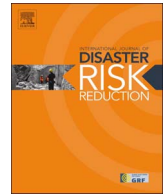




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Community-driven pathways for implementation of global urban resilience goals in Africa

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ABSTRACT

With one billion people worldwide now living in slums and projections suggesting a threefold increase by 2050, the magnitude of implementation challenges facing stakeholders to new global urban, poverty-reduction and climate change commitments are clear. In Africa, where urban growth is almost synonymous with slum growth, entrenched inequality and impoverishment produces multidimensional risk accumulation and threatens the continent's ability not only to implement new commitments, but also to sustain the achievements made to date. This paper, developed from a practitioner viewpoint, argues that an under-utilized and under-resourced strategy for urban risk-reduction and resilience-building is community-driven slum upgrading. It suggests that African cities pursuing a resilient development agenda can significantly increase their implementation capacity through partnership with organized communities.

1. Introduction

While African cities can be centers of opportunity and innovation, pressures such as climate change shocks, disease pandemics, economic crises and political insecurity all too often beset residents. Slum dwellers suffer the brunt of these calamities in the urban context as well as 'everyday' risks that result in even greater premature death, serious illness and injury. The essence of urban resilience-building is to nurture city systems that can withstand these shocks and risks and support inclusive and sustainable prosperity.

At COP21, cities made a strong case that they are uniquely equipped to address climate change; and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have emphasized the need to create inclusive cities and localize development agendas for enhanced implementation outcomes. Thanks to strong transnational slum dweller networks, recognition for the centrality of slum and informal settlement development in these agendas has also gained traction.

With the documents signed, global attention now shifts to implementation, where the classic but ever-amplified struggle to turn plans into action begins. In this commentary paper the City Resilience Index [1] is used to provide a frame for the presentation of a structured account of examples from African slum dweller federations affiliated to the SDI network as evidence of the potential for community-driven pathways to enhance implementation of these agendas. The examples highlighted in this paper are taken from the author's experience of the Shack and Slum Dwellers International (SDI) network. The examples are indicative of the capacities and opportunities presented by

organized slum dwellers as a part of city resilience building. The aim is to provide an overview of activity from a singular perspective.

SDI is the largest slum dweller movement on the globe and since the cases are drawn from across Africa the paper's analysis suggests there is applicability across a wide range of contexts. SDI is a transnational network of slum dweller federations. These federations comprise thousands of saving schemes networked at the settlement, city and national level to collectively drive a bottom-up change agenda for inclusive cities. Federations use tools and strategies such as daily savings [3], peer-to-peer exchanges [10], settlement profiling [15], enumeration and mapping [2] to organize a critical mass of urban poor communities in cities with the capacity to engage cities as partners in the urban development arena. The SDI network's mission is to transform slums into resilient neighborhoods and inclusive cities through incremental, in situ, people-driven upgrading [7].

2. A resilience framework

Resilience is both a technical and social construct. It is expressed through both the design of buildings and infrastructure and the capacities of households, civic organization, governments and business [13]. Physical, financial and social assets accumulated over time provide foundation capacity to reduce or respond to stressors; but it is often social capital that provides the flexibility to support and build back better following shocks [12]. Critically, the daily stressors faced by poor communities place powerful demands on resilient city strategy and management and have city-wide implications as severe as disaster

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Table 1
Selected parameters of analysis: focal dimensions, goals, and indicators.

Focal Dimensions	Focal Goals	Focal Indicators
Health and wellbeing	#1: Minimal human vulnerability	1.1 Safe and affordable housing 1.2 Adequate and affordable energy supply 1.3 Inclusive access to safe drinking water 1.4 Effective sanitation
Economy and society	#4: Collective identity and mutual support	4.1 Local community support 4.2 Cohesive communities 4.4 Actively engaged citizens
Leadership and strategy	#12: Integrated development planning	12.1 Comprehensive city monitoring and data management 12.2 Consultative planning process 12.3 Appropriate land use and zoning

events [4].

In developing the City Resilience Index (CRI), the Rockefeller Foundation and ARUP sought to enable cities to measure and monitor the multiple factors that contribute to their resilience. “Its primary purpose is to diagnose strengths and weaknesses and ”measure relative performance over time.” [1], 2) The intention behind its use as a frame for this paper is that it serves as a pragmatic lens to appreciate the concrete ways organized communities support cities to achieve set resilience goals. It will argue organized communities are part of the solution for city-wide resilience building. Asserting resilience for all can lead to conflict with city authorities and developers, but more collaborative pathways are as possible. Both are documented below.

