

## QUICK GUIDE for participatory, city-wide slum upgrading

# PARTICIPATION FOR INCLUSIVE, CITY-WIDE SLUM UPGRADING

**SDG 11** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

**Target 11.1** By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

**Target 11.3** By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.



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## The aim of this quick guide

Participation has been identified as a key mechanism to promote urban equity and is a 'pre-condition' for inclusive sustainable urbanization.

This quick guide provides urban managers with the tools and messages to embrace participation in city-wide slum upgrading and as a tool to promote inclusive outcomes that benefits everyone, including slum dwellers.

## What is the link between sustainable urbanization and participation?

UN-Habitat research on cities and towns shows that urban contexts are more sustainable when:

- Sustainable urbanization processes are adopted (inclusive, integrated, economically viable and environmentally resilient).
- Stakeholders are involved in the development key plans, especially at the neighborhood level.
- Basic services, infrastructure and public space are understood as the platforms for economic and social development.
- Human rights are respected and used to guide the process and development outcome.
- All stakeholders are engaged from the slum dwellers to key departmental urban managers – to foster mind-set change and to strengthen the institutions that are key to promoting equitable urbanization.

## Who are we talking about in terms of participation?

- All urban actors. Both community level - especially slum and informal settlement dwellers, non-government organizations, community groups -but also those stakeholders whose decisions have a significant impact on local communities and the capacity to make city-wide connections (such as key government actors relevant departments and parastatals). Other actors are also essential to be engaged including city-wide and local economic development agencies and the real estate sector for example. Through participation, stakeholders begin to understand their role in the larger urban system and their relationship to broader city prosperity and urban development processes.

- Participation is not just for local communities or vulnerable groups but engages all who have a stake in the improvement of the urban environment and in broader equitable urban prosperity. The combined engagement of many different stakeholders helps build the necessary political, financial, social and environmental coalitions for strengthening a sustainable quality of life.

## Key components of 'participation' in participatory city-wide slum upgrading?

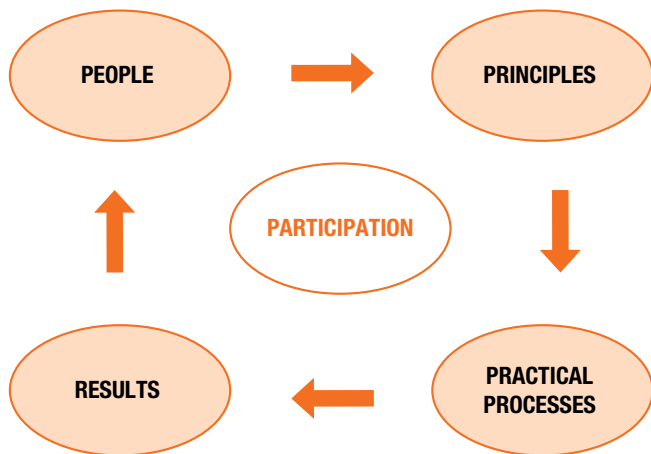
Participation is about inclusion and a commitment to improving the lives of slum dwellers. For an effective process and an inclusive outcome, participation must consider and embrace a number of dimensions and components.

1. People (stakeholders): Participation is the process of engaging all urban stakeholders in a city-wide approach to slum upgrading – from slum dwellers themselves, government ministries, local chambers of commerce, real estate associations to local artists – to deliver equitable urban development.
2. Practical processes, key thematic areas (content): Ideally, participation involves the engagement across a range of processes, especially the planning components as well as the integration of key thematic areas: land, housing, public services and utilities, cultural spaces and livelihood activities.
3. Principles: Participation should be based on the reciprocal idea of rights – the right to be meaningfully involved in decisions that directly affect a person's life – and responsibilities – to contribute appropriate resources – time, ideas and in some cases, financial resources. All stakeholders expectations and the parameters of the project and process should be made clear. The Human Rights Based Approach is a useful framework for guiding the development of project principles.<sup>1</sup>
4. Results achieved (monitoring and evaluation): Participation should be considered in terms of the process – how widely and meaningfully all stakeholders are engaged and able to have their views reflected in the project AND in terms of outcomes - how inclusive were the results achieved and exactly who benefitted?

