



Land tenure regularisation is helping millions of low-income Brazilians secure housing rights. Photo by Cities Alliance Secretariat

## Cities Alliance in Brazil: A Partnership for Success

Prepared by: *Mariana Kara José Kiel*

The Cities Alliance's portfolio in Brazil has historically been the partnership's biggest, with more than 30 projects totalling over USD 20 million over the past 12 years. This longstanding partnership has produced valuable experiences related to integrated slum upgrading that are highly relevant to other cities around the world, mainly in Africa and Asia.

The Cities Alliance has had a presence in Brazil since 2001, working very closely with city and national policymakers on the design and implementation of important urban planning and knowledge dissemination tools, as well as on social housing and slum upgrading. This partnership was further

strengthened after 2003, when the Ministry of Cities was created and Brazil formally joined the Cities Alliance.<sup>1</sup> From the beginning of the Cities Alliance partnership, Brazil has emerged as a champion of slum upgrading. The urban transition in the country was virtually complete by the time the Cities Alliance was launched in 1999, a transition that was poorly managed and resulted in the settlement of huge slums, or *favelas*, in Brazilian cities.

Cities Alliance members the World Bank and the Italian Government played a key role in establishing

<sup>1</sup> The Brazilian government is represented through the following organisations:

- The Ministry of Cities: Federal body responsible for urban development policy and sectorial policies for housing, sanitation and urban transportation.
- CAIXA - Federal Savings Bank: A major government-owned financial institution that provides banking products and services in Brazil. Its activities include real estate loans, basic sanitation, urban infrastructure, and commercial banks. CAIXA plays a leading role in the implementation of the national housing programmes, operationalising housing credit and providing technical and specialised human resources.

The CIVIS series shares knowledge and learning arising from Cities Alliance projects and other activities in slum upgrading and city development strategies. It also serves as a platform for policy dialogue among city development stakeholders, including national and local governments, donors and slum dwellers to impact change in the lives of the urban poor and advance the urban development agenda.

“My most exciting moment with Cities Alliance was when Brazil joined the Cities Alliance in 2003. Brazil was the first developing country to join the Cities Alliance and this was an expression, a gesture by the Government of Brazil that expressed its willingness and its interest in adopting pro-poor housing and urban development policies. And that was a big moment because it ushered in the generation of reforms that transformed access to housing and urban services for Brazil’s poor and completely transformed Brazil’s housing and urban development sector. In opening the way for the participation of key partners such as the World Bank with major financing through a development policy loan which supported the reform programmes that transformed Brazil’s housing and urban development in the ensuing decade.”

Ivo Imparato, Principal Regional Team Leader,  
Latin America and the Caribbean,  
Water and Sanitation Program,  
The World Bank

the partnership’s early foothold in Brazil. Building upon the support it had provided to the state of Bahia, Italian cooperation designed a much larger project with the support of the World Bank. What started as an upgrading and rehabilitation project blossomed to take on national significance in terms of innovation and lessons learned.

By the time the Brazilian Ministry of Cities was created, the Cities Alliance had already set up an office in São Paulo. This good timing, combined with consistent member support and the presence of in-country staff, enabled the Cities Alliance and the Brazilian Government to develop a long-term, successful partnership that provided technical and financial support to flagship programmes aimed at improving national urban policies. It also ensured that key projects, such as the Bahia and the São Paulo projects, would remain on track and stable, despite several government changes—a key characteristic of the Cities Alliance portfolio in Brazil.

Overall, the Cities Alliance and its members have made a very active contribution to the urban debate in Brazil, and Brazil’s representatives to Cities Alliance Consultative Group have been extremely active and stable partners. Brazil’s decision to join the Cities Alliance in 2003 was a landmark event in the history of the organisation, helping strengthen the Cities Alliance as a partnership. Today, Brazil is increasingly sharing its know-how with other partner countries and cities through the Cities Alliance network.

