

Strengthening the South African National Upgrading Support Program

South Africa has been undertaking a major effort to address the challenges of large scale informal settlements since the re-democratization. Roughly 2.3 million households have benefited from the South Africa national government's subsidized housing program since 1994, financed by a total investment of 44.8 billion rand (ZAR). Despite these achievements, the total housing deficit has not improved significantly, and an estimated 2.1 million households in South Africa still live in precarious conditions, either in informal settlements or in the backyards of formal dwelling units.

In 2004, the Government of South Africa piloted a new housing policy approach—*Breaking New Ground*, a national comprehensive plan for the development of sustainable human settlements, including informal settlements through upgrading. As a result, in late 2010 and early 2011, the government launched a new Urban Settlement Development Grant to improve the lives of 400,000 households living in informal areas, applying a wide range of upgrading instruments.

Our approach

This policy encouraged design and implementation of the National Upgrading Support Program (NUSP), in partnership with the National Department of Human Settlements, the World Bank Institute, and Cities Alliance to provide capacity support to the national government, provinces, and cities in scaling up informal settlement upgrading in South Africa.



Our program

NUSP is structured according to the following components:

- **Policy Reform Capacity Support:** Development of a national strategy and Upgrading Informal Settlements Program. They will reflect on what worked, what did not, and why in South African national housing policies. This includes designing appropriate institutional frameworks, funding mechanisms, performance management indicators, and coordination mechanisms between national, provincial, and local governments.
- **Peer Learning and Coalition Building:** Establishment of a national informal settlement upgrading practitioner's network to share innovations, success and challenges, and building a coalition to advocate policy

reforms and programmatic approaches to improve the urban poor's living conditions in South Africa.

- **Knowledge Development and Dissemination:** Design of a national upgrading knowledge platform that sets out approaches to and techniques for incremental upgrading and improvement of informal settlements, and establishment of an interactive web platform for facilitating knowledge sharing (www.upgradingsupport.org).
- **Learning:** Development of an overall capacity building strategy to support the implementation of the national Upgrading Informal Settlements Program, as well as development and roll out of a learning program targeting decision-makers and practitioners who will be responsible for designing and implementing upgrading projects in South Africa.

Results at scale

NUSP has already achieved important results. For the first time, upgrading in South Africa has been mainstreamed in the national housing policy, offering more effective, efficient, and sustainable approaches to subsidized housing production for the urban poor. The program focuses on developing appropriate options, drawing on international experiences and building upon successes and failures of national, provincial, and local authorities as well as shack dwellers' communities and the private sector. NUSP emphasizes coalition-building as much as learning given that provinces, local authorities, private sector, civil society

support organizations and shack dwellers communities are the drivers of change. The Program provides the necessary capacity development support in order to ensure that this mobilization is effective.

Partners

South African National Human Settlements Department, World Bank Institute, Cities Alliance, United States Agency for International Development, Urban LandMark, FinMark Trust, and Neighborhood Partnership Development Facility

Clients

The South Africa National Human Settlements Department is the main driver of National Upgrading Support Program. WBI also works closely with urban practitioners across South Africa, such as city managers, think tanks, NGOs, and with policy makers at the city, provincial, and national levels.

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