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1 <http://hrbaportal.org/wp-content/files/Human-Rights-Mainstreaming27Nov2014Final-PDF.pdf>

**Figure 1** below captures these elements in a representational diagram.



City-wide slum upgrading thus requires diverse participation because slum upgrading is not just about one group of people, one area or one moment in time – it’s an integrated and holistic approach to urban development which aims at building connections and linkages throughout a town and city to make the most of its social and economic capital and to minimize environmental impact. It’s about improving the living conditions in the ‘here and now’ but also about putting in place preventative mechanisms that bring about systemic change for urban sustainability.

### What are the pre-conditions for participation in a city-wide slum upgrading programme?

The lessons from UN-Habitat’s experience suggests that the following ‘conditions’ are more likely to facilitate a participatory slum upgrading process and inclusive outcome for sustainable development. Most of the factors involve having a genuine intention to engage all stakeholders and work towards establishing transparent and connected governance platforms. Specifically, the ‘pre-conditions’ include:

- Power and influence is acknowledged in development decisions and processes and equity and equality principles are applied. Not everyone affected by, or in need of urban development has the opportunity, capacity or a platform to participate on an equal footing. Some people will have more influence than others by virtue of their position in government, their level of education or socio-economic status, and their position in the community (leader,

chief). Many slum and informal settlement dwellers have experienced marginalization and rejection throughout their lives and often struggle to find a genuine platform to express their views. Participation is about finding mechanisms for diverse and broad based input, especially for the most vulnerable and this requires an understanding of power relations.

- Rights and responsibilities acknowledged and the parameters of the project shared. In a slum upgrading.
- Building a case for all stakeholders for the participation of all stakeholders and the integration of institutions and plans.
- Fostering a political system that encourages active citizenship and is committed to equity and remedial action,
- Strengthening the legal basis for participation (especially through the policy and planning functions),
- Making resources available for participation including financing of activities for planning in slum upgrading, and,
- Empowering all stakeholders to be informed and organized and to understand the dynamic of rights and responsibilities in participatory processes.

### Does participation really make a difference?

Yes. UN-Habitat research shows that urban contexts which continue to let slums continue to expand and don’t improve the lives of slum dwellers, affect the prosperity and livability of that city for all urban residents, not just the slum dwellers. Significant proportions of slums negatively affect individual and city-wide productivity, social cohesion, innovation, quality of life, tourism and security. The city as a whole is thus deprived of many social, financial and economic resources and this incurs a long term cost.



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If managed responsibly and with clarity, participation can make a significant tangible difference to developing joint and integrated solutions that set the path for quality of life improvements for all, especially slum dwellers. Participation:

- Sends a clear message that urban managers are serious about the people they serve.
- Creates a mechanism for building the necessary understanding, coalitions and partnerships to strengthen the prosperity of your city, especially for slum dwellers and the private sector.
- Fosters innovation. All stakeholders have something to contribute, including slum dwellers.
- Helps enact any statutory obligations around participatory planning or human rights.
- Increases the likelihood of implementation as all key stakeholders are engaged.

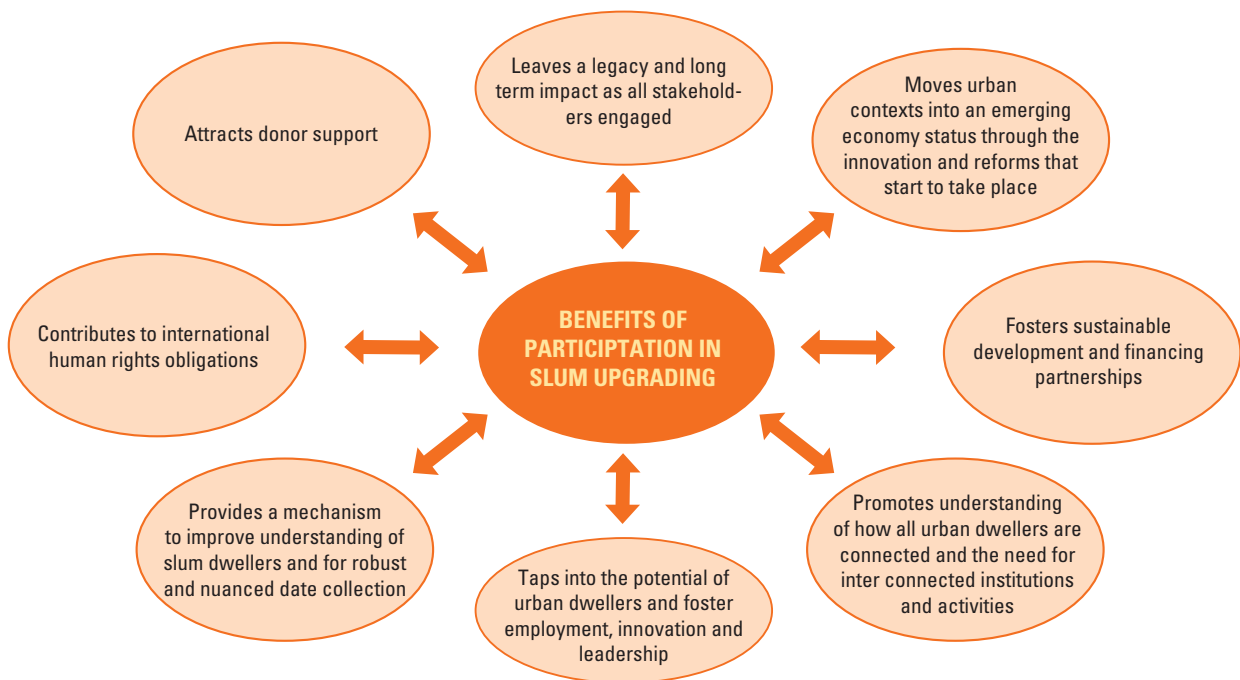
Governments don't necessarily have to develop all the solutions to the challenges of slums and often if they do, they are not sustainable as communities feel something has been imposed. Innovative solutions and pro-active engagement occurs around communities when people are given a genuine