## Including Upgrading in the Growth Agenda

Over the past four decades, Brazil has become one of the most urbanised countries in the world, with 84% of Brazilians living in cities.<sup>2</sup> As in so many developing countries, rapid urbanisation has been accompanied by a lack of urban planning, inadequate job opportunities and predatory land markets leading to a huge population of urban poor. According to the 2010

<sup>2</sup> Brazil has 190 million inhabitants living over a 8.5 million km<sup>2</sup> area distributed in 5,565 municipalities. Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (2010) Indicadores sociais municipais: Uma análise dos resultados do universo do Censo Demográfico. Available at: [www.ibge.com.br](http://www.ibge.com.br).

national census, 3.2 million households—11.4 million people, equivalent to 6% of the country's population—were living in destitute settlements. Most of them were concentrated in metropolitan areas with a population of more than one million people.<sup>3</sup>

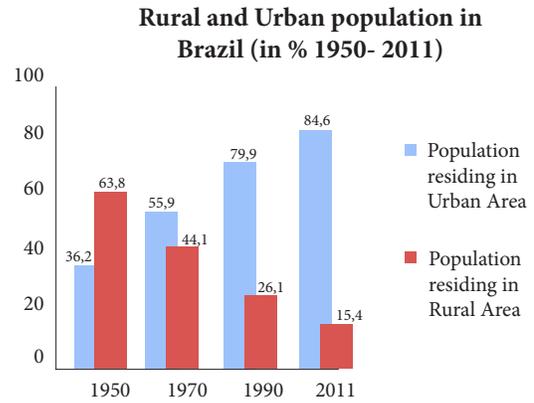
**“The City Statute of Brazil is justifiably highly regarded in many countries throughout the world. The history of the City Statute is an example of how a large number of stakeholders from different sectors of society pursued a concept of this type for many years and saw it come to fruition in the face of adverse circumstances. The Statute seeks to bring together, in a single text, a series of key themes related to democratic government, urban justice and environmental equilibrium to cities. It also highlights the gravity of the urban question, ensuring that urban issues occupy a prominent position on the national agenda of Brazil—now a predominantly urbanised country that was essentially rural until relatively recent times.”**

Erminia Maricato (2010): The statute of the peripheral city in: *The City Statute of Brazil: A commentary*. Cities Alliance, pp.5-22.

<sup>3</sup> In 2000, only 43.2% of homes in large metropolitan areas had adequate access to basic infrastructure, public transport and social services, and their building quality was substandard. The situation was even worse in their outlying areas, where only 24.3% of housing was adequate. Source: Cities Alliance (2009), *The State of the Cities in Brazil: the 2000 – 2009 report*, Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/node/3525](http://www.citiesalliance.org/node/3525).

### Brazil's Urban Transition

Throughout this period of rapid transition, Brazilian cities and the national government have put to the test many different policies and approaches to social housing initiatives with varying degrees of success. Larger cities have traditionally taken the lead in slum upgrading, most notably through the pioneering Favela Bairro programme in Rio de Janeiro and the Guarapiranga project in São Paulo.



Source: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2011 Revision* pp. 124 and 132

Protracted pressure by social movements for many years led to the approval of the 1988 Federal Constitution, setting forth the basis for a new legal urban order in the country. It was subsequently consolidated in 2001 by Federal Law No. 10.257, known as the City Statute.<sup>4</sup> The enactment of the City Statute put in place a progressive regulatory framework and created the conditions for the Brazil to address the real scale and nature of its social and urban deficit, with the goal of providing land access and equity in Brazilian cities. The City Statute confirmed and broadened the legal and political role of municipalities vis-à-vis urban policy while asserting a social approach to urban property rights.

**Over three million households—6% of Brazil's population—live in slums. 88.2% of all urban dwellers live in metropolitan areas with a population of one million or more.**

*(Census 2010, IBGE)*

<sup>4</sup> Cities Alliance (2010), *The City Statute of Brazil: A commentary*. Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/node/1947](http://www.citiesalliance.org/node/1947).



São Paulo, overview of Paraisópolis slum. Photo by Fabio Knoll.

