



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.

Dzivarasekwa Slum Upgrading

Region	Sub-Saharan Africa
Award Scheme	World Habitat Awards
Start Year	2019
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Summary

Hundreds of thousands of people live in slums across Zimbabwe, which have been subject to wide-scale demolition and a lack of government recognition. In Dzivarasekwa Extension, in Harare, a project – run by Dialogue on Shelter for the Homeless in Zimbabwe Trust, Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation and the City of Harare – demonstrates how upgrading slums and incorporating them into town plans is a viable alternative to the state's default demolition and resettlement policy.

Background and Objective

Following independence in 1980, Zimbabwe experienced massive rural to urban migration, but a lack of housing development led to the rapid growth of slums across the nation's major towns and cities. In 2005, the government initiated a nationwide slum clearance campaign, evicting thousands of people and demolishing their homes. During this campaign, slum dwellers were moved into holding camps, including the Dzivarasekwa Extension camp in Harare, which lacked even basic services. Two years later, the government agreed to upgrade the settlement and allocated land so residents could continue to live there and avoid further eviction and relocation. This move was followed in 2010 by the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Dialogue on Shelter for the Homeless in Zimbabwe Trust, Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation and the City of Harare, which focused on promoting city-wide slum upgrading. This provided the framework for a radical new approach in which the city authorities would collaborate with slum communities themselves to provide in-situ improvements. Dzivarasekwa was chosen as the first settlement to be upgraded under the wider Harare Slum Upgrading Project (HSUP), due to the fact land had already been allocated to the Federation. Lessons learned from the Dzivarasekwa Extension Slum Upgrading Project would then be used to upgrade other slums across the city. Work began in Dzivarasekwa in 2011 and now 408 families (around 2,050 residents) have secure land tenure, 336 homes have been built and 1,344 people have been housed. Sanitation has been improved with the installation of 29 eco-san toilets (replacing pit latrines) and a solar-powered water system, a community resource centre has been built and roads have been tarred. Between 2012 and 2018, 71 other slums were mapped and profiled under the HSUP and upgrading initiatives have begun in nine other settlements in Harare using the model piloted in Dzivarasekwa.

Actions and Implementation

The Dzivarasekwa project had three key aims: to improve living conditions for residents; to promote local government practices that encourage the inclusion of the urban poor; and to develop a model for the upgrading of other slums under the HSUP. The organisations involved in delivering the HSUP have distinct roles. The alliance between Dialogue on Shelter for the Homeless in Zimbabwe Trust and the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation is responsible for inventories and documentation, provision of labour and construction, and community mobilisation. The City of Harare is responsible for the installation of infrastructure, including roads, water and sewer systems, provision of technical expertise and supervision. A project management committee – which includes representatives from the community, the alliance and the City of Harare – oversees the upgrade project. Community members were involved in every step of the Dzivarasekwa initiative to ensure improvements reflected residents' priorities. They were involved in data collection, carrying out mapping and inventories, upgrading services and planning and building houses. Three architectural designs for the new homes were developed through community consultations and visits to other sites. These were debated during community meetings until the members agreed to adopt a semi-detached design, which reduced construction costs (due to the shared walls). Residents helped to dig trenches and lay water and sewage pipes, while training for artisans under the project produced teams of plumbers and bricklayers who built the houses. Housing beneficiaries were selected by members of the community-based saving schemes that make up the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation. Selection was based on household employment status and income and typically prioritised child-led, elderly-led or women-led households. The average cost per 24 square metre house was \$2,400 USD, which was paid for by the resident with a loan from the savings group. The project also documented the challenges relating to housing delivery faced by low-income people. This helped partners and other stakeholders in the project identify regulations that hinder the delivery of low-income housing on the scale the city needs and make recommendations to the City of Harare. Funding for the project came from the HSUP, which has raised \$5 million USD, including \$3.8 million USD contribution from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and around \$600,000 USD from community members themselves,



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.

through loans/payments for houses and money from savings groups. The Harare Slum Upgrading Finance Facility (HSUFF) was developed as part of the Dzivarasekwa project to provide financial sustainability and extend the initiative to other settlements. HSUFF started in 2014 with an initial fund of \$200,000 USD – \$120,000 USD from the City of Harare, \$50,000 from Dialogue on Shelter/Slum Dwellers International (SDI), and \$30,000 USD from the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation. In total, 355 loans have been issued to 110 groups for 550 households. These loans have funded income-generation projects, water and sanitation improvements, housing, and land acquisition.

