

Community-Led Data Collection Guide for NGO's

A Guide To Community-led
Data Collection For Informal
Settlements

**WHAT YOU COUNT,
COUNTS**



SA **sdi.** Alliance



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1. Glossary of Terms

Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organization
CUFF	Community Upgrading Financing Facility
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GPS	Global Positioning System
ISSP	Informal Settlement Support Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PSC	Project Steering Committee

Concepts

Household enumeration: Community-driven census that generates a detailed, household-level socio-economic and demographic profile of the community.

Fieldwork supervisor: The person responsible for overseeing the work being done in the field, also provides guidance to the team in the field.

Household: A group of people under one structure sharing one common area. If the structure is divided and a different door is used to enter the next area and the common area is not shared, then that can be considered as a different household.

Mobilisation: This involves organising, getting buy-in and support from communities on the whole process of settlement profiling and developing a shared vision.

Participatory mapping: The creation of maps by local communities – often with the involvement of supporting organisations including governments, NGOs or other actors engaged in development or land-related planning.

Informal settlement profile: Collection of community data through focus group discussions, guided by a standard questionnaire.

Boundary and service mapping: GPS mapping of the settlement boundaries, as perceived by the community, as well as availability and functionality of services within the community.

2. Who is the South African SDI Alliance?

The South African SDI Alliance supports urban poor communities to find solutions to homelessness, landlessness and poverty. We build community-organising capacity, pursue collaborative partnerships and implement informal settlement upgrading and housing projects.

The SA SDI Alliance is the South African affiliate of Slum Dwellers International (SDI), a global movement of slum / informal settlement dwellers comprised of national federations of the urban poor in over 20 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

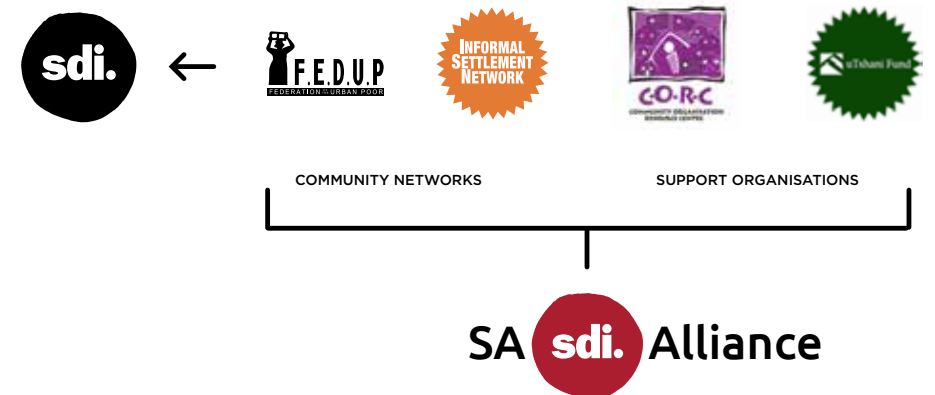
The SA SDI Alliance is made up of four partner organizations:

FEDUP is a women's-led, member-based social movement that organises through savings collectives and community organising practices associated with Slum Dwellers International (SDI).

ISN is a citywide network of poor communities who use settlement-level data to collaborate around issues of concern.

CORC is a non-profit organisation that supports the social, strategic and administrative practices of FEDUP and ISN.

uTshani Fund is a formal bridging finance institution that manages the urban poor fund on behalf of FEDUP.



3. Tools For Community Organising

The South African SDI Alliance supports the urban poor by building strong movements with community-organising capacity, to ensure collaborative partnerships and implement precedent-setting projects.

To do this, we use a set of tools and methodologies (or “rituals”) for community organizing and mobilizing. These organising tools prepare communities for partnership building and project implementation.

Community-based savings:

Savings is at the heart of community mobilisation. Through daily interactions, and weekly community gatherings, savings group members begin to articulate what problems exist within their community, creating a sense of shared identity for the women of urban poor communities.

By saving together, families learn to trust one another. This trust provides the basis for effective collective action. By setting up effective savings collectives, the community generates valuable social capital through building networks of trust, accountability, and transparency. As the saying goes, “We do not collect money, we collect people”. There are a number of advantages to community-based savings: Firstly, savings draws people together on a regular basis. Secondly, savings build a local resource base and makes communities more resilient against the perils of poverty. Thirdly, this process creates an on-going learning environment.

