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Tools for Inclusive Cities

The Roles of Community-Based Engagement and Monitoring in Reducing Poverty

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The Human Settlements Group works to reduce poverty and improve health and housing conditions in the urban centres of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It seeks to combine this with promoting good governance and more ecologically sustainable patterns of urban development and rural-urban linkages.

This paper describes how federations and networks of slum/shack dwellers develop effective responses to their needs through partnerships with local governments. It has a particular interest in the role of Community-Based Engagement and Monitoring. It draws on interviews and discussions with civil servants, politicians and members of slum dweller federations in Jinja (Uganda), Pune (India) and Harare (Zimbabwe) as well as visits to projects where the federations and local governments work together, supported by local NGOs. The paper also considers the role of funds set up by the federations and networks in stimulating and supporting community-based engagement including the Asian Coalition for Community Action.

Contents

Acronyms

ACCA	Asian Coalition for Community Action
ACHR	Asian Coalition for Housing Rights
CBE	Community-Based Engagement
CBM	Community-Based Monitoring
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CLAF-NET	Community Livelihood Action Facility Network (Sri Lanka)
CODI	Community Organizations Development Institute
MoU	Memorandum(a) of Understanding (in this report, these are between government and grassroots organisations or federations
NGO	Non-Government Organisation (or 'Not Grassroots Organisation')
NSDF	National Slum Dwellers Federation
NSDFU	National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda
PHP	People's Housing Process (South Africa)
RAY	Rajiv Awas Yojana (Government of India fund to support 'slum-free' cities)
SDI	Slum/Shack Dwellers International
SPARC	Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres
UPFI	Urban Poor Fund International

Summary

This paper focuses on the role of federations and networks of slum/shack dwellers in developing effective responses to their needs through partnerships with local governments, and thus contributing to more inclusive cities. It has a particular interest in the role of Community-Based Engagement and how Community Based Monitoring contributes to this.

Around one in seven of the world's population lives in informal settlements in urban areas. In cities in low- and middle-income nations, it is common for a third of their population to be in such settlements, although the proportion is much higher in many cities in Africa and Asia. Most city governments have ignored these settlements, even as much of the growth in population has been located here. These settlements typically have little or no provision for basic infrastructure (piped waters, sewers, drains, all-weather roads and paths) and services (including schools, health care and emergency services). Their residents are often battling with city authorities to avoid being evicted or to obtain some services.

One of the most significant developments in addressing these issues and in making cities more inclusive is the emergence and growth of city and national federations or networks of slum/shack dwellers. These are now active in more than 30 nations and they have formed their own international network (Slum/Shack Dwellers International – SDI) to support their learning from each other, to encourage new federations to form, to represent their interests in international discussions and to develop local, national and international funding mechanisms to support their work.

These federations are formed mostly by those living in informal settlements, and have community savings groups at their base. They are seeking change not by confrontation with local government but by offering their resources and capacities to work in partnership. Their strategy is to change the perception of city authorities and other powerful groups from seeing them and their settlements as problems the city is unable to address, to seeing them as allies, partners and innovators. They undertake 'precedent-setting' initiatives to show local government what they can do (e.g. building houses and community toilets, managing upgrading of informal settlements) and then develop partnerships with local government that support their work and that make local government more accountable. They also form national and international networks to help them learn from and strengthen each other – and provide a voice internationally for the 1 billion urban dwellers who live in informal settlements.

This paper focuses on how the federations interact with and work with local government: who is involved, who initiates the interaction and how this is done (remembering the usually antagonistic relations between local governments and those living in informal settlements). How are relations developed from this and sustained (even as key local government staff changes)? These issues are explored, drawing examples mainly from the cities that the authors of this report visited: Pune (India), Jinja (Uganda) and Harare (Zimbabwe). In each city, there were site visits to projects the federations were engaged in, discussions with federation members and meetings and discussions with a range of government officials and politicians.

This paper also describes the tools and methods used by the federations and networks in their work: for instance, the community-directed surveys and mapping of informal settlements; the meetings organised with and for local government staff; the 'precedent-setting' initiatives undertaken; and the visits to other settlements or cities to see federation innovations, and that include federation leaders and local government staff and politicians. It also describes the tactics and strategies used by the federations to establish and maintain good relations with local governments.

The paper discusses what the federations do with regard to Community-Based Monitoring (CBM). This includes:

- *monitoring community processes* (records of savings and loans that are updated each day; regular meetings for savings groups; the public displays that summarise savings and progress for each savings group and data about the settlement; documentation of informal settlements)

- *monitoring the initiatives they undertake*

- *measures that contribute to monitoring local governments and community–local government partnerships* (including Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), project agreements and regular meetings with minutes taken; access to senior government staff;

also, in some cases, federation representatives sitting on key local government committees).

CBM is usually seen as space for community organisations to monitor the performance of infrastructure and service providers (and more generally local government decisions and funding allocations) and hold them to account for deficiencies in provision, quality or pricing. CBM also becomes more effective where many communities are engaged in such monitoring. But for most federation members, the problem is that they get no infrastructure or service so they have no agency or utility they can hold to account. In addition, the federations recognise the limited capacities of the local governments they work with – and the need for partnerships between them to ensure provision. So what they do in CBM is better characterised as Community-Based Engagement (CBE), which includes monitoring of community processes, community initiatives and relationship-building with local government. This includes monitoring outcomes that emerge from these relationships and negotiations.

Issues of accountability and transparency are central to the functioning of the savings groups that are the foundation of the federations. Savings groups can only function effectively if each saver knows the state of their savings account and has confidence in other savings' group members. This also applies to any fund a federation sets up – and to city funds set up with and managed with local governments.

This paper also gives examples of where the federations have influenced the policies and practices of higher levels of government. It further describes where external funding has supported this, especially through the Urban Poor Fund International of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) and through the Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA). External funding of around US$ 30 million has been channelled to community initiatives through these two organisations – and they have leveraged large local contributions and encouraged support from and partnerships with many local governments.

Among the key challenges faced by these networks and federations are getting support for work they prioritise but avoiding being seen and treated by local governments as NGOs (rather than as representative community organisations) or as building enterprises seeking government contracts. This includes a need for the federations to be able to influence both contracts for work (including work in their settlements) and who is contracted to undertake the work, and also be able to hold these contractors to account. Other challenges include ensuring that local authority land allocation systems support low-income groups to get land for housing; the need to get inappropriate standards changed; keeping momentum despite the constant

change in the politicians and civil servants they have to work with (which includes the loss of people who have championed the new ways of working with the federations); the difficulties in getting support from all relevant sectoral agencies within city government; and the lack of external support for the collective work they prioritise.

The work of the federations and of ACCA advances the search for inclusive solutions to urban poverty through encouraging community organisations to act and through the development of political coalitions that represent and benefit low-income groups. The strategies of the federations in Pune, Jinja and Harare (and elsewhere) are underpinned by the following:

- the shift from making demands on local government (and fighting eviction threats) to engagement with local governments that offers partnerships

- the shift from individual to collective responses – which also means learning within the federation and its member savings group and a stronger base for engaging with government

- restructuring the leadership of the federations to include collectives of women leaders and using interventions to nurture the practice and potential of gendered empowerment

- securing opportunities to work with local government – which also means new areas of responsibility, for instance, in keeping records, in managing funding and in generating data

- (as noted already), implementing 'precedent-setting' initiatives that show local governments (and other actors) what the federations can do, as the basis for negotiating change and using these to generate comparable changes elsewhere – e.g. official acceptance of new toilet designs, smaller plot sizes, cheaper building materials …

- bringing proposals to local government that are well designed and carefully costed and with the maps and enumeration data needed for designing upgrading and for providing a baseline for monitoring progress (again this serves to demonstrate their competence to local government)

- learning to work with different departments and levels within government and building from a range of community initiatives to a city-wide strategy, bringing in all federation savings groups

- developing a financial architecture that serves the federations and local governments; when a federation can demonstrate its capacity to set up and manage its own city or national funds, this demonstrates to all levels of government a capacity to take on more and to work city-wide.

In each of the three cities visited, there is evidence of changed relationships between local governments and organisations and federations of slum/shack dweller/homeless people – seen in joint projects, MoU, regular meetings and changes in standards (or permitting their contravention) to allow more appropriate and lower-cost housing and basic services.

All the federations have small support NGOs with whom they choose to work. For the three cities visited, they are SPARC (in India), Actogether (in Uganda) and Dialogue on Shelter Trust (in Zimbabwe). These NGOs work closely with the city federations in Pune, Jinja and Harare and with federations in other locations. The entire work programme of these NGOs is to work with and support the federations and their savings groups.

This report further highlights how the development of strong transnational networks representing urban poor groups (backed by SDI) is also important in supporting disadvantaged communities to learn from each other on how to advance their agenda and avoid continuing exclusion.

1

Introduction

This paper was prepared in response to a request by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH to Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) for a paper that examined how federations or networks of slum/shack dwellers used Community Based Monitoring (CBM). The paper describes the many ways in which the federations monitor their own savings and initiatives and their work with local governments and also how much of what they do is better categorised as Community-Based Engagement (CBE), which includes CBM.

Around one in seven of the world's population lives in poor-quality housing in informal settlements in urban areas (Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2013).[1] In cities in low- and middle-income nations, it is common for a third of their population to be in such settlements, although the proportion is much higher in many cities in Africa and Asia (Hardoy *et al*. 2001). Most city governments have ignored these settlements, even as much of the growth in population has been located there.

Typically, these settlements have inadequate or no provision for basic infrastructure (water piped to homes, sewers, drains, all-weather roads and paths) and services (including education, health care services and emergency services). The residents of these settlements are often excluded from other services, including emergency services and policing, and may be unable to get onto the voters' register as they lack a legal address or other required official documentation (Mitlin and Satterthwaite 2013). This is the fundamental challenge facing governments and international agencies that are seeking to pay more attention to 'the inclusive city'.

If we review the measures undertaken to address this challenge in different cities, they can be divided into those that are initiated and directed by national and/ or local governments and those that are initiated by grassroots organisations (often with support from local NGOs), which then received support from local government. For the first category of measures, most of the examples are from Latin American nations, where much of the focus has been on upgrading informal settlements. Upgrading has become a recognised and relatively uncontroversial aspect of local government policy and practice. This represents a fundamental change from earlier policies and practices in the region that focused on evictions or simply ignored informal settlements. The change was strongly associated with the return to democratic governments, stronger local democracy (including elected mayors and city governments), strong community pressures and decentralisation reforms that strengthened the financial base of cities (Campbell 2003, also UCLG 2014). In some nations, it was underpinned by changes in the constitution. This did not end evictions but they became much less common. Although there are no statistics available on the contribution of informal settlement upgrading to improved service provision in Latin America over the last couple of decades, it is likely that this contributed significantly to the increasing proportion of the urban population with piped water to their homes, toilets in their homes that are connected to sewers and solid waste collection, which is evident in censuses and household surveys.

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[1] This also describes how and why the UN—Habitat figures for the number and proportion of people in slums are likely to be underestimates.

For the second category of measures, most of the examples are from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. An important part of this is formed by the initiatives of more than 30 national federations of slum/shack/homeless people who are members of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI). This included 'upgrading' and, where land-sites could be negotiated, the development of new housing. But these measures were initiated and undertaken by the federations to help open or improve relations with local government. The federations realise that improvements at scale need local government support, and this paper focuses on the experience of these federations in opening dialogues with local governments and getting responses from them in terms of engagement and support. This includes examples of federation representatives being brought into local government committees. The paper also describes the initiatives undertaken by the federations to start this process (what can be termed 'precedent-setting' projects) and then the initiatives developed with local government approval (and often support), and the changes achieved in local policies and regulatory frameworks. As the paper notes, in some nations, the federations have even helped change national policies and practices.

Although the experiences of the different national federations that are members of SDI are very different, they can be compared because all the federations draw on a comparable set of tools and methods to get local government attention and develop a more positive relationship with them. All the federations also visit each other and learn from each other – and there are funds available to support this process and support new initiatives through the Urban Poor Fund International, which is managed by SDI.

This paper also describes the Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA), an Asia-wide initiative to catalyse community-driven development and to support community–local government partnerships. For those nations in Asia that have SDI-affiliated slum/shack dweller federations, there is considerable overlap with ACCA in the organisations involved in implementing the programme and in key focuses such as using community initiatives to engage the interest (and commitment) of local governments. The work of the federations, SDI and ACCA highlight the complex linkages between the capacity-building and facilitation that is needed at local, national and international levels to support the sustained engagement between cities and slum communities for city-wide inclusion.

At present, the sustained engagement noted above is still the exception rather than the rule. This paper explores how citizens trapped in informality seek organisational identities and develop mechanisms to engage the city government. This includes exploring new possibilities to help the city reach the unreached, and produce solutions that gradually generate scale and replicability.

Thus, there is an interest in how the federations and other networks of community organisations work or interact with local government: who is involved, who initiates the interaction and how this is done (remembering the usually antagonistic relations between local governments and those living in informal settlements). How are relations developed from this and good relations sustained? What changes does this bring in what local government does and how it interacts with the federations? What leads to joint initiatives, how are these organised and what mechanisms are established to support this?

There is also an interest in the tools and methods used by the federations and networks in the above, such as:

▪ the community-managed surveys and mapping of informal settlements

▪ the meetings organised for local government staff

▪ the 'precedent-setting' initiatives through which the federations demonstrate their competence and capacity to local governments

▪ the visits to other settlements or cities to see federation innovations that include federation leaders and local government staff and politicians.

There are also larger political issues that need consideration – especially regarding the tactics and strategies of the federations to establish good relations with local governments. One of the key turning points here was the recognition by grassroots leaders from slums/informal settlements that there was little point in making demands on the state that the state could not fulfil. Residents of informal settlements had to show local governments that they were valuable and capable partners (Arputham 2008). This further required their engagement in developing responses so that these better matched their needs. Hence the core is to get local governments to see those living and working in informal settlements, and their organisations, as key parts of the city with rights *and* capabilities. This, in turn, means having to change the often inaccurate assumptions held by local government staff or politicians about informal settlements and their residents.[2]

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[2] These include assumptions that they are recent rural migrants and that they are unemployed and contribute nothing to the city economy.

