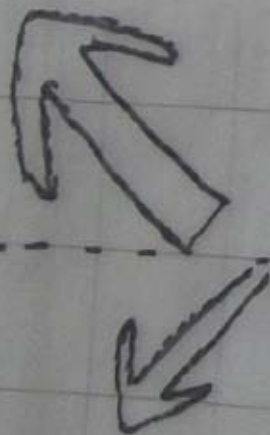
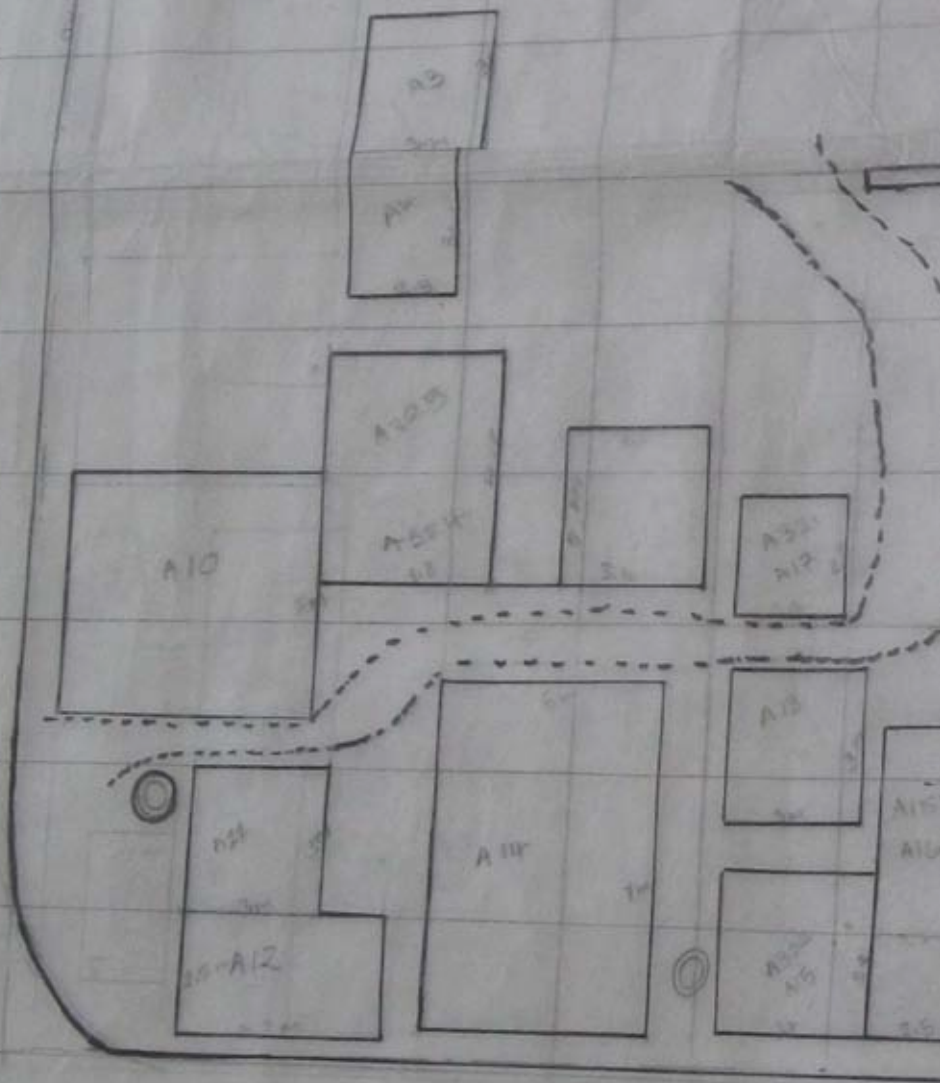




