

## QUICK GUIDE for participatory, city-wide slum upgrading

# STRENGTHENING PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SPACES VIA PARTICIPATORY, CITY-WIDE SLUM UPGRADING

### Sustainable Development Goal Key Statements

**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 11.7:** By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

**Target 1.4:** By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, in heritage, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.



## New Urban Agenda Key Statements

**37.** We commit ourselves to promoting safe, inclusive, accessible, green and quality public spaces, including streets, sidewalks and cycling lanes, squares, waterfront areas, gardens and parks, that are multifunctional areas for social interaction and inclusion, human health and well-being, economic exchange, and cultural expression and dialogue among a wide diversity of people and cultures, and that are designed and managed to ensure human development and build peaceful, inclusive and participatory societies, as well as to promote living together, connectivity and social inclusion.

**53.** We commit ourselves to promoting safe, inclusive, accessible, green and quality public spaces as drivers of social and economic development, in order to sustainably leverage their potential to generate increased social and economic value, including property value, and to facilitate business and public and private investments and livelihood opportunities for all.

**67.** We commit ourselves to promoting the creation and maintenance of well-connected and well-distributed networks of open, multi-purpose, safe, inclusive, accessible, green, and quality public spaces; to improving the resilience of cities to disasters and climate change, including floods, drought risks and heat waves; to improving food security and nutrition, physical and mental health, and household and ambient air quality; to reducing noise and promoting attractive and livable cities, human settlements and urban landscapes, and to prioritizing the conservation of endemic species.

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## 1. The aim of this quick guide

The aim of this quick guide is to strengthen key stakeholders understanding that public and community spaces are essential for all urban dwellers, including those living in slums and informal settlements. Public and community spaces provide fundamental access to economic, social, environmental and cultural resources.

Public and community space:

1. Provides the necessary space for the provision of basic services and utilities as per the slum household definition (access to water, sanitation, sufficient living area),
2. Strengthens economic livelihood generation, social wellbeing cultural expression and climate resilience, and
3. Can be secured through participatory, city-wide slum upgrading as spaces are planned for in the slum and informal settlement area and also linked in with broader public and community space assets and opportunities in the wider urban context.
4. Has been recognised by both the SDGs and NUA as a vital element of Sustainable Urbanization.

The recommendations and actions at the end of this guide can provide practical ideas on how this can be achieved.

## 2. Why public and community space matters

All around the world, public and communal spaces are the conduit for many life sustaining activities. Investments into open public spaces lead to sustainable urban development,

promoting environmental well-being and economic activity, improving public health and fostering social inclusion.

Public and community space:

1. **Fosters economic development and prosperity**, as it is a vital space for livelihood generation and both formal and informal commercial activities.
2. **Enhances mobility** and therewith improve people's access to opportunities for economic, social and political participation in the city.
3. **Supports environmental sustainability and climate resilience** through the provision of space for public urban infrastructure such as water drainage systems and green spaces.
4. **Improves public health** by providing space for leisure and recreational facilities and play, especially for children and youth.
5. **Promotes inclusion and interaction between different urban dwellers** and providing an arena for improving understanding of different groups and a forum for cultural expression.
6. **Enhances safety** in the public realm especially if combined with mechanisms to promote public engagement and is developed in response to the needs of women, girls, children and people with disabilities.
7. **Facilitates the provision of urban infrastructure** (such as space for proper drainage, water points and electricity poles) and **public services**, such as public health, educational and community facilities.

**Figure 1:** How does your town or city promote public and communal spaces?

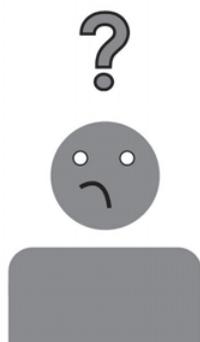
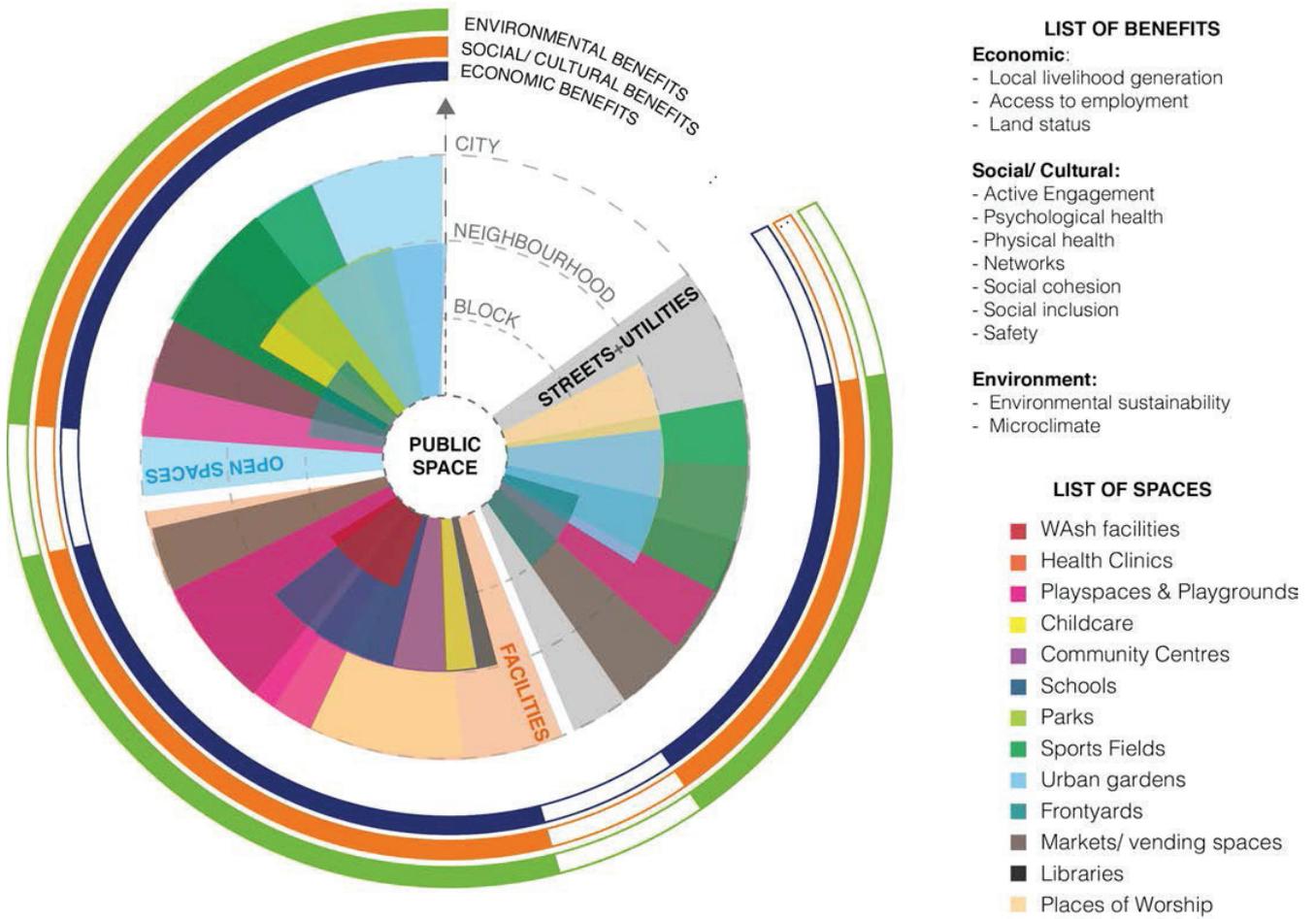


Diagram 1 below shows the multiple ways that public and common spaces are used and the positive impacts/effects they generate.

