

Human Rights and

Slum-Upgrading

General Introduction and Compilation of Case Studies



Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions

Introduction

Over a billion people throughout the world live in slums, which UN-Habitat define as featuring lack of durable housing, insufficient living area, lack of access to clean water, inadequate sanitation and insecure tenure.

Slum upgrading, as opposed to slum redevelopment or slum clearance, is now widely acknowledged as one of the more effective means of improving the housing conditions of the poor and has been hailed as a 'linchpin' of any urban poverty strategy. It has been defined by the Cities Alliance as consisting of *'physical, social, economic, organisational and environmental improvements undertaken cooperatively and locally among citizens, community groups, businesses and local authorities'*¹. The improvement of slums is now a Millennium Development Goal, a though the target of reaching 100 million slum dwellers seems very low.

Slum-upgrading can also go beyond mere physical improvements and promote changes in policy at a city-wide or even national level, recognising that slums are not isolated problems, but indicative of an entire urban system that is not functioning and must therefore be addressed through city-wide planning processes.

From a human rights perspective, slum upgrading can help realise the right to adequate housing and other human rights. Existing housing stock and access to services can be improved, which means that excessive reliance is

not placed upon investments in new low-income housing. Slum upgrading can also provide protection from forced evictions through better tenure security. However, slum upgrading programmes can have adverse implications for human rights if they are poorly designed or implemented.

This brochure provides a brief analysis of selected slum upgrading processes from different parts of the world, placing special emphasis on the various human rights issues involved. It addresses all the different local stakeholder groups, from affected community members to potential and existing decision-makers.

The case studies provide a range of ideas and measures that have positively influenced the development of low-income settlements in the past in order to provide inspiration for current and future projects in the field. One example of a poorly designed programme has also been included to highlight the difficulties that slum upgrading projects can encounter. Though slum-upgrading processes are certainly too complex to be replicated unchanged from one settlement to another, a comparison of basic phenomena and strategies, for example concerning tenure, community participation, financing mechanisms, organisational structures and engagement with municipal authorities can provide valuable information and be a source of encouragement.

Characteristics of urban low-income settlements

Low-income settlements around the world differ in as many aspects as they are comparable. Even within the same country, they cannot be described by any single valid definition. Slums are often set within different legal frameworks and different political situations, emerge from unique historical backgrounds, and have different socio-cultural as well as socio-economic compositions. More often than not, these structural and social distinctions are accompanied by further technical and regional differences, for example in size, density, the quality of the built environment or vulnerability to certain natural disasters.

Generally speaking, though, low-income settlements are in one way or another at a disadvantage - compared to other areas within the city - due to the relative poverty of their inhabitants or due to lack of land security. Lack of financial resources and lack of political commitment are two of the main causes for problems commonly encountered in these areas such as insecure land tenure, the deterioration of the building stock or the exemption from city-wide services such as refuse collection, water, waste-water and sanitation systems.



*Kiambiu
settlement,
Nairobi*

¹ Cities Alliance, *Cities Without Slums: Action Plan for Moving Slum Upgrading to Scale* (The World Bank and the UN Centre For Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat), Special Summary Edition, 1999), p. 4, www.citiesalliance.org. The Cities Alliance is a "global alliance of cities and their development partners committed to improve the living conditions of the urban poor through action". It was launched in 1999 by the World Bank and UN-Habitat.

What is 'slum-upgrading' and what can it entail?

Rehabilitation or 'upgrading' aims at tackling any one or more of these problems. However, since no two settlements are the same, there is no single correct way of proceeding. Any process of slum upgrading requires careful analysis of the local situation and adaptation to its unique circumstances. What slum upgrading actually involves therefore varies. It is subject to local decision-making and can include anything from technical improvements to socio-political arrangements. The following list displays some of the most common issues addressed by slum upgrading programs:

- a) Legalisation of tenure status for sites and houses, including regularisation of rental agreements to ensure improved tenure.
- b) Provision or improvement of technical services e.g., water, waste and waste water management, sanitation, electricity, road pavement, street lighting, etc.
- c) Provision or improvement of social infrastructure such as schools, clinics, community centres, playgrounds, green areas, etc.
- d) Physical improvement of the built environment, including rehabilitation/improvement of existing housing stock.
- e) Construction of new housing units (Housing construction can but doesn't necessarily form part of upgrading schemes. Often enhancing and rehabilitating the existing housing stock is much more sensible and effective and can be achieved at little cost through legalisation of tenure status or regularisation of rental agreements.)
- f) Design of urban development plans (including, for example, the rearrangement of sites and street patterns according to infrastructure needs, although working within existing settlement patterns is generally less disruptive to community networks. This measure might entail resettlement of some residents).
- g) Changes in regulatory framework to better suit the needs and opportunities available to the poor, as far as possible keeping to existing settlement patterns.
- h) Densification measures (e.g. multiple-story houses) for example in order to protect fertile land from being occupied for settlement. Also possible: de-densification due to partial resettlement.

Human Rights and Slum Upgrading

Slum upgrading can protect a range of human rights from access to water and other services to protection from harassment and eviction. The key rights that slum upgrading addresses are the right to housing and protection from forced evictions, the right to water and sanitation and women's housing rights. However, slum upgrading projects are by no means easy to organise, resource, implement or replicate, especially not in a context of poverty and underdevelopment. To be successful, slum upgrading projects require careful long-term plan-

ning, design and management. In particular, there must be political commitment, local conditions need to be considered; housing affordability and project finance must be sustainable in the long term. Direct, meaningful, and sustained community involvement and participation rather than just consultation are vital. Residents must be effectively protected from evictions and violence through the process and there must be recognition of the human rights outlined below.



Kosovar Roma refugee living in informal settlement in Serbia

The Right to Adequate Housing

Adequate housing is fundamental to survival and to living a dignified life with peace and security. The right to adequate housing was recognised in the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights and is entrenched in a number of international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The ICESCR became law in 1976 and is now legally binding on 154 countries. In Article 11(1) it states that:

“The State parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and for his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.”

According to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which oversees the ICESCR, in order for housing to be adequate it must provide more than just four walls and a roof over one’s head. It must, at a minimum, include the following elements, all of which directly pertain to slum upgrading:

Security of tenure: Security of tenure is the cornerstone of the right to adequate housing. It protects people against arbitrary forced eviction, harassment and other threats. Residents of informal settlements and communities without legal

security of tenure live in a constant state of uncertainty, which keeps them from investing time, effort or money into their homes. Providing security of tenure is therefore key to successful slum upgrading strategies.

In settlements with a majority of owner-occupiers, tenure security can be provided relatively easily by granting land leaseholds or title deeds. In settlements with a majority of tenants other systems of tenure security must be found that benefit the most vulnerable instead of commercial slumlords. It must also be borne in mind that rental accommodation is sometimes preferable for very poor people, who may not want the extra burden of ownership and therefore regularisation and control of rental status will be required.

Availability of services, habitability:

Adequate housing requires access to basic services such as potable drinking water, energy for cooking, heating and lighting, sanitation and washing facilities, food storage, refuse disposal, site drainage and emergency services. For housing to be considered adequate, inhabitants must also be ensured adequate space and protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health, structural or environmental hazards.

Technical standards are a key issue to be addressed in this context. If technical improvements are not made within the range of the target group’s ability to pay, they can lead to displacement

of the lowest income segments of the community. Therefore technical standards may need to be reduced, at least in the short-term.

Affordability: Housing must be affordable for everyone and one of the key challenges in slum upgrading is ensuring that improvements do not lead to increased housing costs and therefore displacement. However, fulfilling human rights in the context of slum upgrading does not mean, however, that state or local authorities are under the obligation to provide free services. On the contrary, some slum upgrading approaches have relied nearly exclusively on the target group's resources (for example, slum upgrading projects organised by Slum Dwellers International). Ensuring successful slum upgrading will require constant attention to the budgets of the affected communities and the charges and prices associated with the project.

Physical accessibility: Housing must be accessible to everyone. Housing law and policy must ensure that housing needs of the most vulnerable segments of society are met, including women, the elderly, the physically disabled, children etc. Where housing markets fail to address this, slum upgrading programmes can support the most vulnerable population in improving the urban environment in which they have made themselves at home.