Following the election of President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva in 2002 and the creation of the Ministry of Cities—which was also included in the agenda drafted by the urban social movements—the stage was set for further progress in responding to social demands. The new government launched a series of national programmes to address the historic urban deficit. Since then, a series of measures have been conducted to undertake a significant policy reform agenda for Brazil’s urban and housing sector, including the enforcement of a National Housing Policy (2004) and the establishment of a National Housing Finance System and Fund (2005). These important policy and institutional reforms provided the framework to launch the two major housing investment programmes in Brazil: Growth Acceleration Programme (PAC– *Programa de Aceleração de Crescimento*) Slum Upgrading (2007), and My Home My Life programme (2009) for housing provision.

The introduction of PAC in 2007 included, for the first time, slum upgrading as one of the priority pillars of national investment—enabling social housing initiatives to increase their scale in the country.<sup>5</sup> Economic stability, a gradual drop in interest rates and higher family income help explain this rebound in housing finance, although other factors should also be considered. Housing policy, in the sense of promoting access to affordable housing in the form of either credit or government subsidies, benefitted from increased public resources, credit and the willingness of the private sector to play a more active role in the process, primarily because housing became an attractive investment alternative.

<sup>5</sup> PAC was introduced during the second mandate of President Lula with a view to restoring investment in housing and public sanitation areas, which had been abandoned for almost 25 years. Under the PAC, over US\$ 30 billion were invested over a seven-year span of time reaching 1.8 million families.

Increased activity in the housing sector became key to leveraging economic growth and employment in Brazil, especially given the global economic crisis. This activity subsequently led to the creation of My Home My Life Programme (PMCMV – *Programa Minha Casa, Minha Vida*). Announced in 2009, it aimed to deliver 3.7 million houses by December 2014.<sup>6</sup> The programme became a benchmark for Brazil's housing policy and significantly scaled up the level of individual subsidies as well as the availability of funding for subsidies and finance.

Since 2003, housing-driven investments have increased by about 600% in Brazil. Investments for low-income families were prioritised, with special attention to those earning up to three times the minimum wages<sup>7</sup>, while housing construction for the middle class was encouraged. The housing deficit has significantly decreased in the past years, and in 2010 it was estimated at six million households—representing 10% of all households in Brazil. While these advances in housing policy have been impressive, phasing out the housing deficit remains a challenge for the Brazilian government. With the main programmes in place, the key challenge now is to ensure their sustainability on several fronts: urban insertion, social, economic and environmental development, and enhancing the quality of delivered services.

## Key achievements

Since 2001, the Cities Alliance and its members have supported a range of activities in Brazil to strengthen pro-poor urban policies and to create opportunities for international knowledge-sharing and the dissemination of lessons learned. Highlights include:

### Developing National Policy Frameworks

Through a longstanding partnership with Ministry of Cities which began when the Ministry was created in 2003, the Cities Alliance and its members—notably the World Bank—have contributed to the institutional strengthening and consolidation of the new Ministry

<sup>6</sup> By December 2013, the PMCMV registered more than 3.2 million units contracted and 1.5 million units delivered over five years. Ministério das Cidades. Available at: [www.cidades.gov.br](http://www.cidades.gov.br).

<sup>7</sup> Minimum wage = R\$724 (US\$300). Exchange rate 1 USD=2.4 BRL (Feb.2014).

## The Ministry of Cities

The Ministry of Cities was created following President Lula's historic election in 2002. It was structured to promote universal access to fundamental rights through decentralised actions and with popular participation.

The new Ministry was given the responsibility to help states and municipalities consolidate a new urban development model embracing urban planning, housing, sanitation and urban transport. Its creation was meant to fill the gap left by an over 30-year absence of a national urban policy, and a lack of participation by social movements, entities and municipalities. These popular mobilisation movements also were responsible for the enactment of Law No. 10.257 of 2001, known as the Estatuto da Cidade (City Statute), a landmark piece of legislation, amending Articles 182 and 183 of the 1988 Federal Constitution dealing with urban development matters and making them into norms, and validating power-sharing through the participation of the population in city management as an important component of the right to the city.

More info: [www.cidades.gov.br](http://www.cidades.gov.br)

by providing continued guidance and technical support to national policymaking frameworks. The partnership has also contributed to the launch and successful implementation of Federal programmes to scale up slum upgrading and the provision of affordable housing in Brazil. In addition, the Cities Alliance supported the Ministry of Cities in organising the first National Conference of Cities and the subsequent establishment of the National Council of Cities, which laid the groundwork for the implementation of these new policies in Brazil. Both of these organisations are key instruments instituted by the City Statute, and both are important channels for citizen participation in urban and housing policy decisions.

