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Towards citywide participatory planning:

emerging community-led practices in three African cities

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Abstract

In this working paper we seek to contribute to debates about the scaling up of citizen participation in towns and cities of the Global South through a focus on participatory planning. Our contribution is three-fold. First, we discuss existing experiences of integrating participation into citywide planning and urban governance processes, highlighting that such efforts often do not adequately consider the views of low-income communities, and restrict participation to the level of the neighbourhood. Second, drawing on these experiences, we outline what we mean, theoretically and practically, by scaling up participation and summarise the ways and extent to which the scaling up of participation has occurred as discussed in the literature, and the factors that emerge as significant to its progress. We consider government, academic and civil society-led efforts. Third, we identify factors perceived to be significant challenges and potential opportunities to scaling processes, focusing specifically on experiences in three African cities: Bulawayo (Zimbabwe), Johannesburg (South Africa) and Nairobi (Kenya). In the concluding section we summarise the implications for the next stage of an action research programme to advance our understanding of how to achieve citywide participatory planning.

Keywords

Participatory planning, scaling, community-led practices, Nairobi, Johannesburg, Bulawayo, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya

1. Introduction

In 2012, 863 million people lived in ‘slums’, a pejorative term referring to informal settlements and other forms of inadequate housing (United Nations, 2014). The United Nations has estimated that this number will increase to three billion people (40% of the world’s population) by 2030 (UN-Habitat, 2003). In Africa – where more than half (62%) of urban residents lived in informal settlements in 2012 (United Nations, 2014) – present challenges that are particularly acute include insecure tenure, inadequate access to basic services, insecure livelihoods and lack of citywide integrated and holistic development.

We argue in this paper that existing planning legislation and practice remains incapable of resolving such problems at the scale required. This is the case for both citywide strategic planning approaches, such as master planning or city development strategies, and many participatory planning initiatives that take place at the community or neighbourhood levels. Strategic planning approaches often fail to consider the views of low-income residents and are rarely sufficiently detailed to allow for action in urban contexts in which governments lack crucial resources as well as the capacity for plan implementation (Miraftab, 2003; Watson, 2013). Participatory development initiatives

are often rolled out by the state, donors or the private sector with the aim of saving costs. The consequences are varied but may include the reproduction of uneven power relations between low-income residents and political authorities, selective citizen involvement which thereby reinforces exclusion, and the restriction of citizen involvement to the neighbourhood level in contexts where crucial decisions affecting low-income populations take place at higher levels (Annis, 1998; Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Moser, 1989; Purcell, 2006).

At the same time, it is widely recognised that a more participatory approach to planning, and greater participation in urban development more generally, can also increase efficiency (lower cost of urban projects) and effectiveness (greater reach of urban projects and services, better response to citizens' interests and needs), and ensure empowerment (institutional and organisational resources as well as collective ideas available for effective political action) and the building of citizen capacity among low-income groups (Colenbrander and Archer, 2016; Mitlin and Patel, 2014; Moore, 2005; Moser, 1989). Considering these positive factors, we argue here that one potential pathway for improving accountability towards constituents and citizens' influence in citywide decision-making processes would be to scale-up participatory planning horizontally into other policy areas and/or neighbourhoods, and vertically across lower and higher institutional levels.

Why is this a priority? In an environment in which public and private institutions do not adequately address the specific interests and needs of low-income communities, low-income residents often deploy their own community-based solutions and mobilise for more inclusive urban governance. We argue here that community-led initiatives can promote collective priorities and political voice, produce goods and services, and provide peer support and solidarity. In so doing, they contribute to democratic control over urban policy and planning decisions, with the extent of such influence varying according to the degree to which low-income people and others are affected. A strong process of community-led initiatives can promote inclusion (ie larger numbers of people involved) at neighbourhood and potentially beyond neighbourhood levels. At the neighbourhood level, for example, this refers to involving low-income residents in democratic organisations – such as savings groups or other community-based organisations (CBOs) – and community-led practices – such as contribution to physical labour around upgrading or involvement in planning and re-blocking structures (Colenbrander and Archer, 2016). Beyond the neighbourhood, community-led initiatives involve the coming together of leaders and members of different low-income settlements and organisations to further their objectives (Mitlin, 2004). When community leaders from multiple communities interact in this way, they can observe a set of possibilities that are not evident (Boonyabancha et al, 2012). While innovative community-led initiatives are taking place at the neighbourhood and beyond-neighbourhood levels, insufficient attention has so far been paid to how such activities can be scaled-up to the city level and integrated into state-led urban policy and planning practices.

As part of an action research network funded by the Leverhulme Trust, we are starting to address the above-mentioned knowledge gaps. Our network brings together academics, community networks affiliated with Slum Dwellers International (SDI) and NGOs whose work includes innovative and collaborative local experiments around participatory planning in Bulawayo, Johannesburg and Nairobi. The network aims to develop the knowledge needed to support a move from participatory community-led neighbourhood planning to city-scale planning processes. This working paper represents the first collaborative output of this network.

To situate the network within existing bodies of work, the paper provides a literature review on the challenges and opportunities for scaling up participatory planning to the city level. While there has been much attention given to participation (see, for example, Hickey and Mohan, 2004) we narrow the focus here to planning, as this is one of the key state processes through which urban change and transformation take place. The paper also reflects on preliminary findings from initial knowledge exchanges between the network partners on efforts to scale up participatory community-led planning in Bulawayo, Johannesburg, and Nairobi.

