



"iQhaza Lethu"
An informal settlement upgrading partnership
initiative co-funded by the European Union



INVITATION

Incremental planning, alternative tenure solutions, and unlocking
service provision on privately owned land



Introduction : Soobs Moonsammy

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A Time for Reset - (Local) Government, Policy and Built Environment Practitioners and Citizens

- When we as (govt and BE Practitioners -BEP) and large parts of society, when we think of informality, we think of it as the other
- As separate to what is formality which is what we work with and on, for the most part this is where the BE practitioners see their role and purpose of the profession, this speaks to the tools, instruments and ideology in use – it is all about the formal (and struggling one to uphold, to say the least)
- And when the BEP are involved in informality (such as a planner, engineer etc) they are separate to what is the 'normal' BE mainstream, driven to by projects and numbers (pardon the generalization)
- And when we get involved as the normal BEP we want the rigidity, this is our comfort zone of what we know, we veer off slightly from what is the comprehensive control as dictated by our rational science in the BEP (as transport planners environmental, planners, engineers etc) , yet we are fine to ignore what is taking place in reality, we simply ignore (one quarter of the population and more if we count rural and township areas and CBDs, ITB lands) but when we involved its the lens of the 'formal' that prevails (with some give and take here and there) - in here lies the question how much of planning , engineering, transport planning and the like have been involved in the 312 000 HH (in the 587 settlements) and will be?
- In the recently launched SACN SoCR (21) - some stark trends are highlighted : sub-Saharan cities house 60% of population that live in informal settlements, the highest in the world
- With increased hardships experienced through climate change and other socio-economic-political factors, these numbers are growing
- When do we recognise that 'urban informality' is a of process metropolitan urbanization, expansion - in cities of the South and ETHEKWINI in this case
- Expansion, densification, new household formation, spatial transformation , new edges like that of Ward 105 in the South, how to be a BE practitioner, a govt without embracing, being informed by daily experiences and practices of informality and in this case informal settlements, is unthinkable at this point in time
- This is the urban question and urban policy and crafting a BEP practice that is steeped in and grappling with informality leans into a practice that grapples with African Urbanism

Some Insight into African Urbanism for the BEP

- African urbanisation is regarded as non-conforming as it is not accompanied by economic growth as in developed countries (Turok, 2010; UN-Habitat, 2010/2011).
- According to Pieterse (2011), African cities are very distinctive from cities in the north in terms of culture, education, industrialisation, informality, post-colonialism, everyday survival, violence and poverty. Thus, African urbanism does not respond to the so-called norms of urbanisation.
- Turok (2010) suggests that African urbanisation is different because it has taken place prematurely.
- According to Simone (2004), African urbanism requires new planning theories and practices that respond to the uniqueness of Africa, as the colonised and post-colonised remain entangled and integrated as one relationship.
- Theorisation for African urbanism should also go beyond the informal and embrace cityness in Africa as neither formal nor informal but urban (Simone, 2001; Yiftachel, 2009; Parnell and Robinson, 2012).
- This has a direct bearing on the physical and social spaces created within African urbanism. Some theorists would argue for less government in order to facilitate the movement of, and opportunities for, the poor.
- In (re)theorising for African urbanism and developing urban theory, it is important to consider the role, size, powers and resources of, and conflicts within, the local state (Parnell and Robinson, 2012).
- The value of being definitive and defining African Urbanism is less important, with limiting value, than giving recognition to it and embracing it, it remains an incomplete project that offers opportunity and seeks solutions