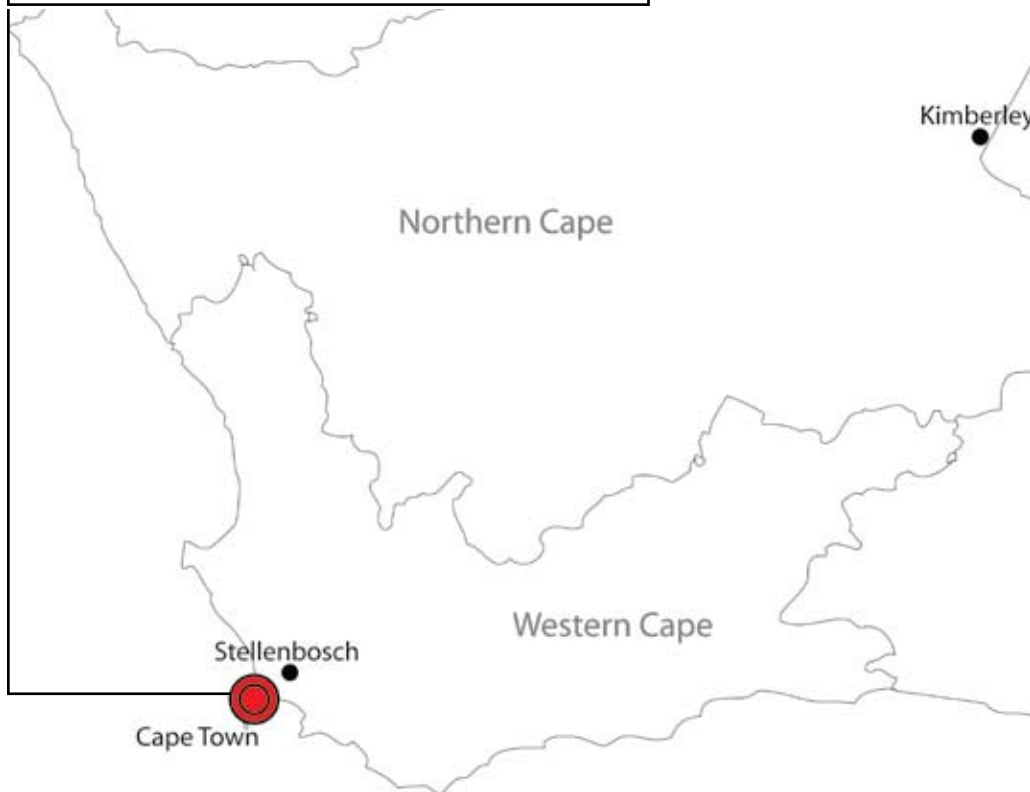
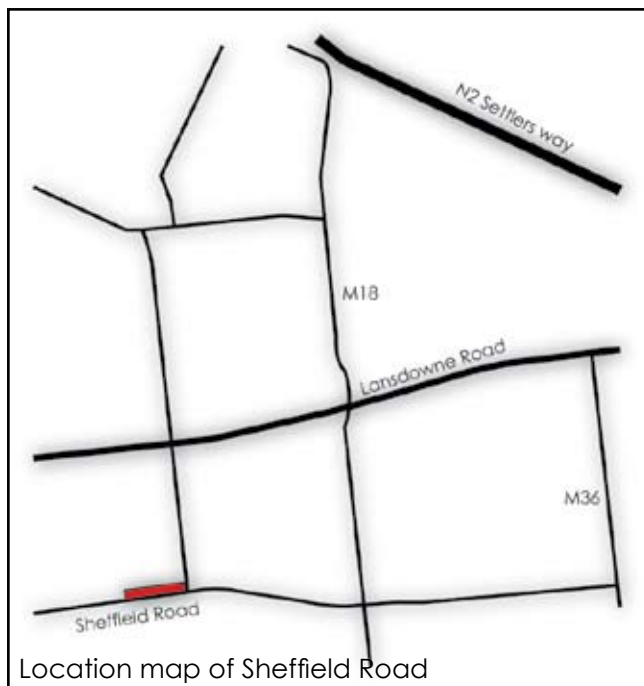
The Upgrading of Sheffield Road



Introduction

Sheffield Road is an informal settlement in Philippi, Cape Town. Situated on a road reserve near the N2 freeway, 167 families live on an overcrowded piece of city land with severe winter floods. The successful blocking out of Joe Slovo Township set the precedent for the Informal Settlement Network (ISN) and the City to agree on joint pilot projects. Sheffield Road came top of a list of eleven in situ upgradings, selected by ISN. This was the beginning of an amazing learning curve for everyone involved. People's lives were transformed. Community members learned to take responsibility, and encouraged others to come on board. Milestones were achieved, and eventually a picture emerged, what informal settlement upgrading really is about: A practical demonstration of how a united community is the number one prerequisite for successful, sustainable development that addresses the needs of residents. The proof on the ground are twelve new houses which form a more spacious, safer cluster, plus better sanitation through city-built toilets and a drainage system. These tangible results serve as learning material for other communities to see and participate in the upgrading process. Sheffield Road has strengthened the voice of the urban poor – through their leaders they now determine policy and practice for city planning and informal settlement upgrading.





Stakeholders

The Sheffield Road upgrading is the result of a successful partnership between a capacitated community, the South African SDI alliance, the City of Cape Town Informal Settlement Department and the University of Cape Town (UCT).

