



SYSTEMATIC APPROACHES TO SLUMS

A REVIEW OF NATIONAL AND
CITY-WIDE APPROACHES

Cities Alliance
Cities Without Slums

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Acknowledgements: The review series was undertaken by the University of St.Gallen for the Cities Alliance's Global Programme on Informality.

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We express gratitude for the comments and feedback we received that ensured the quality of the report.

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First published in 2021: [Version 1](#), November, 2021

Please cite as: Cities Alliance (2021) "Systematic approaches to slums – A review of national and city-wide approaches", Cities Alliance, Brussels.

Cities Alliance – UN House, Boulevard du Regent 37-40
1000 Brussels, Belgium.

Cover: © Victor Lepik

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KEY MESSAGES



Slum upgrading projects and sites and service projects were essential in recognizing the role and merits of informal urbanization processes. The interventions promoted and supported by international organizations showed their limitations quickly.



National and city-wide slum upgrading programmes have been implemented around the world. Such interventions are systematic, as they are based on a holistic view of slums and their multiple levels of deprivation. These interventions are also strategic, as they are based on development phases, intervention tool kits, and practical and participatory coordination.



Our current knowledge on strategic approaches to slums is not consolidated. Sporadic evidence points at essential elements and remaining challenges summarized in this review paper.



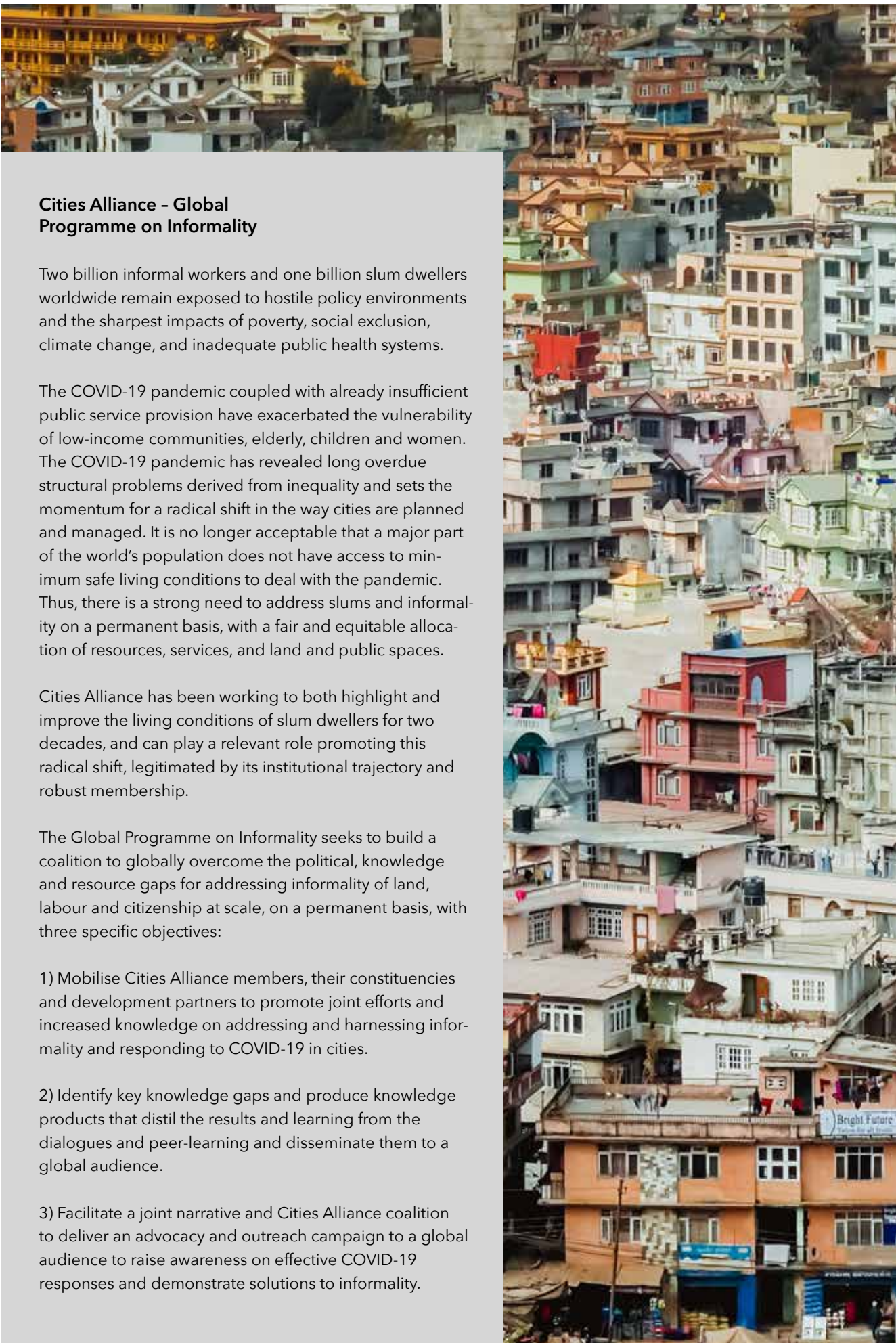
Strategic approaches allow tackling underlying causes and consequences of slum formations, creating physical and functional connections on the project level, enabling strategic decision-making, and contributing to greater fairness.



Recurring elements in systematic approaches are a connection of slum upgrading to the national and/or city-level development strategy as well as the larger policy framework, the embeddedness of slum upgrading into urban and housing strategy, clear and transparent parameters to classify slums and connect them to a set of interventions, and well-informed decision-making and management based on participatory data collection.



The remaining challenges recall the identified bottlenecks on the project level (land, finance, lack of human resources, political will) and offer more possibilities to tackle them by activating all stakeholders and institutional scales available in a country or city.



Cities Alliance – Global Programme on Informality

Two billion informal workers and one billion slum dwellers worldwide remain exposed to hostile policy environments and the sharpest impacts of poverty, social exclusion, climate change, and inadequate public health systems.

The COVID-19 pandemic coupled with already insufficient public service provision have exacerbated the vulnerability of low-income communities, elderly, children and women. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed long overdue structural problems derived from inequality and sets the momentum for a radical shift in the way cities are planned and managed. It is no longer acceptable that a major part of the world's population does not have access to minimum safe living conditions to deal with the pandemic. Thus, there is a strong need to address slums and informality on a permanent basis, with a fair and equitable allocation of resources, services, and land and public spaces.

Cities Alliance has been working to both highlight and improve the living conditions of slum dwellers for two decades, and can play a relevant role promoting this radical shift, legitimated by its institutional trajectory and robust membership.

