



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

# TRANSFORMING THE SETTLEMENTS OF THE URBAN POOR IN UGANDA (TSUPU)



## TSUPU at a Glance

The TSUPU programme is a partnership initiative undertaken by the Government of Uganda and its support partners to align urban development efforts at the national government, local government and community level. It aims to:

- Develop a national urban policy that will guide sustainable urbanisation in Uganda, ensure the empowerment of local governments, and reinforce the importance of active community participation.
- Build the capacity of local governments to strategically manage urbanisation.
- Empower organisations of the urban poor to actively engage in local development.
- Focus on secondary cities (Arua, Jinja, Kabale, Mbale and Mbarara).

## WHAT IS THE TSUPU INITIATIVE?

The Transforming the Settlements of the Urban Poor: A Secondary Cities Support Programme (TSUPU) is an initiative undertaken by the Government of Uganda to align urban development efforts at the national government, local government and community levels and include the urban poor into the planning and decision-making processes.

The initiative is a direct result of the Government's desire to proactively manage rapid urbanisation and improve living conditions for the urban poor. While initial TSUPU activities will centre on the five towns of Arua, Jinja, Kabale, Mbale and Mbarara, the programme is explicitly designed to develop into a national initiative through the systematic sharing of experiences and lessons with all local governments in Uganda.

*“We want to get rid of slums, but not slum dwellers. They are part and parcel of the urban fabric. Sustainable urbanisation can only happen through dialogue and participation.”* —Samuel Mabala, Commissioner for Urban Development, Uganda

## WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF TSUPU?

TSUPU seeks to build the capacity of Government—both national and local—and urban poor communities so that they can effectively manage urban growth, improve access to services, and formulate inclusive urban development policies that benefit the poor. It will do this by:

- **Bringing coherence of effort:** The programme aims to foster closer coordination in urban development by creating an institutional framework that will allow stakeholders to align their activities and financing towards common objectives.
- **Building effective partnerships:** Through the TSUPU process, effective partnerships will be established among the national government, local governments, urban poor communities and other stakeholders. These partnerships will be based on rights and responsibilities that are clearly defined and negotiated.

## WHO ARE THE PARTNERS IN TSUPU?

The Government of Uganda is implementing TSUPU in partnership with the Local Governments of Arua, Jinja, Kabale, Mbale and Mbarara; the Urban Authorities Association of Uganda (UAAU); the Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda; ACTogether; and Makerere University.

These partners are in turn supported by international organisations including the World Bank, UN-HABITAT, Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), International City Management Association (ICMA), Energy Sector Management Assistance Program (ESMAP), and Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI).

Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the TSUPU programme is facilitated and supported by Cities Alliance, an international alliance of cities, slum dwellers, and their development partners focused on improving the lives of the urban poor. TSUPU is the first initiative supported under Cities Alliance’s In-Country Programme approach, which emphasises a long-term commitment to mobilise the different drivers of urban

development in a country and to improve both dialogue and coherence of effort among them.

## WHY DOES TSUPU FOCUS ON SECONDARY CITIES?

Although Uganda still has a relatively low level of urbanisation, it has a high urban growth rate estimated at 5.2 per cent per year. Given this growth rate, Uganda’s secondary cities—while still fairly small—are likely to expand significantly in the coming decades. The Government of Uganda has the rare opportunity to proactively manage the growth of these secondary cities and prevent them from growing into large unplanned settlements.

## WHAT ARE THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF TSUPU?

The TSUPU programme adopts a unique, three-pronged approach that aligns activities at the national government, local government, and community levels to maximise the alignment of effort and foster a more coherent urban agenda that is focused on inclusive, pro-poor cities.

### At the National Level

Coordinated by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, TSUPU activities at the national and sub-national levels aim to strengthen and support Uganda’s domestic urban

## Urbanisation in Uganda

- Uganda is currently one of the least urbanised countries in Africa (17 per cent), yet more than 50 per cent of national output is produced in urban areas.
- Cities and towns in Uganda are growing at the high rate of 5.2 percent a year.
- Uganda’s urban population will likely have tripled by 2025, according to current trends.
- Some 60 per cent of Uganda’s urban residents live in slums.



initiatives so that the country is better equipped to upgrade slums, proactively deal with urban growth, and benefit from urbanisation. These activities are:

- **National Urban Policy and Strategic Urban Development Plan for Uganda.** A national policy and strategic plan for Uganda's future urban development will be formulated with the participation of all stakeholders. The development of the policy will be facilitated by the Uganda National Urban Forum (see below) and other forms of consultation.
- **Uganda National Urban Forum.** Launched 6 May 2010, the Forum is a permanent platform for all stakeholders in Uganda's urban sector—individuals, representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions, organisations of the urban poor, and voluntary organisations—to establish a national consensus to deal with the challenges and opportunities of rapid urbanisation. The input from these forums will feed into the development of the national urban policy and strategic development plan.
- **Institutionalising Change – Universities.** To help ensure that students have the skills Uganda needs, universities will directly participate in and institutionalise planning and research processes at all three levels of the project. TSUPU includes student internships and research components that are preferably commissioned out to national universities.

### At the Local Government Level

This is the level where the urban poor engage with government on a daily basis, and there can be no meaningful impact on their lives without active municipal involvement. In effect, the municipality is the community's key partner in resolving problems and unleashing creative energy. The towns

participating in TSUPU are Arua, Jinja, Kabale, Mbale and Mbarara. Local activities are:

- **Capacity Development.** The Urban Authorities Association of Uganda has partnered with the International City Management Association to build the institutional leadership of both the operational and political spheres of local government. The goal is to systematically improve urban management skills and engage in more effective community outreach and communication.
- **City Development Strategies and Slum Upgrading Strategies.** Each of the five towns will develop a long-term municipal development strategy that includes a strategy for slum upgrading. The purpose of this activity is to strengthen long- and medium-term planning at the municipal level through broad-based participation and negotiated priorities. As part of this process, detailed local slum upgrading action plans will be developed that meet the real requirements of slum dwellers.
- **Municipal Development Forums.** The forum in each of the five towns serves as a platform where organised urban poor, local government, service providers, private sector and other stakeholders meet regularly to exchange views, debate priorities and agree on common actions.

### At the Community Level

The TSUPU programme seeks to mobilise communities of the urban poor, primarily through the establishment of slum dweller federations in the participating five towns. These federations enable communities to organise around activities such as savings groups, enumeration and mapping and have a platform for collective action. Such activities in turn help communities obtain



the knowledge and information they need to engage with local and national governments on municipal development strategies and slum upgrading plans. These activities are:

- **Saving schemes.** Savings mechanisms, which are controlled and managed by the urban poor themselves, form the basis for collective action in urban poor communities. They enable people to build their own capacity and increase their organisational ability while gaining access to affordable finance.
- **Mapping and enumeration of slums.** The act of registering and enumerating all household structures and businesses is a tangible step in the process of local government recognition and the building of an active citizenship. Organisations of the urban poor gather data and conduct the enumeration, which local governments then verify. Communities use the maps and enumerations to engage their local governments about slum upgrading, and the data is also useful for municipalities who often lack information on the informal settlements in their areas.
- **Community Upgrading Funds.** Managed jointly by communities and local governments, these Funds allow community organisations to apply for grants for smaller-scale projects—such as painting a school or establishing

a small waste management project—which they will then oversee. These projects help communities experience visible progress quickly and build participatory planning skills, while engaging in constructive partnerships with local government. Half of TSUPU's funding will go directly to these Funds in the five participating towns.

## Making Progress

- **Positive dialogue at all levels.** Both national and municipal forums have been launched, and an intensive dialogue focused on settlement issues is in place.
- **Mobilised, engaged communities.** Local slum dweller federations have been established in all five towns, and settlement profiles completed for each municipality. Community organisations now have offices in the municipal governments.
- **Potential for leveraging investment.** The framework of national dialogue, local-level good governance and community voice has resulted in closer engagement of partners, raising the possibility of increased investment linked to the outcome of the dialogue process.
- **Training the next generation of urban planners.** Makerere University is actively engaged in developing planning processes with stakeholders. In addition, urban planning students at the University are participating in internships with SDI/Actogether to learn about key activities including enumeration, profiling, mapping, and engaging local government on the importance of community-generated information.

## About Shack/Slum Dwellers International

Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is a transnational network of local slum dweller organisations that have come together at the city and national level to form federations of the urban poor. SDI's objective is to build a strong grassroots movement that realises the citizenship and centrality of slum dwellers in urban development in a rapidly urbanising Global South. ACTogether Uganda is SDI's local affiliate and the national support NGO for the Uganda Slum Dwellers Federation.