**In Informal Settlements and Slums,  
 Public Spaces are Multi-Functional and Derive many benefits**



**BOX 1 DEFINITION OF PUBLIC SPACE.**

UN-Habitat definition: 'Public spaces are all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive'<sup>1</sup>.

UN-Habitat's slum upgrading Unit also promotes consideration of community space alongside the public space definition to incorporate the public spaces found in slums and other informal settlements. The notion of community space refers to those spaces and common areas that might not be officially recognized as 'public space' by local authorities for example and are sometimes even contested but nevertheless are managed by a set of informal and known local processes and people, usually community leaders. These spaces might be open spaces used for a variety of activities (markets some days, sport others), can have illegal structures used for community meetings or simply be vacant land used as a street for example.

1 p.26. UN-Habitat (2016) "Global Public Space Toolkit - From Global Principles to Local Policies and Practice".

Slums and informal settlements are no different than other urban places in terms of the critical role that public and communal spaces play. Like all urban contexts, public and communal spaces in slums and informal settlements are a conduit for the right to the city - providing an enabling environment and spaces for livelihood generation, the provision of essential services networking and recreation and spaces for transport and mobility.

Ironically, the limited nature of public and communal space in slums and informal settlements creates a certain vibrancy and dynamism as many economic, social, household and cultural activities are undertaken simultaneously often in those spaces. In fact many slums and informal settlements function in a highly 'mixed use' manner that results in many benefits – lively street life, livelihood generation activities, availability of household goods, dynamic social and cultural activities. Such high levels of activity and engagement can be absent from other more formal parts of towns and cities.

At the same time, the activities undertaken in these often cramped and under serviced urban areas, are forced to compete and operate alongside each other with both people

and the environment suffering disproportionate health, safety and economic impacts as a result.

The severe lack of essential and basic infrastructure and services, narrow streets devoid of sidewalks and designated waste management - combined with challenges associated with overlapping land and security of tenure arrangements –mean that the capacity of that vibrant dynamic mixed use to be positively and effectively harnessed - is sometimes lost. And the impacts on certain groups in terms of safety, security and health are disproportionate including women, children and people with disabilities.

**BOX 2 IMPACT OF LIMITED PUBLIC AND COMMUNAL SPACES IN SLUMS AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS**

A loss of transformative urban development capital - represented by limited public space - severely impacts sustainable urban development in two key ways:

First, it directly affects residents living in such areas, especially women and children who suffer most from the lack of safety and services in public and communal spaces. There is often not the basic sanitation or waste management services to make these spaces clean and healthy. Emergency services cannot pass through. Children must struggle to find any space to play let alone find a safe space or bench to sit on. Women and children in particular can be more at risk to numerous forms of violence in slums and informal settlements because there is no street lighting, limited safe public toilets and walkways.

Second, it affects residents in the rest of the urban context. A lack of or limited public and communal space reinforces poverty dynamics and often increases perceptions of safety and crime - which ultimately undermines the prosperity prospects of all urban dwellers.

Research shows that urban centres that promote and protect common spaces to facilitate safe economic and social activities are the most prosperous, sustainable and liveable for all urban residents<sup>2</sup>.

2 UN-Habitat (2013), The State of the World Cities Report 2012/13. UN-Habitat (2015), El Estado de las Ciudades Colombianas, UN-Habitat (2016) World Cities Report.

Public and community spaces are thus not only 'just' spaces for slum and informal settlement dwellers because they improve urban equity through connectivity and access, they also have a 'transformative' and 'enabling dimension' for all urban dwellers. The presence of public space across all urban areas has a positive impact – thus promoting justice and sustainability outcomes for all.

**BOX 3**

**HOW DO YOU SEE PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SPACE? IS IT AN ASSET OR A COST TO YOUR TOWN OR CITY?**



Governments and private sector developers sometimes consider public and communal spaces 'luxury items' in the scheme of urban planning, slum upgrading or area redevelopment. These spaces are not seen as critical to sustainable development – or worse – detract from profit margins.

In many parts of the city, urban development is therefore allowed to take place without any provision for public space or room for basic services and trunk infrastructure (sewerage and drainage, main arterial roads and transport systems). In slum and informal settlements, public space is known to be highly politicized and subject to changes in local politics rather than a respected right for all urban dwellers, no matter how poor.

Research makes clear that public space adds immense economic, social and cultural value to all urban dwellers. It's an investment, not something that should be left to chance. Urban environments which generalize access to urban commons and public goods, and actively prevent their private appropriation, improve social equity and enhance the quality of life for all of their inhabitants. Urban contexts that focus on the provision of quality public space and facilities also experience higher levels of prosperity, as their investments enhance land values and create new economic opportunities, by turning the city into an attractive place to live and work.

### 3. The benefits of city-wide slum upgrading for promoting public and communal space

The provision of quality public space has a particularly important impact on the life of slum dwellers who often live in overcrowded conditions, struggle to make a living and often lack access to basic services, infrastructure and green spaces. Livelihoods and social relations depend on access to streets and spaces of which there are few in unplanned settlements.

Participatory slum upgrading adopted within a city-wide framework, can help promote and secure adequate public and communal space for slum dwellers as well as all urban residents.

**BOX 4**

**WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY CITY-WIDE SLUM UPGRADING?**

City-wide, 'at scale' participatory slum upgrading refers to a strategic choice and approach to poverty alleviation and slum upgrading. It recognizes that slum dwellers and informal settlers must be part of broad planning and development planning, projects and funding allocations.

The key difference in participatory slum upgrading from conventional upgrading is that proposals to upgrade a slum are embedded in broader visions and plans of the city and there is a constant conversation - institutional, policy, planning, stakeholders (including slum dwellers themselves) between the proposed urban renewal of the slum and how it links in with the rest of the urban environment.

