

ABOUT SLUM UPGRADING

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- More than one billion people in the world live in slums.
- In the developing world, one out of every three people living in cities lives in a slum.
- Slums are often economically vibrant; in many cities, as much as 60 per cent of employment is in the informal sector.
- Some other names for slums are barrio, basti, bidonville, favela, ghetto, kampong, katchi abadi, masseque, shanty towns, skid row, and squatter cities.

WHAT ARE SLUMS?

The word *slum* is used to describe informal settlements within cities that have inadequate housing and squalid, miserable living conditions. They are often overcrowded and are not provided basic municipal services, such as water and sanitation. Slum dwellers are forced to obtain land informally or illegally, and build housing for their families with little or no security of tenure. Many slums have been unserved and unrecognised for long periods, over 20 years in some cities.

WHY DO SLUMS DEVELOP?

Slums are often the only type of settlement that is affordable and accessible to the poor in cities, where competition for land and profit is intense. There are two main reasons why slums develop:

- **Population growth.** Countries are urbanising rapidly as a result of migration and natural population growth. Today, more than half the world's population resides in cities. Over 90 per cent of urban growth is taking place in the developing world.
- **Governance.** Governments often contribute to slum growth by failing to provide for the needs of the poor and incorporate them into urban planning. Some governments simply cannot respond to rapid urbanisation quickly enough or lack the tools to deal with the situation. Others take a hostile approach to urbanisation, believing that providing services to the poor will attract more people and cause slums to grow.

WHAT IS SLUM UPGRADING?

Slum upgrading is a process through which informal areas are gradually improved, formalised and incorporated into the city itself, through extending land, services and citizenship to slum dwellers. It involves providing slum dwellers with the economic, social, institutional and community services available to other citizens. These services include legal (land tenure), physical (infrastructure), social (such as crime or education) or economic. Upgrading activities should be undertaken by the local government with the participation of all parties—residents, community groups, businesses, and national authorities.

Another key element is legalising or regularising properties and providing secure land tenure to residents. People who are safe from eviction with a sense of long-term stability—whether they own the land or not—are much more likely to invest in their housing or community. Over time, these incremental improvements by residents can upgrade the entire community.

WHY IS SLUM UPGRADING IMPORTANT?

People have a fundamental right to live with basic dignity and in decent conditions. It is also in a city's best interest to upgrade slums and prevent new ones from forming. If slums are allowed to deteriorate, governments can lose authority within a city, exposing slum dwellers to informal systems of service provision and control, with slums becoming areas of crime and disease that can affect the whole city. Moreover, in-situ slum upgrading is one of the most viable, affordable ways to provide housing to the urban poor and can be implemented incrementally.

WHY NOT TEAR DOWN THE SLUMS AND START OVER?

Sometimes it is necessary to tear down a slum. If a slum is built on land that is unsafe or fundamentally unstable, negotiated relocation may be the best long-term option. Generally, though, slums are on land that is well-located with easy access to the city and its opportunities. Most slum evictions occur when local authorities want to remove slums located on prime real estate and turn the land over to developers or other vested interests. Location is critically important for the urban poor. They need to be near the city where job opportunities are accessible and where they may have established social and survival networks.

WHAT FACTORS ARE NEEDED FOR SLUM UPGRADING TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

The most important factors are strong political will on behalf of government, strong buy-in on the part of communities, and a sense of partnership among all parties. The slum upgrading initiative must meet a real need; people must want it and understand why it is important. It is also beneficial if upgrading activities are city-wide and involve partners beyond the slums themselves, especially for implementation. And to keep slum upgrading going, it should be a priority in financing, institutions and regulations.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES IN SLUM UPGRADING?

The primary challenges in slum upgrading are achieving some kind of coherence in the community and finding solutions to a wide range of needs. Slums are not homogeneous, and there are many diverse vested interests that exist in slums—the poor looking for a place to live, criminal elements, or landlords who rent out shacks. All of these interests must be properly understood and brought into the planning process. The best way to do this is through negotiated development, in which people participate in negotiating their rights and understand that all the different interests will need to be addressed.

