

# Why Participatory city-wide Slum Upgrading matters

**SDG 11** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

**Target 11.1** By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

**Target 11.3** By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

**Target 1b** Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions.

## ” Key Statement:

Participatory city-wide slum upgrading is a pre-condition and trigger for inclusive and sustainable urbanization. The approach strengthens everyone’s capacity to contribute and benefit from the advantages of urbanization, including slum dwellers themselves.

## KEY MESSAGES:

- Urbanization is occurring in all countries around the world and is one of the major trends of the 21st Century.
- Urban areas are the engines of national economic growth and presently account for 70% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP): 55% of GDP in low-income countries, 73% in middle-income countries, and 85% in high-income countries<sup>1</sup>. No country has ever achieved sustained economic growth, rapid social development and gender equality without urbanizing.
- The exclusion of large sections of the urban population, such as those living in informal settlements and slums, ignores human rights conventions and incurs a range of costs (lost productivity and insecurity) that undermines sustainable urbanization because the full potential of all urban dwellers is not harnessed.
- Research shows that slums are full of economic, cultural and social capital<sup>2</sup>. While slums are deprived urban areas, people are also making a living, raising families and contributing to the broader urban economy. The energy and creativity of slum dwellers should be recognized and incorporated into urban improvement activities.
- Research shows a clear correlation between sustainable urbanization, land rights and security of tenure: those urban dwellers with secure land rights have more long-term and intergenerational social and economic stability.
- Research also shows that significant levels of urban inequality undermine your town and city's capacity to be sustainable. Urban areas with significant proportions of slums and informal settlements are thus not sustainable and prosperous<sup>3</sup>.
- A key for urban prosperity is creativity. Urbanization is where mind-set change occurs and creativity is sparked. Cities and towns which provide access to education, exposure to new people, different cultures, are places

where thinking is changed and new ideas generated for social, economic, environmental benefits.

- The type approach to urbanization used is critical to harness its positive elements and thus achieve improvements to the lives of slum dwellers. Sustainable and inclusive urbanization is underpinned by:
  1. A pro-poor vision which translates into inclusive actions (recognizes both the rights and value of slum dwellers as assets to the urbanization process, brings together all the key government partners and external stakeholders, focusses on socio-economic development directed by harnessing the informal economy and livelihood activities).
  2. Comprehensive integration of sectors, governance arrangements and people (government departments, key actors and groups, joined up physical plans responding to key policy, legislative and regulatory elements).
  3. A strategic focus on all scales (projects are directed at local impact but within a broader strategic focus of the city and region).
  4. Appropriate and innovative financing mechanisms (sufficient investment for both upgrading and maintenance, pro-poor financing (micro-financing, community managed funds).
- The political will to improve the lives of all urban dwellers including those living in slums. Urban managers and politicians have a chance to leave a lasting legacy through sustainable urbanization development choices that include and engage slum dwellers.

## KEY RECOMMENDATION:

Integrate slum dwellers into the rest of the urban context to facilitate sustainable urbanization for all.

## KEY ACTION:

Pro-poor national urban policies and city-wide slum upgrading strategies as instruments to achieve the integration of slum dwellers for sustainable urbanization.

1 United Nations system meeting document CEB High-Level Committee on Programmes CEB/2014/HLCR-28/CRP.5 23 September 2014. UN-Habitat the New Urban Agenda.

2 WIEGO (2014). Statistics on the Informal Economy: Definitions, Regional Estimates & Challenges. WIEGO Working Paper (Statistics) No. 2.

3 UN-Habitat (2015). El Estado de las Ciudades Colombianas. UN-Habitat (2013). State of the World's Cities Report 2012/2013. UN-Habitat (2015). Construction of Equitable Cities: Public Policies for Inclusion in Latin America. Nairobi.