Despite the universal relevance of savings in building communities and alleviating poverty, the application of savings systems differ between FEDUP and ISN. Where FEDUP constitutes a membership base around savings schemes, ISN mobilises communities around an issue-based agenda for upgrading, which involves community contributions in cases where CUFF funding is accessed. Savings are also a mobilisation strategy of the ISN which is conceptualised as community contributions towards individual and collective upgrading when CUFF funding is accessed. ISN seeks to balance issue-based mobilisation for better services, alternatives to relocations, and tenure security with building local resilient communities through regular savings.

The solidarity, capacity and trust built through savings and loans at settlement level are clearly the great replicators. They also create the basis for an attendant willingness to share and to spread risk. These may be regarded as the two critical ingredients necessary for the innovations needed to take pro-poor development to scale.

Learning exchanges:

The most important learning vehicle in the South African Alliance – and for that matter all community alliances associated with SDI – is through the direct exchange of information, experience and skills between urban poor communities. Through exchanges, communities build a horizontal platform for learning and to share successes and failures in projects, give and receive advice on engaging government, share in work and life experiences, and exchange tactics and plans. This horizontal learning creates the critical mass and body of knowledge produced by the poor required to take community-based planning to scale. Exposure to international experiences and regional dialogues occur through the vast network of SDI.

Community-led data collection:

Community planning activities build political capital for communities both internally and externally. Within communities, activities like enumeration (household-to-household socio-economic surveys), profiling and mapping create space for communities to identify developmental priorities, organize leadership, expose and mediate grievances between segments of the community, and cohere around future planning.

Such activities serve as a platform for engagement with governments and other stakeholders involved in planning and setting policy for development in urban centres. A key aspect of community planning activities is that communities own the information they collect. When they share the data with government, they are able to create new relationships – and even institutions – that make the poor integral role players in the decisions that affect their lives.



4. Community-Led Data Collection: What Is It And Why Do We Do It?

Value & purpose of community-led data collection

Community-led data collection creates space for communities to identify developmental priorities, organize leadership, expose and mediate grievances between segments of the community, and cohere around future planning.

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Informal settlement profiling

Settlement profiling involves the collection of socio-economic details about the settlement during community meetings and mapping of the settlement on cadastral maps and using GIS software. Community forums or focus group discussions allow for the collection of information such as estimated population size, access to basic services, number and types of structures, economic activities in the settlement, amenities such as schools and healthcare, and more. While there is a standardised profiling questionnaire, these are often amended to suit the specific context of the settlement.

The key objectives of informal settlement profiling include:

- Allowing the community to prioritise their needs as a collective;
- Providing poor communities the opportunity to contribute to planning and development of their settlement;
- Creating capacity amongst the poor for meaningful partnerships with government
- Creation of a live database of informal settlements to inform developmental agencies and stakeholders about the socio-economic status of informal communities.

All the information gathered during the profiling phase is then brought back to the community for verification. This information, owned by the community itself, becomes a critical advocacy tool for the community in negotiations with government and other development stakeholders.

Household enumeration

An enumeration is a community-initiated and run census that generates a detailed, household-level socio-economic and demographic profile of the community, including tenure status, level of services and development aspirations. Networks of the urban poor consciously adopt strategies of self-enumeration as a powerful negotiation tool in their dealings with government. By leveraging their own resources through this information gathering exercise, communities are best positioned to articulate a demand-driven development agenda. Through this process of making themselves “visible” to governments, informal settlement residents have the most up to date knowledge on how many households make up their settlement, how long they have lived there, and how they make a livelihood – valuable information for any development stakeholder. One of the outcomes of the enumeration exercise is the production of “ID cards” – containing the number of people living in the shack, years of occupation. These are generally endorsed by local government and become the principle form of evidence to support shack dwellers’ claims to the land they occupy.

On the day of the enumeration, the general assembly elects an enumeration team who interacts with the regional ISN “working team” who trains the community enumerators. The community discusses and prioritises the breadth and depth of the types of knowledge they want to capture, including vulnerable groups, safety and security, health and wellness, and more.

Armed with questionnaires, chalk, booklets and tape measures, enumerators create a qualitative and quantitative map of their settlement. Their work is twofold: (a) to survey each household, and (b) to number and measure every structure. This data is collected at the household level and aggregated to give a comprehensive profile of the settlement. This information-gathering underpins the development of a physical and narrative picture of community-level challenges. A subsequent verification process within the community enables areas of disagreement to be identified and mediated by community members. The data also becomes a key mobilisation nodal point when communities actively discuss and interpret the meaning of the data, which becomes the cornerstone for devising community master development plans.