Our review of the literature reveals that existing scholarship mainly focuses on experiences around state-led efforts at scaling up participatory planning. Such efforts appear to be associated as much with managing and thus restricting participation as they are with the transformation and empowerment of low-income communities. Meanwhile, the few existing studies on civil-society-led efforts at up-scaling tend to be more optimistic. They highlight the success of organised groups in pressing for the state to recognise their needs and capacities, although the lack of community-led scaled urban development processes is notable. Nevertheless, our own findings from Bulawayo, Johannesburg and Nairobi, also demonstrate that changes in scale can produce complex political challenges for community organisations. These relate, for example, to challenges around adapting or changing community organising modalities in such a way that the depth and breadth of different low-income groups' involvement at city-scale can be ensured. In addition to reflecting on such challenges, our findings from the three cities also show that scaling can have the potential for community innovations to be introduced at the level of local government. We therefore challenge static and singular interpretations of terms such as 'invited', 'invented' and 'claimed' spaces of participation which are commonly used by academics to represent the different ways in which communities 'reach up' to engage the state and states 'reach down' to engage communities (Cornwall, 2002; Miraftab, 2009). Instead, we demonstrate the dynamic and iterative nature of these representations, showing, for example, that invented spaces of local community organisations can become invited spaces as grassroots strategies are taken up by state authorities operating at different levels.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. In terms of contextual background, section two discusses existing experiences of integrating participation into citywide planning and urban governance processes, highlighting the way such efforts often do

not adequately consider the views of low-income communities and restrict participation to the level of the neighbourhood. In section three we draw on this discussion to define what we mean, both conceptually and practically, by scaling up participatory planning. Section four then draws on this definition, as well as on Cornwall's (2002) typology of participation, to identify and analyse actually existing efforts by states, donors, academics and civil society groups to scale up participatory planning as discussed in the literature. Our analysis is broadly pessimistic and points out that, to date, there are no elaborations of positive examples of scaling up, even when there exist more positive specific experiences. In section five, we then reflect on initial findings from our action-research network, which provides the opportunity both to analyse the reasons why up-scaling has been so difficult and to explore how it can be improved. In the final section, we consider what these findings mean for debates around scaling up participatory community-led planning to city-scale planning processes and discuss the next steps for our action research network.

2. Participation in city and neighbourhood planning

Throughout the last four decades, international donors, governments, and academics have promoted participation in processes of development, planning and governance. While it may be overstated to say that participation is the new 'orthodoxy' (Cornwall, 2002), there has been wider recognition of citizen contributions both in terms of individual consultation and collective efforts. Urban development and city planning in the Global South represent no exception to this trend. This section reviews the academic and policy literature on the shifting role of participation in planning, focusing first on citywide strategic approaches to planning and subsequently on different approaches to participatory planning at the community and neighbourhood levels.

2.1. Participation and citywide strategic planning

Citywide strategic planning in the Global South has shifted significantly over the past five decades, with participation increasingly, at least in terms of commitment, becoming a central component of the planning and local governance process. From being a process of urban administration dealing with control of land planning and tax collection and the delivery of some services in the 1970s, local government approaches changed to one of urban management in the 1980s, responsible for the effective and efficient provision of services, and more responsive to local citizens' demands (Freire and Stren, 2001). Since the 1990s, local governments have also been expected to be facilitators of good urban governance (Pierre, 1999; Watson, 2016). This role requires them to be more accountable and transparent, more adroit at contributing to the transformation of the diverse forms that local democracy assume, more willing to recognise the complexity of new forms of citizenship, and more capable of involving proactively different public, private and civil society actors (Pierre, 1999; Watson, 2016). Yet, despite these shifts towards more inclusive approaches framed around

good urban governance, outcomes have been limited. We demonstrate in this section that, in practice, citywide strategic planning approaches still fail to consider the views of low-income residents and often fall short in the stage of plan implementation, especially in contexts where governments lack crucial resources and capacity.

One of the most popular ways to open spaces for good urban governance has been through decentralisation and devolution (Beard et al, 2008). Much excitement around the opening of local democratic spaces could be noted after decentralisation reforms in the Philippines (1990 Local Government Code), India (73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment), and Bolivia (1994 Law of Popular Participation). In addition to establishing legal frameworks for decentralisation, these reforms all established institutional channels for citizen engagement at the local level (ie Local Government Councils in the Philippines, Panchayats in India, Neighbourhood Councils and Civic Oversight Committees in Bolivia). These legislative reforms promoting good urban governance and participation were certainly successful in some urban settings, contributing to citizen empowerment and more inclusive and redistributive planning (Faguet, 2012). However, it is widely recognised that progress was slower than anticipated in some contexts. Stated commitments did not lead to changes in local governance practices. The most commonly cited factors in explaining these gaps are: (1) the prevalence of ineffective and weak local government institutions; (2) lack of capacity among local authorities to undertake required institutional and administrative reforms; and (3) lack of political will among the authorities in charge of local government (Kohl and Farthing, 2006; Shatkin, 2008). Another factor contributing to the at times limited potential of decentralisation for citizen empowerment and stronger democratisation was the fact that, in parallel to such reforms, governments throughout the Global South also introduced market-led reform policies which often led to an emphasis on cost-recovery and continuing exclusion. Alongside a reluctance by national government to invest in local government activities, it has been difficult to engage residents, and the lowest-income groups have struggled to participate.

In addition to decentralisation reforms, participatory mechanisms were also introduced into strategic and master planning processes. According to Mitlin and Thompson (1995), this was done for more pragmatic reasons. For example, in many cities of the Global South there is an absence of good quality data available from censuses. In such contexts, professionals have included participatory methods in the diagnosis stage of the master planning process and involved members of low-income settlements in processes of data collection (Mitlin and Thompson, 1995). In some countries, participation has also been incorporated into the end stage of the master planning process. For example, Brazil's City Statute requires that every municipality should subject their master plans to public ratification and consultation (Avritzer, 2009).

Participation also represents a key element of City Development Strategies (CDS's) which, with support from Cities Alliance and the World Bank, have been introduced by more than 200 cities across the Global South since 2009. CDS's emphasise values of good urban governance and citizen empowerment through stakeholder participation in

public agenda setting, with a market-driven logic for economic growth and effective resource management (Cities Alliance, 2006; Rasoolimanesh et al, 2012). Unlike comprehensive master planning which produces detailed spatial plans to be implemented within a period of four to five years, CDS's mainly consist of "frameworks and principles and broad spatial ideas" which should be addressed in policy and planning practice within a period of 20–30 years (Watson, 2009, p 168).