The Global Programme on Informality seeks to build a coalition to globally overcome the political, knowledge and resource gaps for addressing informality of land, labour and citizenship at scale, on a permanent basis, with three specific objectives:

- 1) Mobilise Cities Alliance members, their constituencies and development partners to promote joint efforts and increased knowledge on addressing and harnessing informality and responding to COVID-19 in cities.
- 2) Identify key knowledge gaps and produce knowledge products that distil the results and learning from the dialogues and peer-learning and disseminate them to a global audience.
- 3) Facilitate a joint narrative and Cities Alliance coalition to deliver an advocacy and outreach campaign to a global audience to raise awareness on effective COVID-19 responses and demonstrate solutions to informality.



1 INTRODUCTION

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Informality is a complex topic with a long history.

Five decades ago, a study in Ghana resulted in the first comprehensive discussion on informality in a development context.¹ Hart coined the term informal economy that became an important concept to describe national economies in the developing world.² The idea of informality has been used in different knowledge domains and discourses. Several have made important contributions to improving our understanding of the Global South's urbanization processes: informal economy, informal housing, informal land markets, informal law, and informal institutions.

This paper is part of a larger review series on informality launched by Cities Alliance. Since its creation in 1999, this multi-institutional platform has been at the forefront of the debate on slums, slum upgrading, and the role of informality in cities of the Global South. Cities Alliance has recently launched the Global Program on Informality. The overall aim is to fundamentally alter how knowledge is created and shared on informal settlements and related topics. One of its objectives is to build a coalition to globally overcome the political and geographic as well as knowledge- and resource-related gaps for addressing the issue of informality in housing, land, economy, and citizenship at scale, on a permanent basis.

The “Practice Review of Informality” is embedded in the **Global Program on Informality** and proposes a new take on cross-sectoral knowledge sharing. Each paper addresses an important topic of informality by reviewing the literature produced by Cities Alliance, its members, and other important knowledge stakeholders whenever needed. Developed in close collaboration with the restructuring

of the knowledge library, several elements have been developed to enable better access and more targeted impact. The paper and its content have been tagged to unlock the potential of text-based online searches to make the content more accessible.

Our world is changing at an unprecedented pace.

This also imposes new demands on knowledge creation. The authors of this paper perceive the paper as a current snapshot of the practitioner's knowledge on the given topic. We encourage the readers to get in touch with us for further suggestions and comments. This feedback is very valuable to us and may include, among others, specific references to new projects and case studies, missing concerns, and proposals for future review topics. Interested parties can also sign up for the mailing list of the Global Programme on Informality. The papers shall be updated regularly (traceable in the version index) to keep pace with the evolving knowledge of the Global Community of Practice.

by Anthony Boanada-Fuchs, Vanessa Boanada Fuchs, Anaclaudia Rossbach and Susana Rojas Williams

1 – Hart, 1973.
2 – Chen, 2012.



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2 SETTING THE STAGE

Slums are a recurring feature of urbanization and represent the living reality of one billion people. There is no universally accepted definition of slums.³ Still, the UN-Habitat uses five dimensions of housing deprivation to assess the challenge of slums (data on tenure insecurity is not collected). There is an ongoing initiative to develop a broader definition based on the idea of multiple deprivation index⁴ that can help more accurately capture the challenge and assess the impact of interventions.

From an international vantage point, a learning curve can be observed on tackling slums and informal growth. Early attempts focused on eradicating slums and relocating their population. Providing alternatives in the form of public housing was costly and ineffective. More supportive interventions were developed in slum upgrading and sites and services projects. While acknowledging the strength of informal urbanization and self-help housing construction, such responses were never deployed at the required scale. An own review paper is dedicated to this broader learning curve. We will relate the advantages and challenges of systematic approaches to the more punctual interventions (see review paper on slum upgrading programmes).

“
Early slum-upgrading projects tended to be confined to improvement of housing and

physical infrastructure. With time, slum upgrading has started to pay attention to community involvement, governance, legal status of the households' title, and environmental safety.”⁵

Starting in the early 1990s, more structural interventions have been advocated. Such approaches take the form of city-wide or even national slum upgrading programs. While differing in some important ways (such as geographic scale, range of possibilities), these two approaches have a systematic nature in the approach in common. These initiatives are the subject of this review paper. The research design for this paper consists of a literature review of the literature in combination with case studies analysis to establish the current state of the art. The focus lies on the knowledge products of Cities Alliance and its members. Whenever needed, we consulted other source material.

Our knowledge of national frameworks is not consolidated enough to provide a comprehensive overview of constituting elements and success factors. The consulted literature relies largely on examples and does not provide synthesized overviews. This review paper reflects its source material; best practices take a more critical role in the paper. Furthermore, city-wide slum upgrading and national approaches are discussed jointly, given their connections in practice. The review paper is structured as follows. After outlining the main advantages of systematic approaches, the recurring elements are discussed, then draw to remaining challenges.

3 – see review paper on the challenge of slums.

4 – Thomson et al. 2020.

5 – Shah et al. 2015, p.9.



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3 REASONS FOR SYSTEMATIC APPROACHES

3.1 Systematic Approaches Allow to Tackling Underlying Causes and Consequences of Slum Formation

“One of the most effective results from participatory citywide slum upgrading programmes are achieved when interventions are closely and clearly aligned with national urban development frameworks.”⁶

Many challenges identified in slum upgrading programs require government changes on a high legislative level.

The review paper on slum upgrading programs has underscored several challenges: land, finance, standards, and data. To improve their accessibility, enabling environments need to be created, institutional bottlenecks removed, existing legislation amended, or new laws passed. In most countries, the power to carry out such changes rests – at least partially – with the national government. Inadequate or missing laws and regulations can be identified in the mapping exercise of the institutional environment during the feasibility study of slum upgrading programs. While legal reforms can be political and institutional complicated endeavours, some country experiences point to promising ways to combine reforms with financial incentives (see text box 2 on incentivized institutionalized reforms in India).

Slums are also increasingly seen as socio-spatial results of multi-dimensional deprivation. Consequently, exclusion and urban poverty can be two root causes of slum formation. Effective measures to lift households out of slum conditions must include measures to remedy this situation, such as creating opportunity structure and employment possibilities.⁷ Successful slum upgrading projects often include economic and educational elements, but impacts may be limited due to the geographic reach and the resources available to local governments. National slum upgrading programs have the significant advantage of using the entire arsenal of legislative and regulatory possibilities and can tap into additional financial resources. They can combine non-slum specific programs, e.g. targeted at creating jobs, the training of people, and anti-poverty measures with slum-focused interventions to tackle the root and the physical manifestation of slums.

3.2 Systematic Approaches Create Physical and Functional Connections

Urban plans are essential features of slum upgrading programs. They are used as tools to re-block housing units, enlarge roads and public space and ensure the urban functioning of a slum settlement (see review paper on slum upgrading programmes). Systematic approaches represent an opportunity to extend design and planning considerations beyond the borders of the targeted settlement. Slums often form in places exposed to risks and disconnected from the rest of the city. The physical integration into the rest of the city is the precondition to transforming slums into neighborhoods.⁸ It should consist of the realization of physical connection and the integration of urban functions into the settlement.