Participatory city-wide slum upgrading involves:

- Slum specific plan (such as a national or city-wide slum upgrading strategy) reflected in the broader city Master or Spatial plan, the infrastructure plan and including potential financing arrangements across the phases of the city-wide proposal. Consideration of any significant re-location efforts will need to be part of the financial plan.
- Identification of key stakeholders – government departments and institutions, including any implicated national level agencies.
- Mechanisms to engage stakeholders and benefit from their knowledge including the variety of slum dwellers themselves.

Slums and informal settlements are thus not an isolated planning intervention but part of the broader mainstream debate about the vision for the urban environment. The key question for a city-wide approach is therefore: how do we create the physical and socio-economic connections between slums and the rest of the city?

When considering the role of participatory city-wide slum upgrading, it is important to understand the relationship between the slum and informal settlement and the broader urban context and the inter-related links and benefits of connected and integrated public spaces.

Table 1 below outlines the benefits of public and communal spaces across all key scales of the urban context.

**Table 1:** The benefits of connecting public and communal spaces through city-wide slum upgrading for all urban dwellers including those living in slums and informal settlements

#### City-level



A busy street in Nairobi where people commute daily to the market to buy goods and distribute them to different parts of the city. Photo@JuliusMwelu

- Providing access for informal area dwellers to the resources of the formal city and to opportunities for economic, social and political participation especially livelihood generation
- Establishing a network of public spaces that links formal and informal neighborhoods and creates a well-connected and socially inclusive city – especially cross city art and cultural projects
- Maximizing the effectiveness of utility infrastructure

#### Neighborhood level



A recently paved street in Kibera Slums, this has opened up business opportunities for the locals and enhancing connectivity. Photo@psup UN-Habitat

- Providing opportunities for livelihood generation
- Enhancing mobility
- Increasing possibilities for encounter and social interaction
- Hosting key services, public venues and commercial spaces
- Improving environmental sustainability and public health
- Empowering local residents and fostering social cohesion and capacity development through participatory planning and community management

#### Block level



Ladies washing dishes outside their shacks in Malawi, this is a common practice since they have inadequate space inside the shacks.; photo@PSUP UN-Habitat

- Providing space for small-scale productive and commercial activities
- Allowing for an extension of household activities in the public realm
- Providing relief from overcrowded living conditions and space for recreational activities
- Creating space for social interactions and movement, with attention to the needs of the elderly and those with disabilities for example.
- Allowing for safe play areas for children and youth
- Intensive use of and routinized presences in public space result in a sense of safety and comfort for the local community

At the same time that there are clear arguments and benefits associated with public and communal space, it is a highly political activity to secure and preserve it. With many interests tied up in land and access to land, the idea of public space is sometimes seen as contrary to short and long term gains and interests. When governance and planning frameworks are weak, there is room for a broad interpretation around how public space is managed, in particular in relation to its provision for economic activity, for public facilities and utilities for example....

**BOX 5 KIBERA SLUM, NAIROBI - PUBLIC SPACE PROJECT**

Kibera is one of the largest slums in Nairobi, and is well known for its scale, location, history, and degraded conditions. Kibera is just four kilometers from downtown Nairobi and occupies a space two-thirds the size of New York City's Central Park. Like most slums, Kibera lacks most of the basic services found in other neighbourhoods. It has no formal trash collection system and limited water and sanitation facilities. Security of tenure is precarious and livelihood generation is a daily struggle. Unemployment and crime is high and most residents live on less than USD\$1 a day. Vertical overcrowding is a significant issue. With houses packed tightly together and any space used for mobility and livelihood activities, there is little traditional open space for children to play or communities to gather.

Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) is a non-profit design and community development organization that partners with underserved communities in the US, Africa, and Latin America to physically transform communities and in the process, improve environmental, economic, and social quality of life. KDI takes the approach that slums often involve a complex set of interconnected problems — financial, environmental, physical, political, and social — but also acknowledges that within these environments, there are many assets worth preserving and harnessing: community activism, informal economies and entrepreneurship.

Kibera Public Space Project is located at the border of the villages of Soweto East and Silanga at the Southeast edge of Kibera. Due to flooding during the rainy seasons, the site was swampy and impassable on foot. It was deemed un-buildable by residents and therefore used as a dumping ground.

The KDI project to clean up this site was undertaken in a number of phases. PHASE 1 included a general community led cleanup of the site. An organizational partner Buro Happold designed a simple, stone and wire-mesh gabion system—with input and costing

advice from Eco-Build Africa and the residents in Kibera—to create flood control for a viable recreation and economic space. With the help of Buro Happold, the community designed a simple wood and concrete bridge to withstand a 100-year flood. The bridge opened a very important circulation route between the two villages of Soweto East and Shilanga. PHASE 2 involved additional cleaning of the site as well as the construction of a KDI / community shade pavilion undertaken by KDI and residents. Adjacent to the shade pavilion is a small office and a park with benches, chess tables and a play structure made entirely from recycled materials. The play structure is the first of its kind in Kibera and is used by children from around the settlement. Next to the office is a small urban farm which is used for group members to grow and wholesale vegetables to local kiosk operators. Income-generating activities were introduced at the site in order to pay for maintenance and operation. Each enterprise contributes a percentage of their profits to a site maintenance fund.



Kibera Slum Nairobi, Kenya @ KDI [http://www.kounkuey.org/Kibera\\_PPS1.html#](http://www.kounkuey.org/Kibera_PPS1.html#)



KDI Children's Playground Kibera @ KDI [http://www.kounkuey.org/Kibera\\_PPS1.html#](http://www.kounkuey.org/Kibera_PPS1.html#)

Table 2 below highlights the positive aspects of communal and public space activities in slums and informal settlements and how slum upgrading can harness these.

**Table 2:** The positive characteristics of public and community spaces in slums that must be harnessed in slum upgrading.