platform to participate and feel more likely to follow through on activities or respect decisions made.



**Nkolbikok Residents Association, from Yaounde in Cameroon, receiving cheques for their PSUP community managed funds projects @ UN-Habitat/Melissa Permezel**

**Figure 2** The benefits of participation in a city-wide slum upgrading programme.



### What are the risks and costs of ignoring participation?

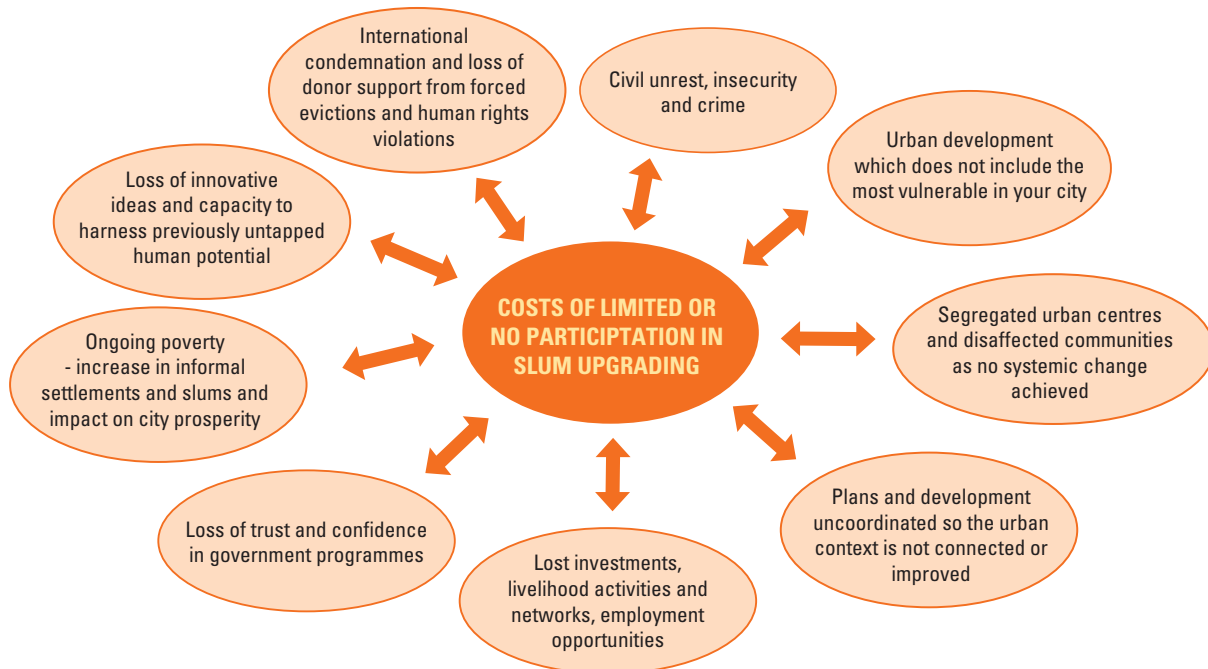
Research shows that the disenfranchisement of large sections of your population becomes a risk and a huge cost to cities and towns. The ongoing and long term exclusion of sections of your urban population, especially of the poorer ones - results in an incremental cost - associated with lost productivity, reduced innovation, increase in crime, insecurity and rising security prevention costs, lost tax revenue, reduced purchasing power, managing civil unrest. So while it is true that participation 'costs' - time, human capital and basic infrastructure - the cost of not including the range of stakeholders is much greater and can have a significant long term impact.

