

A woman with dark hair, wearing a red jacket, is looking down at a large, unfolded map she is holding. The map shows a grid-like layout of buildings. In the background, there are several small, simple buildings made of corrugated metal, typical of an informal settlement. The sky is clear and blue.

Exploring partnerships with
local government

A PEOPLE'S LED APPROACH TO INFORMAL SETTLEMENT UPGRADING



SA  Alliance



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This publication was authored by Yolande Hendler (CORC) and Walter Fieuw (Making of Cities). Bunita Kohler (CORC) played an important role in content conceptualisation and editing. The publication was designed by arqino.com

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Joe Slovo, Langa
Sheffield Road, Philippi
Mtshini Wam, Joe Slovo Park, Milnerton
Flamingo Crescent, Lansdowne
California, Mfuleni

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Upgrading informal settlements is now widely accepted by governments and international agencies as the most effective way to improve conditions for their inhabitants. Such upgrading is endorsed by the Sustainable Development Goals along with a commitment to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services by 2030.

But citizen and community led upgrading was first recommended in the 1960s. Why has it taken 50 years to gain this acceptance? Why are there are still so many examples of bulldozing rather than upgrading informal settlements?

Even where upgrading is accepted, there are still many challenges. Some upgrading schemes just provide such rudimentary improvements (e.g. communal water gaps and better drainage). Then there are the challenges for governments and community organisations to increase scale – going from one or two small successful upgrading initiatives to supporting initiatives in a much larger and more diverse range of settlements. Yet this also has importance for protecting informal settlement dwellers from climate change risks. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2014 assessment noted how in growing numbers of cities in Asia and Africa, experiences with community-driven “slum” or informal settlement upgrading has led to a recognition of its potential to reduce risk and vulnerability to extreme weather events, most effectively when supported by local government and civil defence response agencies.

This publication draws from the rich and varied experiences in upgrading of the South African SDI Alliance, in particular the Informal Settlement Network (ISN) and Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDUP). It describes the community-led practices for upgrading and the tools that support these, especially mobilising through savings and data collection. It describes how these examples helped change national government policies towards commitments to community-led upgrading. It also describes a decade of partnerships with local governments that sought to greatly increase the scale of upgrading and reflects on where this worked well – and less well. Many positive commitments have been made by city governments (and ministers within national governments). But it has proved challenging to put them into practice on the ground within the formal processes of local government with its sectoral rivalries, bureaucratic inertia and range of (often inappropriate) rules and regulations.

What makes this publication so interesting and so relevant is its discussion on what has been learnt on the challenges of scaling up upgrading, without diminishing community engagement and control. It provides valuable learning of relevance to all grassroots organisations on how to support community-led upgrading and how to get local government support at scale, without diminishing community engagement and control. It also shows how grassroots-led upgrading can open up new development possibilities that government and professionals are unable either to see or to realise.

Patrick Magebhula Hunsley marching
with Durban SA SDI Alliance to eThekweni
municipality.





The kind of upgrading we speak of is not about land and services alone. This is about realising real citizenship and equality in our cities.

Patrick Magebhula Hunsley,
late ISN coordinator and co
founder of FEDUP

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Saving is key to community
organising, North West

Abbreviations

BNG	Breaking New Ground
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCT	City of Cape Town
Cllr	Councilor
CoJ	City of Johannesburg
CORC	Community Organisation Resource Centre
CSP	Cities Support Programme
CUFF	Community Upgrading Finance Facility
Du/ha	Dwelling units per hectare
ePHP	(enhanced) People's Housing Process
FEDUP	Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor
FIGP	Federation Income Generation Programme
HDA	Housing Development Agency
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
IBR	Inverted Box Rib (material)
ISN	Informal Settlement Network
IUDF	Integrated Urban Development Framework
MEC	Member of Executive Council
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSTT	Ministerial Sanitation Task Team
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPO	Non Profit Organisation
NHC	National Housing Code
NMBM	Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality
NUA	New Urban Agenda
NUSP	National Upgrading Support Programme
PFO	Principal Field Officer
SDI	Shack Dwellers International
SHARE	Sanitation and Hygiene Applied Research for Equity

Abbreviations

SPLUMA

Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act

UISP

Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme

UPF

Urban Poor Fund



SA SDI Alliance with Western
Cape Minister of Human
Settlements and Flamingo
Crescent community, Cape Town.

About the SA SDI Alliance

The South African SDI Alliance supports urban poor communities to find solutions to homelessness, landlessness and poverty. Through building organised communities and collaborative partnerships urban poor communities seek to make cities more inclusive and pro-poor.

The Alliance consists of four partners:

The Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FEDUP) is a women's-led, member-based social movement that organises through savings collectives and practices associated with Shack Dwellers International (SDI)¹. These tools include data collection, peer-to-peer learning exchanges and pragmatic partnerships with the state and other actors. Since 1990, FEDUP has used these strategies to acquire land, build houses, upgrade informal settlements and create income-generating opportunities. The Federation is active in 8 South African provinces with over 40 000 savers.

The Informal Settlement Network (ISN) is a citywide network of poor communities who collaborate around issues of concern such as landlessness, homelessness and exclusion. Founded by FEDUP and CORC in 2008, the main aim of ISN is to influence policy and achieve impact at a city-wide scale. ISN uses FEDUP's tried and tested practice of data collection as the main tool to mobilise. Through the network, CBOs are able to pool experience, develop strategies and engage government through dialogues and forums. The network is active in the metros of Cape Town, Nelson Mandela Bay, eThekweni, Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, and Stellenbosch local municipality. FEDUP is a member of ISN.

The Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC) is an NPO that supports the social, strategic and administrative practices of FEDUP and ISN. These include savings, data collection, peer-to-peer learning exchanges, community-based planning and engaging with government and other actors. CORC's mission is to support poor communities that are willing and able to help themselves.

The uTshani Fund is a formal bridging finance institution that manages the urban poor fund on behalf of FEDUP. Through uTshani Fund, FEDUP and ISN can access loans for community-led house construction, livelihoods, land acquisition and incremental informal settlement upgrading.

Get in touch to learn more:

Web: sasdialliance.org.za

Email: info@corc.co.za



South African SDI Alliance



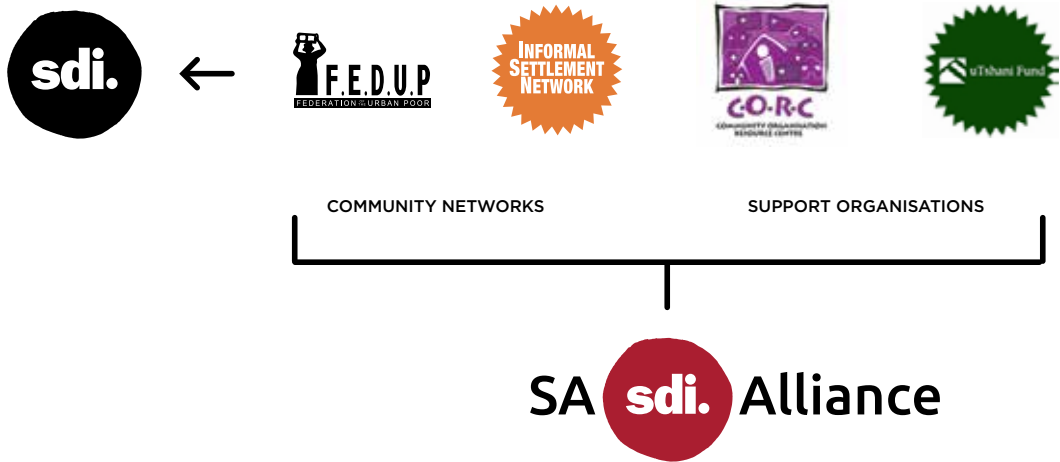
@SASDIAlliance



Instagram: SASDIAlliance

¹ SDI is a network of community-based organisations of the urban poor in 32 countries.

00 About the SA SDI Alliance



Mtshini Wam residents in Milnerton, Cape Town, gather for a general meeting.

00 About the SA SDI Alliance

SA SDI ALLIANCE PRACTICES FOR CHANGE

Urban poor communities linked to FEDUP or ISN follow a set of ‘practices for change’, developed by informal settlement dwellers across the SDI global network. These practices have emerged as powerful mobilising, organising and negotiating tools for engaging all tiers of government.



Savings Schemes

Each day groups of women in low income neighbourhoods and informal settlements walk from home to home, and gather small change from each other in order to collectively address the livelihood struggles they share.

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.

Whilst men are not excluded, the reality is that the savings groups are comprised mainly of women. Women are often at the center of the household – responsible for the provision of food, school fees, clean water, and a place to sleep. By targeting the poorest women in a settlement, one can be sure that the settlement’s most vital needs will be addressed.

Additionally, the structure of savings groups allows members to access short-term loans, which are otherwise largely unavailable to the urban poor. This system of savings & credit prepares communities for medium and large-scale financial management necessary in informal settlement upgrading projects they are likely to pursue.

00 About the SA SDI Alliance



Central Participation of Women

For SDI, the central participation of women is not just an ideal but a critical component of a gender-sensitive mobilisation strategy, which sees men and women re-negotiating their relationships within families, communities, and organisational forms such as urban poor “federations”. By prioritising the leadership potential of women, federations alter traditional male domination in communities, in ways that actually strengthens grassroots leadership.

By recognising that women are often the engines of development, FEDUP uses the savings and credit methodology to develop their own leadership capacity, financial management skills, and confidence. By entrusting women to handle such important monetary systems, whereby they are in charge of the precious savings of their neighbours and friends, communities begin to understand the potential of women as public decision-makers and powerful agents of change. In fact, savings and credit activities, apart from their clear financial benefits, serve as a means to bring women out of the home and into the public sphere.



Data Collection & Mapping

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

Such activities serve as a platform for engaging government and other actors 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.



Partnerships

Urban poor communities cannot address informal settlement challenges on their own, but they can catalyse change. The key to reaching community driven development at scale is the inclusion of external partners. The SA SDI Alliance engages with government, international organisations, academia and other institutions wherever possible to create relationships that benefit the urban poor. Ultimately, the aim is to create situations in which the urban poor are able to play a central role in “co-producing” access to land, services, and housing.

00 About the SA SDI Alliance



Informal Settlement Upgrading

There is not, and never will be, a one-size-fits-all approach to upgrading informal settlements. Each settlement is unique in its challenges, but there are common themes. Informal settlement upgrading is not simply “site and service” or the provision of a “top structure” house. Upgrading is any intervention that improves the physical conditions of a settlement, which in turn enhances the lives of its inhabitants.

The most critical emphasis is that this process should happen in situ, where communities already exist. Relocations should always be seen as a last resort. However, in situations in which they are unavoidable, such as in flood plains or along railway lines, the SA SDI Alliance works to ensure that decisions are made in conjunction with the community.

Informal settlement upgrading projects are not about delivering land, services and incremental houses as ends in themselves, but do so as a means to draw in politicians and policy makers in order to challenge and transform institutional arrangements and policies.



Peer-to-peer Learning Exchanges

Horizontal learning exchanges from one urban poor community to another are our primary learning strategy. Participants within savings networks and informal settlements learn best from each other. When one savings group or community has initiated a successful income-generating project, re-planned a settlement or built a sanitation or community facility, the SA SDI Alliance enables groups to come together and learn from each other's achievements. The community exchange process builds upon the logic of 'learning by doing' and helps to develop a collective vision.

Additionally, horizontal exchanges create a platform for learning that builds alternative community-based politics and “expertise,” challenging the notion that development solutions must come from professionals. In this way, communities begin to view themselves as holding the answers to their own problems rather than looking externally for professional help.

The pool of knowledge generated through exchange programs becomes a collective asset. When informal settlement residents meet with external actors to debate development policies, they can draw from national and international examples, which influence government and other actors to listen.

1. A Decade In Review: Building Partnerships For Upgrading

Shack dweller communities linked to FEDUP savings groups have come together for over twenty years to organise themselves around incremental solutions to land, shelter, livelihood and tenure. However, since the introduction of the national Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy in 2004, there has been a growing awareness to support communities in implementing incremental informal settlement upgrading, as an in-situ approach to shelter.

The purpose of this publication is to narrate the experiences of informal settlement communities who, together with FEDUP and ISN, have sought formalised partnerships with cities and municipalities. We ask: what are the ingredients for a people's led approach to building successful partnerships with local governments? Based on the experiences of FEDUP and ISN across South Africa, the publication simultaneously examines the factors that contribute to the breakdown of such partnerships, once established. The focus here is specifically on partnerships around informal settlement upgrading, which is a priority focus area for developing sustainable human settlements in South Africa.

This introductory section therefore provides an overview of the SA SDI Alliance experience in building partnerships before and between 2008 and 2018, including achievements and challenges encountered. Section 2 details the policy and organisational context within which upgrading occurs. Section 3 outlines the community organising practices of FEDUP and ISN and how they relate to various stages and aspects of informal settlement upgrading. Section 4 offers insight into partnership building with metropolitan and local governments, based on the experiences of the SA SDI Alliance in respective municipalities. Section 5 shares lessons and considerations derived from these partnership experiences.



Some of the founders of Fedup and SDI, the late Patrick Magebhula Hunsley (left), the late Jockin Arputham (centre), and Rose Molokoane (right).

01 A decade in review: building partnerships for upgrading

1.1 A background to partnership building in the SA SDI Alliance

The rationale for partnership building²

Since its inception in the early 1990s, FEDUP (then known as the South African Homeless People's Federation) pursued partnership building with government as a key strategy. The rationale for this strategy was based on the Federation's early engagement during this period with Indian slum dwellers:

"[In India] we heard a story that was very astonishing: Jockin [Arputham, late President of SDI] told us that the Indians had voted for their democratic government and expected honey and milk to flow on the street. However, after 40 years what they got was a queue of 800 hundred people waiting for one toilet. That story is still awake in my mind. We realised, even if we get democracy in South Africa, if poor people are not organised, government will work for them and not with them." Rose Molokoane, FEDUP Coordinator and SDI Vice President



Jockin (far left), Patrick and Rose (front centre) during first exchange to India

² Content in this subsection is drawn from CORC archive material: *Building the Informal Settlement Network – Summary of inter-community dialogues on the state of informal settlements in South Africa's major metropolitan centres.*

01 A decade in review: building partnerships for upgrading

In a society that had been liberated through confrontation, boycott and the struggle for rights in South Africa, the organising concepts used by Indian slum dwellers were unfamiliar. These included prioritising women, mobilising through savings and data collection, and committing to engagement and dialogue with state institutions.

The Federation's orientation towards dialogue with state institutions occurred in an international context of an ascending market economy while locally, private sector economics became entrenched in South Africa's new dispensation. Land and housing became "products" to be delivered by the market while the urban poor sector became fragmented and weak as powerful social movements (SANCO and trade unions) were co-opted into the state and their leadership entered government.

It was clear, therefore, that grassroots movements of the urban poor needed to be rebuilt, being accountable and functional at community level but networked at city, provincial and national level. Even though the state became an instrument for implementing privatised economics and an anti-poor agenda, it was also clear that these grassroots movements had to engage both the state and the market. In order to be autonomous from the state and the market but still engage both, the Federation (and other grassroots movements) needed to organise around their own knowledge and resources and not around demands for constitutional "entitlements". For the South African Federation, the Indian experience had foreshadowed that constitutional democracy would not necessarily translate into tangible improvements for poor South Africans.



Patrick speaks at gathering of South African Homeless People's Federation, early 1990s.

01 A decade in review: building partnerships for upgrading

FEDUPs engagements with national ministers of housing and land

As poor women throughout South Africa federated to save, support each other and build self-reliance, the Federation engaged with National Ministers of the then Department of Housing. This included dialogue with ministers Joe Slovo in 1994 and Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele in 1996. After the Federation engaged Slovo, he pledged R 10 million to the Federation process, which was made available during Mahanyele's term in office. The Federation used Slovo's pledge to start a revolving fund so as to loan money to Federation members to build their own houses, during a time when South Africa's housing subsidy program was not yet instituted.

The Federation also engaged with Lindiwe Sisulu, when her first term as Minister of Housing commenced in 2004. In 2006, she signed a MoU committing Provincial MECs to pledge 1000 housing subsidies per province per annum to FEDUP.

From housing to informal settlement upgrading

As the Federation became rooted in such pragmatic partnership building, national policy began to shift in 2004 from subsidy housing provision to a more incremental approach of informal settlement upgrading (see section 2.5). Changes in practice, however, remained minimal with mass state subsidised housing as the preferred mode of delivery. While the Federation had made use of collective savings in previous negotiations, mass subsidised housing made it easy for councilors and officials to exclude Federation members and restrict their access to funds. Although the Federation used its political linkages at a national and sometimes local level to contest this, the result was often a divided community.

For the Federation and its support organisation, CORC, these dynamics indicated a likelihood of growing obstacles to the Federation's approach to community organising. FEDUP and CORC took the decision to engage traditional male-dominated leadership to form a broad based network of community-based organisations. This would include communities where the Federation had established saving schemes.

ISN's engagements around informal settlement upgrading

In 2008, a series of dialogues took place in five major metropolitan areas in South Africa, from which the Informal Settlement Network (ISN) emerged. By the end of 2009, the ISN established a steering committee comprising informal settlement residents and two support professionals. It was active in six metropolitan areas and had started enumerations and profiling as precursors to informal settlement upgrading in Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, eThekweni and Cape Town.