In practice, however, there often remains a gap between participatory rhetoric and actual political and economic realities. While in part this is related to competing ideologies and a lack of investment in participatory governance, it also appears to be related to a reluctance of authorities to institutionalise empowerment and bottom-up control. Actual citywide planning processes, whether in the form of master plans or CDS's, continue to be characterised by citizen non-engagement and remain in the hands of state elites who are often unaccountable to low-income residents. Writing on Sao Paulo, Brazil, Caldeira and Holston (2015) reveal how government authorities rely on citizen involvement in the diagnosis and planning stage but often ignore the results of this process at the crucial implementation stage of master plans. This point is further supported by Rolnik (2011, p 251) who notes that participatory master planning is more symbolic than real, as local governments, in practice, have "little autonomy over […] investments, whether participatory or not". Instead, in the centralised and sectorised Brazilian political system, local government officials define their interventions on the basis of relationships which they build with people in federal government and with associated private sector lobbyists. It is for these systemic reasons that wealthier citizen groups, representing the political elite and the private sector, have a significant advantage in mobilising around their specific interests and needs in participatory consultations in comparison to low-income groups (Caldeira and Holston, 2015; Rolnik, 2011). Such patterns are also evident in many Sub-Saharan African cities, where low-income communities often continue to remain outside formal realms of government-led urban planning, a process which mainly seeks to attract private urban developers and project investments by donors (Watson, 2009, 2013). Evidence from India also suggests a flawed process (Patel, 2013). The ability of higher income groups to occupy spaces introduced by the Indian government for participatory and citizen involvement has long been noted (Harriss, 2006; Ghertner, 2011).

In summary, then, while current citywide planning approaches might be useful in designing more inclusive urban development plans and visions, they are characterised by a range of limitations. Citywide planning is still influenced by a variety of competing ideologies, including market-led approaches that tend to be prioritised over more inclusive and participatory approaches. Further, governments tend to lack commitment to participatory opportunities, allocate limited resources to associated support measures, remain unable to manage elite encroachment, and lack knowledge of how to design citywide plans that build on the assets and resources of low-income groups. Instead, citywide planning continues mainly to respond to donor or private sector interests.

2.2. Participation and neighbourhood planning

Whatever the ambivalence of state action to support participation in citywide strategic planning, the benefits have been widely recognised both by those concerned with urban planning practice in the Global South and by those concerned more generally with poverty reduction. Efforts have emerged from distinct sources, including governments, NGOs and donors, and civil society groups, and tend to focus predominantly at the level of the neighbourhood or community.

Governments concerned favouring citizen participation have recognised the need to develop programmes that advance these goals. Some better-known examples include the government of Sri Lanka's Million Houses Programme (Joshi and Khan, 2010), and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)-funded and NGO-led sites, services and housing microfinance projects, including PRODEL in Nicaragua and FUNDASAL in El Salvador (Stein and Vance, 2008), and more recently the Community Organisation Development Institute in Thailand (Boonyabancha, 2009).

With this have come different models and codified processes. For example, Hamdi and Goethert (1997) have refined such participatory processes as 'community action planning'. Community action planning emphasises the involvement of residents and organisations in low-income settlements in different stages of the planning process and in development projects taking place at the community level. Core stages include, first, the diagnostic stage where, community representatives should identify and prioritise existing problems; second, the planning stage, in which community representatives, in collaboration with other stakeholders, identify, negotiate and prioritise project solutions to problems; and third, the implementation and monitoring stage of a specific project within low income settlements.

In addition to professional efforts, citizen-led groups have also developed their own approaches incorporating similar components. Such initiatives recognise that poverty reduction necessarily has to involve greater voice as well as material improvements in people's lives (for a list of specific examples see Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2013). The more substantive of these processes tend to have a stronger focus on building relationships between low-income residents, as well as on building relations between organisations of low-income residents and a host of partner agencies, and consolidating new relations between citizen groups and the state (Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2013).

As noted in the introduction, community-based participatory planning approaches, whether initiated by states, donors or citizens, focus on stakeholder cooperation and seek to improve the responsiveness and accountability of local governments towards local communities. Their attention to community needs and problems also puts the interests and demands of local, often low-income, population groups to the fore. At the same time, however, such approaches have limited impact and face a number of challenges. In particular, insufficient attention may be given to ensuring that the lowest-income urban groups are included in decision-making processes which affect their

communities (Annis, 1998; Mohan and Stokke, 2000; Purcell, 2006). Furthermore, community-based approaches mainly represent small-scale and localised activities, even when they have the formal support of national government agencies (Cornwall, 2008). Even when effective at the local level, without approaches that emphasise the interconnected nature of urban development and which raise the ambition and capability of local citizens to participate in city challenges, the SDGs and other development goals are unlikely to be achieved. Participatory planning at neighbourhood scale might lead to important improvements at the household level or to small-scale community interventions. But such processes rarely lead to larger-scale improvements and changes within low-income neighbourhoods as a whole, such as settlement upgrading, re-blocking, or community-wide service provisioning. The latter interventions often require pooling of resources and financial, technical, political and administrative support from multiple and diverse organisations (eg public, private, civil society) working across different sectors (eg housing, finance, infrastructure services), as well as at different levels of urban governance (eg local, regional, national, international). This requires new modalities of enabling neighbourhood-level decision making to be relevant to the city scale and vice versa. Therefore, as we outline in detail in the subsequent sections, scaling up participatory planning might be one possible way forward.