2

CBE or CBM?

Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) is a term given to a form of public or community oversight of the performance of government and of service provision in which members of the community are engaged. The intention is to foster the inclusion in this monitoring of those who previously were excluded (for instance, those living in informal settlements). This, in turn, is expected to provide data on performance and enhance dialogue between service user groups and the responsible authorities. This can also include the monitoring of private service providers. It is possible to identify a range of essential services that should be provided to all individuals and households, and assess the extent to which their provision, quality and pricing are monitored by community groups or, at a larger scale, by civil society groups for the whole city in ways that puts pressure on the service providers to improve provision or extend it. CBM often includes making public the reports on the performance of service providers.

Thus, it is possible to undertake an assessment of the extent to which CBM improves service provision and improves dialogue between service users and the service provider (and the local or national government departments that organise or oversee provision of the service). From this, an evaluation of the contribution of CBM towards creating more socially inclusive cities is possible. It is also possible to review local government development programmes to see if these incorporate CBM. There are case studies showing community or neighbourhood-based monitoring of government expenditures and investment choices, including some examples that have gone further to allow community organisations to influence investment choices (see Cabannes 2004, also Rowden 2013).

However, CBM of services implies that there is a service provider or agency undertaking a development initiative, which community organisations can, or should be able to, hold to account. The focus of CBM is on getting the service provider or agency to perform better and to make it more accountable to the community organisations. But most of the federations' approaches to service provision do not fit into CBM because it is the federations that are taking the initiative (for example as the service provider). The federations are also seeking partnerships with local governments, in which the community organisations are not just monitoring what local government does but are actively engaged in the design and implementation of initiatives. The federations are also representative organisations of those living in informal settlements that are seeking more than improved service provision. So, as discussed in more detail in Section 7, what the federations do is better categorised as Community-Based Engagement (CBE), which includes CBM.

3

The National Federations of Slum/Shack/Homeless People and SDI

Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) was set up in 1996 by six national federations or networks of slum/shack dwellers (South Africa, India, Namibia, Cambodia, Nepal and Thailand) that had visited each other and learnt from each other. It was set up as network of federations of the homeless and landless in towns and cities of Asia, Latin America and Africa and their support NGOs. Since then, it has expanded with fully-fledged federations in:

▪ Asia: Cambodia, India, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka

▪ Africa: Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda and Zimbabwe

▪ Latin America: Bolivia, Brazil.

There are now more than 16,000 savings groups within the federations that are members of SDI.

The SDI network also includes national organisations that have slightly different organising methodologies. Thailand is particularly important as it has a very large network of savings groups and a national government agency (the Community Organizations Development Institute – CODI) that has supported community-based upgrading and other housing initiatives at scale (Boonyabancha 2005, also Satterthwaite and Mitlin 2014). These networks of grassroots organisations and

CODI have long-established links with the federations that are members of SDI.

In many other nations, communities in informal settlements have formed savings groups and are in touch with SDI affiliates – including Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Swaziland in Africa, and Peru and Haiti in Latin America. A range of other countries have civil society organisations that keep in touch with the federations, including Burkina Faso, DRC Congo, Pakistan, Indonesia and Argentina.

There have been many examples of slum or shack dwellers organising to fight against the threat of eviction or becoming more effective in making demands – for instance, for legal tenure or basic services. But there are far fewer examples of city-wide or national organisations of slum/shack dwellers doing so. In India, the National Federation of Slum Dwellers (NSDF) was formed in 1978 by Jockin Arputham (Arputham 2008). This brought together slum dwellers from across India who were fighting to avoid eviction. All slums had action committees that were organised mainly to protest and demonstrate – making demands for land, water and the cleaning of public toilets – but Jockin realised the limited influence the NSDF would have if it focused only on making demands on the state.

Table 1: The Slum/Shack Dwellers International Network

	DATE FOR BEGINNING OF SAVINGS GROUPS	YEAR THAT A FEDERATION WAS FORMED	NUMBER OF URBAN CENTRES WHERE FEDERATION SAVINGS GROUPS ARE ACTIVE	YEAR WHEN THE FEDERATION ESTABLISHED THEIR OWN URBAN POOR FUND
India	1976	1978	65	
South Africa	1991	1993	25	1995
Cambodia	1992	1996		1998
Thailand	1984			1992
Namibia	1987	1998	84	1999
Philippines	1995	1996	17	2000
Kenya	1996	1998	11	2003
Swaziland	1997	2001	10	
Zimbabwe	1997	1998	53	1998
Lesotho	1998	2009		
Nepal	1998	2003		2004
Sri Lanka	1998	2000	24	2004
Colombia	1999			
Tanzania	2000	2006	6	2008
Zambia	2001	2006	33	2006
Uganda	2002	2002	6	2004
Malawi	2002	2003	28	2005
Indonesia	2003			
Ghana	2003	2003	7	2007
Angola	2004	2012	10	
Brazil	2004		3	
East Timor	2004			
Sierra Leone	2008	2011	4	
Bolivia	2009	2012	2	
Botswana	2011			
Burkina Faso	2011			
Peru	2012			
Haiti	2012			

NB: Details of the work in each of the countries mentioned above is available at http://www.sdinet.org/

In 1984, a new NGO, the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) was established in Mumbai by staff who had previously worked for a conventional, welfare-oriented NGO. It sought to listen to and support those living in slums and on pavements, and supported women pavement dwellers to undertake a census of themselves (SPARC 1985) as part of a strategy to avoid eviction. Jockin and the other NSDF leaders observed how SPARC and pavement dwellers worked together, and also the tenacity and confidence of the leadership of women pavement dwellers. In 1985, SPARC entered into a partnership with NSDF, and in 1986, the two organisations initiated the first pavement women's organisation, *Mahila Milan* (Women Together). Initially, this was a federation of six clusters of pavement dwellers who began to save, first for a crisis credit scheme and then for housing solutions (Patel and d'Cruz 1993). The three organisations are often termed the Indian Alliance – and each had a different role. SPARC's role was to backstop the initiatives of the community process, open new doors (especially to government staff) and investigate new possibilities, to see where they could lead. *Mahila Milan* and NSDF provided community leadership as soon as they were ready to take the innovation forward. NSDF sought to deepen and strengthen community voice and choice and expand its network to cover as many city federations as possible. *Mahila Milan* took over local processes such as managing savings and credit activities, assisting in creating more space for women, and supporting the formation of neighbourhood organisations that could become cooperatives or legal entities once they managed to get access to resources.

The origins of SDI lie in the contacts established between community leaders and activists in the early 1990s. In 1991, a meeting in South Africa of community leaders from informal settlements was held to discuss how to further their interests in their soon-to-be democratic country. Contact with Jockin and the Indian Alliance at that meeting led to the South Africans visiting India and deciding to explore various initiatives and to draw on the Indian Alliance's organising methodologies in South Africa. Savings groups were started in South Africa, which became a federation with a small support NGO. They had links with savings schemes in Namibia that had been supported by a revolving fund for housing linked to an existing credit union and savings schemes and this too developed into a federation. South African groups visiting Zimbabwe encouraged savings groups that then also developed into a federation. Links between the Indian Alliance and the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) stimulated the formation of savings-based groups in the Philippines, Nepal, Cambodia and Thailand.

These federations encourage and support the setting up of savings groups by residents in informal settlements and those living informally in formal areas and then bring these savings groups together, enabling them to identify and realise a range of strategies to address their needs and interests. This core form of organisation within the federations that make up SDI draws together residents (mainly women) in low-income neighbourhoods to save, share their resources and strategise on how to address their collective needs. These local groups and the larger federations to which they belong are engaged in many community-driven initiatives to upgrade informal and squatter settlements, improving tenure security and offering residents new development opportunities. They are also engaged in developing new housing that low-income households can afford and installing infrastructure and services (including water, sanitation and drainage).

As most savers and savings group managers are women, these savings groups help address the multiple forms of disadvantage that women face. The immediate focus and localised orientation to collective savings provides them with a different role and one that is supported by their peers. This challenges and helps overturn discrimination and limited social expectations, as women engage with each other as activists (rather than remaining subservient to male and/or older household members), both public (rather than enclosed in the household) and strategic (rather than passive). The collective nature of savings helps to ensure that women are supported as they develop a new understanding of themselves and their capabilities. As women take up new leadership roles in seeking essential goods and services, centred on the home and the neighbourhood, an engagement with the state begins. Relations with the state, including local councillors, officials and sometimes traditional authorities, are essential if urban deprivation is to be addressed and development is to take place.

These federations and their local organisations learn from and support each other at the neighbourhood, city, national and international scale. The initiatives or precedents undertaken by federation savings schemes demonstrate how shelter can be improved for low-income groups and how city redevelopment can avoid evictions and minimise relocations. The strategies (shared across the networks of savings groups within and across nations) build on existing defensive efforts by grassroots organisations to secure tenure. But they also add to these new measures designed to strengthen local organisational capacity and improve relations between the urban poor and government agencies. Savings schemes defend themselves against eviction threats and negotiate for secure tenure as well as exploring strategies to improve their members' livelihoods using a variety of methods and approaches. These have several key components:

- *The emphasis on local savings* emerges from a commitment to strengthen social relations and social capital. Women, more than men, see the multiple benefits that arise from coming together in small groups and collecting finance (pennies, cents, rupees) through savings. Savings scheme members form active local organisations able to consider how best to address their own needs and those of their families. The savings groups are immediately useful, providing members with crisis loans quickly and easily. The accumulation of each member's savings provides them with a fund for housing improvements or income generation investments. The collective management of money and the trust it builds within each group increases the capacity of its members to work together on development initiatives. Finance, rather than being a means of exclusion, becomes a trigger for the formation of strong local organisations, as women combine to find ways to aggregate, protect and enhance their 'small change' savings.

- *Individual members, working within the savings collective, develop the confidence and skills to identify and address their ambitions* (Appadurai 2004). As a result of organising undertaken by some of the lowest-income women living in informal settlements, a strong emphasis on shelter-related activities has emerged. Women take on most domestic and child-rearing responsibilities, often completing the associated tasks alongside home-based income generation activities. Many of the savings scheme members do not have secure land tenure and are at risk of eviction. They are usually without access to basic services such as regular good-quality water supplies and toilets. In this context, improved shelter is a priority.

- *Each federation works with a support NGO*, staffed by professionals who assist in a range of tasks related to grant management, technical development services and documentation for a professional audience.

- *Each federation engages in exchanges* as representatives from different savings groups visit each other. These exchanges may be experiential (for example, to see how a savings group has negotiated for land) or related to the development of specific skills. They often also have a political purpose, as the federation members involved in the exchange bring politicians and officials with them to show them how the challenges they face have been overcome. Most of these exchanges and dialogues take place within cities or between cities within nations. But international exchanges have also been important. Exchanges and the sharing of experiences between informal settlement dwellers in India and South Africa in the early 1990s resulted in growing bilateral links between the Indian and South African federations and an awareness of the value of international networking. Exchanges help to ensure that ideas come from the urban poor and are not imposed on them by well-meaning professionals (Patel and Mitlin 2002). As a consequence, emerging strategies are embedded in the proven practices of the urban poor. Savings scheme members and others learn what is effective through their own experience, supported by that of other communities around them. Learning, rooted at this level, consolidates individual and collective confidence among informal settlement residents in their own capacities. Moreover, the consistent horizontal exchanges build strong relationships between peers, adding to the effectiveness of local negotiations.

- *Community-managed enumerations, surveys and maps* create the information base needed for mobilisation, action and negotiation – and baselines to allow monitoring (Weru 2004; also Patel *et al*. 2002; Karanja 2010).[3] Federations undertake enumerations of informal settlements that are in effect censuses – as each household is interviewed and data are collected on them and their needs, and maps are prepared that show all buildings, plot sizes and infrastructure. But the process of enumeration is more than data collection. These enumerations are part of a mobilising strategy, drawing in residents who want to participate in a locally managed identification and verification of their shacks and plot boundaries. Managing these processes strengthens existing savings groups and encourages new savings groups to form. Equally important is that once the findings are assessed, local residents then have the opportunity to set collective priorities through neighbourhood and settlement meetings. Neighbours come together to look again at their settlement through the enumeration data and assess what needs to be done. These are not easy discussions but they are essential in developing an awareness of potential priorities, for intra-community negotiating and for agreeing on a way forward.

As household (and other) data and maps are provided to local authorities, then stronger relations are built; this information helps to change the attitudes and approaches of governments and international agencies. These are settlements that are ignored in official documentation and there is little information available. By providing verified data on these areas, federations both challenge this exclusion and shift the terms of the debate. As a result, they provide local communities and city federations with a negotiating advantage as, in many contexts, politicians and officials recognise the federations' capacity to provide a fair and accurate information base widely accepted by residents. This is

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[3] Also several papers in *Environment and Urbanization* 24:1, 2012.

required for upgrading and housing development – and for the inclusion of informal settlements in the maps and plans of local governments.

Projects that federation members take on to improve shelter options, including investment in tenure security and physical improvements, *provide 'precedent-setting' investments* that can be scaled up. Through a set of specific activities related to planning of land (often with some re-blocking to improve road access) and installation of services, and sometimes construction of dwellings, members of savings schemes illustrate how they can improve their neighbourhoods. This also demonstrates their understanding of the costs associated with this process and supports their learning, which allows them to develop more ambitious proposals.

