

# APPROACHES TO LOW-INCOME HOUSING

## Disclaimer

This is a draft of the Quick Guide on Approaches to Low-income housing. It was prepared by Prof. Patrick Wakely.

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## Introduction

The objective of this ‘quick guide’ is to provide information on various proven and innovative approaches and methodologies to address low-income housing at the programme and project level. It focuses on the improvement of the living conditions of those currently residing in slums and squatter settlements, as well as on the need for adequate housing for future generations of urban poor.

Millennium Development Goal 7, Target 11: By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

## Purpose of the guide

The guide aims to help build the capacities of national and local government officials and policy makers. It is not aimed at subject specialists, but instead targets those who rapidly need to enhance their understanding of low-income housing issues. It outlines the central concepts and approaches, it gives examples of practice and presents key lessons and messages.

## How to use it

The guide is arranged in easy-to-follow, logical sections. The first presents some basic concepts essential to understanding low-income housing, and briefly explores the reasons behind the acute lack of affordable housing of a socially acceptable standard, and hence the problem of urban slums. Then in more detail it outlines the main approaches to

addressing the housing needs of the urban poor by examining alternative strategies for what to do about existing slums and how to avoid future slums through the production of new housing. Finally, it examines the principal considerations needed to address the improvement of slums and production of adequate and affordable low-income housing on a city-wide scale.

Within each section are examples of policies, programmes and projects that have been implemented in a range of countries. These illustrate dominant trends, as well as innovative approaches and best practice. Key lessons and messages are highlighted in boxes throughout the guide. The guide may be ‘dipped into’ at any point as it is simply and clearly cross-referenced both to the sections in this guide and to the other ‘quick guides’ in the series.

## 1. Explaining slums

### 1.1 What are slums and squatter settlements?

‘Slum’ is frequently used as a catch-all concept to describe a wide range of low-income settlements. More traditionally, *slum* refers to housing that was once of good condition but has since deteriorated and often been subdivided and rented out to low-income groups. *Squatter settlements* are, in contrast, areas of substandard housing built on illegally occupied land, while *irregular subdivisions* originate through legal landowners subdividing their plots and selling them on without complying with all relevant laws.

Within each of these three categories variations are wide, differing according to location, landownership patterns, the policy context and cultural traditions. The huge array of settlement types that fall under the low-income banner means that the broad concept of slum can be useful to encompass them all. Despite their variety they tend to share a number of characteristics or disadvantages: poor housing conditions and service levels, living conditions that are hazardous to health, insecure tenure, high levels of poverty and social exclusion among residents, and overcrowding.

The characteristics of urban slums:

- Lack of basic services, including inadequate access to safe water, sanitation and other essential infrastructure;
- Substandard housing or illegal and inadequate building structures;
- overcrowding and/or high densities;
- unhealthy living conditions and hazardous locations;
- insecure tenure;
- poverty and social exclusion.

## 1.2 Why do slums exist?

There are slums of one sort or another in most cities and towns throughout the world. Sometimes they house over 50 per cent of an urban centre's population. In some places systems for distributing and acquiring land and housing are still governed by traditional regimes outside of the 'free' market, yet even here slums can exist. Increasingly economic competition is dominating urban land and housing markets, exacerbating the lack of housing of an acceptable standard that the poor can afford. Low-income households can only afford to build, buy or rent dwellings of relatively small size, low quality of construction and minimal service provision.

Slums and squatter settlements exist because poor people cannot afford the housing provided by the formal land and housing markets.

Low-income households need to be in locations that are close to income-earning opportunities (the commercial and industrial centres of cities and towns) in order to minimize the cost and time spent in travel to work. However, good land in such places is generally in high demand and expensive. Low-income households are therefore forced to occupy land that is not in demand, inappropriate or dangerous, such as land liable to flooding or landslides, railway embankments, canal banks and road verges. They are also forced to occupy as little space as possible, which leads to very high densities and unhealthy overcrowding. Alternatively, they are forced to settle on land at the periphery of towns and cities, beyond the urban infrastructure network and far from centres of employment where land is more accessible, if not affordable.

Slums are 'the products of failed policies, bad governance, corruption, inappropriate regulation, dysfunctional land markets, unresponsive financial systems, and a fundamental lack of political will. Each of these failures adds to the toll on people already deeply burdened by poverty and constrains the enormous potential for human development that urban life offers' (Upgrading Urban Communities website).

The role of governments is to intervene in land and housing markets to ensure that the lowest income groups have access to them. Political will within government and civil society is essential to resolve the problems of slum populations.

## 2. What to do about slums

To many policy makers slums should be demolished because they embody all things negative (disease, crime, political unrest, ignorance etc.). However, research has shown that slums are in fact often highly organized both spatially and socially, that their occupants participate fully in the urban economy, that they are culturally diverse and dynamic, and that their residents are motivated, entrepreneurial and not delinquent. Some established slums have within them vibrant local economies, dynamic informal housing and land markets, and diverse social and cultural groupings. While some slums are

indeed characterized by squalor, disease, acute poverty and exclusion, this is the result of the absence of alternatives and opportunities for the residents, rather than owing to the characteristics of the occupants themselves. Because of the diversity of slums that exist within regions, cities and towns, prior to planning any intervention, governments and non-government organizations must seek to understand the characteristics of the slum in question. Slum dwellers hold the key to that understanding.

To understand what to do, policy makers must get to grips with diversity within and between slums. Slum residents have the best knowledge of how their settlement works, the characteristics of the communities within it and their needs.

### **3.1 Forced eviction and slum clearance**

Forced eviction entails the involuntary removal of people from their place of residence, with or without provision made for their resettlement in an alternative location. At worst, evictions are violent, destroying personal property, communities and livelihoods. When the residents of slums are provided with alternative places of residence, such places may be so remote, under-serviced, environmentally hazardous or otherwise unsuitable, that the evicted people are effectively rendered homeless (see section on Resettlement below).

Forced evictions are a ‘gross violation of human rights’ (United Nations Human Rights Commission, 1993, resolution 77).

The razing of slums became a common approach of governments from the 1950s onwards but despite international recognition that forced evictions should be outlawed, many governments continue to sporadically or systematically forcibly evict the urban poor from their homes (see Quick Guide to Evictions). In recent years the strengthening of the autonomy and powers of local government has meant that city authorities can opt for policies of forced eviction and resettlement, with central governments having little scope to stop such a regressive step. The city government of Jakarta is such a case in point.

Forced evictions take place for a range of reasons, for example, to release valuable land for redevelopment, to ‘beautify’ an area by removing unsightly squatter housing, or to undermine pockets of political resistance. Evictions are especially prevalent in times of economic growth as developers look for new investment opportunities. During recession, forced evictions decline in number.

In Bangladesh the razing of slums and forced evictions remains common. For example in the slum of Tikkapara Bizli Moholla in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2000–3000 families are under threat. Politicians and corrupt government officials have been trying to evict the residents in order to release the land. Land redevelopment is being pursued through earth filling, where some homes are simply ploughed over by huge mounds of earth. In addition there

were arson attacks in 1994 and 1996, and hired thugs continually threaten the community to get them to leave the slum.

In Cambodia the residents of the Phnom Penh slum of Tonle Bassac were evicted to make way for a commercial development project. City authorities have been trying to move more than 1000 families to remote sites on the outskirts of the city, 22 kilometres from the centre where Tonle Bassac is, but many complain they have not been allocated a plot of land there or that the land is uninhabitable. While some families have already left the slum, allowing demolition squads to reduce their homes to rubble, hundreds who were tenants are not entitled to alternative land and are refusing to leave Tonle Bassac, living in the open as their homes have already been razed. Corruption and a lack of credible land records (most of which were originally destroyed by the Khmer Rouge in the late 1970s) have made land disputes increasingly common in Cambodia, with a number of slums being razed or torched over recent years.