### **National Programmes for Land Regularisation and Risk Prevention.**

The initial co-operation between the Cities Alliance and the Ministry of Cities was intended to support national policymaking to guide all government programmes towards the sustainable regularisation of urban informal settlements. This partnership succeeded in getting a comprehensive regularisation programme included in the municipal urban development agenda, extending security to millions of poor Brazilians.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cities Alliance (2013), *Cities Alliance in Action: Expanding Land Tenure and Reducing Risk in Brazil's Poorest Communities*. Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/node/3544](http://www.citiesalliance.org/node/3544).



The involuntary resettlement policy has been a key to facilitating major slum upgrading programmes in preparation for several world events in Brazil. Photo from Secretaria Nacional de Habitação.

**National Housing Plan and Programmes.** In partnership with the World Bank, the Cities Alliance provided support to the design and planning of the current housing policy and its main programmes, such as the PAC slum upgrading and the My Home My Life housing subsidies programme. The Cities Alliance also actively supported the National Housing Plan (PLANHAB) planning process, which was key to identifying the main housing challenges and adopting a long-term outlook.

This steady partnership contributed to achieving significant outcomes in housing policies in Brazil, and created several important global benchmarks: (i) a National Housing Plan; (ii) a national-level slum upgrading programme (PAC); and (iii) a large scale housing subsidies programme (PMCMV). Over the last few years, the focus of Cities Alliance support to the Ministry of Cities has evolved to include improving

the social component of housing programmes, promoting sustainable resettlement process due to development needs, and creating a Monitoring and Evaluation framework.

**Supporting a Landmark Involuntary Resettlement Policy.** In 2013, the Ministry of Cities enacted a groundbreaking policy designed to safeguard the rights of residents who are involuntarily resettled from their homes. This policymaking was supported by the Cities Alliance and the World Bank. The new policy regulates procedures and measures to be adopted in cases of involuntary resettlement of families from their homes or business (place of economic activities), caused by the execution of national programmes and actions managed by the Ministry of Cities. This policy is a significant development for social housing in Brazil. Its implementation embeds the concept of social sustainability within the Ministry

of Cities' substantial investment programmes and it creates a benchmark for other Brazilian authorities who are implementing infrastructure programmes. The policy also has the potential to act as an international benchmark for a controversial policy issue that governments would often rather avoid.<sup>9</sup>

***National Guidelines to Improve the Social Component of Housing and Slum Upgrading in Brazil.*** The Cities Alliance, together with the World Bank, the Italian government, and the AVSI Foundation, supported the Ministry of Cities in drafting national guidelines and a toolkit to enhance the social work component of slum upgrading and housing projects. These guidelines, approved as a national ordinance by the Ministry of Cities in 2014, represent a significant shift in the way Brazil approaches social support for vulnerable communities and low-income households. They strengthen community participation and planning aspects of housing and slum upgrading projects—helping ensure that recipients benefit from social and economic development in addition to brick-and-mortar interventions. To implement these guidelines, Brazil's National Housing Secretariat has prepared three practical guides: diagnostics and planning, income generation and strengthening community organisations. These user-friendly criteria give local governments the tools they need to improve the social component of slum upgrading programmes and to strengthen the post-occupancy policies. This toolkit also provides contents for follow-up dissemination activities, including a distance-learning course for over 5,000 social work professionals who are involved in the implementation of Brazil's federal housing programmes.

## Drafting and Implementing Inclusive Strategies

The scale of resources committed for slum upgrading and affordable housing under Brazil's PAC and PMCMV was unprecedented. The size and outreach of programmes, however, posed new challenges for those responsible for its management. Strengthening the institutional and implementation capacity of local authorities responsible for undertaking the upgrading interventions became central to the programmes' success. The Cities Alliance supported several

<sup>9</sup> Cities Alliance (2013), "Brazil Passes a Landmark Involuntary Resettlement Policy". Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/brazil-involuntarydisplacementpolicy](http://www.citiesalliance.org/brazil-involuntarydisplacementpolicy).

initiatives aimed at filling this gap and contributing to the improvement of the quality of services delivered.