The ISN was therefore established to network and link poor communities around specific needs and issues, especially land and access to basic services. The main aim of the ISN is to influence policy and achieve impact at a city-wide scale. ISN uses FEDUP's tried and tested practice of data collection as the main tool to mobilise. Through the network, CBOs are able to pool experience, develop strategies and engage government through dialogues and forums.

01 A decade in review: building partnerships for upgrading

“Data is the ID of the community. It helps us understand where we are and our land and this is why it helps us build relationships with local government. We need to live our data like the Federation lives saving so that any time you are asked, you know all information about your settlement. In this way, we can have an impact on how the country is run. It [data] can be used as a tool of navigation. If the government wants to talk about anything, we would have the most updated data.”

Nkokheli Mcambele, ISN Coordinator

In the first three years, ISN³ focused its attention on mobilising communities by profiling settlements. By 2010, close to 600 settlements were engaged and affiliated to the network. In 2009, the South African SDI Alliance, represented by the senior leaders of all Alliance partners, reached a significant **milestone** by deciding to focus its energies (and fundraising) on informal settlement upgrading. On a national level, the will to implement informal settlement upgrading increasingly emerged, after having been introduced in policy documents as early as 2004 (Breaking New Ground, see Section 2).

Rooted in the Federation's long-standing experience of partnership building, the ISN sought to establish formal partnerships with municipalities around informal settlement upgrading initiatives. The first signs of such partnerships emerged with the City of Cape Town and Stellenbosch Municipality. Informal settlement upgrading projects that catalysed engagements between the Alliance and these municipalities included Joe Slovo (Langa), Lwazi Park (Gugulethu) and Sheffield Road (Philippi) in Cape Town.

Finance facilities that catalyse partnerships for upgrading

CORC and uTshani Fund (with contributions from SDI) successfully raised capital from the Gates Foundation to establish the **Community Upgrading Finance Facility (CUFF)**, which received applications for upgrading projects from ISN-linked communities country-wide. The board of CUFF consisted of 60% shack dwellers and 40% support NGO professionals. The ultimate responsibility for proposal writing, costing and engagements with suppliers was that of community residents, with support offered by CORC and uTshani Fund.

³ FEDUP is a member of ISN. Therefore, when this publication refers to ISN, FEDUP is automatically implicated

01 A decade in review: building partnerships for upgrading

The purpose of projects funded through CUFF was to catalyse partnerships between informal settlement communities and their municipalities around precedent-setting informal settlement upgrading initiatives. The end goal was a formalised partnership by means of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In the MoU, the municipality committed to the working partnership and allocated funding to support social facilitation and project implementation.

Through CUFF, community-led informal settlement upgrading projects gained the attention of municipalities. This led the Alliance to sign formalised agreements with Stellenbosch Municipality in 2011 and with City of Cape Town in 2012 (see section 4.1 for more detail). In Cape Town, an initial list of 23 upgrading projects was identified. Between 2010 and 2014 upgrading took place in three settlements, namely Mtshini Wam (Milnerton), Kuku Town (Kensington) and Flamingo Crescent (Lansdowne). In both Stellenbosch Municipality and the City of Cape Town, the Alliance leveraged close to four times the initial investment⁴ in social facilitation and project support.

Coinciding with the National Government's policy refocus on informal settlement upgrading, Patrick Magebhula Hunsley (1958 – 2014) – a FEDUP leader from Inanda, Durban and co-founder of ISN – was appointed in 2010 as a special advisor and the only civil society representative of a 5-person advisory panel to then-minister of Human Settlements, Mr. Tokyo Sexwale.

“Our strategy is a version of that old rally cry: ‘Nothing for us without us’. The kind of upgrading we speak of is not about land and services alone. This is about realising real citizenship and equality in our cities.”

Patrick Magebhula, late ISN coordinator and advisor to Minister of Human Settlements.

⁴ For example, in a re-blocking project, the cost of social facilitation, project preparation and subsidies of the top-structures are a quarter of the cost of groundwork, infrastructure development and services committed by the municipality.

01 A decade in review: building partnerships for upgrading

As CUFF supported community-led upgrading initiatives nationally, the Alliance explored the potential of a people's led finance facility with a focus in a metropolitan municipality. With funding from Comic Relief, the Alliance established a people's led finance facility in Cape Town in 2013. Inspired by the model of the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) in Thailand, the aim was to establish a finance facility in which community savings, and donor funding would leverage municipal finance, for community-led upgrading initiatives. Such a facility would make it possible to bypass lengthy bureaucratic requirements and make it simpler and faster for organised urban poor communities to access the necessary funds to upgrade their settlements in partnership with the municipality.

1.2 Key achievements in relation to upgrading

Over the past decade, the Alliance has made progress in influencing how government relates to urban poor communities in terms of informal settlement upgrading. This is particularly evident in the era of Alliance upgrading initiatives that were implemented in the context of strong partnership agreements and financial support from municipalities. Key achievements include:

- Developed **capacity in residents** to engage government as equal partners through empowering practices, networks, and project experiences
- Supported 1,420 informal **settlements to profile** themselves (52% of all settlements nationally)
- Supported 100 **communities to enumerate** themselves
- Prepared 23 communities for **upgrading projects** in seven municipalities
- 5 **MoU agreements** with metropolitan and local governments of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Midvaal, Nelson Mandela Bay Metro and Msunduzi
- Signed an **MoA** with the Housing Development Agency (HDA) in 2016
- Established 1 national **finance facility** for upgrading (CUFF) in 2008
- Established 2 '**local urban poor funds**' in Stellenbosch (2012 - 2014) and Cape Town (2014 - 2018)
- 4 **design studio** agreements with following tertiary institutions: University of Cape Town, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, University of Johannesburg, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (USA)
- **Leveraged over R20m** from local governments for incremental upgrading of informal settlements
- **Profiled 106 informal settlements in the Western Cape Province** that contributed to the formulation of the Informal Settlement Support Plan
- **Enumerated approx. 18 000 households in the airport precinct in Cape Town** in preparation for a government 'mega' housing project
- Member of the working group that formulated the strategy for **100 Resilient Cities** in eThekweni municipality
- **R10m pledged** by the Western Cape Provincial Minister of Human Settlements for the purpose of informal settlement upgrading

01 A decade in review: building partnerships for upgrading

1.3 Challenges in building partnerships

After successes in Cape Town and Stellenbosch until 2014, the partnerships in these two municipalities became significantly strained. At the time of publication the Alliance is re-engaging the City of Cape Town in joint forums concerning structured support to informal settlements. At the time of publication, the Alliance is working together with Stellenbosch municipality through the provincial Informal Settlements Support Plan (ISSP). Considering repeated efforts of engaging with municipalities in Gauteng, the Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal, the Alliance, for the most part, struggled to cement any meaningful partnerships in these areas since the inception of the ISN. However, at the time of publication, the Alliance has moved towards partnering with both the metros of Nelson Mandela Bay (Port Elizabeth) and eThekweni (Durban), with differing levels of implementation.

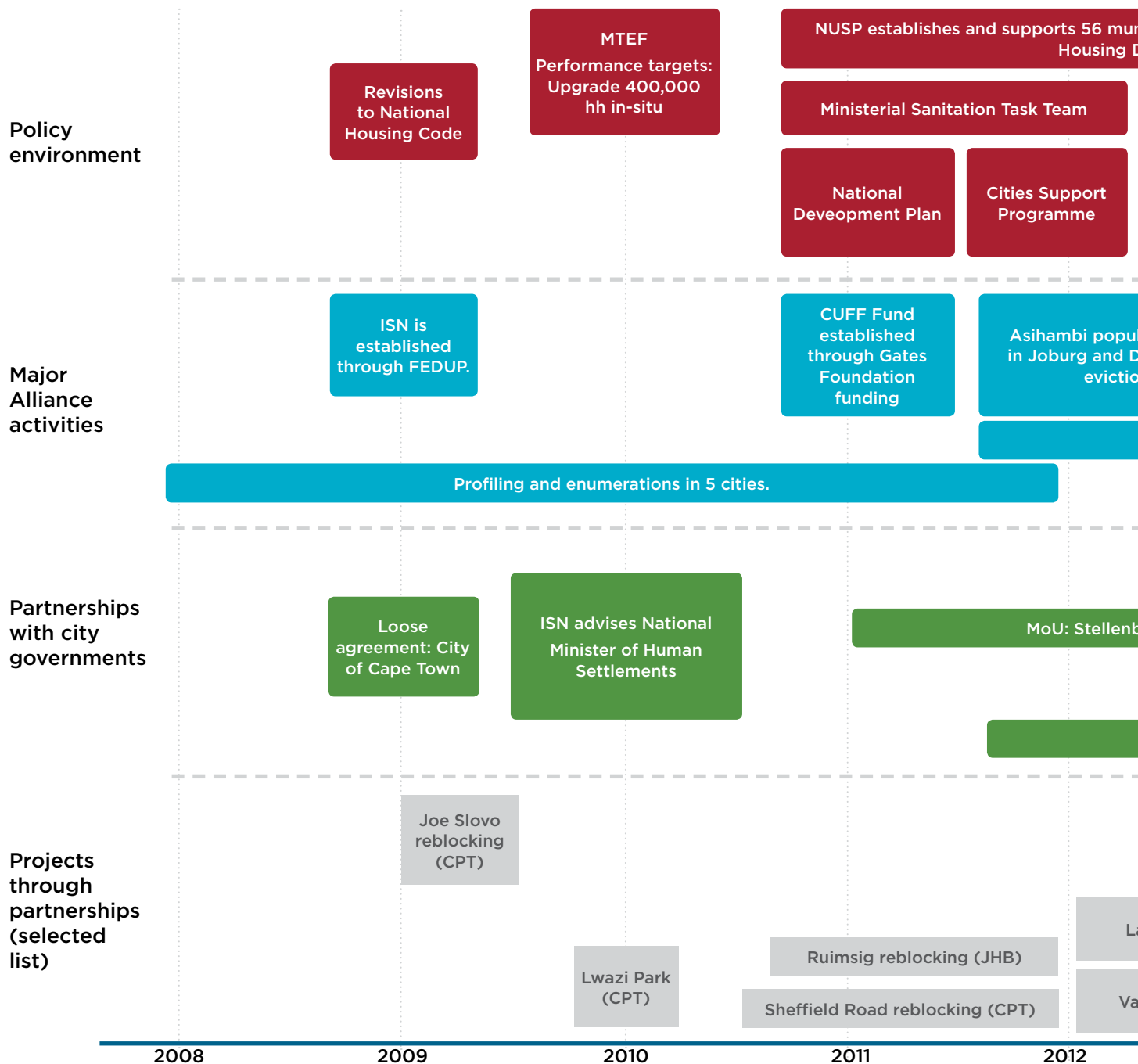
This publication also engages with the challenges of building partnerships with local governments across South Africa. Based on these experiences, we draw attention to five overarching lessons learnt in the past decade as these relate to informal settlement upgrading.

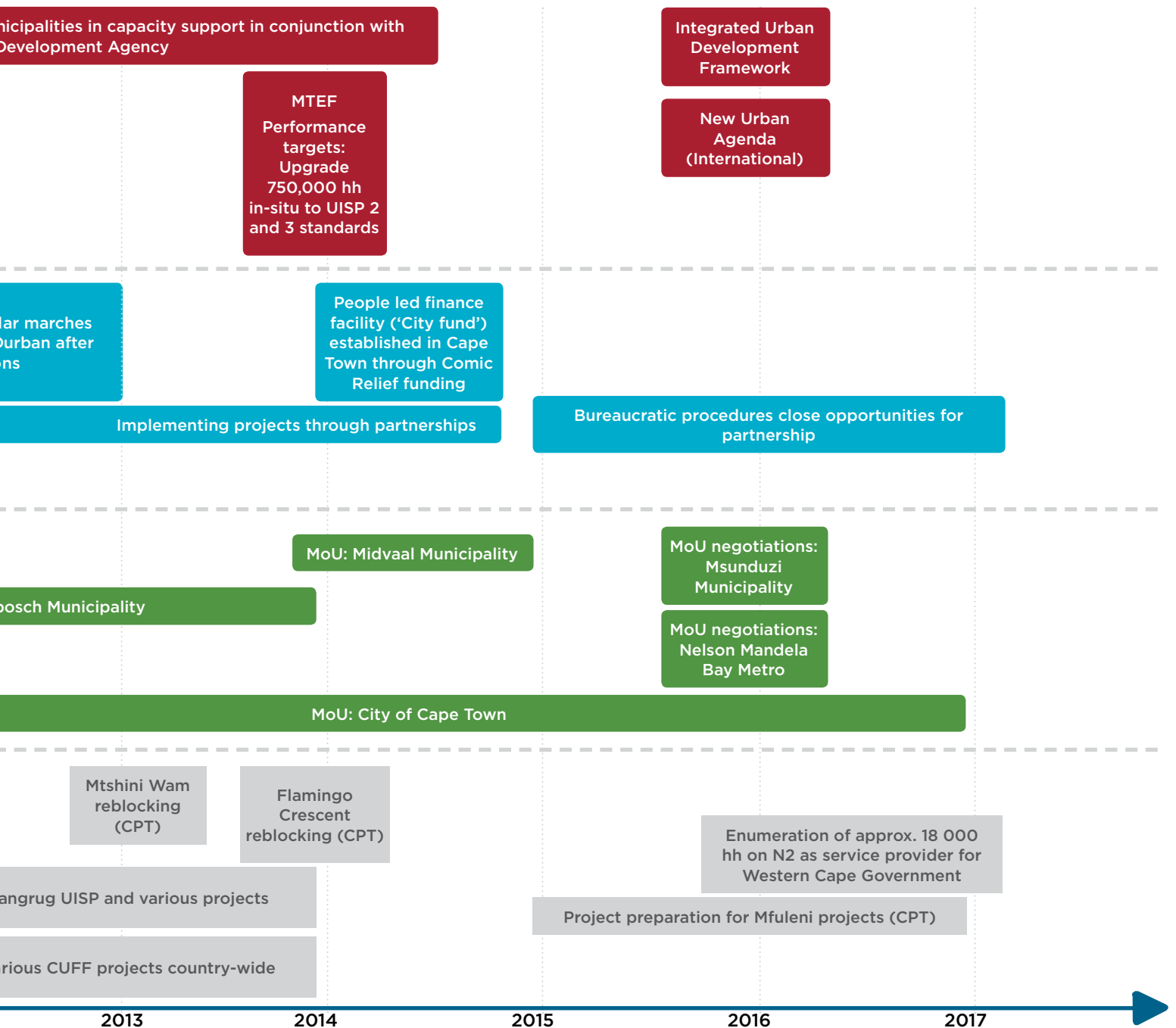
- **Political endorsement and an enabling local policy environment:** A commitment by the mayor and mayoral committee ensures a political climate conducive for building partnerships. Too frequently the demands of communities are brushed off by non-responsive officials who are unwilling to apply national upgrading programmes in their municipal areas. A higher-level political commitment can solve this impasse.
- **Long delays can kill a project or partnership:** There is a need for a schedule of 'quick win' projects to sustain the momentum created by community mobilisation. Hence, in the context of partnerships, project preparation should be swiftly followed by implementation.
- **Building municipal capacity for participatory upgrading:** Participatory approaches to informal settlement upgrading often require a different set of municipal competencies. For this reason, departments dedicated to informal settlements and service provision should be established, with credible field officers liaising between communities and line departments.
- **Experimentation, innovation and change:** Each informal settlement will require a different set of interventions, and for this reason, creativity and innovation should drive a social change process. In some cases in building partnerships, it was necessary to draft special by-laws and legal agreements that could steer the allocation of public resources into upgrading projects.
- **Communication and joint planning:** The establishment of project steering committees and other joint decision-making mechanisms sustains successful partnerships. Partnerships between informal settlement residents and local governments thrive when communities are well organised, conflict can be resolved and credible projects are tabled for funding.

01 A decade in review: building
partnerships for upgrading



ISN coordinators Melanie Johnson (left) and Naeema Swartz (right) with the then mayor of Cape Town at the official launch of reblocking in Flamingo Crescent settlement, done in partnership with the City of Cape Town, 2015.





2. Policy And Implementation Context

South Africa's focus on housing delivery (initiated in 1994) has overshadowed more incremental approaches to improving tenure, basic services, and social and economic development in informal settlements. In 2004, informal settlement upgrading emerged as a policy priority for the South African government. However the application and implementation of available funding instruments related to upgrading, has been poor.

Since 2010, local governments have been compelled to action through the introduction of municipal performance targets. This section outlines the emerging policy consensus to move from housing to human settlements; from state as "provider" to state as "enabler"; and the increasing focus on human dignity, rights, and spatial integration.

2.1. Informal settlements in South Africa

The growth of informal settlements and so-called backyard shacks (informal dwellings) has proliferated in the post-apartheid era, and remains a consistent feature of towns and cities across the country. The number of informal settlements has grown from about 300 in 1994 to 2,700 in 2015⁵. A comparison between national census data of 2001 and 2011 reveals a decrease in informal settlements (in absolute terms) from 1,4 million households (or 12% of the total population) in 2001 to 1,2 million households (or 9% of the total population) in 2011. Backyard shacks, on the other hand, have increased by 4.5% over this period from 460,000 households in 2001 to 710,000 in 2011⁶.