**Summary of evictions from January 2004 – June 2005 in selected Asian countries**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of people evicted</i>	<i>Number of incidents</i>	<i>Responsible group</i>	<i>Reasons</i>
Bangladesh	27,055	17	13 by government 4 by private groups	Environmental clean-up Building shopping complexes Land grab Infrastructure development
China	707,656	10	6 by government 4 by private groups	Shopping centres Infrastructure development Olympics
India	854,250	24	17 by government 4 by private groups 1 by local government 2 by state government	Environmental improvement Removal of hawkers Park development Redevelopment Tourist development Caste
Indonesia	40,417	12	City government	Infrastructure development Redevelopment of land occupied by hawkers
Japan	600	3	2 by private groups 1 by local government	Clearing up the area
Malaysia	200	4	Government	Removal of illegal immigrants Road development
Philippines	43,488	7	4 by local government 3 by government	Infrastructure development Removal of vendors/hawkers Beautification

Source: [www.achr.net](http://www.achr.net)

Forced evictions destroy the offending slums but do nothing to resolve the housing problems of occupants, indeed they often make them homeless. When people are forcibly evicted from their homes without the provision of acceptable alternative accommodation they may create new squatter settlements or become tenants, increasing the population density and problems of existing slums (see Quick Guide to Rental Housing). Whatever the motive behind a forced eviction, it cannot justify the means and only exacerbates housing shortages.

## **2.2 Resettlement**

In the 1970s the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board in India operated on the assumption that it could build a sufficient quantity of subsidized housing to meet the needs of all slum dwellers. This assumption soon proved to be false; the construction of large numbers of new subsidized housing units is beyond the financial means of most governments in the world. In addition, the eradication of all slums demands that rates of natural population increase and in-migration are very low so that future housing demand can also be catered for by building new units. This scenario is simply unrealistic in the context of rapid urbanization in most regions of the world (see Quick Guide to Urbanization, Urban Development and Housing Policies).

The removal of people from their homes in slums and their rehousing on alternative sites should not be the first choice of policy makers. Resettlement can destroy social networks and communities, and experience shows that new development can cost between 10–15 times more than upgrading the conditions in the places where they already are. Suitable land is usually scarce and resettlement destroys housing stock, compounding the problem of housing shortages.

Nevertheless, relocation and resettlement are sometimes necessary, but should always take place with the agreement of a majority of residents. Without the agreement of residents, the line between forced eviction and resettlement becomes blurred. Some recent big projects to threaten thousands of people in Asian cities with eviction are the Kolkata Canal Improvement Project in India, Lyari River Expressway in Pakistan, Dhaka Slum clearance in Bangladesh, Surabaya Normalization Project in Indonesia, Jakarta Bay Reclamation Project also in Indonesia, Manila North and South Rails, the Pasig River Rehabilitation and Laguna Lake Ring Road and Camanava Flood Control Project, all in Philippines (Anana, 2003). Funded by the Asian Development Bank, World Bank and other multilateral agencies, it remains to be seen whether these projects gain the cooperation and support of those being resettled (see section on Forced Eviction above).

An example from Mumbai, India, shows that large-scale resettlement initiatives need not be characterized by conflict and popular opposition. In order to allow the speed of suburban trains to increase, some squatter settlements close to the track were earmarked for demolition under a large World Bank-supported urban transport initiative. With the assistance of the Indian NGO, SPARC (the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres), and the CBOs, NSDF (the National Slum Dwellers Federation) and Mahila Milan, 900 slum households acquired suitable alternative land and managed the entire resettlement process. SPARC used the project as a demonstration model, showing how

the support and participation of affected communities is vital to ensure resettlement free from conflict and that respects people's rights and dignity.

The residents managed surveys of the railways settlements to identify household numbers and characteristics, drew up maps of the areas to be demolished, identified needs and formed cooperative housing societies. Each of the 27 societies (most led by women) then visited the site where they would be resettled, a site identified by NSDF, selected where they would stay, fixed a day for moving and planned how they would organize the move. On the appointed date, they took their belongings, locked their old houses and moved to the new site where they were given keys to their new houses. These were temporary, with permanent multi-storey homes to be built later and funded through residents' savings, a loan from a central government agency and cross-subsidization through the sale of some apartments on the open market (Burra, 1999).

Sometimes a number of households within a slum may need to be relocated, for example, in order to widen an access road, reduce population densities, or make safe an area of unstable land. Within the Favela Bairro squatter settlement upgrading programme that was implemented in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in the 1990s, the density of settlement in many *favelas* meant that some households had to be resettled to enable the widening of access routes, slope stabilization or flood protection. Those needing to be resettled where, in some cases, either offered money to allow them to find alternative housing or rehoused in apartments and houses built within the affected settlements (usually apartments within low-rise blocks, with the architects' plans scrutinized and approved of by those to be resettled). Each house or apartment was then assigned to affected households through a lottery (Riley et al, 2001).

### **2.2.1 Managing the process of resettlement**

Do not send demolition squads and bulldozers in to raze houses when residents are still present. If residents remain this may indicate their opposition to resettlement; demolishing their houses in these circumstances constitutes forced eviction (see section on Forced Eviction above).

In Manila, an association of poor people's organizations, known as DAMPA, called on the government of Japan to investigate the violations of the rights of people displaced by a Japanese-funded public project. The project included a highway flyover, an aqueduct, a railway extension and an airport expansion. In March 1996, a Japanese fact-finding team, including church, academic and NGO representatives, found that people were evicted without prior consultation or notice; in relocation sites, people were left without basic services, water, electricity, schools and hospitals; people lost jobs in the relocation process; people were taken to relocation sites without choice of where to go; and implementing agencies reneged on promises of compensation and support services. The mission's findings were publicized in local newspapers and the government of Japan subsequently decided to cancel funding for projects involving involuntary resettlement, and to investigate complaints of affected residents and human rights violations (Williams and Barter, 2001).

Community participation is essential to achieve resettlement with minimum conflict and avoid destruction of livelihoods and social networks. Resettlement directly affects all the residents of a slum so project managers should have little trouble generating community interest. Trust must be quickly established by involving residents in all aspects of planning for the move.

The direct involvement of residents in planning their resettlement will ensure the stressful process of losing a home and being rehoused is characterized by cooperation and not conflict. Residents should be involved in all aspects of planning, including setting dates for resettlement, organizing transport, choosing the site they are to be relocated to and planning its current and future layout, housing, services and infrastructure. Those being resettled should be assisted in the formation of small area-based groups who can manage their move, sometimes even helping dismantle their own homes so they can take any materials of value with them.

In India in April 2006, 83 households who had been living as pavement dwellers on three streets in South Mumbai were presented with the keys to their new homes. This precedent-setting project was the work of Mahila Milan with support from SPARC. The Maharashtra government provided land for the housing, while construction was facilitated by SPARC and project capital was provided by the CLIFF (Community-Led Infrastructure Finance Facility) programme, which is being piloted in India by SPARC's construction and finance company, Nirman. As a result of the project the state government has committed itself to resettling all Mumbai's pavement dwellers within two years, following the same participatory process. This means that 100,000 people will have the chance of permanent and secure housing. The families are moving from pavement dwellings where 10 to 12 people live in spaces as small as one square metre to new 23 square metre homes, designed by members of Mahila Milan.