***Institutional Capacity Building for Slum Upgrading.*** The Cities Alliance supported the organisation of the first distance-learning courses to reinforce the institutional capacity of local authorities promoted by the Ministry of Cities under the National Programmes for Land Tenure Regularization and Risk Management in 2005. The highly successful experience motivated the Ministry of Cities to expand the use of distance-learning to other courses, and in 2008, with the announcement of PAC's investments in slum upgrading, the government partnered with the University of São Paulo to design and implement an award-winning distance-learning course on integrated slum upgrading actions. Based on its success, the Cities Alliance supported the Ministry of Cities and CAIXA's efforts to scale up the offering to a broader range of municipalities in Brazil and assisted the World Bank Institute in the preparing a global initiative. Since then, over 10,000 practitioners around Brazil have benefited from the initiatives with capacity-building on development of local housing plans, promotion of social development, and community participation.<sup>10</sup>

***Dissemination of Slum Upgrading Lessons Learned in Brazil.*** In partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Brazilian Ministry of Cities and CAIXA, the Cities Alliance conducted a survey of slum upgrading programmes in precarious settlements in Brazil to distill and disseminate useful lessons learned. These lessons inform recommendations for the design and management of public policy on slum upgrading and contribute to improving the efficiency of specific programmes. The findings of this survey have been recorded in the book *Slum Upgrading: Lessons from Brazil*.<sup>11</sup>

***The State of Cities in Brazil: 2000-2009 Report.*** This report provides a cross-sector analysis of urbanisation conditions in Brazil with a view to informing an urban development policy that incorporates the diversity of Brazil's municipalities,

<sup>10</sup> Cities Alliance (2010), *Distance Learning Course: Integrated Slum Upgrading Actions*. Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/node/2026](http://www.citiesalliance.org/node/2026).

<sup>11</sup> Fernanda Magalhães and Francesco di Villarosa, eds. (2012), *Slum Upgrading: Lessons from Brazil*, Washington, D.C.: IADB, Cities Alliance and others. This book is available in Portuguese, English and Spanish.

and promotes an inclusive, democratic and sustainable model of urban development. It was initiated by a group of stakeholders including the Brazilian Association of Municipalities (ABM), CAIXA, Cities Alliance, IDB, Ministry of Cities, National Association of Mayors (FNP), UN-Habitat and the World Bank. The Polis Institute coordinated the report, involving a network of researchers and institutions that built on an agenda to put together urban issues-related capabilities and expertise.<sup>12</sup>

## Strengthening Cities' Own Capacity to Improve Service Delivery to the Urban Poor

At the city and state level, Cities Alliance's direct partnership activities—such as those with the municipality of São Paulo and the state of Bahia<sup>13</sup>—have showcased good practice models of scaling up planning and urban development through national policies and programmes.

***Alagados and Slum Upgrading in Bahia.*** The Bahia project was one of the first activities undertaken by the Cities Alliance after its establishment in 1999. The activity began in 2001 in the Alagados area, a well-known slum in the Brazilian city of Salvador, when the state of Bahia partnered with the Cities Alliance, the World Bank, and the Italian government to make a real difference in the lives of slum dwellers by adopting a participatory integrated approach to slum upgrading.<sup>14</sup> With technical assistance from AVSI, more than 70 local community-based associations were mobilised, improving public participation and establishing a dialogue between the community and public authorities.<sup>15</sup> Throughout this initiative, the Cities Alliance and its members played a key role in several areas: ensuring the scaling up and dissemination of the methodology; building up



Alagados, Salvador (BA), photo by Geraldo Melo

international partnerships for implementation; and emphasising the development impacts deriving from Brazilian experiences. After years of fine-tuning, the methodology developed in Bahia was instrumental in preparing national guidelines and a toolkit to improve the social aspect of housing and slum upgrading projects used throughout Brazil.

It is also being applied internationally. The Municipality of Maputo, Mozambique, is using the Bahia methodology with the support of the Cities Alliance, the World Bank and the Brazilian and Italian governments in its own upgrading initiatives.

