GOLD VI

Case-Based Contribution
to Chapter 7: Renaturing
GOLD VI Report on Pathways
to urban and territorial equality

Partnership for Resilient Citywide Slum

Upgrading, Cape Town, South Africa

In partnership with:

Produced by:

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Partnership for Resilient Citywide Slum Upgrading, Cape Town, South Africa

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CHAPTER
7: Renaturing

SUMMARY

From 2013-2019, the South African Slum Dwellers International Alliance worked together with other civil society partners in Cape Town on a joint project for informal settlement upgrading, as part of the Comic Relief Four Cities Program. In four cities across Africa, relevant stakeholders were asked to come together to create collaborative solutions to challenges their cities face. In Cape Town, each organization identified a specific focus within the broader framework of informal settlement upgrading, with the view of contributing towards the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) review of informal settlement upgrading policy and practice. The SA SDI Alliance identified the establishment of a metro level fund for informal settlement upgrading as a key priority. This set the stage for engagements with the Western Cape Province around the development of a provincial level approach to informal settlement upgrading. The SA Alliance was selected in a competitive bid process to conduct a rapid appraisal of all informal settlements in the Western Cape (RAP) using community-led data collection practices and protocols developed by the SA SDI Alliance over the past 15+ years.

Sweet Home Farm is an informal settlement in Cape Town.
Source: Simon Kirby / Flickr

From 2013-2019, the South African Slum Dwellers International Alliance worked together with other civil society partners in **Cape Town** (South Africa) on a joint project for informal settlement upgrading, as part of the Comic Relief Four Cities Program. In four cities across Africa, relevant stakeholders were asked to come together to create collaborative solutions to challenges their cities face. In Cape Town, each organization identified a specific focus within the broader framework of informal settlement upgrading, with the view of contributing towards the **Department of Human Settlements (DHS) review of informal settlement upgrading policy and practice**.

The South African SDI Alliance is made up of four organizations:

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

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

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

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

Together, these organizations support urban poor communities to find solutions to homelessness, landlessness and poverty. The SA SDI Alliance works together to build community-organising capacity, pursue collaborative partnerships, and implement informal settlement upgrading and housing projects. The SA SDI Alliance is the South

African affiliate of Slum Dwellers International, a global movement of slum and informal settlement dwellers composed of national federations of the urban poor in over 20 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

SDI-affiliated federations across Africa, Asia and Latin America **collect data on their settlements to create space for communities to identify developmental priorities**, organize leadership, expose and mediate grievances between segments of the community, and cohere around future planning.

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

As their contribution to the joint project for informal settlement upgrading, the South African SDI Alliance identified the establishment of a **metropolitan level fund for informal settlement upgrading** as a key priority, with the view of contributing towards the Department of Human Settlements review of informal settlement upgrading policy and practice. This set the stage for engagements with the Western Cape Province around the development of a provincial level approach to informal settlement upgrading. The SA Alliance was selected in a competitive bid process to conduct a rapid appraisal of all informal settlements in the Western Cape (RAP) using **community-led data collection practices and protocols** developed by the SA SDI Alliance over the past 15+ years.

In 2016, the RAP was used to inform the development of the Western Cape's Informal Settlement Support Framework and Programme (ISSF and ISSP). The use of community-led informal settlement data to inform the drafting of provincial policy and programme for informal settlement upgrading was a major win for the SA Alliance. It emphasizes the value of community-collected informal settlement data in the development of policies, plans, and development that is in line with the needs, priorities, and realities of informal settlement communities on the ground.

In 2017, the national government began a process to review the **White Paper on Human Settlements**. The NGO Collaborative Initiative prepared a draft submission proposing guiding principles for incremental, *in situ* development and informal settlement upgrading in the White Paper. The Community Organisation Resource Centre (CORC) had, throughout this time, been engaging National Treasury to explore possibilities around the development and establishment of a metro fund for upgrading, with some promising engagements over the course of the 2016-2017 period. In 2019, the three organizations (CORC, Isandla & VPUU) were given the opportunity to consolidate their work from the previous period.

CORC focused on developing tools to improve training, reporting and analysis on community-led data collection, and the hosting of a **stakeholder learning forum on the role of community data in effective *in situ* informal settlement upgrading**. This included training activities for community enumerators and supervisors, the development of community-led data collection training manuals for communities, NGOs and supervisors, and poster templates for community verification and feedback to communities and government.

Building on this work, 2018-19 witnessed the establishment of a much deeper and more meaningful relationship between the South African SDI Alliance and the City of Cape Town, thanks to their shared interest in examining what it means to turn Cape Town into a "resilient" city. This was of particular importance to the SA Alliance as no resilience strategy can be considered truly resilient without looking at the challenges, lessons and unique situations that informal settlement dwellers face. **The Alliance influenced the City of Cape Town's resilience strategy**, ensuring that the voices of informal settlement dwellers were heard, understood and reflected in the process. This was accomplished through the presentation of community-collected slum data from over 70 informal settlements to the City of Cape Town, informing about their informal settlement upgrading interventions. This process involved communities presenting their own profiling data. Specifically, leaders from a particular region would present information on a number of informal settlements organized in such a way that it matched the relevant line department of the City of Cape Town. The challenges were thus categorized according to settlements with no access to water, sanitation and electricity, settlements with inadequate levels of basic services based on the City of Cape Town's own ratio targets and then finally settlements that were located on pieces of land that were not owned by the City and would thus prove to be challenging to work in. Informal settlement dwellers themselves could show how powerful community collected data can be in both the planning and implementation of basic service delivery. The Alliance's data helped introduce the City of Cape Town (Department of Informal Settlements and Back-yarders) to service delivery priorities in 74 informal settlements in the metro and unlocked project work with other partners like the Western Cape Human Settlements Department through the Informal Settlement Support Programme.

RENATURING

This paper has been produced as a Case-Based Contribution
to the sixth Global Report on Local Democracy and Decentralization
(GOLD VI): the flagship publication of the organized constituency of
local and regional governments represented in United Cities and Local
Governments. The GOLD VI report has been produced in partnership with
the Development Planning Unit (University College London), through the
programme Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality (KNOW). GOLD VI
focuses on how local and regional governments can address the local
manifestations of growing inequalities and contribute to create "Pathways
to urban and territorial equality". The GOLD VI report has been produced
through a large-scale international co-production process, bringing
together over a hundred representatives of local and regional governments,
academics and civil society organizations. This paper is an outcome of this
process and is part of the *Pathways to Equality Cases Repository*, which
collects the over 60 Case-Based Contributions produced as part of the
GOLD VI report.

In particular, the present paper has contributed to Chapter 7 on
"Renaturing", which focuses on the governance and planning of
nature-based solutions, with specific emphasis on decoupling economic
development and resource use, the transition to net zero carbon systems,
risk reduction and urban resilience. The chapter explores how local and
regional governments can promote approaches that advance these goals,
placing the needs and priorities of structurally discriminated social groups
at the core of their actions, and contribute to urban and territorial equality.