### **3.2.2 The importance of the resettlement site**

Perhaps the main factor determining the success of a resettlement project is the site to which people are moved. This must not only offer (at least the potential of) acceptable housing and service standards, but crucially ensure that existing livelihood strategies are not destroyed or that alternative opportunities are sufficient to meet all residents' needs. If this is ensured, then the cooperation and participation of residents in their resettlement will be easier to obtain. In the resettlement of railway slum dwellers in Mumbai, the new plot of land had good transport links and was close to the demolished slums.

The key to ensuring successful resettlement is the suitability of the land on which people will be rehoused. Essentially it must offer access to economic opportunities and viable livelihoods, as well as acceptable housing and service standards.

Proposals to resettle people on land distant from income earning opportunities will always be met with hostility and lead to a deterioration in levels of trust between residents and government authorities. Within towns and cities tracts of vacant land are often held by public sector bodies (see Quick Guide to Land for Housing the Urban Poor). Negotiations between relevant public bodies, community groups and supporting NGOs to acquire suitable land can be prolonged but will ensure that eventually resettlement occurs as a cooperative process that preserves people's livelihoods, social groupings and dignity. The negotiation process itself can also be empowering for the CBOs involved, creating more cohesive, confident and dynamic communities.

The relocation of small numbers of households within existing settlements can usually be achieved through the purchase of vacant plots or land on the edge of the slum. Alternatively financial compensation can be offered at a level that allows households to move to comparable or better housing elsewhere.

## **2.3 Squatter settlement upgrading**

### **2.3.1 What is upgrading?**

Upgrading involves the progressive improvement of the physical, social and economic environment of a settlement through selective investment initiatives. Improvement of infrastructure networks is typically a major component and may include water supply, drainage, sanitation, roads/footpaths, street lighting, domestic electricity networks and refuse disposal. Upgrading may also include technical and/or financial assistance for house improvement, income generation initiatives, the provision or improvement of community facilities and improved access to health care and education. The regularization of land tenure is also an important component of upgrading projects (see Quick Guide to Land for Housing the Urban Poor).

Upgrading brings minimal disturbance or displacement, and involves the adaptation of an existing layout to incorporate improved facilities. It does *not* involve major redevelopment (or slum clearance), with a new 'better' layout being superimposed on an existing settlement pattern.

### **3.3.2 The benefits of upgrading**

Upgrading benefits existing residents, keeping people together where they may have lived for a long time. It thus helps to consolidate communities, enhancing social stability and mutual support mechanisms. It encourages active participation in good governance, especially when people are given the opportunity to fully participate in the upgrading process.

Endorsing people's right to occupy the land where they live by guaranteeing them security of tenure encourages them to invest in improving their housing and maintaining

their environment. It makes their life better and it increases the value of their property when they want to sell it or use it as collateral for raising finance.

Upgrading also allows the rationalization of land use to take place. It can recognize (and so protect) the boundaries of people's plots, allocate land for civic amenities (schools, places of worship, recreation space), improve health, prevent overcrowding, anti-social developments and illegal development.

Upgrading consolidates social networks, stimulates private investment in housing, rationalizes land use, improves health and well-being, and encourages people to participate in managing their communities.

Research has also shown that improving infrastructure (safe water, sanitation, electricity) and access to services (schools, primary health) not only fulfils the functions of government, but also raises people's morale, pride, sense of civic engagement and ambition to invest in their own dwellings and property.

The upgrading of the physical environment of a settlement and its civic amenities, especially when accompanied by support (technical or financial) for income generating initiatives often leads households to invest in their housing, adding rooms (or extra space of rental income), upgrading kitchens and bathrooms, and investing in household appliances that ease the domestic burden of women and children. For every US\$1 invested by government in upgrading, households find an average of US\$7 from non-project resources to invest in housing improvement (Upgrading Urban Communities website).

In Cambodia, the community-led Urban Poor Development fund (UPDF) has been at the forefront of progress in housing policy, with official government support for the UPDF savings and upgrading model being given in 2003. The total number of UPDF upgrading projects approved by mid-2005 was 66, covering about 6000 households in five cities (Phnom Penh, Poipet, Prey Veng, Siemriep and Oddar Meanchey). UPDF implements 'comprehensive upgrading', an approach that goes beyond infrastructure, roads, toilets and environmental improvements to include loans for housing construction and improvement, as well as income generation activities. The upgrading projects have also led to the improvement of land tenure status in several squatter communities. The implementing process emphasizes partnership among communities and Sangkat (ward) administrations. The process operates at the lowest level of local authority and has gained the support from ward officers. The upgrading procedure requires an overall survey of communities in the ward, with selection of projects and implementation undertaken by communities and the Sangkat unit, while the funds for the community upgrading pass directly to community organizations.

### **2.3.3 The principles of successful upgrading**

Planning and implementation is most effective when carried out jointly between the public authority (usually local government) and the local community – the more the

community participates, the more successful is likely to be the result. NGOs can also play a crucial role in supporting community organizations, as well as providing some of the elements of the upgrading package (such as technical support for housing improvements or income generation).

Upgrading must be a participatory process that responds to the demands of the community, its leaders and individual households in order to assure sustainability. If it is not, infrastructure improvements will be under-used or vandalized, people will become disillusioned with local government, and investment in the upgrading process will be wasted.

Providing security of tenure is a vital part of upgrading. Sometimes individualized freehold tenure is given to households after all boundaries have been measured and recorded. Simply assigning tenureship to ‘the household head’, however, often re-enforces gender inequalities placing the asset in the hands of a man. Any breakdown of a relationship could then leave the woman and children homeless. It should also be noted that women are often the household members who begin small-scale informal businesses and having their names on tenureship deeds allows them to raise resources for their enterprises.

Granting women the tenureship of their land through upgrading can protect women and children from homelessness and provide women with an asset they can use for income generation.

Where population densities are high and occupancy is multi-household, communal tenureship arrangements are also possible, where each household has a share of tenureship (and its value) of a particular area. This ensures that residents benefit from security of tenure whilst reducing the administrative burden of granting individualized titles.

Regularizing tenure by granting freehold deeds is a time-consuming and costly procedure. Changing legislation can help, for example, the Peru Urban Property Rights Project, through regulatory reforms, reduced the costs and times for registering property drastically, making it easier, more affordable and indeed possible for low-income tenants to register their property, and thereby become ‘legitimate’ citizens (Upgrading Urban Communities website). Alternatively, security of tenure can be given without formal regularization, for example, by providing long-term communal leases for the settlement as a whole (see Quick Guide to Land for Housing the Urban Poor). This preserves community cohesion and reduces market pressures on land and house prices in the wake of upgrading. Freehold tenure can also be granted at a later date.

Enhancing security of tenure is more important than initially pursuing the complex and costly task of distributing freehold individual titles to land.

To enhance financial sustainability, the community can contribute to the cost of upgrading – experience shows that this strengthens the community’s commitment to and engagement with the upgrading process. The contribution may be financial (as capital or user charges) or in kind (for example, providing unpaid labour), or a mixture of the two. The contribution will usually not cover the entire cost, and there is likely to be an element of subsidy from public funds (see Quick Guide to Housing Finance).

One example of this comes from Phu Binh ward in the Vietnamese city of Hue. Phu Binh is a poor area often hit by floods during the rainy season, causing water-borne diseases. Residents of one area, X’om Alley discussed the problem with their neighbours and eventually a cell meeting was organized for all those living in the alley. Based on these meetings, the cell leader presented the local authorities with a petition for the upgrading of the alley and a request for financial support. With the agreement of the people’s committee, the local authorities submitted a proposal to the city government – and the city people’s committee agreed that the X’om alley should be paved but noted that they would only provide 30 per cent of the budget (UN-Habitat, 2006).