HARNESSING THE POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SPACE IN SLUMS		OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY SLUM UPGRADING
Vibrant and high usage rates	<p>Public spaces in slums are often characterized by intense usage and great vibrancy, due to high density levels and mixed-use environments.</p> <p>Vibrant public spaces can enhance feelings of safety in public space and create unique opportunities for commercial activities and social interaction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take the intense usage of public space as a basis for maximizing the potential of such multi-dimensional spaces and for increasing the provision of public space, basic infrastructure and facilities in slum areas.</li> </ul>
Multi-functional	<p>Most existing public spaces in slums are multi-functional and multi-dimensional, meaning diverse user groups and uses co-exist and create a highly complex set of stakeholders and temporalities.</p> <p>The introduction of strict zoning or land use regulations could risk to destroy this multi-functionality and would necessarily exclude certain uses and user groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider public space as an asset and gain an understanding of the complex functions of public spaces</li> <li>Involve different stakeholders and user groups through participatory upgrading processes</li> </ul>
Community organization and management structures	<p>In absence of formal regulations and management structures for public space, many common spaces in slums are managed and maintained through informal arrangements by local communities.</p> <p>These informal management structures ensure full community ownership and enhance local social capital.</p> <p>Local authorities can help facilitate the long-term management and provision of such spaces via the development of management and maintenance frameworks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrate informal management structures for common spaces into upgrading approaches and strengthen these whenever possible to ensure community ownership</li> </ul>

## 4. Incorporating public and community space in slum and informal settlement upgrading process

One of the challenges for urban managers and stakeholders engaged in a participatory, city-wide slum upgrading process is how to ensure that:

- Developing challenges of public space are understood from a variety of perspectives and experiences – a mind-set that public and community space matters.
- The current provision of public and community space is understood and mapped including the experiences of vulnerable groups such as women, girls and people with disabilities understood and captured.
- Any planning document reflects stakeholders needs and aspirations as well as current regulatory frameworks.
- Planned public space projects are relevant and appropriate, funded and have the ownership of key stakeholders, especially slum dwellers themselves.
- Public space projects can be managed and maintained over the long term.
- Public and community space become strongly embedded in urban policy and upgrading and renewal strategies.

**Table 3:** An outline of how public and community space can be secured across the various phase of a slum upgrading process.

KEY PHASES	HOW PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SPACE CAN BE SECURED	KEY ACTORS TO FACILITATE
<b>Preliminary discussion and decision making phases where decisions are made on the scope and content and priorities of a participatory city-wide slum upgrading</b>	The preliminary discussion phase is a critical point to ensure public and community space are 1) recognized and valued and prioritized and 2) considered a city-wide urban asset and one that slum dwellers, alongside all urban dwellers.	Relevant Ministers, Senior urban managers, NGO's and local leaders
	It is also a critical phase to ensure that funds are committed for public space initiatives and this includes support for engaging local authorities and empowering local communities through initiatives such as community managed funds.	-Private sector (through their role in development or as actors in the upgrading area) -Community (through umbrella groups and local leadership)
<b>Data gathering, SWOT, profiling phase</b>	Public and community space must be considered part of participatory data gathering processes such as an enumeration process or public space inventory and mapping process.	Senior urban manager must approve method and commit funds.
	Focus groups on the experiences of public space for vulnerable groups can be useful during this phase.  A subsequent report must include a chapter on public and community space dynamics in the proposed upgrading areas as well as what city-wide initiatives and infrastructure the slum can be connected with to improve city-wide access to public space.	Technical staff must be available.  Local communities trained to support inventory including local leaders.
<b>Participatory planning phase</b>	Ensure that public space is understood as a key planning theme directly related to safety, livelihood generation, local economic development, essential urban infrastructure, provision of streets and transport networks and the provision of cultural and recreation initiatives.	Support from senior technical planner and overall urban manager.
	Ensure public space projects are within the overall slum upgrading plan and linked with broader spatial plans.	Support from technical staff with an understanding of gender and other vulnerabilities.
	Ensure that all stakeholders are part of the ideas and planning formulation especially slum dwellers themselves and women.  Ensure the multiple use of public and community spaces is preserved and promoted during this phase.	Support from local leadership to promote the engagement of vulnerable groups including women.
<b>Project implementation phase</b>	Ensure that public space projects are prioritized and funded as part of essential urban infrastructure.	Support from senior technical planner and overall urban manager.
	Ensure the organization and engagement with the local community.	Support from technical staff with an understanding of gender and other vulnerabilities including local NGO's
	Ensure local authorities and other relevant NGO's are on board with progress and challenges in this phase to ensure completion and to undertake effective risk management.	Support from local leadership to promote the engagement of vulnerable groups including women.
<b>Management and maintenance</b>	Promote community management opportunities or push for current ones to be more inclusive.	Monitoring from relevant local authorities.
	Ensure that key local groups and local authorities are part of the broader management process.	Support from local NGO's  Support from local leadership to promote the engagement of vulnerable groups including women.
		Support from the private sector based on the amenity gains from improved and secure public space.
<b>A key theme in urban policies and upgrading and renewal strategies</b>	If any national urban policies are being developed in relation to slum upgrading (housing, livelihood generation and city-wide economic development, basic urban infrastructure, recreation and culture, ensure public and community space) are 1) recognized and valued and prioritized and 2) considered a city-wide urban asset and one that slum dwellers, alongside all urban dwellers and 3) the idea that the most productive, inclusive and safe public and community spaces are open to all the public and have a multipurpose use.	Minister, Senior urban managers, NGO's and local leaders.

## 5. The challenges and opportunities from formalizing and regulating public and community spaces

The public sector is involved in the creation, improvement and preservation of public space in two ways: by providing the relevant regulatory frameworks and by providing communal services. As the momentum builds to secure public space within slums and informal settlements, it is important to consider the current use and management of any pre-existing space which will undoubtedly represent a highly complex and innovative set of existing formal and informal arrangements. It will also be important to review current regulations to know how public and communal space can be secured within current frameworks. Regulatory frameworks must work to enhance the spaces - not constrain them or exclude poor and vulnerable groups from gaining access to them.

Understanding and mapping these arrangements via a participatory process, can help to protect the public open spaces from invasion and encroachment (one of the biggest risks facing open spaces in informal settlements) in the upgrading process and facilitate links to the rest of the urban context. The analysis should review the management arrangements and official but

also 'unofficial' norms which govern current land uses - from the placing of fixed vendors on a street to the use of spaces by different youth groups.. It is also essential to understand the tenure status of the space and how these match or often don't with current legal frameworks.

Once these arrangements have been analysed stakeholders must consider the design and maintenance of the spaces including the financing. Specific attention must be paid to elements of the space that ensure it is 'inclusive and fit for purpose': sufficient space for utilities and livelihood generation, storm-water drainage systems, maintenance and emergency service access, spaces for young people (and not just space for football) taking into account the different needs and safety challenges of women and girls. A clear management model should be developed which is recognizes a range of governance arrangements and norms, is highly context-specific ,clarifies transparently the responsibilities and roles of specific government departments, the communities and any other relevant shareholder of the spaces.

