



## Urban Agenda Platform

*The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.*

# Local knowledge, action and learning for inclusive urban transformation: Best practices for implementing the NUA in slums and informal settlements

Region	Sub-Saharan Africa
Themes	Capacity-Building Climate Change Covid-19 Gender Housing Human Rights Local Economic Development Public Health Slum Upgrading Social Inclusion Waste Management Water & Sanitation Youth & Livelihoods
Geographic scope	Global
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere Goal 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls Goal 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all Goal 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
New Urban Agenda Commitments	Sustainable Urban Development for Social Inclusion and Ending Poverty Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Prosperity and Opportunities for All Environmentally Sustainable and Resilient Urban Development

## Summary

Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is a transnational network of hundreds of thousands of slum dwellers living in slums and informal settlements across the Global South. For decades, organised urban poor communities affiliated with the SDI network have been implementing a set of tools and methodologies to build partnerships with government and transform their communities and cities. These tools focus on building local capacities, organising and mobilising slum dweller communities, collecting and utilising community-driven slum data to drive policies, planning and development, partnering with governments and other stakeholders, and implementing incremental slum upgrading, housing, and infrastructure projects that address the needs and priorities of the urban poor.

SDI's strategies continue to be aimed fundamentally at finding effective means of securing of tenure for the most vulnerable urban residents. Since the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in 2016, SDI has consolidated and expanded many of our efforts in order to increase the impact of our work and ensure that the global policy commitments are bearing fruit in the lives of urban poor communities on the ground. Despite major challenges - including Covid-19, major organisational changes, and increasingly severe climate disasters – SDI affiliates continue to demonstrate the impact of partnerships between organised communities and government stakeholders in realising the goals stated in the NUA.

## Background and Objective

SDI is a transnational network of hundreds of thousands of slum dwellers living in slums and informal settlements across the Global South. For decades, organised urban poor communities affiliated with the SDI network have been implementing a set of tools and methodologies to build partnerships with government and transform their communities and cities. These tools focus on building local capacities, organising and mobilising slum dweller communities, collecting and utilising community-driven slum data to drive policies, planning and development, partnering with governments and other stakeholders, and implementing incremental slum upgrading, housing, and infrastructure projects that address the needs and priorities of the urban poor. In the drafting of the New Urban Agenda, SDI pressed hard for the inclusion of clear language addressing forced evictions, calling upon governments and other urban decision makers to put an end to this practice in all forms. Unfortunately, despite clear evidence of effective alternative strategies provided by



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organisations like SDI, power-holders continue to use events such as Covid-19 and climate disasters as excuses to decimate communities, putting the lives of entire communities and indeed entire cities and countries at risk as increasing numbers of people find themselves displaced. In light of this, and of SDI's vision for "resilient and inclusive cities that substantively improve the lives of the urban poor," SDI's strategies continue to be aimed fundamentally at finding effective means of securing of tenure for the most vulnerable urban residents. Since the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in 2016, SDI has consolidated and expanded many of our efforts in order to increase the impact of our work and ensure that the global policy commitments are bearing fruit in the lives of urban poor communities on the ground. Despite major challenges - including Covid-19, major organisational changes, and increasingly severe climate disasters – SDI affiliates continue to demonstrate the impact of partnerships between organised communities and government stakeholders in realising the goals stated in the NUA.

