

# Literature review of informal settlement initiatives

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An estimated 1 billion people live in informal settlements globally. 90% of the 1 billion people are from low and middle income countries. Informal settlements appear in many ways, both physically and socially. The appearance is prerequisite by the local conditions such as; culture, history, politics, topography and the built environment. Challenges that most informal settlements have all over the world tend to be overcrowding, access to sanitation and clean water, poor structural quality of housing and security of tenure. Deprived neighborhoods have existed since formalized cities formed. It wasn't until the 1820s that the concept of informal settlements was established. This was due to the ability to differentiate between the affluent and deprived areas. Informal settlements were common in developed western countries during the industrialization period when rapid urbanization was required. The early capitalism changed the urban planning traditions to focus less on open spaces and communal grounds. With the industrial revolution, advanced transportation made it possible for the affluent society to segregate themselves from the underprivileged. Thus, informal settlements were the only choice for the deprived populous in cities, where land prices were appreciating, and profitability was high.

For the first time in history more than half of the global population resides in cities. However urban areas only equate to 3% of the earth's land. Over 90% of urban growth is occurring in developing regions. The increase of people living in cities can potentially rise to an estimated 60% by 2030 & 66% by 2050. Key contributing factors for increased development of slums are a rapid population increase, the lack of urban governance and rural-urban migration. A rise in growth of that extent would have serious implications

around the world ranging from access to health care, water, sanitation and affordable housing, which could prove detrimental.

Informal settlements are generally seen as dilapidated sites home to densely populated communities. However they also comprise of businesses, schools and health care institutions, which all generate income that contributes to an informal economy. As a result, due to the lack of governmental authority, it serves as a provision for a free market of low-cost housing. They serve as lucrative businesses, whereby housing which does not conventionally adhere to building codes or regulations and formalized infrastructure can be developed. Without any maintenance costs, these “ permanent” structures become inexpensive, invaluable assets with high ROI's.

Both Turner (1972) proposed that there may be another argument which suggests that residents aren't lacking in resource, skilled labor or networking but are deficient of secure tenure and land rights to occupy these residencies. To unlock this resource would require assurance that the investments made into their settlements will not be confiscated or demolished. By providing security of tenure, it will act as a catalyst for growth as residents may be more inclined to cumulate their resource and invest into housing, local services & sanitation, which in turn will drastically improve the physicality of the settlement. Hence, not only is slum upgrading crucial to overall urban and national development, but the urban poor is as entitled to equal services and opportunities as the rest of the population. Instead of having these informal settlements where social exclusion and underdevelopment is prevalent, slums can be integrated into the larger

framework of the cities and contribute to the economic, social and even cultural development.

### Understanding Slum Upgrading

Slum upgrading is a development of informal areas, by providing the dwellers with the economic, social and community services available to other citizens. These often entail securing land tenure, implementation of formalized infrastructure, or social and educational entities on current structures. It is argued that it is not simply introducing these formalized services such as housing and water or drainage to the communities as a one-off proposal, but a more holistic approach of creating a communal effort and involving the several parties within the community, residents, community groups and local businesses, to identify and relay the potential solutions.

The term “ Land Tenure” often refers to the right of an individual or collection of people to reside on the stated piece of land, without governmental conflicts and fear of forced evictions. It encourages residents the sense of security and ability to develop. Often through an explicit legal framework attached to the land via a lease agreement or ownership, land tenure is a rare commodity within informal settlements due to various political and regulatory issues. Thus, an often item of discussion during the process of slum upgrading

Slum upgrading is accepted as a priority for sustainable development. While there are clear challenges to upgrading, local support and community engagement are seen as essential to success. Typical “ top-down”

approaches led by institutions with power and resources may fail to generate local engagement. Conversely, initiatives led by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) or other self-help groups may garner good community support but may lack institutional and material resources to meet objectives. A hybrid approach that engages the community while mobilizing the resources of governments and large agencies can overcome some of these limitations, but it is not without complications.

### Strategy & Policies

#### The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2005

According to the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2005), implementation of slum upgrading has been identified as one of the program to address poverty by targeting the poor communities. The slum upgrading program should improve the living conditions of millions of urban poor that live in urban slums mainly in Nairobi and Mombasa and lack access to basic water and sanitation, road, energy and housing infrastructure. The program should develop slum upgrading and relocation plans that include land adjudication and registration, expansion of water network and sanitation facilities, provision of electricity

#### National Housing Policy, 2004

According to the National Housing Policy (2004), upgrading of slum areas and informal settlements shall be given high priority. It shall be undertaken with minimal displacement to cater for proper planning and provision of

necessary infrastructure and related services. Appropriate upgrading measures shall be instituted for existing slum areas taking into account key upgrading components that cover security of land tenure, provision of basic infrastructural facilities and services, improvement of housing structure and the socio-economic status of the target community.

The Government shall streamline acquisition of land for housing the poor, adopt appropriate tenure systems, planning standards to suit given slum settlements and prevent unwarranted destruction of existing housing stock and displacement of the residents. Upgrading shall be integrated to take into account socio-economic activities that improve livelihoods of target communities while employment and income-generating activities that address poverty alleviation shall be enhanced.

The Kenya Informal Settlement Improvement Project (KISIP) is an initiative started by the Government in collaboration with the World Bank, SIDA and French Agency for Development (AFD) in June, 2011. It focuses on improving living conditions in existing informal settlements by investing in infrastructure and strengthening tenure security. It also support the Government of Kenya (government counterpart funding is 10%) in planning for future urban growth in a manner that prevents the emergence of new slums.

Most notably, The United Nations Millennium Development Declaration of 2000, stated the necessity of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. In Kenya, the management of slum areas has undergone three distinct development paradigms. From 1895 to the 1970s, the initial

approach to slums development consisted of demolition and eviction of slum residents. However, the more they were demolished, the more they increased elsewhere due to the absence of alternative accommodation, dispersing parts of the population which in turn dispersed the community to other regions of the city.

The second phase was evoked by international pressure along with civil rights groups in the 1980's, prompting Kenya to precipitously acknowledge the need to improve living conditions within slums, primarily funded through multilateral agencies. However, by the 1990's, these Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), not only relinquished subsidies but required State governments to occupy predominant roles in project implementation. When the second and third urban projects in Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Thika, Eldoret, Nakuru and Nyeri were completed in the 1990's, public housing development stopped, yet slum development continued to flourish. To the extent that 50% of the population of Nairobi, the capital city, now reside in these informal settlements.

Following a conference in Istanbul in 1996, the International Community re-evaluated the dismal housing situation and mandated the urgent response to the dire living conditions within these informal settlements. However rather than simply addressing these issues, urgent response to rapidly instrument policies and actions were required. And the implementation and development of infrastructure and the reduction of these slums were fundamental.