"Most job-seeking migrants moving to cities first live in informal settlements, which are an affordable entry to the city. Many migrants cannot break into the urban labour market and find it difficult to move out of shacks into more formal accommodation. The average residence period within urban informal settlements has increased from about two to four years in the early 1990s to 10 years currently."

National Development Plan, page 105

⁵ NUSP 2017

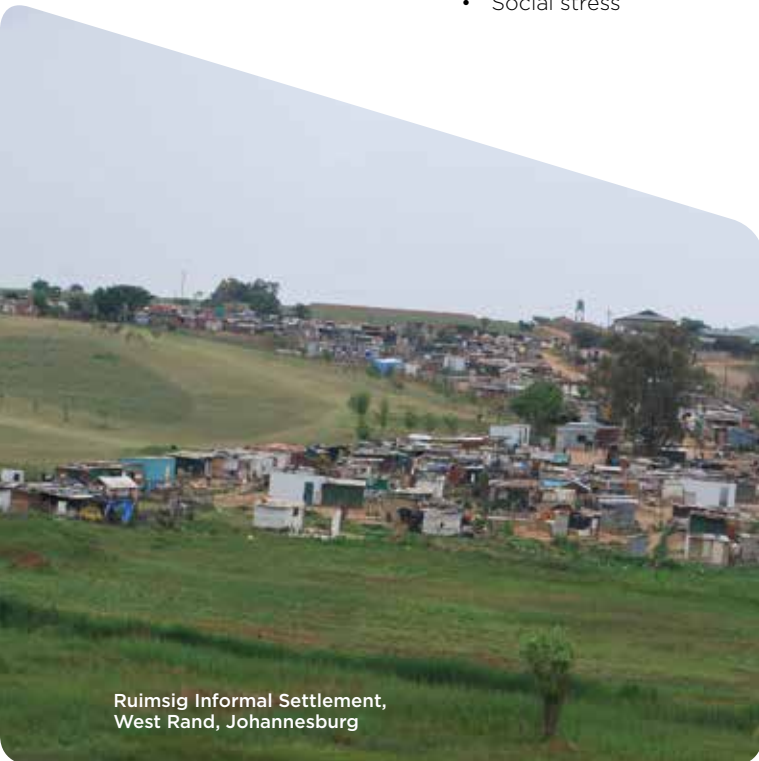
⁶ It is also worth mentioning that 1,2 million households live in rural traditional dwellings.

02 Policy and implementation context

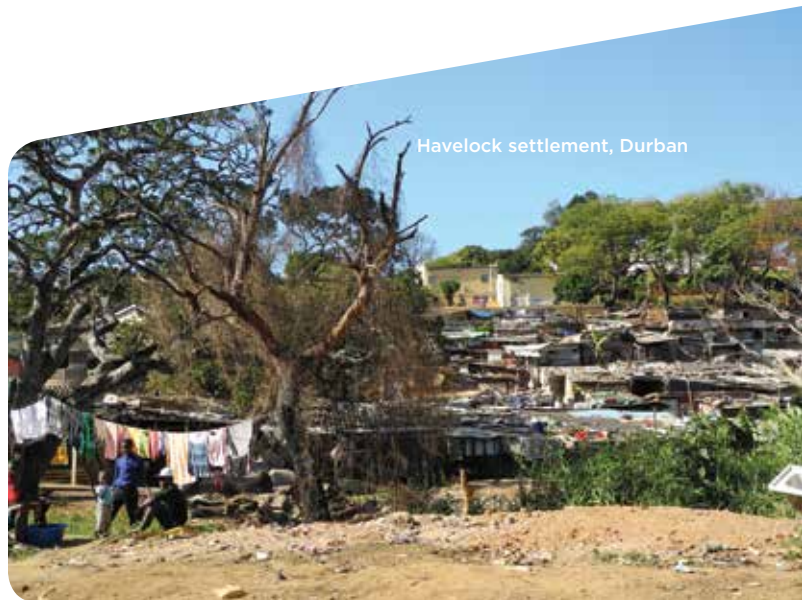
2.2. How do we define informal settlements

Statistics South Africa defines an informal settlement as “an unplanned settlement on land which has not been surveyed or proclaimed as residential, consisting mainly of informal dwellings (shacks).” An informal dwelling is described as “a makeshift structure not erected according to approved architectural plans”. The Upgrading of Informal Settlement Programme (UISP), which corresponds to Part 3 of the 2009 National Housing Code, adds that informal settlements are characterised by:

- Illegality and informality;
- Inappropriate locations;
- Restricted public and private sector investment;
- Poverty and vulnerability; and
- Social stress



Ruimsig Informal Settlement,
West Rand, Johannesburg



Havelock settlement, Durban

Flamingo Crescent informal
settlement before upgrading



Settlements around Khayelitsha
Open Space, Site B, Cape Town





Langrug settlement Franschhoek,
Stellenbosch Municipality



Marlboro warehouses,
Johannesburg



Informal Settlement in Marlboro
Warehouses, Johannesburg

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2.3. What drives the formation of informal settlements?⁷

- **Rural to urban migration, or urbanisation:** Following the repeal of oppressive pass-laws in the late 1980s, urbanisation escalated, and by 1994 an estimated 150,000 new informal dwellings were constructed each year⁸. According to Census 2011, 19% of South Africa's total population moved between provinces during 2001 and 2011, and 63% of the population lives in urban areas. The majority of these moves occurred from rural to more urban provinces (e.g. Eastern Cape or Limpopo to Gauteng or the Western Cape).
- **Natural growth and smaller households:** A further key change between 2001 and 2011 was the increased growth of smaller, one-person households. In 2001, one-person households accounted for 19% of the population, whereas in 2011 this figure increased to 27%. Households with five or more people declined from 33% of the population in 2001 to 25% in 2011. The prevalence of smaller households indicates the presence of more dwellings. In an informal settlement, this also indicated the natural growth of shacks as teenagers and young adults leave their parents' dwellings to establish their own homes.
- **Urbanisation of poverty:** The migration of poor and unemployed people from rural to urban areas drives the formation of informal settlements. In South Africa, as in many other developing countries, much of urban expansion is from informal settlements that are not part of formal planning and infrastructure provision and poorly located in relation to labour markets. Due to unemployment, more and more low-income households have no choice but to live in informal settlements. This creates a pattern of 'structural unemployment' whereby residents are too poor to afford transport to look for work, and remain stuck or immobile in poverty traps. A nuanced understanding of and support for township / informal economies is therefore a vital component of inclusive growth.
- **Poor forward planning and urban management:** Municipalities are ill equipped at anticipating and responding to rural-urban migration, the demand for serviced land, and the growth of informal settlements. This lack of planning and urban management means that existing settlements become very dense and sometimes unfeasible for upgrading. Some settlements in Cape Town reach densities of 400 dwelling units per hectare (du/ha), where the municipality deems a feasible density of 120 du/ha. This ratio is still very dense when compared to the city's average residential density at 17 du/ha.
- **Exclusionary housing markets:** When housing markets do not offer more affordable rental and ownership options, low-income families are unable to find formal accommodation. This situation constitutes market failure; a condition that arises when the market cannot optimally distribute opportunities, and which requires state intervention. However, government has been unable to intervene meaningfully in property markets to deliver more affordable housing. In addition, the rise of social housing is relatively new in South Africa and is still unaffordable to informal settlement residents.

⁷ References to analysis of Census 2001 and 2011 relies on data analysed and presented by Eighty20, available online at <http://www.eighty20.co.za/housing-demand-in-south-africa>

⁸ Statistic cited in HSRC Report, Status of informal settlements targeted for upgrading: implications for policy and impact evaluation. Available online at <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/en/review/hsrc-review-june-2017/upgrading-informal-settlements>

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2.4. Not all informal settlements have the same patterns

ISN and FEDUP have conducted more than 100 enumerations in the past two decades. In 2016, the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements appointed CORC, FEDUP and ISN, (through a competitive tender process) to enumerate 11 informal settlements along the N2 highway as part of the 'Southern Corridor'⁹ initiative. Of a total 20,060 households, 91% or 18,828 households were enumerated. In the enumeration reports, CORC, FEDUP and ISN observed that not all informal settlements have the same patterns.

These findings are closely correlated to the work of Catherine Cross¹⁰ and her colleagues at the Human Science Research Council (HSRC), who conducted randomised surveys in Gauteng and Mpumalanga, and found that there are marked differences between '**core zone shacks**' and '**peripheral zone shacks**' in urban centres.

'Core zone shacks' are likely to be composed of **male-headed households** with a **lower unemployment rate** than shack settlements on the periphery. However, they also cover a **far smaller area** of the sample size and therefore have a higher average household size. Crucially, when questioned about why they had moved to the area, residents in the 'core zone' indicated that **access to jobs was their primary motivation**, while those in peripheral settlements indicated a clear **priority about access to housing**.

⁹ The Southern Corridor Integrated Human Settlements Project (hereafter 'the Southern Corridor') is one of the catalytic projects of the Western Cape Government and is comprised of several projects within the City of Cape Town's area of jurisdiction. The Southern Corridor is a major component of the City of Cape Town's Metro South East Integration Zone (MSEIZ) designated according the guidelines set by National Treasury to access the performance-based, grant Integrated Cities Development Grant (ICDG).

¹⁰ Cross 2010; Görgens and van Donk 2012.

Community Voices

Excerpts from residents about every day life in informal settlements:

"What I like about living here [is that] I don't pay rent to any one. I hustle for myself so that I can have money. I don't work [but] I sell sweets."

"The transport is near but where I work is [also] near so I just walk to my work place."

"We are near malls and schools for our children. We also have a crèche and a chemist."

"During the week it is very quiet but on weekends the rate of crime, drugs, rape and alcohol abuse is very high. The police don't even come to our place to patrol. They only come when we report someone's death."

"In five years to come I want to see development here, people moved from this dirt to a place where there are proper flush toilets and running water taps. We are tired of having to walk a mile to the toilets or taps."

"Our community is too dirty. We get sicknesses and our children are suffering especially in summer time because there are mosquitoes."

Various residents in Cape Town's airport precinct settlements



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2.5. Housing policy and informal settlements

Among the first housing policies formulated in the post-apartheid era, the housing programme constituted a primary tool with which government sought to make towns and cities more inclusive. Since 1994, the government has built 2.8 million new houses, as part of one of the largest housing programmes in the world. However, the construction of mass-scale housing has resulted in numerous problems, including **urban sprawl, the spatial marginalisation of the poor, the absence of a low-income housing market**, and a social phenomenon of **dependency** where residents wait on government to provide housing.

Since then, housing policies have shifted, and government at all tiers has proclaimed that upgrading informal settlements is a priority. Over the past decade significant policy changes have resulted in this focus on in-situ, informal settlement upgrading:

“In the 2016/17 financial year, the Department conducted an enumeration study of eleven informal settlements, which form part of the Southern Corridor. This process has resulted in a detailed research paper for each settlement and speaks to our intention to make decisions, which are relevant and meaningful to the households we serve. As such, the rich data gathered through the study will be used to inform the conceptual frameworks for the Southern Corridor, as well as broader policy development in future.”

Western Cape Government Minister for Human Settlements, Bonginkosi Madikizela
Human Settlements Budget Vote Speech 2017/18, delivered on 31 March 2017

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Breaking New Ground (2004): Introduced in 2004, BNG sought to provide a new strategic and comprehensive plan for housing policy reform. For the first time, informal settlement upgrading was central to housing policy. The BNG policy called for informal settlements to be “urgently integrated into the broader urban fabric to overcome spatial, social and economic exclusion.” BNG also promised to introduce a new funding instrument to support the in-situ upgrading of informal settlements, in line with international best practice. Along with BNG, the concept of social compacts was introduced, a form of a “people’s contract”, for changing the housing delivery paradigm.

National Housing Code (2009 revision): The Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) was introduced in the 2006 National Housing Code, and revised in the 2009 Code. The UISP was deemed as “one of the Government’s prime development initiatives and that upgrading projects should be dealt with on a priority basis.”

Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and Outcome 8 (2010): As part of the Outcomes-based approach of the Zuma-administration, targets for informal settlement upgrading were included in the 2010 – 2014 MTEF. Then-Minister of Human Settlements Mr. Tokyo Sexwale was required to oversee the upgrading of 400,000 well-located households by 2014. Other targets related to informal settlements in Outcome 8 included improving access to basic services: water from 92% to 100%; sanitation from 69% to 100%; refuse removal from 64% to 75%; and electricity from 81% to 92%.

In 2014, the Department of Human Settlements reported achieving the target of upgrading 400,000 well-located households. However, an independent investigation by the World Bank found severe irregularities in the Department’s reporting: the UISP was often used to provide engineering services to green fields sites, rather than to upgrade informal settlements in-situ, i.e. in their current location. Moreover, housing projects were reported as informal settlement projects, because municipalities argued that informal settlement residents were beneficiaries of these housing projects¹¹. The performance target was therefore a poor reflection of municipal engagement with informal settlement upgrading.

National Development Plan: Our Future 2030 (2011): Chapter 8 of the NDP (developed by the National Planning Commission) set an objective of “upgrading all informal settlements on suitable, well-located land by 2030”. The NDP views informal settlements as important entry points to cities, and observes that the residence period in informal settlements increased from 2 – 4 years in the 1990s to 10 years at present. The NDP also observes that the process of securing incremental tenure, infrastructure and shelter upgrades should occur in ‘a participatory and empowering way’. At the same time, the NDP refers to government ambivalence, the lack of appropriate regulations and capacity-building mechanisms as constraints in achieving participatory upgrading.

¹¹ Foster and Gardner 2014

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A structured way of upgrading: The UISP instrument in the Housing Code

The Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) is a government funding programme to approach upgrading in a 'structured manner'. The UISP aims to achieve three outcomes:

- (1) to institute tenure security;
- (2) to promote secure and healthy living environments; and
- (3) to address the social and economic exclusion of the poor.

In Phase 1, community participation is facilitated, followed by interim services in Phase 2 and full engineering services in Phase 3.

Phase 1 provides preliminary planning, geotechnical investigation, land acquisition and a range of community facilitation services, such as conflict resolution, socio-economic surveying, housing support services and information sharing.

In Phase 2, interim services such as water, sanitation, refuse removal and electrification are provided, while settlement planning commences. This includes detailed town planning, land surveying and pegging, contour surveying and civil engineering design. Provisions are also made for relocation and transport costs, as well as social service and welfare support, where needed.

During Phase 3, full services are provided including land rehabilitation, final environmental impact assessment, project enrolment with the National Home Builders Registration Council, and project management and professional fees.

After these three phases, qualifying residents can apply for a housing subsidy in **Phase 4**. Tenure can be achieved through an 'incremental model', starting from administrative recognition to township establishment and formal title to land. Flexible stand sizes and non-conventional sizes (e.g 120 – 250 sqm) are available under the UISP. The UISP emphasises providing social and economic amenities, which municipalities should include in their budgets or apply for funding from the Social and Economic Amenities Programme.

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Establishing the National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP)(2010): The NUSP was established within the Department of Human Settlements' Programme Delivery work stream and received funding in the MTEFs of 2010 – 2014 and 2015 – 2018. The DoHS admits that NUSP was created after an “assessment of the UISP in 2009 indicated that there were significant blockages in the upgrading of informal settlements despite the wide array of policies and programmes in place”¹².

Between 2010 – 2014, NUSP delivered technical support to 54 municipalities with a focus on rapid assessment and categorisation of informal settlements, formulation of municipal informal settlement strategies, systematic resource planning towards such strategies and, in fewer cases, detailed settlement level plans, informal economy and livelihood strategies, and protocols for engaging communities. In 2011/12, the SA SDI Alliance was actively involved in NUSP tenders in Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni, but after procurement changed to a Professional Resource Team¹³, limited options were available to engage government through NUSP tenders.

Ministerial Sanitation Task Team (MSTT) (2011 – 2012): The MSTT was established by Minister Sexwale in 2011 to investigate the scale of the sanitation problem in terms of its nature and its geographic spread, i.e. urban or rural, and identify irregularities and malpractices. Mrs. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was appointed as the commissioner, and Patrick Magebhula Hunsley of the ISN was also on the panel. The MSTT had extensive engagements with ISN and FEDUP affiliated communities in urban and rural areas in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and North West provinces. The task team coincided with the emergence of the Strategic Infrastructure Project (SIP) number 18 – Water and Sanitation, and recommended eradicating the ‘bucket system’ in South Africa.

Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) targets (renewed 2015):

In the following MTEF for 2015 – 2019, the Department of Human Settlements was required to upgrade 750,000 households according to the service standards outlined in Phases 2 and 3 of the UISP. This includes interim services such as water, sanitation and electricity, interim environmental studies and town planning layouts.

Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) (2016): The IUDF, alongside the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA), is an important policy framework that guides urban development in South Africa. The IUDF calls for the “acceleration of informal settlement upgrading”, and that attention should be given to better designed, more safe, and dignified settlements.

¹² DHS 2014:24

¹³ Professional Resource Teams are permissible in procurement of professional services when instituted. In the case of NUSP and the Department of Human Settlements, slow procurement and approval processes by the department and a lack of sufficient human resources to manage the NUSP effectively prompted the department to rectify this. A PRT consisting of 20 (mostly engineering) companies are preferred suppliers to the department on a ‘request for proposal’ basis, rather than on a basis of issuing open tenders. The options for engagement were therefore limited.

