ABSTRACT

Shelter is fundamental to people’s physical, psychological, social and economic well being in all countries. The problems faced by the low-cost housing sector in Mauritius have not been given due consideration up to now. There is a lack of initiative both from the side of the government and educational institutions like the University of Mauritius to research on the problems so as to find sustainable solutions to them. In this dissertation, the author attempts to identify the major issues confronted by the low-cost housing sector in Mauritius.

Housing has never been affordable to the very low-income earners in Mauritius. The main hurdle to constructing a house is the cost. In Mauritius, those major factors responsible for this high cost are the conventional techniques being used as well as the over-design of the buildings. Furthermore, there has also been a cumulative increase in all the components that go into the housing product, such as land, materials and labour. Thus, there is a widened gap between the cheapest housing option and family affordability. By carrying out a survey among professionals in the construction industry and by presenting a case study about an alternative construction technology, the author tries to prove that ways of reducing the cost of low-cost housing units do exist.

Low-cost housing developments undertaken so far were by the National Housing Development Company (NHDC). The latter did not carry out enough studies about the acceptability of the type of units that they were going to build for the low-income people in Mauritius, with the result that many people now living in these types of units have many complaints about the latter. The author carried out an interview and looked into those complaints that the residents had to make. The feedback provided a good
source of information about those aspects concerned with living in a flat that the residents were not satisfied with. That information would be useful when considering future housing developments.

Key words: Low-cost housing, sustainable solutions, cost, conventional techniques