Detailed documentation is prepared and disseminated to the community, city officials and other stakeholders. Development of the settlement can then proceed, with all stakeholders engaged around an information set controlled by the community which most accurately represents the community’s developmental needs and aspirations.

5. How To Conduct An Informal Settlement Profile

Tools required for the enumeration

Tools required for the enumeration and informal settlement profiling process include:

- GPS Devices
- Electronic tablets
- Data collection software: Tablets are loaded with data collection software used in collecting profiling and enumeration data. Kobo Collect/ODK software is used by the SA SDI Alliance, among other SDI federations. Information on this software has been included at the end of this manual.
- ArcGIS Software: ArcGIS is a geographic information system (GIS) for working with maps and geographic information through the use of other mapping tools like GPS devices. It is used for creating and using maps, compiling geographic data, analysing mapped information, sharing and discovering geographic information, using maps and geographic information in a range of applications, and managing geographic information in a database.
- Hard (paper) copy of the profiling or enumeration questionnaire
- Spray paint, for use in house numbering exercise
- Record books

Settlement profiling involves the collection of socio-economic details about the settlement during community meetings and mapping of the settlement on cadastral maps and using GIS software. Community forums or focus group discussions allow for the collection of information such as estimated population size, access to basic services, number and types of structures, economic activities in the settlement, amenities such as schools and healthcare, and more. While there is a standardised profiling questionnaire, these are often amended to suit the specific context of the settlement.

All information gathered during the profiling phase is then brought back to the community for verification. This information, owned by the community itself, becomes a critical advocacy tool for the community in negotiations with government and other development stakeholders.

Why do we conduct informal settlement profiles?

- To allow communities to prioritise their needs as a collective;
- To create opportunities for poor communities to contribute to planning and development of their settlement;
- To create capacity amongst the poor for meaningful partnerships with government
- To build a live database of informal settlements to inform developmental agencies and stakeholders about the socio-economic status of informal communities.

Process map



Preparation phase

In order to successfully carry out a community-led profiling exercise, general community meetings and smaller meetings with focus groups, community leadership, and other groups, are held regularly, ensuring the community's continued engagement throughout the profiling process. Ultimately, the settlement profile will highlight the kinds of issues and questions which need to be addressed in the enumeration process.

1. Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

The SA SDI Alliance uses the “triple C” approach to stakeholder engagement: Community, Councillor and Community leadership. The SA SDI Alliance is sensitive to the politics of collecting community data. As such, the community-led data collection process must include consultation with all community stakeholders as a necessary first step to the data-collection process. This supports a deep participatory approach on the ground, ensuring that key community stakeholders are well informed about the process and that community members can participate in the collection of their own data.

Step 1: Assessment of the community by FEDUP/ISN

- First, determine whether there has been any contact between the social movement and the settlement in question.
- Next, check if any social movement networks exist in the settlements in question, i.e. women savings collectives, participation in community / settlement forums, etc.
- Determine whether there are any informal settlement upgrading projects underway, or if any have been conducted in the recent past.
- Make contact with the community leadership committee's chairperson.

Step 2: Set up engagement with the chairperson of the leadership committee

- Make contact with the chairperson of the local community's leadership committee.
- Secure a meeting with the settlement's entire leadership committee.

Step 3: Meeting with the settlement leadership committee

- Organising team should present themselves to the community's leadership committee and explain what the social movement (and the profiling process) are about.
- The organising team will also begin to sensitize the leadership committee around what is required from the community for the community-data collection process.
- This may include details around how many paid volunteers are needed from the community, and an explanation that these volunteers will be trained in the profiling, enumeration, mapping and verification processes.

Step 4: General meeting

- Following the meeting with the leadership committee, a general meeting should be organized with the entire community.
- At the general meeting the mobilizing team is gives a similar presentation to what was presented to the leadership committee, describing their work as a social movement and the aims and objectives of the community-led data collection process.

Step 5: Engagement with the ward councilor.

- Engagement with the ward councilor is vital in community-led data collection, ensuring that the national political and civil society structures understand the process. If not properly engaged, there is a risk that local political actors will perceive the data process as an initiative of a rival political party or of individuals who do not recognize his/her authority.