After community meetings to discuss how to come up with the remaining 70 per cent of the budget, it was agreed that the 16 households residing in the alley would contribute 140,000 VND each (equivalent to around US\$9) – drawn from a savings and credit programme sponsored by ENDA (Environmental Development Action in the Third World). Loans were interest free. The recipients saved 3000 VND per day (US\$0.20), which was given to their cell leaders. Every 10 days the project management board collected the money from the cell leader. Those unable to afford loans because of low or unstable incomes, would contribute labour in lieu of payment. When the alley paving was finished residents agreed that life had definitely improved and it also encouraged the residents to clean up the waste that had been dumped nearby. This project also stimulated the local authorities of the ward to apply the 70/30 recipe to 18 other alleys in the area (UN-Habitat, 2006).

Upgrading must be affordable to the beneficiaries. The amount that households can contribute will help determine the scope and content of the upgrading package. If people have to pay taxes or user charges that they cannot afford, they will not use the facilities, vandalize them, or simply move away to affordable settlements elsewhere.

To ensure the sustainability of physical infrastructure (maintenance, management and continuous development), it is important that investment in civil works is complemented by programmes to help develop community cohesion and organization (see Quick Guide to Community Organization and Development) and to promote local economic development.

Sustainability of a project comes in large part from its finances. Ideally these should be of mixed origin, including residents’ contribution, subsidies and loans from government, and perhaps support from international
--

or local development organizations.

Upgrading projects should form part of a coherent vision or strategy for town or city development. They should not be isolated emergency initiatives, but interventions that are part of plans for overall urban management that seek to address housing problems at scale.

<b>The Dos and Don'ts of slum upgrading</b>	
<b>Do</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Promote good urban governance	Assume that slums will automatically disappear with economic growth
Establish enabling institutional frameworks involving all partners	Underestimate the role of local authorities, landowners, community leaders and residents
Implement and monitor pro-poor city development strategies	Separate upgrading from investment in planning and urban management
Encourage initiatives of slum dwellers and recognize the role of women	Ignore the specific needs of women and vulnerable groups
Ensure sure tenure, consolidate occupancy rights and regularize informal settlements	Carry out unlawful evictions
Involve tenants and owners in finding solutions that prioritize collective interests	Discriminate against rental housing and promote a single tenure option
Adopt an incremental approach to upgrading	Impose unrealistic standards and regulations
Associate municipal finance, cross-subsidies and beneficiary contributions to ensure financial viability	Rely on governmental subsidies or on full-cost recovery from slum dwellers
Design and negotiate relocation plans only when absolutely necessary	Invest public resources in massive social housing schemes
Combine slum upgrading with employment generation and local economic development	Consider slum upgrading solely as a social issue
Develop new urban areas by making land and trunk infrastructure available	Provide unaffordable infrastructure and services

Source: UN-Habitat, 2003.

### 2.3.4 The sequence of a typical upgrading project

*Settlement selection* – the prioritization exercise carried out by local government planners to identify suitable settlements for upgrading. Factors affecting selection will include: a community's desire to participate, physical conditions, land tenure issues and the urban development context. Achieving a good 'demonstration effect' may also be important, especially if the upgrading project is innovative in some way. Slums that are 'easy' may be chosen first, for example, those with transferable land titles, a well-organized community and easy connection to trunk infrastructure. Alternatively, areas of extreme poverty and with high levels of environmental degradation may be a priority.

The selection of slums for upgrading should not be solely determined by the desires of politicians but also reflect levels of need and poverty, technical and financial capacity and the enthusiasm and will of a range of stakeholders.

*Formation/selection of community organizations* – to be the effective 'client' organization for the upgrading programme, which must be truly representative of the beneficiary community. Their role is to: negotiate with the local government planners; articulate local aspirations and interests; and participate in planning, implementation and maintenance.

Ideally upgrading projects should not seek to form new community organizations unless there are none in existence (see Quick Guide to Community Organization and Development). Instead existing organizations should be worked with, ensuring that their capacity to fully participate in all aspects of the upgrading is improved and aiming to enhance their representativity of the community. NGOs can play a vital role in building the capacity of community organizations and building trust between residents and government bodies. More than one community organization can and should be involved, for example, local youths may have their own groups, as may particular minorities such as ethnic groups, parents, the elderly or tenants.

Upgrading projects should avoid the creation of new community organizations to act as partners in a project. Instead existing organizations should be mapped, their representativity and capacity assessed and increased, and a range of organizations encouraged to participate in all stages of the project or programme.

Women should especially be encouraged to participate and, if need be, form new organizations based on area or on activities such as savings and loans for participation in the upgrading or related projects. The participation of women is particularly important within the context of upgrading because of their intimate knowledge of their settlement, its resources and problems. They benefit most directly from the improved provision of services, for example, reducing the time they (and their children) spend on domestic duties, enabling them to earn extra income that benefits the entire household.

The dynamic women's organization, Mahila Milan, in India, started in the city of Mumbai with very humble beginnings. Supported by SPARC and NSDF, women pavement dwellers were encouraged to form daily savings and loans groups. These activities increased the confidence, power and skills of the women, enabling them to later take leadership roles in projects such as obtaining electricity connections, surveying and mapping settlements for resettlement, and networking with other CBOs in India and abroad to share their experiences and build their understanding.

Women should be encouraged to play a full role in any planned intervention. They have an intimate knowledge of their community and already have strong social networks within it. They have the ability to mobilize support for, or opposition to, a project. Their full participation can build their capacity to organize and to generate income. Their increased status and confidence acts to undermine entrenched patterns of inequality.

*Stakeholder meetings* – to launch the upgrading programme and establish the mechanisms to be used during planning and implementation. Such meetings should not consist of the presentation of a pre-determined upgrading package that stakeholders are simply to approve of or reject. At the very least a range of options should be forwarded and discussed or ideally the planning process should begin through these meetings so that each upgrading project is a reflection of the true needs and demands of residents.

*Surveys* – detailed physical and socio-economic surveys to obtain accurate profile of the settlement as the basis for plan/programme formulation. To empower community groups and increase their space for participation, such surveys should ideally be carried out by residents themselves. Simple technical support from local government or NGOs can enable residents to design effective questionnaires, draw up accurate settlement maps and gather data essential to upgrading. This not only builds the capacity of residents but stimulates the interest of all residents, strengthening community organizations.

*Design of upgrading package* – planning and design of civil works components (including post-project maintenance), with financial and institutional implementation plans. This is carried out jointly by local government planners and community representatives (with or without the support of NGOs). It includes defining: levels of service provision; mechanisms for implementation; financial provisions; programming of incremental improvement; liaison with service providers (for example, water supply); and the relation of the project to urban development context. Again, the greater the scope for community participation in substantive decision making the greater the chances of success.

*Tendering and implementation of works* – by commercial contractors (for technical infrastructure components) and the community (for labour-intensive clearance and

maintenance work). Also NGOs are increasingly contracted to implement components of upgrading projects such as technical support or social services provision.

*Continuing stakeholder dialogue* – the process continues after completion of the civil works, and provides platform for further upgrading works. For example, the provision of basic public infrastructure and services may then be followed by domestic electricity connections (often by a private sector provider), or by income generation, sports and leisure, health or education projects.