Outcomes and Impacts

The project has improved the living conditions of thousands of low-income people in Dzivarasekwa through secure land tenure and improved housing and urban services. The community centre provides a space for meetings, early childhood development, and for young people to learn about ICT-based documentation of slum-upgrading initiatives. Dzivarasekwa – and other slums – are now recognised as part of the city, and, therefore, its overarching development agenda. This integrates slum dwellers with the wider community and helps secure their right to housing and access to basic services. The project was also instrumental in the creation of the Harare Slum Upgrading Strategy in 2012 and, because of this, residents now know more about city processes, including their rights and obligations. The project has set a precedent for positive engagement between local authorities and slum dwellers after decades of animosity, evictions and demolitions. The initiative highlights how genuine partnerships between local authorities and slum communities can become platforms from which pro-poor settlement initiatives can be implemented. Environmentally-friendly energy solutions were included in the upgrading work in Dzivarasekwa. These included the installation of a solar-powered borehole, public solar lighting and solar lights for households. Thirty women were trained in solid waste management and some now work in recycling businesses. The introduction of eco-san toilets has helped to manage public health issues and further protect the environment by preventing the pollution of underground water sources through pit latrines, which were the main form of sanitation in Dzivarasekwa.

Innovative Initiative

Lessons learned from the Dzivarasekwa project are already being implemented in other HSUP initiatives across Harare and have even spread to other cities in Zimbabwe, such as Masvingo, where the city council has supported the building of 1,000 eco-san toilets. The project faces some barriers to transfer, however, including a lack of political will within the City of Harare to implement the principles underlying the slum upgrading strategy, which has led to policy inconsistency. Zimbabwe's cash crisis has also impacted the issuing and repayment of loans through the HSUFF. The fund is temporarily suspended in 2019 but still operating with a capital of around \$200,000 USD, which continues to grow. Despite these challenges, the ground-breaking partnership approach taken by the Dzivarasekwa project has changed attitudes towards slum upgrades and defined a new relationship between city authorities and the urban poor. The initiative has already transformed the living conditions of hundreds of vulnerable households, giving low-income people a voice and a stake in the future of their city.

Conclusion

Sladen Makona was born in 1968 and is married with four children. Sladen's family was one of the first to benefit from the Dzivarasekwa Extension Slum Upgrading Project. In 1986, my parents bought a plot, which were being informally shared out by a man called Zex in Jacha, Epworth. In 1990, we started facing the threat of eviction since they had been subdivided without formal planning approvals. We approached senior politicians for protection against the potential evictions but the relief we got was short-lived – in October 1991 we were evicted. This was prior to the Queen's visit for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and many informal settlements were affected as the government went on a programme of sanitising low-income neighbourhoods. They wanted to show a clean city without slums like our Jacha in Epworth. The bulldozers arrived at midnight, the houses were razed down and we were taken to Porta Farm. Others ran away as they feared being sent to resettlement farms. When we arrived at Porta Farm, it was like a real bush. Government assured us that we would stay there temporarily. After some months, we were advised that those who were formally employed would be relocated to Dzivarasekwa Extension – yet another holding camp. My parents were working hence they were able to make it onto the list of families earmarked for this relocation. On 29 December 1991 the relocation happened and then I was employed by the District Development Fund which was constructing the wooden cabins for the relocated families. We had four blocks of toilets – two for women and two for men. In 2000, some families were able to get plots through the government in Hatcliffe Extension but some remained in Dzivarasekwa Extension. In 2005, things took a sad turn as we were again evicted under the government-led Operation Murambatsvina. I took my belongings to my mother's rural area in Mt. Darwin. After a month following the evictions, we moved back to Dzivarasekwa Extension and reconstructed our shacks. In 2006, Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation members visited us and they talked to us about the need to establish our numbers. After the enumeration we received support from Federation leaders and started housing savings schemes. Later, we set up the various components for the groups and I was volunteered for the training component. I was able to take part in a number of exchange visits and these increased my understanding of the Federation process. In 2007, the land we had lived on informally for 16 years was officially allocated to the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation by the government. We were involved in the land development processes working with experts. In June 2011, after the approval of the layout and survey, we were formally allocated plots by the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation. We no longer fear evictions and with the current upgrading work, our settlement has changed.