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### Housing challenges encountered by single mothers heading households in Tyutyu Village, Bhisho Eastern Cape, South Africa

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#### ABSTRACT

Access to social and economic opportunities, such as housing and property rights, remains gendered in many developing countries such as South Africa due to institutionalised forms of exclusion. Focusing on rural female-headed households (FHHs), this descriptive qualitative study explored the interconnectedness between housing and rurality challenges in Tyutyu Village, Bhisho, Eastern Cape, South Africa. The study applied purposive sampling to select 10 female household heads to whom semi-structured interviews were administered. Thematic analysis was used to make sense of the data. The study found that FHHs experienced several housing-related challenges, such as persistent unemployment and poverty, unsafe and insecure housing and neighbourhoods, and the absence of a father figure. Based on the findings, the study recommends integrated and inclusive gender-aware housing policy responses to cater for the housing needs of FHHs.

**Keywords:** female-headed households; gender; housing; social exclusion; South Africa; Tyutyu Village