6 – PSUP, 2016, p.1.

7 – UN-Habitat, 2012, p.38.

8 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.44..

City-wide slum upgrading programmes also need to be integrated into the urban plans of the local government. There are considerable advantages in making slum upgrading an integral part of mainstream city development strategies. It sets the topic on the development plan and ensures continuous commitment.⁹ Furthermore, the

integration facilitates the coordination of several departments to plan and execute interventions. Resources can be more effectively used and services provided that may serve slum dwellers and the rest of the city (e.g. urban mobility, education, and health infrastructure).

Text Box 1: Kampung Improvement Programme (KIP) in Indonesia

The Kampung¹⁰ Improvement Programme is a highly cited best practice with a special place in history. It is a slum upgrading programme that was scaled up to a national programme and represents a genuine government initiative that only received the support of international organizations later on. The upgrading of kampungs was initiated under Dutch colonial rule, and the government of Indonesia started after independence to provide basic infrastructure to informal settlements in the Javan cities of Jakarta and Surabaya. Between 1969 and 1974, a million people were reached, and international organizations started to support this slum upgrading initiative. The KIP was supported by the World Bank, the UN-Habitat, and the Asian Development Bank and extended to over 500 towns and cities, benefiting 15 million people.¹¹

A new programme was launched in the mid-1990s. The KIP-Comprehensive (K-CIP) integrated a community focus based on decentralized and participation. Activities were based on the capacities and needs of the communities to decrease the dependency on state funds. In each part-taking community,

a development board was created and responsible for managing the upgrading process. The Kampung Development Board consisted of community members, representatives of local political parties and technical experts. In addition, university students were assisting the community.

The first step consisted of collecting data and mapping the neighbourhood. The community is trained and supported by students to carry out surveys and identify the specific development priorities of the neighbourhood. In a participatory process, the interventions are decided and may include the provision of water, sanitation, drainage infrastructure, footpaths and roads, solid waste management and public toilets. The creation of co-operatives, micro-credit- and skill-building and educational programs represent non-physical improvements. The C-KIP relies mainly on the financial capacities of the community. The public budget is spent on the physical infrastructure, and it is expected that the benefiting neighborhood raises for every dollar another US\$ 2,50 to generate a revolving credit.¹²

3.3 Systematic Approaches Enable Strategic Decision Making

“**not all slums can be upgraded at the same time given institutional capacity and practical considerations.”¹³**

Systematic approaches are based on strategies that include development phases and incremental implementation.¹⁴ In the perspective of the size of the challenge in most countries, governments need to acknowledge their institutional and resource limitations. It is often impossible to extend slum upgrading to all neighborhoods in need, and techniques for prioritization have to be developed. National and city-wide programmes develop a process-based implementation based on the financial, logistical, planning and managerial capacities¹⁵ in connection to clear goals and parameters. In addition, a transparent selection and decision-making process are essential in ensuring the strategic use of resources and fairness (see next point).

Systematic approaches undergo several development phases from policy formulation until project implementation. An essential part of systematic approaches is the care-

9 – referring to Cities Alliance, UN-Habitat, 2013, p.44.

10 – Villages are called Kampung in the Indonesian language. The term also refers to informal settlements.

11 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.137.

12 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.137.

13 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.25.

14 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.25.

15 – UN-Habitat, 2012, p.37.

ful crafting of the informal settlement upgrading cycle.¹⁶ The identified steps include setting the objectives, program management and resource allocation, selection criteria for upgrading and resettlement, cadastre and beneficiary surveys, community involvement, project design and public tendering, project planning and preparation and project implementation. All steps need to take the people's needs and demands at the core of consideration and should be developed based on participatory processes.

3.4 Systematic Approaches can Contribute to Greater Fairness

Slum upgrading has as positive impacts on the concerned community that can be seen in health and environmental conditions and often translate into financial gains on the household level.¹⁷ Project-based interventions can alleviate the living conditions while ignoring the needs of many other slums. The choice of which slum to upgrade and which not often relies on technocratic decision-making and may have little to do with merit or specific characteristics of the slum population.

Systematic and strategic approaches maximize the fairness involved in slum upgrading. When it comes to housing and slum upgrading "[a] holistic, integrated, comprehensive approach is critical to overcoming inequality and ensuring non-discrimination and inclusion, leaving no one behind."¹⁸ It is fundamental to develop clear and logical selection criteria and connect a set of interventions to them. This ensures that every slum settlement can be situated within a decision matrix. Particular attention should be given to vulnerable groups and gender issues and those who often fall outside the beneficiaries, such as informal renters. For example, MCMV in Brazil adopted affirmative actions and a gender focus. Women were a priority, and 80% of the contract signed in the first phase were signed by female-headed households.¹⁹



Simone D. McCourtie © World Bank

16 – Acioly Jr. 2012, p.5.

17 – Field and Kremer 2006; Pérez Casas 2017; Turley et al. 2013.

18 – HFHI, 2021, p.50.

19 – UN-Habitat, 2017, p.25.



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4 ELEMENTS OF SYSTEMATIC APPROACHES

“
Successful slum upgrading, on a citywide and sustainable basis, has many requirements, but these do not involve magic.”

4.1 Connection to a Broader Policy Framework

Slum upgrading is embedded in a broader spatial, economic, and social development strategy. National urban policies (NUP) and national and city-wide slum upgrading strategies mutually reinforce. Ideally, NUPs provide the overarching framework and coordination tool to “support and strengthen the institutional setup required for a successful national and city-wide slum upgrading strategy.”²¹ In a review of housing and slum upgrading practices, the Urban Housing Practitioner’s Hub (UHPH) concludes that “[c]omprehensive, integrated approaches work best.”²²

On a national level, slum upgrading and access to decent housing can be directly connected to the national constitution and human rights. Several governments have made provisions in their constitutions to at least partially reflect the human rights status of the housing. “Human rights-based approach: starts from the premise that people living in slums have a right to adequate housing and basic services [...]”²³ Right-based approaches can mainstream the claims and empowerment of women, minorities, and vulnerable groups.²⁴ The UN-Habitat’s Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme and the Housing at the Centre rely on a human rights perspective in housing and slum upgrading. This is also reflected in the New Urban Agenda. The human rights-based approach in slum upgrading “applies a holistic development approach that addresses inequalities and discrimination, leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind in development by placing power relationships in human settlements at the heart of its analysis.”²⁵

20 – Cities Alliance 2008, p.1.

21 – PSUP, 2016, p.1.