3. Scaling up participatory planning

In a recent study, Tomlinson (2017, p 116) emphasises that questions around scaling up participatory planning "arise from the projection that there will be two billion slum dwellers by 2030". He further notes that scaling up participatory planning is particularly required in cities and countries with a high proportion of informal settlement dwellers, whose specific interests, needs and demands are difficult to realise and are unlikely to be adequately considered in city planning and urban development. Although we share such normative sentiments, it is important to emphasise that we, unlike Tomlinson (2017), do not define scaling up in relation to the number or proportion of underrepresented people, such as slum dwellers, in decision-making processes. Rather we argue the need for multidimensional scaling up.[1]

Understood as such, scaling up means expanding participatory planning horizontally into other policy areas (eg from water and sanitation to drainage and health) and/or communities (eg from one neighbourhood to another) and vertically into higher institutional levels (Fung and Wright, 2001). Further, we suggest here that successful

[1] Our definition of scaling up participatory planning and our understanding of the processes to achieve this share similarities with previous research led by Edwards and Hulme (1992), which focused on scaling up the impact of NGOs on development. For Edwards and Hulme, scaling up refers to organisational or programmatic growth which can be achieved through a variety of processes, including: (1) working with government and within existing institutional structures; (2) organisational expansion; (3) strengthening grassroots organisations; and (4) lobbying and advocacy at local, national and international scales.

scaling up processes should promote collective priorities and political voice, community self-organisation in the production of goods and services, and peer support and solidarity. It should also enhance the levels of inclusion and empowerment of low-income residents and thereby improve democratic control over urban policy and planning decisions.

To achieve this, we recognise that both quantitative and qualitative changes must take place over time and across different realms of urban governance. In our understanding of quantitative changes, we follow Miraftab (2003), who defines the quantitative nature of scaling up as the capacity of actors to extend their work from the community level and to engage with a larger number of actor networks and organisations at higher levels. Even though quantitative changes might be in place, scaling up might not occur because institutional, political and structural obstacles remain prevalent (Baiocchi et al, 2011). Hence, for scaling up to occur and to succeed, qualitative changes are also required (Gaventa, 1998; Miraftab, 2003). According to Miraftab (2003, p 230) scaling up demands "a qualitative change in how agencies see their roles, responsibilities, power, objectives, and procedures and of how well prepared they are for changes (intra-organizational and inter-organizational) in their power structures". Such qualitative changes are likely to be required for all actors and institutions involved in city planning, including those representing low-income settlements. Bringing about qualitative changes essentially refers to creating an enabling environment where different people, including low-income residents, can cooperate, listen to each other and make deliberate choices at face-to-face level. At the same time, as more and diverse localities are drawn into citywide processes, associated policies and programmes must be amended to be relevant to the specificities of a growing number of locations. In addition, the perspectives of previously isolated communities also change, leading to new priorities and possibilities.

4. The making of invited spaces: existing experiences of scaling up participatory planning

Drawing on Cornwall's (2002) typology of citizen participation and the definition above, we now identify and analyse actually existing experiences of scaling up participatory planning by states, donors, academics and civil society as discussed in the literature. Cornwall (2002) considers participation processes along a continuum spanning closed spaces – where decisions are made by actors behind closed doors without citizen involvement (ie conventional master planning) – invited spaces – platforms for participation designed and controlled by states, donors or NGOs (ie the PRODEL or FUNDASAL model for community planning) – and claimed spaces – which are established by civil society groups (ie the SDI community-development planning scheme). In addition, Miraftab (2009) adds a fourth category: invented spaces. These are also established by civil society groups but, unlike claimed spaces, are less institutionalised and serve to directly challenge the status quo (Refstie and Brun, 2016).

It is important to note that these different spaces of citizen participation do not stand in isolation to each other. Indeed, as highlighted by Refstie and Brun (2016), claimed, invented and invited spaces may overlap and connect; this, they suggest may lead to participation which is transformative in nature, producing urban reforms that challenge unjust practices of resource redistribution and exclusion. And, as we argue, the interplay of claimed, invented and invited spaces is also an essential precondition for scaling to occur.

The case of participatory budgeting (PB) illustrates this point. Participatory budgeting emerged in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, where social and community movements that opposed the privatisation of public goods and the reduction of local government functions demanded greater control over government spending decisions taking place at city level. Responding to these demands, participatory budgeting was introduced into the planning proceedings of the municipal government, led by the Workers Party (PT), in 1989 (Baiocchi et al, 2011). Hence, participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre represents an illustration of how one participatory practice shifted from a claimed or invented space to an invited space thanks to the ability of movements to move from the local to the city scale.

After its success in Porto Alegre, participatory budgeting was introduced by municipalities across Brazil (Avritzer, 2009) and was later, after receiving praise from donor organisations such as the World Bank, rolled out as a blueprint participatory urban development model by municipal governments in other countries in Latin America and elsewhere in the Global South and North (Cabannes, 2014; Goldfrank, 2007; Shah, 2007; Sintomer et al, 2008). Research on participatory budgeting in Brazil shows that cities which adopt this approach have spent a significantly larger amount of their budget on public housing, informal settlement upgrading, sanitation and healthcare, and thereby are contributing to a greater reduction in urban poverty and mortality rates in comparison to cities which have not introduced participatory budgeting (Pimentel Walker, 2016; Touchton and Wampler, 2014). Similar pro-poor outcomes have also been observed for participatory budgeting schemes in other cities of the Global South and North (Cabannes, 2015). Projects resulting from participatory budgeting are also considered to be cheaper and better maintained thanks to community control and oversight (Cabannes, 2015). In addition, participatory budgeting is praised for mobilising people in low-income settlements and for demonstrating the potential to transform at least some aspects of urban planning from a state-controlled exercise into a more open, deliberative and collaborative process in which direct and deliberative democracy can flourish (Avritzer, 2009; Baiocchi et al, 2011; Cabannes, 2015; Goldfrank, 2007; Santos, 2005). Participatory budgeting has also been recognised for its ability to change political norms and values, favouring those that are more inclusive and so improving democratic practices (Baiocchi et al, 2011). In a study of eight municipalities, these latter authors argue that “PB cities provided for more much effective forms of [citizen] engagement than their non-PB counterparts” (p 144).