Implementation phase

The implementation of the informal settlement profile is done in three parts:

1. The collection of qualitative data through the focus group discussion, guided by the profiling questionnaire;
2. Mapping of basic services; and
3. Mapping of settlement boundaries.

The first step in the settlement profiling exercise is done through a community focus group, involving a mix of community members that includes men, women, youth, residents with a long history in the settlement, community leadership, religious leaders and other civil society representatives from the settlement. In some instances, government officials might take part, but this is not a requirement and their involvement should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

There is a standard profiling questionnaire that guides the focus group discussion and, together, those present offer answers that paint a picture of the settlement's history and makeup. The questionnaire includes, among other things, questions regarding access to basic services (water and sanitation) within the settlement, the name of the settlement, number of structures, population estimate, and other services available in the settlement, such as clinics, creches, and churches or mosques.

In addition to the collection of qualitative data through the guided focus group discussion, the profiling team maps the settlement boundaries and any services available within the settlement. This involves a walkabout in which the settlement boundaries as perceived by the community and basic services, such as water taps, toilets, shops, churches, clinics, creches, and political offices are mapped using GPS devices. This information is then uploaded onto a GIS system and used to generate settlement maps that the community can use for engagement with development stakeholders and in their own planning.

Verification phase

During the verification phase, the outcomes of the profiling exercise (the qualitative data from the profiling questionnaire and the boundary and services maps) are presented back to the community in a full community forum, inviting and including as many community members and representatives as possible. This can be done using a poster that includes the maps and key data points from the questionnaire. During this forum, the community will give feedback on the information presented, informing the profiling team if anything has been misrepresented or omitted by the profiling team. It is usually during this conversation that the need for an enumeration is identified by the community, based on the challenges and priorities identified during the profiling exercise.

Desktop analysis and feedback to the community

Using desktop analysis tools, the data support team, together with professional support, will draft a final profiling report, digital settlement maps, and final data sets to be handed back to the community for their use in negotiations and other engagements with development and planning stakeholders. This is often done in the form of a profiling report that includes key information, such as a the settlement name and location, date of the profile, the boundary and services maps, settlement history, and key data points, identified in consultation with the community, such as total settlement population, number and type of structures, tenure status, available basic services, health services, social amenities (such as schools, religious centres, creches), access to economic opportunities, and identification of the community's main needs and priorities, including whether or not the need for an enumeration has been identified.



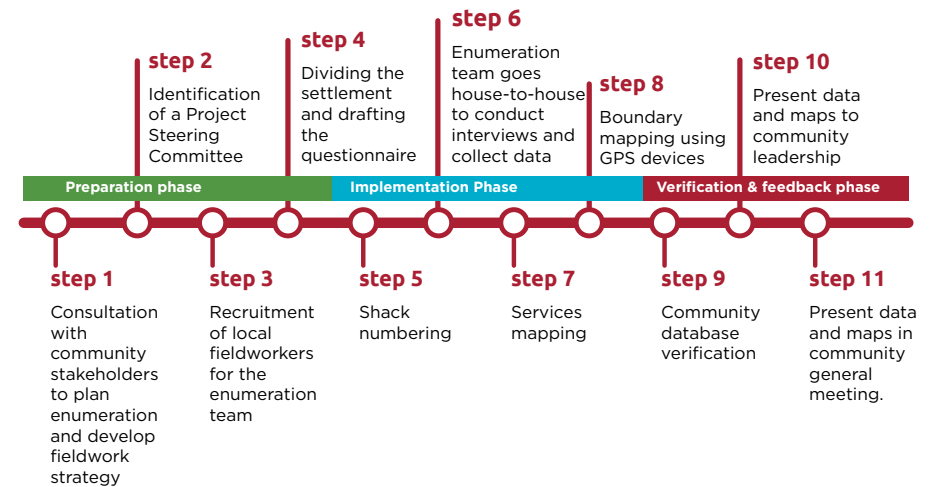
6. How To Conduct A Household Enumeration

An enumeration is a community-initiated and run census that generates a detailed, household-level socio-economic and demographic profile of the community, including tenure status, level of services and development aspirations. Networks of the urban poor consciously adopt strategies of self-enumeration as a powerful negotiation tool in their dealings with government. By leveraging their own resources through this information gathering exercise, communities are best positioned to articulate a demand-driven development agenda. Through this process of making themselves “visible” to governments, informal settlement residents have the most up to date knowledge on how many households make up their settlement, how long they have lived there, and how they make a livelihood – valuable information for any development stakeholder. One of the outcomes of the enumeration exercise is the production of “ID cards” – containing the number of people living in the shack, years of occupation. These are generally endorsed by local government and become the principle form of evidence to support shack dwellers’ claims to the land they occupy.