The community was mobilized by two organizations: the Informal Settlement Network (ISN) and the Federation of the Urban Poor (FEDUP).

ISN is an alliance of informal settlement dwellers, active in all of the country's major metropolitan municipalities. Their task is to mobilize and network communities around issues related to urban exclusion, such as no tenure, insufficient basic services, and the threat of evictions. ISN uses this networking mechanism to engage the State. At the same time, they closely cooperate with FEDUP's women savers who become the instruments for managing the in-situ upgrading process from within the community.

For the past 20 years FEDUP has empowered hundreds of communities to start savings schemes, capacitate themselves, negotiate with government, build houses and acquire land.

Through their alignment with FEDUP, the Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC) and the technical support NGO iKhayalami have access to the worldwide network Slum Dwellers International (SDI). At Sheffield Road, the NGOs have assisted the community with planning, mapping and building – iKhayalami is specialized on low cost housing solutions with a focus on green technologies.

CORC facilitates partnerships and exchanges to enable communities to learn from one another, so they can broker deals with formal institutions, especially the State. Through pilot projects, CORC provides case studies for policy change at national and international level.



Timeline



March 2009: A fire destroys 512 shacks and leaves 1,500 homeless at Joe Slovo township in Cape Town. The community and iKhayalami plan, rebuild and improve the settlement through re-blocking 125 shelters. A precedent for a successful in situ upgrading at only ten percent of the cost of more formal housing developments has been set. City officials come to visit – and soon after express interest to engage in joint pilot projects.

April/May/June 2009: The South African SDI alliance, CORC, FEDUP and ISN meet with the City of Cape Town to form a partnership for the upgrading of informal settlements. The city at this point does not want to include the improvement of shelter but prefers to focus on the provision of basic services. Sheffield Road is chosen as the first pilot project from a list of eleven potential sites – identified and presented by ISN.

November 2009: According to the enumeration, 167 families have access to seven functional toilets, which means 72 people share a single toilet. Other problems are flooding, overcrowding, and the lack of space. There are no showers, bathing happens at home or in public. The Informal Settlement Department announces that funding has become available for taps, drains and a total of 19 toilets. Negotiations in the community begin where to place them.

December 2009: The community of Sheffield Road produces an initial map of their settlement. Discussions begin around their urgent need for more sanitation, and the most needy areas are pointed out. At the same time the province announces that there will be no further construction of roads for the next five years. Sheffield Road is no longer under the immanent threat of eviction.



March/April 2010: ISN and NGO professionals meet with the community to discuss blocking out. The feedback from the residents is positive. The planning of the first cluster begins. The community first resists the one size fits all approach - all twelve houses are planned to be 15 m2. The process slows down. The NGOs respond with also offering 20 m2 houses for a slightly higher contribution.

July 2010: The City agrees to support blocking out and shelter improvement. After a year of negotiations, this is a significant achievement for the partnership. In the community, ISN tries to rebuild the momentum and stresses the importance of savings. Every family must contribute a minimum of R300 for a new house.

September 2010: Blocking out in the settlement begins. Shacks are demolished and rebuilt in different positions. Initially iKhayalami professionals handle the manual labour, but soon the community takes over.

November 2010: The first cluster of twelve new houses is finished. Brick thresholds protect the structures from flooding. The community embraces the safe, spacious courtyard, where kids play and women wash laundry.

February 2011: Work on the next clusters is in progress. ISN and women's savers cooperate well. Areas across the settlement mobilize to be next in line for blocking out and new toilets. ISN and the City trust the partnership and engage in another 22 joint upgradings in Cape Town.



Community defining areas of need on their self-produced map



Enumerations and Mapping

167 shacks, 542 people, 15 toilets, 5 shops, severe flooding

Communities can only be upgraded by building on the local knowledge and capacities that exist in a given settlement. Through the practice of enumeration - communities count themselves - a detailed socio-economic profile of the settlement emerges. This helps the community to assess their developmental priorities. Communities use the enumeration to confirm the identified need for upgrading and to create space for dialogue around planning the future of the settlement. The result is an engaged community: Passive recipients become active participants.

The mapping element serves to support the assertions made by the community in their enumeration. It is the physical representation of the enumeration.

