

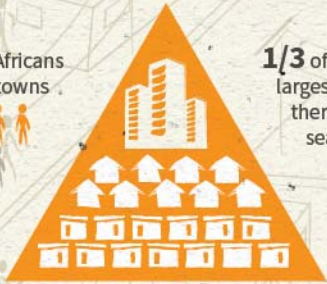


PLACEMAKING

How to involve communities in
upgrading their informal settlements

THE CHALLENGE

63% of South Africans live in cities and towns



1/3 of residents in the four largest metros have moved there from elsewhere in search of a better life



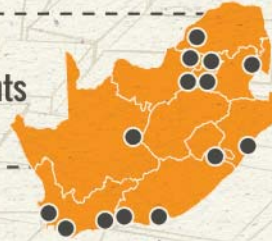
On average households are getting smaller and the total number of households in towns and cities is increasing which has fuelled the growth in demand for housing



URBAN

INFORMAL

There are approximately 2700 informal settlements in South Africa



NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS LIVING IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS



- About 11% of South Africans live in them
- Only 31% of adults in informal settlements have a matric or higher education
- On average, 40% of people living in informal settlements are unemployed
- Households with unemployed adults are far less likely to own a house

HOUSING

- Since 1994 demand for housing has always outstripped supply
- State-delivered housing has not created settlements in which communities can thrive
- Patterns of housing delivery have entrenched exclusion and inequality in South African cities
- Residents need to be involved in planning the development of their settlements and housing options

Levels of urbanisation and rates of housing delivery mean that demand is likely to continue to rise. The majority of South Africans are not going to be able to earn their way into owning a house any time soon. We need to find a way to make informal settlements liveable for the foreseeable future.

Current informal settlements

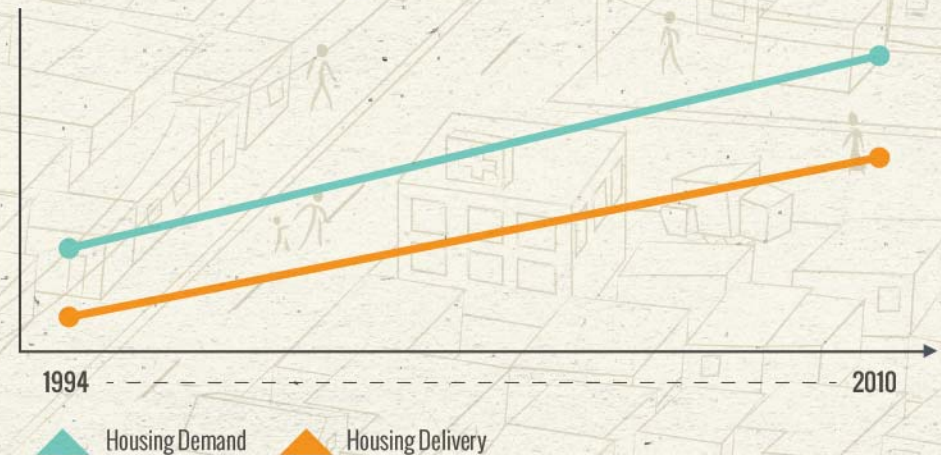
Benefits

- ✓ **Affordability & access:** Informal settlements offer migrants, work seekers and young families an affordable way to live in cities. They can also give poorer people access to schools, health care and job opportunities.
- ✓ **Flexibility:** Informal settlements can adapt quickly to meet the needs of residents.
- ✓ **Social networks:** Communities in informal settlements often build strong social networks. These provide support for jobs, childcare, safety and so on.