4

Methodology and site visits

The challenge for the three authors of this report was to get an understanding of how community organisations formed by the residents of informal settlements worked, and of the relationship between these community organisations and local governments. From this should come an assessment of monitoring by communities of their own internal processes, monitoring by communities of their own initiatives (and funding management), including recording achievements, and monitoring of local governments and community/local government partnerships (including MoU, project agreements and regular meetings with minutes taken). It was also important to assess the extent to which community/local government partnerships provided platforms that allowed low-income community organisations to work as equals with their local governments and other urban partners.

What was proposed and then agreed with GIZ was the formation of a three-person team to prepare this report, which included one academic who was external to the community processes but had a knowledge of the federations and of ACCA (David Satterthwaite); one SDI staff member with long experience of working with community organisations and federations (Celine d'Cruz); and one community leader from one of the most active national federations (Sonia Fadrigo Cadornigara) from the Philippines Homeless People's Federation.

The team visited three countries (India, Uganda and Zimbabwe) and three particular cities (Pune, Jinja and Harare)[4] to look at the monitoring by communities of their own internal processes (especially savings groups),

monitoring by communities of their own initiatives (and funding management) and monitoring of community-local government partnerships. The three countries (and cities) were chosen because they present diverse experiences and contexts. India was chosen because it was the first country to develop a national federation, and its two federations (NSDF and *Mahila Milan*) are among the largest and most active within SDI. Uganda was chosen because of the rapid growth in the Ugandan Homeless People's Federation and in the development of relationships with local governments, which has included governments in smaller cities (thus the city visited was Jinja). Zimbabwe was chosen in part because it shows the success of a national federation in a very difficult national political context that has been sustained over many years.

All national federations that are SDI affiliates have a local NGO with whom they work (and whose work is structured to support them). This is the case in India, Uganda and Zimbabwe, and it was local NGOs that made arrangements for the interviews and visits (SPARC in India, Actogether in Uganda and Dialogue on Shelter Trust in Zimbabwe).

With regard to who was to be visited and interviewed, the intention was to have meetings with senior politicians, with civil servants from a range of sectors or departments and with community leaders and community groups. Each visit was to include site visits to initiatives being undertaken by the federations and also the opportunity to talk to those who were engaged in implementing these initiatives.

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[4] One of the team members, Sonia Fadrigo Cadornigara, was unable to join the visit to India because of difficulties in getting a visa, but she participated fully in the other two visits.

Annexe 1 gives a list of the people interviewed. In Harare, it included the Mayor, senior civil servants from different departments of Harare City and from national government, a group meeting with federation leaders, discussions with federation members during site visits, and discussions with staff from Dialogue on Shelter Trust. In Jinja, it included discussions with the Town Clerk and a range of his staff, one senior national government staff member (Commissioner of Urban Development), savings groups and a group meeting with community leaders from Jinja, leaders from the national federation and staff of Actogether. In Pune, it included discussions with the Municipal Commissioner, a range of his staff, a group of federation leaders (from *Mahila Milan*) and staff from SPARC who were supporting the work of the federations in Pune.

5

The engagement of the SDI federations with local governments

5.1 Introduction: the engagement with local governments

Many city governments and some national governments have become interested in supporting community-driven approaches, recognising their potential contribution to poverty reduction and urban development. This is described in this section, drawing examples from different federations – including examples from the three cities that the authors of this paper visited to review the nature of the federations' relationship with local governments.

All the federations that are SDI affiliates seek a development partnership with government, especially local government. The federations recognise that large-scale programmes to secure tenure in their settlements and provide services or to get land for housing are not possible without government support. As most of the homes and settlements in which federation members live are illegal, such relationships are essential if more secure tenure is to be achieved (and eviction avoided). Often, the federation members are squatting on land belonging to a state agency, and require the government to acknowledge their right to stay and to provide them with tenure. In other cases, they are on private land and need state support either to negotiate tenure or to find an alternative location in which to live.

Engaging with local government also means engaging with the difficulties that local governments face, including limited funding for investment in infrastructure and services and (in many nations) responsibilities allocated to them that are beyond their capacities. The federations are aware that governments face problems in managing the city, including dealing with squatter settlements, some of which are located on land needed for infrastructure (such as road or railway reserves or along natural drains). Many local governments also have to cope with additional pressures on existing service providers that accompanies in-migration (and, more generally, the growth in the number of households), and handling the fact that poor-quality settlements are often judged to compromise the image of the city.

5.2 The bases for assessing CBO/local government relationships

An inclusive city would be (as a minimum) a city where all residents are included in infrastructure and service provision, where city government is accountable and transparent for decisions made and for budget allocations, and where there are mechanisms that allow all residents to engage in city and sub-city governance (including getting on the voters' register and being active in community or other civil society organisations). An inclusive city also implies one where discrimination (for instance, on the basis of gender,

age or race) is actively addressed. For cities with large deficits in infrastructure and service provision (and with much of this in informal settlements), being inclusive would include city governments being supportive of representative organisations and federations of slum/shack dwellers and working with them to address these deficits.

To assess the engagement of the federations and other networks of grassroots organisations with local governments towards the goal of more inclusive cities, the focus of this report is on the following:

- how engagement with local government starts and develops: from contacts with individual politicians and civil servants, to informal and then more formal consultation with local government, to regular consultation and meetings (often with minutes taken and made available), to formal MoU on partnerships and respective roles, to city funds set up and jointly managed with local governments; there are also examples of the incorporation of federation representatives into key local government committees – for instance, on land-use changes or budget oversight

- reduced risk of eviction: also the increasing involvement of conventional local government departments and utilities in providing infrastructure and services in informal settlements

- support from local government and how this can increase: for specific initiatives in one informal settlement, which then develop to offers of support from local government for community/federation-organised initiatives in more settlements (including upgrading, provision of land for new housing and community toilets and washing facilities)

- bringing the urban poor and their organisations and federations into city-wide dialogue and planning: local government support for community/federation surveys and mapping of specific informal settlements that leads to support for city-wide mapping and enumerations, to drawing on this for planning and implementing, to upgrading and other initiatives to improve conditions in informal settlements and city-wide strategies

- changing anti-poor rules and regulations: from community initiatives that are allowed to contravene building and land-use regulations (often termed 'precedent-setting' initiatives) to changes in these regulations

- local government involvement in city funds: from supporting funds set up by the federations to the setting up of funds that are co-managed with local government

- changes in national policies: these include new funding sources to support the above.

5.3 Getting the initial engagement with local governments

The initial engagement of federation members with local governments is often with particular politicians or civil servants. The engagement then widens to include others working within local government, especially as federation members demonstrate what they can do and come to local governments with offers of partnership and reasonable demands. Examples are given below of how the initial engagement with local government took place and how it developed.

5.3.1 Pune, India

In Pune, obtaining regular water supplies for slum communities was a big issue in 1994/95. Residents would lobby the local government ward office and their local politician but with little success. Jockin Arputham (President and founder of NSDF who is based in Mumbai) came regularly to meet the women community leaders in Pune – and also came with *Mahila Milan* members from Mumbai to explain how they worked and managed savings. Jockin advised the Pune community leaders to get organised, otherwise local politicians would never give them what they wanted. Jockin also met the Municipal Commissioner and helped to initiate the relationship between the Pune community leaders and the municipal government. Pune leaders also visited Mumbai to see the work that was being done there.

As noted by Parvati (one of the *Mahila Milan* leaders we talked to), they saw what could be done so were convinced that they should set up *Mahila Milan*

"… and our battery became strong. For the first time, someone was showing us a direction we could take. After this, we worked hard to get the water connection to our settlement – undertake the survey with details of each household, prepared the file for the ward office. This got the support of the Municipal Commissioner. What we learnt – we are able to get these services for our community without belonging to a political party or through a corporator (local politician)."

This then encouraged *Mahila Milan* savings groups' engagement in many other settlements – doing surveys, stopping demolitions and encouraging new savings groups.

"When we were threatened with an eviction, Jockin came and persuaded the Municipal Commissioner to put in writing that they could stay on that land. Then we said we also want water and the Commissioner approved this. So no demolitions after that and we had water connections."

But it is a complex process to prepare the documentation needed to get water connections. The scale and scope of the work of the two Indian federations (NSDF and *Mahila Milan*) has been much helped by the strong support they have received from particular (and often very senior) civil servants within city and state governments. In Pune, this has included many of the municipal commissioners.

5.3.2 Harare and other cities in Zimbabwe

Bridget Mandizha from the City of Harare's Department of Housing and Community Services described how the relationship with the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation had evolved. One important factor in this was when the federation and local NGO that supports them (Dialogue on Shelter) approached the city government and offered to work with them. She reported on how her Department was taken aback, as usually urban poor groups come to see them to ask for favours. Now they had a grassroots organisation that had member savings groups in many locations that was willing to put their own efforts into housing. She noted their surprise at how articulate the federation members were. At first, the relationship was through meetings and attending some workshops organised by the federation. City officials who had never before attended meetings organised by low-income communities were exposed to the work of the federation. So the Department had potential partners who wanted to work with them. Bridget Mandizha commented that she and her colleagues may have learnt about 'bottom-up' approaches as students but they had never practised them.

As they began working with community organisations, they found it difficult to address their needs and draw in their capacities within the formal processes that government agencies are meant to follow. Over time, the city government learnt how to work with communities and communities learnt how to work more within formal ways and procedures. Bridget Mandizha commented on how she was initially surprised at what the community organisations wanted, but with dialogue and discussions common ground was found and this relationship allowed them to start talking about informal settlements and to recognise the incremental approach to upgrading them. So the city of Harare began to follow new approaches that allowed more possibilities than the conventional formal processes. Support began with permission for a public toilet in Mbare; the city government provided land and allowed community organisations to undertake the building. In Crowborough, on land allocated to a federation savings group, city officials saw how high-quality housing could be built even as official standards were not met (for instance, many plots at Crowborough were smaller than the official minimum plot size of 300 square metres).

Partnership with the federation gave the city government knowledge of how to plan with them, not for them. Also, from this, to allow the urban poor to own plans, develop houses – and demonstrate their capacities to take on collective responsibilities. Of course, this also needed support from formal processes – engineering skills for infrastructure and housing quality, knowledge of how to do site layouts and lay water and sewer pipes, and overall project management. For a city government with very limited funding, such partnerships allowed much more to be done. Initially, the process was a little incoherent but it was a learning one. Within this, slum upgrading was no longer seen as a problem. There was recognition within local government that the conventional development approaches designed and implemented by professionals would not work.

Claudius Kuravuone (City Architect, Harare Department of Planning Services) talked about his excitement at the partnerships with the federation; also how he and his colleagues used to dismiss the federation representatives when they came to their office. But this changed when the federation demonstrated their capacities – for instance, the toilet block built in the market. The partnership had been strengthened by the detailed surveys, enumerations and mapping of informal settlements undertaken by the federation to provide the documentary base for upgrading. The city government draws on this to develop the engineering and architectural plans and the installation of water pipes, sewers and roads in new land subdivisions. As this relationship became increasingly cordial, the city council agreed to contribute some funds and to use its technical officers to assist in the construction of infrastructure. So, for instance, in DZ Extension, the work is done by the federation and supervised by the city council; the city council also provided gravel and equipment for roads. All this has strengthened and supported the city–federation relationships.

Discussions with federation savings group managers from other cities in Zimbabwe also gave details of how the federation–local government partnerships developed. For instance, in Mutare, the savings groups that form the city federation began in 1998. When they first went to negotiate with the council, they were thrown out; the official attitude to them was "*you are robbers*". But they kept visiting the council and eventually a

dialogue began. The Mayor supported the federation to construct a resource centre and then allocated substantial amounts of land to their housing schemes – 1,362 plots in the first phase and 762 in the second. For Phase 1, piped water, sewers and roads were installed by the federation with technical assistance provided by the city engineer. The enumeration done in 1999 was important for strengthening the federation and for changing the relationship with government. Exchanges were also important – for instance, inviting the Mayor to a national convention where he heard about federation initiatives in other cities.

In Bulawayo, savings groups that were part of the federation began in 1999, but initially it was difficult to get any support from the local authorities. This changed in 2003 when one councillor started working with the federation and got other councillors interested. The federation developed links with the local authority's Housing Department. They invited government staff to see the three model houses and the community centre that they had built. The federation organised an exchange with the Namibian federation, visiting Windhoek with two government officers to see how standards had been changed and partnerships developed. After this, the local government provided the federation with land for 100 units and technical support for free. Then an additional 250 stands were negotiated from state government. But here, as in other cities where land allocations had been negotiated, there are many challenges, including disagreements between national and local government and with some of the plots originally allocated to the federation being allocated to others (including soldiers and other employees of national government). The city government did not want to become involved in the complexities of getting allocation papers for each plot. But the city government now sees informal settlements and their residents as part of the city and there is less pressure to evict those living in informal settlements. There is an MoU in place to strengthen and formalise the relationship and to agree on the different roles that community and city can play.

The Zimbabwe federation has also visited many other federations (and often taken government officials with them) and other federations have visited Zimbabwe. The development and official acceptance of on-plot sanitation (eco-san) was in part due to seeing this working in Malawi and from advice provided by the Malawi federation. The federation's engagement with national government around national housing policy was helped by a visit by the Minister of Housing to Mumbai, invited by Jockin. The (national) Ministry of Local Government has state land and can allocate this to

beneficiaries, so it is important for the federation to work with them too. There is now a National Housing Policy that specifies roles for the federation but there is very little money to implement it. But interaction with these ministries allowed federation to increase its influence in government.

5.3.3 Jinja and other urban centres in Uganda

It was clear from the interviews, group discussions and site visits that there are strong and productive links between Jinja Council and the Uganda federation and its savings groups. This was elaborated on with considerable detail both by senior government staff and by federation leaders.