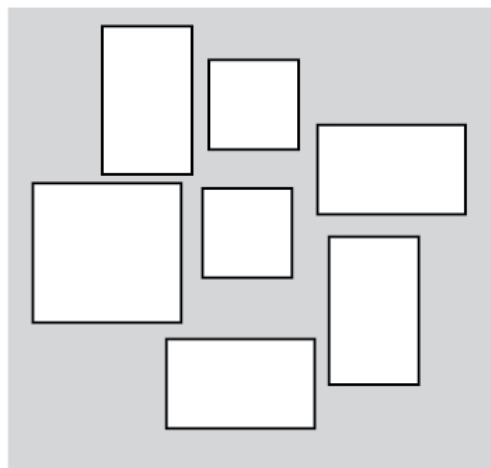
Savings, contributions, reblocking

"Before there was no space to walk. You could not see your enemy, even if he was right in front of you."

FEDUP have used savings for more than 30 years to mobilize the urban poor. Daily collections not only build the base for future community investments but also encourage communication, sharing and caring. At Sheffield Road households had the option to contribute R300 for a new 15m² shack. The outstanding amount of R2700 was financed by the NGOs. Alternatively families could commit to a payment of R650 which bought them a slightly larger 20m² house.

Re-blocking or blocking out is the process of knocking down an existing shack and replacing it in a better location with better materials. It means that the community is able to create open, safe spaces such as courtyards, where children can play and women wash their laundry. At Sheffield Road the first cluster consists of twelve houses. Community leaders decide which group of families is the next to receive new homes.





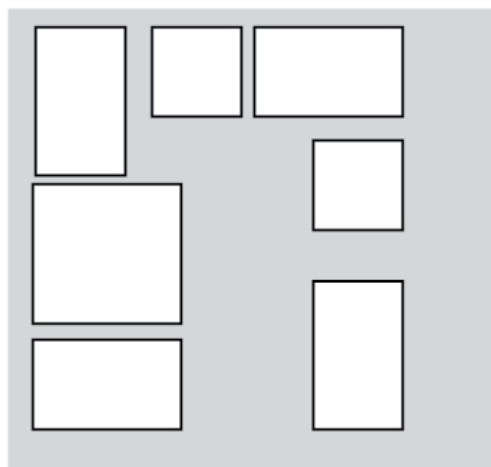
Existing condition of cluster:

Haphazard shacks

Insufficient open space and paths

Fire and flooding risks

Bad living conditions



Proposed condition of cluster:

Organizing shacks

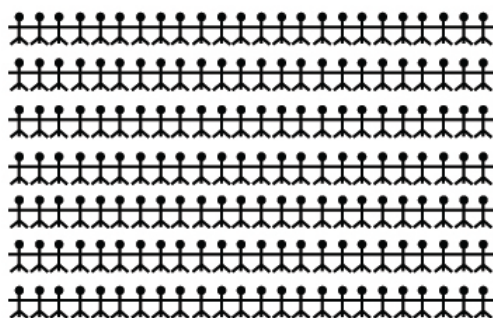
Shared public open space

Better safety

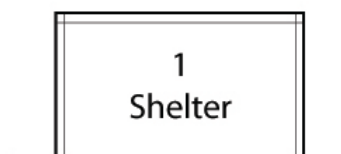
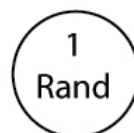
Options for infrastructure

Better living conditions

Based on exiting cluster



167
families



Information flyer for community

Blocking Out Contribution

R 300= Material for 15sqm

[R3,000= cost of material]

[R2,700= paid by Ikhayalami/
CORC]

R 650= Material for 20sqm

[R3,650= cost of material]

[R3,000= paid by Ikhayalami/
CORC]



Finally, the first shack comes down





Safe spacious courtyard



Lessons learnt

People must drive the process

- + **Community has to be ready:** This is the number one prerequisite for the process to take off. Leaders from within, and competition with neighbouring settlements for the upgrading also help.
- + **Enumeration only the start:** The community must stay engaged, or the momentum is lost. Women's groups become instruments for change.
- + **Champion to take charge:** At Sheffield Road an old gogo went from house to house and explained the process. She built the community's trust and confidence.
- + **Savings are necessary:** Through contributions the residents become active participants.
- + **No progress without unity:** Development Committee and ISN leaders must cooperate to be able to influence practice and policy.
- + **Partnerships leverage resources:** Negotiations take time, and patience is needed for the buy-in of all stakeholders. Then funding may become available quite suddenly.
- + **Community knows best:** Planning happens on the ground with resources from within the settlement making the decisions.