Challenges

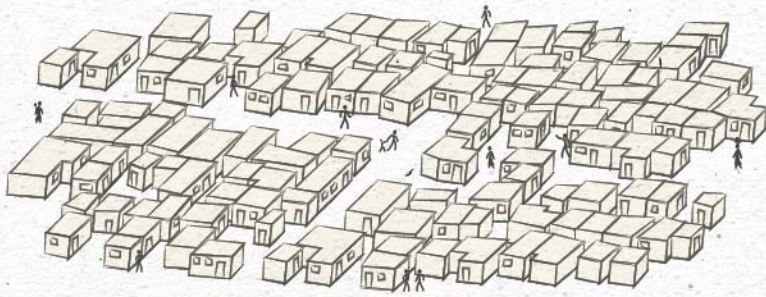
- ✗ **Unsafe & exclusionary:** Informal settlements can be unsafe spaces with high rates of crime and violence. Households can also find themselves excluded, exploited or victimised by other residents.
- ✗ **Insecure land:** Residents in informal settlements can be at higher risk of eviction. They are also more likely to be built on land that is dangerous or of poor quality.
- ✗ **Poorly serviced:** Households often lack adequate access to necessary services. This makes it difficult to live in dignity and good health.

THE DIVERGENCE BETWEEN AVERAGE HOUSING DELIVERY AND DEMAND



UPGRADING OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Informal Settlement



Since 2009 the upgrading policy of the South African government has had the following elements:

Before the government starts upgrading informal settlements it needs to:

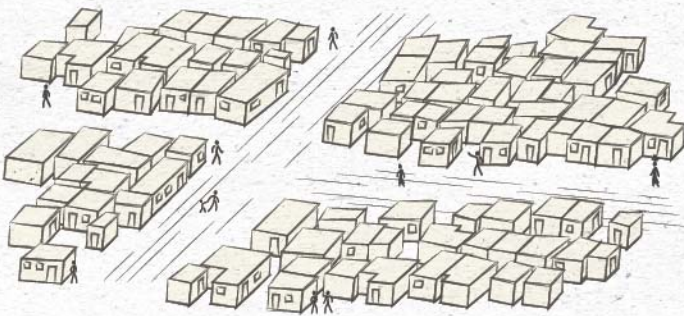
- Assess geotechnical conditions, particularly where they may limit the delivery of services and future upgrading into formal homes
- Better understand the environmental risks or ecological considerations that present current or future threats to the development of the community
- Identify legal issues that may limit or undermine processes of development
- Assess planning options based on information about the composition, number and preferences of residents in the community
- Collect information about the need for basic and social services including an assessment of the costs and practicalities of extending access to bulk services

Can the community be upgraded?

Yes

No (relocation)

- Land & planning**
- Determining/confirming security of tenure
 - Collection of socio-economic information
 - Community planning (including layout planning, re-blocking & opportunities to support local livelihoods & businesses)
 - Organising the community



- Installation of basic interim services**
- Communal provision of water, sanitation, electricity, roads and walkways, and lighting and so on



- Full and permanent installation of services**
- Land acquisition completed
Support for livelihoods & local economic development



- Allocating funds for the development of individual houses in line with the eligibility of beneficiaries