Why do we conduct house-to-house enumerations?

- To negotiate, design, implement and manage a stakeholder participatory process to support the data collection process.
- To conduct a household enumeration exercise which includes data collection and numbering of shacks for each informal settlement pocket
- To conduct GIS mapping for all the households in each informal settlement pocket based on the information gathered
- To analyze the collected data for each informal settlement pocket
- To record existing social infrastructure and socio-economic opportunities/networks accessible to the dwellers
- To develop a database which will generate household and settlement profiles

Process map



Preparation phase

The enumeration process starts with a preparation phase. This is critical to ensure that the entire community is aware of the data collection exercise and understands the details of why it is being rolled out and by whom. This initial phase begins with the convening of community general meetings, followed by the identification and training of local enumeration team. Once the team is identified and trained, fieldwork activities can commence. This starts with a community walkabout in order to ensure that all households in the community are aware of the upcoming enumeration. During this exercise, all shacks in the settlement are numbered and the household questionnaire is drafted.

1. Consultation with community stakeholders

The SA SDI Alliance is sensitive to the politics of collecting community data. Community-led data collection must include consultation with all community stakeholders as a

necessary first step to the data-collection process. This supports a deep participatory approach on the ground, ensuring that key community stakeholders are well informed about the process and that community members can participate in the collection of their own data.

During these community meetings, a main resource centre is identified and agreed upon. This provides a central meeting point and coordinating base for the settlement enumeration programme. The resource centre should be equipped with wireless internet, so that it can serve as a data upload centre for enumeration data.

2. Identification of a Project Steering Committee (PSC)

Enumerations are generally linked to larger informal settlement upgrading projects. They often serve as a critical step in the early stages of preparing a community for such projects, helping the community to understand itself and identify its needs and priorities. For each of these projects, and in each community where an enumeration takes place, a Project Steering Committee is created. These PSCs are generally made up of local community members, supporting community buy-in of the project and process.

3. Recruiting and training an enumeration team

The next step in preparing for an enumeration is the selection and recruitment of an Enumeration Team. This team is usually selected by the local PSC, and includes members of the community, city federation leaders, representatives of the local authority, and NGO support professionals with experience in both the technical skills associated with the enumeration and the soft skills required for community mobilization. Because the SA SDI Alliance is part of the larger SDI network, national and international federation members may also be invited to participate in the enumeration process in order to support the local community.

During the training exercise, mock data-collection is conducted in order to test and, if necessary, make changes to the draft questionnaire. This gives the enumeration team a chance to practice the interview process before the enumeration is underway. The training also provides a chance for the enumerators to familiarise themselves with the geographical layout of the settlement using the prepared field maps which define the boundaries of the enumeration area.

4. Drafting the questionnaire

The informal settlement profile serves as a key step in identifying settlement specific focus areas for the enumeration. As described in the previous section of this manual, this is conducted together with local community leaders, city officials and support

from the federation and NGO professionals at city, national, and even international level. The priority issues highlighted in the informal settlement profile inform the settlement-specific questions to be included on the enumeration questionnaire.

Using a standardized questionnaire (the template for which has been included with this manual) as the basis for the household enumeration, the enumeration team would draft the enumeration questionnaire in consultation with the community, being sure to include questions related to the priority areas identified in the settlement profile.

Typical categories included in an enumeration questionnaire include:

- Basic household profile, including number, age, gender, civil status, of household members
- Description of household structures and tenure status
- Length of residency in the community
- Access to basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity
- Social profile of the household, including ethnicity, religion, and social ties to and in the community
- Employment status / sources of income
- Affiliation to local community-based organisations
- Perception and position on community issues

A repository of additional questions is currently being developed, which can also be included in consultation with the community. Additional questions address issues such as:

- natural disasters
- health
- crime
- economic activities
- disability
- gender
- quality of service delivery services

5. Dividing the settlement

Next, the enumeration team works with the local community organisations to divide the settlement into manageable sections for the enumeration. Members of the team will be responsible for enumerating and mapping a set of specific sections allocated to them.