Research and experience in slum upgrading has shown that ignoring slum dwellers consistently at the expense of other interests brings short term gain for only a few. Furthermore, not engaging with high level urban managers within the slum upgrading change process will not deliver the longer term systemic change required for the prevention of slums.

### What other factors support a participatory approach to city-wide slum upgrading?

- In a slum upgrading project context, it is important to define the parameters of the project, the time frame and what will and won't be achieved. Those affected by any immediate change must also have a platform to present their views and expectations as well as consider what they also bring to the development agenda. Decision makers must be clear as to what can and can't be achieved, be open to engage with others's ideas as well as beaccountable for what can and measuring the results.
- A city-wide planning approach is adopted that engages a broad range of stakeholders. Successful 'at scale' slum upgrading requires a wide range of stakeholders to be engaged across various sectors and segments: It will include slum dwellers themselves and local non-government organizations, broader community organizations and municipal government actors including those responsible for transport and local economic development, municipal

Figure 3: The costs of limited or no participation in slum upgrading







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level organizations, chambers of commerce and real estate agents and relevant national government departments who might have a role. The ideas and inputs of stakeholders must then be reflected in local and city-wide strategic plans, strengthening links between transport, utility infrastructure and public services.

- Inclusive mechanisms and approaches are adopted that are sensitive to vulnerable groups and gender and are communicated and undertaken in a manner which reaches all stakeholders but which also realize the value of engaging key urban managers and decision makers for institutional mind-set change and inclusive city-wide prosperity gains.
- Participation is measured both in terms of both process and outcomes. For example, if you have tried to include women, and single mothers in particular, in your slum upgrading project, it's also about understanding and monitoring if those women are still 'beneficiaries' after the improvement and upgrading process and that women have had choices.
- Data is collected to understand the reality on the ground and in light of bigger picture trends and is used to inform the participatory process (to understand who might be considered vulnerable for example). Effective slum upgrading and city-wide approaches for prevention, are achieved when urban managers understand their local communities and the bigger picture trends.
- For the most up to date picture of your city, data is often best collection via a participatory enumeration process. It builds a very complete picture of local neighborhoods in urban areas – especially in terms of understanding

the tenure relations, economic activities and social networks. For long-term gains, data is also best collected via a partnerships with key institutions who can assist in developing robust and useful data sets and reports on trends in your city.

Figure 4: Types of engagement.



Source: <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/effective-engagement/introduction-to-engagement/what-is-community-engagement>

Figure 5: The importance of undertaking genuine participation.



## Why is a communication strategy important in participatory city-wide slum upgrading?

'Participation' for city-wide slum upgrading must be linked with communication. Participation efforts become limited if they are not part of an effective and engaging communication strategy, especially if slum dwellers themselves are to be informed and engaged effectively. Communication has been made so much easier because of all the different platforms available to both reach a range of urban stakeholders in a

slum upgrading project and enable stakeholders to initiate inputs themselves. At the same time, these strategies must not be limited to one platform type. For example, in many contexts, many urban stakeholders, have limited access to the internet and given cultural traditions, transmit information via meetings or notice boards or newspapers. In some places, mobile phones are becoming a major communication tool for many including slum dwellers. All communicative avenues need to be utilized effectively and transparently to add value to the slum upgrading project.

### Box 1 PSUP's "MyPSUP" platform

UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) uses the internet for communication and participation of key stakeholders in the 35 countries taking part. The website [www.mysup.org](http://www.mysup.org) is available in English and French, and is used as a regional technical exchange platform by slum upgrading country teams initiated through the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme. The teams share case studies, news, discuss crucial issues facing country teams, debate and use the platform as a repository for country specific results realized in phase I and II. Furthermore, the platform showcases the latest news, videos, photos and publications on participatory slum upgrading. The platform has also been used to disseminate live information during conferences and workshops. Due to public demand, sections whose content is approved for public dissemination have been opened up to non-participating countries.