Location: For housing to be adequate it must be situated so as to allow access to employment opportunities, health

care services, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities. It must also be located in an acceptable environment, not, as is often the case, in environmentally hazardous areas such as dump sites, steep slopes, or flood prone areas. Though low-income settlements usually lack public facilities, it has been recognised that strong social networks play an immensely important role in alleviating this deficit as well as in creating employment opportunities. Slum upgrading, as opposed to relocation, should make sure that social networks are maintained and distances to the work place are kept reasonable.

Cultural adequacy: The right to adequate housing includes a right to reside in housing that is considered culturally adequate. Slum upgrading programs that do not consult with the target group prior to any improvement actions, run the risk of not being accepted by the community due to cultural inadequacy. It is therefore advisable to agree upon improvement measures by creating a dialogue with residents. In some areas of Kenya, for example, informal burial grounds are commonly kept next to the home, resulting in extraordinarily strong personal attachments to specific housing sites. Traditional planning instruments such as site redistribution or the reorganisation of the street layouts are therefore potentially hampered and must be reconsidered.

Women's Rights and Housing

The bulk of problems associated with inadequate housing conditions especially affects women. Beyond basic shelter needs, for women particularly, housing is a place of employment and social interaction, and a place to care for children. Nevertheless, women can face discrimination in many aspects of housing. This can occur in terms of from exclusionary policy development, lack of control over household resources, rights of inheritance and ownership, community organising or even the construction of housing. Secure tenure is one of the key priorities for many women. See, for example, the Commission on Human Rights in Resolution 2000/13 stated that, "Discrimination in law against women with respect to acquiring and securing land, property and housing ... constitutes a violation of women's human right to protection against discrimination. There are a number of ways in which security of tenure is denied to women including gender-biased law, customary laws, tradition and dominant social attitudes, domestic violence and financial barriers. Since women are generally in charge of households and most directly affected by inadequate housing conditions, they tend to know which problems are the most pressing, and what kind of improvements their families can afford. Many slum-upgrading programs rely especially on women's cooperation in planning and implementation of improvement strategies.

The Right to Water

Access to good quality potable water is fundamental to human survival and therefore basic to any slum upgrading scheme. The human right to water has been recognised in various international standards, in particular the General Comment No. 15 on the Right to Water which states that:

"The human right to water entitles everyone to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses."

In many low-income settlements, water is both scarce and expensive. In some countries slum-dwellers pay up to 30 times more than middle class residents for their water. Moreover, inadequate sanitation is one of the main sources of water contamination in urban poor settlements, leading to diseases and millions of deaths each year. Providing adequate sanitation facilities is therefore equally fundamental to low-income settlement upgrading.



The Right to Participation

The right to participation is also part of international human rights law. In its General Comment No. 4 on right to adequate housing, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stated that each State party to ICESCR will need to adopt a national housing strategy and that:

”Both for reasons of relevance and effectiveness, as well as in order to ensure respect for other human rights, such a strategy should reflect extensive genuine consultation with, and participation by, all of those affected, including the homeless, the inadequately housed and their representatives.”

Moreover, citizens and residents have a right to information. Fore example as clearly expressed in Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

However, participation and sharing of information are not only important simply because these requirements are a fundamental part of human rights and imposed by international laws and standards. Participation is the cornerstone of international best practice strategies to deal with poverty and the provision of low-income housing, simply because of the enormous value it adds to projects. Participation can secure trust, which in turn promotes cooperation and unleashes community energy and community knowledge, and with it reliable, appropriate information – all of which are indispensa-

ble ingredients in the design of appropriate and sustainable development processes.

In a number case studies in this publication - in particular, the Orangi Pilot Project - innovative and effective participatory approaches can be found, including the use of street or lane-based representation.



Conclusions on Human Rights

International human rights standards provide a solid foundation and a logical starting point for slum upgrading projects. They set a legal framework that communities can refer to as they voice their claims, and that decision-makers must recognise and make an effort to comply with. The various human rights standards relevant to slum upgrading therefore fulfil two important purposes. First, they can support vulnerable communities in their struggle for a fairer and more humane environment by providing an official background for their legitimate demands. Secondly, their legally binding nature puts duty-bearers, who in most cases are state or local authorities, under the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil these rights. Experience has shown that right to participation is a fundamental element

of slum upgrading strategies. Participation in decision-making can ensure sustainable programme design by fostering community organisation and by creating a mutually enhancing dialogue between civil society and other stakeholders.