**Table 1:** Additional Recommendations and Actions

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS	ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC ACTION
<b>RECOGNIZE SLUM DWELLERS</b>	
Change the view that slum dwellers are illegal. Start to institutionalize a more positive outlook focusing on what slum dwellers actually contribute to the broader urban environment (employment, livelihood activities, local economic development and cultural activities)	-Start meaningful conversations, via an integrated planning approach (using a city-wide slum upgrading strategy as a trigger), between your policy makers, key departmental heads and politicians, to foster mind-set change.
Support efforts to realize slum dweller's potential and harness their energy. This includes countering any discussions about forced evictions with arguments around the benefits of inclusion and the right to adequate housing.	-Undertake an inventory to understand the slum economy and its contribution to the rest of the city. -Identify some 'quick win' projects and interventions to demonstrate the value of micro-enterprises operating in slums and slum dweller's skills. -Adopt a humanitarian approach to slum dwellers as a collective vulnerable group who have much to offer the urban development agenda of your town and city.
<b>LINK SLUM UPGRADING WITH SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY FOR ALL</b>	
Understand and promote slum upgrading as a mechanism to facilitate sustainable urbanization for all.	-Form a team to understand how slum upgrading would work in your town or city. -Undertake an inventory of current strategic plans and development projects to ensure your plans speak to each other and reflect an integrated overview your vision for the city.
Recognize that urban issues cannot be addressed in isolation, but must be considered in terms of relationships - linkages between different departments, interventions and how the urban context is 'a system' with interlinked components.	-Reflect 'city-wide approaches' to slum upgrading in the development of a 'city-wide slum upgrading strategy' to maximize the benefits of connecting any planned intervention with other key and strategic urban developments (especially those related to economic hubs, road, utility, service and housing infrastructure) and departments/actors.
<b>MAKE 'INCLUSION' A MANTRA FOR URBANIZATION</b>	
Make inclusion a mantra for facilitating city-wide inclusive urbanization which includes slum dwellers.	-Develop a broad stakeholder group to develop a city-wide slum upgrading strategy which considers the strengths of slum dwellers and slums. -Take steps to ensure that all planning is participatory and inclusive. Review planning frameworks to understand if participatory planning is mandatory to promote your inclusivity agenda.
Ensure slum upgrading is participatory in its design and implementation. Remember to ensure key decision makers take part as well as slum dwellers themselves. Everyone has good ideas to contribute.	-Review 'big ticket' plans (infrastructure, economic, environmental, waste management and affordable housing plans) and ask if they are pro-poor and how slums specifically can be included into the development agenda.
<b>PROMOTE SECURITY OF TENURE FOR ALL</b>	
Make security of tenure a clear part of the sustainable urbanization agenda. Consider different forms of land tenure available, including recognition of use and access rights, leases etc above and beyond land ownership to make everyone safe and secure.	-Using 'prosperity for all arguments', make a political commitment to improve security of tenure for slum and informal settlement dwellers using the continuum of land rights approach (utilizing options including long-term leases, space use rights, community tenure). -Update your land records by undertaking a participatory enumeration process. -Commit to no forced evictions in your slum upgrading and urban development approaches.
<b>GET THE BEST INFORMATION TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING AND ACTION</b>	
Ensure that there is an institution or department effectively gathering disaggregated city wide data on all urban dwellers – especially the ones living in informal settlements and slums in peri-urban areas. Ensure that there is information on core components like current population, types of households including female headed households and population growth.	-Review what urban data is being collected in your town or city. Find out how that information is effectively being used and communicated, especially to decision makers, such that all urban dwellers needs and aspirations are reflected and policy makers and planners are empowered.
<b>ALLOCATE FUNDS FOR SLUM UPGRADING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
Dedicate funds for slum upgrading through key partnerships across all levels of government but also including the international community, local organizations and the private sector.	-As part of national or city-wide slum upgrading strategies, allocate funds for incremental slum upgrading over an agreed time frame. -Foster financing partnerships and do a stock-take of available financing mechanisms to support such collaborations. -Develop micro-financing mechanisms and community managed funds for adequate housing, improvements to basic services and local economic development.

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