### Box 2 UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF EQUITY FOR URBAN PROSPERITY

Equity has a significant impact on economic performance. the greater the degree of equity, the greater the chances of a fuller, more efficient use of available resources, including skills and creative talent. Urban prosperity thrives on equity, which involves reduction in barriers to individual/collective potential, expansion of opportunities, and strengthening of human agency and civic engagement<sup>5</sup>. Promoting equity must be a dual endeavor: 1) providing the conditions that enable every individual and social group to realize their full potential and harness the collective benefits any city has to offer and 2) removing systematic barriers that discriminate against individuals and social groups. Participation is a key mechanism to promote equity and thus prosperity in urban contexts<sup>6</sup>. A prosperous and sustainable urban context ensures gender equality, protects the rights of minority and vulnerable groups, and ensures civic participation by all in the social, political and cultural spheres.

5 p.83 UN-Habitat (2013). State of the World Cities Report 2012-2013: The Prosperity of Cities.

6 P.84. Ibid



**Box 3 HOW DECENTRALIZATION FOSTERS PARTICIPATION AND SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION**

A major benefit of decentralization as it relates to the prosperity of urban areas is that delivery of essential services such as water, sanitation and waste management, health and education can be carried out more effectively. Decentralization can make for better service delivery by providing greater opportunities for community-based groups to lobby for improved services. Proximity to physical demand for a service encourages effectiveness and promotes a more rational use of resources, while also allowing for closer monitoring by the beneficiary population of projects intended to serve them. The devolution of authority can foster community participation, too. Decentralization can lead to an institutional framework through which various political, religious, social, ethnic groups and multi-levels including towns and cities, can participate in making decisions that will affect them. Decentralized decision-making can provide a better framework for poverty reduction, so long as it is accompanied by fiscal devolution of powers to municipal authorities. Decentralization can accelerate economic development through active engagement of regional and municipal government units and local enterprises in economic activities. The transfer of authority and resources to local units of government and administration to design and implement programmes provides more opportunities for local citizens to play a more direct role in the development process<sup>7</sup>.

7 p.83 UN-Habitat (2013). State of the World Cities Report 2012-2013: The Prosperity of Cities.

**Box 4 CAMEROON'S EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGING ALL KEY STAKEHOLDERS.**

As part of the PSUP process and strongly supported by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Cameroon has instilled a strong country team. The team includes the full spectrum of stakeholders in Cameroon relevant to slum upgrading from the Minister of Housing and Urban Development to representatives from the various slum upgrading communities. This country team is successful because it is the first time in Cameroon where such a broad based group regularly meets to discuss challenges, approaches and lessons learnt in relation to slum upgrading. It has also become a conduit through which other key government departments are informed on issues within their jurisdiction that are blocking the successful implementation of slum upgrading. The Team has become an important voice for systemic change at the institutional level as key policy, legislation, regulatory, planning and land issues are raised with senior bureaucrats. At the local level, all the communities engaged in the PSUP project feel a sense of genuine engagement, a capacity to participate, a platform for innovative ideas and practical local projects that can be supported through the community managed funds. They also feel their aspirations, needs and concerns can be effectively communicated to decision makers as both local, city and national level governments are engaged in the slum upgrading projects together.

Participatory approaches are now being used on other planning processes as some local governments have seen the benefit of engaging a broad range of stakeholders as new ideas are developed and support is given to the implementation of the planning agenda.

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:**

View participation as an asset that triggers learning and innovation.

Understand that participation secures inclusive slum upgrading outcomes that promote broader urban prosperity.

Understand that participation refers to both a process which leads to an inclusive outcome and involves both rights and responsibilities.

**KEY ACTION:**

Create multi-stakeholder national/city-level slum upgrading teams to guide and support slum upgrading. Ensure that slum dwellers are part of these teams.