Table 4 below shows the potential benefits and risks of securing public and community space:

**Table 4:** The benefits and risks of regulating public space

DIFFERENT WAYS TO SECURE A SPACE:	BENEFIT	RISK
Securing through design (materials, lighting etc.)	Improving the quality through better storm-water provision leads to healthier spaces  Improving lighting leads to safer spaces	Upgraded spaces can lead to gentrification of an area, especially when it is decoupled from material improvement to the dimensions of a slum (access to water, sanitation)
Securing land-use	Appropriate and participatory process of facilities can ensure well-used spaces and better infrastructure and sometime fairer allocation of space  Well-used spaces in turn are safer spaces	Excessive regularisation can erode existing norms that often include vulnerable groups. This can lead to a buildup of tension and also reduce activity, especially livelihood generation initiatives and therefore vibrancy of the spaces.  Authorities take the liberty of imposing a charge for using the space which can deter many and make it impossible for vulnerable groups to enjoy access and have a right to that space.
Construction to prevent land grabbing	Introducing permits for structures can help prevent land grabbing	Permits can be abused by those with influence and money, and often vulnerable groups such as street-vendors, miss out on livelihood generation opportunities.
Management and maintenance arrangements	Formal maintenance arrangements can provide transparency over who should look after what, especially if the local community are involved.	Formal governance models can be ineffective and inefficient and remove the existing norms which often result in excluding the most vulnerable.

As the above table suggests, there are important considerations in the regulation of public and community space in terms of how accessible they become and for whom.

Furthermore, any regulatory change or strengthening must be considered in terms of the enforcement capacity to enforce, the cost of enforcement and the long term management of that regulatory context. It must be recognized that public space does have an ongoing cost associated with it in

terms of upkeep and many local authorities struggle, for all sorts of valid and other reasons, to provide that money for enforcement and upkeep. Those that can't often semi-privatize spaces or have them encroached upon.

Worldwide, many local authorities adopt a variety of regulatory responses to secure the provision of public space and to raise revenue for their ongoing maintenance. Table 5 below highlights some of those initiatives.

**Table 5:** How Regulatory Frameworks Can Support and Threaten the Provision and Maintenance of Genuinely Common Public Spaces in Slums

REGULATION	DESCRIPTION
<b>ADOPTING REDISTRIBUTIVE REGULATIONS AND POLICY DIRECTIVES</b>	
<b>Public Space policies</b>	Policies developed from a belief in the value of public and community spaces such as National Urban Policies, Housing policies, Transport and Utility Policies and having implications for national and city wide spatial plans and other sector plans such as transport and infrastructure.
<b>Planning Incentives</b>	Providing a bonus or incentive to developers to secure public space in projects, eg. The development would receive additional floor area or reduced parking requirements, in exchange for provision of public amenity such as public space.
<b>Encouragement of temporary uses of idle land</b>	The owner of idle plots can temporarily give his/her unused land to be used in exchange for an exemption from the payment of property tax. This can also provide incentives for governments to utilize underutilized public land.
<b>Compulsory Dedication of Part of the Land</b>	Land for public space secured by requiring land-owners who intend to develop their plots to transfer part of their land for public purposes, or to pay fees in lieu thereof – which is then used to secure land in other places for public space.
<b>Negotiated Exactions tax</b>	Raising municipal revenue by requiring in-kind contributions to public goods such as public space, as a condition of development approval.
<b>Subdivision Exactions tax</b>	Raising municipal revenue by requiring developers to dedicate land for public purposes, or to pay fees in lieu thereof – which is then used to secure land in other places for public space.
<b>Land-value sharing tax</b>	Raising municipal revenue for public space interventions by capitalizing on the land value increase and creating a tax for this public purpose. Land value sharing requires specific instruments such as valuation, taxation or land readjustment. It also requires functional institutional arrangements to secure and utilize the tax effectively.
<b>USING REGULATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE</b>	
<b>Creation of a unified Public Spaces Agency</b>	Many governments struggle with lack of co-ordination, often aggravated in their dealings with public space where multiple departments may have to work together eg. Roads, Environment, Health. Creating a Public Spaces Agency can enable an integrated, holistic approach.
<b>Semi-formalizing informal trading</b>	Regulations or frameworks which acknowledge and empower street-vendors, by providing them with security to operate and a right to change and manage the space help serve public space and also address community needs.
<b>Private-Public Partnerships</b>	Adoption of public spaces and public amenities by businesses can work if set up in a community rights framework.

REGULATION	DESCRIPTION
<b>REGULATIONS WHICH REQUIRE CAUTION</b>	
<b>Fee payment</b>	In many cities around the world, entrance fees are used to help with financial resources for the managing and maintenance of a space, however this often excludes the poorest in society and perpetuates their marginalization.
<b>Introducing permits for construction</b>	Public spaces are often threatened by invasions of those with money and power. The introduction of regulations around construction permits can help make these invasions illegal. However, these laws can be abused and lead to corruption and further marginalization of those who are most in need of access to the space.

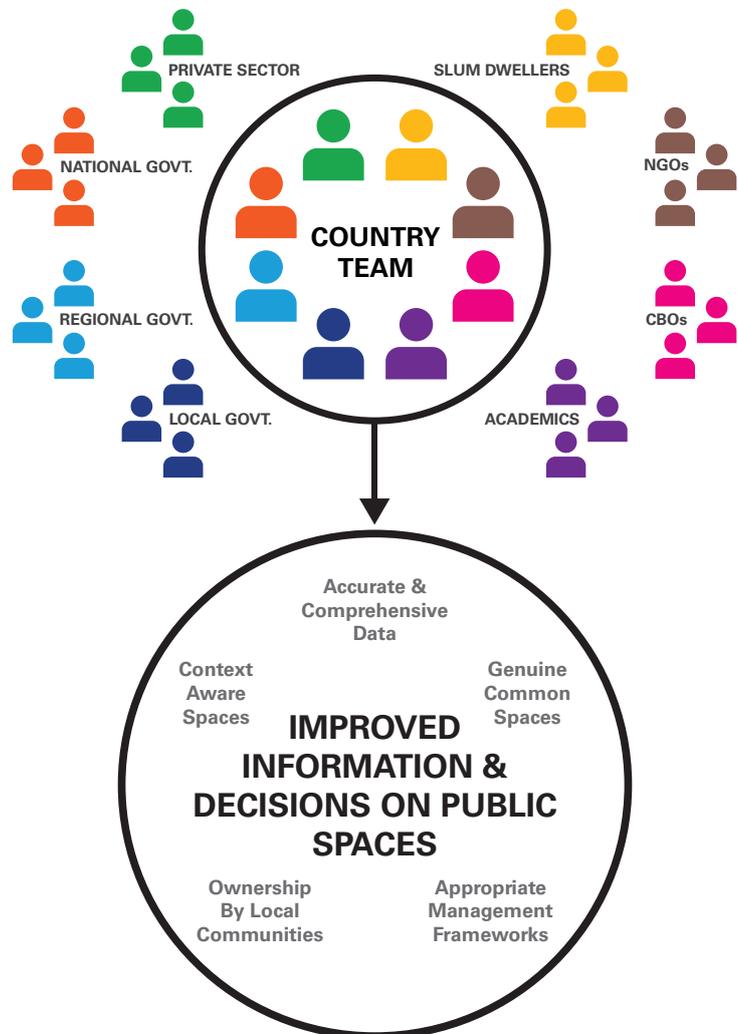
**BOX 6**

**ENGAGING THE FULL SPECTRUM OF STAKEHOLDERS TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION USING THE PSUP COUNTRY TEAM MODEL**

It is fundamental that a participatory approach is taken which engages a broad spectrum of relevant stakeholders. Multi-stakeholder management helps to strengthen the institutional and community ownership and response to public space creation as well as its preservation. It also helps ensure that the spaces are integrated with broader urban public space aspirations and programmes. In slum and informal settlement upgrading, the participation of the local affected communities should be present throughout the process, from initial design to maintenance of the spaces and consideration given to the needs, challenges and aspirations of those different users, especially women and girls.