Upgraded Settlement

VS

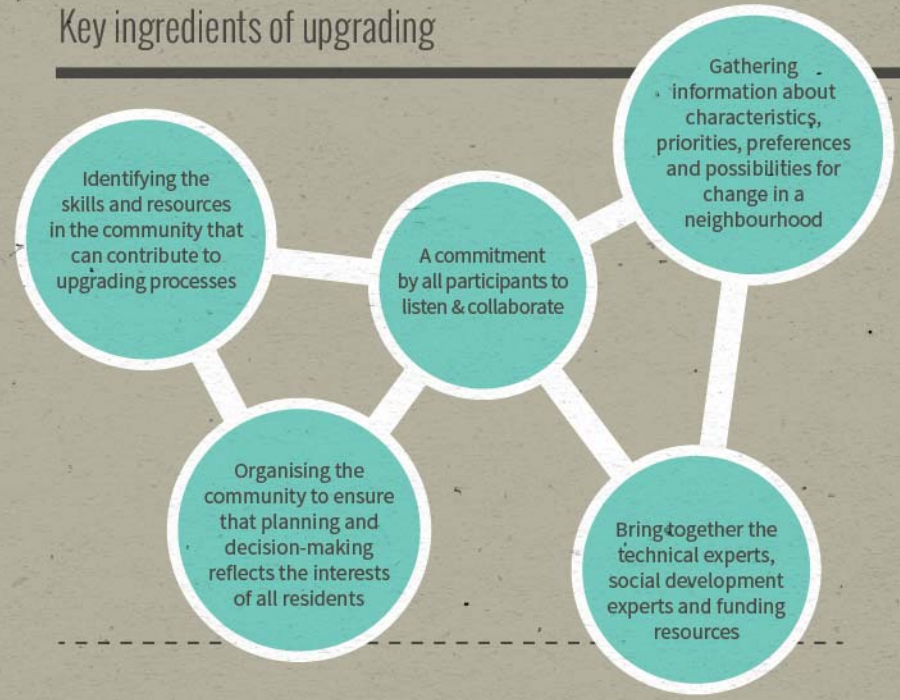
Low-Cost Housing Project

What makes upgrading informal settlements a better response?

- 1 We know that people will continue to migrate to South African cities.
- 2 We know that the current model of housing delivery cannot keep up with demand.
- 3 We know that many instances, communities are not involved in the development of their settlements and that these do not reflect their needs.
- 4 We know that settlements can be built bit by bit. This approach allows communities to be involved in the planning and implementation of changes.
- 5 We know that government investment in services and communal spaces can trigger or support people investing in the improvement of their own homes.

When settlements are incrementally upgraded communities can combine their creativity and commitment with state resources and services so that upgrading meets their needs. An incremental approach will resist, as far as possible, the relocation of households.

Key ingredients of upgrading



Is there urgency or immediate opportunity?

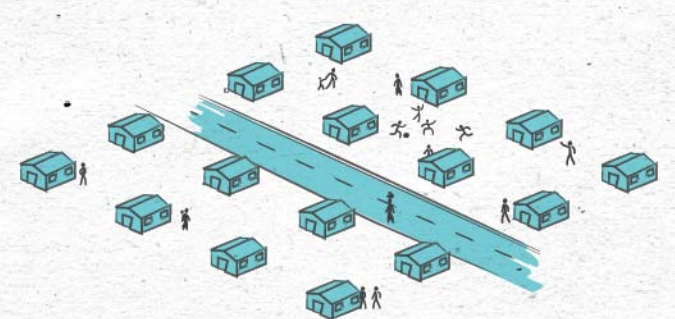
Yes

No

Depending on density of informal settlement, some residents may need to be relocated

Temporary Relocation Area

Provision of emergency basic services





The role of the GOVERNMENT

in incremental informal settlement upgrading

The strength of the state is its access to resources, its ability to mobilise different skills and capacities and its ability to regulate. An incremental approach to informal settlement upgrading shifts the responsibility of the state from developer and decider to facilitator and resource.

In this revised role the state needs to work in partnership with other social actors and communities to produce solutions that are both technically satisfying and socially relevant.

Tools & Opportunities

State bodies & policies supporting the shift towards upgrading

The National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP) provides technical support to municipalities and provinces.

City Support Programme (CSP) provides support and grants to cities to integrate to informal settlements into wider systems of planning.

Housing Development Agency (HDA) fast-tracks the release of land for human settlement developments and provides project management services.

Urban Settlements Development Grant (USDG) enables local government to directly get funding for the provision of land and services to low income households.

National Development Plan (NDP) confirms government commitment to the upgrading agenda and the need for further innovation.

Accreditation Cities can apply for accreditation for greater control over housing delivery.

Upgrading Informal Settlements Programme (UISP)

The National Housing Code includes this chapter which details the government's approach to upgrading.

The Challenges of shifting the approach

Changing mindsets and attitudes Coordinating interdepartmental approaches to the needs of informal settlements

Shifting the focus from individual households to communal infrastructure and services Combining a commitment to targets with meaningful processes

Identifying, leveraging and managing funding resources Balancing the response to short-term needs with long-term solutions

THE VALUES OF A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH



Everyone is committed to the same goal



Everyone in the community takes part



Community involvement leads to more creative solutions



Community involvement makes solutions more sustainable



INTERMEDIARIES

It is often difficult for the state and communities to understand and work directly with one another. It is also important that all sectors of a community can participate. For successful and inclusive upgrading to occur individuals or organisations need to facilitate the coming together and collaboration of the state and communities. Officials and community organisers should involve intermediaries as early in the upgrading process as possible.