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New Urban Agenda (2016): In the lead-up to Habitat III¹⁴ in October 2016, the Pretoria Declaration on Informal Settlements¹⁵ played a key role in prioritising informal settlements in the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III. Rose Molokoane, National Coordinator of FEDUP and SDI Vice President, was appointed as Co-Chairperson of the World Urban Campaign Steering Committee alongside Sandeep Chachra of Action Aid India. Both the Pretoria Declaration and the New Urban Agenda require national governments to progressively improve services and support the economies of informal settlements.

"This is OUR agenda. I only wish this whole venue was full of slum dwellers. We call for specific mention in the New Urban Agenda of the urgent need to combat the spatial, social and economic exclusion of informal settlements and the informal sector in cities and to mobilise the requisite resources to address this. This will require a New Urban Agenda that commits itself to support the process of organising communities to partner effectively with governments and other urban actors. We must find ways of institutionalising these partnerships in the decision making and planning process."

Rose Molokoane, FEDUP coordinator and SDI vice president at Habitat III



¹⁴ the United Nations conference on housing and sustainable urban development that takes place every 20 years

¹⁵ Read the Pretoria Declaration online at <https://unhabitat.org/pretoria-declaration-on-informal-settlements/>

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2.6. Participation is central

Community ‘empowerment’ and ‘participation’ is a central theme throughout successive policy changes that were introduced in the last decade. However, government evaluation of its own practice indicates that informal settlement communities are still not adequately involved in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of upgrading plans¹⁶.

The policy changes, although constrained in terms of capacity to implement, provide a progressive framework in which the role of communities is centrally recognised. Community-led informal settlement upgrading implies the central participation of residents in the planning and implementation of settlement improvement projects. For example, at the project level, the UISP recognises that a community has “deep rooted knowledge of its development needs and preferences” and that this knowledge should be “harnessed to ensure that township design ... is targeted at satisfying the actual needs and preferences”¹⁷.

To this effect, funding is available to support community involvement and 3% of the total project cost is reserved for social facilitation, which includes activities such as socio economic surveying / profiling, conflict resolution, facilitated community participation, and housing support services.

However, such funding allocations are rarely honoured in upgrading projects, and are typically consumed in the overall engineering budgets. Through its work, the Alliance is placing more pressure on government officials to recognise the benefits of community participation and intermediary services offered by NGOs. If such allocations are honoured, projects are more likely to build organising capacity in communities, improve project management and minimise the likelihood of project disruption due to protest action.

The next section unpacks community-led practices for upgrading. These practices are tools that informal settlement communities linked to FEDUP and ISN have used to organise their communities in terms of settlement governance, identifying priorities, project preparation, planning and implementation. In section 4, the discussion focuses on partnerships in action, as the context for these community organising tools.

¹⁶ World Bank 2011; WCG 2014.

¹⁷ UISP Policy, page 30

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The Process of Informal Settlement Upgrading



3. Community-led Practices For Upgrading

As an approach, in-situ upgrading recognises existing power relations between actors, social networks and livelihoods in a settlement. It is critical to engage with these actors, existing patterns and logics to facilitate a meaningful, community-centred interaction. Successful informal settlement upgrading should therefore be marked by the central endorsement and participation of residents. This is critical as upgrading projects often involve the internal relocation of some residents to open space for infrastructure development such as roads, water and sanitation reticulation and service points, parks and facilities.

This section outlines the tools and processes used by ISN and FEDUP affiliated communities in informal settlement upgrading initiatives. Below, the associated flow chart of activities and general descriptions provides context for the different stages of partnership formation, discussed in Section 4.

3.1 A note on social facilitation

Each upgrading initiative of the Alliance consists first and foremost of deep social facilitation and engagement. After facilitating initial contact, community mobilising and organising takes place through savings, data collection (settlement profiling, enumerating and mapping) and peer-to-peer learning exchanges to other community-led initiatives.

Throughout, deep social facilitation is crucial. Through the upgrading practices outlined below, urban poor communities engage with relevant partners and negotiate around self-identified priorities. For FEDUP and ISN-linked communities, informal settlement upgrading is not an end in itself but a means to challenging patterns of exclusion and realising cities and structures that prioritise and engage urban poor residents as equals.

3.2 Making initial contact and forming community committees

There are a number of avenues through which an informal settlement community establishes contacts or initiates upgrading. Firstly, a **leadership committee** representing the interests of a majority or part of the community can make contact with the Alliance through a Federation savings group present in the settlement. Alternatively, a leadership committee may hear about ISN from other leadership committees, neighboring settlements or area structures, or be contacted by ISN coordinators. Secondly, a community may come into contact with the Alliance through the **elected ward councilor** who may have engaged with the Alliance in a particular subregion of the municipality or have encountered the Alliance in the context of a partnership with the municipality. Thirdly, the **general meeting** in a settlement might request the capacitation of leadership networks in their settlement.

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Community organising also involves general governance matters in the settlement. When leadership networks in a settlement are established or capacitated the leadership body becomes responsible for convening general meetings, identifying stakeholders, mediating and at times resolving conflict. Responsibilities also include communicating and establishing core values and beliefs such as community-led action or engagement with mobilising tools of the Alliance such as savings or data collection. In many settlements the presence of other organised bodies (religious, political or issue based etc.) can act as a counter balance to the leadership committee. The presence of Federation savings groups, in particular, establishes an alternative accountability base and opens avenues for women to establish themselves as leaders in traditionally male dominated leadership structures in South African settlements. A development committee in a settlement creates a **strong local resource base** that can set the agenda and identify relevant interests.



Flamingo Crescent
steering committee in
Cape Town

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Community leadership traits...

The ISN seeks to strengthen and support already existing leadership structures. In cases where leadership is contested, ISN seeks to mediate opposing leadership structures in order to find an amicable solution. This does not always happen, and in some cases, the Alliance, through ISN and FEDUP has had to withdraw from communities until disputes are resolved internally.

Is there a recipe for a perfect leader? The answer is no. There are characteristics that FEDUP and ISN value in potential community forums:

Representative: The leader is endorsed by the majority of residents as their representative. Ideally, the leader will also have a good relationship with the elected councilor.

Good communication: The leader is able to listen well, articulate the aspirations and needs of various actors in a community, and convey information.

Confidence: The leader should be able to act confidently when dealing with municipal officials.

Value-based: The leader should place the interests of the community before her/his own.

Non-partisan: Leaders should not be partisan towards any group based on political ideology, religion, race, language or culture.

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A view into different types of community committees

Leadership committee: The leadership committee convenes general meetings, identifies and communicates with stakeholders, mediates and at times resolves conflict. When in collaboration with the Alliance, responsibilities also include communicating and establishing core values and beliefs such as community-led action or engagement with mobilising tools such as savings or data collection.

Block committee: Block committees are required to coordinate savings and data collection activities. Depending on the size of the settlement, a block consists of about 8-10% of the total settlement, but groups larger than 100 are more difficult to manage, and in very large settlements a number of blocks might make up a cluster committee. Block committees are demarcated and leaders are democratically elected.

Project Steering Committee (PSC): PSCs represent the majority of the community during the preparation and implementation phases of a project. They are usually elected by majority vote during a general meeting. In small settlements, PSCs report back to the leadership committee directly or to the community at large during a general meeting. In large settlements, the PSC will report back to block committees. Report backs include progress on projects, and plans for engagements with the Alliance and/or councilors and officials of the municipality.

ISN sub regional forums: Leaders (typically serving on the PSC) of individual settlements are grouped into sub-regional forums, which form the backbone of the ISN. For example, 10 – 20 settlements might be representative of a larger neighbourhood, and at regional forums developments affecting all residents can be discussed, and approaches can be strategised.

Partnership meetings: At partnership meetings, ISN regional and subregional coordinators facilitate engagements between the municipality, and informal settlement leaders centered around the respective community's development plans. At partnership meetings, officials of relevant line departments, field officers, councilors, and CORC staff evaluate the project and plan what technical support is needed to implement projects.

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3.3 Mobilising through saving

While ISN is issue based and aims to network communities at the city level, FEDUP's experience comes to bear when setting up savings schemes in a settlement. At the end of September 2018 there were 657 saving schemes in the FEDUP network. Savings groups play a key role in establishing an interpersonal support base for residents, especially to women. They are also spaces in which alternative leadership and accountability bases are developed and organising strategies and skills are acquired. As the saying goes, "we do not collect money, we collect people" (See *About the SA SDI Alliance* for more on FEDUP savings).

In informal settlement upgrading projects, the Alliance emphasises the importance of savings contributions from residents as a means of measuring the level of commitment for an upgrading initiative in a settlement. Ideally, these community savings contributions should go hand in hand with establishing daily savings groups that will continue meeting after project implementation has been completed. In the experience of the Alliance, this has rarely been the case. The lack of deep-rooted savings groups after project completion has meant that residents battle to establish secure livelihoods (if any) for themselves nor have a sufficient social support base to address individual or household concerns. Nevertheless, project linked savings contributions in Alliance upgrading projects, have reflected residents' sense of ownership and pride in their structures or houses with very few willing to sell their houses as opposed to those who receive free houses from government.



FEDUP treasurers at savings meeting in North West



DAILY SAVINGS BOOK

DATE		DAILY SAVINGS		WITH-DRAWALS	SAVINGS BALANCE	SIGNATURE MEMBER	COLLECTOR
DAY	DATE	R	C				
Thursday	11/02/2015						
Week 1 Sub-totals					R112.00 R114.00	H. [Signature]	[Signature]
Thursday	19/02/15	2	00				
Week 2 Sub-totals					R114.00 R116.00	H. [Signature]	[Signature]
Thursday	26/02/15	2	00				
Week 3 Sub-totals					R116.00 R118.00	A. [Signature]	[Signature]
Week 4 Sub-totals					R118.00 R120.00	A. [Signature]	[Signature]

Example of daily savings book used by FEDUP savings groups

03 Community-led practices for upgrading

3.4. Mobilising through data collection

Many times the first contact between the Alliance and a new community is the activity of **profiling**, which consists of a **top-level scan or overview of the settlement**, in which community representatives capture all the important features of a settlement such as location (along with GPS coordinates), history, access to services (social, transport, health, safety), and emergencies (fire, flooding, evictions).

An enumeration is a more in-depth household-level study. Enumerations are conducted as a **community-initiated and run census**. Data is collected on socio-economic conditions, income and expenditure, demographics, level of services, and development aspirations. Organised communities elect an enumeration team who interacts with the Alliance who trains community enumerators.

At general meetings, residents discuss and prioritise the breadth and depth of the types of knowledge they want to capture, e.g. be it vulnerable groups, safety and security, health and wellness, and so forth. This data is collected at the household level, analysed and presented in a report that gives a comprehensive overview of the settlement.

During enumerations, the spatial boundaries are often mapped out along existing footpaths, areas of interest (e.g. areas with religious structures, crèches, shebeens), environmental dimensions, and so forth. After residents agree on the spatial boundaries and allocate enumerators to these blocks, residents hand draw detailed spatial maps of the blocks and measure structures.

CORC supports community members to digitise these maps and geo-tag enumeration data to each structure. The GIS maps are then printed and disseminated, catalysing a lively discussion about the key areas of intervention.

The data also becomes a key mobilisation point when residents actively discuss and interpret the meaning of their data, which becomes the cornerstone for devising evidence-based community development plans.



Capturing household level data during enumeration, Vukuzenzele, Cape Town.

03 Community-led practices for upgrading

3.5 Mobilising and learning exchanges

The most important learning vehicle in the South African Alliance – and for that matter all community alliances associated with SDI – is the **direct exchange of information, experience and skills** between urban poor communities. The exchange takes place at settlement level, city level, between cities and across regions.

To advance experiential learning, **new leaders accompanied by experienced ones** visit settlements and dialogue on issue-based development solutions. An exchange can either be directed at introducing new settlements to the Alliance's core activities, or for established settlements to share information, experience and skills. Managing exchanges also advances the development of local capacity. Often **government officials accompany these exchanges**, and a level-playing field is created with the focus on upgrading and improving living conditions.

3.6 Design and layout

Data collection is followed by a design and layout phase in which FEDUP and ISN-linked communities co-produce plans with alternative layouts and designs of their settlement. Spatial planning is the basis of design and layout considerations for longer-term growth. Priorities for development are therefore evidence-based and enjoy broad based support by the community, if the process is well facilitated.

To meet the demands of this resource consuming activity, CORC professional staff offers support around digitisation. In addition, the Alliance has found a partner in **academic institutions to support informal settlement communities** with establishing plans for development. Based on these, the municipality is required to formalise town planning, engineering services, and surveying.

Informal settlement residents therefore use their community development plans (based on the data collected) and their organising power (established through savings groups) to engage their local municipalities and other relevant actors to form partnerships around budget timelines and project preparation.



Structure numbering during enumeration in Vukuzenzele, Cape Town



Community planning an alternative layout in Santini, Cape Town

03 Community-led practices for upgrading

3.7. Project preparation and implementation

While the municipality follows (often lengthy) internal processes, the Alliance and ISN-linked communities engage in their own project preparation process that includes costing and materials, submitting a community development plan to the Alliance's internal people's led finance facility, collecting relevant saving contributions for individual structures or community facilities and establishing community construction management teams.

Whether upgrading includes a community facility, installation of basic services, settlement reconfiguration (reblocking), area wide upgrading, drainage or water and sanitation, implementation and engagement with partners is managed by residents of the community, with support from FEDUP, ISN and CORC.

While the Alliance approach to community-led upgrading includes distinct activities, processes and stages (as outlined above), these are not linear or mutually exclusive. Instead, these activities and engagements often run concurrently and are interdependent. In the same vein, the process is not smooth or seamless. Technical, social and bureaucratic challenges and tensions arise throughout. Deep, community-led social facilitation is critical for a nuanced understanding of dynamics between different actors and interest groups in a settlement. Who is more equipped for this task than informal settlement residents themselves?

For FEDUP and ISN, the social challenges that arise during community organising and mobilising are expected. The challenges and obstacles that emerge during project preparation and implementation, however, often present a deeper concern as they have the potential to bring an upgrading project to a standstill (See Chapter 4). Such challenges include:

- Misalignment between municipal timing / budget cycles for implementation and community readiness;
- Weak partnerships with local municipalities;
- Inexperienced municipal project managers.

Once implementation has occurred, Alliance projects serve as:

1. **A practical demonstration** of how an organised community and committed municipality are the top prerequisites for successful, sustainable upgrades that are centered on the priorities of residents;
2. **A capacity building experience** that builds spaces of social support through women's led saving groups and equips residents with the ability to continuously update the settlement's data. The project also increases skills for self-organising, addressing challenges and pursuing future projects in the settlement such as housing.
3. **Learning centres for other communities and municipalities** to see and participate in examples of upgrading and find solutions to their peculiar circumstances.

03 Community-led practices for upgrading

What is re-blocking?

The South African SDI Alliance uses “re-blocking” to refer to the reconfiguration and repositioning of shacks in very dense informal settlements in accordance with a community-drafted spatial framework. The aim is to better utilise the spaces in informal settlements to allow for better service provision. Moreover, re-blocking is done in “clusters” identified by the community, and during implementation, “courtyards” are created to ensure a safer environment for women and children via neighborhood watches (all shacks face the courtyard), productive places (such as washing lines, food gardens). This generally provides space for local government to install better public services and infrastructure.

To date, the largest re-blocking project comprised 250 households, and is therefore not a solution for every settlement. The Alliance is continually looking for ways to partially re-structure a settlement to allow for service delivery, access and circulation, and longer term development. In larger settlements, this concept can be applied to ‘superblocks’, a ‘street-led approach to upgrading’, and the prioritisation of public open spaces and associated road and streets networks. These ‘structuring’ elements can set up a settlement for longer term development.



Flamingo before reblocking.



Flamingo after reblocking.

4. A Decade Of Partnerships With Local Governments

This section shares the experience of informal settlement communities and the SA SDI Alliance of entering partnerships with municipalities. The focus is largely on Cape Town and Stellenbosch, where the most significant progress was made.

Why are communities seeking partnerships with metropolitan and local governments?

- To influence policy and draw government closer;
- To share power of decision making and engage on an equal level;
- To play an equal part during implementation on the ground;
- To make better use of government funding; and
- To learn from each other

“Government can learn from us how to mobilise communities, how to collect data, how to work with communities as active participants. Development is about building people first, before building projects.”

“We can/need to learn from government about their processes (budgets, planning, implementation, rules, regulations, by-laws, norms & standards). This will also help us recognise when government gives us wrong information.”

FEDUP and ISN reflections at a national gathering in 2017

04 A decade of partnerships with local governments

Key outcomes of the partnership with City of Cape Town

The partnership with the City of Cape Town is possibly the best example of formalised collaboration between communities associated with ISN and FEDUP and a local municipality. The partnership is characterised by:

Cooperation agreement signed between the Alliance and the City of Cape Town

Initially, 23 settlements identified for upgrading

6 settlements reblocked, 5 community facilities, 2,000 fire detectors, and 7 awards received (World Design Capital, Impumelelo Social Innovations Award, etc.).

A people's-led finance facility set up (with funding from Comic Relief)

Policy impact in the adoption of the re-blocking by-law and the budgeting for projects in the Integrated Development Plan, Integrated Human Settlements Framework, and Built Environment Performance Plan

Awarded a tender through Western Cape Government to enumerate 11 settlements with a total of 20,060 households (of which 18,282 or 91% were enumerated).