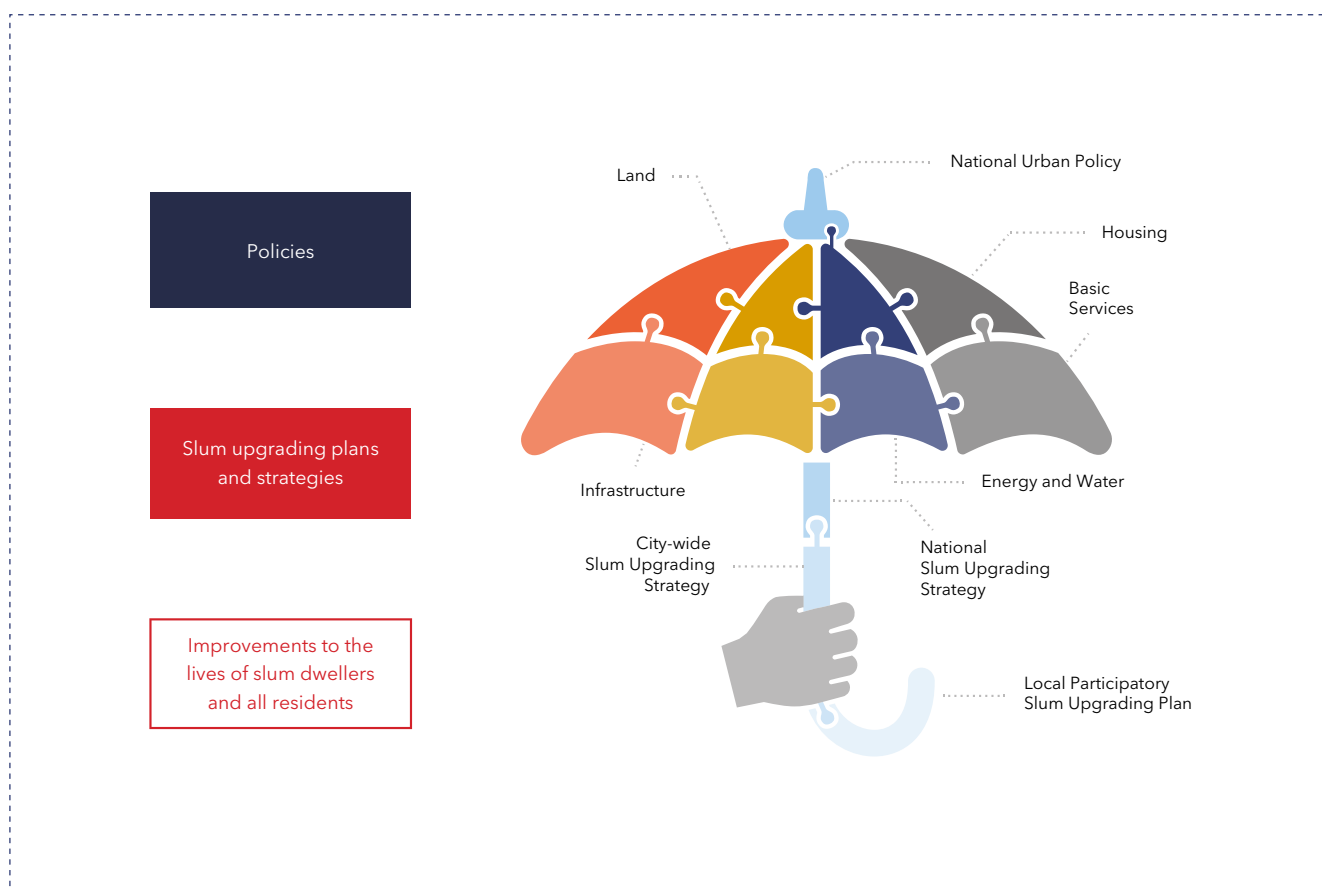
22 – HFHI, 2021, p.54.

23 – PSUP, 2016, p.3.

24 – HFHI, 2021, p.50.

25 – UN-Habitat, 2017, p.27.

Figure 1: The policy umbrella for strategic approaches to slum upgrading²⁶



Policy and Regulatory Reforms can tackle bottlenecks.

Laws and regulations are historical products that do not always reflect the local living reality and actual demands. In particular, countries with a colonial past have been subject to legal continuity and blueprint adoptions of laws and standards developed in a completely different geographic and cultural context (see review paper on slum upgrading programs). Laws and regulations can come in the way of upgrading projects, and some initiatives have only managed progress by circumventing laws and relying on informal solutions.²⁷

Systematic approaches to slum upgrading should identify significant urban development and housing bottlenecks. In the feasibility phase of a slum upgrading program, the legislative and regulatory framework, institutions, and the most critical administrative processes need to be mapped across thematic areas and different levels.²⁸ Based on this assessment, existing laws have been identified that need to be reformed and the requirement to issue new legislation. Such change might face resistance and require strategic advocacy efforts,²⁹ paired with show-casing initiatives and the right incentives. In India, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission has institutionalized an interesting system that ties financial benefits to institutional reforms (see text box 2).

26 – Source: PSUP, 2016, p.1.

27 – UN-Habitat 2012, p.35.

28 – PSUP, 2016, p.7.

29 – HFHI, 2021, p.54.

Text Box 2: Incentivized Institutionalized Reforms in India

The Indian central government launched an urban reform mission that deployed incentives to push for state and local government reforms. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) ran from 2006 to 2012 until 2014. Launched under the purview of the Ministry of Urban Development, the mission represented the largest-ever government program for cities. The formulated objectives of the mission were the integral development of infrastructure and the scaling-up of the delivery of public infrastructure and services. Urban development received historically less attention in India, and there were several signs of urban dysfunctionality, aggravated by outdated laws and regulations.

The central government identified several major bottlenecks to increase sustainable urban development and developed a conditional funding scheme to stimulate institutional changes. The two significant submissions, the Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) and the Urban Infrastructure and Governance (UIG), were launched competitively. Local and state governments could apply with specific projects. The financial contributions of the national government ranged between 50-80%, while the rest had to be covered by the other government levels. In exchange for the funds, several reforms had to be completed within the mission period, such as advancing decentralization, deregulation, and specific impediments (e.g. control acts and stamp duties).³⁰

4.2 Part of a Larger Urban and Housing Strategy

A two-pronged approach combines curative and preventive measures. Slum upgrading is an intervention that aims at improving the living conditions of existing slum dwellers. If representing the only measure targeted at slums, they would need to be carried out faster than new slums are forming. In practice, slum upgrading needs to be embedded in a more comprehensive housing policy with a twin-track approach.³¹ Curative measures need to be combined with slum prevention measures to reduce the demand for slum housing and, consequently, the need for future slum upgrading. Monitoring land-use changes to discourage squatting and/or informal development of lands are only valid options when considerable efforts are spent in parallel on the provision of housing alternatives. The best slum prevention is the development of an efficient and affordable housing provision that manages to absorb the housing need of the poor and the lower middle-class households. The same institutional bottlenecks (insufficient supply of land, access to finance, too high standards, complicated administrative processes, inadequate laws and regulations) that contribute to informal urbanization and slum formation, are also hindering the adequate supply of formal housing.