<b>Key questions for the upgrading project</b>	
Getting started	<p>How does it fit into comprehensive development plans?</p> <p>How does it consider scaling-up?</p> <p>Does it address issue of sustainability?</p> <p>Is it sensitive to cultural factors?</p> <p>Do the institutional and staff capacity match the scope and scale of the project?</p> <p>Does the organizational structure include sufficient coordination and political support?</p> <p>Is it financially viable? Are there sufficient financial resources to carry through the programme?</p> <p>Is the scope/scale affordable to the families and has willingness-to-pay been assessed?</p> <p>Will laws and regulations need to be modified?</p> <p>What will be the tenure arrangements?</p> <p>Is the location appropriate to upgrade?</p>
Setting it up	<p>What are the basic issues and key trade-offs in any project/programme?</p> <p>What is the institutional structure for managing the project?</p> <p>Are gender issues appropriately considered?</p> <p>How will renters and landlords be considered?</p> <p>What are the policies and procedures for realignment, readjustment and legalization of individual lots?</p> <p>What are options for financing service provision?</p> <p>How will costs be recovered?</p> <p>How will costs be collected?</p> <p>How will family house improvement loans be structured: cash/materials, collateral, repayment?</p> <p>What is the policy and procedure on defaults?</p> <p>What service standards will be used?</p> <p>What are the alternatives in service options (including using small-scale informal sector providers)?</p>
Carrying it out	<p>Does it support local initiatives in construction?</p> <p>How to assure continuity of staff and community representatives?</p> <p>What is your role during construction: direct supervision, delegated supervision, periodic review?</p>

	What is the role of NGOs during implementation?
Monitoring, evaluation and learning	How are lessons being captured? Who does it? How are lessons being incorporated? What are the indicators for evaluations? Whose interests are being served? Who pays? How will the reporting system be set up? What are the policies on displacement and spillover?

Source: Upgrading Urban Communities website.

### 3. How to avoid slums (new low-income housing provision)

#### 3.1 Public housing construction

There is a popular belief that governments should construct housing for urban low-income groups. In this way the quality of housing can be ensured, as can the ‘orderliness’ of development. In order to make it affordable, however, both its initial cost of construction and its maintenance and management in use must be heavily subsidized. Few city or national governments have either the political will or the resources to provide sufficient subsidy cover even a fraction of the need for new housing for low-income families.

Nevertheless, many governments around the world have set out to pursue conventional housing policies resulting in the construction of estates of modern, finished housing units, and the establishment of financial systems to capture savings and generate resources for housing programmes (see Quick Guide to Housing Finance). But the impact of conventional programmes has invariably fallen far short of that intended when targets fail to be met and costs prove too high. ‘If little or no subsidy was given (so that more units could be built), the new units could only be afforded by relatively well-off households. Alternatively, if sufficient unit subsidy was given to allow lower income groups to afford them, relatively few could be built’ (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989).

In addition, criticisms of inaccessibility, poor services, and shoddy design and construction are lodged against public housing estates in many countries. In some cases, there is a high turnover of units, with higher-income groups moving in and the poor returning to squatter settlements (see section on Resettlement above). Where this had not happened, rental housing estates frequently fall into disrepair, becoming new slums due to lack of maintenance by the state and lack of interest by their occupants. For instance, in India a significant component of the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board slum upgrading programme in the late 1980s was the renovation of the apartment blocks that it had itself built for the resettlement of slum dwellers barely 15 years previously.

Large-scale building programmes to provide subsidized, finished, standardized houses for existing and future low-income households are beyond the scope of developing (and most developed) country governments. Resources are better spent on improving existing sub-standard stock

and implementing innovative, flexible approaches to create new stock.

In Europe where public housing schemes resettled large numbers of inner-city slum dwellers, the high-rise estates built at low costs are often associated with the social issues such as poverty and social exclusion, as well as poor physical environments and declining local economies.

The proponents of mass public housing policies frequently refer to the successes of Hong Kong and Singapore in the 1960s and early 1970s, forgetting to observe that one was a 'show-case' colony and the other a city state, neither of which had the budgetary constraints experienced by much of the rest of the world. Indeed, public housing still constitutes 50 per cent of Hong Kong's housing stock and the government's continued high production of subsidized flats for sale has been blamed for the collapse of property prices and the private housing market. Mass production of public housing in the context of economic globalization has implications not foreseen when policies of public housing construction were first advocated. Housing built and subsidized by the public sector should now cater for specific population groups such as the elderly or disabled and key civil servants such as teachers, health workers and administrative officers whose jobs take them away from their homes.

### **3.2 Sites-and-services**

As a reaction to the inability of governments to provide adequate ready-built dwellings for low-income households there has been a global transition towards the provision of support for the self-help efforts of the poor themselves. This takes the form of supporting them through land, service and infrastructure provision, and sometimes by making credit and cheap building materials more widely available. At the project level, these ideas are incorporated into sites-and-services projects (and upgrading projects – see section on Upgrading above).

#### **3.2.1 What are sites-and-services?**

Sites-and-services projects involve the subdivision of urban land and the provision of services and utilities for residential use and complementary commercial use. It aims to improve housing conditions by providing a plot of land, on which people can build their house, and the utility and service infrastructure necessary for a functioning community. Projects vary and may provide floor slabs with utility connections, roofs only, one-room cores houses or more complete dwelling units. Utility services also vary, from communal pit latrines and shared water standpipes, to full piped services to the individual plots.

The sites-and-services approach involves government agencies only in the preparation of land parcels or plots with certain basic infrastructure. These plots are then sold or leased to the intended beneficiaries. Responsibility for the bulk of house construction lies with the beneficiaries, though financial (loans) and technical support may be made available to speed the process.

Sites-and-services try to strike a balance between minimum socially

acceptable housing conditions and what beneficiaries can afford. They assign a minimal role to the state.

### **3.2.2 The benefits of sites-and-services**

Sites-and-services enable government to share responsibility for housing provision with low-income groups and thus save scarce resources. Beneficiaries are in control of the pace and form of house construction, and sites-and-services schemes can reach large numbers of people and be useful in meeting future housing needs (as well as in essential resettlement projects).

Sites-and-services, if properly planned and executed, can provide a flexible way of meeting future housing needs. The location of the plots and cost recovery are fundamental to the success of schemes.

### **3.2.3 Making sites-and-services work**

When planning a sites-and-services scheme, land should be found as close as possible to centres of employment and work in order to offer viable livelihood opportunities to project participants. A site should be chosen that is also close to existing infrastructure and service networks so as to reduce the cost of extending these networks.

A common approach to sites-and-services is to look for large peripheral sites where big projects embracing large numbers of plots and new sites for schools, clinics and recreational and social amenity facilities can be developed. However, in most cities there are many small sites with easy access to the existing infrastructure and services that may be economically used for sites-and-services projects without having to invest in costly trunk infrastructure extensions.

Plot sizes should be kept small so more people can be accommodated and costs kept low. When deciding the appropriate size (or sizes – plan for meeting a variety of needs), research how ordinary low-income households use domestic space in urban areas. Existing standards and bylaws should not go unquestioned as they may no longer be appropriate or affordable. As people get richer they will move or buy the next door plot.

The costs of service provision should also be reduced by having rectangular plots with access on the short side (square plots are the most uneconomic). Levels and type of infrastructure (extent of vehicular access, centralized or on-plot water and sanitation facilities, etc.) must be decided by levels of affordability and social acceptability. As in all low-income housing projects, the key to determining affordability and acceptability is the full participation of beneficiaries in planning, implementation and maintenance.