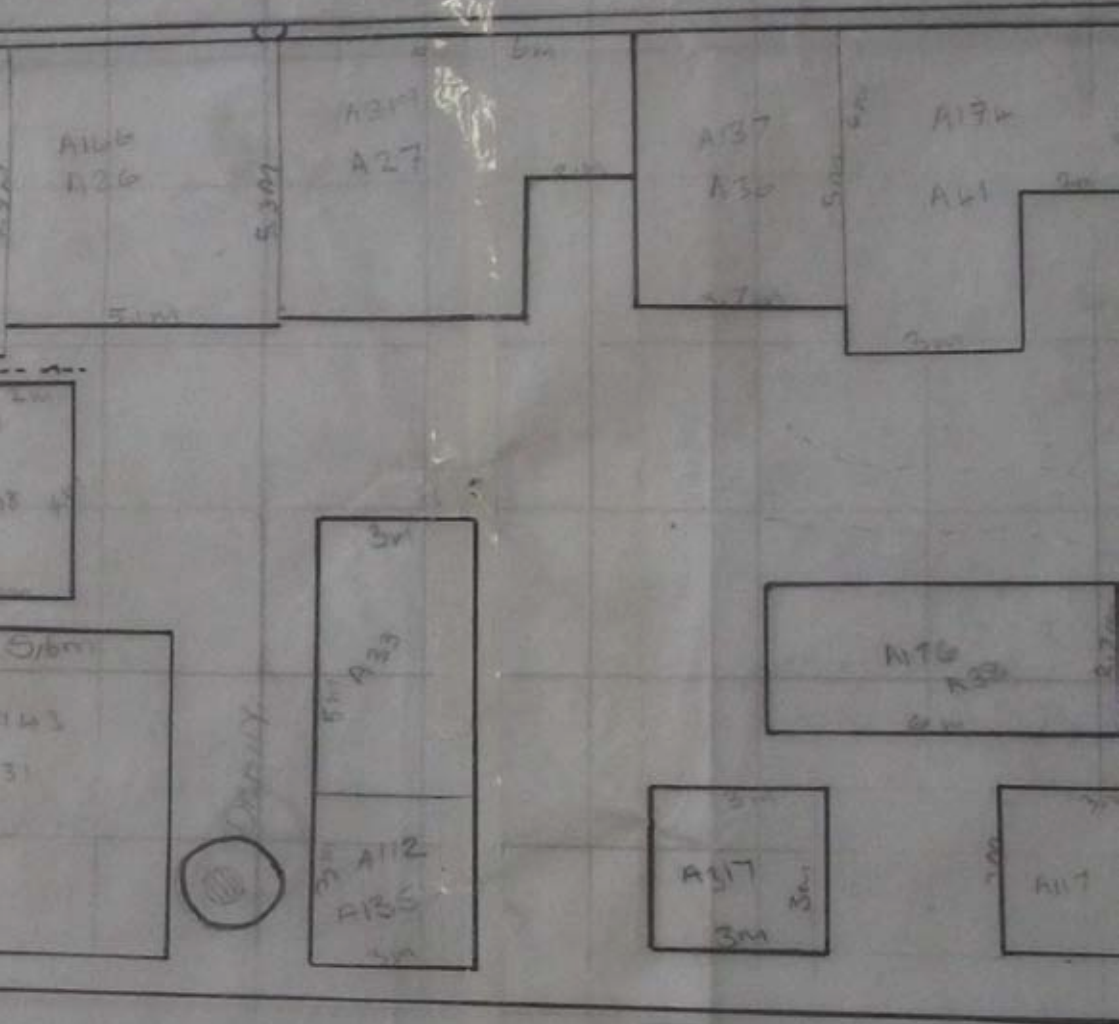
Conclusion

The transformation from an initially NGO-driven process to a community-owned development took nine months. In the absence of a strong women's savings mechanism, ISN and professionals had initially tried to fill in. But only when the women and men of Sheffield Road took charge, problems disappeared, contributions started to flow, and volunteers offered support.

Small steps point at the bigger picture: Residents of informal settlements – in Sheffield Road and elsewhere – are grappling on the ground with the kinds of issues, the professionals, the city officials, and the academics tend to keep in a more theoretical realm. Meanwhile the poor are learning from each other. Their capacitation has opened the door for change in policy and practise. The City of Cape Town has extended its focus from the provision of basic services to the in-situ improvement of shelter. Sheffield Road has provided a case study that Informal Settlement Upgrading is more than bricks, land and services. Upgrading is any intervention that improves the physical properties of a settlement and enhances the lives of its inhabitants.

As government shifts to an incremental approach to informal settlement upgrading, it is finding that communities such as the Sheffield Road residents are preparing the ground for a historic possibility. For settlement-wide upgrading can only be done with communities as central partners in the process.







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