In the past, numerous legal decisions have also been made in favour of vulnerable communities worldwide based on international human rights law. For example, some communities in Argentina have successfully relied on the right to health in legal cases to compel authorities to provide a regular supply of water in the short-term and take steps to provide a proper service over time. Human rights can also guide the various policy mechanisms established to support slum upgrading.



Informal housing in the Philippines

Case Studies

The following case studies provide an insight into how different slum upgrading strategies have worked or failed in different countries in the past.

1. Orangi Pilot Project, Karachi, Pakistan⁴

Orangi is the largest of Karachi's low-income settlements, housing approximately 1 million people. Due to the initiative of a locally based NGO called Orangi Pilot Project (OPP), residents considerably improved their access to environmental services, health care and employment opportunities in little more than a decade.

In 1980, OPP started its work in the settlement with a low-cost sanitation program which, by 1993, had successfully installed sewers serving more than 70,000 out of a total of approximately 94,000 households in the settlement. Once the sanitation program had gotten under way, other community efforts developed, including a basic health and family planning program, a credit program for small family enterprises, a low-cost housing upgrade program, a program to assist in upgrading physical and academic conditions at schools, a women's work centre program, and a rural development program. OPP's work has been replicated in various other settlements throughout Pakistan.

OPP's achievements have been based on the conviction that people organized in small groups can help themselves, and that if social and economic organizations within a community are strengthened, services and material conditions will begin to improve.

In Orangi, residents were organized in groups of 20 to 40 families who lived along the same lane and generally knew and trusted each other. Each group elected a lane manager, who formally applied to OPP for assistance, collected money, received tools and organized construction work.

Although poor, Orangi residents were motivated not only to pay for improvements to sewage systems but also to assume responsibility for their construction and maintenance. Residents were interested in participating because their houses represented a significant investment for them and because lack of sanitation facilities was regarded a health hazard to their families. In the end, residents performed between 80 and 90 percent of the work needed to build the sewer system, leaving the Karachi government with the responsibility only for the provision of the main drains and treatment plants.

OPP managed to drastically reduce construction costs by simplifying designs and standardising parts. This

way, sanitation technology was not only kept affordable, but also simple to construct and easy to maintain. Models and other visual material helped to demonstrate how the sewer system would be laid out, and ensured the construction of a coherent and workable system in spite of decentralised planning.

All programs headed by OPP were accompanied by research and evaluation procedures. A careful problem analysis preceded any activities, and the implementation process was continuously reviewed so adjustments could be made as necessary.

Functioning partnerships between stakeholders as well as the incremental, community-based approach to tackling neighborhood problems have rendered the Orangi Pilot Project one of the most successful slum-upgrading projects to date. However, since residents had land tenure, they were more willing to invest in services.

2. Voi, Kenya

While upgrading of the Tanzania-Bonde-ni settlement in Voi took 12 years to complete, it has been noted that the participatory approach that was taken ensured that the upgrading was sustainable.

The settlement, with a population of 5 000 residents, was chosen as a pilot project within the Voi Municipality. The majority of the residents were structure-owners. Although the settlement was situated on Government land – as well as on land owned by the Kenya Railways Corporation and private interests – the various stakeholders managed to negotiate secure tenure for the beneficiaries. In the case of Voi, the tenure took the form of a community land trust, which was chosen from a number of options. The land trust restricted the residents' ability to sell their units, which meant that they were less susceptible to land speculation and the pressure to sell their shares. A management committee of 13 members runs the trust.

Sponsored by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the project was multi-sectoral from the outset and involved a wide range of stakeholders. Committees were also instituted at community, local and national levels. According to Professor Syagga of the University of Nairobi, two aspects that were overlooked were the need for the project to go beyond shelter to include nutrition, child healthcare and family-planning, as well as the need for active monitoring and evaluation.

⁴ See Website of Orangi Pilot Project (OPP): www.oppinstitutions.org and [World Resources 1996-97: The urban environment](#), World Resources Institute, United Nations Environmental Programme, United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, 1996.