***Citywide Slum Upgrading Programme in São Paulo.*** The Cities Alliance has co-operated with the São Paulo Municipal Housing Secretariat (SEHAB) on a citywide slum upgrading programme since 2001. As a result of this partnership, the Municipality of São Paulo established the Bairro Legal Programme, an initiative providing security of tenure and improved living conditions for slum dwellers. The municipality also introduced a citywide upgrading policy, and eventually produced—with Cities Alliance support—one of the most advanced and innovative information

12 Cities Alliance (2009), *The State of the Cities in Brazil. The 2000 – 2009 report*. Available at: URL: [www.citiesalliance.org/node/3525](http://www.citiesalliance.org/node/3525).

13 The Cities Alliance provided support to some other Brazilian cities, among them the municipalities of Salvador and Diadema, on urban development and housing funding; to the state of Minas Gerais on metropolitan management and poverty reduction in the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte.

14 Cities Alliance (2008), *Alagados - The Story of Integrated Slum Upgrading in Salvador (Bahia) Brazil*. Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/alagados](http://www.citiesalliance.org/alagados).

15 Through the Cities Alliance, the government of Italy provided more than US\$14 million in grant funds for the project in Bahia. The Technical and Social Support Project's first phase started in 2001, and facilitated a US\$80-million project, including a World Bank loan and, subsequently, a second Cities Alliance grant, again with the support of the Italian government.



## Facilitating Global Knowledge Exchange

Internationally, the Cities Alliance has provided innovative external cooperation and focused support to Brazil, creating valuable opportunities for learning and improvement of policies. Brazil has played an increasingly important role in the world in the fight against urban poverty, and the Cities Alliance and its members have facilitated significant knowledge exchanges with mixed results, while also disseminating lessons from the Brazilian experience.

***Slum upgrading in Mozambique.*** The Cities Alliance facilitated a tripartite cooperation between Brazil, Italy and the municipality of Maputo in Mozambique on upgrading efforts in the Chamanculo C neighbourhood. A highlight of the Cities Alliance Country Programme in Mozambique, this initiative brings the Brazilian slum upgrading experience to Maputo. It builds upon the success of the Bahia project, one of the Cities Alliance's first and most visible interventions in Brazil.

***Supporting the IBSA Human Settlements Group.*** Since 2009, the Cities Alliance and the World Bank Institute (WBI) have worked together to facilitate cooperation between members of the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Human Settlements Group. The group has become a unique platform for cooperation and learning among three countries that are grappling with similar urban challenges. As a next step, the group will focus its debate on applied research and policy making in emerging countries with a particular emphasis on the role of cities and human settlement planning in sustainable development. This agenda should feed into some of the main international debates on sustainability, poverty alleviation and social inclusion in cities and metropolitan areas in emerging countries. For the Cities Alliance, working with the IBSA Human Settlements Group was a very positive experience, and provided two longstanding members—Brazil and South Africa—with the opportunity to tap into our members' experience as they shape their human settlements strategies.<sup>19</sup>

management systems: HABISP.<sup>16</sup> By providing accurate, up-to-date information about the city's informal settlements, HABISP has dramatically improved São Paulo's ability to prioritise its social housing interventions, and it has become one of the city's most effective urban planning tools. Based on the success of HABISP, and with Cities Alliance support, São Paulo established a technical cooperation endeavour with the municipality of São Bernardo do Campo to customise São Bernardo's system, called SIHISB.<sup>17</sup> This knowledge-sharing initiative included customising the online system, documenting the process with a comprehensive publication, and highlighting lessons learned. The information system addresses a key problem faced by cities around the world: access to usable information that is not politicised. It also shows how relatively small investments can leverage significant learning, especially when it is shared between cities. São Paulo's role has evolved within the Cities Alliance, and it has increasingly been called upon to share its knowledge and experiences globally.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> For more information: [www.habisp.inf.br](http://www.habisp.inf.br)

<sup>17</sup> For more information: [www.shihisb.saobernardo.sp.gov.br](http://www.shihisb.saobernardo.sp.gov.br)

<sup>18</sup> *Integrating the Poor: Urban Upgrading and Land Tenure Regularisation in the City of São Paulo* (2004). Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/node/728](http://www.citiesalliance.org/node/728) and *Social Housing in São Paulo: Challenges and New Management Tools* (2009). Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/sh-sp](http://www.citiesalliance.org/sh-sp).