R 10 million pledge from Western Cape Department of Human Settlements towards informal settlement upgrading.

As of 2018, regional forums with the City of Cape Town's director of Informal Settlements and Backyarders and associated department.

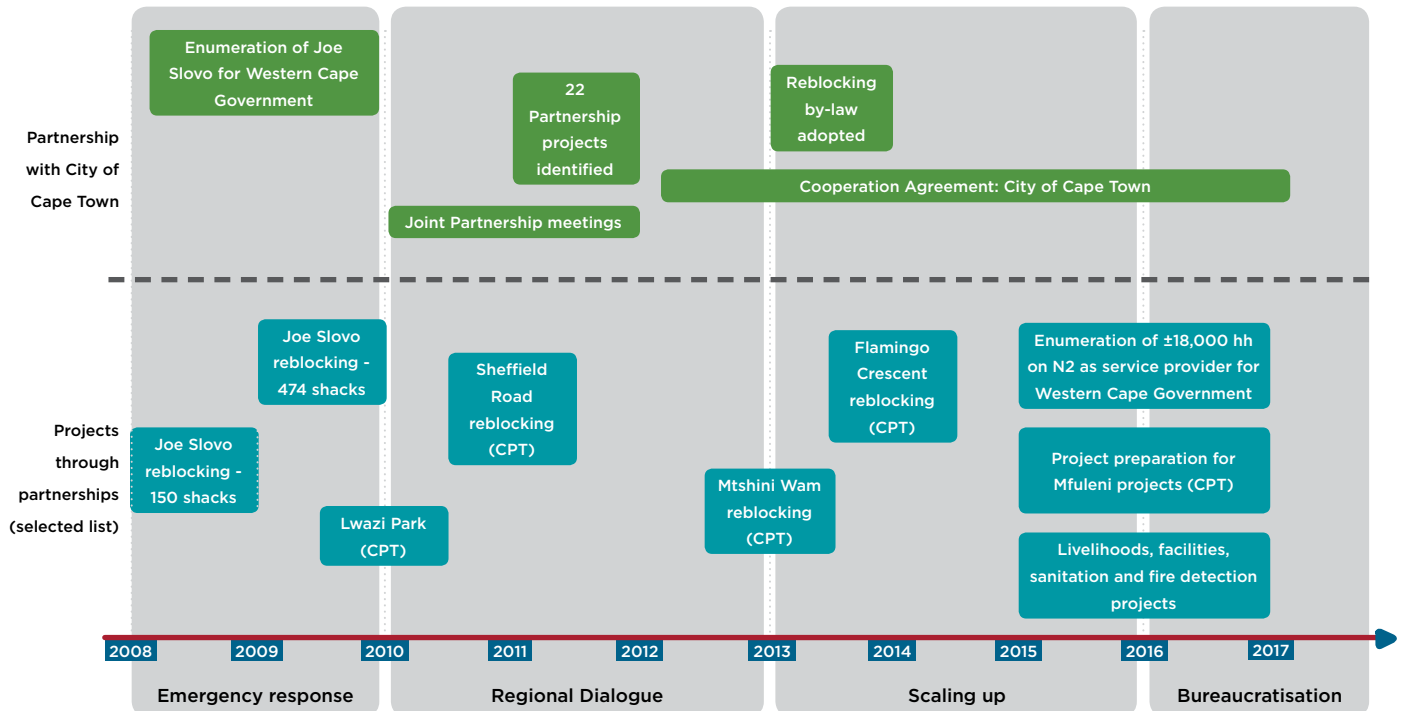
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4.1 City of Cape Town

Partnerships phases: The partnership with the City of Cape Town can be understood in four loosely defined phases.

- 1) Emergencies prompt responses (2008 – 2009);
- 2) Partnership formation through regional dialogues (2010 – 2012)
- 3) Scaling up implementation (2013 – 2015); and
- 4) Bureaucratisation of processes (2016 to current).

Partnership phases with the City of Cape Town



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1) Emergencies prompt responses (2008 – 2009)

The Alliance's first contact with the City of Cape Town regarding informal settlement upgrading was compelled through an emergency. In February 2008, a fire destroyed 150 shacks in Joe Slovo informal settlement in Langa. This community was part of the N2 Gateway project¹⁸, coordinated between National, Provincial and Local spheres of government. Rather than face the fate of many residents being relocated to peripheral Temporary Relocation Areas, residents affected by the fire reached out to FEDUP leaders for support. Together with iKhayalami and CORC, the community rebuilt their structures in a new layout plan drafted to ensure better use of space (such as walkways and shared open spaces).

One year later, on 9 March 2009, another fire broke out, more devastating and destructive than the first, razing 474 shacks to the ground. The Disaster Management department of the City of Cape Town responded by dropping off emergency kits (containing zinc sheets, nails, wood poles and insulating plastic materials), as in most disaster situations. However, the community decided to take a few days to work out a new layout plan for the settlement. During a mass meeting with 300 – 400 people the community discussed the benefits and drawbacks of reblocking and decided to go ahead. The disaster kits were used to reconstruct the residents' dwellings according to a layout plan. CORC's technical team supported the community to measure and peg out sites.

The activities of Joe Slovo residents, CORC and iKhayalami drew the attention of the Western Cape Department of Housing (as it was then called) and the City of Cape Town, who commissioned the SA SDI Alliance to enumerate Joe Slovo settlement in 2009. This primary data collection would act as a first step towards partnership formation.

¹⁸ The N2 Gateway project was a large-scale mega-project aimed at delivering 15,000 houses in New Rest, Delft 7-9 and Delft Symphony, Boystown and Joe Slovo. The project commenced in 2005, but has been criticised widely for poor management, infighting, and violation of human rights (by relocating affected residents to far off Temporary Relocation Areas such as Tsunami/Delft and Blikkiesdorp TRAs). To date, 650 of 2,600 double story-housing units planned have been delivered.

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2) Partnership formation through regional coordination (2010 – 2012)

After Joe Slovo informal settlement was enumerated and reblocked, a loose agreement was secured in 2009 between the Alliance, iKhayalami and the Informal Settlement Unit in the City of Cape Town's Housing Department. Monthly partnership meetings were held in each of the four housing regions in the city: South / Central; Strand / Khayelitsha; Eastern; and Blaauwberg. Community leaders met with Principal Field Officers (PFO) and senior engineers in the Urbanisation department and discussed development plans, enumeration results, and governance issues. The commitment to collaborate around service delivery ensured the attendance of a number of relevant departments such as Water and Sanitation, Electricity, Parks, and Roads and Storm water.

This radical departure from service delivery consultations towards much deeper engagement was a momentous moment. However, the technical engineering standards that are required in informal settlement upgrading projects often meant that community plans were deemed unfeasible. The lack of negotiation meant that the partnership was almost derailed in the early stages. Communities accessed funding for projects through the Community Upgrading Financing Facility (CUFF) – housed in uTshani Fund – and two projects were implemented during this time: Lwazi Park in Gugulethu (37 households) and Sheffield Road (150 households) in Philippi.

The city council acknowledged the emerging partnership (still not formalised at this point) in its 2010/11 Annual Report¹⁹ when it reported that “an informal settlements strategy was completed, and outlines, among others, issues relating to tenure, partnerships and incremental upgrades. Partnership structures were formed between the company Independent Site Management (ISM), the Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC) and the City of Cape Town to improve informal settlements in Cape Town incrementally.”

The Lwazi Park and Joe Slovo upgrading initiatives became ‘learning centres’ for the Alliance in Cape Town. At these ‘learning centres’, other communities across Cape Town who were linked to the Alliance, were able to learn from communities who successfully completed enumerations, savings, partnership meetings, and project implementation. These experiences initiated a number of ‘spin-off’ projects. For example, in Barcelona settlement in the Airport Precinct, families were required to relocate. The Alliance facilitated a design studio with Master students of the University of Cape Town's Planning department to develop ‘spatial frameworks’ for the longer term upgrading of Barcelona, which is constructed on an abandoned landfill site. In Barcelona, extensive land rehabilitation is required, because the “spongy” land does not support structures like pipes or sewers.

19 City of Cape Town, 2011:62.

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"We as the ISN encourage partnerships where communities are part of the process," says former ISN leader Vuyani Mnyango. "The Barcelona residents and the students worked closely together on the ground, gathering this information, so it can be used for future development."

De-densifying Barcelona in the Airport Precinct and relocating to Lwazi Park in Gugulethu

Commencement to completion: January to May 2011

Location: Lotus River Canal near the N2 freeway in Gugulethu, Cape Town.

Project outcome: Successful relocation of 38 families from Barcelona settlement to Lwazi Park and opening space for sanitation services in Barcelona settlement.

Project partners: SA SDI Alliance, Roads and Storm Water Department, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)

Context: 38 families were required to be relocated from a flooded area in Barcelona settlement, home to 2,800 families. The department of Roads and Storm Water identified land next to the Lotus River Canal, which is less than 100 meters from Barcelona settlement. The city first procured the services of a consultant to oversee this process, but relations broke down and the layout plan only accommodated 26 families. The Alliance facilitated the engagement with 38 affected families, developed a layout plan, and managed the project of resettling. All 38 families successfully relocated to Lwazi Park on land made available by the city council.

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Project description: Drawing from the experience of reblocking at Joe Slovo, Langa, the community designed the layout plan according to their requirements and priorities. The consultant proposed a simple grid layout scheme, which the families rejected. The new plan incorporated:

- Working with the existing contour of the land and existing walkways to structure roads and open spaces.
- Different plot sizes according to the needs of families and single people.
- Placement of toilets in central locations to avoid vandalism by outsiders.

Future development potential: The community worked with 4th year architectural students of CPUT in a design studio in 2015 to explore the potential of formalising the settlement with different housing typologies. Initial design suggests that it is feasible to upgrade Lwazi Park to a small neighborhood. The community is considering self-build options.

Despite the progress of projects in Lwazi Park and Joe Slovo, it was still difficult to achieve coordination between relevant departments in the City, which meant that projects stalled. In an attempt to breathe new life into the partnership, the City and Alliance agreed in February 2012 to focus on 22 pilot partnership projects. The geographical spread of these projects was true to the need of the City, with eleven projects in the South / Central area, and six in the Khayelitsha / Strand area. The projects included consolidation and relocation of settlements (20%), formalisation and subdivision (40%), and reblocking (40%). Settlements ranged from very small (7 households) to considerably large (1,284 households).

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"I have been walking this road with the Alliance for two years. I have shared the pain and I have shared the joy," said Mzwandile Sokupa, then-director of the Cape Town municipality's informal settlements department. "We bring all resources to the table, in terms of people, in terms of funding, in terms of will ... We are also saying, 'nothing for you without you.'"



Lwazi Park Canal, during design
studio with CPUT, 2015

04 A decade of partnerships with local governments

Re-blocking Sheffield Road, Philippi

Commencement to completion: September 2010 to January 2012

Location: Sheffield Road informal settlement located on a road reserve in Philippi.

Project outcome: In-situ re-blocking of 167 structures, open spaces, 1:1 water and sanitation services and electricity was provided.

Project partners: SA SDI Alliance, iKhayalami, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

Context: Residents of Philippi occupied a road reserve on Sheffield Road in the early 2000s. The community was part of regional dialogues initiated by the ISN in 2009 and 2010, and demonstrated interest in experimenting with the reblocking of shacks to improve water and sanitation service levels.

Project description: Reasons for poor service delivery in Sheffield Road included the density and poor spatial configuration of shacks. In September 2009, Sheffield Road leaders and community volunteers enumerated the settlement, and engaged the city on re-blocking plans. Residents found 15 working toilets for 167 families and that the settlement was prone to flooding. In response, the community engaged the ISN to support with re-blocking the settlement. The re-blocking would commence in blocks of 10-12 structures. The first cluster was completed by September 2010.

The new structures – made from Inverted Box Rib (IBR) material – were funded through the CUFF fund. However, 20% of top-structure cost was required as a contribution from residents. At the time, the City council revised its minimum standards and, where possible, sought to install water and sanitation services at a 1:1 standard (rather than one toilet per five families and 1 tap to 25 families, as national standards indicated). The city was therefore interested to test this new level of service provision in an incremental upgrading project.

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The delay in community savings and installation of water and sanitation services by the City council drew the overall project out over the next 18 months (i.e. September 2010 to January 2012). Sheffield Road was the first example of in-situ re-blocking paired with enhanced services in the City. In both Joe Slovo and Lwazi Park cases, reblocking occurred on cleared land following fire disaster and green fields land in the respectively.



**Sheffield Road
after re-blocking**

The momentum of projects on the ground compelled the new mayor at the time, Alderman Patricia De Lille to formalise the partnership between the City and the Alliance by means of a Cooperation Agreement for the improvement of informal settlements and backyard precincts in Cape Town, which was signed on 19 April 2012 at a meeting in Vygieskraal, a settlement of 300 households located in Belgravia neighbourhood in Athlone. The partnership secured mayoral support and would be honored by the inter-departmental commitment to 22 project schedules and guided by the following values:

1. Create a shared community vision of the future, especially with regard to informal settlement upgrading and backyard rehabilitation;
2. Identify and prioritise key issues, thereby facilitating immediate measures to alleviate urgent problems;
3. Support community-based analysis of local issues, including the comprehensive review of long-term, systemic problems that confront particular service systems and the need to integrate different service strategies so that they are mutually supportive;
4. Develop action plans for addressing key issues, drawing from the experiences and innovations of diverse local groups;
5. Mobilise community-wide resources to meet service needs, including the joint implementation of sustainable development projects; and
6. Increase public support for municipal activities and local understanding of municipal development needs and constraints.

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3) Scaling up implementation (2013 – 2015)

Two significant projects were implemented during this period: Mtshini Wam (250 households) located in Milnerton in 2013, and Flamingo Crescent (104 households) located in an industrial area in Lansdowne in 2014/15. A smaller settlement called Kuku Town (22 households) was also reblocked in 2014, but is not featured in this publication. There are remarkable differences between Mtshini Wam and Flamingo Crescent. After the re-blocking of Mtshini Wam, issues related to the low water table still caused flooding while in Flamingo Crescent, paved roads and storm water drains mitigated flooding. What explains the difference in service provision levels in these two projects? The adoption of the re-blocking policy by the City of Cape Town in 2013²⁰.

Re-blocking at Mtshini Wam and options for consolidation housing

Project preparation: 2010 - 2012

Implementation commencement to completion: May 2012 to March 2013

Location: Located in a storm water catchment area between RDP houses in Joe Slovo Park, Milnerton.

Project outcome: In-situ re-blocking of 250 structures, 45 short term employment opportunities via the Expanded Public Works Programme, open spaces and roads, 1:1 water and sanitation services (in 80% of cases) and achieving more secure tenure.

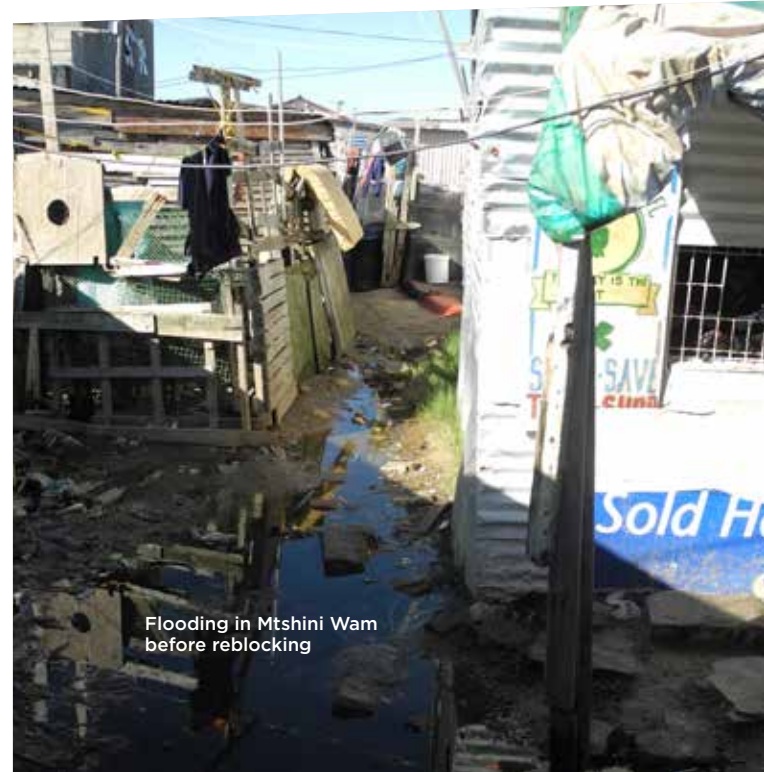
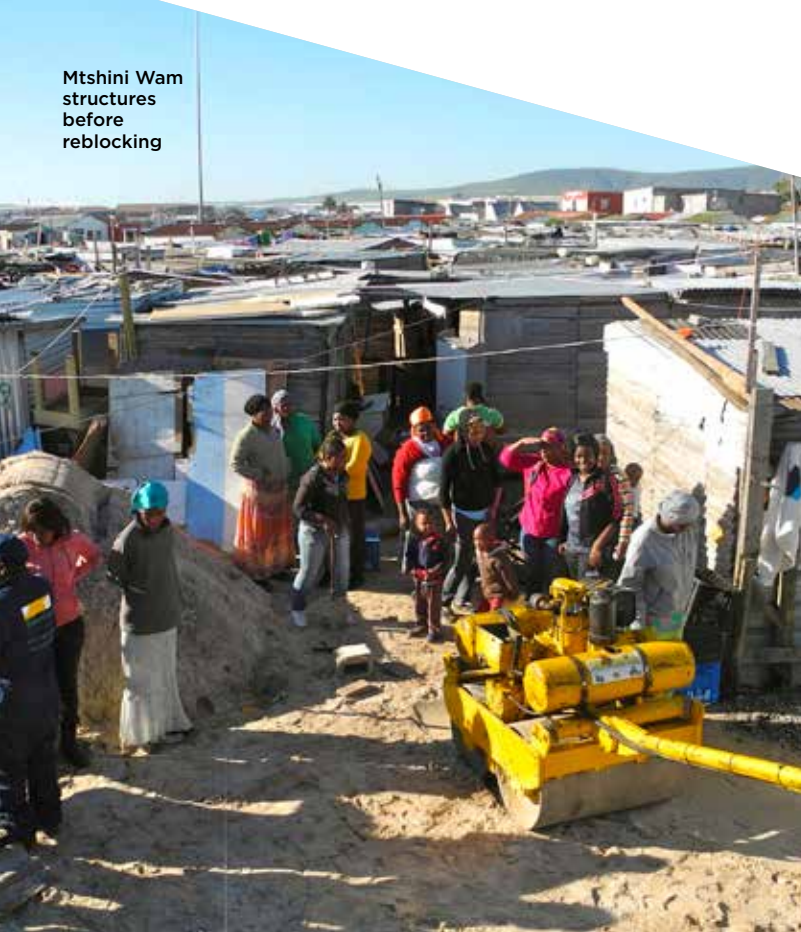
Project partners: SA SDI Alliance, iKhayalami, Worcester Polytechnic University (USA), Touching the Earth Lightly (vertical gardens and 'green shack'), University of Botswana (design studio).