The transformative potential of participatory budgeting may, however, be limited. Baiocchi et al (2011) agree with earlier research that emphasises the significance of a strong and established civil society and sympathetic administration. Without these factors, outcomes in their study cities are less positive. In Bolivia government authorities established the terms and conditions of participatory budgeting, restricted the allocated resources and restricted the application to specific policy sectors (ie small-scale community infrastructure improvements) and/or neighbourhoods, thereby preventing citizen involvement in other citywide decision-making processes (Kohl and Farthing, 2006). Participatory budgeting should, hence, not be treated as a blueprint that can be applied equally everywhere. Instead, the benefits associated with participatory budgeting (eg poverty reduction, democratisation, citizen empowerment) only emerge when certain context-specific conditions are fulfilled (Baiocchi and Ganuza, 2014). These authors have highlighted the fact that the establishment of deliberative spaces in which low-income residents can be involved in decisions around spending priorities represented only one precondition for participatory budgeting to succeed. Success is also dependent on a set of democratic reforms within the state apparatus which induce a shift from representative to direct democracy and empower ordinary citizens. In other cities of the Global South, when governments have introduced deliberative spaces without undertaking democratic reforms to enhance citizen empowerment and inclusion, participatory planning remains a symbolic exercise. This is illustrated by Refstie and Brun (2016), who noted that the participatory budgeting in Blantyre was more an information-oriented event, during which a municipal plan, developed by the government administration, was presented to residents without leaving space for consultation. Similar trends were also noted for other African cities such as Dondo and Maputo (Cabannes, 2015). What again appears important is the presence of organised and autonomous civil society able to strategise its use of these spaces to secure its own goals; otherwise PB may result in localised improvements to the relevance of state investments, but little more (Avritzer, 2006).

The breadth of civil society ambition in contributing to the making of invited spaces is also evident in the recent efforts of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) which has supported members to strengthen citizen planning and implementation in hundreds of cities (Boonyabancha et al, 2012; ACHR, 2017). One of the most notable recent efforts to experiment with citywide participation and enable communities to finance larger-scale improvements with public monies is the civil society programme, Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA). ACCA introduced community development funds (CDFs) in 12 Asian countries as a part of an integrated set of measures to strengthen local participation and to scale it across the city (ACHR, 2017). ACCA encourages local government involvement in CDF management, thereby creating horizontal links between community savings groups and vertical links with local government and other relevant professional agencies. CDFs are a “financial platform made up of contributions from different sources including community savings, ACCA seed funds and contributions from local/national government” (Archer, 2012, p

424). If ACCA seeks to create a platform for citywide participation, CDFs are the institutional mechanism to enable community and local government to plan and finance together. Local government finance contributions to CDFs vary considerably but the participation of officials and politicians has helped to secure changes in policies as well as some access to resources. Arguably CDFs have been most successful in Thailand, where they sit alongside a Thai parastatal, the Community Organization Development Institute (CODI), which invests in informal settlement upgrading and has encouraged community groups and their networks to engage with local government. CODI's approaches have drawn heavily on the experiences of Somsook Boonyabancha, Secretary General of the Coalition who was first Deputy Director and then Director of CODI for many years. CODI encourages the residents of informal settlements to organise and plan their own upgrading, with infrastructure subsidies and soft loans for housing improvements. It also encourages networking at the city scale and beyond to strengthen local initiatives and enable citywide planning. CDFs have emerged as Thai networks have taken up ACCA-financed opportunities to strengthen their ability to create autonomous spaces within which they invite local authority participation. In other countries in which ACCA operates, however, it remains unclear how successful the CDF initiative is in securing citywide community planning.

The potential significance of building capacity, changing behavioural patterns, and contributing to the making of invited spaces in which scaling up participatory planning can occur is also highlighted by academic advocates of co-productive research and planning (Albrechts, 2012; Mitlin, 2008; Polk, 2015; Watson, 2014). For example, Polk (2015, p 111) highlights how co-production, defined by her as collaboration between different public, private, civil society and academic actors, may help in "co-creating solutions to urban planning problems or citizen engagement in creating visions for urban planning". To facilitate co-production and stakeholder collaboration, Polk highlights the importance of establishing a 'neutral' space – in this specific case the 'Mistra Urban Futures Centre' situated in Gothenburg (Sweden) – in which different stakeholders can interact and jointly plan and evaluate policy-relevant research that can later be applied in different public, private or civil society organisations operating at different scales.

However, the problem with such approaches remains the fact that the subsequent anchoring of policy-relevant research in distinct institutional and political contexts did not occur. The reasons for this relate to the ongoing absence of an institutional, legal and funding structure designed for such co-productive practices, the tendency of participants – especially practitioners – to fall back into familiar roles in their actual institutions, and the struggle of participants to integrate project results within their agencies (Polk, 2015). Hence, while experiments around co-production and research and planning may work within an academic workshop framework, they are unlikely to be grounded in existing formal city governance structures and embedded in a political process. It is therefore not surprising that government authorities and associated agencies do not integrate such exercises into their institutional and operational environment.

In other contexts where an enabling legal environment is already in place, the establishment of 'neutral' spaces appears to be helpful for defining and consolidating participatory mechanisms at the city or metropolitan level. This is suggested by research on Belo Horizonte, Brazil (Klink, 2014). Responding to new legislative guidelines outlined in the 2001 City Statute (a federal law which called for the consolidation of participatory planning at the city, metropolitan and regional scale), a new metropolitan agency – comprised of academics, local government officials, and residents from across the metropolitan area – was established within the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). UFMG was selected because, unlike the different municipal governments operating in and around Belo Horizonte, this university represents a more 'neutral' space in which different actors can jointly elaborate a participatory metropolitan master plan. Relying on a variety of participatory exercises – ranging from consultations and workshops to artistic forms of dissemination – Belo Horizonte's (and Brazil's first) participatory metropolitan master plan was designed between 2005 and 2010. In the current context the metropolitan development agency continues to operate within UFMG and is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plan. Whether this latter stage of plan implementation is participatory in nature remains to be seen.