Implementation phase

This then leads to the implementation phase: the phase where all fieldwork activities are officially given a green light. This phase includes household data collection, services mapping, and GIS mapping of the settlement boundaries as identified by the community. This is followed by data registration and the preparation of household and community data for verification.

1. Data collection

- Administer house to house questionnaires
- Collect household information using the Android
- Create a household database for the settlement
- Preliminary data analysis, creating tables for verification

During this main field work activity, interviews are carried out with every household identified to be part of the enumeration, using the electronic version of the enumeration questionnaire as the basis for these interviews. Each questionnaire is referenced with a unique ID that links the questionnaire to the structure number given during the numbering exercise. This unique ID becomes the link code between the GIS map and household-level data.

A team of trained supervisors provides support to the enumerators throughout this process. At the resource centre, the supervisors check the data for any mistakes on before uploading the data from the electronic tablets to the database.

2. Services mapping

- Mapping of basic services and amenities using the GPS device

The services mapping exercise includes the locating and identification of basic services and amenities – ranging from water taps and toilets to spaza shops and churches – using a GPS device. Details regarding each service, such as whether it is functioning properly or in use, is recorded as a note and mapped together with the location of the service.

3. GIS mapping

- Number all structures and indicate existing and new structures on field maps
- Map the settlement boundary identified by settlement leadership
- Collect spatial data using GPS device
- Consolidate spatial data and household data onto a settlement register
- Link enumeration data and GIS maps to settlement register

Verification Phase: Desktop and Field

The Verification Phase ensures that the data is free of human error and verified with the community, ensuring its reliability with external stakeholders. Throughout the data collection process, a record should be kept of any disputes or issues requiring clarification or adjudication.

During desktop verification, the data manager checks all the uploaded data for any errors. If errors are found, these are communicated to the fieldworkers for corrections. Desktop verification also includes a review of the map, checking for any duplicates on structure numbers and formatting of structure numbers when entered into the register.

Before the production of the final database, the entire data set needs to be checked for errors. The database manager checks the data on the storage platform as it is uploaded. The questionnaire has been designed in such a way that some very common errors can be prevented automatically during collection, for example the use of skip logic where questions only appear based on responses provided from previous questions.

Once desktop verification is complete, data outcomes should be displayed publicly within the settlement, i.e. a poster displayed in a community hall. Following this, household data verification forms should be given to all households to offer an opportunity for them to verify their own data.

Additional community verification is conducted using sectional databases which are set up at central points and monitored by the enumeration team members and the community leadership.

Upon completion of these first stages of verification, a general community meeting should be held to discuss the data outcomes and rectify any data disputes.

Desktop analysis and feedback to the community

Using desktop analysis tools, the data support team will then, usually with professional support, draft a final enumeration report, digital settlement maps, and final data sets to be handed back to the community for their use in negotiations and other engagements with development and planning stakeholders. Detailed documentation is prepared and disseminated to the community, city officials and other stakeholders. This should include a poster that includes key information, such as a boundary map of the settlement and key data points identified in consultation with the community, such as total settlement population, number and type of structures, tenure status, and number and type of services.

The process for data analysis is twofold: spatial and statistical analysis. During spatial data analysis, GIS software (mainly ArcGIS and QGIS) and the electronic data set are used to create thematic maps that provide community residents with a visual understanding of their settlement and its connection to other settlements and neighbouring areas and serve as the basis for detailed discussions on upgrading priorities. These maps are sometimes displayed in community halls and other strategic points of the settlement to ensure feedback to the entire community.

Using the structure number reference codes, the socioeconomic information gathered from each household during the enumeration is linked to the relevant structure on the map. Once the data is uploaded it is accessible by selecting the relevant structure on the digital map, providing the geo-mapped location of all household details. Statistical analysis is done using software like STATA, SPSS, or Microsoft Excel's analysis tool among others. The outcomes are then included in the final enumeration report, which is presented to the community. Statistical outcomes are shared with the community in different ways. An example is provided in the diagram below.

Note

- This manual was prepared mainly to provide guidance to SA-SDI Alliance and its partners participating in community led housing and developmental initiatives. It provides guidelines to anyone interested in conducting community-led data collection exercises.
- This manual provides basic procedures followed when conducting a community led data collection in informal settlements. Steps outlined may not be applicable to all settlements since each settlement is different.
- Please contact us if you need support or have questions: info@corc.co.za





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