### **3.2.4 Sites-and-incremental development services**

One means to make sites-and-services a more viable option and build in greater flexibility is to consider 'phased development', starting with basic infrastructure that can be improved over time. Essential to this approach is knowing what the basic minimum

level of infrastructure is that ensures people's health, safety and amenity, and that will meet with the approval of potential participants. Adequate provision will need to be made for public facilities (schools, clinic, religious buildings, police posts, etc.), even if they will not be provided immediately.

This incremental approach is especially useful for making new serviced land available to cater for the needs of 'newcomers' (migrants or newly formed households) at affordable costs.

### **3.2.5 The problems of sites-and-services**

Starting in the 1960s, many sites-and-services projects have encountered several problems because they have been predicated on misconceptions regarding low-income households, what they can afford, what they need and what they can achieve. Despite their intentions, sites-and-services schemes have often been unaffordable or inaccessible for the lowest-income groups.

One example is Kim Long ward, located in the west of Hue in Vietnam, which was established in 1995 with the resettlement there of 200 *sampanier* (boat-dwelling people) and an additional 300 *sampanier* households relocated later. When the resettlement area was established, the government provided basic infrastructure such as electricity, water, health stations and a market along the main roads. However, residents who lived away from the main road were responsible for connecting themselves to the public systems. This constituted a considerable financial burden to the households, most of who were accustomed to using river water, without cost, for their daily activities. Many households could not afford these new expenses. To address this problem, local authorities suggested that the Water Supply Company of Hue provide public taps to people and divide the monthly water bill equally by the number of users. Although this solved the problem of water supply in the community, it also created conflict as households accused each other of using more water than they had paid for (UN-Habitat, 2006).

The cost effectiveness of sites-and-services is the biggest obstacle to their success.

Many sites-and-services schemes are plagued by poor cost recovery. Beneficiaries have to bear high costs shortly after moving into the scheme, needing not only to pay for the plot but also construction of the house, while perhaps also suffering from the loss of income due to the move to the new scheme. Transport, water and electricity costs add to the burden. But some of the main reasons for poor recovery lie with the delay in provision of services, inadequate collection methods, lack of sanctions for non-payment and absence of political will to enforce payment (UEM website) (see Quick Guide to Housing Finance).

In the 1970s in Lusaka, Zambia, the World Bank's implemented one of the first very large-scale, low-cost sites-and-services projects. Costing US\$42.1 million in 1974, it included upgrading of squatter settlements, sites-and-services, technical assistance and infrastructure provision. The project covered an area of 1400 hectares and had 145,000

beneficiaries. It achieved high levels of community participation and had an interdisciplinary management team, an effective team of field workers, targeted several income categories, and used hired, local labour, stimulating the economy and the project's reputation.

However, there were problems that were not foreseen at the design stage of the scheme. Amongst these was the failure of the beneficiaries to participate in a project to manufacture building materials. Instead people preferred to buy them, and there was also a lack of interest in building material loans that were too small and poorly promoted. Cost recovery on home loans and service fees was problematic with no adequate collection agency in place and no sanctions for non-payment. Also inflation caused a constant need to re-evaluate the income limits of potential participants, adding to bureaucracy and making it hard to reach the target population. On a broader scale, the new executive agency set up for the project alienated Zambian government workers, leading to turnover difficulties when the executing agency was incorporated into the local government (Upgrading Urban Communities website).

#### **4. Developing and implementing city-wide strategies for low-income housing**

City-wide strategies for low-income housing not only need to cope with the backlog of housing shortages and upgrade huge numbers of under-serviced areas, but also address future housing needs. The current demand for acceptable and affordable housing is so overwhelming in most urban areas that the challenge of meeting future needs seems very daunting indeed.

Two broad areas of action are essential to achieve an impact on low-income housing problems at the city level. First, city/national policy and regulatory reforms are needed to stimulate innovation in the areas of land supply and housing supply for future needs, and to stimulate the viability and sustainability of improving existing sub-standard housing stock. Second, investment in infrastructure and services at the city level is needed, with this obviously being stimulated by reforms in policy and regulations.

<p>To impact on housing problems at the city level, policy and regulatory reforms are needed to stimulate future land and housing supply and to improve existing sub-standard housing stock. Investment in city infrastructure and services is also essential.</p>
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It is possible that some large-scale transformations in a country's slums can come about by eliminating impediments to change, such as land markets, land policy and legislation, decisions on the extension of infrastructure networks, and the design and administration of subsidies. For example, the national Community Mortgage Programme of the Philippines government helps squatters to buy government or private land that they have occupied for an extended period of time, and provides financing for infrastructure improvements. This programme relies on intermediaries such as NGOs that help with the process of buying and registering land on behalf of the communities (Upgrading Urban Communities website).

The example of Mandaue City (near Cebu in the Philippines) illustrates how regulatory reform and innovation can encourage investment in infrastructure at a small scale, then providing a stimulus for change at a larger scale. A thriving urban poor federation in Mandaue has six large savings schemes and it has set up the San Roque Parish Multipurpose Cooperative, which provides a legal umbrella for a number of community-managed development projects, including land acquisition, income generation, savings and credit, community provisions stores and canteens, and the construction of common toilets and access roads in some settlements. In most of these settlements access to water is a particular problem; up to 500 families share each water tap and water is expensive. One of the San Roque cooperative's most urgent projects has been installing and managing community water taps, using the Metro Cebu Water District's Community Faucet Programme, which gives poor communities permission to tap into the mains and get water at a low cost, as long as they lay the pipes, install the taps and pay for it themselves. Responsibility for planning, implementing, and managing the water taps rests entirely with the residents (UN-Habitat, 2006).

Groups borrow money from their savings schemes to buy the pipes and materials, and undertake the often difficult task of negotiating with factory-owners and subdivision developers for permission for the water pipes to cross their land. The community tap programme has also encouraged other improvements – for example the installation of communal toilets funded by the profits earned from the communal taps. Some communities in Mandaue use the profits from the communal water system to start income generating activities such as small community stores and to pave roads (UN-Habitat, 2006).

To reach the large scale that is essential if low-income housing problems are not to deteriorate still further obviously requires huge investment, not least in building the capacity of governments to implement large-scale initiatives. Networks of support within countries and between countries are essential. One idea is a programme that encourages, provides guidelines and helps to finance localized sub-projects in small geographically identified areas. This could support (somewhat like a franchise) multiple, simultaneous activities at a large scale. Some basic principles, models, options and guidelines would need to be established, under which local implementation communities would participate. This would require different types of action at: the facilitating level (central and local governments), the local implementation community or 'unit' level, the programme implementation level, and the international level (Upgrading Urban Communities website).

An example that nears this ideal is the Thai government's Baan Mankong (secure housing) programme, an ambitious national slum and squatter upgrading programme launched in 2003, which works not only in the larger cities but also in hundreds of small urban centres. Its goal is to support improved housing and secure tenure for 300,000 households in 2000 poor communities in 200 Thai urban centres (UN-Habitat, 2006). The Baan Mankong programme is implemented through the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI). It centres on providing infrastructure subsidies and

housing loans to community organizations formed by low-income households to support upgrading in situ wherever possible and, if not, to develop new homes close by. Support is provided not only to community organizations but also to their networks, to allow them to work with municipal authorities and other local actors and with national agencies on urban centre-wide upgrading programmes. It seeks to go to scale by supporting thousands of community-driven initiatives within programmes designed and managed by urban poor networks working in partnership with local governments and other local actors (UN-Habitat, 2006).