“Slum upgrading and the supply of affordable housing are part and parcel of a one single housing policy that must be executed simultaneously.”³²

Unlocking the potential of affordable housing requires the enablement of other sectors. The market enablement paradigm in housing started in the 1980s, but results have often been limited. Housing becomes increasingly unaffordable in cities around the world.³³ In the absence of attainable alternatives, the urban poor and even the middle classes are pushed into substandard housing solutions. The involvement of market actors in affordable housing is challenging³⁴ and even more in slum upgrading.³⁵

30 – Based on Boanada-Fuchs, 2015.

31 – UN-Habitat, 2012, p.36.

32 – UN-Habitat, 2012, p.46.

33 – UN-Habitat, 2016.

34 – IBRD, 2020.

35 – Baliga and Weinstein, 2021.

Text Box 3: A twin-track Approach in Brazil

Brazil has a long tradition in slum upgrading and has developed several approaches, such as the Favela Barrio program, that gained a lot of international attention. In contrast to these local initiatives, the PAC and Minha Casa Minha Vida (My House My Life, MCMV) are two national programs that can be seen as a twin-track approach to tackle the housing challenge in the country.³⁶

MCMV offered several housing provision modalities for large cities, small cities and rural areas and the supply of new houses, it was also reviewed to absorb the housing component of slum upgrading programmes. The programme had two objectives, closing the housing deficit and stimulating the economy in light of the unfolding global financial crises, but its focus was primarily on the provision of new housing. Using the housing subsidy programme to support slum upgrading programmes revealed to be very challenging, due to the land regularization requirements and the need to match national and local selection criteria.

The Growth Acceleration Programme (PAC) launched in 2007 has illustrated the positive effects of large-scale infrastructure spending on the national economy and employment. In four years, PAC channelled US\$ 334 billion investments into critical sectors (transportation, energy, and social and urban infrastructure) and also included a component for slum upgrading, including the housing component. The second phase of PAC-Favelas was launched in 2011 and used the MCMV umbrella for the provision of housing in slum upgrading and redevelopment schemes. PAC-Favela followed the idea of integrated slum upgrading and provided physical infrastructure combined with a robust social component that included socio economic development strategies, as well as capacity building and support to strengthen communities, the social capital in the territory.

The affordable housing programme (MCMV) and the national slum upgrading programme (PAC-favela) introduced an unprecedented scale to the housing pro-

vision in Brazil. MCMV received over US\$ 150 billion of investment and built over 5 million houses, while PAC has benefited approximately 2 million households. Despite the quantitative achievement, criticism has been raised that MCMV led to cheap housing at the urban periphery.³⁷ Still, both programs have considerably scaled up the affordable housing supply and broadened the possibilities of local governments.

The PAC implementation in Belo Horizonte under the lead of URBEL (The Urbanization and Housing Company) can illustrate the potential of national programmes when implemented effectively. Since 2007, the city of Belo Horizonte upgraded 12 slums with a total investment of approx. US\$ 500 million with funds were mainly coming from the national infrastructure program PAC. The holistic intervention package included: physical infrastructure (water, sewerage, and electricity), urban services (solid waste collection), and social infrastructure projects (parks, nursery schools, sports facilities, and community centres).

The city-wide slum upgrading strategy perceived upgrading as a process, investing in community supporting activities, sensibilization programs, and skill-building. To improve the economic conditions of families, professional education classes were offered in construction, gardening, cooking, and sewing classes.

Complex projects such as slum upgrading require multi-sectoral institutional configurations: the essential actor is the community, the federal government provides financial, legal, and political support, private companies deliver technical and construction services. In contrast, NGOs and social work companies offer social and technical expertise, facilitating the engagement of local communities and building social capital. The interventions improved the residents' quality of life by considerably reducing water-borne diseases, geological risk, and homicides and violent crime rates. This success goes hand in hand with improved environmental conditions and opportunity structures.³⁸

36 – Lonardoni, 2016, p.31.

37 – Cardoso, 2013.

38 – Based on Lonardoni, Acioly Jr., and French 2013; Lonardoni, 2016; Boanada-Fuchs, 2020.

4.3 Clear Parameters to Classify Slums and a Range of Interventions

An intervention strategy is developed with clear parameters of decision-making. The UN-Habitat practical guide on city-wide slum upgrading states seven general criteria that can be considered to develop own priorities: the size and density of the settlement, the need and level of deprivation, the proximity to trunk infrastructure, nearness to other settlements to be upgraded, ability to pay off the community, and the activity and the quality of local mobilization. An overriding consideration is the public profile of the settlement as “it might be politically advantageous to show that a particular settlement is being improved.”³⁹

Exclusion criteria to qualify for slum upgrading have to be developed and clearly communicated. Slums cannot be upgraded if located in a hazardous area that puts residents at risk. The land might also be earmarked for development, or the original owner contests the occupancy in courts. Recent slum settlements are often excluded from part-taking in a program to deter opportunistic behaviour.⁴⁰

The Indian Programme of Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) envisions a “Slum Free India.” It offers central government assistance of 50-80%, a financial scheme that has been developed under the JNNURM (see respective text box 2). The city of Hyderabad developed an evaluation matrix to classify its slum settlements based on the poverty of its residents and the lack of infrastructure. The Kampung Improvement Programme (KIP) in Indonesia developed a scoring board based on 15 criteria.⁴¹

“**Establish a consultative process with target populations via CBOs and representatives prior to defining the scope of the programme. This will help to prioritize programme components and turn the programme into a demand-driven initiative with a greater degree of support from slum residents.**”⁴²

39 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.53.

40 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.54.

41 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.54.

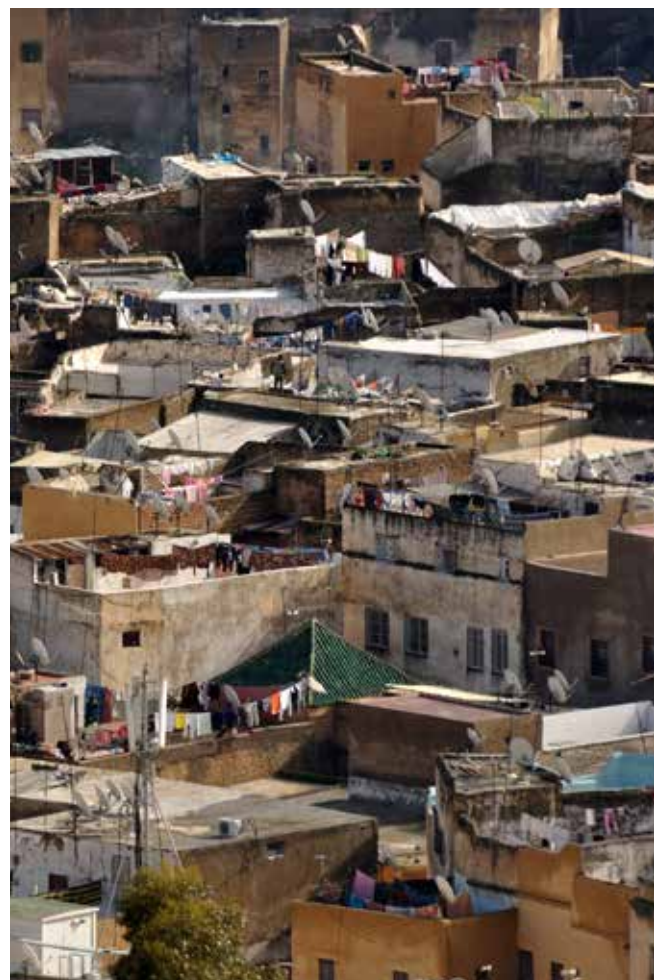
42 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.77.