The Jinja federation representatives described how they came to work closely with the Town Clerk, David Kyasanku, and the Jinja Council – and this was confirmed by the Town Clerk and by several senior civil servants (including the Deputy Town Clerk and staff from the Physical Planning Department). Some of the senior civil servants used to work with NGOs that engaged with those living in informal settlements. The federation leaders also reported on how they now had good access to senior government staff. Federation leaders are involved in a range of government committees. This includes their engagement in the Jinja Municipal Development Forum and forums held at the level of settlements (see below), and several federation leaders talked about how this has made them feel more included in government.

The Deputy Town Clerk noted how he was pleased when slum dwellers began to organise, and realised that the federation needed land. He commented that the federation had not let them down so the government must deliver for them. He also commented that the municipal authority staff must be available to the federation ("*We have cancelled three meetings to be here*") and *"their success is our success"*.

5.3.4 Iloilo, the Philippines[5]

In the city of Iloilo, the engagement of the Philippines Homeless People's Federation with the city government began in 2002 around issues of eviction, prompted by the relocation of settlements from the city's flood-prone areas. The city was in the process of redesigning its major infrastructure to be able to deal with floods in both informal and formal areas. The then Mayor of the city (Jerry P. Treñas) heard about the urban poor federation at the League of Cities meeting, where the federation

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[5] This report focuses on the work of national and city federations in India, Uganda and Zimbabwe and draws on visits by the authors to Pune (India), Jinja (Uganda) and Harare (Zimbabwe). However, the authors have also visited slum/shack dweller federations and networks in many other countries – and Sonia Fadrigo Cadornigara is a community leader from the Philippines Homeless People's Federation. Thus, this short section highlights some of the work of the Philippines federation while the conclusions section also draws on the authors' work in other nations.

had been invited to make a presentation, and also learnt of the work of SDI when they contributed to launching the Secure Tenure campaign in Manila in 2002.

The Mayor invited the federation to come to Iloilo. Many forced evictions were taking place by private landowners and the previous mayor had not taken any action and had no relocation policy. The Mayor was looking at relocation options but the government did not have the funds to buy land. At this time, the city federation was becoming more organised and the Mayor challenged the federation to develop plans. The federation used this as an opportunity to engage the city and presented an alternative model for one community in Iloilo. This included the redevelopment of a settlement along the shore. This helped to strengthen the partnership with city officials and built the trust necessary to continue to work with the city on slum enumerations.

The federation was invited to contribute to the city's comprehensive land-use plan, the city shelter plan, the local housing board, the local development council where the city budget was discussed and all technical working committees that the Mayor developed. The federation was also part of the relocation and resettlement process for 3,000 families, from the initial stage of preparing the communities prior to the relocation, up to the shifting and post-shifting stage.

As a result of SDI's support, the federation was able to respond to the typhoon in 2008, which affected 8,000 families, of whom 2,000 were informal settlers. The federation provided support for transit housing while the city provided the temporary infrastructure, including half of the labour required for construction. The city created a land bank for dealing with all kinds of development and to respond to the issue of tenure for all its residents.

5.3.5 Drawing in local governments

Thus, the challenges that local governments face can draw them into an engagement with federations. Often, they are open to working with federations if they are persuaded that federations can help them address such challenges. Exchanges of community residents, politicians and government staff provide a platform to explore these issues within some kind of neutral space. Government officials responsible, for instance, for zoning and land-use management or water and sanitation become more open to innovations suggested (or implemented) by the federations if they find that their peers in the city they visit have accepted or even supported this.

Some important federation—local government partnerships were initiated at international meetings. Muchadeyi Masunda, the then Mayor of Harare, talked

about how he came to know Davious Muvindhi and Sheila Magara (two federation leaders) and Patience Mudimu (who works with the support NGO Dialogue on Shelter) at a World Urban Forum in Nanjing, organised by UN—Habitat in 2008. Upon his return to Harare, the Mayor described how this relationship was formalised through an MoU, which further led to additional support for city-community initiatives from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The Mayor declared that government has to support these community processes – but as with many senior politicians, he noted that this must not compromise on standards. However, his staff were allowing official standards to be contravened – but what was being built did not look like an informal settlement.

Samuel Mabala, Commissioner of Urban Development at the National Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development in Uganda noted how they had learnt about the potential of community-driven processes. Before the Uganda federation was formed, SDI had been invited to Uganda to talk about the work of the federations – and about investing in people and recognising slum dwellers as legitimate citizens and part of urban community. SDI brought examples of how, when grassroots groups are mobilised and well organised, there is the potential to release community resources – which make a positive contribution. The federation can take on housing themselves and other initiatives, if supported.

Again we see the value of international exchanges and events supported by SDI. The visit by SDI representatives to Uganda in response to a request by a senior government official was one of the factors catalysing the development of the Uganda federation. In Zimbabwe, SDI arranged a meeting between the Mayor of Harare and the federation at the World Urban Forum in Nanjing, and it linked the Zimbabwe federation and the City of Harare to external funding – which, in turn, strengthened the institutional relationship between communities of the urban poor and the city authorities through actual implementation of a housing development project. SDI has supported federation leaders from each of the cities to go on international exchanges with other federations – to present what they do, to learn from what the federation they are visiting has done. The earlier account of the work of the Philippines federation in Iloilo also describes instances where SDI support was valuable. SDI organises the regular meetings of all the federations and also federation participation in international events – for instance, the World Urban Forums that are organised by UN—Habitat every two years.

5.4 Getting support from local governments

The first step in a shift beyond engagement with local governments is often the establishment of a formal partnership with the state. Across the federations there are 102 agreements with provincial or city authorities that establish a dialogue, with potential for a more equal relationship between the authorities and communities. In addition, eight SDI federations have agreements with the national government.

In the three cities visited, discussions with a range of government staff from the municipal government (and from national government in Harare and Jinja) confirmed that the Indian, Ugandan and Zimbabwe federations have agreements and working relationships with the municipality. These discussions also explained how this gives the municipal governments confidence to expand their work with them. In all three cities, what is remarkable is how the federation leaders (most of them women living in illegal settlements) can walk into the municipal headquarters and see senior staff

to discuss what needs to be done. This goes right up to the Municipal Commissioner in Pune, the Mayor in Harare and the Town Clerk in Jinja. In all three cities, we saw senior government officials greeting the community leaders – clearly knowing them well and engaged in developing initiatives with them. For instance, the Municipal Commissioner in Pune (Mahesh Zagde) talked warmly about the partnerships with *Mahila Milan*. The Commissioner sees *Mahila Milan* leaders regularly – usually once a fortnight. The *Mahila Milan* leader, Savita Sonawane, sees the Additional Commissioner once or twice a week and meets the municipality's ward officers every week. She also sees the Deputy Collector (Poonam Mehta) once a week – for discussions on relocation and on preparing projects to submit to the Government of India for funding under RAY.[6] The women from *Mahila Milan* also described in detail how each of the last seven municipal commissioners has worked with them; also their close links with the previous mayor (and they are waiting to see what the newly elected Mayor will do). From the accounts of the *Mahila Milan* women, later confirmed by interviews with government staff, there are a range of initiatives under way in which they work together – in surveys of informal

Table 2: *Mahila Milan* relations with municipal commissioners in Pune

PUNE MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER	WORK WITH *MAHILA MILAN*
Ramanath Jha, 1995–1997	Water connections in Parvati; stopped demolitions in Chandra Ma; houses constructed for demolished community; survey of flood-affected families; considerable range of initiatives in low-income settlements
Mr. Bhatia, 1997–1998	Focused on stopping corruption, especially among the corporators (local government politicians); little contact with *Mahila Milan*
Mr. Ratnakar Gaikwad, 1998–2002	Focused on infrastructure (especially roads and sanitation); support for *Mahila Milan* working on community sanitation
Sanjay Kumar, 2002–2003	Continued support for community sanitation implemented by *Mahila Milan*; supported a range of housing initiatives and also the setting up of police stations in informal settlements (with community committees supporting these) with Mr. A.N. Roy, the Police Commissioner, and encouraged and supported by Jockin (this scheme later expanded to Mumbai when Mr. Roy became Police Commissioner there)
Nitin Karir, 2003–2005	Not very supportive – but one housing scheme supported
Mr. Benjamin, 2005–2007	Did not give *Mahila Milan* much support but there was work under way that continued
Mr. Shrikar Pardeshi, 2008–2010	Started housing schemes with *Mahila Milan* under the Government of India's Basic Services for the Urban Poor programme
Mahest Zagde, 2011–2012	Support for *Mahila Milan* working with the municipality on upgrading and on relocation; developing proposals for RAY funding

[6] RAY: Rajiv Awas Yojana – a Government of India fund to support the achievement of 'slum-free' cities.

settlements, in planning relocations and in upgrading some informal settlements. *Mahila Milan* had done a survey of the settlements along the river that were at risk of flooding, and were working with communities at risk of eviction from infrastructure initiatives or from dangerous sites (hillsides, river banks) to find solutions that worked for the communities and the local government.

The meeting with Jinja federation members and the support NGO (Actogether) took place in a well-constructed meeting room above a community toilet block with washing facilities that the Jinja federation had built. This was at Rubaga Market and also within a large informal settlement. This is one among many possible examples of the use of a 'precedent-setting' project. The municipal council had provided the land, SDI had contributed some funding and the community had provided labour and contributed to funding. The room where we met is a community meeting place where many records of the federation's work and savings are displayed. It is also where livelihoods training and projects can take place. Careful records are kept on revenues from the toilet block (which is used by market vendors and their customers as well as residents), as the intention is to pay back the funding – although revenues are currently below what was initially expected.

There are a number of initiatives under way for sanitation (and sanitation blocks), upgrading and house building or improvement, drainage, markets and the extension of electricity, and an ambitious initiative is proceeding to set up a training centre for grassroots groups on house construction or improvement.

Uganda federation leaders described the monthly meetings they have with the council every last Friday of the month – which include the federation, Actogether, SDI and the council. Here, the federation informs the council of what they are doing and what they need, to ensure that local government knows what the federation is engaged in (they used to complain that they were not kept informed about this). But the council has very little funding to support work in Jinja's many informal settlements, so the federation seeks to ensure funding is available by having their projects included in the council budget.

The National Slum Dwellers Federation of Uganda recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. In December 2012, it had 38,000 members (most of whom are saving daily), 477 savings groups and ten MoU with local governments. The federation has completed city-wide surveys of informal settlements in five cities, including Jinja. The federation and Actogether are also partners with national and local governments in an initiative Transforming the Settlements of the Urban Poor in Uganda – A Secondary Cities Support Programme. This is supported by the Cities Alliance.

In Zimbabwe, our meeting with the then Mayor of Harare also showed how the federation had developed strong ties with city government. The Mayor gave us nearly an hour – much longer than had been planned for – and not only expressed his commitment to working with the Zimbabwe federation but also his commitment to having no evictions. Similar points of view were expressed by other government staff. Every official or politician we interviewed emphasised the importance of their relationship with the Zimbabwe federation and their commitment to working with them. While there are still many areas where the actual on-the-ground support by government agencies for federation members needs to improve, this is still a remarkable turnaround. The Government of Zimbabwe had implemented what must rank as one of the largest and most brutal eviction campaigns (Operation Murambatsvina), in 2005. The government–federation relationship was even endorsed by staff from the Ministry of Local Government – and this Ministry was one of the promoters of these evictions. In addition, as reported below, there are changes in formal standards and regulations in some local authorities; also in processes allowed or supported by government in its working relationship with the federation – including support for upgrading.

5.5 Federation engagement in local and city-wide planning

Across all the federations in SDI, perhaps their most direct influence on local and city planning comes from the surveys, maps and enumerations of informal settlements they undertake, which have already been described, and their use as the basis for discussions on upgrading and on city-wide initiatives. They also provide baseline data from which progress can be assessed.

In Pune, it is clear that the work of *Mahila Milan* with the municipal authorities over many years has influenced how the municipality addresses housing issues within the various government housing schemes. The municipality also relies on civil society organisations (including *Mahila Milan*) to do much of the community liaison when developing housing initiatives.

The relationship between Pune Municipality and *Mahila Milan* has also helped promote *in situ* upgrading of informal settlements (slums), which is generally much preferred by the residents to resettlement. This has been a long struggle as the standard model for government intervention is still resettlement. And even if there is *in situ* upgrading, this often involves contractors clearing the land and building from scratch, not upgrading (Patel 2013). The municipality also wants *Mahila Milan* to help with relocation, where this is needed. *Mahila Milan* is

concerned with making the whole planning process for those who have to move more open and clearer, and is supporting them to become organised. This requires the gathering of data – and the schemes require very detailed data from each household.

The Head of Physical Planning in Jinja reported on the cordial relations with the federation and how they worked together closely. Here, the stress was on how ideas were shared and how council offices are open to the federation. There was also recognition of the capacity of the federation to survey their settlements – and the importance of this for the Jinja Structure Plan. There were issues that needed to be resolved over planning standards, although the council has become more flexible regarding the standards demanded – for instance, in allowing smaller plot sizes.

The Jinja federation, along with the national federation and the support NGO Actogether, undertook a survey of informal settlements in 2011 with support from Jinja Council and from community leaders. Each of the settlement profiles had details of how the settlement developed, of the land tenure situation, housing and basic services, community priorities and relations with the council. This showed that more than 80 per cent of the residents in these settlements do not have access to a toilet in their house or compound and almost all residents have to rely on public taps or water points. The support from the council for the community toilet block in Rubaga was, in part, in response to these findings. The survey also serves as a baseline against which progress can be assessed.

5.6 Changing the institutional and regulatory framework

Local government agencies operate within a regulatory framework that includes land-use controls (often including zoning regulations) and building regulations and these are often responsible for putting formal housing beyond the reach of most citizens. In order for land for housing and shelter improvements to be affordable to federation members, such regulations usually need to be renegotiated. One of the main reasons why federations undertake 'precedent-setting' investments is to demonstrate the kinds of regulatory amendments required to lower unit costs while still producing good-quality housing, or to make better use of land. These also explore the scale of finance required and the kinds of cost-sharing arrangements that might be necessary. When local government officials see the quality of a new housing development undertaken by the federation, which has smaller plot sizes than the official minimum plot size or cheaper forms of infrastructure or

cheaper building materials, this increases the possibility that other settlements will be able to do the same.