3. Land Sharing in Thailand

During the 1980s, the concept of land sharing emerged and was successfully implemented in various low-income settlements in the city of Bangkok, Thailand. The approach initially evolved as a result of negotiations between organised slum-dwellers facing the threat of eviction and their counterpart - a private landowner. After a prolonged struggle, both sides agreed in many cases that part of the disputed territory was to be permanently and legally assigned to its occupants, whereas the remaining part was to be vacated for the owner's further development. Families originally living on the landlord's share of land were to be re-housed on the other side.

This innovative approach to resolving conflicts between informal dwellers and landlords shows how evictions can be avoided in favour of respectful cooperation. It does not, however, provide answers to the problems that arise during the process of slum upgrading that follows.

Land sharing depends greatly on strong community organisations with the leadership and commitment to represent their own interests in the face of authority and the ability to acquire support from other outside organisations. Since settlers, as opposed to landlords, have no legal claims to the land, government

agencies rarely grant them outright support and will at most act as arbiter in the negotiation process. If communities do not persistently oppose eviction, the landlord will have no reason to give in.

However, it is the government's obligation not only to ensure the planned and orderly development of cities and to promote real estate investments; governments must also see to meeting the housing needs of the poor. Land sharing is a compromise which allows governments to remain neutral, where the land is not owned directly by the government and yet provides them with a solution to the conflict.

Land sharing is only a pre-requisite for the urban upgrading process that follows. Once a binding land sharing agreement has been signed entitling residents to their land legally and permanently, urban improvement schemes must still be developed. Increased residential densities and the need to clear part of the site usually require reconstruction measures. This often involves a considerable logistical and financial effort and can include new forms of housing such as multi-story buildings.

⁵ This summary is based on material from Paul Syagga, Integrated, Multi-Sectoral and Sectoral Urban Development Initiatives in Kenya, report prepared for ITDG-East Africa, Jan. 2001.

4. Urban Management in Porto Alegre, Brazil⁷

In 1990, state and municipal governments of Porto Alegre, Brazil, initiated an infrastructure project that developed into a sustainable, pro-poor approach to urban management. The project managed to create new relationships between politicians, bureaucrats and the poor, especially by introducing additional elements for political participation besides the periodic influence in elections. The reduction of political and administrative domination also resulted in an adaptation of technical standards for slum-upgrading and engraining community participation into the urban management process.

The project started out with the goal of adapting public services to the needs of the communities of five slum areas in Porto Alegre with a total of approx. 60,000 inhabitants. It also aimed at strengthening the self-management capacities of the target population. The project management consisted of three especially developed decision-making entities, which brought together a variety of stakeholders as follows:

The PRORENDIA Council consisted of a balanced relation of representatives from the affected communities, the municipal government, the German development agency (GTZ), and the Brazilian implementation agency (METROPLAN).

The Council met once a month and discussed conceptual and procedural issues to do with the community funding, neighbourhood offices, local development plans and improvement measures. Though the implementation agencies had more decision-making rights, communities were able to exert considerable influence on the course of activities on a regular basis.

Local Development Committees (LDC's) were established that united representatives from all existing neighbourhood associations, clubs and community groups. Each Local Development Committee was headed by two elected, non-partisan leaders and its work assisted by project staff without any further membership rights. The LDC's tasks included managing community funds, drafting neighbourhood development plans, and accompanying the execution of infrastructure improvements in the area. Training enabled LDC members to plan and account for small scale technical interventions, and to articulate a long-term development strategy.

The PRORENDIA Forum existed as an independent forum of community leaders, that could be consulted by the Council and also develop its own activities. The PRORENDIA Forum proved to be effective at mobilising its members when the project as a whole was in danger, although, apart from that, its influence diminished once the Local

⁷ See Matthaeus, Horst: PRORENDIA Slum-upgrading Rio Grande do Sul: From the Provision of Infrastructure to Strengthening the Self-Management Capacity of the Poor.

Development Councils were created. The PRORENDA Urbano project laid the foundation for a permanent structure of community self-management in the low-income settlements of Porto Alegre due to effective bodies of joint decision-making that were able to influence the project outcome because no target was explicitly defined from the start. This way, the project took on a procedural character.