In summary, then, scaling up participatory planning has, to a degree, enhanced citizen involvement and inclusion in crucial decision-making processes at levels beyond the neighbourhood. In the case of state-led interventions around participatory budgeting, this seems to be mainly the case in settings where participatory budgeting was initially introduced as an invented space by local community organisations and later became an invited space as grassroots strategies were taken up by state authorities operating at the city level. In contrast, in contexts in which participatory budgeting was simply introduced as an invited space by state authorities, considerable limitations remain evident. This is demonstrated in the literature on participatory budgeting in other Latin American countries such as Bolivia and in Africa. In these settings, participatory budgeting appears to be associated as much with managing and so restricting participation as with transformation and empowerment. Meanwhile, despite advances in the making of invited spaces in which scaling up can occur, supported by experimentation both by civil-society-led programmes such as ACCA and by academic efforts in the case of co-productive planning, more work is needed on how to sustain such innovative partnerships and strategies over time, and on how to avoid creating additional or parallel spaces which coexist outside formal institutional structures.

5. Community-led practices to scale-up participatory planning in three African cities

A recently established action-research network, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, provides the opportunity to further analyse the reasons why scaling up participation has been so difficult – by drawing on the experience of specific locations – and explores

how it can be improved. The network draws together academics and non-academics with an established relationship in three African cities. It draws on the work of SDI, particularly in Bulawayo and Nairobi. In Johannesburg the partnership includes an NGO, One to One, that has been working at the interface of professional, academic and community expertise to develop new options for informal settlement upgrading. This work has included collaboration both with SDI and other community groups. This section explores the context in which this action-research will take place.

SDI is a network of community-based organisations of the urban poor in 32 countries and hundreds of cities and towns across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In each country where SDI has a presence, affiliate organisations come together at the community, city and national level to form federations of the urban poor. Since 1996, this network has helped to create a global voice for the urban poor, engaging international agencies and operating on the international stage to support and advance local struggles. Nevertheless, the principal theatre of practice for SDI's constituent organisations is the local level: the informal settlements where the urban poor of the developing world struggle to build more inclusive cities, economies and politics. Over 80% of SDI federation members are women. The federations share very specific organisational practices: savings, data collection, horizontal learning and co-production of urban development solutions with other stakeholders, particularly local authorities.

Relying on a bottom-up, community development approach, SDI strengthens collective organisation, inclusion and community cohesion by encouraging residents, particularly women, to join savings groups. The core aim of such initiatives is to amplify the voice of women living in informal settlements, to build relationships between low-income groups and to empower low-income citizens to define and implement their own development agenda in collaboration with local authorities (for a detailed review of SDI's methodology and approach, see Satterthwaite and Mitlin, 2014; Mitlin and Patel, 2014). SDI affiliates seek to find solutions that are relevant to the scale of the problem; in the cities in which federations are active informal settlements typically house at least between 30% and 80% of the population. The ambivalent citizenship status accorded to informal residents in many towns and cities means that they are rarely consulted about the development plans and associated regulations taken up by the city governments. Even when well intentioned, these plans rarely address their needs and may exacerbate multiple forms of exclusion. Their citywide focus is not only a reflection of their commitment to inclusion, it is also a city politics in which residents' associations are divided by politicians who negotiate individual deals and offerings in order to reduce their potential power and influence, and to maintain clientelist relations.

5.1. Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation emerged in 1998. The movement began with the launch of savings groups in the two 'holding camps' in Harare, Hatcliffe Extension and Dzivarasekwa Extension in 1997 (Chitekwe-Biti, 2009). These holding

camps were at that time home to thousands of families following evictions from informal settlements in and around the city during the previous decade. The savings groups formed after a visit from an urban social movement, the South African Homeless People's Federation; the South African community leaders came to share working practices and build solidarity. Working in alliance with the NGO Dialogue on Shelter, the Zimbabwe Federation grew into a national network; within 10 years it had a presence in 27 local authority areas, working with more than 45,000 households. Despite considerable political challenges, economic crisis and a government broadly hostile to independent civil society, the Federation has had some successes. By 2016, 11,541 savers in 352 savings groups had secured land and built homes for 8,500 families, built 2,703 houses, secured improved water services for 3,659 and sanitation provision for 2,558 households.[2]

The challenges related to the scaling up of participatory planning in Zimbabwe have long been acute, related both to the prevailing nature of top-down planning in the country and to the economic and political crisis from the early years of the 21st century. Moreover, there have been particular difficulties in Bulawayo. For a considerable time, the federation groups were paid little attention by the city government. In part, this was a result of the ethnic and related political divisions in Zimbabwe and the efforts being made by the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation and its support NGO, Dialogue on Shelter, to engage national government. However, over time this politics has changed, and the City of Bulawayo authorities have responded more positively to Federation efforts, partly because of the crisis in local authority funding.[3] In the present context, for Bulawayo as for other local authorities, community participation is as much about income-generation as it is about sharing decision making. The contraction between state-led development and market approaches has collapsed under the weight of a financial crisis so extreme that all the state can offer is the market, despite the required abdication of its responsibilities to respect citizens' rights and address needs. At the same time, the crisis in household income means that there is a very limited potential for households to pay for municipal services. The City of Bulawayo has been seeking to respond to these tensions with a more open approach, both in terms of dialogue and engagement, and with a willingness to approve incremental urban development (eg eco-sanitation designs rather than insisting on sewered sanitation).