In some cases, these partnerships build on or lead to more embedded engagements. For instance, in Ghana, federation members have been brought onto the technical committee, which reviews national housing policy, where issues of the urban poor's housing needs are being prioritised. Another example of this is federation members in Harare participating with the city in a programme of activities to upgrade Mbare, a low-income settlement around the central market. There are many other examples of explicit changes in policy driven by federation initiatives. There are also cases where the federations negotiate for the application of existing policies rather than the introduction of new policies. In the Philippines, for example, the federation has helped to negotiate a Shelter Code in Iligan City (with a financial commitment equivalent to just over US$ 1 million) and a Shelter Plan in Kidapawan. This Shelter Code is provided for within existing legislation, but without the active engagement of the Philippine Homeless People's Federation it is unlikely that it will have been realised. The plan recognises the federation communities (and other low-income groups) and provides land for the housing needs of those who are to be relocated because they live in danger zones and also land needed for major infrastructure projects. It also seeks to encourage low-income residents to play an active role in improving their neighbourhoods. There is also a commitment to making finance affordable and available, and to recognise alternative building materials such as bamboo.

Policy influence and change are seen as involving dynamic experimental processes. The federations are aware that they need to shift formal policies and subsequent programmes and practices. Many policy initiatives take place at the city level as local groups try out new approaches and draw in politicians and officials in co-learning, which then develops into co-planning and implementation. As city-wide approaches are found to be effective, then national leaders and SDI respond by negotiating changes in national and international policies to support and consolidate inclusive pro-poor urban development.

In Zimbabwe, as in other southern African nations, there are land-use regulations for housing that impose very large minimum plot sizes (in Zimbabwe 300 square metres). This increases the cost of housing plots and also increases the cost of infrastructure per house. Minimum standards for housing and infrastructure are also unrealistic – for instance, the requirement that each house be connected to a sewer. These standards are also part of a system where local authorities assume that they can direct planning, control and manage land allocations for housing and demand that all buildings meet conventional building standards. Discussions with

many government staff elicited-official recognition of the need to move to smaller plots and of the importance for low-income households of being able to build incrementally (and for households to get formal tenure even as they build or expand the home over time). In some municipalities, the federation has been allowed to develop house plots that are smaller than 300 square metres (including plot sizes of 150 square metres), to start building in locations where there were no water mains and sewers, to provide for sanitation through eco-san toilets (that do not need sewers) and shared toilets (to keep down costs), to build semi-detached housing (cutting unit costs) and to draw water from local sources (for instance, local boreholes rather than having to connect to central piped water systems). A challenge that remains is the time limit within which they are required to upgrade housing – and the continuing expectation that one room built with concrete blocks will be provided (which is not affordable for the lowest-income households).

One example of how the federation's work helps in a shift towards more realistic standards is provided by Waszanayi Vhutuza from Harare's Department of Urban Planning Services. He explained how working with the federations had changed his mind with regard to standards. For instance, the decision to accept smaller plot sizes when he saw a federation scheme where two houses were built on a 300-square metre plot; also, he had not accepted using shared walls until he saw the result in a federation housing scheme. But he also noted that it took time to get these changes accepted. New settlement layouts are being tried out that increase densities and lower the costs of services and land – for instance, through cluster housing in the DZ extension. He also noted how the work with the federation had helped change the way in which the city government views informal settlements; previously, evictions were seen as a key part of a successful government policy.

All these changes had to be negotiated and each such change represents an important outcome for the federation. In Harare, it took long negotiations to get official agreement that people could go on the waiting list for land even if they did not have payslips or marriage certificates and that federation savings books could be used as the documentary proof for getting on the list instead. To remain on this list, an annual payment has to be made and the federation negotiated a lower rate.

One of the most important breakthroughs in some local authorities has been the official acceptance of upgrading of existing informal settlements, even as road layouts and houses in the settlement to be upgraded do not conform to official standards. Part of the reason for this acceptance has been the detailed data that the federation has collected on informal settlements, which includes profiles of each household and settlement and detailed maps. These data are needed for upgrading

– and it is data that local government staff often have difficulty generating themselves. To date, 68 informal settlements in urban areas of Zimbabwe have been profiled – and this provides the information base for upgrading.

The *in situ* upgrading programme in a large informal settlement in Epworth (Magada with more than 6,500 households) is important for a number of reasons (Chitekwe-Biti et al. 2012). Epworth is a town 10 kilometres from Harare (where many people who work in Harare live) but the government of Harare has no jurisdiction there. Epworth Council has agreed to support *in situ* upgrading and this is the first time such upgrading has been allowed in informal settlements. It also sets important precedents in the extent to which the upgrading programme was developed with the residents and their community organisations. The Zimbabwe federation undertook an enumeration and mapping of Magada and this provided the information base and the basis for an agreement between residents and the local council regarding the upgrading. The upgrading programme in Epworth is implementing new standards that are more appropriate – for instance, roads that are 5 metres wide instead of 8 metres. There is official acceptance of densities that are higher than official standards permit. The federation is now building 50 toilets, drawing on designs and the expertise of the Malawi federation. The mapping also demonstrated to the local government (and other local governments) the federation's capacity to provide the accurate and detailed information that is required to upgrade any large settlement. This upgrading programme is also evidence of the new approach that is within the national upgrading policy.

5.7 Joint management of Urban Poor Funds

A key mechanism for investing in improved tenure and services has been Urban Poor Funds, which have been established by many of the federations as they begin to undertake 'precedent-setting' investments. Just under US$ 10 million is currently in the savings accounts of the federations from daily savings collections. Much of this finance is locally circulated within savings schemes, as loans are given to members (for consumption, emergencies and small enterprise loans) and then repaid. These figures are very much an underestimate, as the scale of money kept and circulated at a local level is captured only intermittently. An additional US$ 2 million is in community savings in national Urban Poor Funds.

5.8 Influencing other cities and local governments

Most federations are active in many different urban centres and it is often some innovative initiative they have undertaken with one local government that then encourages other local governments to work with the federation. The federation initiatives in a range of urban centres in Uganda and Zimbabwe have already been described.

To give but one tangible example of this, the work of *Mahila Milan* in Pune and the partnership with the municipal authorities has gained the attention of other local governments. This includes the government of Bhubaneswar, a city where partnerships are developing between *Manila Milan*, NSDF and the local government. The city's Municipal Commissioner visited Pune and drew on what he saw and learnt to develop a comparable partnership. Government officials and politicians from many other cities have come to Pune, including from Nanded and Amravati (in Maharashtra); Delhi; some cities from Uttar Pradesh and Haryana; Surat and others from Gujarat. *Mahila Milan* and local government staff from Pune have also visited Nanded, Bhubaneswar and other cities following invitations from local government.

5.9 Federation influences on the policies and practices of higher levels of government

There are many examples of policy change catalysed by the national federations. One early example of policy reform was the creation of the People's Housing Process (PHP) by the South African government in 1998 as an adjunct to its housing programme. The South African government had set up a programme to provide subsidies to housing for low-income groups but it was usually contractors who got the subsidy and who often built housing of poor quality on land far from income-earning opportunities. The PHP offered greater scope for communities to make decisions for themselves in the use of the subsidy, allowing them to provide voluntary labour and to undertake project management activities. As noted by the then Minister of Housing, this policy and programme encourages and supports individuals and communities in their efforts to fulfil their own housing needs and who wish to enhance the subsidies they receive from government, by assisting them in accessing land, services and technical assistance in a way that leads to the empowerment of communities and the transfer of skills. It is always

difficult to assess what factors are responsible for changing government policy – but the People's Housing Process option emerged in part because the local communities linked to the South African Homeless People's Federation demanded a more community-driven collective process.

In Zimbabwe, Nair Mudzinge from the National Ministry of Local Government emphasised how useful it was for local governments to get support from the federation for housing and in other sectors. Her Ministry focused on setting national policy and facilitating local governments regarding implementation – for instance, in relation to improving livelihoods, housing and services. Ms. Mudzinge noted that her Ministry seeks to encourage and support better performance by local governments through a range of measures, including capacity-building, learning through exchanges and financial support; also by providing the legal framework for local governments and seeking to harmonise the many acts of parliament that affect them. Support for the federation is within all of these measures. The Ministry also gives awards to local governments – for instance, to the most progressive or who is best at dealing with social issues, and this is also a way of reminding the 32 local governments and seven city governments of their responsibilities.

Among other changes in policy catalysed or influenced by the federations is the adoption of a new approach to informal settlements in Windhoek (Namibia). This was influenced by federation-supported exchanges, which showed how the cost of land for housing could be cut by allowing smaller minimum plot sizes and lower infrastructure standards. Other changes include the acceptance of eco-sanitation within the regulatory standards in Zimbabwe as well as federation-style eco-sanitation being accepted within the National Sanitation Policy in Malawi; and changes in tender processes to facilitate community construction in Bhubaneswar and other cities in India, municipal land rules and regulations being relaxed in the case of housing in Morotuwa (Sri Lanka), and the agreement of the Kenya Railways Company to resettle 11,000 households squatting in the rail reserve in Nairobi. In Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, federation groups have been able to reduce plots sizes to below the present minimum-size standard both through securing agreement for double occupancy and/or by using a collective land title to negotiate exemption from the regulations.

There is a wide range of government schemes that are meant to support improved housing for low-income groups and for which national government funding is available. But the extent to which these are applied in ways that do (or do not) serve low-income groups is much influenced by how city governments choose to implement them. For instance, under the Government

of India's Basic Services for the Urban Poor programme, some cities and states use this to clear slums and rebuild units that are often unaffordable and inappropriate to former slum residents, whereas others have developed slum upgrading programmes that work closely with the residents (Patel 2013).

5.10 How external funding has supported this

External funding has made an important contribution to the scaling up and multiplication of federation initiatives in many nations, and since 2002 around US$ 18 million has been channelled through SDI to support the initiatives of the federations. Over time, and working with particular donors, the network of federations and support NGOs that form SDI secured access to donor funds that they could allocate themselves (rather than being directed by donors). This provided them with resources to enable the urban poor to make choices and learn from the results. Starting in 2002 with around US$ 300,000 from the Sigrid Rausing Trust, several hundred thousand dollars were available each year between 2001 and 2007. This supported a large number of federation initiatives and showed how external funding goes much further when the monies go direct to grassroots savings groups, which usually leverage additional local resources. Among the initiatives supported were:

- tenure security (through land purchase and negotiation) in Cambodia, Colombia, India, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, the Philippines, South Africa and Zimbabwe

- slum/squatter upgrading with tenure security in Cambodia, India and Brazil

- bridge financing for shelter initiatives in India, the Philippines and South Africa (where government support is promised but slow to be made available)

- improved provision for water and sanitation in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zimbabwe

- enumerations and maps of informal settlements in Brazil, Ghana, Namibia, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Zambia that provide the information needed for upgrading and negotiating land tenure

- exchange visits by established federations to urban poor groups in Angola, East Timor, Mongolia, Tanzania and Zambia (in Tanzania and Zambia, these visits helped set up national federations)

- community-managed shelter reconstruction after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in India and Sri Lanka

- federation partnerships with local governments in shelter initiatives in India, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe

- the emergence of a number of local funds.

In 2008, SDI created the Urban Poor Fund International (UPFI) as a platform to access finance from international sources. Major donors to this fund include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the governments of Norway and Sweden and the Rockefeller Foundation. The SDI secretariat built up the capacity to manage project funds and provide technical assistance and federation strengthening. Between 2008 and 2010, the fund supported investments in land development, housing and basic services in more than 22 towns and cities. In India, Kenya, the Philippines and South Africa, the fund has provided finance for developments involving thousands of people who were renting or squatting in shacks without secure tenure. This fund has produced a new way of financing community-led development and of encouraging and leveraging support from local and national governments.

6

The Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA)

One of the most innovative and large-scale urban poverty reduction programmes currently under way is the Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA),[7] implemented by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR). This coalition, like the Urban Poor Fund International, provides support direct to community organisations formed by urban poor groups. It, like SDI, also supports community organisations to engage with local governments. It has many overlaps with SDI (and it has supported many initiatives undertaken by the federations that make up SDI in Asia) but it also includes support for community organisations in countries where there is no slum/shack dweller federation. Since its launch in 2009, the coalition has provided support for more than 1,000 community-driven initiatives in 168 cities in 18 different countries, with partnerships with local governments being encouraged and supported. It has also supported 111 larger housing initiatives, and more than 100 city-level community development funds have been set up by savings group networks and local governments. An additional 19 projects in eight countries help communities respond effectively to disasters.

The Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI) in Thailand is also relevant to this paper's interest in Community-Based Engagement (CBE). This institute provides support direct to community organisations in informal settlements to develop their own upgrading programmes, including negotiating secure tenure or finding and acquiring an alternative site. Somsook Boonyabancha, the founder and Secretary General of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (which launched ACCA), was director of CODI between 2000 and 2010 and she had also been engaged in supporting large-scale community-driven upgrading prior to this. The work of CODI, ACCA and SDI all focus on providing support direct to community organisations and on helping community organisations develop productive relationships with local governments – and they have many interconnections and have long drawn from and learnt from each other.

ACCA has supported hundreds of small community-led upgrading initiatives that then catalyse partnerships between community organisations and local governments. In most cities where ACCA is active, several community-led initiatives are supported with small grants. The community organisations that undertake these visit each other and form city-wide networks to engage with their local governments. Further support is available (mostly as loans) as local governments engage with this network and then come to support the process, including setting up city development funds jointly managed with the network.

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[7] This section draws on ACHR (2011a); also ACHR (2011b); Boonyabancha and Mitlin (2012); Boonyabancha, Somsook et al. (2012); and www.achr.net.