Within this national programme, there are a variety of means by which those in illegal settlements can get legal land tenure – for instance by the inhabitants purchasing the land from the landowner (supported by a government loan), negotiating a community lease, agreeing to move to another location provided by the government agency on whose land they are squatting, or agreeing to move to part of the site they are occupying in return for tenure of that site (land sharing). CODI also provides loans to community organizations to on-lend to their members to help build or improve their homes. It also supports city governments in taking the initiative in collaboration with urban poor organizations – for instance providing a site on which those living in various ‘mini’ squatter settlements in their jurisdiction could relocate, with the land provided on a 30-year lease. These are the kinds of solutions that can develop when there is a city-wide process in which urban poor communities are involved (UN-Habitat, 2006).

Some of the key factors (Imperato et al, 1999) to consider when aiming to reach a city scale include:

1. Political will, not just on the part of government, but on the part of society as a whole.
2. Policy environment, including an appropriate information base on the city’s informal settlements. Legal, regulatory and procedural bottlenecks that impose unreasonable requirements for physical planning, building codes and land use must be changed. Participatory development plans and physical plans for settlements should be promoted.
3. Area-based needs assessment, planning and implementation that is based on an integrated approach. A broad long-term vision of city development is needed to underpin current and future planning.
4. Subsidy structures and cost recovery strategies that are clear and transparent to make programmes financially sustainable (see Quick Guide to Housing Finance).
5. A national legal and regulatory framework that stimulates the upgrading and provision of services for the poor. This includes: land rights and land registration systems, technical standards for infrastructure, provisions that include small-scale operators, participatory planning recognized by formal master plans, responsibilities and incentives for ex-post monitoring, supervision and evaluation, and regulations for financial institutions that make it easier to cater to the poor.

6. Land release mechanisms and shelter alternatives for resettlement and for the provision of housing for future generations (see sections on Resettlement and Sites-and-Services above).
7. Systematic land tenure regularization and mechanisms to increase security of tenure (see Quick Guide to Land for Housing the Urban Poor).
8. Strategic alliances to include various public authorities with jurisdiction over an area, public and private utility companies, formal and informal land owners, formal and informal land developers, owners and managers of businesses in the area, managers and staff of public or non-governmental facilities in the area, politicians and political party activists, NGOs, religious groups, private business whose employees live in the area, and private firms providing services in the context of a programme or project.
9. Development of appropriate institutional arrangements. There is a need for a strong coordination mechanism that is accepted by all parties. Decentralization will be limited in effectiveness if not accompanied by careful coordination.
10. Development of a critical mass of local capabilities. A wide range of specialized services is needed, including socio-technical support, urban planning through a participatory approach, architecture and engineering services and technical guidance in appropriate technologies, programme coordination services, project and contract management services, construction skills in tune with the specific needs of informal areas, quality control in engineering and construction, affordable building materials, and micro-finance services.

Going to scale requires:

1. Political will;
2. An appropriate policy environment;
3. Intregated approaches and a city vision;
4. Mechanisms for financial sustainability;
5. An appropriate legal and regulatory framework;
6. Land and housing policies to meet future needs;
7. Policies to increase security of land tenure;
8. Strategic institutional alliances;
9. Strong and coordinated institutions;
10. Technical capacity.

Small-scale projects can provide the perfect environment for innovation and learning but ultimately the housing needs of many millions of people living in towns and cities in Asia and the Pacific must be met. The upgrading of existing sub-standard housing stock and services and the improvement of security of tenure are an essential part of meeting existing needs at a meaningful scale. Future housing needs must be met through a judicious, flexible and innovative mix of policies to release suitable land, provide incremental services and infrastructure development, and provide technical and financial

support to the poor. Essential to combat both current and future housing problems is the full involvement of poor women and men in planning for and meeting their own needs within a supportive environment provided by government and non-government organizations.

## **Annotated websites**

### **Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR)**

**[www.achr.net](http://www.achr.net)**

ACHR is a regional network of grassroots groups, NGOs and professionals actively involved with urban poor development processes in Asian cities. It is a forum where members share experiences, tackle the problem of forced evictions in the cities, develop opportunities for organisations of the poor and consider their place in city planning.

### **Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme (BLP)**

**[www.blpnet.org](http://www.blpnet.org)**

BLP of UN-HABITAT is one of the principal mechanisms by which UN-HABITAT supports the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals. It is a consortium of organizations committed to identifying and sharing successful solutions to problems of human settlements and applying the lessons learned from such practices to places in need. The practices are identified in areas such as housing, urban development and governance, the environment, economic development, social inclusion, crime prevention, poverty reduction, women, youth, infrastructure and social services.

### **Builders Without Borders (BWB)**

**<http://builderswithoutborders.org>**

BWB is a US-based not-for-profit organization and international network of ecological builders who form partnerships with communities and organizations around the world to create affordable housing from local materials (for example, straw and earth) and to work together for a sustainable future.

### **Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)**

**[www.cohre.org](http://www.cohre.org)**

COHRE is an NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland. It has the objective of promoting and protecting the right to housing. Its work involves housing rights training; research and publications; monitoring, preventing and documenting forced evictions; fact-finding missions; housing and property restitution; women's housing rights; active participation and advocacy within the United Nations and regional human rights bodies and activities in all regions of the South. It has an active Asia and Pacific programme that works directly with various NGOs, CBOs and governments to promote and protect housing rights throughout the region. The Programme is currently involved in activities supporting housing rights in Australia, Bangladesh, Bougainville, Bhutan (refugees in Eastern Nepal), East Timor, Fiji, Japan, Myanmar (Burma), Pakistan, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

## **Cities Alliance**

**[www.citiesalliance.org/citiesalliancehomepage.nsf](http://www.citiesalliance.org/citiesalliancehomepage.nsf)**

Cities Alliance is a partnership arrangement between UN-HABITAT, the World Bank, major bilateral aid agencies, the global coalition of cities and their development partners. It seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of urban development cooperation by focusing on City Development Strategies and slum upgrading programmes and activities.

## **CITYNET**

**<http://citynet-ap.org/en>**

CITYNET (The Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements) is a membership organization of local authorities that promotes sustainable urban improvement initiatives in Asia-Pacific. It facilitates city-to-city cooperation and networking among local governments and other urban stakeholders with the aim to help local governments provide better services to citizens.

## **CityPoverty**

**[www.citypoverty.net](http://www.citypoverty.net)**

CityPoverty is a website of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) concerned with urban poverty issues. It includes the research outputs of the Localising the Habitat Agenda for Urban Poverty Reduction project implemented by Max Lock Centre at the University of Westminster (UK) and WEDC at the Loughborough University (UK), which aims to facilitate the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through a published toolkit of guidelines/indicators to aid pro-poor development practice at the local level. It also focuses on the Addressing Poverty in City Development Strategies project implemented by GHK Research & Training, a London based multi-disciplinary consultancy firm.

## **Division for Sustainable Development of the UN DESA**

**[www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/index.html)**

This promotes sustainable development as the substantive secretariat to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and through technical cooperation and capacity building at international, regional and national levels. The context for the Division's work is the implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

## **Fukuoka Office of UN-HABITAT**

**[www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org](http://www.fukuoka.unhabitat.org)**

This is UN-HABITAT's regional office for Asia and the Pacific. It provides support to efforts by individual governments and their national and local partners in implementing the Habitat Agenda and monitors progress being made in the region. The tasks of the office cover many aspects of human settlements development and reflect the mandate of UN-HABITAT. The responsibilities combine operational activities (development projects and programmes) and normative activities (advocacy and policy guidance) and include the Campaigns for Secure Tenure and Good Urban Governance

## **Global Development Research Centre (GDRC)**

**[www.gdrc.org](http://www.gdrc.org)**

GDRC is a virtual organization that carries out initiatives in education, research and practices in the spheres of environment, urban, community, economy and information. Its focus is on small scale/local level interventions/initiatives. It functions as an information repository, a research and training centre, and as an educational centre. It identifies 15 themes within which its activities revolve, including:  
urban governance ([www.gdrc.org/u-gov/index.html](http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/index.html));  
NGOs and civil society ([www.gdrc.org/ngo/index.html](http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/index.html));  
gender and development ([www.gdrc.org/gender/index.html](http://www.gdrc.org/gender/index.html));  
microfinance ([www.gdrc.org/icm/index.html](http://www.gdrc.org/icm/index.html));  
and the informal sector ([www.gdrc.org/informal/index.html](http://www.gdrc.org/informal/index.html)).

