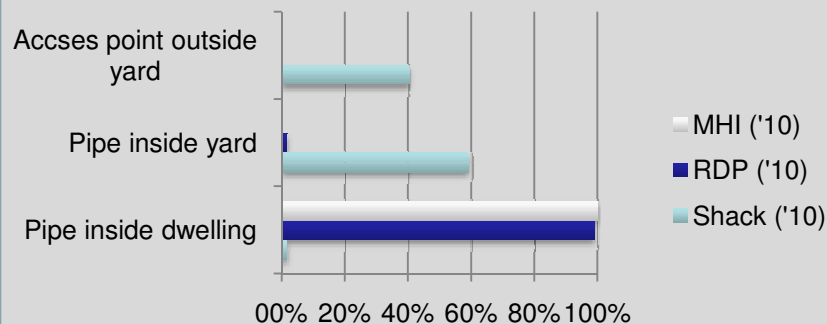
Siphoh is an 11 year old boy who moved from a shack to an MHI house three years ago. He lives with his mother, grandmother and 10 year old brother. Siphoh's mother works in Cape Town in the service industry ( ) and his unemployed brother is actively looking for work. Siphoh's grandmother has HIV and she stays at home and looks after Siphoh while his mother is at work. Siphoh speaks Xhosa at home.

# Waking up and getting ready for the day

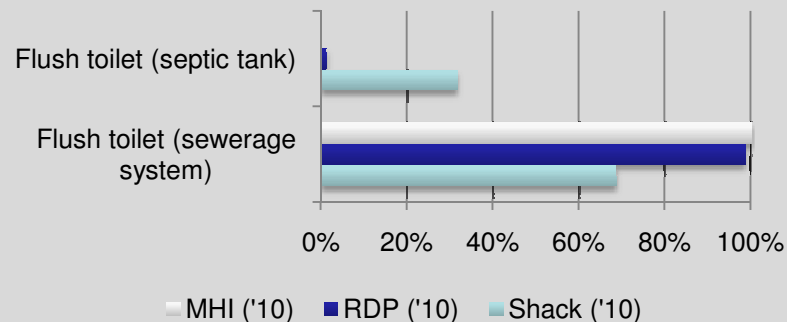
## WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION

### Quantitative data

#### Access to water



#### Toilet



### Qualitative

*“It wasn’t easy to go to the toilet at night. We felt unsafe, especially since there’s no fencing around the shack. If I needed to go to the toilet I’d be very scared because it was outside”.*

*“Staying in a shack often exposed people to terrible conditions like blocked toilets exposed to sewerage, which led to illnesses, especially in children.”*

*“I stay with my 4-year old child and she is very happy. I used to bath her in the basin but now she just ask me to run water in the bath for her.”*

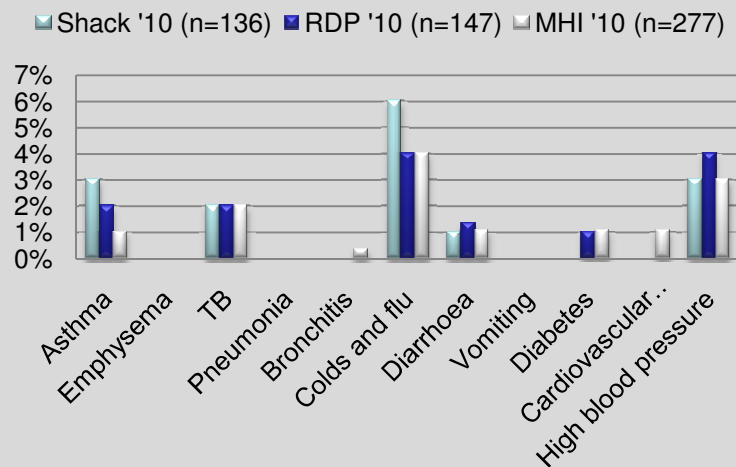
# A busy day at school

## HEALTH

### Quantitative

Overall, no clear pattern of change in health – health benefits not yet being realised on a population level

Some changes in reported illness, but no significant change:



### Qualitative

Health problems in shacks due to lack of protection from the elements: cold, rain and wind are alleviated when moving to a house:

*“We were always sick and my grandchild died due to cold in the shack.”*

*“Our shack used to leak and water would also come from underneath. When we wake up in the morning the house would be damp. This affected our health.”*

*“Kids go to the clinic and this causes absenteeism and late arrivals at school.”*

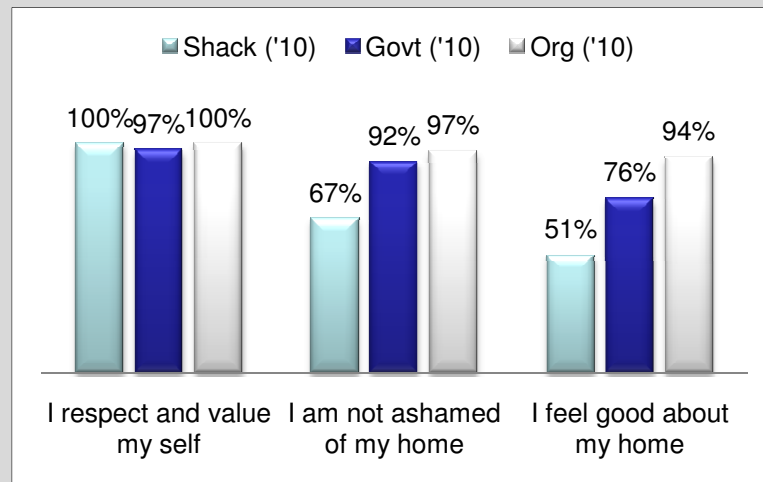
*“We do not suffer as much from flu or fever, conditions are better”.*

# Getting home after school

## PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: DIGNITY

### Quantitative

Survey results show significantly higher levels of a 'sense of dignity' for formal housing dwellers compared to those living in shacks (no significant difference between org and RDP):



### Qualitative

Dignity and pride in one's home was a clear emergent theme:

*"You see the pain and suffering in children who don't have homes. Having your own house brings not only shelter and security, but also a great sense of pride and dignity. People see themselves differently, they walk differently, as if saying 'I've come up in life'".*

*"I am very glad that my dream of owning a house has been realised, I will now leave a legacy for my own children; their own proper home."*

*"I enjoy my life in this house and I would never change it for anything. I am proud about my home, my self-esteem is back. I can invite my friends now something I could not do before because I was embarrassed to bring them to the shack."*

# Getting home after school

## EDUCATION

### Quantitative

No clear pattern of improved education due to living in a house built by the organisation (using indicators of educational enrolment and highest educational achievement statistics).

In one community, a significant difference was found in enrolment in an educational institution:

	Shack 10	RDP 10	MHI 10
Khayelitsha	33%	33%	32%
Wallacedene	30%	55%	58%

### Qualitative

Children in shacks find it difficult to complete homework regularly due to inhibiting factors including health, poor light, noise, lack of privacy and space, lack of protection from weather and fire:

*They tell me that they can study better now without the disturbances and noise from the neighbours. Their grades have also improved”.*

*“We do see a difference...a lot, now at least that they are staying in housing they improve really in terms of their performance”.*

*“I have enough time to study; I have my own room and privacy to do my own things...I have enough time to do everything...”*

# Getting home after school



## HEALTH: MANAGING HIV/AIDS



- Home-based caring in South Africa = NB avenue of treatment and support for HIV positive patients. Houses are more accessible for HB carers than shacks.
- House residents have more access to healthcare through clinic and home-based care, which increases their compliance with medical treatments.
- Strong link between quality of life and management of living with HIV and AIDS.
- Living in a house improves the lived experiences of HIV positive people.

# Family time

## ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

### Quantitative

Results are mixed and do not reveal significant patterns of change.

It is likely that these benefits will only show after many years (measured by indicators of:

- household income level
- level of starvation/hunger (as a proxy for poverty)
- household asset ownership
- Unemployment
- level of entrepreneurship)

### Qualitative

Asset ownership: Shacks are more susceptible to regular theft so there is continuous loss and replacement of assets which puts a strain on economic well-being:

*“I felt like there was no progress in my life because I would buy things only for them to be stolen repeatedly“.*

A benefit of housing is that assets are safer and more secure than when they are in a shack.