In addition to difficulties related to the motivation of government and its lack of interest in participation outside of market-related imperatives in service delivery, there are two further challenges to scaling up state and citizen collaboration. These reflect the past and the present. With respect to the past, Zimbabwe's strong state has resulted in an emphasis on professional rules and regulations. City planning processes have continued to be based on rigid Master Plans, reduced at the local level into local development plans. It is a challenge to get state officials to agree to the local community doing things differently and experimenting with alternative approaches that may not be 'modern' but which are more likely to be inclusive. At the same time,

[2] Numbers in this section are all drawn from SDI (2016).
[3] https://www.iied.org/co-learning-for-inclusive-cities.

community activists have had to develop their capacities to work collectively to create new options for urban development. Traditionally the residents of informal settlements have not even been included in consultations by local authorities; and their ability to design and recognise improved modalities of urban development has not been recognised. In this context, local organisations have tended to take on the role of supplicants or have been drawn into party politics and have depended somewhat on the state to deliver (once electoral victory has been secured). Second, and with respect to the present, the growth in settlements on the periphery of the city has led to residential neighbourhoods being far from bulk infrastructure. Arguably there is a need to consider 'densifying' areas proximate to bulk infrastructure (to maximise access to services) and/or to create innovative financing approaches that facilitate cross-subsidies between higher-income and low-income households, thereby making services more affordable for the latter. However, at present such approaches are not being considered.

More positively, there has been a willingness to engage in stakeholder discussions about how the needs of residents can be met. Between 2014 and 2015, the alliance of Dialogue on Shelter and the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation signed two memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and the City of Bulawayo. These two MOUs present opportunities for deepening participatory planning by creating the much-needed institutional framework for collaborative slum upgrading activities. However, a lot more still needs to be accomplished to scale up participatory planning. Generating consensus and a shared understanding of why, how and when communities in slums are engaged in planning processes remains a priority. An intended City slum upgrading protocol also has potential to advance the up-scaling of participatory planning processes. However, Bulawayo is still to consolidate its modest experiences into a protocol that informs its response to informal settlements and, hence, guarantees visibility for and voices of the urban poor in planning processes. The MOU with NUST could also be instrumental in supporting both vertical and horizontal up-scaling, as it potentially offers scope for reflecting on and refining current syllabi, thereby creating opportunities to produce a new generation of built environment professional practitioners who are more responsive to inclusive city-making processes.

In Bulawayo the challenges are: the limited willingness among authorities to innovate, limited innovation experience at the community level, a municipal income crisis and a lack of citywide vision. The opportunities lie in the recent recognition on the part of the City of the potential of the participation of residents in solution generation to some urban challenges (eg garbage collection and sanitation provision).

5.2. Johannesburg, South Africa

The Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor (FedUP) has been working in Johannesburg for many years. Many of the savings schemes involved had previously

been members of the South African Homeless People's Federation. Savings groups in South Africa were catalysed in 1991 when a group of community leaders from informal settlements were introduced to this approach by the National Slum Dwellers Federation of India and a collective of women's savings groups from India, Mahila Milan. Johannesburg was one of four South African cities in which the Federation prioritised activities. Progress was slow in this city relative to the other three locations in part because of the high levels of contestation between organised communities and local and provincial government. The South African Homeless People's Federation split in 2006 (in part related to the slow progress) and FedUP was formed. By 2016, across South Africa, FedUP included 43,346 savers in 626 savings groups, and had secured land and built houses for 13,348 families, had improved water services for 13,477 households, and provided sanitation for 14,839 households. To complement the work of FedUP, the South African SDI Alliance has developed the Informal Settlement Network (ISN), which "is the first major attempt in the post-Apartheid era to bring the country's disparate settlement-level and national-level organizations of the urban poor under one umbrella" (Bradlow et al, 2011). The ISN draws together more traditional community organisations, led primarily by men and the Alliance facilities their collaboration with the women's-led groups that make up FedUP.

South African local government appears to be well placed to support citywide participatory engagement. Local government's democratic mandate is well established and the commitment to participation is embedded within the integrated development planning process that municipalities have to follow (Karabo Molaba and Khan, 2016); however, there has long been concern that participation is weak with an underlying conception of citizenship that does not support active engagement (Oldfield, 2008). Recent outcomes have continued to be disappointing (Lemanski, 2017). Efforts to enhance the participation of disadvantaged groups have focused on the upgrading of informal settlements.

In the post-apartheid context, South Africa's national government recognised the importance of addressing the needs of the urban poor and of tackling the problems of social exclusion and poverty. However, despite the capital housing subsidy programme introduced shortly after democratisation in 1994, there remained a significant housing backlog and informal settlements continued to grow. While this capital housing subsidy programme included a commitment to participation, this was not realised (Miraftab, 2003). Even the success of SDI and other civil society organisations in securing the introduction of the People's Housing Programme failed to embed more participatory approaches within housing delivery (Mitlin and Mogaladi, 2013). To address the rising housing backlog, South Africa's then Department of Housing reorientated its focus towards informal settlement upgrading. First articulated in the 2004 policy document *Breaking New Ground* (BNG), this recognised informal settlements and provided a directive and financial support for upgrading. This policy was further elaborated in the Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP), which aims to "support upgrading [instead of greenfield social housing delivery] on an area-wide basis, maintain fragile community networks, minimise disruption and enhance community

participation" (NUSP, 2015). The upgrading of existing shack settlements requires in-depth local participation (see also Fieuw, 2015 for a detailed description of the different UISP stages). To further ensure uptake of UISP, the national government set up the National Upgrading Support Programme (NUSP) in 2009, whose prime tasks include strengthening the capacity of national, local and provincial governments to implement participatory and community-based incremental upgrading (NUSP, 2015).

Despite a formal commitment to participation and integrated urban development, actual government practices have been limited and tokenistic (Fieuw, 2015; Fieuw and Mitlin, 2018). Provincial and local governments lack the political will to implement participatory and integrated urban development on the ground. Furthermore, the professionalised, standards-orientated nature of South African planning is widely recognised and the tension between these top-down approaches and the need (included in the Housing Code of 2009) for a collaborative bottom-up decision-making process has also been acknowledged (Combrinck and Bennett, 2016). Finally, incremental upgrading interventions continue to focus mainly on participation at the settlement scale with no related commitment to participation at the city-scale.