UN-Habitat’s Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) Country Team model – a diverse multi-stakeholder management team incorporating all key government stakeholders and institutions as well as slum and informal settlement dwellers themselves serves as a learning and decision making body to guide inclusive effective actions in the upgrading scenario.

**Figure 2:** Members of the Country Team and the impact of the multi-stakeholder group



## 6. Key recommendations and actions for securing public and community spaces in slum upgrading

### KEY RECOMMENDATION:

Use the development of the participatory city-wide slum upgrading strategy to raise awareness of, understand secure and fund public and community space for utilities, livelihood generation and general well-being activities.

### KEY ACTIONS:

Use the Slum Upgrading multi-stakeholder county-team and the profiling and mapping phases to obtain diverse perspectives on public and communal space.

Use the participatory planning phase to map out public and communal space options including utilities and livelihood opportunities services community managed funds to promote safety and livelihoods for women and recreation spaces for children, youth and people with disabilities.

**Table 6:** Additional recommendations to address key challenges facing the provision and protection of public and communal space in slums and informal settlements.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS		
KEY CHALLENGES	EXPLANATION	RECOMMENDED ACTION
Perception of public spaces as a 'luxury item' for recreation	<p>Public space is often wrongly perceived as a 'luxury item' or understood solely in relation to recreation and green spaces. It is not seen as fundamental to urban sustainability.</p> <p>Simultaneously, there is a failure to recognize streets, public transport hubs and urban infrastructure as vital public spaces for economic and livelihood development that require investment and protection to fulfill their important potential for local development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize slums and informal settlements as unique and valid forms of urbanization that need to be developed incrementally to improve the living conditions of local inhabitants.</li> <li>Promote public space as essential value adding component to urban development and real estate.</li> <li>Draw attention to the benefits for all of public and communal space. Streets, market places, improved walkways and streets, transport hubs, space for drainage, sanitation, waste management - act a key economic, social and cultural development spaces in slums and across urban areas.</li> <li>Ensure planning and design regulations reflect the value placed on public space for livelihood and economic development as much as for green space, especially in slums and informal settlements.</li> </ul>
High exchange and use value of land	<p>Very high density levels, the absence of formal planning and regulations, and high land prices lead to compact development with narrow streets and insufficient availability of open spaces; high profits can be made from the sale of land, so remaining public or open spaces need to be actively protected if they are to be maintained.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise awareness for increases in land and property value that occur through investments in public space; while at the same time consider mechanisms to prevent gentrification and the eviction of vulnerable groups.</li> <li>Develop legal, regulatory and financing mechanisms and compensation schemes that can render the preservation of public space viable for land owners.</li> </ul>
Lack of safety in public space	<p>Safety problems often lead to processes of enclosure and discourage residents from using public spaces and facilities.</p> <p>Women and children (girls in particular) are affected by safety challenges and which often results in a minimal engagement in public space or a dangerous public space encounter.</p> <p>Spaces that are not maintained or managed often get into a cycle of neglect which further undermines perceptions of safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for vibrant and mixed-use public spaces that ensure "eyes on the street" and convey a sense of safety to their users.</li> <li>Ensure lighting on streets.</li> <li>Involve especially women and girls and other vulnerable groups in planning for public space to understand their specific needs and concerns.</li> </ul>

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Lack of formal regulations, management/ maintenance mechanisms and planning for public space and transparent land management across the whole city including slums and informal settlements	<p>Most public spaces in slums are set up informally and lack any formal planning or design process. They are also sometimes grabbed by influential individuals in slum areas. -</p> <p>Planning and regulatory rules do not often promote or value public space sufficiently in upgrading programmes.</p> <p>In addition, management and maintenance of public space is often 'communal' in character, meaning it is arranged informally and without or with minimal government involvement or sometimes spaces are vulnerable to speculation even when government systems are in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Think of public spaces in the city as a network that guarantees connectivity and spatial integration. Use the city-wide slum upgrading as a starting point to secure and connect local and city-wide spaces.</li> <li>• Review legal and regulatory structures to ensure that there is the sufficient provision of public space including for basic services, livelihood and economic activity to promote multi-use functions.</li> <li>• Use planning and design to render public spaces and facilities more functional and to maximize their existing potential.</li> <li>• Consider sustainable management and maintenance schemes for public space and public facilities as central concern in all upgrading attempts.</li> <li>• Ensure community ownership and involvement to guarantee maintenance through local trust arrangements if part of traditional lands or community land trust arrangements.</li> </ul>
Unclear or contested land ownership	<p>Many of the existent vacant plots or open spaces in slums have not been built up because of conflicts over ownership or unclear ownership; this often complicates or impedes plans to turn these vacant plots into public spaces or facilities.</p> <p>Land management systems are also weak and administrative systems vulnerable to corruption</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote neighbourhood level enumeration projects to map land use arrangements engaging all key stakeholders.</li> <li>• Use slum upgrading processes to foster and promote a positive mind set towards public space and the develop clarity around contested land and a continuum of land rights.</li> <li>• Clarify land ownership through titling etc but adopt a continuum approach to land and security of tenure and investigate different land use mechanisms to avoid forced re-location and evictions.</li> <li>• Develop compensation schemes to protect existing vacant plots and transfer them into public property.</li> <li>• Secure a minimum of public space and public facility provision in all legislation applicable to all urban development, redevelopment or upgrading projects and communicate to the private sector – but don't use those standards as an excuse for forced evictions.</li> </ul>
Lack of trust between public authorities and local communities	Land speculation combined with government neglect of informal areas, or sense of poor land management decisions on the one hand, and threats of eviction or clearances on the other hand, often lead to very low trust levels between slum dwellers and government authorities; this means official attempts to upgrade public spaces will meet local suspicion and maybe resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in an incremental and participatory planning process that involves both public authorities and local communities and ensures full community ownership of the public spaces to be revitalized or provided.</li> </ul>

## 7. Case studies

### 1. Award-winning<sup>3</sup> process to enable livelihood generation of informal street traders in Durban, South Africa, Warwick Street Junction.

