

Critical Issues with Social Tenure Domain Model in Tenure-Responsive Land Use Planning in Okahandja, Namibia

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SUMMARY

Informal settlements, often characterized by inadequate housing, limited access to basic services and precarious living conditions, continue to be a significant urban challenge in many parts of the world. These settlements are typically marked by land tenure insecurity, which hinders residents' rights to their homes and exacerbates their vulnerability. This paper explores the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) as a potential land information system tool in Namibia to improve tenure security in informal settlements through the case Okahandja Municipality. Through the use of both primary and secondary data involving a comprehensive review of literature, policy frameworks and community engagements, this paper sheds light on the multi-faceted nature of informal settlements and the significance of tenure security within the broader context of urban development and equitable housing. The findings underscore the need to prioritize tenure security as an essential component of sustainable and inclusive urban management. It evident that insecure tenure leaves residents of informal settlements vulnerable to displacement or forced evictions. The STDM serves as a vital tool for land information management for low-income to ultra-low communities in smaller local authorities. It is also a tool that aids local authorities to keep record of all land information on informal settlements in a central repository. The application of STDM in Okahandja gives incorporates a spatial reference to the existing right to land occupation certificates issued by the municipality. Land information that is spatially linked, with parcel clearly identified and linked to occupants, creates an opportunity for ease of land management and facilitates effective informal settlement upgrading. Tenure security ultimately helps in improving the living conditions and rights of residents in informal settlements while giving them a sense of belonging and contributing towards social cohesion.

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