<sup>19</sup> Cities Alliance: "IBSA Human Settlements Group Calls for Greater Focus on the Urban Poor in SDG". Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/ca\\_newsletters/newsletter\\_news/167](http://www.citiesalliance.org/ca_newsletters/newsletter_news/167)



The São Paulo Department of Housing and Urban Development (SEHAB) was awarded the prestigious UN-Habitat Scroll of Honour award in 2012 for a slum upgrading programme supported by the Cities Alliance. Photo by Cities Alliance Secretariat.

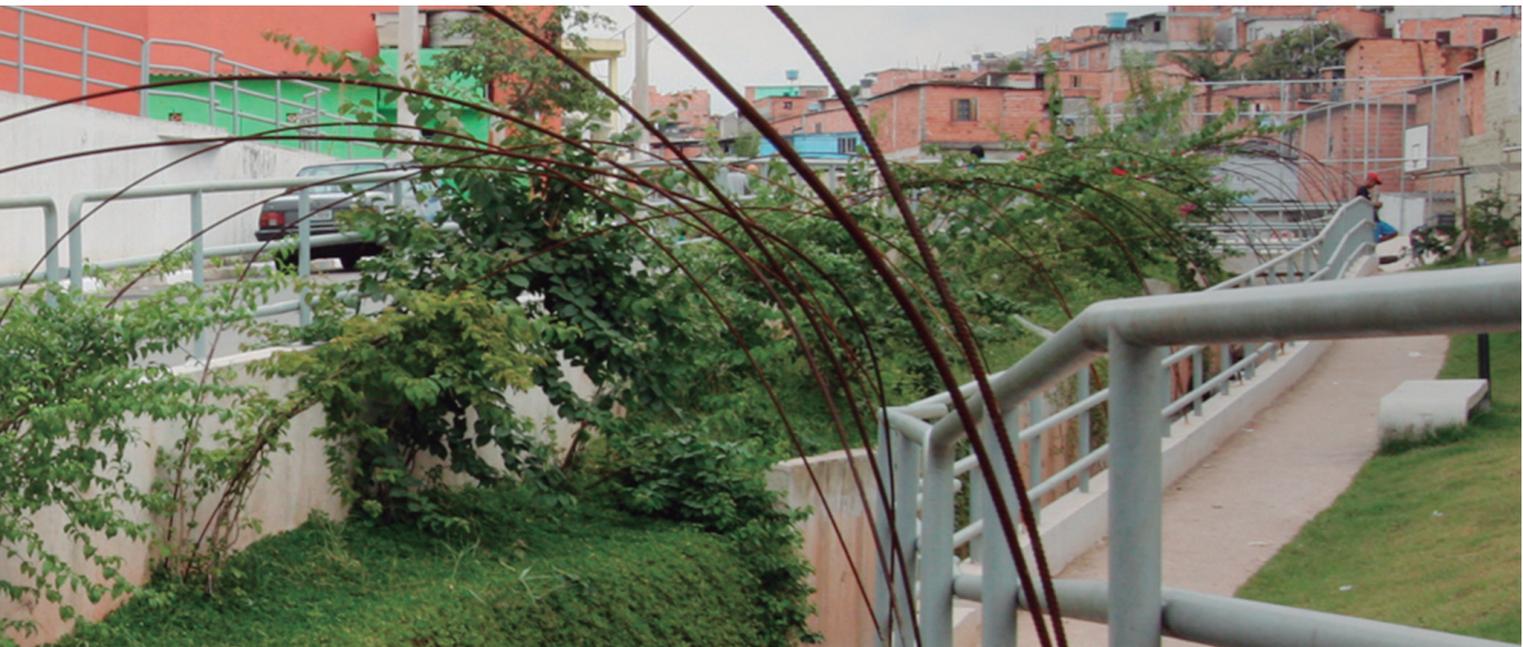
**International Policy Dialogue.** In 2008, the Cities Alliance hosted its first major South-South cities exchange event, which was hugely successful, leading to demands for more fora of this kind to be held for learning and experience sharing. Co-organised by the Cities Alliance and the municipality of São Paulo, this five-day event brought together representatives of South megacities, such as Cairo, Ekurhuleni, Lagos, Manila, Mumbai to share their experiences on “Challenges of Slum Upgrading” with São Paulo’s experience as a case study. These participants were joined by ‘observers’ from other cities, and by representatives of development organisations.<sup>20</sup>