CHALLENGE / OPPORTUNITY	DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT / INITIATIVE	WHERE? / WHO?	LESSONS LEARNT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scale of space.</li> <li>Diversity of users.</li> <li>Importance for livelihood generation as Warwick Junction is home to roughly 2/3 of Durban's informal street vendors.</li> <li>Major physical infrastructure needs.</li> <li>Requirements for a participatory and realistic management strategy to ensure safety and maintenance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project was committed to participation and consultation - from initial design to management strategies.</li> <li>In terms of design, dynamics of the multiple markets were observed and users were engaged (with a focus on traders) to develop multiple context-specific projects.</li> <li>In terms of management strategies, numerous different self-organized and voluntary groups of traders were set up to ensure protection and maintenance of the spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Durban, South Africa</li> <li>Different City Government departments.</li> <li>Local architecture firms.</li> <li>Street Traders.</li> <li>Users of the space.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Illegal status of street traders can and should be reconfigured to directly improve both their opportunity for livelihood generation and the wider public.</li> <li>Area-based policies can help to integrate and make manifest the benefit street vendors bring to the public realm.</li> <li>In-depth understanding of the public realm requires genuinely participatory processes, which has the additional benefit of providing the users of a space with ownership.</li> <li>Continual exchange and adherence to the regulatory frameworks are required, as relationships between the stakeholders (City government and traders) have been deteriorating.</li> </ul>

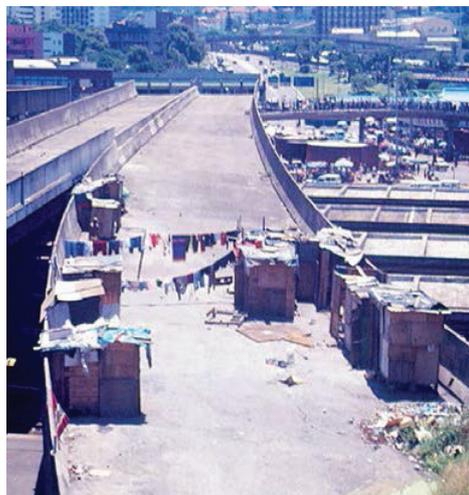
#### Further reading:

**Xulu, P. 2015**  
<http://www.inclusivecities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/IC-Durban-Law-Case-Study.pdf>

**Ogbu, L. 2012** <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjud20>

**Alfers, L. Xulu, P. and Dobson, R. 2016**  
<http://eau.sagepub.com/content/28/2/391.short>

**City at eye level 2016**  
[https://thecityateyelevel.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/ebook\\_the-city-at-eye-level\\_english.pdf](https://thecityateyelevel.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/ebook_the-city-at-eye-level_english.pdf)



Before improvement



After improvement @ Warwick Junction

<sup>3</sup> Won the UN Habitat / Dubai International Award for Good Practice (Ogbu, 2012 <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjud20>)

## 2. Using Community-led re-blocking creates communal spaces within high density settlements in Cape Town, South Africa

CHALLENGE / OPPORTUNITY	DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT / INITIATIVE	WHERE? / WHO?	LESSONS LEARNT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very high density levels in South African townships.</li> <li>• Lack of open public spaces and vacant plots for public facilities and utilities.</li> <li>• Very narrow roads and footpaths that impede mobility and livelihood generation in public space.</li> <li>• Absence of formal planning in townships and compact residential development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-led "Re-Blocking" initiatives aim to free up spaces for the creation of common spaces and facilities in dense slums and informal settlements.</li> <li>• Re-blocking refers to the in-situ repositioning of shacks or housing through a strictly participatory process with the local community.</li> <li>• Through the reconfiguration of housing, often accomplished for clusters of housing, courtyards can be created for each cluster as central community spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cape Town, South Africa.</li> <li>• Local community groups.</li> <li>• SDI (Shack Dwellers International), South Africa Alliance.</li> <li>• City of Capetown (officially adopted re-blocking as development strategy in 2013).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through a participatory and community-led process of re-planning at the block-level, vital community spaces and vacant plots for public facilities can be freed up.</li> </ul>

### Further reading:

<http://sasdialliance.org.za/projects/sheffield-road/>

[https://www.capetown.gov.za/en/PublicParticipation/Documents/Have\\_your\\_say\\_human\\_settlements\\_Draft\\_Policy\\_%20Final\\_9\\_July\\_2013%20.pdf](https://www.capetown.gov.za/en/PublicParticipation/Documents/Have_your_say_human_settlements_Draft_Policy_%20Final_9_July_2013%20.pdf)



Space before reblocking @ SDI <http://old.sdi.net.org/blog/categories/cape-town/>



Space after reblocking @ SDI <http://old.sdi.net.org/blog/categories/cape-town/>

### 3. Community-led Sanitation projects to provide multi-functional community facilities in Mumbai, India.

CHALLENGE / OPPORTUNITY	DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT / INITIATIVE	WHERE? / WHO?	LESSONS LEARNT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very high density levels in Mumbai's slums</li> <li>• Lack of public facilities</li> <li>• Lack of toilets and insufficient maintenance of existing facilities</li> <li>• Safety concerns in public space in informal settlements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-led Sanitation Projects that aim to provide communal toilets in Mumbai, while at the same time creating community centers and facilities in the same building</li> <li>• The combination of communal sanitation facilities and community centers ensures the maintenance of the facilities, enhances security around the facilities and increases a sense of community ownership</li> </ul>	Mumbai, India <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers (SPARC), NG=</li> <li>• National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF)</li> <li>• Women's network Mahila Milani</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery of utilities and infrastructure can be combined with the provision of quality community facilities and communal spaces</li> <li>• Enhancing public spaces and providing community facilities enhances the sense of ownership in a community and ensures maintenance</li> </ul>

**Further reading:**  
[www.sparcindia.org](http://www.sparcindia.org)



Children using buckets to get water from well in slum in Mumbai, India @ Shutterstock/gary yim

#### 4. Recognising the role of public space for livelihood generation and poverty alleviation: the case of Bangkok

CHALLENGE / OPPORTUNITY	DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT / INITIATIVE	WHERE? / WHO?	LESSONS LEARNT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public space in Bangkok Thailand has been played a key but often informal and multi-functional role in livelihood generation and poverty alleviation for a large number of urban dwellers in the capital city Bangkok. There are an estimated 400,000 plus street vendors operating there.</li> <li>The national and city-level administration have introduced many policies and regulatory frameworks over the years, some of which have supported and promoted street vendors, other's which have had a negative impact on their capacity to operate.</li> <li>-With fluctuations in Thailand's economic fortunes and the influx of migrants, both from rural urban migration and international migration, the capacity city's public spaces have become the places where people have struggled and sometimes succeeded due to street vending.</li> <li>Unfortunately, the ascension of Bangkok's military government in 2014 following a coup has seen a shift in policy towards reduction in the number of street vendors, under the motto of "return the footpath to pedestrians." Official municipal statistics show a reduction in registered vendors by almost half between 2014 and 2016, with removals of vendors from prominent and often iconic locations.</li> </ul>	<p>Historical study of how national and city-level and local policies and regulatory frameworks have impacted on the fortunes of street vendors in Bangkok</p>	<p>WIEGO (Women in Informal Economy Globalizing and Organizing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proactive and inclusive response to street vendors been more beneficial than evictions or repression of the activity.</li> <li>Recognition of street vending as a legitimate and productive pathway to promote of poverty alleviation</li> <li>Recognition of the value organized street vending can add to the vibrancy of the urban space in Bangkok.</li> </ul>