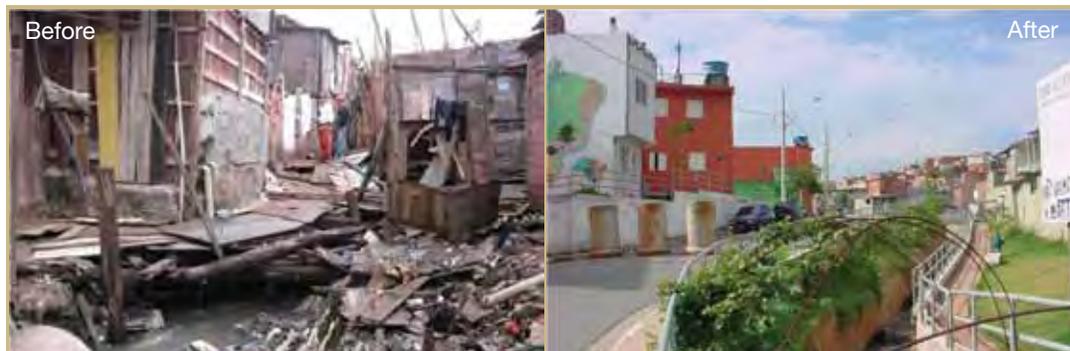
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR A SLUM TO BE UPGRADED?

With the implementation of adequate policies and local economic growth, slums gradually disappear as residents invest in their homes and upgrade them over time. How quickly this process happens depends largely on how fast a city's economy grows and the effectiveness of its urban policies.

It is important to note that there are different phases of slum upgrading projects. Some are accomplished relatively quickly; it doesn't take long to install urban services such as a water supply system or drainpipes. Other phases take more time. Integrating a poor, informal settlement into the city and establishing the necessary linkages into the economy can take years.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CITIES ALLIANCE IN SLUM UPGRADING?

- **Grants.** The Cities Alliance supports citywide and nationwide slum upgrading and prevention initiatives in different countries around the world.
- **Knowledge sharing.** With its broad, international membership, the Cities Alliance can draw best practice experiences from around the world and help cities or countries share experiences with slum upgrading—what has worked, what has not, and why—and give them access to a network of cities dealing with similar issues.
- **Advocacy.** The Cities Alliance engages directly with governments and development partners on the significance of managing urban development and planning for future urban growth in a manner that responds to the needs of the urban poor and the city alike.



Paraisópolis, São Paulo, Brazil: Before and After Slum Upgrading





CITIES ALLIANCE IN ACTION

SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

Project: Technical cooperation on a citywide slum upgrading programme

The Situation: The largest city in Brazil, São Paulo attracted millions of immigrants during an industrialisation boom from the 1950s to the 1980s. This rapid growth resulted in a proliferation of informal settlements, many on precarious land with no services.

Partners: The World Bank and the São Paulo Municipal Housing Secretariat (SEHAB)

The Result: The Municipality of São Paulo established the Bairro Legal (Legal Neighbourhood) Programme, an initiative providing security of tenure and improved living conditions for slum dwellers. The Municipality also created HABISP, a centralised database with information about the city's precarious settlements that has become a valuable tool for urban development. HABISP has generated considerable interest internationally, and plans are underway to expand it to other cities in Brazil.

EKURHULENI, SOUTH AFRICA

Project: Upgrading for Growth initiative that integrates energy, economic development and housing needs

The Situation: The third largest city in South Africa, Ekurhuleni was created in 2000 from nine local authorities. The new municipality struggled to deal with the huge social and economic disparities that resulted from social planning during apartheid. Around 65 per cent of the city's population were living in informal settlements or townships.

Partners: The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, the World Bank

The Result: The city has adopted an approach to slum upgrading that uses the upgrading process to drive sustainable economic development. Instead of focusing solely on housing for slum residents, the Upgrading for Growth approach involves providing opportunities for economic growth that meet the livelihood and social needs of the poor within Ekurhuleni's informal settlements.

UGANDA

Project: Transforming the Settlements of the Urban Poor initiative. It is the first implementation of the Cities Alliance's global Land, Services and Citizenship programme, which seeks to assist a selected group of developing countries grapple with the challenge of rapid urbanisation, growing cities and deepening urban poverty.

The Situation: Uganda's urban growth rate has increased significantly in recent years as rural poverty and conflict in the northern part of the country have driven people to the cities. Secondary cities in particular are growing rapidly. While Uganda's secondary cities are still relatively small, the national government has recognised the importance of proactively managing their growth to prevent them from developing into large, unplanned settlements. The Government of Uganda is seeking national and international assistance in managing the urbanisation process, building the capacities of its local governments, and integrating the urban poor into towns and cities all over the country.

Partners: The Uganda Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development; five municipal governments, Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI); United Cities and Local Governments, represented by the Urban Authorities Association in Uganda; Makerere University; The World Bank; UN-HABITAT; and the Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme (ESMAP)

Expected Results: In partnership with interested stakeholders, the Government of Uganda will develop effective, inclusive urban development policies and strategies to manage future urban growth. The initiative also aims to enable at least 250,000 slum dweller households in five of Uganda's secondary cities to improve their access to municipal services and actively engage in securing their rights, primarily by providing space for dialogue.

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