5. Non-disruptive decanting in Santo Andre, Brazil⁶

The 'Integrated Social Inclusion Programme' in Santo Andre, Brazil, is based on the principles of integrating marginalised informal settlement communities into the city, participation of the residents, and coordination across the social, economic and infrastructural sectors. One of the projects undertaken within this programme was the upgrading of Sacadura Cabral, an informal settlement that had existed for 32 years. 780 households were occupying 4.2 hectares of flood prone land (a density of 186 households per hectare). The level of the land had to be raised by 2.5 m, in order to prevent flooding. All residents therefore had to be removed temporarily.

A new layout with plots of 42 to 45 m² to be held in freehold title was developed through many workshops with the community. However, in the new layout 200 of the original 780 households could not be accommodated. A neighbouring portion of land could be developed with new housing units. In close collaboration with the community, the concept of choice was incorporated into the relocation. Removal of households, land filling and redevelopment was to occur on a phase-by-phase basis, small portions of the settlement being removed at a time. However, rather than treating the neighbouring development as a decanting site, a call was made to all the residents, for people to come forward who wished to move out of the slum and into the new development on a permanent basis. Sufficient households volunteered, and their vacated units were then occupied by households living in the first phase of the development. Once Phase One was complete, these households moved back onto their demarcated plots of 42-45 m², and with credit and technical support from the municipality began converting their shacks into formal multi-storey houses, with commercial space on the ground floor. In the meantime, the second phase could be handled in the same manner.

⁶ University of the Witwatersrand, notes from a study tour to Brazil, Nov. 2003.

Failure of the Cingapura Programme in Sao Paulo, Brazil⁸

In 1993, a conservative party, which had been voted into the municipal administration of Sao Paulo, halted all in situ upgrading projects of the previous administration and developed the Cingapura Programme. This intervention proceeded in selected favelas (informal settlements) that were visible from the city's highways. Residents were moved into controlled temporary (wooden) housing on the same land, while the favela was demolished and replaced by a high-rise block of flats⁹. At the time, the land tenure component in situ upgrading in Sao Paulo was conceptualised as free hold titling - in practice this has proven to be a very slow process, alternative tenure forms such as leaseholds are currently being considered in Brazil.

Even though the temporary relocation site was nearby, residents resisted this disruptive intervention. It destroyed local enterprises and intricate social relations in the neighbourhood, and required residents to live in tightly controlled temporary housing for many more months than promised. Towards the end of the administration's term, it had accepted that people could not be forced into modern housing, and allowed communities to choose between in situ upgrading and high-rise flats. By then, it was widely recognised that despite its enormous cost to the administration, the Cingapura Programme had made only a minimal impact on the scale of favelas in Sao Paulo.

The administration was voted out in 2000, and the new subsequent administration resumed in situ upgrading. At that time, the media exposed large scale corruption in the contracting system for the Cingapura Programme, zero cost recovery (the individual flats were to be financed through a tenant purchase scheme, but for political reasons payments were never collected), a rampant informal secondary market that had displaced the original beneficiaries, control by criminal gangs, and lack of maintenance. Today, the rapidly decaying Cingapura blocks remind city motorists of the failures of a corrupt administration.

⁸ Source: Marie Huchzermeyer, *Unlawful Occupation: Informal Settlements and Urban Policy in South Africa and Brazil* (forthcoming, Africa World Press, 2004).

⁹ The intervention was designed primarily to benefit the construction industry and build political capital; indeed, the construction industry was one of the main supporters of the mayor's party.

Conclusions on Case Studies

As the case studies demonstrate, upgrading the urban environment of low-income settlements can encompass a variety of components. The main issues are political will from the authorities, land tenure, financing and the institutional arrangements, including how stakeholders, particularly the marginalised and vulnerable, can participate in decision-making processes.

It is important that the political will to carry out an upgrading process comes from an idea of improving the standing of a community, rather than a desire to rid an area of an 'eyesore'. Upgrading, to be successful, is a long-term process rather than being a political project and must be supported by all stakeholders despite what can be conflicting interests. This will involve carrying out extensive surveys, preferably by the residents themselves in order to understand what is currently the norm in terms of living conditions and what ideas the residents may have of how this could be improved. Women's involvement is particularly essential in this process as they tend to be not only the social glue but also as the residents with the most invested in the home and its environments will be most effected if the upgrading process is not favourable.