How can the state change its approach?

- Invest in facilitators to improve processes involving officials and communities
- Encourage communities to negotiate and prioritise their needs and visions
- Identify, use and help to develop locally recognised democratic processes to participate in planning, decision-making and implementation
- Identify opportunities to work with local groups to deliver and maintain services and communal infrastructure
- Remain open to renegotiating at every phase of the upgrading process
- Create opportunities for technical experts (e.g. engineers) to work with community members to produce contextually-relevant solutions
- Be transparent with local groups about the opportunities and constraints under which officials need to work
- Prioritise investment in public space and infrastructure
- Enable residents to invest in their places of residence

The Vision of an UPGRADED SETTLEMENT



MOBILISE YOUR COMMUNITY

- Involve all groups and leadership structures in a community
- Ensure there is a leadership to consult with and report back to the wider community
- Agree upon clear procedures for the leadership to consult with and report back to the wider community

GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

Set up a network of individuals to collect information about the community:

- Who lives in the settlement and where?
- How do they earn a living?
- What is their access to resources like?
- What are their most immediate needs and priorities?

Bring the community together to jointly map:

- The existing boundaries in a community
- Local assets and facilities
- The layout of shacks

JOINTLY IDENTIFY WHAT YOU KNOW & WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

Have a discussion about:

- The skills, expertise and capabilities in the community and discuss how these may be used to support local processes of development and change
- The processes or contributions that community members can make to initiate/facilitate local development (e.g. local savings clubs)
- The skills and knowledge that the community does not have and will need for particular development processes (e.g. particular technical skills or a deeper understanding of how to access state funding)
- Individuals, organisations or state departments that can be approached to address these gaps

PLAN WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

- Identify strengths, weaknesses and threats to the community
- Set goals for upgrading that are negotiated with and accepted by all groups in the community
- Agree on priorities for the upgrading process
- Develop strategies to achieve joint goals

UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

- Know who your local councillor is
- Know how and when government makes decisions
- Know what government resources are available
- Know which departments are responsible for key parts of upgrading



The role of the COMMUNITY

in incremental informal settlement upgrading

The community should be active in every stage of planning, decision-making and implementation of changes in their community.

Community organisers need to create systems through which different groups can express their needs and interests, and leaders can be elected and held accountable.

Your Rights as a South African citizen

The right to dignity

The right not to be evicted from your home

The right to basic services including water, sanitation and electricity

The right to a safe and healthy environment

The right to be involved in planning and decision-making

The right to be consulted about the priorities and allocation of resources in local government's budget

The right to information about government processes

Active citizenship means:

- Understanding your rights
- Know what part of government is responsible for ensuring particular rights
- Finding out how to be involved in government processes of planning and decision-making
- Be an active participant in decisions that affect you and your community
- Help to identify members of your community that may need additional support to access their rights

Why should communities get involved?

- To achieve great improvement in the quality of life offered by their settlement
- To influence the kinds of services that are delivered
- To benefit from opportunities that are created by the upgrade
- To strengthen and enrich the social networks in communities
- To develop new skills that will enable the community to continue to develop
- To find sustainable solutions that can be managed and maintained by local groups



isandla
i n s t i t u t e

Isandla Institute acts as a public think tank with a primary focus on just, equitable, sustainable and democratic urban habitats. At the core of our work is the goal of advancing the right to the city, only attainable when urban residents are able to exercise full citizenship and participate in planning and governance. Our programmatic areas of work are local governance, urban land and livelihoods.

Isandla Institute's mission is to advocate for the eradication of poverty and the realisation of human rights through innovative and effective strategies at the interface of state and civil society, including the following: promoting dialogue and exchange, policy research, advocacy, public education, institutional support, network coordination and information dissemination.

Contact

Postal Address:

Isandla Institute
PO Box 12263
Mill Street, Gardens 8010
Cape Town, South Africa

Physical Address:

Ubunye House
70 Rosmead Avenue
Kenilworth 7708
Cape Town, South Africa

T +27 21 683 7903

F +27 21 683 7956

E admin@isandla.org.za

www.isandla.org.za