## Outline of activities over the last four years

- Planning and construction of water points and sanitation facilities in slums and informal settlements: These have been planned and developed with central involvement of the communities themselves to ensure that they meet the needs of the communities, paying particular attention to the needs of women children as it relates to safety and well-being of these groups.
- Installation of infrastructure informed by communities' needs: Infrastructure related to waste management, drainage, energy, water, health services, roads, and more have been constructed and installed in settlements across the SDI network with the involvement of SDI-affiliated communities and federations. In nearly all cases, support has been provided by Mobilising and organising women-centred savings groups in slums and informal settlements across the global south, supporting women to collect daily savings to enhance livelihoods, support daily needs, and built capacity to manage finances.
- Skills training for women and youth to build livelihood capacities in urban gardening, recycling, production of construction materials, media and documentation, production of PPE material during and since the onset of Covid-19.
- Implementation of pro-poor, data driven policies and development: SDI played an integral role in the development of more inclusive, resilient urban development policies and projects at community, city and national scale. These projects have been informed by community-driven slum data, collected by and for the communities concerned – ensuring that policies and projects are informed by the needs and priorities of the communities on the ground. This has included the development of innovative finance mechanisms, such as city upgrading funds, that can provide agile pro-poor funding directly to the communities who need it the most. Some examples of this work are listed below.
  - **Kenya's** Mukuru Special Planning Area (SPA) – the largest informal settlement upgrading project in East Africa – aims to use large-scale collaborative community planning to transform a 650-acre slum that is home to over 100,000 households, businesses, and institutions. Aiming to transform a slum area of 650 acres of land currently facing some of the most severe urban challenges in Nairobi into a healthy, functioning neighbourhood, the SPA plan goes beyond providing just a legal basis for upgrading. An innovative approach for large-scale collaborative community planning, the SPA offers a platform to unite Mukuru's residents, the county government, and roughly 42 other organisations (including civil society, academia, and the private sector) to work together to design an Integrated Development Plan for the area's 138,000 households, businesses, and institutions. The plan includes both spatial and sectoral elements, and contains six areas of focus: 1. water, sanitation and energy; 2. education; 3. health services; 4. roads, housing and commerce; 5. secure tenure; and 6. the environment. Once complete, the MIDP would guide delivery of sustainable basic social services. By the end of 2019, six sectoral consortia had completed initial residents consultations and developed draft sector plans. The draft plans were presented to the county government. Initial comments were made and received.
  - The partnership between the **Ghana** Federation and local government on the implementation of the Amui Dzor slum upgrading project demonstrates an institutionalised collaboration. Following on the success of this project, and at a time when the government was particularly responsive to slum upgrading efforts, state institutions across Ghana became increasingly interested in securing partnerships with Federation groups to implement upgrading programmes. In particular, progress was made in growing institutional collaborations to provide household toilets for the urban poor across the Greater Accra region. Building capacity of Federation members to construct Biofil toilet systems at a fee, the Alliance modelled and propagated this system in Ashaiman (Greater Accra), and the success of this project attracted further institutional collaborations to continue doing the same across the Greater Accra region. Collaborating with state institutions, the Ghana Affiliate shared data on informal settlements, informal economies, and other development needs of the urban poor. State institutions' continued reliance on the Alliance's participatory data collection has resulted in a more pro-poor urban planning decision-making process. For instance, the Alliance collected data helping to identify development priority needs for state intervention for the new Ministry of Inner-City and Zongo Development (MICZD), which oversees Ghana's informal settlement/slum communities. The Alliance will also continue to collaborate with academia (University of Ghana at Legon and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi) to standardize data collection tools and make them speak to the needs of the urban poor.
  - In **India**, the relationship between the India Alliance communities and the city of Mumbai / Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (MMRDA) is on a good footing and has resulted in the relocation of over 70,000 households to improved, formal housing through various government housing and upgrading programmes. As a next step, the Alliance is seeking to institutionalise the post-relocation process in order to ensure the government's continued support to these urban poor communities. The Federation and Mahila

Milan (a national network of women's savings groups and part of the SDI Alliance in India) are also working in partnership with the city on large-scale housing and infrastructure projects. The Federation is also cultivating these relationships in cities like Ahmedabad, where communities still need to be organised before a substantive relationship with the city can be built.