Part of a slum upgrading process may be simply to make provision for further increases in population by making land available with services for low-income residents. This will decrease pressure on

those settlements which are already in existence, making the upgrading process easier to manage.

Usually, tenure regularisation is the first necessary step towards achieving any substantial improvements as without some form of regularisation it is unlikely that there will be investments made to improve either services or housing. It is also an essential element of the human right to adequate housing. One option, which lowers the likelihood of speculation, is land sharing agreements, whereby land title is not given to individuals but is held in trust. This also helps to avoid the commodification of land.

Infrastructure deficits, especially concerning water supply and waste water and sanitation management, are also important issues to be addressed.

While access to potable water is vital to human survival, functioning waste and waste water management systems can help to secure an adequate standard of health.

However, the case studies show that reaching technical goals should not be the primary concern of any slum-upgrading initiative. It is equally important to enable communities to contribute to urban management issues on a regular and institutionalised basis. This not only requires effective community organisations, but also the cooperation and political commitment of local governments and administrations. This

is frequently where problems can occur, as those with the political power to lead slum upgrading programmes are often those with the most to lose from allowing community processes to make decisions regarding housing and tenure status. Successive, incremental upgrading on the basis of joint decisions and effort, can truly enhance the urban environment, and contribute to sustainably improving the lives of many people. Community involvement including self-financing of parts of the upgrading process, perhaps facilitated through increased tenure security, has the benefit of increasing the likelihood of internal investment, which in turn leads to increased sustainability. This may demand an incremental approach to upgrading, rather than expecting that a settlement will become a model environment overnight.

Decision-making at the lowest level is more likely to ensure that residents are satisfied with what is planned. As change tends to lead to heightened risk, particularly in low-income settlements where coping mechanisms tend to be very highly tuned, unless people are given the opportunity not just to voice concerns but be involved directly in decision-making, there can often be high levels of discontent and conflict, even where it looks like there will be increased access to security and better services.

Affordability is key to any upgrading process, particularly when it comes to operation and maintenance of new installations, so while reducing standards where necessary to allow existing population to remain in place can be a positive step, reducing standards which then leads to an increase in maintenance costs should be avoided.



Basic Principles of Slum Policy (set up by UNHabitat in 2004):

DO'S	DON'TS
Promote good urban governance systems	Assume that slums will disappear automatically with economic growth
Establish enabling institutional frameworks involving all partner	Underestimate the role of local authorities, landowners, community leaders and residents
Implement and monitor pro-poor city development strategies	Separate upgrading from investment planning and urban management
Encourage initiatives of slum-dwellers and recognize the role of women	Ignore the specific needs and contributions of women and vulnerable groups
Ensure secure tenure, consolidate occupancy rights and regularize informal settlements	Carry out unlawful forced evictions
Involve tenants and owners in finding solutions prioritising collective interests	Discriminate against rental housing or promote a single tenure option
Adopt an incremental approach to upgrading	Impose unrealistic standards and regulations
Associate municipal finance, cross-subsidies and beneficiary contributions to ensure financial viability	Rely on governmental subsidies or on full-cost recovery from slum-dwellers
Design and negotiate relocation plans only when absolutely necessary	Invest public resources in massive social housing schemes
Combine slum upgrading with employment generation and local economic development	Consider slum upgrading solely as a social issue
Develop new urban areas by making land and trunk infrastructure available	Provide unaffordable infrastructure and services

Over a billion people throughout the world live in slums. Slum upgrading is now widely acknowledged as one of the more effective means of improving the housing conditions of the poor and has been hailed as a 'linchpin' of any urban poverty strategy.

Slum upgrading can help realise the right to adequate housing and other human rights of affected groups. Existing housing stock and access to services can be improved, which means that excessive reliance is not placed upon investments in new low-income housing. Slum upgrading can also provide protection from forced evictions through better tenure security.

However, slum-upgrading programs can have adverse implications for human rights if they are poorly designed or implemented. Successful slum upgrading requires close attention be paid to the human rights of communities living in slums and informal settlements.

This brochure provides some lessons learned from slum-upgrading programs from the perspective of human rights and case studies from Brazil, Kenya, Pakistan, and Thailand.



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