²⁰ Policy to inform the proactive re-blocking of informal settlements (policy number 13282) approved by council on 30 October 2013.

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Context: Many backyarders in the broader Joe Slovo Park in Milnerton were not accommodated in large-scale housing developments in the early 1990s. Mtshini Wam informal settlement was founded in 2006 when backyarders occupied an open space designated for storm water retention, and faced several threats of eviction. The enumeration confirmed that 497 people lived in 250 shacks and had access to only 6 chemical toilets and 2 water taps. High densities and lack of access roads posed a limitation for the City in terms of providing services.

Mtshini Wam structures before reblocking




Flooding in Mtshini Wam before reblocking

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Project description: As one of the 22 pilot projects agreed upon in the MoU mayoral partnership, the re-blocking layout plan was approved by the City in 2012 and re-blocking commenced in May 2012. The community leadership was particularly strong, and managed to achieve community consensus and commitment to upgrading, evident through having mobilised the required 20% contribution to IBR top-structure within 6 months. The leadership also formed 'cluster committees' of residents coordinating re-blocking activities to minimise disruption to daily life.

"Prior to re-blocking, the settlement was very dense," said community leader Nokwezi Klaas, "There were no passageways and when there were fires it was virtually impossible to get into the settlement. All the toilets were on the outskirts and there were only three water taps for over 200 households in the settlement."



Mtshini Wam residents plan for upgrading

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By August 2012, 100 of 250 structures were re-blocked. The project was completed by March 2013. The city provided a general contractor who provided sub-soil (G5 building material) as each cluster was prepared for new construction. Toilets and taps were installed as clusters were completed. The construction drew the attention of National deputy-minister of Human Settlements, Ms. Zou Kota-Fredericks, who visited Mtshini Wam in 2013.

The re-blocking of Mtshini Wam transferred building skills to the community, and one leader founded the Community Development Investment (CDI) Holdings Pty Ltd, a construction company which secured outsourced construction work on a nearby MyCiti bus stop. The project management experience in reblocking therefore enabled this leader to tender for subcontractor work.



Opened pathways in Mtshini Wam, after reblocking

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However, poor attention was paid to the issues of storm water from surrounding properties, and the sub-soil was insufficient to mitigate the effects of this storm water run-off. Localised flooding in rainy seasons remains an issue after re-blocking.

Future development potential: Mtshini Wam has continued to engage the city to rectify the issues related to localised flooding. In the years following upgrading more and more households independently extended their structures to a second storey. These developments indicate a sense of commitment by residents to establish themselves and invest in Mtshini Wam. During this time, the Alliance supported the community to explore ways of incrementally formalising the settlement following re-blocking (similar to Lwazi Park). A team consisting of an urban designer / architect, property economist, and design-build specialist was appointed and results were published in November 2014.

Mtshini Wam residents
independently add a
second storey to their
structure



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The incremental formalisation of the settlement was deemed feasible at the following specifications (report available from CORC):

- Coverage of the site remains 60% (built area at 3,306 sqm and open space 2,584 sqm of the 5,8ha site) and formalisation occurs with double volume row housing.
- 240 units could be delivered at 52sqm, and remaining 10 units would be 24sqm.
- From enumeration data, about 58% of residents could be eligible for a housing subsidy, and these units would receive ground floor preference.
- Current zoning (Single Residential 2) supports incremental building in a township environment.
- Issues of light, ventilation, and access (e.g. 20 parking spaces) would be possible to deliver.
- The area remains a social housing restructuring area where social housing subsidies can be applied (for people with incomes ranging from R3,500 – R11,000 per month).

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In the framework of the MoU agreement, there was a need to produce a policy on re-blocking to provide a means whereby the city could commit human resources, funding and contractors to the re-blocking of settlements. The City of Cape Town adopted the policy (number 13282) called the Proactive Re-blocking of Informal Settlements on 30 October 2013 after an announcement made by Councillor Thandeka Gqada, Mayoral Committee Member for Human Settlements, City of Cape Town. ISN and CORC, as the only implementers of re-blocking projects at the time, were consulted about a brief policy in July 2013. In a City of Cape Town media statement, Cllr. Gqada reported:

"We view this as a turning point in our commitment to redress and a new model of shared responsibility that can change the face of our informal settlements".

The outcomes of the re-blocking policy are to ensure settlements have:

- A positive, legible urban structure that integrates the settlement with its surrounds;
- A safer integrated public realm;
- Emergency and services vehicular access and egress roads;
- Safe and convenient paths for movement of people on foot;
- Open space, where achievable, for essential community facilities that may precede the formal upgrading process;
- Better located and maintained basic municipal utility services.

The re-blocking policy presents indicative roles and responsibilities for all parties, but requires an MoU to be signed between the City, respective community and its support NGO. Furthermore, a Project Steering Committee needs to be established, guided by terms of reference and an implementation programme.

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Community

- Facilitating public engagement and mobilisation;
- Providing detailed information on the settlement and the community profile;
- Conducting the enumeration, land mapping and cost analysis of a project;
- Facilitating peer-to-peer learning between urban poor communities earmarked for re-blocking

Support NGO

- Acting as an intermediary in community and City interactions;
- Facilitating access to donor funding in support of the rollout of the project

City of Cape Town²¹

- Funding of earthworks, engineering services and relocation kits (via USDG subsidy)
- Providing professional support in planning and design
- Overseeing data collection
- Procurement of service providers
- Ongoing maintenance of roads and services
- Job creation via the Expanded Public Works Programme
- Disaster management
- Monitoring environmental health
- Sub- and ward-councils to support the initiative.

21 Content derived from pp. 9-11 of City of Cape Town reblocking policy document.

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According to the policy, re-blocking projects will only commence when a **community endorses the project**. Alternatively projects can be identified through the Informal Settlements Department; Disaster Risk Management and Fire Services; Health Directorate; or other role-players. It is assumed that the primary relationship in re-blocking is between the community and the relevant departments of the city (where Human Settlements takes lead) and the onus is therefore on the community to draw in the support of other actors such as FEDUP, ISN, CORC or iKhayalami.

While the re-blocking policy opened up a means for the city to commit more resources, funding and capacity to this initiative, which was previously unavailable (e.g. Mtshini Wam), the Alliance increasingly experienced a change in its role from partners-in-development towards a client-service provider relationship. This is problematic because the city increasingly required more technical work in support of reblocking projects (e.g. engineering services layout), which exceeds the scope of CORC's capacity (to appoint or fund). Hence, reblocking projects increasingly became costlier for CORC and the CUFF fund, which jeopardised the ability to scale up the programme and to continue testing and experimenting with new innovations during informal settlement upgrading projects.

Despite these challenges, the re-blocking of Flamingo Crescent informal settlement occurred after the adoption of the reblocking policy. This demonstrated the impact of what is possible when having a fully committed local government, project manager and community partner with each other in upgrading projects.

Setting new standards in the re-blocking of Flamingo Crescent

Project preparation and planning: 2012 – 2014

Implementation commencement to completion: May to December 2014

Location: Flamingo Crescent in the industrial area of Lansdowne.

Project outcome: In-situ reblocking of 104 dwellings, water and sanitation services on a 1:1 basis, settlement-wide electrification, paved access roads with official road names, individual postal addresses, Little Paradise crèche, more secure tenure, 50 EPWP jobs.

Project partners: SA SDI Alliance, iKhayalami, CPUT, WPI, Habitat for Humanity SA

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Context: An informal settlement emerged on Flamingo Crescent in the industrial area of Lansdowne when the city council relocated homeless people living on streets and under bridges in Constantia, Wetton and Lansdowne to a vacant plot owned by the council.

Project description: First contact between ISN and Flamingo Crescent community leaders was in 2012 when exchanges were organised to Mtshini Wam. The community was interested in the project and commenced enumerating the settlement in 2012. The community of 104 households and 450 people only had access to 2 taps and 7 working chemical toilets.

During 2013 a planning and design studio, community members, CPUT students, and CORC technical staff surveyed the site, designed its re-blocked layout and verified its enumeration results. During this time the community project steering committee started collecting 20% contributions towards the cost of top structures.

The Alliance, together with the City of Cape Town and Mayor Patricia de Lille, announced the launch of the project on 10 February 2015. The project implementation lasted from May to December 2014, and was lauded as a successful demonstration of community-led, participatory planning, collaborative implementation and improvement of informal settlements. The community members and ISN technical build team also worked closely with the council-appointed contractor on site responsible for compaction of sub-base, paving, storm water, and infrastructure.

One of the innovations of reblocking at Flamingo Crescent re-blocking is the formal registration of new roads. Every road in the new layout scheme is recognised by the post office and can serve as proof of residence for residents seeking to open bank accounts, apply for jobs, credit and so forth.

Future development potential: One of the most noticeable changes following reblocking at Flamingo Crescent is the level of household investment in improved dwellings. Although only about 10% of households have upgraded the interiors of their homes by 2017 (3 years after completion), this is nevertheless a trend in the community. Residents are making improvements to ceiling boards, painting, skirting, doors, kitchens, bathrooms, and so on; sometimes with used materials and other times with new materials, depending on the level of household affordability.

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"Before re-blocking, there were fires, the place was wet and you couldn't make your place nice. If you wanted to visit me, you had to wear a pair of rubber boots. There were no roads in the beginning, and access was limited to our houses. For instance, you could not park a car inside [...] We were really desperate, because fires burned our shacks down. The second big fire burned a child. Now that we are done, we can make our houses better."

Mark Solomons, Steering committee member

"If it wasn't for ISN, I don't know where we would be. Through ISN we were introduced to the City and we got a partnership. We started thinking, 'Now something is going to happen'. Flamingo is going to be re-blocked!"

Marie Matthews, community leader

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"Informal communities are often times socially and economically disconnected from basic administrative functions, and therefore a residential address will give the Post Office an opportunity to serve the community with dignity."

Gerald Blankenberg, regional director of the Post Office.

Flamingo before reblocking






View of the same street in Flamingo Crescent, before, during and after reblocking

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"The roofs no longer leak. In the old shacks, even with insulation, there were leaks. But the new dwellings are like homes to us. We have been saving towards household content. We feel more secured now, whereas in the old settlement we were always expecting to be moved. When it rains we no longer step water and mud into our houses. I have always run a shop; business is the same as before."

Flamingo Crescent resident



After reblocking, each structure in Flamingo has its own toilet and tap.

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4) Bureaucratisation of processes (2016 to current)

Following the completion of the Mtshini Wam and Flamingo Crescent re-blocking projects, it has taken three years to progress to the next project. The reasons for these delays can be attributed to the lack of hand-over of the partnership to successive heads of departments and senior project managers. Therefore, a loss of institutional memory and knowledge of the working partnership in a time of high staff turn-over within the City's human settlements department had a devastating effect. Decision makers no longer trusted the approach of community-centred development.

The demise of the partnership can be attributed to bureaucratisation for the following reasons:

Scope and nature of the partnership: The partnership had been reduced to implementation of re-blocking projects, rather than collaboration in the improvement of informal settlement and backyarder precincts. Hence, the primary liaison between communities and the council was around re-blocking, despite numerous requests to extend this partnership to include other relevant departments. Good relationships exist with departments of water and sanitation, roads and storm water (Transport and Urban Development Authority), and the parks and recreation department. All these partnerships are outside the scope of the reblocking unit.

Speed of implementation: It took the City of Cape Town two financial years to appoint a contractor to implement the re-blocking projects that the Alliance invested in over a three-year period. The cost of the social facilitation as well as the technical support in developing the layout plans in collaboration with the community is a cost borne by CORC and the Alliance as a whole, which constitutes a significant investment in these projects. Communities expressed increasing frustration with the process, which included suspicion of the Alliance "eating" community savings and distrust in the City's ability to follow through on scheduled milestones, due to the slow pace of implementation. This resulted in communities requesting that their savings be returned as well as abandoning the project. This undermined the community leadership, in turn weakening the relationship between community leadership and FEDUP / ISN and opened space for political interference.

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Poor communication: Partners are required to ensure effective communication, but the reality is that local activities are not always well coordinated. This results in mixed messages and can undermine trust. There are also differences in the set up of projects. For example, for the SA SDI Alliance savings and self-reliance is a corner stone of the process. However this practice is constantly challenged and questioned by City officials and is rather seen as a hindrance to the implementation of projects.

Appetite for innovation and doing things differently: We experienced many delays in the decision making process related to sign-off of designs for community facilities. The City's internal approval process was unclear, which resulted in further unnecessary delays. A fast turn around time is critical given the Alliance's primary obligation to community partners, as well as to funders as we are unable to leverage further funding without being able to demonstrate successful projects. The same applies to our community partners where trust and confidence is key to successful bottom-up processes.

The partnership breakdown had adverse effects, particularly as the Alliance was gearing to scale up upgrading activities. In 2014, The Alliance set up a people-led finance facility with funding from British donor Comic Relief. By April 2015, the people-led finance facility had approved 16 applications, installed 1 420 fire detection devices in 10 informal settlements in Cape Town, informed plans for 80 toilets in five informal settlements with the Department of Water and Sanitation and secured project approval for an area-wide urban park in Khayelitsha. These projects were preceded by deep community mobilisation which included over 32 facilitated partnership meetings between communities and city departments, over 40 learning exchanges, and 75 community-based planning initiatives facilitated by CORC planners and architects²².

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Stalled upgrading projects in 2015 - 2017: Masilunge (Gugulethu), Santini and Tambo Square (Mfuleni)

In the period 2015 - 2017, communities supported by the Alliance experienced doubt and distrust in the partnership between the Alliance and the City of Cape Town. This distrust is evident in stalled reblocking initiatives, where residents were initially convinced about reblocking and after repeated implementation delays, chose to discontinue.

An example of such a stalled project is Masilunge informal settlement in Gugulethu, one of the initial settlements on the City's list of 22 pilot projects for upgrading. Since Masilunge was first identified as a reblocking project in 2011, 6 years have passed. During this time the City twice allocated a budget for upgrading Masilunge, once in 2011 and once in 2015. Whereas the first time, the project was postponed due to perceived insufficient community readiness, it was halted a second time due to bureaucratic delays in the municipal system ²³.



Community Planning in Santini, Cape Town

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A similar pattern can be observed in Mfuleni, a region in Cape Town where three settlements progressed to advanced stages of planning for re-blocking. This included setting up saving schemes, developing layout plans, and conducting enumerations. However, due to repeated delays in city approval processes, local politics and resultant distrust and disillusionment from residents, two of these projects – Santini (45 households) and Tambo Square (62 households) – came to a standstill. In both Santini and Tambo Square, residents, who had initially supported upgrading, changed their disposition.

In Santini the time lapse between initial community engagement and repeated delays in starting dates led to a disgruntled community. Party political tensions also led to a divided support base for reblocking in the settlement. The opportunity of a possible housing development nearby also swayed some residents against reblocking.

Tambo Square experienced similar delays to Santini, regarding starting dates for project implementation. After in depth interrogation and engagement with local political dynamics, the majority of the community voted against the project.

