

## **The response of common building construction technologies to the urban poor and their environment**

B.W. Wekesa\*, G.S. Steyn<sup>1</sup>, F.A.O. Otieno<sup>2</sup>

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: 027 12 841 2544; fax: 027 12 841 2539.

<sup>1</sup>Tel.: 027 12 382 5712; fax: 027 12 382 5036

<sup>2</sup>Tel.: 027 12 382 5120, 027 82 335 7019 (mobile); fax 027 12 382 5568.

e-mail addresses: bwekesa@csir.co.za (B.W.Wekesa), steyns@tut.ac.za (G.S. Steyn), otienofao@tut.ac.za (F.A.O. Otieno).

### **ABSTRACT**

There is a need to assist the inhabitants of informal settlements especially in developing countries to improve their living conditions and hence their quality of life. However, it is important to note that the bulk of housing for the urban poor will always be built by the poor themselves. In which case, there is a need for building technologies that are responsive to such communities and their environment in order to empower them to make their own contribution to the process of improving their living conditions. There exists building technologies considered as such. This paper analyses some of these technologies against a conceptual framework. The framework defines and analyses building technologies in terms of socio-economic, environmental and technical criteria defined in the regional context. It is based on the concept of sustainable development. Building technologies are analysed as an objective function problem using a multi-criteria optimisation technique. The results show that most of the technologies are not responsive in the regional context. That is, the technologies cannot provide a good quality dwelling unit and at the same time address the socio-economic needs of the urban poor while minimising the negative impact on the environment.