- In March 2019, the **Namibian** Federation signed two MOUs with local government authorities to institutionalise working partnerships with urban poor communities. The first MOU was with the Municipality of Swakopmund, and the second between the Namibian Federation and their support NGO, Namibia Housing Action Group (NHAG), and the Association of Local Authorities. Meanwhile, collaborating with the National Alliance for Informal Settlement Upgrading, the Namibia Federation is helping develop a strategy to kick-start upgrading at scale in partnership with government. The Federation is awaiting a meeting with the president to present the strategy.
- Also advancing its institutionalized partnerships with government authorities, the **Senegalese** Alliance developed draft agreements with the Social Housing Fund of the Ministry of Urbanism; partnership agreements with the municipalities of Diameguene Sicap Mbao, Pikine East, Pikine West, Ndiarème Limamoulaye, and Yeumbeul Sud; and signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the municipalities of Jeddah Thiaroye Kao and Wakhinane Nimzatt to facilitate the development of thirteen public spaces.
- Thanks to the **Zambia** Federation's 2018 leveraging of a five-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Lusaka City Council (LCC), the Alliance continued construction of a community-managed public sanitation block in Old Soweto Market in Lusaka, on land allocated by the LCC to the Federation. Specifically, the MOA allows the Zambian Federation to operate toilets constructed on city land for a period of three years, allowing it time to recoup its investment. Thereafter, a profit-sharing arrangement will start, with 60% of any profits accrued going to the Federation, and 40% to LCC. The construction of the sanitation unit is in its final stages with roofing, plumbing, and plastering in the process of completion.
- In January 2020, the **Zimbabwe** Federation and their support organisation Dialogue on Shelter signed an MOU with the Masvingo Municipality, re-affirming the Zimbabwe Alliance's position in engaging with the city around inclusive policies for slum upgrading. The MOU recognises the Alliance's approach to sanitation service provision and allocates land for the construction of a public facility. This municipal partnership demonstrates how a long-standing history of constructive lobbying and collaboration with local authorities can yield city-level changes fundamental to the wellbeing of the urban poor. The Alliance has also contributed to the National Development Strategy through the coordination of Urban Informality Forums. This has been instrumental for the institutionalisation of slum upgrading as a national urban development strategy. In addition, the National Human Settlement Policy, which the Alliance has been contributing to since 2018, was finally adopted by the Government with the inclusion of language in support of slum upgrading. Finally, the Youth Federation and other partners worked with the Transport Department in finalizing the transport policy.
- Working with Lilongwe City Council (LiCC), the Malawi Alliance is regularizing unplanned and informal communities within its jurisdiction. Having developed a rapid needs assessment tool, the Alliance piloted the tool in three informal settlements across Lilongwe to assess residents' knowledge and understanding of the land regularization process. Data collected is guiding the partners in developing messages for targeted audiences, including the development and dissemination of a poster targeting communities that expounds on the regularization process.
- As of November 2019, the **South African** Alliance nationally had profiled 1,511 informal settlements (up from 983 since September 2018) and conducted household enumerations in 196 informal settlements (up from 172). Alliance data unlocked project work with three rural municipalities, in partnership with the Western Cape Provincial Department of Human Settlements' Informal Settlement Support Programme (ISSP). Meanwhile, also in partnership with the Western Cape Provincial Department of Human Settlements (DHS), Vusi Ntsuntsha housing project members used community-collected household enumeration data to resolve issues with the Vusi trustees. This move allowed the Vusi project committee to take ownership of the process and move forward with the signing of the Land Availability agreement, in partnership with the Western Cape DHS. In South Africa, the National Department of Human Settlements used input by a Cape Town NGO Collaborative (of which the South Africa SDI Alliance is a member) for national policy deliberations on an updated human settlements white paper and the incremental informal settlement upgrading policy, which is informed by the white paper.

## Achievements

- Organised urban poor communities regarded as key partners in the urban development and planning sector at the city and global scale
- Increased awareness of the critical value of community-driven slum data for urban development and planning and resilience-building efforts
- Increasingly institutionalised partnerships between organised urban poor communities, including city upgrading funds and municipal budget allocations towards upgrading efforts
- Increased ownership by organised communities of the urban poor of their own processes – and their own development.

## Partners



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- SDI affiliated organisations in 20+ countries across the Global South
- Cities Alliance
- Huairou Commission
- IIED
- Local, regional and national governments in 20+ countries across the Global South
- World Bank
- UCLG and CGLU-Africa
- UN Habitat
- Global Commission on Adaptation
- Voices for Climate Action

## Contribution to other global agendas

SDI affiliates and Secretariat report on progress to date towards outcomes stated in our Strategic Plan. These align with these above indicators / milestones, such as policies impacted, partnerships secured with government and other stakeholders, infrastructure improvements, improved access to basic services, skills trainings undertaken, community-driven data exercises undertaken, policy influence effected, and any other opportunities or challenges faced. The Secretariat collates these experiences to track progress of the network overall.