

WUF 2022

## **Global Community of Practice on Slum Upgrading**

Networking Event NE 81 | 4386697334042651

### **Envisioning Slum Upgrading for the City of Tomorrow**

Held on: Tuesday 28th June 2022 | 16.30h - 18.00h

ICC Multifunction Hall: Room 1

Katowice, Poland

### **Summary Report**

## **Introduction**

The World Urban Forum (WUF 11), took place on 26-30 June 2022 in Katowice, Poland, under the theme “Transforming our cities for a better urban future.” The forum brought together representatives from across the world to share views and experiences on sustainable urbanisation.

During this forum, the Global Community of Practice on Slum Upgrading (GCOP) held the session “Envisioning Slum Upgrading for the City of Tomorrow,” which took place on the 28th of June 2022, bringing together actors and experts from the African, Asian and Latin American regions, to discuss main challenges and the way forward towards equitable and sustainable cities. The discussion took place within the framework of the activities of this Community of Practice on Slum Upgrading, a coalition of multiple stakeholders (national and local governments, multilaterals, academia, NGOs and CSOs) working in the Global South on the referred topic seeking to advance knowledge and boost exchange.

The WUF 11 session was a culmination of events and activities in Africa, Asia and LAC that contributed to sharing knowledge around informal settlements and upgrading approaches, as well as fostering dialogue among actors and institutions across the regions, resulting in the identification of trends and lines for action and research.

In this sense, the session had two main momentums: the first was to expand on the potentialities of the Community of Practice and the wealth of knowledge that has been produced collaboratively, particularly from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and second, an overview of the main challenges in informal settlements in Africa, Asian and Latin America.

### **The discussion was guided by three questions:**

1. Has the visibility of informal settlements embraced by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in attempts to rewrite public policies and make structural transformations in terms of housing and infrastructure or others?
2. How can Climate Change action be articulated with Slum Upgrading efforts? How can it be embedded into planning policies and plans?
3. What is the future of slum upgrading in light of the current migration context and social and political crises? How can informal settlements be brought to the forefront of global discussion?

### **Session Outcome**

Panels led the session with members of the academia, think tanks, NGOs, grass-root organisations and international cooperation agencies. The panel reinforced the role of the community as an actor in positive transformation by facilitating knowledge exchanges and sharing best practices across networks and regions and further urged the global audience to leverage the collective power to exchange ideas to address the challenge of informality.

In line with the WUF 11 theme “Transforming our cities for a better urban future,” the panel identified six fundamental issues in addressing housing justice through slum upgrading while promoting climate justice.

#### **1. URGENCY**

- The need for rapid action, since slums risk is rising rapidly: governments and cities cannot afford to ignore the intersection of urbanisation, informality and climate change.

- Governments need to engage in the challenge of informality, especially municipalities, which can contribute in technical resources and bring the communities together.
- Urbanisation cannot be stopped, strategies to accommodate this growth need to be identified in the best way, including affordable house development
- Addressing the challenges of informality is critical to the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

## **2. LEARNING & DATA**

- The importance of learning from the bottom up, from locally developed interventions that may be relevant for different contexts.
- The need of learning from each other and from history; from the many decades of experience with all sorts of informal settlements upgrading and housing solutions.
- Informal settlements are diverse, with different contexts and needs, hence the need for accurate and timely data for informing public policy and implementation decisions
- The need to co-develop the capacity of people on the ground to collect and analyse data as evidence for service requests and local advocacy. This will support negotiation, media and empowering the dwellers.

## **3. SLUM UPGRADING**

- The need for affordability, scalability, replicability, sustainability, and social aspects of tenure security and regularisation.
- The need for integrating slum upgrading, using urban planning as a tool to achieve spatial justice through citywide interventions: “informality is a system that needs to be understood not as binary to formal, but on its own.”
- Slum upgrading cannot be only infrastructure, it has to consider the slums as a system of disadvantages, of exclusion: not slum upgrading but “slum integration”.
- Responsive urban planning framework is critical, where the government and community must participate in the process.
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- To shift from individual property rights to zoning, collective forms of owning and managing land; such as community land trusts, community-led housing and other non-speculative ways of producing and managing houses.
- To revisit Sites and Services and other experiences that improved the life of the underprivileged. A shift to secure land tenure and infrastructure is needed

## **4. SLUMS AS POVERTY & OPPORTUNITY**

- COVID 19 and climate change were identified as growing drivers of migration and displacements, leading to increased poverty.
- The need to talk about the structural reasons for poverty and to challenge the idea that the market approach is appropriate or enough.
- Low-income housing has not been resolved through free market ideology and market-based mechanisms focused on exchange values, instead of using values of cities and neighbourhoods.
- While housing is a critical component, as a commodity, it cannot solve the problem of informal settlements or of poverty if the issue of the economic challenge is not addressed.
- To recognize informal settlements as places of opportunity and as systems of disadvantages which go beyond the infrastructural shortfalls, calling for “slum integration” and addressing structural conditions that lead to poverty.

## 5. CLIMATE CHANGE

- Location matters. Upgrading is a key mechanism that is not only a strategy of adaptation but also mitigation. Relocating communities outside of cities contributes to carbon-intensive urban development processes.
- Small actions can create big changes. To engage with small-scale developers in informal segments, not as illegal actors in the housing production, nor as criminals, but as agents of change that have the potential to capture social and environmental benefits in terms of techniques and building materials.
- Focus on upgrading and housing policies placing people and nature in the centre of the planning processes.

The session was posed as the continuation of efforts being made to integrate and strengthen a Global Community of Practice on Slum Upgrading and had hoped to enrich not only the topic but to build on long-lasting alliances that can work collaboratively towards contextual solutions, using an array of ingredients that may come from the least expected places through collaboration, cooperation and exchange. Through the WUF process, the activities of the COP became better known among global actors and entities. More than 70 participants attended the networking event, including high-level government officials. Awareness was raised on slum upgrading and cross-cutting issues of poverty and climate change.

The community will further continue to provide a learning and knowledge exchange platform for experts, and development actors to guide cities and governments on their local and national strategies and policies regarding slum upgrading and related sectors. Next up, a meeting will be held in September 2022 to continue the conversation and keep shaping the Global Community of Practice on Slum Upgrading, hoping to grow not only the members but to extend the commitment toward more equitable and inclusive cities.

The success of this event was possible thanks to the contribution of REDEUS\_LAC (lead), CUBES – Wits University, Centre for Policy Research (CPR) India, UN-Habitat and World Bank. Other contributing partners included: Academia (RIVHA, St. Gallen, NTNU, DPU, Buenos Aires University, Drexel /SALURBAL, INSPER, Boulder Colorado), Think tanks (IIED, NIUA India), NGOs (HFHI, IDEAMAPS, CURE, ACU, TECHO, HIVOS, HIC, KOTA KITA, AVSI) and International (UNICEF, GIZ & GIZ India, SISCA – Central American System of Social Integration). We would also like to thank all the participants, in particular the speakers, and the facilitators for their dedicated work.