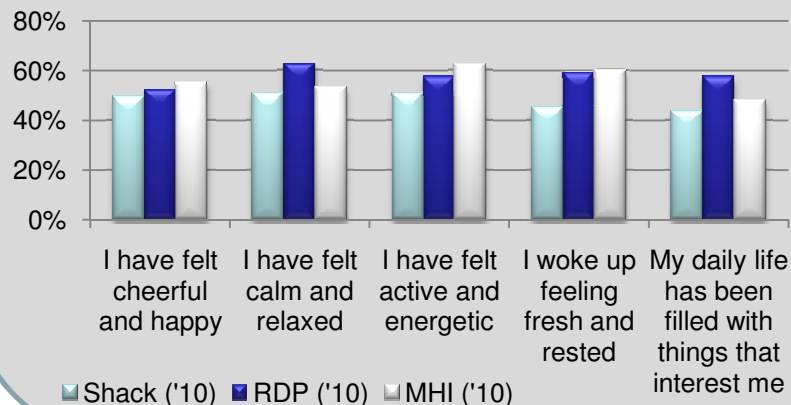
A formal address makes it easier to find employment.

# Family time

## PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

### Personal autonomy

- HD were significantly more positive about being able to plan for the future.
- In one community, organisation HDs show statistically significant differences on 4 out of 5 “happiness” items. Other community showed higher levels of happiness and energy, but these were not statistically significant.



### Qualitative

- Levels of worry: Those living in the houses worry far less about their personal safety compared to those living in shacks because they are less exposed to dangerous elements:

*“There are no more worries about rain, wind or fire.”*

- Houses have improved beneficiaries’ overall sense of happiness, energy and wellbeing, home-dwellers report having more time and freedom to enjoy life:

*“I am happy now with my children; we enjoy the new house...[it] has changed my life”.*

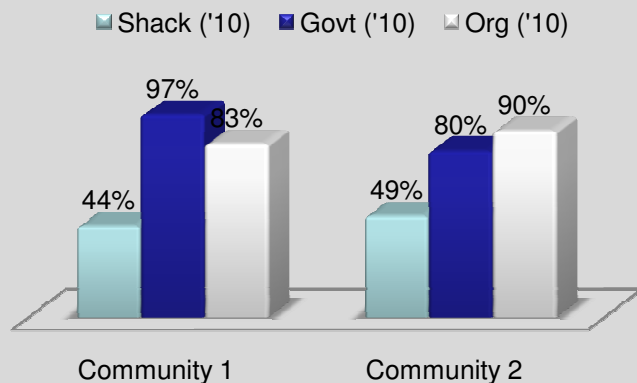
# Going to bed

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

### Quantitative

Lower proportion of org HDs reported property crime and contact crime than did their shack and RDP counterparts, however difference was not statistically significant.

Perceived change in safety and security: occupants of formal housing are more likely to feel safe in their homes than shack dwellers:



### Qualitative

Living in an informal structure led to an increased sense of danger and fear:

*“Our homes were broken into all the time – sometimes even while we are inside the house sleeping. Because we are scared we just pretend to be sleeping while they take what they want.”*

*“We had break-ins all the time, with criminals pulling one of the planks on the wall and coming to the shack. Sometimes this happened while we slept, we’d wake up in the morning and everything would be gone or they’d come in and threaten us with a knife”.*

*“With a shebeen nearby, there were always noisy people in the street and sometimes gunfights. We were afraid of stray bullets and we did not feel safe at all”.*

# Other outcomes/impacts



- Providing skills development and employment opportunities
- Increase in volunteerism, but dependence and entitlement issues
- Encouraged better practice in the housing sector
- Income from renting out house (needs more focused research )
- Lack of sustainability of community facilities



# Changes in organisational policy



- More focus on accredited skills development and employment opportunities
- Changes in volunteer policy to reduce dependence
- Changes in house building model to reduce costs further while maintaining quality
- More engagement with community regarding community facilities for increased sense of ownership
- Strategic community development partners
- Plans for more focused education for new home-owners to increase health and hygiene



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