The City Resilience Index frames resilience according to four dimensions Rockefeller's [1] vision for urban resilience includes four dimensions (leadership and strategy, health and wellbeing, economy and society and infrastructure and ecosystems) that underpin 12 city resilience goals 12 goals. While organized community contributions are evident across the four dimensions and 12 goals, this paper must limit the parameters of its analysis. It will focus on the three goals (cutting across 3 of the 4 dimensions) shown in Table 1 and a selection of key CRI indicators developed by Rockefeller and ARUP to measure capacity. The three goals were chosen because they speak to the fundamentals of systemic resilient urban change:

1. How do we reduce the vulnerabilities that cause every day hazards and increase the likelihood and severity of shocks for a billion urban slum dwellers worldwide?
2. How do we organize communities so that they play a major role in driving the reduction of these vulnerabilities?
3. How do we ensure state and community action is coordinated and represents a partnership for the co-production of systemic resilience?

3. Pathways in action

3.1. CRI dimension: health and wellbeing

3.1.1. Goal 1: minimal human vulnerability

The Health and Wellbeing dimension of the CRI speaks to the “extent to which the city enables everyone to meet their basic needs (food, water, and shelter) ...”. Goal 1 under this dimension seeks Minimal Human Vulnerability, specifically to “enable[s] individuals and households to achieve a standard of living which goes beyond mere survival.” [1] A selection of indicators for this goal are examined below.

3.1.2. CRI indicator: safe and affordable housing

Affordable shelter is a critical element of a resilient city strategy, simultaneously promoting housing, infrastructure, and employment goals. Throughout the SDI network in Africa, slum dweller federations are contributing to the production of safe and affordable housing – many using their own savings and labour to gear resources from

community development funds, government and other development partners.

In SDI's Southern African Hub,¹ slum dweller federations have built or improved over 23,000 houses. In South Africa alone, the slum dweller federation has built close to 13,000 houses in efforts to combat entrenched vulnerability [14]. The positive externalities (or co-benefits) of the community self-build process employed by the South Africa federation include skills development, increased community cohesion, skills building and even the enhanced size and quality of the units delivered [8]. Using community contractors, moreover, reduces the cost of building considerably and often leads to enterprise creation and employment in participating communities.

In addition, South African communities are undertaking incremental upgrading projects that reconfigure settlements to improve safety and security and access to basic services. In 2016, for instance, Mathambo settlement in Durban, was razed by fire. It was not the first time. Through a series of community meetings, residents and the Planning Division of eThekweni Municipality identified re-blocking as an incremental solution for improving conditions in Mathambo. Community savings were used to secure a loan from a Community Upgrading Fund for the collective purchase of building materials. To prevent future fires, the project incorporated emergency precautions such as fire-resilient construction materials and fire detectors, while also improving access ways to facilitate energy vehicle access and movement throughout the settlement.

The safe and affordable housing demands of slum dwellers throughout the global South simply cannot be met by government or the market alone. Incremental upgrading of slum settlements that is undertaken in partnership with organized local communities has greater potential for reducing shelter vulnerability.

3.1.3. CRI indicator: adequate affordable energy supply

Nearly 140 million urban dwellers in sub-Saharan Africa do not have access to electricity [6]. Many have illegal connections for which they pay more than wealthier groups with official connections. A high proportion of urban households in sub-Saharan Africa use dirty fuels for cooking and kerosene or candles for lighting. This results in exposure to dangerous concentrations of indoor air pollution and to accidental fires. High respiratory risks, personal injury and burns, as well as devastating shack fires are but some of the consequences of this energy injustice.

In East, West and Southern Africa, SDI federations are undertaking solar projects. There are now 21 energy service hubs located across 8 countries offering household solar PV kits through federation savings and loans structures. Household kits of less than 20 W have generated the largest demand and are seen by households as either a direct replacement for the grid, an interim means of providing modern energy,

¹ The South African Hub is a regional cooperation between all of SDI's federations in Southern Africa. Other regional hubs exist in East Africa, West Africa, Latin America and Asia.

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