43 – Shah et al. 2015, p.62.

44 – based on UN-Habitat, 2013, p.75.

45 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.75.

Different types of interventions are developed to tailor slum upgrading to the needs of a specific community. “Each community has unique conditions, needs, priorities, and potential, so no single model for upgrading fits all.”⁴³ Systematic interventions acknowledge the different needs and possibilities of slums and design a set of programmes. These interventions account for different slum realities (location, density, age, see review paper on the challenge of slums) but can also be seen as specific steps in the incremental development process.⁴⁴ Sectoral approaches focus on one specific deprivation (e.g. provision of basic infrastructure). Integrated upgrading considers the multi-dimensional nature of deprivation by jointly addressing social, economic, physical, and other vital parameters of exclusion. The regularization of settlements aims at solving the land tenure situation. Settlement redevelopment “focuses on the physical improvement of degraded existing structures in central city slums”⁴⁵ while total redevelopment replaces existing slum housing units with fully developed alternatives. Housing improvement provides technical assistance and access to finance for expanding and improving existing structures. The result of infrastructure improvement is an increase in the quality of and access to physical infrastructure. Equally important are local economic development interventions that provide jobs and opportunity structure and improve the livelihoods and economic security of slum dwellers.



4.4 Well-informed and Based on Participatory Data

Data is collected and operationalized. The lack of data in slum upgrading is well recognized⁴⁶ as underscored by the review paper on the challenge of slums. A special workshop of the Global Community of Practice on the data challenge in relation to slums and informal settlements, provided practical evidence from several initiatives (Slum Dweller International, Atlas of Informality, Ideamaps, UN-Habitat Data) on the difficulties of having adequate and aggregated data.⁴⁷ Data creation often represents the first important step in a systematic slum upgrading programme. Communities are involved in the mapping and surveying of neighbourhoods. In the city-wide slum survey in Bharatpur, Nepal, the local government prepared a base map, and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) supported communities in the process. Every slum neighbourhood was identified, and representatives from each community were invited to draw their neighbourhood layout with all the

available amenities. Afterwards, more detailed information was collected (number of households and their members, land ownership and access to basic services), and the entire settlement was mapped with the help of community architects and the local development agency.

Data collection is fundamental during program implementation. A systematic intervention has clear goals, parameters, and indicators that need to be monitored during the entire process. National frameworks develop a communication infrastructure to ensure that locally collected data is aggregated per geographic scale. The collected data should be disaggregated by gender, people of disabilities, etc., to ensure appropriate feedback loops.⁴⁸ The community's involvement is highly desirable, but the limits to data quality need to be acknowledged and eventually supplemented by other means of data collection. Data can be collected from a sample survey, census surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, observations, case studies, and quasi-experimental design.⁴⁹



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46 – Shah et al. 2015, p.29.

47 – Cities Alliance and GIMLA, 2021.

48 – World Bank, n.d., 5.

49 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.122.

Institutional structures and communication channels are developed to jump scale and geographic divisions.

National approaches have a very high demand in coordination. Adequate resources in terms of finance and human resources have to be made available, but the right institutional set-up is identified, which considers the national particularities. Several institutional devices are capable of adequately bridging space and scale. Successful programmes are either under the purview of a ministry/agency or an autonomous management unit.⁵⁰ These institutional arrangements differ in how power is divided, and cooperation enabled.⁵¹

The PAC in Brazil has created command centres that channelled all information flow and decision making. A specific task force was created in Indonesia on different government levels (local and national). These coordination devices use cross-sectoral and inter-governmental coordination⁵² to ensure that all expertise and viewpoints are accounted for. High-level Coordination devices also need to reach the ground. A local presence is of utmost importance to ensure feedback loops, contact zones between residents, technicians, and officials, the participation of concerned communities, and the local assessment of the implementation process and its impacts.

In the *Programa Integral de Mejoramiento de Barrios Subnormales* (PIMED) in Medellin Colombia, a coordination committee was created in order to ensure inter-institutional coordination. Administrative and monitoring groups were supported by consultants and assistance groups and were in charge of coordinating the zonal programme. Specific channels were established to guarantee information flow, planning, and control between both administrative levels. This operational division was done in parallel with a geographic differentiation. Field offices united the functions of legalisation housing improvement, neighbourhood improvement, social fund, monitoring and inspection. They were established for three different regions in the city to guarantee on-site presence and a strong liaison with the concerned neighbourhoods.⁵³

The Kenya National Slum Upgrading Programme (KEN-SUP) developed several coordination and monitoring agencies. The Inter-Agency Steering Committee is the main coordinating institution composed of government representatives (national and local), UN-Habitat and development partners. It can give policy directions and reports to the political leadership. The Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee coordinates all activities related to the slum upgrading programme, while the main function of the



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Multi-Stakeholder Support Group is to review and provide feedback. Representatives of development partners, civil society, the national government, local authorities, and communities form the support group. The Project Implementation Units are created in each local authority to oversee and coordinate the programme's implementation, which is under the responsibility of the Settlements Project Implementation Units.⁵⁴

50 – PSUP, 2016.

51 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.78.

52 – Acioly Jr. 2012, 13 see also BMK, Thailand.

53 – Acioly Jr. 2012, 23ff.

54 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.84.



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5 REMAINING CHALLENGES OF SYSTEMATIC APPROACHES

5.1 Access to Land

Irrespective of the approach to slums, land and finance remain two of the largest challenges. National approaches have more options at their disposal to raise funds, increase the supply of land, and regulate existing tenure disputes. We lack comprehensive overviews of the original ownership patterns of slums (as the housing deprivation of tenure insecurity is currently not accessed by UN-Habitat). Still, sporadic evidence on slum land points to governments' important role in land ownership.⁵⁵

Systematic approaches need to develop development options for a different constellation of land ownership. The possibilities and restrictions of developing land and transferring the title to slum communities are highly influenced by who owns the land. In national programs, situations with state ownership of the land on which a slum community developed represent the most feasible scenario for regularizing tenure. It is essential to onboard large landowners and develop a range of solutions. Private landowners might represent a major obstacle to regularizing slums. In several countries, land sharing solutions have been implemented that led to redeveloped communities with a higher built-up density, while land parcels are liberated for commercial purposes. Thailand and India have successfully implemented partnership models based on the concept of land sharing.⁵⁶

National slum upgrading programs also require the supply of centrally located land. Existing slums are classified based on a pre-defined decision matrix. Slums, built in inadequate locations (high-risk areas, land that cannot accommodate residential functions, land needed for urban development), need to be relocated. Such interventions have to be applied in a limited way, and relocated slums should be accommodated as close as possible to their original residence to limit the disruption on daily life and opportunities structures. Acquiring centrally located land is very costly. Government land banks might represent a suitable alternative. Promising solutions in land management rely on land value capture and land readjustments to increase the supply of well-located land and raise finance simultaneously.⁵⁷

55 – Ballaney et al., 2013.