The budget ceiling for the upgrading projects is very small (a maximum of US$ 3,000) but it is funding that is available and flexible so it responds to what community organisations choose to prioritise. It also encourages the community organisations that are undertaking the upgrading to negotiate with local governments and other local actors for additional resources and support. The most popular initiatives by community organisations using the small grants are to improve water, sanitation and drainage. Investments in roads and bridges are also popular; community leaders explained how important it was to link their settlements to the city's transport network (although in many cases the means of transportation is walking or cycling). Many community centres and playgrounds were also built or improved.

In relation to CBM, ACCA supports Community-Based Engagement (CBE), which starts with community initiatives, then seeks engagement with local government and works with them to increase the scale and scope of what is done. As with many of the federations, CBM has relevance for monitoring how community–local government relationships develop and what benefits are brought by this.

There is one other aspect of the ACCA programme that has particular relevance for CBM – and this is the way in which the programme is assessed. When ACCA was being designed, ACHR recognised the need to rethink how this would be done. Here, it is common for the funding agency to hire outside professionals to assess a project, with or without the participation of the communities and implementing groups. The assessment is often done according to some pre-prepared list of objectives and outputs that were agreed in the original project document. The external assessor usually has little knowledge or experience of living on a very low income or in an informal settlement or of fighting or actually experiencing eviction. ACCA uses an alternative assessment process, where the assessment of community initiatives is done by their peers (Carcellar and Kerr 2012). This involves a system for comparing, assessing, learning from and refining the ACCA projects in different countries, through a series of visits to ACCA projects within each country and discussions with the people who are implementing them. These 'joint' assessment trips include a mix of community members, support professionals and sometimes a few supportive local government officials who can usefully be exposed to the ACCA process in another country. All participants are involved in implementing ACCA projects in their place of origin and hence they are able to raise many questions, doubts, problems and ideas.

A new option within ACCA, introduced in 2011, is to lend money to community development funds that are able to demonstrate loan management capacity. These loans increase the financial resources available to community development funds, and also demonstrate to the networks the potential of loan capital as well as building up the practice of repayment to external investors.

Certain key lessons have been learnt from ACCA:

- how much can be achieved with modest funding if support is provided to community organisations for collective action to address mutual needs

- start with support for such action as capacity development is best realised through practical actions with demonstrated results

- surveying and mapping informal settlements city-wide is the best way to begin a process, breaking down the isolation of individual settlements and enabling the community activists to see the city as a unit

- the selection and prioritisation of projects within any city is best done by those communities involved in the programme, as a collective decision

- budgets need to be flexible and easily accessible but small and controlled by the people themselves, with horizontal public systems of accountability

- supporting several small projects in a city can create many opportunities for networking between community organisations – and this in turn helps these community organisations engage with local governments, providing a platform for negotiation and then partnership with the city authorities

- at least one housing project should be included in each city as these demonstrate the link between small projects and the larger-scale process of shelter improvement, and support community networks to explore how such development can be secured.

Thus, the ACCA programme has developed financial systems for low-income households that work well within the realities of their lives and that they can manage themselves. The most basic building block of a people's financial system is the community savings group, in which they build, use and manage their own resources. Community savings and credit is being practised in 101 of the ACCA cities so far. Many city-level community development funds are emerging, most seeded with capital from ACCA project money. These city funds are linking community savings groups with the ACCA finance – and with other sources of finance.

Some countries have started national funds (such as the Urban Poor Development Fund in Cambodia (Phonphakdee *et al.* 2009) and CLAF-Net in Sri Lanka). Seventy cities have started with city-based funds (as in cities in Nepal, Burma and Vietnam). Local governments have contributed to 21 of these city funds, in eight countries.

The joint city development committees that are being set up are platforms that allow low-income communities to work as equals with their local governments and other urban partners. In many cities in Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Vietnam, Fiji, India and Lao PDR, the successful implementation of ACCA big projects has led local governments to initiate or agree to partner with the community networks and their support NGOs to implement new housing projects, and to link with other housing schemes and development projects in their cities.

There are also examples of ACCA initiatives adjusting existing planning standards to make them more realistic, lower cost and easier for the urban poor to develop housing that matches their needs, as well as of pro-poor policy reforms being secured or strengthened.

7

Community/ federation-based monitoring

Table 3 lists measures that contribute to Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) within the federations and networks of community organisations. These include the monitoring by community organisations of community processes (that includes records of daily savings and loans, regular meetings for savings groups, the public displays that summarise savings and progress for each savings group, and data about the settlement and documentation of informal settlements); the processes by which information about achievements gets recorded and disseminated (including the management of funds for local initiatives); and the measures that contribute to monitoring local governments and community–local government partnerships (including MoU, project agreements, regular meetings with minutes taken and joint management of community–city funds).

CBM in the three cities visited (and in other cities where federations are active) can be seen in what the federation and its savings groups do to monitor their activities, and in what they monitor in relation to what local government does (and in the methods used to do it). In the first instance, CBM is evident in the careful records kept of funds by each savings group (and of each saver's savings and loans) and of the summaries of these that are on public display – also in the regular savings group meetings where progress on all fronts is assessed. Although the savings schemes may seem relatively informal to outsiders, each savings group has members designated to manage particular tasks and to report back on these to their savings group

and in larger meetings (city-wide, national). There are also committees that oversee particular initiatives, which then engage many savers in overseeing and monitoring progress. When the federation members introduced themselves to the visiting team in the three cities, each specified their own particular roles and responsibilities, which included regular reports to each savings group and to the federation. The operation of each savings group is monitored by savers and by the federation – from monitoring the savings of all members, the loans taken by individuals within savings groups to the savings for each group. Also monitored are the number of savings groups, the savings held within particular federation funds and the funding allocated to specific initiatives (and where relevant their repayment). Progress on all initiatives is monitored through regular reports to the federation, including costs, expenditures, construction and maintenance – and repayments to national revolving funds. Some of this information is on display in the places where savings groups meet. There are also regular audits of savings, and reviews at federation meetings of treasurers' and savings collectors' records to ensure that federation records match the information in each saver's savings book. The engagement of many federation members in such tasks also serves as training in accounting and fund management.

Table 3: Measures that contribute to Community-Based Monitoring

MONITORING OF COMMUNITY PROCESSES

- The records that each saver has and each savings group keeps of each member's savings, loans and loan repayments.

- Daily interaction between the savings manager and all members of the savings group (with savings or repayments taken or loans given recorded for the saver and in the larger system). This daily interaction between managers and all savers means a daily update on funds collected and used (and other relevant issues).

- Regular meetings for each savings group and data displayed publicly and constantly updated on each savings group's performance.

- Federation savings groups (or community networks) undertaking detailed surveys and mapping in informal settlements. These can focus on particular settlements to provide the basis for planning interventions there (for instance, upgrading and provision of land tenure). Or these can document and map all informal settlements in a city. This is both to provide data and maps for each settlement and provide the basis for city-wide planning and prioritisation. These are particularly valuable in setting baselines from which monitoring of change can be developed.

MEASURES BETWEEN COMMUNITIES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MONITORING

- Visits made by community members to other communities to see and learn from what they have done; the learning from these visits is often recorded, with support from local NGOs (for instance, in written documentation and in video). Exchange visits are important for showing the transparent and public processes used by savings groups to other savings groups or community organisations interested in developing savings groups – and also in helping them understand procedures and how funds for initiatives are managed.

- The incorporation of new savings groups into each federation (and the records kept of this).

- The way the above processes also lead to new community organisers emerging and becoming part of the network or federation of community organisers who help record change and organise exchange visits.

- The formal processes by which information on the above gets recorded and published. Each federation and its support NGO have their own publications and most also have videos. The work of many of the federations has also been recorded and published in international journals and magazines – and with support NGOs drawing in the community organisers for its preparation.[8]

MEASURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MONITORING COMMUNITY–LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS

- Regular meetings with municipal officials (often recorded – and where partnerships have developed, formal minutes kept of discussions).

- Community-managed data collection from the surveys and mapping of informal settlements noted above, which serve joint initiatives with local governments and provide a baseline against which progress can be measured.

- MoU that formalise partnerships between community organisations and local governments and project agreements that do so for particular initiatives.

- Federation members invited to sit on local government committees, including budget oversight and land-use planning committees.

- City funds set up that are jointly managed by the federation and local government.

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[7] The international journal *Environment and Urbanization* has given priority to supporting the documenting of the federations' work and, to date, more than 40 papers have been published on this.

Community monitoring of the local government takes place, in part, in the regular meetings with local government staff described above. In Jinja, the Municipal Development Forum and the settlement forums make more public the key decisions and resource allocations. There is also a range of MoU between local government and the federation. Federation members noted their importance, as these formally establish in writing municipal roles and support. They formalise and make more explicit the agreements and relations with local government regarding particular areas where the federation works well. The federation wants MoU and more binding relationships between themselves and local government. In Jinja, for instance, there is an MoU for each piece of land they get from the local authorities.

Three photos are presented here to illustrate some of the aspects of monitoring. They are from the visit to Jinja but comparable photos could be shown for Harare or Pune (or other cities where the federations are active). Photo 1 shows how the federation projects under way in Jinja are publicly displayed; Photo 2 shows the list of who is responsible for different aspects of the Rubaga sanitation project; Photo 3 is of the meeting we had with the federation in the meeting room built above the community-designed and managed toilet block with washing facilities that they had built. Here, as with other federations, there are also public records of the funds collected and managed by savings groups. It must be stressed how much a careful keeping of records and the assignment of responsibilities among federation members is central to their functioning.
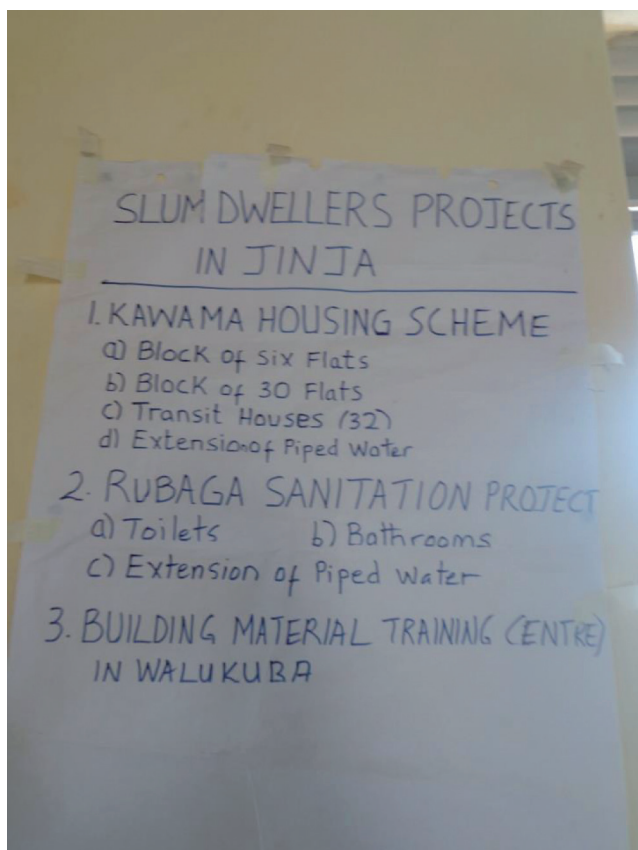

Photo 1: Federation projects in Jinja – displayed in their meeting room above the community toilet block by Sonia Fadrigo Cadornigara
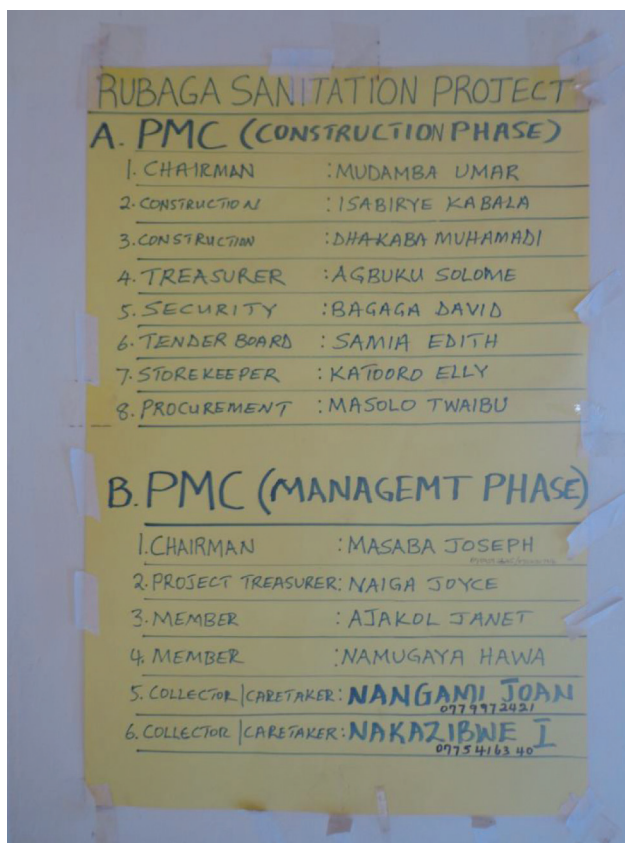

Photo 2: Details of who is responsible for different aspects of the toilet block – displayed on the wall of their meeting room by Sonia Fadrigo Cadornigara

Photo 3: The meeting with federation members by Sonia Fadrigo Cadornigara

Framework for monitoring CBE. Strategies and systems used by local governments for supporting greater inclusion for low-income groups need to recognise, first, the need for representative community organisations and, second, the need to facilitate these organisations' engagement with the state. For the federations, monitoring this requires monitoring of three phases of development within which many milestones can be set:

1. Creating a city-wide federation

   a. Assessment of scale and depth of federation savings groups

   b. Engagement through enumerations, exchanges and 'precedent-setting' initiatives across the city

   c. Degree of women's participation in the federations, including the leadership

   d. Quality of the partnership with the NGO facilitating the federation process

2. Nature and level of engagement with the city government and other tiers of government

   a. Ability to contest city data on slums with data collected by the federation

   b. On the basis of data collected on slums and households, representing communities with regard to needs for infrastructure and services

   c. The use of precedents to show what communities can do and how they can scale these up with city partnerships (which may

include changing official standards or getting permission to contravene these in particular projects)

   d. The engagement with senior politicians and civil servants

   e. The extent to which strategies developed in one city have proved useful to other cities

3. The joint ventures and projects that expand services to the urban poor

   a. Progress in undertaking projects at three different scales

      i. Pilot

      ii. In some districts

      iii. City-wide

   b. Joint initiatives undertaken by communities and city governments

      i. Joint design and execution

      ii. Joint monitoring (with government contributing to the information needed to do this)

      iii. Joint capacity-building

      iv. Joint management of city funds

      v. Tracking relationships at institutional level beyond committed individuals

   c. Joint explorations to influence the state and national urban policy

8

Challenges facing the federations

The federations face a range of challenges in increasing the scale and scope of work that addresses the needs of the urban poor. Many of these challenges are around the roles of the federations in work planned and implemented. This includes getting support for work the federation groups want to do while avoiding being seen by local governments as NGOs or being treated as contractors. It includes being able to influence contracts and who is contracted to undertake the work. Other challenges include the constant change in politicians and civil servants they have to work with (which includes the loss of people who have championed the new ways of working with them), the difficulties in getting support from all relevant sectors within city government, the need to change inappropriate standards, and the lack of external support for collective work. In some federations, there are also complex conflicts within informal settlements that have to be addressed. More details of these are given below.