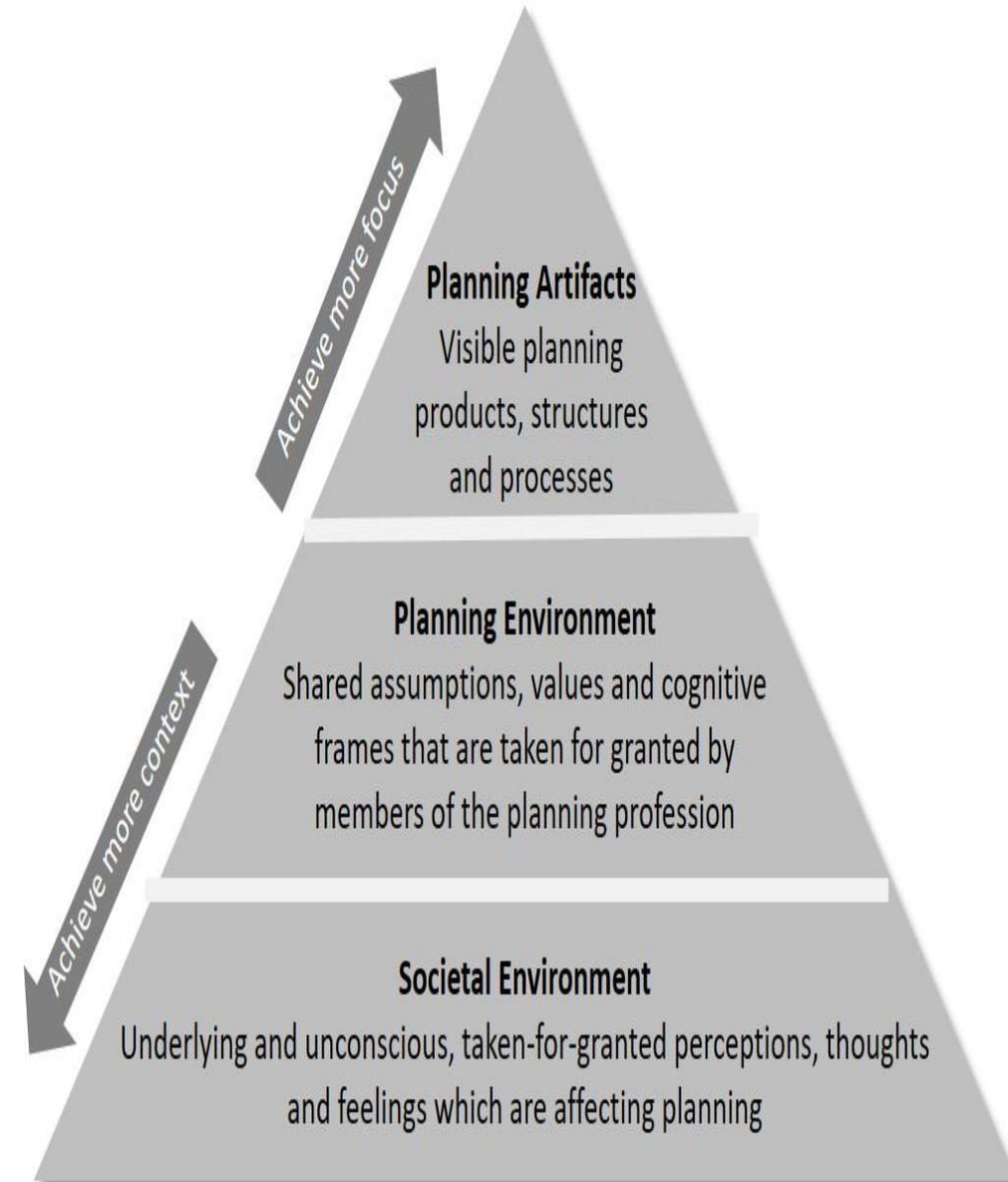
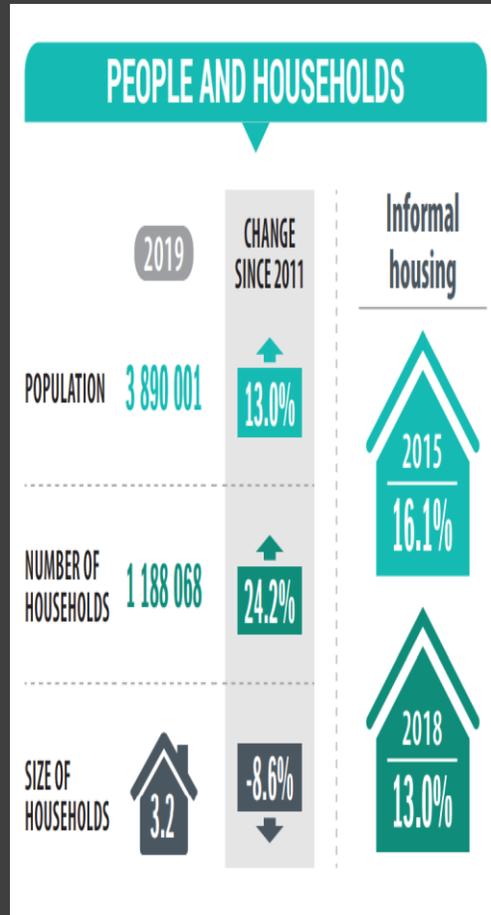