56 – UN-Habitat, 2012, p.42.

57 – Becerril Miranda, Rossbach, and Boanada-Fuchs, 2021; Smolka, 2013.

Text Box 4: The Baan Mankong Upgrading Programme (BMK) in Thailand

A highly cited best practice in slum upgrading is the Baan Mankong (Secure house) upgrading programme in Thailand. The initiative could build upon some piloting initiative on participatory slum upgrading and land sharing experiences in Bangkok of the 1980s and 90s.⁵⁸

The Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) is the main focal point to coordinate this national initiative. CODI was created by fusing the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) with the rural-development fund and had more resources and greater autonomy within the government. The most important initiative is the BMK that “centres on providing infrastructure subsidies and housing loans to low-income communities to support upgrading in situ wherever possible and, if not, to develop new homes close by.”⁵⁹ Communities can approach CODI

for support and borrow from subsidized interest rates once the community-saving group has proven its capacity to manage funds. The community issues loans to their constituting household with a mark-up interest and is responsible for raising contributions of at least 10% of the total upgrading costs.⁶⁰

In addition to the financial mechanisms, CODI is also pivotal in gaining tenure security. The semi-autonomous public agency supports the communities in negotiating the purchase of their land and the issuance of collective titles. Depending on the case, land may be purchased from landowners at reduced costs, the land might be shared between the community and the landowner (the slum needs to be densified), or the slum community could be relocated (a new land parcel needs to be organized).^{61 62}

Land is also needed for some preventive measures.

Affordable housing projects targeted at absorbing the housing need of the urban poor need to be very cost-effective to remain attainable to the target population. Land is one major impediment and an effective policy lever to ensure affordability. It contributes an ever-larger share to the overall cost of affordable housing. In Latin America, it is estimated land costs increased from 7% to 20% of the overall costs.⁶³ In India, in states with restrictive land-use regulations (very low permissible built-up density), land can represent 75% of the total costs.⁶⁴ Streamlined regulations and land conversion procedures⁶⁵ can considerably increase the supply of land and decrease its costs. Governments that tap into value capture tools can, in addition, raise funds for land preparation and infrastructure supply. In Brazil, the social function of the land is recognized in the National Constitution, this is fundamental to recognize the rights of slum dwellers, guaranteeing not only security of tenure and protection against evictions, but also possibilities for cities to intervene and invest public budget in areas where property is not clear, without the financial and bureaucratic burn of formally acquiring the land.

An increase in land supply needs to go hand in hand with alternative tenure options. The provision of individual freehold titles has shown mixed results (see review paper on informal land markets). Tenure security can also be achieved by other means and by considering a continuum of land rights.⁶⁶ Community titles, as issued in the BMK in Thailand have the advantage to counter non-local investment interests and prevent the displacement of beneficiaries.

58 – Boonyabancha, 2011.

59 – Boonyabancha, 2005, p.21.

60 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.143.

61 – Boonyabancha, 2005, p.29.

62 – Based on: Boonyabancha 2005, 2011 ; UN-Habitat, 2013, Collier et al. 2019.

63 – between 1994 and 2004, Magalhães, 2016, p.7.

64 – Boanada-Fuchs 2015; Patel, Byahut, and Bhatha 2018.

65 – Shah et al. 2015, p.23.

66 – Shah et al. 2015, p.23.

Text Box 5: Indonesia Towards Cities Without Slums

Indonesia has a strong history in slum upgrading, and the KIP is a global reference for the first generation of large-scale slum upgrading projects. While the program managed to reach 10 million people until the end of the 20th century, the provision of basic infrastructure remained a major challenge. A third of the urban population still lacks access to clean water and a fifth to improved sanitation.⁶⁷ The National Slum Upgrading Programme was launched in 1999 with a clear aim to improve access to infrastructure. The programme recognizes different slum types (about topography) and locations (about the city).⁶⁸

The Cities without Slums Programme (KOTAKU) was initiated in 2016 and implemented in 269 districts and cities and over 11.000 urban villages, representing a slum area of almost 25.000 hectares. The programme is managed by the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing which assigned project management units (national level) and working units (central, provincial, and local government levels). To align regulations and foster collaboration between all stakeholders, a central collaboration management unit was created.

The former focus on basic infrastructure was abandoned, and a more comprehensive approach was developed that considers housing provision, land,

housing finance, spatial planning and the social economy/livelihood opportunities. The programme combines slum alleviation (upgrading existing slum areas, developing new affordable housing) with urban renewal that combines the two slum alleviation measures in one single area. Two tracks are offered to account for different local conditions and institutional capacities, one enabling community-based renewal, the other large-scale urban renewal projects. The community-based urban renewal in Surakarta is financed by a collaboration between the local government, a special central government fund and the KOTAKU project. The local government granted land to 500 households, and existing housing units were consolidated. This approach is based on a competitive selection process and is currently replicated in seven other cities.

The advantages of the urban renewal projects are multi-fold. Given the scale of the intervention, urban space can be managed and utilized effectively, areas to accommodate new housing projects carved out; socio-economically mixed areas realized that also accommodate low-middle class, and mixed-use fostered to encourage the emergence of new economic activities. In 2020 projects were only in the planning phase as these interventions are very large and complex.

5.2 Financing Slum Upgrading

The financing of urban development in the Global South is a constant challenge. Slum upgrading requires the pooling of several financial flows to cover its costs for planning, implementation, management, and operations.⁶⁹ National frameworks for slum upgrading offer the widest possibilities to leverage funds. The financing may come from international donors, central government, state and local government, community-saving groups, civil society and the private sector. The origin of the funds will also naturally define the scale of the interventions. While project budgets and external funds can be an important initial trigger, financial sustainability can only be achieved if funding is structural. Fiscal resources have revealed to be the best source for large scale and continued programmes. "Tax revenues, municipal earmarked development fund, revolving type of basket funding, savings mobilization, land-

based finance and different forms of financing instruments must be devised."⁷⁰

Important: Recognizing slum upgrading as a priority is the first step toward financing.

Access to finance to benefiting households stimulates investment. Slum upgrading programs may heavily rely on self-help construction to improve housing units. In addition to skill-building and institutional support, access to finance and credits is needed. This further supports the creation of assets and wealth, as well as the empowerment of the urban poor.⁷¹ The involvement of financial institutions ultimately relies on the capacities of the government to reduce risk (perception) involved in lending to the urban poor and informally employed households. Security funds have been successfully tested in several countries (e.g. Brazil) to reduce the default risk for loans without collaterals.