Local governments that recognise the value of working with their local federation often seek to realise this by contracting the federation to undertake work on their behalf – for instance, documenting and mapping informal settlements or building community toilets and washing facilities. Local government may want the federation to take on tasks that they find difficult or that are contrary to the interests of federations members – for instance, working with communities that local governments want to relocate. In Pune, one of the main challenges for *Mahila Milan* is the way in which the municipal bureaucracy operates in response to its new relationship with them. They are treated as if they were an NGO with a professional staff that has to bid for government contracts. All the government staff we talked to in Pune stressed the value of working with

Mahila Milan, especially for its ability to work with and through the residents of informal settlements. But to get government funding for their work, *Mahila Milan* has to compete with NGOs and contractors in tenders. There are complex technical and bureaucratic issues in developing bids for tenders, submitting files and managing the work, which professionals know how to fulfil even if what they produce is not of good quality.

Low-income communities need to be organised to be able to get the best out of local government and to be able to stop professionals taking over. In Jinja and Harare, while senior local government staff (and in Uganda and Zimbabwe senior national government staff) may stress the importance of the partnership with the federation, local government procedures still end up treating the federation as if it were an NGO that is commissioned to do particular tasks – or expect the federation to take on tasks normally assigned to contractors and to work within the conventional contracting system. While there may be strong support within local government for the federation, there are often many bureaucratic blocks to this support being realised. In Jinja, the Community Upgrading Fund is a public fund that is meant to support community action, but federation groups have had difficulties getting funding for initiatives that they want to undertake. In order to take on more of the work themselves they need to register as a construction company, which then competes for contracts, as procurement procedures are for registered enterprises. During our discussions with Mr. Mabala (Commissioner of Urban Development at the National Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development in Uganda), he noted that perhaps another funding line is needed for community organisations.

This point is relevant to all cities – how to develop a financial architecture that really works for federation groups while retaining accountability and transparency to funders. The experience with ACCA is interesting in this regard as it provides small grants direct to community organisations and then has additional funding to support local governments that work with these community organisations.

Local authority systems that support low-income groups to get housing or land for housing are usually set up to support individuals. Federation savings groups want to be able to access land on which they can build housing for all members. Here, the challenge is to get government to work with federation groups as collectives – for instance (as in Crowborough in Harare), allocating land to the federation savings group, allowing federation groups to develop the land sub-division plans, and allowing them to make collective payments and manage members who fall behind with their payments.

Local politicians may feel threatened by more open discussions about local priorities and use of government funds. For instance, in Uganda, some local councillors feel threatened by municipal and local forums and may see them as going against the normal functioning of the local authority and the decisions they make. The Jinja federation actively engages in such forums but they had hoped that these would have more influence over what was prioritised; at present, the contracts committee within local government and the evaluations committee are influential in allocating funding and are not very transparent. The federation would also like to have representatives on project management committees; here, CBM is needed to make sure that contractors undertaking projects in informal settlements are accountable to them too.

The scale and scope of what local governments could contribute would be enhanced if they had more powers and capacities to increase their own revenue base and ensure more accountability to their citizens. Funding provided by national governments and international agencies often means that city government focuses on plans that meet the conditions of these funders. In reporting on progress, the focus is also generally on reports to funders, so accountability mechanisms are for higher levels of government and international funders, not for residents.

Local governments may also see the federations as capable of undertaking tasks that they find particularly difficult – for instance, helping to move and relocate those informal settlement dwellers whose land they want for redevelopment or for infrastructure improvements. In Pune, the municipal corporation is relying on *Mahila Milan* to negotiate agreement on upgrading between residents of a very dense informal settlement, which is particularly difficult because most housing units are

so small and it is difficult to put in place infrastructure without reducing the size of some of the units. In this instance, *Mahila Milan*'s ability to do this is an important demonstration of the federation's capacity.

There is a need for the federations to have real influence on what projects are chosen by local government, the budgets allocated to them, the choice of contractors and the supervision of project implementation (and use of funding). In the three cities and in the work of many other federations, federation members emphasise the need for more community supervision of contractors, including monitoring what they are doing and reporting to local government when there are problems. Many of the federations face difficulties making accountable the contractors who win contracts to implement projects in their settlements. There are examples of poor-quality work by contractors and of the need for measures to address this – for instance, community organisations being able to ensure that no final payment is made until the work is completed to their satisfaction. Contractors who win projects do not feel they are accountable to the community where they are being implemented. They often do not deliver on time or deliver less than they were contracted to do. In Jinja, the federation felt it had to make the council committee that is responsible for awarding contracts aware of such problems. At present, when a project comes to a community, residents have no say and it is also difficult for them to obtain details about the contracts awarded. More generally, the federation in Jinja (and other federations) felt that it needed to be represented on project management and monitoring committees. Discussions with federation members also highlighted their desire for more openness from local government with regard to what is funded and in the terms of reference for the company or NGO contracted to do the work. So in this instance, CBM is needed to ensure contractors are accountable to the communities where they undertake work.

In terms of working with local government, three other issues are highlighted: the need to get more sectors of government to work with them; the need to manage the loss of champions; and the need to change official standards. That there is a real relationship of trust and mutual respect between senior civil servants and the federations was evident in all the meetings we had. Discussions with the federations and the local NGOs that support them noted a need to develop similar relationships with other government departments. The good working relationships between the federation and government are usually with specific departments or ministries. For instance, in Harare, the federation works with the Physical Planning Department and the Ministry of Water (which can be more progressive than local governments). There is some work with the Ministry of Health – and new toilets need to get approval from this Ministry. The Ministry of Environment is showing some interest in working with the federation on resilient

housing. The federation needs to develop a relationship with certain other sectors, including the department that issues licences for markets and security, and the police to address the harassment of vendors and informal markets. This requires negotiating with a department within city government that the federation has never worked with.

The discussions also pointed to the difficulties the federations face from the constant movement of government staff and politicians, hence valuable allies within government move or are replaced and a new set of politicians and civil servants need to be made aware of what the federation does. All the federations face difficulties in institutionalising the partnerships with local governments and national government ministries or agencies so that these partnerships continue and expand when key government staff or politicians who support the federations move jobs or come to the end of their term. For instance, in Pune, the Municipal Commissioner generally changes every two years and so the federation needs to build relationships with new commissioners. The much improved relationship with the Zimbabwe federation has been supported by the Mayor but this may not continue when another mayor takes over. The same is true for Jinja, when the Town Clerk who has been so supportive of the federation moves to another job.

In all cities, there are difficulties regarding the high standards demanded in housing and settlements. Government staff from Jinja and Harare emphasised their pride in having a city that is well planned – but inappropriate planning measures and land-use and building standards are among the reasons why such a high proportion of their population lives in informal settlements. It has been difficult for the federations to get acceptance and approval for some of its initiatives because these do not meet official standards, and this also contributes to delays in getting approval for building plans. Even with all the innovations around standards noted earlier, it is still difficult to get local government to move away from formal processes of land allocations of large plot sizes (that meet minimum plot-size standards) and provision of conventional (high-cost) infrastructure. Also, from the requirement to build housing to high formal standards (rather than allowing incremental improvements). Regarding upgrading, despite federation success in getting it accepted, government agencies often set time limits for the upgrading and expect that building will be with concrete blocks. This is the case even though this has long been shown to be far too expensive and incapable of reaching the needed scale. This is not to suggest that rules and standards should be abandoned – but they need to be simplified and changed in ways that also support community-driven processes (Mitlin and Muller 2004).

It takes a long time for local governments to accept that their policies on housing and land use and the standards they seek to enforce are unrealistic. Informal settlements are still seen as an aberration – not as the result of inappropriate government policies and standards. But it is through better relations between federations and local governments that new possibilities emerge – for instance, modifying standards in particular projects to bring down unit costs and then to actually change the norms. This also includes recognising households' efforts and the resources they bring to put into a house, once they have a plot.

Some of the federations have to deal with (and learn to deal with) conflicts that were not anticipated. For some of the land-sites that the federation has negotiated, it has proved difficult to stop other individuals or groups from coming onto the land plots – and difficult to get government to help resolve the issue. Local governments may require the federation to manage repayments or payments for services – and in some nations it is difficult for the federation to manage people who default on payments. Federations may get unexpected demands – for instance, in Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe), the local authority demanded that 10 per cent of plots the federation had been allocated be given back to them for allocation. In the DZ extension in Harare, the federation has had to accommodate 188 households from outside the federation. The federation leaders recognise the need to learn how to develop solutions for everyone. It is also important to get agreed MoU that set out what is planned and agreed.

9

Conclusions on community-based engagement and monitoring

One of the most significant developments in addressing urban poverty in low- and middle-income nations and in developing more inclusive cities is the emergence and growth of city and national federations or networks of grassroots organisations. These are now active in more than 30 nations and they have formed their own international network (Slum/Shack Dwellers International – SDI) to support their learning from each other, to encourage new federations to form and to represent their interests in international discussions. These federations and ACCA (the Asian Coalition for Community Action), whose work is described in Section 6, have also developed local, national and international funding mechanisms that directly support community initiatives and are catalysts for getting local government engagement and support.

The national and city-level slum/shack dweller/ homeless people's federations whose work and strategies are described in this paper[9] have developed as representative organisations of the urban poor to actively engage in poverty reduction and to work with local governments and other actors in doing so. The foundation of each of these federations is savings groups – in many nations, hundreds of such savings groups, in some, thousands.

Careful record-keeping is important for the federations to maintain accountability to their members and to develop more productive relationships with local governments; also to provide a formal base through which to hold local governments to account for agreements or commitment made.

The community organisations and federations record and monitor many *community processes* – records kept by each savings group of the savings, loans and repayments that are updated each day; regular meetings for savings groups; and the public noticeboards that summarise savings and progress for each savings group, also the data collected about the informal settlements (through profiling, mapping and enumeration). Careful records are also kept of the initiatives they engage in – for instance, records of the costs for houses or community toilets they construct.

The community organisations and federations also record and monitor their evolving relationships and then partnerships with local governments. This is done through keeping records of meetings with local officials and project staff. Federations seek wherever possible to get these partnerships formalised – for instance, by scheduling regular meetings, keeping

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[9] This conclusions section draws on the authors' work in other nations.

minutes of these meetings, and working on projects where they work as partners with local authority staff with defined responsibilities. These can also be seen in the MoU developed in many cities between the federation and local government. In some instances, federation representatives are invited to sit on key local government committees.

Federation savings groups also monitor what is done by local governments – for instance, how contractors are contracted to undertake work in the settlements where they live and how they fulfil those contracts (and whether the contractors have any accountability to the residents in the settlements). These contribute to a process of learning and reflection among all the federation savings groups, which then serves more ambitious initiatives and often more effective larger-scale support from local governments.

Thus, there are many ways in which the savings groups and the larger federations or networks they form monitor themselves and their work and monitor local governments and other groups they work with. But this takes a different form than the most common forms of CBM – which involves community organisations monitoring the performance of infrastructure and service providers (and more generally local government decisions and funding allocations) and holding them to account for deficiencies in provision, quality or pricing. For most of the community organisations that make up the federations, the problem is that they get no infrastructure or services, so they have no government agency or utility they can hold to account. In addition, the federations recognise the limited capacities of the local governments they work with – and the need for partnerships between them to ensure provision. So what they do in CBM becomes better characterised as Community-Based Engagement (CBE), which includes monitoring – of their own processes, of their relationship-building with local government, and the outcomes that emerge from these relationships and negotiations. This recording and monitoring also underpins the shared learning among the federation groups – for instance, as savings group or federation representatives visit each other and learn from each other's experiences.

The ACCA programme whose work is summarised in Section 6 has many points in common with the federations: in the support provided to savings groups to take action and in the support for communities in a city to learn from each other and join together to get local government engagement. In many Asian nations, ACCA provides additional support to city and national federations.