##### Further reading:

<http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Yasmeen-Vending-Public-Space-Bangkok-WIEGO-PB16.pdf>

<http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/resources/files/Street-Vending-Bangkok-Legal-and-Policy-Framework-Law-Case-Study.pdf>



@ Getty Images

## **Public Space in the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programmes (PSUP)**

UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) focuses on integrated strategies for citywide slum upgrading and strives towards the sustainable improvement of living conditions of slum dwellers. PSUP considers the improvement of public spaces and facilities as an important step in fostering economic and social development in slums and informal settlements and therefore promotes its integration into comprehensive slum upgrading strategies. Instead of focusing exclusively on housing and infrastructure, public spaces and public facilities can become important components of citywide slum upgrading strategies that seek to improve the quality of life for all urban dwellers and aim to improve connectivity between slums and the rest of the city. The PSUP strengthens stakeholders' appreciation of and commitment to it through the incorporation of public space into the practical upgrading process and the specific consideration of public spaces in strategic planning documents for slum upgrading and through the strengthening of institutional and financial arrangements for the provision and maintenance of public spaces and facilities in slums and informal settlements. Outlined below are a series of PSUP case studies – how public spaces and public facilities have been integrated into different participatory slum-upgrading efforts

## **How much public and community space is required and for what purpose?**

### **Planning design recommendations promoted by UN-Habitat's PSUP**

Based on its experience of upgrading in slums and informal settlements, the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) recommends the following in securing public and common space in slum and informal settlement upgrading programmes:

- Give more recognition and emphasis to the provision of multi-dimensional public/common good space for socio-economic development (for livelihoods, cultural expression and social networks), provision of utility and waste management infrastructure and mobility. Specifically:
  - Strengthen the link between roads, sidewalks and utilities infrastructure (as opposed to highlighting just streets and sidewalks) as well as the connections points for formal and informal public transport systems.
  - Highlight the space for community /social services and space for recreation, public gathering and cultural activities.
  - Recognize and preserve the flexibility to multi-use nature of these spaces
  - Consider revising the current 30% space designated for streets and an efficient street network - to include all common spaces.
  - Consider designating 20% for streets, sidewalks and drainage channels (utility functions), with an emphasis on their role for livelihood generation and local economic development.
  - Consider designating 10% for recreation/ community space/services/facilities.
  - Consider preserving an agreed % of the current access configuration to preserve existing livelihood generation activities and to preserve access to homes as appropriate.
  - Consider a regulation that provides a common space within higher density buildings for trading and livelihood generation.
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## PSUP public space case study

### Case study 1.

#### Haiti: Rehabilitation of a community space/square in Place de la Paix, La Savanne, Haiti through the PSUP to create a central social hub

The rehabilitation of Place de La Paix in Haiti has created a central social hub in the area where there is space for people to meet and children to play, this space provides a break from the dense residential parts around the park, and the Square is being managed by the Community with support from the Municipality. The redesigning of the square was done in a participatory process creating a strong sense of ownership by the local residents.



#### Before, during and after

Rehabilitation of community space in Place de la Paix,  
La Savanne in Haiti @ psup UN-Habitat



## 8. References and additional recommended reading

Celine d’Cruz With Sheela Patel and Getrude Z. Mazvimavi Shack/Slum Dwellers International (July 2014). Affordable public spaces in Informal settlements Urban poor federations strategize around spatial, social, political and economic inclusion. [http://sdinet.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/FINAL\\_Edited\\_Updated\\_Sep29\\_Celine\\_SDI\\_Public\\_spaces\\_and\\_urban\\_poor\\_communities.pdf](http://sdinet.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/FINAL_Edited_Updated_Sep29_Celine_SDI_Public_spaces_and_urban_poor_communities.pdf)

ILO (date unclear). The regulatory framework and the informal economy. Informal economy and decent work policy guide. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_policy/documents/publication/wcms\\_210451.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_policy/documents/publication/wcms_210451.pdf)

Intersection between street vendors and public space. WIEGO (Women in Informal Economy Globalizing and Organizing). <http://wiego.org/informal-economy/occupational-groups/street-vendors>

UCLG Peer Learning 2015. Public space as a generator of growth in African Cities. <https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/challenges-and-opportunities-public-space-generator-growth-african-cities>

Yasmeen, Gisèle and Narumol Nirathron (2014). Vending in Public Space: The Case of Bangkok, WIEGO Policy Brief (Urban Policies) No 16. <http://wiego.org/sites/wiego.org/files/publications/files/Yasmeen-Vending-Public-Space-Bangkok-WIEGO-PB16.pdf>

Brown Alison (2006). Contested Space: Street Trading, Public Space, and Livelihoods in Developing Cities

Lund, Francis (2003). People working informally: negotiating the use of public spaces in Durban city. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.197.8566&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

inclusion Celine d’Cruz With Sheela Patel and Getrude Z. Mazvimavi Shack/Slum Dwellers International (2014). Affordable public spaces in Informal settlements Urban poor federations strategize around spatial, social, political and economic. [http://sdinet.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/FINAL\\_Edited\\_Updated\\_Sep29\\_Celine\\_SDI\\_Public\\_spaces\\_and\\_urban\\_poor\\_communities.pdf](http://sdinet.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/FINAL_Edited_Updated_Sep29_Celine_SDI_Public_spaces_and_urban_poor_communities.pdf)

UN-Habitat (2015). Global Public Space Toolkit. From Global Principles to Local Policy and Practice.

<https://unhabitat.org/books/global-public-space-toolkit-from-global-principles-to-local-policies-and-practice/>

UN-Habitat (2013). Designing and Implementing Street Led City-wide Slum Upgrading Programmes.

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Street scene in Monrovia, Liberia. 2008 © UN-Habitat/William Ross



A local market in Arusha, Tanzania © UN-Habitat/Julius Mwelu



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**STRENGTHENING PUBLIC AND  
COMMUNITY SPACES VIA PARTICIPATORY,  
CITY-WIDE SLUM UPGRADING**

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