

ABSTRACT

Adequate Housing in Jamaica: The Perspectives of Householders and Housing Planners

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Jamaica's Vision for housing is in line with the widely accepted view that adequate housing is required to improve well-being. The central idea in this study is that a contextual understanding of adequate housing which takes account of the perspectives of householders and housing planners is essential to delivering adequate housing for all. The UN-Habitat's conditions for adequate housing were used as the framework for assessing adequacy. A review of the literature on housing was carried out to determine the extent to which the consensus on adequate housing for all has been implemented in Jamaica since the 1996 Istanbul Declaration. The findings of the review were two-fold: (i) Jamaica has no programme which addresses adequate housing and (ii) the developments were fragmented and, at best, can be classified as complementary interventions. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from a sample of housing planners and a stratified random sample of householders from public housing developments across six parishes. The study revealed that planners were generally unaware of the UN-Habitat's conditions of adequacy, and that there are disparities between the perspectives of both groups. While planners emphasized quantity, affordability and habitability, householders emphasized access, habitability, dwelling size, and the home and neighbourhood dimensions of housing. This study is the first to explore the concept of adequate housing in Jamaica. It recommends that an objective which promotes adequate housing be incorporated in the island's housing policy and that the current housing quality index be modified to assess adequacy. This housing adequacy index should be used as a planning and monitoring tool by local parish council and national level planners as part of a hybrid, top-down and bottom-up approach to housing. Further, adequate housing should be anchored by accessibility in policy in order to ensure housing justice.

Keywords: Adequate housing; housing policy; housing planning; housing justice.