Engaging with local governments. The federations want to be seen by local governments as working partners, not as lobbies. The quality of the relationship between city government (civil servants and politicians) and urban poor communities is clearly critical for most aspects of poverty reduction, including addressing many aspects of exclusion (and in many cities avoiding eviction), providing or improving infrastructure and services and allowing urban poor groups to influence what is planned and what is done. In the work of the federations (and in ACCA), what is notable is that urban poor communities are not lobbying government for government-directed changes but, rather, are seeking working partnerships in which they are actively engaged with local governments in joint planning, financing and implementation. This is being done by savings groups and, wherever possible, city-wide through the city and national federations. So if a city government is prepared to work with local federation groups, they have partners in particular localities (local savings groups) and for developing city-wide measures (supported by city and national federations or networks). These savings groups and the larger federations they form are making themselves available to work with politicians and civil servants by not being confrontational and by demonstrating the knowledge and capacity they can bring to joint initiatives.

Changing how local government views informal settlements and their residents. The success of all the federations and networks of community organisations supported by ACCA and SDI depends not only on what they do but also on changing the mindsets of local politicians and civil servants. The federations in the three cities visited have made great progress in this. All the (local and national) government staff we talked to spoke positively about the federation and about their relationships with the federation. This must be understood in a context where in most cities in Africa, at best, those living in informal settlements are ignored and, at worst, bulldozed (recall here the enormous scale of forced evictions in Zimbabwe in 2005) (Tibaijuka 2005). City politicians and civil servants usually have very negative (and usually inaccurate) views about informal settlements and their residents – for instance, on wanting to stop people moving to their city ("*Migrants are our biggest problem*") and to get informal settlement dwellers "*to move back to rural areas*" (when most are actually long-term city residents). Local politicians and civil servants generally want to get rid of informal settlements because they feel these present a poor image of the city and discourage new investment. They often assume that most residents of informal settlements are unemployed, when much of the city economy depends on the work they do and the tasks they take on – for instance, in construction, waste-processing, manufacturing and service provision.

Using 'precedent-setting' initiatives to get the attention of and engagement with local governments. The federations and the other networks of community organisations supported by ACCA undertake 'precedent-setting' initiatives to demonstrate their capabilities to local government. These initiatives are also used to negotiate changes in standards. All three of the federations visited (and other federations) have to contend with a regulatory framework that includes land-use controls (including large minimum plot sizes) and building regulations that ensure that legal housing is unaffordable for federation members. Rather than directly challenge these, the federations will undertake 'precedent-setting' projects (i.e. building houses or household or community toilets, upgrading housing in an existing settlement) that local authorities can see are good quality – yet contravene official regulations. So 'upgrading' of existing settlements is allowed even as the housing there does not meet official standards, and plot sizes for houses and road widths are below the official minimum-size standards.

How learning is shared through community exchanges. 'Precedent-setting' initiatives show local government (and other actors) what community organisations are capable of. But they also serve to support shared learning within the federations and networks as other community organisations visit them and learn from those who implemented them. Visiting community organisations often bring local government staff with them, so they also learn.

The way in which the networks and federations are organised means a central concern of these interventions is to nurture the practice and potential of gendered empowerment and women's leadership. Most federation savers and savings group managers are women (although all federations also encourage men to join). As women are more actively engaged in savings group and federation activities, in many cases they become local, city and sometimes national community leaders. The success of women in achieving physical improvements is then reinforced by a demonstrated capacity in financial (savings) management and in working with and negotiating with local government.

If we want to understand inclusion (and exclusion) in urban contexts, we need to understand how local governments view low-income groups and their organisations. This is especially the case for those groups that are excluded from formal systems – for instance, living in informal settlements where most or all aspects of their lives are outside formal systems. Their homes do not meet building standards, their plots contravene land-use regulations, they occupy land illegally, they often draw on water illegally and have illegal toilets and many of their livelihoods break one or more laws, rules or regulations.

In each of the three cities visited, there is evidence of changed relationships between local governments and organisations and federations of slum/shack dweller/ homeless people – evident in joint projects, MoU, regular meetings and changes in standards (or allowing their contravention) to allow more appropriate housing and basic services. MoU provide the groundwork and official legitimacy for the federations to develop new approaches that then become more widely accepted by local governments. For instance, in Zimbabwe, the federation has been very successful in Harare in getting land for housing and in official acceptance of and support for informal settlement upgrading that includes legal title transfer when upgrading is complete. Official standards have been made more appropriate as a result of federation–city government interactions – and incremental housing is also accepted in new housing projects as well as upgrading projects.

Community-Based Monitoring (CBM) needs legitimate community organisations (that represent urban poor groups and are accountable to them) that can monitor what is happening and can use this for learning, monitoring and, where needed, as the basis for evaluation. No community-based savings group can be sustained without careful records available to all, which provides the needed transparency and accountability to its members. The same is true for any city fund or national fund where federation members choose to put some of their savings. Here, what must be stressed is how much a careful keeping of records and assignment of responsibilities among federation members is central to their functioning.

CBM is different from conventional monitoring because the focus is not only on what is happening in each community but also on how community members and organisations are engaged in monitoring and what this does for reducing exclusion. What is remarkable in each of the three cities visited is the many ways in which representative organisations of the urban poor (formed around savings groups) are recording what is happening in what they do (especially through the savings groups), what initiatives they undertake, and in how they relate to local governments (records of meetings where minutes are taken, MoU, joint reviews of initiatives and federation members sitting on key local government committees). They are also engaged in generating much of the data needed for action (both by them and by local government) through the mapping, profiling and enumerating of informal settlements and their residents; these are practices carried out by the other federations too. There are also mechanisms for making the learning in each community part of a wider learning process that involves other savings groups and local government – as described already in the community-to-community exchanges that often include local government staff. There is also monitoring to hold local government to account – for instance, through checking

on what is being done against agreed MoU and project designs. And there is the monitoring of progress on initiatives taken by or funded by the local governments; this includes addressing some problem areas, as in when contractors do poor-quality work or do not meet agreed implementation schedules, and community organisations can bring their concerns regarding this to local government.

Drawing on the knowledge contributed by federation members. One of the most valuable resources for community-led processes is the knowledge brought by savings group members and community leaders. This knowledge – from their own experience within their community, from their experience with external agencies and from the synthesis produced from their group discussions – is central to CBM. This is supported by both the formal and the informal processes by which community processes and community–local government relations are recorded. It may not be a very sophisticated methodology for CBM but this combination of drawing on the knowledge and assessments of savings group managers and other community organisers in group discussions and visits to key government officials and visits to project sites with these managers and organisers provides a very rich understanding of community–local government relationships and how these are changing. This is then also deepened by looking at the more formal documentation that has relevance for this – including how savings are recorded.

Developing community-based evaluation. Both the federations and the ACCA programme have developed methods of community-based evaluation that have relevance beyond their work and networks. They use visits by community organisers to contribute to evaluations of initiatives. Thus, urban poor groups (and their work) are assessed by their peers – other urban poor groups (see Carcellar and Kerr 2012). Assessments or evaluations of community-led initiatives are usually assessed by outside (usually foreign) professionals. They often focus only on a checklist to see whether what was done matches what was specified in the project proposal. As described already, the federations have long used exchange visits as a means of initiating community-based discussions and evaluating what has been done. ACCA developed an assessment programme where ACCA-supported community initiatives are assessed by community leaders and their partner NGOs from other cities and nations through visits and discussions with the people who are implementing them. This assessment method opens up new space for two-way learning, sharing and building mutual assistance links across Asia, and helps expand the range of what community people see as possible.

Key roles for NGOs. All the federations have support NGOs with whom they choose to work, and these have supported the federations in expanding and extending the scale of their work. They have also demonstrated how this support can be provided without weakening community-driven processes. For instance, in each of the three cities visited, the federations have an NGO (SPARC in Pune, Actogether in Jinja, Dialogue on Shelter Trust in Harare) that works very closely with them (and whose entire work programme is to work with and support the federation and their savings groups). Each of the NGOs that works with the federations knows that it is the federation that must lead and it is the federation to whom they must be accountable. These NGOs provide professional assistance where needed and help manage external funding. They help with the documenting of what the federation is and does – although, again, care must be taken to ensure that it is federation leaders and members who are centrally engaged in this. There is a very substantial documentation of what each of the federations is doing (in the cities we visited and in other cities) on the web and in a range of journals. The NGOs that work so closely with the federations are also members of Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI). It was these NGOs that arranged our visits to the federation sites, the discussions with federations and the discussions with government staff – but they were also very careful not to dominate or lead any discussion.

The development of strong transnational networks representing urban poor groups is crucial to supporting disadvantaged communities to learn from each other on how to advance their agenda and avoid continuing exclusion. This report noted earlier the many instances where visits by SDI representatives (federation members from other nations) helped catalyse better relations with governments. Both SDI and ACCA invest in the development of collective political capabilities among the urban poor through exchanges between communities and through nurturing an institutional practice of federating and networking. This enables lessons to be identified and embedded in improved practices by other groups. SDI has long supported federation leaders from each of the cities to go on international exchanges with other federations – to present what they do, to learn from what the federation they are visiting has done. A key component of ACCA was exchange visits by community leaders between nations. These complement the many exchanges organised within each nation. SDI also organises regular meetings of all the federations and also federation participation in international events – for instance, the World Urban Forums that are organised by UN–Habitat every two years.

International assistance needs to change the way it operates if it is to help make cities more inclusive. This includes supporting federations with city-wide and national presence. Today, SDI and ACHR operate in many countries with very different government attitudes to and support for those in informal settlements. These range from countries with active government programmes to support the urban poor and their organisations (as in Thailand) to countries with large subsidy programmes that need to be made to work better for the urban poor (for instance, Brazil, India and South Africa). They include many countries seeking aid and loans from international development banks such as Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania and Uganda that have hardly any resources to make plans to assist slum dwellers. Creating strategies to develop sustained mobilisation by slum/shack dwellers in all these countries has emerged from international assistance. SDI has facilitated the Cities Alliance in adopting the federation-building strategy for its programme and demonstrated to donors the value of making this investment.

Through the Urban Poor Fund International and ACCA, we see how international funding can directly support hundreds of community initiatives and strengthen networks or federations of community organisations in developing good working relationships with local government. This has considerable importance in that these not only support much innovation and action but also strengthen the influence of low-income groups and their organisations at city and national level.

Framework for monitoring CBE within a federation. Section 7 suggested a framework for monitoring the federations that focused on three phases of development:

1   Creating a city-wide federation with monitoring of the scale and depth of federation savings groups and degree of women's participation; also the recording of initiatives undertaken and of partnership with a supporting NGO.

2   The level of engagement with the city government and other tiers of government: recording the federation's ability to contest city data on slums with their data, to represent excluded communities, to undertake 'precedent-setting' initiatives to catalyse scaling up, to engage with senior politicians and civil servants, to get round inappropriate standards and to explore how strategies in one city encourage comparable initiatives in others.

3   Joint ventures and projects that expand services to the urban poor, including recording progress of shifts from pilots to city-wide; joint initiatives by communities and city governments and joint monitoring , capacity-building and management of city funds; and joint explorations to influence the state and national urban policy.

Annexe 1: List of people interviewed in Pune, Jinja and Harare

Harare

From the federation: S. Chiremba, Brenda Florence, S. Ndlaru, L. Kunaka, M. Ncube, J. J. Karongo, S. Tondor, D. Mundi, E. Chachi, P. Soibanda, C. Chingani, J. Nziramasango, Julio Ndlojius, Sheila Magara, E. Tembo, M. Chakamba, C. Matofi and E. Barana

Nyari Mudzinge, Director in the Ministry of Local Government, responsible for urban local authorities

Mayor Muchadeyi Masunda, Mayor of Harare

Dr. Tendai Mahachi, Town Clerk

Bridget Mandizha, Assistant Director, Department of Housing and Community Services, City of Harare

James Chiyanwa, Deputy Director, Department of Housing and Community Services, City of Harare

Waszanayi Vhutuza, Planner, Department of Urban Planning Services, City of Harare

Claudius Kuravuone, City Architect, Department of Planning Services, City of Harare

Jinja

in visits to sites where the federation was working and in meetings with federation members (including a meeting with one of the savings groups) and with government staff, many people contributed to the discussions or reported on their work and on relations between the federation and local government. We did not keep a full list of these but included the following:

Katana Goretti, NSDFU, Nakuwa, Kampala

Hassan Kiberu, Chair, NSDFU, Kampala

Sarah Nandudu, Vice Chair, NSDFU, Jinja

Muhammed Lutwama, Actogether, Programmes Coordinator

Waiswa Kakaire, Actogether, Engineer

Helen Nyamweru, Actogether, Administrative and Documentation Support

Skye Dobson, SDI, Programme Officer

Michael Kasede, Jinja Chair (federation) and Chair of the MDF

Samuel Mabala, Commissioner of Urban Development at the National Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development

David Kyasanku, Town Clerk, Jinja

The Deputy Town Clerk and the Head of Physical Planning, Jinja

Pune

from the federation: Chaya R. Gaikwad, Padma A. Gore, Malan G. Kamble, Gulshan L. Sheikh, Shoba S. Adhav, Jyoti A. Bhemde, Sangeeta Devkule and Savita Sonawane

Dhananjay Sadlapure, Engineer

Mahesh Zagde, Municipal Commissioner

Poonam Mehta, Deputy Collector

Vijay Havaldar, Junior Engineer

Anoop Kumar Yadhav, Additional Municipal Commissioner

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Brick by Brick: Transforming relations between local government and the urban poor in Zimbabwe by Beth Chitekwe-Biti http://pubs.iied.org/10702IIED.html

Building partnerships between urban poor communities and local governments by Hellen Nyamweru and Skye Dobson http://pubs.iied.org/10700IIED.html

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This paper describes how federations and networks of slum/shack dwellers develop effective responses to their needs through partnerships with local governments. It has a particular interest in the role of Community-Based Engagement and Monitoring. It draws on interviews and discussions with civil servants, politicians and members of slum dweller federations in Jinja (Uganda), Pune (India) and Harare (Zimbabwe) as well as visits to projects where the federations and local governments work together, supported by local NGOs. The paper also considers the role of funds set up by the federations and networks in stimulating and supporting community-based engagement including the Asian Coalition for Community Action.

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