## **Homeless International**

**[www.homeless-international.org](http://www.homeless-international.org)**

Homeless International is a UK-based charity that supports community-led housing and infrastructure related development in partnership with local partner organizations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The initiatives are all led, developed and managed by the local community groups themselves.

## **Housing International Coalition (HIC)**

**[www.hic-net.org](http://www.hic-net.org)**

HIC is an independent, international, non-profit movement of some 400 organizations and individuals working in the area of human settlements. Members include NGOs, CBOs, academic and research institutions, and civil society organizations from 80 countries in both North and South. HIC is committed to communities working to secure housing and improve their habitat conditions. The organization focuses on the promotion of housing rights.

## **id21**

**[www.id21.org/urban](http://www.id21.org/urban)**

id21 is a fast-track research reporting service run by the Institute of Development Studies in the University of Sussex and funded by the UK's DFID. It aims to bring UK-based development research findings and policy recommendations to policymakers and development practitioners worldwide

## **infoCity**

**[www.infocity.org](http://www.infocity.org)**

infoCity is an interactive knowledge-sharing tool for local governments in Asia that enables them to communicate with each other and provides access to global knowledge and resources. It is a World Bank initiative that seeks to assist municipal associations in the region in creating their own city-to-city knowledge sharing networks. It offers a range of tools that facilitate civic leaders, municipal officials and the development community to exchange their latest hands-on practices and innovations on city management.

### **Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS)**

**[www.his.nl](http://www.his.nl)**

Established in 1958, IHS has built a substantial expertise in the fields of housing, urban management and urban environmental management and planning. It offers support by building the capacity of both organizations and individuals through: training and education; institution building; advisory services; research; and networking

### **International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)**

**[www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org)**

IIED is a UK-based international policy research institute and NGO working for more sustainable and equitable global development. It works with partners across the developing world, including big city slum-dwellers, national governments and regional NGOs, global institutions and international processes. IIED acts as a catalyst, broker and facilitator and helps vulnerable groups find their voice and ensure their interests are heard in decision-making.

### **Practical Action (formerly ITDG)**

**[www.practicalaction.org](http://www.practicalaction.org)**

Practical Action is a UK-based NGO that specializes in helping people to use technology for practical answers to poverty. It works with poor communities in Latin America, East Africa, Southern Africa and South Asia to develop appropriate technologies in food production, agroprocessing, energy, transport, small enterprise development, shelter, small-scale mining and disaster mitigation.

### **Lumanti Support Group for Shelter (Lumanti)**

**[www.lumanti.com.np](http://www.lumanti.com.np)**

Lumanti is an NGO dedicated to the alleviation of urban poverty in Nepal through the improvement of shelter conditions. Its activities range from shelter upgrades to micro-finance, from education and children's programmes to good governance and gender equity and advocacy.

### **Management of Social Transformations (MOST)**

**[www.unesco.org/most](http://www.unesco.org/most)**

MOST is a research programme of UNESCO designed to promote international comparative social science research. The overall long-term objective of the Programme is to establish sustainable links between researchers and policy makers and to emphasize the relevance of social science research for policy formulation. Its activities are mainly organized around themes such as: the study of cities as the sites of accelerated social change; management of change in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic societies; local management of economic, technological and environmental transformations; and the eradication of poverty and social exclusion.

### **Partnership for Sustainable Development**

**[www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnership/partnerships.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnership/partnerships.htm)**

The Partnership for Sustainable Development is a voluntary multi-stakeholder initiative contributing to the implementation of Agenda 21, Rio+5 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

### **Southeast Asia Urban Environmental Management Applications (SEA-UEMA)**

**[www.sea-uema.ait.ac.th](http://www.sea-uema.ait.ac.th)**

SEA-UEMA is a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded and Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) implemented/managed project that aims to improve the urban environmental management policies and good practices in Southeast Asia region. It focuses on the three key urban environmental sub-sectors, water and sanitation, solid waste, and air pollution, with poverty reduction and gender equality being the two cross-cutting themes.

### **Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC)**

**[www.sparc-india.org](http://www.sparc-india.org)**

SPARC is one of the largest Indian NGOs working on housing and infrastructure issues for the urban poor. Formed in 1984, SPARC's approach is to develop solutions with the poor that work for the poorest and most marginalized in the city and then scale them up to work for other groups of the urban poor across the country and internationally. Since 1986, SPARC has been working in partnership with two CBOs, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan. Together, they are known as the Alliance, which works in about 70 cities in India and has networks in some 20 countries internationally.

### **Toolkit participation**

**[www.toolkitparticipation.nl](http://www.toolkitparticipation.nl)**

Toolkit participation is a group of civil society (NGO) and local government organizations from all over the world, working together to promote participatory governance in local government. It aims to contribute towards the development of a positive attitude of local authorities vis-à-vis citizen participation. Its site offers information on tools which promote citizen participation, a forum for discussions and it holds articles for further reference

### **United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)**

**[www.uncdf.org](http://www.uncdf.org)**

UNCDF is a multilateral organization that funds and implements small-scale investments, in the form of grants/soft loans, in the areas of local governance and microfinance. It initiates pilot projects that can be replicated on a wider scale and provide the basis for pro-poor policy decisions.

### **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)**

**[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)**

UN-HABITAT is the lead agency within the United Nations system for housing and human settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter

for all. Its activities revolve within broad issues such as sustainable urban development, adequate shelter for all, improvement in the lives of slum dwellers, access to safe water and sanitation, social inclusion, environmental protection, the various human rights and shelter finance mechanisms.

### **Upgrading Urban Communities: A Resource for Practitioners**

<http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading>

A website dedicated to exploring the upgrading sponsored by the Cities Alliance programme of the World Bank. It includes discussions of the pros and cons of upgrading, as well as technical advice on many aspects of upgrading projects.

### **Urban Development Sector Unit of the East Asia and Pacific Region (EASUR)**

<http://Inweb18.worldbank.org/eap/eap.nsf>

This is an organizational unit of the World Bank that deals with issues of urban development, water supply, sanitation, pollution control, solid waster management, municipal management, municipal finance, urban environment and housing. Its client countries are Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and East Timor.

### **Urban Management Programme for Asia and the Pacific (UMP-Asia)**

[www.serd.ait.ac.th/ump](http://www.serd.ait.ac.th/ump)

UMP-Asia is the regional track of a global technical cooperation programme of the United Nations aimed at strengthening the capacity of cities in developing countries in addressing the challenges of urbanization. It is executed by UN-HABITAT, with core funding from the UNDP, the World Bank, and several bilateral agencies.

### **Water and Sanitation Program (WSP)**

[www.wsp.org](http://www.wsp.org)

WSP is an international partnership of the world's development agencies concerned with improving sector policies, practices and capacities to serve poor people. Administered by the World Bank, its goal is to alleviate poverty by helping the poor gain sustained access to water and sanitation services. Its website contains useful information on upgrading slums and squatter settlements.

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