Implemented upgrading projects in 2017: California (Mfuleni), Open Space Park (Khayelitsha Site B). Notably, the third reblocking project in Mfuleni – California informal settlement (47 households) – is being implemented at the time of publication. Although residents had faced similar delays as in Santini and Tambo Square, they unanimously supported reblocking when the City expressed readiness for implementation. Some of the factors influencing this decision were:

Residents knew that the City had allocated a specific budget for reblocking California in the then current financial year

When the City was (eventually) ready to spend the budget and implement the project, City representatives communicated the urgency of budget spending to the Alliance and California residents (if not spent in California, the City would allocate the budget to a different settlement)

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Residents expressed conviction for reblocking, and were not deterred by the (uncertain) prospect of housing development

During this period, Alliance affiliated communities' also implemented projects in Khayelitsha. These include four community halls and an Open Space Park in Site B in 2017. While the community halls were not implemented in partnership with the City, the Open Space Park was. Due to its area wide nature, the Open Space project required multiple parallel and interdisciplinary engagements with various departments in the City. These included the Transport and Urban Development Authority, Water and Sanitation, City Parks and the local ward councilor. Due to strong collaboration with some of these departments, the Open Space project sets a precedent for what kind of partnership is possible when community members, intermediaries and municipal representatives express the will and commitment to collaborate. The experiences of California and the Open Space project therefore point to critical factors for building strong partnerships.



Playpark in Open Space, Site B, Khayelitsha. See p. 28 (bottom) for additional view of Open Space

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In the absence of a functional partnership with the City of Cape Town, the SA SDI Alliance was appointed in 2016 by the Western Cape Government through a competitive tender process to enumerate 11 settlements with a total number of 20,060 households (of which 18,282 or 91% were enumerated). The role therefore changed, to some extent, from partner to service provider, which has direct implications on scaling up the work of the Alliance.

Other urban sector NGOs and social movements were experiencing similar challenges with the City of Cape Town, and an initiative started to engage the City council collectively as urban sector NGOs and social movements working in informal settlements in Cape Town. This initiative is aimed at streamlining communication. At the time of publication the Alliance has been re-engaging with the City of Cape Town's department of Informal Settlements and Backyarders in several area based forums concerning more sustained and community-centred support to informal settlements.

We, are a group of Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs), namely Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC), Development Action Group (DAG), Habitat for Humanity South Africa, Isandla Institute, People's Environmental Planning (PEP), Ubuhle Bakha Ubuhle (UBU) and Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU), who work in and on addressing informality with regard to human settlements. We are a formidable, diversified unit, comprised of the strengths of each organisation. We host a wide array of knowledge and skills pertaining to approaches and methodologies in the practice of upgrading of informality. We have an established history of bilateral and multilateral collaborations to date. Our experience on our work on informality extends further than the Metro City of Cape Town to a number of municipalities countrywide and vertically across various spheres of government.

Pre-amble to the Collaboration Plan signed by organisations and submitted to City of Cape Town, June 2017

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4.2 Stellenbosch Municipality

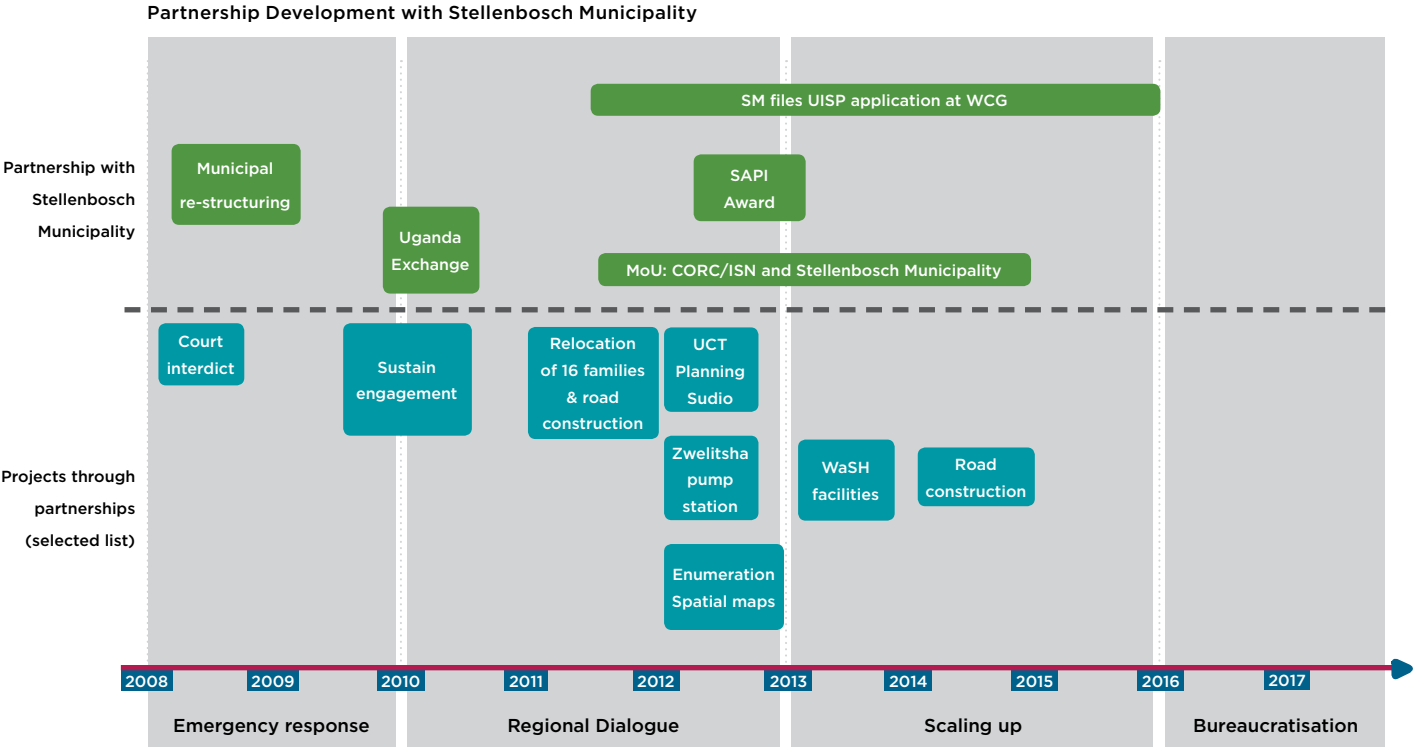
Key outcomes of the partnership with Stellenbosch Municipality

The partnership with Stellenbosch Municipality took the form of a MoU agreement and a funding commitment to a schedule of activities and projects. Through a deep facilitation process, the community of Langrug (near Franschoek) received full services. The weakness of the partnership was that it was contract-bound and support from the municipality diminished after the 3-year contract expired.

- MoU signed with annual funding commitment and a schedule of activities and projects.
- Langrug informal settlement progressed to UISP Phase 3 and won the SAPI award for best community project in 2012.

Read more about the partnership with Stellenbosch Municipality on our website and in the following publications: Fieuw 2011, Murcot 2012, and Kumar and Robyn 2016.

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The partnership between Stellenbosch Municipality and the Alliance emerged through a negotiated process. In 2008/09, Stellenbosch Municipality embarked on a strategic change process, which would see the establishment of the Informal Settlement Management Department. This change was based on a view that the then approach to housing was unsustainable; indeed, at the rate of delivering 300 houses per annum it would take the municipality close to 100 years to eradicate the housing backlog of more than 25,000 units. The focus shifted from delivering housing units to upgrading the municipality's 22 informal settlements; of which the three largest – Langrug (1,800 households), Enkanini (2,500 households) and Mandela Square (1,000 households) – took priority.

The municipality approached the Alliance with a request to unlock a stalled upgrading project in Langrug, which was established in the early 1990s by migrant laborers seeking jobs on nearby farms, the forestry plantations, and the construction of Wemmershoek dam. For more than three years the municipality tried to engage with the community to find a working relationship, but years of service delivery neglect and mismanagement had led to strained relations.

The municipality was compelled to action through a legal interdict obtained by a farmer adjacent to Langrug settlement in 2008. In the interdict, the municipality was legally obliged to solve a problem of grey water runoff from Langrug, which polluted the farmer's irrigation dam by constructing an access road and storm water system on the boundary. The construction of the road required 16 families to be moved to another section in the settlement. However, planning processes were delayed because of the fractured relationship between the community and the municipality.

Officials from the Informal Settlement Management Department approached the Alliance in the hope of cementing a partnership that would initially focus on the in-situ upgrading of Langrug. Notwithstanding the claims from the municipality of being an "honest broker", the ISN leadership had suspicions about the municipality's intentions for entering into a partnership and whether any long-term developmental prospects would really materialise.

Over two years (2009 – 2010), a sustained engagement between the Alliance (esp. ISN and CORC) and Stellenbosch Municipality took place, with parties outlining the conditions under which the partnership would take shape. The central topic of discussion was the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and, more specifically, the core areas of intervention and action (contained in the appendices to the MoU). Between 11 and 16 October 2010, senior officials from Stellenbosch Municipality and community members from ISN Stellenbosch (mostly leaders of Langrug settlement) travelled to Uganda to see people-centred planning in action (see CORC 2011b). This international exchange was facilitated by Shack Dwellers International (SDI).

On 12 November 2011, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Stellenbosch Municipality and ISN/CORC was signed in Langrug informal settlement. Part of the commitment under the

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MoU was the establishment of an 'Urban Poor Fund', which would be financed by contributions from the Alliance and the municipality to the value of R3.5 million per annum. Perhaps most significantly, poor residents from Stellenbosch region pledged R12 000 of hard-earned savings. The agreement was signed off by the municipality's legal department, and was completely compliant with the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA).

UISP project in Langrug, Franschhoek

Commencement to completion: October 2011 to November 2014

Location: The settlement is located on the slopes of Mont Rochelle Nature Reserve, three kilometers outside the town of Franschhoek.

Project outcome: UISP project progressed to stage 3 (full services); Genius of Place project; 3 x Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) facilities;

Project partners: SA SDI Alliance, Stellenbosch Municipality, WPI, Habitat for Humanity SA, Western Cape Government (Green Cape), Touching the Earth Lightly.

Context: Langrug has a population of 4 088 people, or 1 858 households, of which 41% are women headed. At the time of enumeration (November 2011), an average of 45 people shared one toilet, and 72 people shared one water tap. However, these services only reached two-thirds of the community: Zwelitsha is an area located higher up on the mountain slope that was occupied in the past five years. Zwelitsha had no access to services; people used the bucket system and carried water up the steep slope.

Project description: Langrug community volunteers completed enumerations in November 2011, which entailed setting up block committees, administering house-to-house surveys, and measuring shack sizes. At the same time, a team spatially mapped the services, non-residential uses, informal walkways, and flood-prone areas.

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Alfred Ratana, a Langrug community leader, said 'we took ... about two to three weeks to talk with them [the broader community] about the enumeration. And then afterwards they came in big numbers'. The community presented their enumeration results to the Mayoral Committee and the Executive Mayor, who were impressed by the community's articulation of their priorities and aspirations. One of the immediate priorities identified included better engineering services in Zwelitsha, which required the construction of a pump station to improve the water supply pressure.

In October 2011, 16 families were successfully relocated to make way for the access road, which paved the way for the in-situ upgrading of Langrug. As Johru Robyn, then senior manager of the municipality, commented, 'the role of the municipality has intensified in this partnership compared to an agreement with a contractor. In this case, we were quite hands-on in everything'. Shortly thereafter, the municipality filed an application to the Western Cape Government for settlement upgrading according to the UISP programme.

The spatial framework for roads and town planning was co-developed by the residents, CORC and the municipality with support from the University of Cape Town. In 2012 a design studio was launched in partnership with the UCT Department of Engineering and Built Environment. The spatial frameworks made recommendations on precinct developments, environmental health, mobility and transport nodes, and more generally on how Langrug could be integrated into the broader urban fabric. In June 2012, eight Langrug community leaders were awarded Continued Professional Development (CPD) certificates from UCT, recognising their contribution in the design studio.

CORC also brought in the support of Worcester Polytechnic Institute University (USA), Touching the Earth Lightly, and Habitat for Humanity SA. Three Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (Wash) facilities were constructed with toilets, showers, and washing areas. They partly included dry-composting toilets; functioned as a multi-purpose centre; and included 500 metres of grey-water canals. In 2014 the internal circulation roads were completed. Langrug was also the site for the Western Cape Government 'Genius of Place' project, which looked at remediation of population into the Berg River.

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The Langrug UISP project was awarded the best 'Community' project by the South African Planning Institute (SAPI) at the "Planning Africa" conference held in Durban's International Conference Centre (ICC) between 17 and 19 September 2012.

The MoU expired after the three-year contract period in November 2014 and was not renewed. The UISP project advanced to stage 3, and work is ongoing in each financial year to ensure full services are delivered.

At the time, executive mayor, Mr. Conrad Sidego, said:

"The benefits of this partnership are far-reaching and should be viewed as a paradigm shift in municipal governance. Today is about changing mindsets in providing housing ... For us as the local government, we also need to understand and face the reality of what we need to do. If we continue with our old thinking, there is no way that we are going to change this".



Overview of Langrug



Signing of MoU between
Stellenbosch Municipality
and Langrug

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The partnership between ISN and Stellenbosch Municipality entailed a range of activities in all 22 settlements, which were profiled and enumerated.

The partnership had a significant impact on the way Stellenbosch Municipality sees itself approaching informal settlement upgrading in the future. Johru Robyn, senior project manager of Stellenbosch Municipality, noted the transforming effects of his department's partnership with the SA SDI Alliance. "We have pursued many public-private partnerships, but our partnership with [the Alliance] has led to a total rethink of our housing strategy," he said.

The in-situ upgrading of Langrug also drew the attention of Western Cape Premier Helen Zille, who visited the settlement with a number of officials from other municipalities across the Western Cape in May 2012. In an interview with Eyewitness News Online (2012), Premier Zille stated, "The important point about this informal settlement is that it is one of the first where we have a viable partnership with the community. And now, working with the community, we are installing storm water, grey water systems, toilets, washing facilities, roads and upgrading the place generally ... But the exciting thing about this project is that we are upgrading shacks where they are instead of moving people out and starting from the beginning."

At the time of publication, the MoU with Stellenbosch Municipality is under revision. The Alliance is engaging with the municipality through the Western Cape Provincial Informal Settlement Support Plan. In particular Alliance support and collaboration with Stellenbosch Municipality is focussed on informal settlement upgrading initiatives in Langrug and Enkanini informal settlements near Franschoek, and Stellenbosch, respectively.



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Zwelitsha WASH facility during
and after construction



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4.3. City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality and Midvaal Municipality

ISN networks in Gauteng have struggled to cement partnerships with local and metropolitan municipalities. In the founding years of the ISN, communities gathered profiling data on close to 600 communities in two years, and the number of settlements profiled grew to 1,100 in 2014. Many of these settlements were located in Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal provinces. Profiling afforded regional ISN coordinators first contact with new settlements to build a movement of the urban poor. However, much of the project preparation work has not gained traction with elected politicians and/or officials.

In Johannesburg, a settlement in the Ruimsig neighborhood bordering Mogale City municipality made the most advances in project implementation. The re-blocking of Ruimsig settlement commenced in 2011, and drew the attention of City of Johannesburg councilors and officials, and senior programme managers of the newly-established National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP). Project preparation in settlements called Slovo Park in Johannesburg and Makaue in Ekurhuleni also progressed, and a community hall was constructed in Slovo Park with support from architectural students of the University of Pretoria. However, very little support for these projects was forthcoming²⁴, and community leaders experienced frequent eviction threats (Socio Economic Rights Institute documented the intimidation of Makaue leaders in its series called Community Practice Notes²⁵).



Overview of Ruimsig

²⁴ However, in April 2016 the Gauteng High Court ordered the City of Johannesburg to apply to Gauteng Province for a grant to upgrade Slovo Park, which established that UISP is binding on municipalities. See seri-sa.org.za for details.

²⁵ SERI's community practice notes are available online at <http://www.seri-sa.org/index.php/26-research/252-community-practice-notes>

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Demonstrating the power of community-led upgrading in the re-blocking of Ruimsig

Commencement to completion: October 2011 to December 2012

Location: Located in Ruimsig on the West Rand of Johannesburg, bordering Mogale City municipality.

Project outcome: Re-blocking of 134 structures (38 in phase 1 funded by Selavip Grant, and 96 in phase 2 funded by the CUFF fund).

Project partners: SA SDI Alliance, iKhayalami, University of Johannesburg (Department of Architecture), 26'10 South Architects, Goethe Institute.

Context: Ruimsig informal settlement has 369 households and covers an area of 5.2 hectares. When the first residents of the settlement lived on the land in the mid 1980s, the area was predominantly farmland. By 1986 the farm was sold to a new owner who charged farm workers rent. In 1998 the City of Johannesburg bought the land at which time the land was rezoned from a peri-urban agri-zone to residential. In the following years, new residential developments attracted job seekers in the construction industry who settled on the land.

Project description: Following the enumeration, Ruimsig community members and the University of Johannesburg architecture department launched a design studio that lasted for seven weeks. Students and community 'architects' worked together to develop a new layout for the settlement.

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"We are supposed to stay here because we are close to jobs. There is no need to move to another place. This place is close to the shopping areas, close to Joburg, and close to all areas".

Albert Masibigiri, Ruimsig community steering committee.

iKhayalami raised funding for the first phase of reblocking from an Italian donor Selavip. On 5 October site demarcation started and shelters were erected in a reconfigured layout. After the first phase of re-blocking 38 shacks in the flood prone "wetlands" area, the community approached CUFF for funding of phase two: the re-blocking of 96 new shacks. Phase 1 was completed by November 2011 and phase 2 was completed by December 2012. Therefore one third of the community was re-blocked.