Important: There is a general need to change public perception, perceiving slum upgrading as an investment and integral part of urban development – not as an expense.

67 – World Bank, n.d., p.1.

68 – World Bank, n.d., p.3.

69 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p. 58.

70 – UN-Habitat, 2012, p.42.

71 – Shah et al. 2015, p.29.

5.3 Lack of Capacities and Human Resources



For citywide slum upgrading, local governments and other implementing agencies must be well equipped in terms of human resources and be empowered by institutionally and legally protected mandates to intervene within the domain of slums.”⁷²

Systematic approaches to slum upgrading are complex undertakings and new experiences for most stakeholders. To ensure effective and smooth operations, adequate staffing and skill-building are required. Skills and capacities can be obtained by targeted actions, such as training and on-the-job technical assistance, improving organizational processes and resources, and adapting existing policies “to allow the new skills, processes and resources to be utilised effectively.”⁷³ While “many local governments suffer from a lack of capacity and a lack of resources.”⁷⁴ Every stakeholder has specific roles within a slum upgrading programme and, therefore, a specific capacity need.⁷⁵ The participatory slum upgrading project in Ismailia, Egypt, offered training to local authorities on “conflict management, housing development, GIS and participatory planning for slums, strategic plans and new construction laws.”⁷⁶ Additionally, local communities and implementing agencies received action planning training. In South Africa, Urban LandMark developed a toolkit with the support of Cities Alliance, the World Bank, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. In addition to the practical resource, municipalities received technical assistance to strengthen their capacities to scaling-up slum upgrading.⁷⁷



5.4 Coordination, Continuity and Political Will

Coordination needs to be effective, flexible and responsive for horizontal and vertical communication. Several management and communication devices have been developed to answer the challenges of vertical and horizontal coordination. Despite the institutionalization of the management and implementation processes, enough flexibility needs to be guaranteed to “jump-scale” and enable local actors to reach decision-making on the state and national level to prevent feedback and grievances from being blocked and remaining unheard. The Settlement Executive Committees in the KENSUP connect the community to the programme coordination and is “charged with advocacy for community rights and seeking full community participation in decision-making.”⁷⁸

Strategic and systematic intervention need strong, competent and committed leadership.⁷⁹ Training, skill-building, and funds can equip involved stakeholders with the right knowledge and tools. Political support is another essential ingredient of successful initiatives. Our current knowledge on the impact of slum upgrading practices is limited, impeding the development of convincing arguments that relate costs/efforts to impacts (see review paper on slum upgrading programmes). In the perspective of an incomplete picture on the merits of slum upgrading, political arguments and diplomacy are more important to secure commitment. It is recognized that the lack of political will hampers the implementation of slum upgrading at scale.⁸⁰ Showcasing of initiatives, a realization of pilot projects, and fostering international knowledge transfer can help foster political capital and support for national and city-wide slum upgrading programmes.

72 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.44.

73 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.90.

74 – Shah et al. 2015, p.19.

75 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.91.

76 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.152.

77 – HFHI, 2021, p.51.

78 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.84.

79 – UN-Habitat, 2013, p.28.

80 – UN-Habitat, 2012, p.42.



6 CONCLUSION

“
The challenge of scaling up slum upgrading is not a call for bigger projects. It requires regulatory, institutional, and policy reforms, coupled with long-term strategies.”⁸¹

One billion slum residents remind policymakers and governments that past urbanization has led to unequal spatial and socio-economic results. This high number is also a clear message that business-as-usual is not effective enough to eradicate inadequately housed families within a lifetime. The size and the complexity of slums require answers that correspond to the challenge.

City-wide slum upgrading programmes have been developed to address the issue of slums at the scale of a city. By applying a systematic approach from diagnostic to interventions, the larger scale of the programme enabled a more holistic take on the challenge, greater fairness in the process, and a more nuanced intervention package tailored to specific local conditions.

National approaches apply a comparable logic on the scale of a country. These programmes have a lot in common with city-wide strategies and are indeed directly interconnected and dependent on a local protagonism.

Both are *systematic*, as they are based on a holistic view of slums and their multiple levels of deprivation. Both are also *strategic*, as they are based on development phases, intervention tool kits, and effective and participatory coordination. At the same time, national frameworks also unlock a new set of possibilities. They can address structural bottlenecks, reform existing or pass new laws and regulations, and connect slum upgrading programmes to broader urban development and housing policies.

This review paper presents an overview of recurring elements and the remaining challenges of systematic approaches. The findings were derived and synthesized from the practice literature. While the discourse is still far from being consolidated, several interesting insights have been presented. Systematic approaches are highly complex undertakings, but governments can use an array of institutional options and coordination devices to maximize all stakeholders' participation and ensure communication between scales and geographies. Programmes also need to be horizontally (in space, between institutions) and vertically (within institutions) coordinated and managed, enabling the 'jumping of scales', and the local stakeholders can connect to decision-makers at the state and national level when needed.

Several insights from practice are presented, the Kampung Improvement Programme and the more recent national strategy KOTAKU in Indonesia, the Baan Man-kong upgrading programme in Thailand, the twin-track approach of Minha Casa Minha Vida and PAC Favela in Brazil, the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission in India. In addition to several shorter references, these examples illustrate interesting solutions to specific elements of systematic approaches and, at the same time, underscore the ongoing institutional learning process.

⁸¹ – Cities Alliance, 2002, p. 20.

As there are no silver bullet for slum upgrading there is a need to promote exchanges and improve the understanding of current practices, both at national and local level, to improve current approaches and contribute to a Global Community of Practice.

The challenge is likely to grow stronger in the future, while the global pandemic and the post-pandemic recovery will further strain available resources. More than ever, governments need to commit to making access to affordable housing a priority by deploying curative and preventive measures to slums. We have also seen that current national slum upgrading programmes strongly integrate such initiatives to other programmes and the housing and urban policies. In some way, slum upgrading becomes an integral part of city building in the Global South but there is still a long way to go in mainstreaming the upgrading and integration of slums in city-wide planning and getting the national legislation and regulations to support the right to the city.

The global pandemic also represents an opportunity. The fundamentals of cities are back on the discussion table and active debates broke loose on what kind of city we want to live in. Climate change and post-pandemic resilience will need strategic and systematic interventions. Decision makers can “learn from this crisis to build long-term societal, economic and environmental resilience against recurring natural and manmade disasters.”⁸²

This paper is part of a larger review series on key topics of informality published in 2021. We encourage the readership to also engage with the review of slum upgrading programs, National approaches to slums, informal land markets, informal rental solutions, informal economy, the impact of COVID-19 on informal settlements, and informality concepts.

82 – Cities Alliance, 2021, p.3.



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