**Nine Years of the City Statute.** The Cities Alliance, jointly with the Ministry of Cities, organised a debate on processes involved in framing the Brazilian City Statute and implementing it over a nine-year period at the 5<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum, held in Rio de Janeiro in 2010. In addition to analysing the importance of the regulatory and urban frameworks designed to address the many and varied urban shortcomings in Brazilian cities, this event drew international attention to the Statute and provided an opportunity to assess both the potential and constraints to applying its concepts in other countries.

<sup>20</sup> Cities Alliance (2008), *Slum Upgrading Up Close*. Available at: [www.citiesalliance.org/node/694](http://www.citiesalliance.org/node/694)

## What can we learn from the partnership with Brazil?

Arguably, the main lesson learned from the Cities Alliance–Brazil partnership is the importance of a long-standing relationship. Since the early 2000s, the Cities Alliance and its members have provided just-in-time policy advice, technical assistance, and capacity building to local partners. The partnership has enhanced local efforts related to planning, implementation and improvement of current housing policies and the two national pillar programmes: PAC and PMCMV. The main shift towards achieving large-scale investments and structuring innovative subsidies schemes able to reach a large, diverse country like Brazil has already taken place. Activities implemented under this ongoing technical assistance approach have provided a valuable contribution to strengthening the Ministry of Cities and urban policymaking in Brazil. The engagement of different stakeholders, from private sector to social movements and international organisations, is now providing a strong political platform for the constant improvement and spread of national policy into local government investment plans and programmes.



In recent years, a key goal of this partnership has been to improve the social component of housing programmes aimed at enhancing the quality and sustainability of housing developments. This shift depended not only upon technical inputs, but also a cultural change away from regarding the household itself as the sole aspect responsible for generating social and economic development. Many challenges remain, however, such as improving monitoring systems, enhancing the integration of social and economic policies at the territorial level, and building up stakeholders' capacity in order to leverage the scale of sustainable housing initiatives.

Successful slum upgrading strategies undertaken in a sustainable manner and on a citywide scale call for a great deal of effort. There is no magic: what is needed, among other things, is clear foresight, public policy that is committed to a longer-term view, policy stability, consistent investment and the effective participation of communities. Strategies that anticipate future growth patterns are generally far less costly, less socially disruptive, and less complex than retrofitting approaches.

A review of experiences in Brazil demonstrates the scale of the challenges but also concrete policies of upgrading neighbourhoods. A key opportunity for

the Cities Alliance and its members is to facilitate sharing these experiences with other rapidly urbanising regions and cities, such as in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia.

Finally, the experience of the Cities Alliance in Brazil has been a catalyst in changing the business model of the Cities Alliance itself. While the portfolio in Brazil contained a wide range of activities and projects, they were all aimed at supporting the Ministry's attempts to forge a new urban agenda in Brazil, and to create space for innovations at the city level. In a very real sense, Brazil was the first, pioneering Cities Alliance Country Programme.

# Cities Alliance

---

## Cities Without Slums

[info@citiesalliance.org](mailto:info@citiesalliance.org) | [www.citiesalliance.org](http://www.citiesalliance.org)

knowledge resources | national urban policies | housing | land regularisation | Alagados |  
IBSA human settlements group | involuntary resettlement policy | slum upgrading |  
Bairro Legal | Ministry of Cities | incremental housing | results | Brazil



Facebook - [www.facebook.com/pages/Cities-Alliance](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Cities-Alliance)



Twitter - [www.twitter.com.citiesalliance](http://www.twitter.com.citiesalliance)



Flickr - [www.flickr.com/photos/citiesalliance](http://www.flickr.com/photos/citiesalliance)