The local authorities from Region C of the Johannesburg Metro supported the reblocking. Senior programme managers of NUSP also documented and disseminated the learning generated through the process. Although general meetings were conducted to discuss project progress, no support from the City of Johannesburg or Mogale City was forthcoming in terms of funding, engineering, and improved service provision. The project was therefore terminated due to lack of state support.

Future development potential: iKhayalami rekindled its partnership with Ruimsig community in 2016 and subject to funding is aiming to support 100 additional households in Ruimsig—bringing the total targeted households to 247, or two-thirds of Ruimsig's families.

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Through the CUFF fund, smaller upgrading projects were also launched, such as water reticulation in Marathon and Delpot settlements. These were small and catalytic projects through which communities tried to demonstrate their ability to work with officials to upgrade their settlements.

During 2012 ISN suffered a blow when Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) demolished, overnight and without warning, more than 20 buildings in Marlboro South leaving more than 2,500 people homeless²⁶. The JMPD had no eviction order and Lawyers for Human Rights championed the legal case of the Marlboro South residents. They won a Constitutional Court Case (after the challenge of the Gauteng High Court ruling) demanding the City of Johannesburg to re-settle evicted residents.

Due to the lack of state support and ongoing evictions in the Province, the ISN changed its tactics and organised a mass march on the Gauteng Premier's office on Tuesday 11 September 2012, where more than 5,000 shack dwellers from 100 settlements in Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni (the mining belt), Tshwane (Pretoria) and smaller municipalities such as Mogale City, Midvaal, and Sedibeng participated. The agenda was a simple but powerful one: mobilising those affected by poor service delivery, insecure tenure, and evictions.

The lack of support for partnerships in the region can be illustrated in the way that ISN members were received during the march. Both the City of Joburg and Gauteng Province alleged in an article by The Sowetan ("Squatter to march against evictions" by Vusi Xaba, 10 September, page 8) that they were not aware of the march.

City of Johannesburg spokesperson at the time, Gabu Tugwana said he was not aware of the march. Mokonyane's spokesperson, Thebe Mohatle, said the office of the premier had not received any letter from the metro police, informing them of the intended march.

26 Read more about the Marlboro South evictions in our report, available online at http://sasdialliance.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Marlboro_report_Full.pdf

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The only signs of a potential partnership emerged in Midvaal municipality. In October 2012 ISN and CORC supported Sicelo settlement to enumerate. The main objective of the enumeration was to empower the majority of Sicelo residents who would not benefit from a housing development that only catered for 450 housing units. The community wanted the municipality to consider upgrading Sicelo settlement.

On a walkabout in Sicelo settlement, MEC for Local Government and Housing, Humphrey Mmemezi, commented on the situation, *I realised after the walk about in the area that there are no toilets and people use nearby bushes and open pit toilets to relieve themselves. I made a commitment that we will get funds so that we can buy toilets for the community. There are also only 9 taps for the community of 4000 shacks.*

In the context of the enumeration of Sicelo settlement, Councillor Bongani Baloyi (MMC for Development and Planning) said *"The Sicelo Enumeration Survey project can be classified as collaboration at its best, and it is hoped that future projects will be met with similar report and enthusiasm"*. A MoU was signed with the Midvaal municipality in December 2014 to support the ongoing engagements between Sicelo and other communities, but in all reality, the lack of technical capacity and municipal commitment to projects have meant that there have been no tangible impacts.

Despite the emergence of a promising (and first) partnership in Gauteng Province, regulations and compliance obstructed the enthusiasm for collaboration, and the partnership did not materialise in a meaningful way.



Marlboro Informal Settlement
in Marlboro Warehouses,
Johannesburg

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4.4 Ethekewini Metropolitan Municipality and Msunduzi Municipality

Similar to ISN's experiences in Gauteng, no real partnerships for informal settlement upgrading had materialised in Kwa-Zulu Natal, despite FEDUP's considerable successes in ePHP housing projects such as Namibia Stop 8. This was surprising, given the dearth of experiences in consolidation and self-built housing in the context of in-situ, brownfields settlement upgrading. In Kwa-Zulu Natal, forward thinking officials could have benefitted from refining policies after communities showcased the possibility of consolidating an informal settlement into a formal neighbourhood.

In the absence of meaningful state support for settlement upgrading, FEDUP and ISN in KZN adopted a similar tactic to FEDUP and ISN in Gauteng: implementing a range of incremental upgrades to showcase the abilities of organised communities. Two projects emerged in advanced planning stages in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality: Havelock (215 households) and Kwa-Mathambo (294 households). Both Havelock and Kwa-Mathambo conducted enumerations, spatial mapping, engaged officials and councilors and advanced to finalised upgrading plans. In Havelock, development was blocked by a neighbouring residents' / ratepayers' association. In Kwa-Mathambo a fire in August 2012 destroyed more than half of the settlement. A second fire in March 2016 required 37 structures to be rebuilt. The reconstruction offered an opportunity to pilot a reblocking layout in Mathambo, which served as an example of reblocking during continued negotiations for a partnership with the municipality. Read more about these projects on our website²⁷.

Following Gauteng's experience, a mass march was organised and a crowd of about 2,500 informal residents set off from Dinuzulu Square to the municipal chambers on 24 March 2014. At the march, MaMkhabela, provincial FEDUP coordinator remarked,

"We need to be informed about time lines and planning. We want to be independent communities. We have [tools] that help us, like enumerations that show that one shack does not equal one family. If we have a chance to submit this information to the municipality we can develop our country nicely, like the constitution says."

²⁷ Project profiles of Havelock and Kwa-Mathambo can be accessed on the SA SDI Alliance website. The links are: Havelock: <http://sasdialliance.org.za/projects/havelock/> and Kwa-Mathambo: <http://sasdialliance.org.za/projects/kwa-mathambo/>

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The Alliance has also signed a MoU with Msunduzi municipality that is yet to become operational. The Federation and ISN conducted enumerations in Msunduzi and completed the first upgrading project at Shamrock during 2017.

eThekweni Metro was selected as one of the 100 Resilient Cities funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Since 2016 eThekweni has engaged the SA SDI Alliance regarding partnerships towards creating more resilient settlements through infrastructure development, service provision and livelihoods. In eThekweni a MoA with the Department of Human Settlements was signed in September 2018 with a focus on both the housing and upgrading space. Due to FEDUP's association with SDI and the 100 Resilient Cities campaign, the Alliance has managed to influence the municipality's resilience strategy through proposing informal settlement profiling that uses a community-led, participatory approach.





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4.5 Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality

Since ISN was formed in Port Elizabeth, a partnership with Nelson Mandela Bay Metro has been a top priority for the ISN. This is especially because of the strength of FEDUP in housing developments (e.g. Joe Slovo ePHP project) and the extent of deprivation in the province. In 2009/10 senior officials of the Metro were invited to join the Alliance on learning exchanges to Thailand and Cape Town to become familiar with the Alliance process and finance facilities for upgrading.

The first engagements with the Department of Human Settlements' Ministerial Sanitation Task Team (MSTT) occurred in Port Elizabeth between 1-5 November 2011. At this event, communities such as Missionvale, Seaview, Midrand, Kleinskool, and Zweledinga who had already enumerated their settlements used the opportunity to present their settlements' data to the MSTT.



Midrand sanitation facility

"We have spoken to your Council and Mayor and received a report on what they have done for you... but this time, you are the ones to tell us what you want."

Mrs. Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, chairperson of the MSTT at the Port Elizabeth meeting.

Sanitation and water services are a pressing priority for many Eastern Cape settlements. Following the engagements with the MSTT, a water and sanitation facility was constructed in Midrand settlement as part of the Sanitation and Hygiene Applied Research for Equity (SHARE) project. On numerous occasions, the Alliance presented to the portfolio committee where all councilors were present and officials saw a learning opportunity to support their settlements.

Regarding a partnership with Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, the Alliance and the municipality have signed a joint MoU through which the Alliance supported communities to profile 42 informal settlements. This data served as a basis for communities and the Alliance to engage government on community needs and priorities in the metro. Through this partnership, the Alliance has seen the successful completion of a first joint project, a water and sanitation facility in Midrand informal settlement. Instead of making use of pit latrines, 38 households now have access to 9 flush toilets.

5. Conclusions And Key Partnership Lessons

05 Conclusions and key partnership lessons

Political endorsement, municipal capacity development and flexible, adaptive funding models are necessary preconditions for achieving progressive, city-wide approaches to informal settlement upgrading. The experiences of the SA SDI Alliance in engaging local governments reflect the regulatory, operational and institutional complexities of forming meaningful partnerships. At the same time, informal settlement communities have ‘deep rooted knowledge’, to quote the UISP, of their own settlements. This knowledge should be integrated into the design, planning and implementation of settlement improvement initiatives.

This section outlines five major lessons SA SDI Alliance partners have learnt over the past decade. The Alliance is advocating for systemic changes in the way municipalities engage the urban poor, and how resources are allocated to transform South Africa's spatially unjust, fragmented and exclusive cities and towns.

5.1. The value of a deep social facilitation process

Successful approaches to collaborative informal settlement upgrading require deep and ongoing social facilitation. Over the past ten years, social movements like FEDUP and ISN have demonstrated the capacity to support informal settlement communities to understand and articulate their priorities and to confidently interact with government and other stakeholders around these priorities. However, building this capacity in communities requires an almost daily and constant interaction between social facilitators and residents whose settlements have been earmarked for upgrading. The experience of the Alliance is that such deep social facilitation can best be provided by skilled community facilitators, who themselves come from and reside in informal settlements.

5.2. Political endorsement and an enabling local policy environment

Successful partnerships are fully endorsed by the Mayor and binding agreements are signed as a sign of commitment (e.g. MoU or MoA). In Cape Town and Stellenbosch different agreements were set in place. Cape Town follows an open-ended cooperation commitment to improving settlements and commits funding on a project-by-project basis. The work of the Alliance resulted in and enabled reform of policy with the adoption of the re-blocking by-law / policy, which opened up funding and capacity for that purpose. In Stellenbosch a 3-year contract (the maximum length of any agreement according to the MFMA) was signed with deliverables and included a funding commitment, but when the contract came to an end, the partnership was significantly constrained. Senior political and mayoral endorsement also compels sceptical officials to develop the appropriate mechanisms to enable partnership formation.

In other metros, such as Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni and eThekweni, the lack of political endorsement and commitment has resulted in communities being sent from pillar to post in search of a department that is willing to take risks and engage with new approaches. Even in Cape Town, where the Alliance has experienced its most mature partnership, the period 2015 – 2017 has been marked by a significant slow down in activities with the municipality. In the absence

05 Conclusions and key partnership lessons

of a partnership, the Alliance has still engaged metros in the country, but through tendering for government work. Examples include NUSP contracts in Johannesburg and Ekurhuleni, as well as the Western Cape Government tender to enumerate 20,000 households along the N2, Rapid Appraisals of 106 informal settlements in the Western Cape, and all informal settlements in Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality.

5.3. Long delays can kill a project or partnership

“The planning process risks losing momentum if it is only focused on long-term goals and if it takes too long to reach these. Therefore, the process should preferably have short-term and midterm, as well as long-term objectives. Quick-win interventions, which could be implemented without or with little external support, give rapid results from local resources and efforts. Early successes, even if they are small, keep stakeholders active and committed, and could lead to further involvement by new partners.

UN Habitat, 2010:9

Projects initiated by informal settlement communities affiliated to the Alliance and funded through the CUFF, or the Alliance's people-led finance facility, are geared at finding solutions to immediate problems. This demonstrates that it can be effective to implement a project to 'hook' a municipality into a partnership, which in turn can form the context for scaling up initial precedent setting projects. However, when slow supply chain processes dominate all local creativity and agility, projects and partnerships can fall apart.

In Cape Town, it took the council two years to appoint a service provider for re-blocking projects in Mfuleni, and the entire region suffered as a result. There is a need for quick, light and cheap interventions to start changing the way government thinks about informal settlement upgrading projects. Other issues with particularly negative consequences for moving ahead with projects include the following:

- Party political frictions during election years often extend the time required to mobilise an entire community for upgrading.
- At times, city preparation and procurement processes stretch project timeframes beyond the designated one-year municipal budget allocation period.
- When a project is delayed (due to, for example, transcending budget time frames) it is twice as difficult to restart and remobilise the community.

05 Conclusions and key partnership lessons

5.4. Building municipal capacity for participatory upgrading

Government evaluations and capacity building initiatives²⁸ have concluded that what is needed to manage informal settlement upgrading projects are officials with a different approach. For municipalities, the benefits of committing to an authentic participatory approach to upgrading include²⁹:

- Local communities expressing greater acceptance of the upgrading process, which is regarded with greater legitimacy;
- Effective utilisation of existing skills and resources;
- Improved quality of information gathered, which is more comprehensive than when local authorities or communities gather information alone;
- Fewer disputes among local residents and between communities and authorities;
- Effective responses to local conditions and priorities;
- Building trust and confidence by all parties;
- Opportunities for further engagement between communities and authorities.

Municipalities should take proactive measures to create spaces for communities as central actors and partners in upgrading projects, primarily because any intervention directly implicates the living arrangements of informal settlement residents. A multi-disciplinary and inter-departmental team with regular reporting to senior level political and official structures needs to be established. It is therefore instructive to note that in both successful partnerships (Cape Town and Stellenbosch), municipal councils established dedicated departments for informal settlements.

5.5. Experimentation, innovation and change

While the UISP instrument provides a 'structured approach' to upgrading, the end goal of delivering a conventional housing product limits the impact of this instrument. Many Alliance projects identified by communities such as re-blocking, community-managed Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) facilities, open space projects, and smaller scale interventions (e.g. fire detectors) occupied an uncomfortable space in local government legislation. The advent of more flexible legislation (such as IUDF and SPLUMA) provides a framework in which municipalities are expected to expedite the development of informal settlements.

Multi year project funding should be ring-fenced and not be subject to changes in municipal staffing. This is critical to ensure that funding is available when communities consider themselves ready for implementation. In the absence of funding commitments, CORC and other NGOs are required to fill a funding gap to spur on local initiatives, and in some cases (e.g. Cape Town) establish a People's Finance Facility that was designed to promote bottom up processes, build organising capacity in communities and ensure community contributions through strong savings groups.

28 NUSP 2017

29 NUSP 2017, Chapter 4, page 8

05 Conclusions and key partnership lessons

5.6. Communication and joint planning

Joint decision-making and effective communication is vital for successful partnerships. Partnerships between informal settlement residents and local government thrive when communities are well organised, conflict can be resolved and credible projects are tabled for funding. To sustain an innovative approach, we recommend:

- Establishing multi-disciplinary and inter-departmental teams with regular reports shared with senior level political and official structures.
- Increased willingness to adopt and understand the importance of participatory approaches to informal settlement upgrading, based on best practice and government guidelines.
- Building social capital and capacity in community structures to ensure equal standing as partners in development.
- Ring-fencing multi-year funding for social facilitation, project preparation and implementation.



With then-mayor of Cape Town, Patricia de Lille in Mtshini Wam, 2012

With eThekwin municipality, 2018



With Western Cape MEC for
Human Settlements and City
of Cape Town in Flamingo
Crescent, Cape Town, 2015



After marching to eThekwin
municipality in 2014



Residents of Europe informal
settlement with planning students
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SA SDI Alliance upgrading projects. See blog and videos on sasdialliance.org.za

SA SDI Alliance Resources And Reading On Upgrading

City of Cape Town:

1. Joe Slovo (Langa)
2. Lwazi Park (Gugulethu)
3. Sheffield Road (Philippi)
4. Mtshini Wam (Milnerton)
5. Kuku Town (Kensington)
6. Flamingo Crescent (Lansdowne)
7. Open Space / Area Wide Upgrading (Khayelitsha Site B)
8. California (Mfuleni)

City of Joburg

1. Ruimsig reblocking (West Rand)
2. Water and Sanitation projects (various)

eThekweni Municipality (Durban)

1. KwaMathambo reblocking

Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (Port Elizabeth)

1. Midrand Water and Sanitation Facility

Stellenbosch Municipality

1. Langrug partial reblocking (Franschoek)
2. Langrug sanitation facility
3. Zwelitsha water and sanitation facility in Langrug

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**BILL & MELINDA
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2010 – 2014: to align communities with local and national governments to improve the shelter and livelihoods of the poor living in urban South Africa.


CHARLES STEWART
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2004 – 2011: Learning Through Practice: Building Partnerships Between Organizations of the Urban Poor and Local Authorities (renewed bi-annually).

2010 – 2018: General Purposes (renewed bi-annually).



Comic Relief:

2013 – 2018: A People Centered Finance Facility for Cape Town.

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2007/08: To pilot alternative and environmentally sound building technologies in low-cost housing settlements and promote community involvement in related policy formations and processes.

2009/10: For a pilot program on informal settlement upgrading, community participation and accountable government in South African five cities.

2011/12: To promote and facilitate partnerships between communities & local government to develop replicable, inclusive, people-driven practices for upgrading informal settlements in cities across South Africa.

2013/14: General support to engage urban practitioners and social activists in focused problem-solving to reduce urban poverty in developing countries.



Misereor:

2012 - 2015: Building partnerships between communities and local authorities.

2016 - 2018: Deepening the capacity of urban poor communities in South Africa to lead their own development in partnership with government.



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