**Table 1:** Additional Recommendations and Actions

RECOMMENDATION	SPECIFIC ACTION
<p><b>RECOGNIZE SLUM DWELLERS AND THE VALUE-ADDED FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT FROM THEIR ENGAGEMENT</b></p> <p>Start to institutionalize a more positive outlook focusing on what slum dwellers actually contribute to the broader urban environment (employment, livelihood activities, local economic development and cultural activities) and take clear steps to strengthen mechanisms to engage them in slum upgrading.</p>	<p><b>CHALLENGE URBAN MANAGERS TO THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT SLUM DWELLERS</b></p> <p>-To foster mind-set change, start meaningful conversations about the importance of integrating slum dwellers and slums into the broader urban context. Use integrated planning approaches such as the development of National Urban Policy, national and city-wide slum upgrading strategies as the means to do so. -Discuss the impact of forced evictions and the benefits of tapping into slum dwellers’ potential.</p>
<p><b>MAKE ‘INCLUSION’ AND INTEGRATION THE MANTRA FOR URBANIZATION AND SLUM UPGRADING</b></p>	
<p>Make inclusion and integration the mantra for facilitating city-wide prosperity which includes slum dwellers. View participation as a key mechanism to promote institutional integration, the engagement of key decision makers in government and other sectors and integrate key strategic physical plans</p>	<p>-Form a team to understand how to ensure that participatory approaches are formalized throughout a slum upgrading project. -Ensure the group is effectively chaired and lead. -Ensure that key decision makers take part as well as slum dwellers themselves who have many good ideas to improve their lives.</p>
<p>Align participatory slum upgrading with urban prosperity so that it is clear how it contributes to broader quality of life gains and prosperity outcomes for all urban dwellers.</p>	<p>-Undertake an inventory of current strategic plans and development projects to ensure they are connected and reflect the integrated vision for the city.</p>
<p><b>DEVELOP INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION PLATFORMS IN SLUM UPGRADING PROJECTS</b></p>	
<p>Share the urban vision with all stakeholders and create platforms to promote understanding and engagement.</p>	<p>-Develop a realistic communication strategy outlining what’s possible and what’s not, supported by adequate communication tools to reach and engage all stakeholders including some form of post-review process to assess the lessons learnt.</p>
<p><b>DEVELOP A CITY-WIDE SLUM UPGRADING STRATEGY THAT INCLUDES PARTICIPATORY PLANNING, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND INTEGRATED BASIC SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p>	
<p>Recognize that slum upgrading cannot be addressed in isolation, but must be considered in terms of linkages and integration between different stakeholders, departments, sectors as well as physical plans. Participation is the key to promote effective integration.</p>	<p>-Reflect the ‘city-wide approach’ to slum upgrading in the development of a ‘city-wide slum upgrading strategy’ to maximize the benefits of connecting any planned interventions with other key and strategic urban developments (especially those related to economic hubs, road, utility, service and housing infrastructure).  -Review current and future ‘big ticket’ plans (infrastructure, economic, environmental, waste management and affordable housing plans) and ask if they are pro-poor and how slums specifically can be included into the development agenda. -Undertake participatory planning processes (such as enumerations, community SWOT analysis) to understand the community (both needs and assets, mapping) and engages all stakeholders to share the findings for innovation and learning.</p>
<p><b>PROMOTE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND MANAGEMENT (capacity development) IN LOCAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT</b></p>	
<p>Stakeholders, need to see the practical and tangible impacts of a slum upgrading strategy within a short time frame increase trust and confidence in the benefits of city-wide slum upgrading and the effectiveness of key actors.</p>	

RECOMMENDATION	SPECIFIC ACTION
<p><b>DEVELOP COMMUNITY MANAGED FUNDS AND LOCAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OPTION</b></p>	<p>-Community managed funds and community contracting, ensuring a range of groups needs and roles are recognized (youth, women, disabled etc).reflecting a common vision and approach.</p>
<p><b>AGREE ON WHAT MECHANISMS WILL AVOID THE DISPLACEMENT OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN A SLUM UPGRADING PROJECT TO PROMOTE AN INCLUSIVE OUTCOME</b></p> <p>Ensuring that the final upgraded area remains pro-poor amidst natural population and diversity trends is a challenge but one that must be considered. Many urban renewal and slum upgrading projects are co-opted by higher income groups and displace those who need the project most – the urban poor.</p>	<p>-Ensure a no forced evictions policy is adopted. -Adopt pro-poor planning codes that preserve social mix and housing types that accommodate the poor. -Ensure that vulnerable communities are maintained through commitments to granting security of tenure to a proportion of the original inhabitants or through traditional collective land ownership agreements.</p>

## References:

Guide to undertake participatory slum upgrading: <http://unhabitat.org/books/a-practical-guide-to-designing-planning-and-executing-citywide-slum-upgrading-programmes/>

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Participation and youth: <http://unhabitat.org/books/young-people-participation-and-sustainable-development-in-an-urbanizing-world/>

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**PARTICIPATION FOR INCLUSIVE,  
CITY-WIDE SLUM UPGRADING**

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