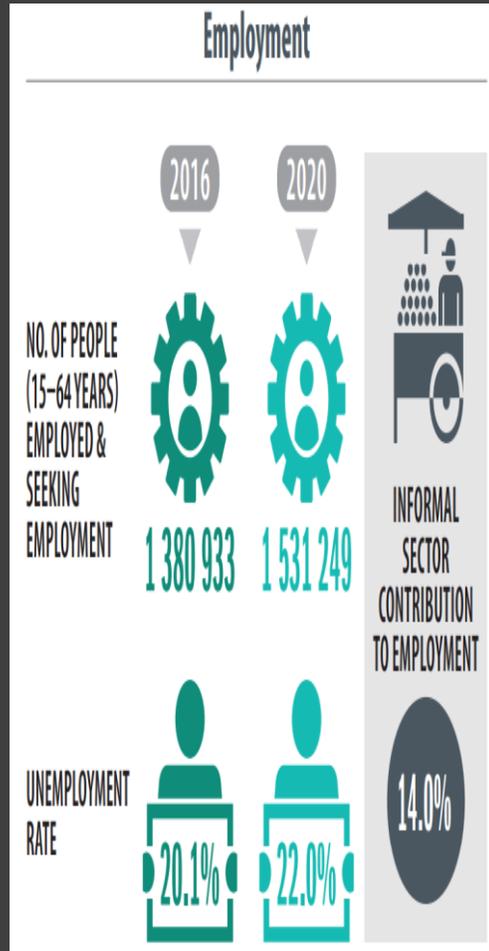
Figure 2.1: The culturised planning model - Source: Othengrafen and Reimer (2013:1275)

- We think academically of African Urbanism, but we speak of practitioners tasked with managing urbanization, facilitating sustainability and resilience, appropriate knowledge creation for policy , action and governance, but we can't do any of this, we don't reset how we see urbanization, and grapple with the BEP in this context
- We in desperate need of new models for BEP , policy makers – International, National, Provincial, Regional and Local, if we are to respond to the 312000 HH in 587 settlements, then we must find (EMBRACE) new models of doing things
- We must forget about , permission from (the 'normal BE practitioners') to give some notions of reduced standards, not knowing if it is sustained or not, does it even make sense, so again, coming from a place a of weakness we engage in informality and in this case informal settlements -This stems from First World Models that manufactures Third World Problems
- I argue we certainly don't lack policy, we lack where its coming from , who is included and who is not, to what extent this is a shared , negotiated policy agenda and when it's not, this makes all the difference
- It is in the policy , strategy and knowledge space that determines what is compliant and what is not , as an example land use manage for informality, environment standards and set asides, roads, services standards, ECDs etc this is the space where resetting should take place, involvement of stakeholders outside the usual is important and a must, a break away from information sharing to understand what it means to cogenerate such policy, such standards a shared agenda
- Isandla Institute speaks of Informality Forums, Neighbourhood Projects and lessons learnt that informs this space, an adapted version of communicative planning theory, that recognises power and conflict
 - It would be interesting to see how the strategy is being shaped by those most likely to be excluded and how this expands knowledge wodge and practice for policy

Seeing Differently



Source : SoCR 2021



- This strategy (eThekweni Informal Settlement Incremental Upgrading City-Wide Strategy) then must pass a test of not making people worse off, creating unnecessary cost and burden to be compliant.
- Challenge BEP to recognise this is where your profession career matters most
 - Roads that are so wide without pavements, land use management driven less by function and more by visuals, so so-called expert knowledge that determines what fits and what does not, without living or learning from lived experiences, ECD places that are so costly to start , that compliance will be just too expensive, that that render the good - illegal
- It was (Roy, 2005) that said planners (BEP) have a real difficulty to work with informality, partly this comes from our schooling, behaviours re-enforced at work, as practitioners and belonging to practitioners' bodies, where it is taken for granted that all risk is avoided, we don't have the space to balance between risk mitigation, and risk avoidance, harm reduction approaches - this confines and limits working and embracing informality
- This certainly has uncomfortable reasoning, when as a city we have just come through floods

When Apartheid was the Lens - How Effective this was in Achieving the Apartheid City



- When African Urbanism is the Lens..., Imagine the possibilities we have if we change how we look at our city, with a new lens one that sees informality and formality as gray spaces (not formal or informal but distinctively urban) as opposed to seeing things with a formal lens and to make things work around this, this is the reset we need for the present we in and future that awaits us
- Blurring models, A Development Agency for Informal Settlement Upgrades – from Policy to Implementation
- Backyard rooms for rent and microunits in the suburban (imagine Umhlanga)
- New and incentives & approaches to using private owned land for rental accommodation for those with low affordability
- A new culture for planning lies in reducing individual and collective isolation and increasing tolerance and acceptance within the context of a city shared by different people

thank you