Local-level engagement has been difficult in Johannesburg. Community leaders and residents are mistrustful of the state and frequently communities are divided. Inner-city communities fear resettlement (Kitchen, 2016). Divisions may be related to party political allegiances or to traditional governance systems and tribal affiliations. While the alliance between FedUP and ISN has helped, tensions between the groups are sometimes present as a result of their different modalities of organising and their different constituencies. While funding is less of a problem in comparison to both Nairobi and Bulawayo, since the government has the capacity to subsidise local improvements, this creates contestation over control of resources. Although there is considerable capacity within both civil society and local government, the lack of substantive shifts towards a participatory inclusive city vision and associated programming points to more limited capacities in terms of the citywide scale. Muthoni Maina (2016) discusses the regularisation programme for informal settlements within Johannesburg, initiated in 2008 with a commitment to citizen participation in neighbourhood development. She argues that the programme was well conceived but poorly implemented. While the legislative framework supports both local and city-scale participation, progress has been limited and the City of Johannesburg acknowledged this in 2016 with a new approach to secure citizen engagement (Karabo Molaba and Khan, 2016). While acknowledging that progress has been limited, Karabo Molaba and Khan recognise the contribution of the ISN to City planning and argue that it has been influential both with respect to planning approaches and in preventing specific evictions. Settlement-level successes continue to be reported. For example, in 2014 Slovo Park Informal Settlement, a member of the South African SDI network, has sued the City of Johannesburg and, in April 2016, won a landmark case. In the final court decision, the judge decided that the City of Johannesburg most follow the UISP

framework and stop efforts at unlawful resettlement in Slovo Park.[4] Currently, the NGO One to One is working with Slovo Park Informal Settlement Development Forum to implement upgrading solutions and is engaging with technical staff at the City of Johannesburg, as well as with academics and students at the University of Johannesburg, to trigger citywide reforms around participatory and integrated urban development planning. A second example is Ruimsig, on the periphery of the city, where community-led incremental development has been explored with the support of both the City and SDI affiliates. Success here has been recognised by the City government, which has responded with policy concessions and efforts to improve cross-departmental coordination to address residents' needs (Karabo Molaba and Khan, 2016). However, the perspective remains local.

5.3. Nairobi, Kenya

The Kenyan SDI federation, Muungano wa Wanavijiji (Swahili for 'united slum dwellers') began in Nairobi in 1996 as a movement of urban poor people resisting, through activism and legal challenges, the land grabs and brutal forced evictions of informal settlements in that city in the mid-1990s. In 2001, Muungano joined SDI's international network of community-based organisations and evolved from a loose collection of activists into a network of settlement-based savings groups claiming a representative mandate. In part, this shift was in response to perceived changes in government attitudes, which around 2001 began to look more favourably on upgrading and regularising land ownership. Through learning exchanges with federations from India and South Africa, the Kenyan movement quickly embraced SDI tools of savings, data collection and house modelling. Organising through savings, in particular, became a catalyst for mobilisation, and from 2002 Muungano spread, establishing savings groups in most major towns and cities. In 2003, Muungano established a national 'urban poor fund', the Akiba Mashinani Trust, to provide loan capital for upgrading informal settlements, livelihood activities and greenfield developments (Weru et al, 2017). By 2016, Muungano had organised 73,360 savers in 956 savings groups that had secured land and housing for 283 families, improved water services for 20,499 households and improved sanitation for 7,796 households. In Nairobi many members consider that the major achievement was to 'retain the slums', protecting both informal markets and informal settlements. Today, these informal areas take up around 2% of the city's land and are the homes and/or workplaces of over half of Nairobi's four million citizens (Lines and Makau, 2017). Muungano's consistent approach has been to balance a single-minded struggle – to "frame the slum phenomenon as a core issue that the city and the state have a responsibility to address" (Lines and Makau, 2017, p 7) – with adaptability and opportunism in response to emerging openings from the state. Where a lacuna has been observed, Muungano has acted directly to introduce

[4] For further details, see http://www.seri-sa.org/index.php/19-litigation/case-entries/225-melani-and-the-further-residents-of-slovo-park-informal-settlement-v-city-of-johannesburg-and-others-slovo-park.

new practices and policies, for example the advances in Kenyan national policy on slum resettlement, which resulted from the Federation's involvement in planning and implementing a World Bank-financed railway resettlement project in Kibera, Nairobi (Lines and Makau, 2017).

Nairobi continues to be a key area of organisation and exploration. When Muungano emerged in 1996, its focus was on challenging evictions across the city. The same year the state established the Nairobi Informal Settlements Coordination Committee (NISCC) – probably the Kenyan state's first significant response to informal settlements – and in 1997 the Committee instituted a moratorium on slum demolition on public land. Muungano began to explore modalities of community-led informal settlement upgrading, drawing both on self-reliance and state support. These improvements were generally at the neighbourhood level with a project focus. Projects included the upgrading of five 'villages' (smaller neighbourhoods in slum areas) in Huruma, Nairobi. The local community in one of these villages - Kambi Moto – built 100 homes between 2003 and 2009 and, as significantly, land was shared between landlords and tenants (Weru, 2004).

In 2012, Kenya's new constitution required public participation to be the basis for government planning and all government expenditures to be guided by such planning. Alongside this, a devolution process created new county governments with enhanced responsibilities. Some county governments, including Nairobi, began to address the needs of people living in informal areas. In this context, the federation has found its data collection processes and inventories, including the city-level profiles of all slums in five Kenyan counties including Nairobi, collected in 2003 (Lines and Makau, 2017, p 3), increasingly valued. In the context of these political changes, the Muungano leadership explored new approaches to organising residents of informal settlements. Anticipating that only a minority of community residents would be likely to join savings groups (in projects undertaken to date, this figure rarely exceeded 10%), the leadership reflected on how the remaining 90% might be drawn into the participatory planning of upgrading. After serious internal reflection, the leadership proposed that savings groups should catalyse into neighbourhood associations which draw in all residents. Recognising that the contribution of savings groups is likely to be essential to deepen local democratic practice and build leadership accountability and financial capability, Muungano acknowledged the need to experiment with modalities that might lead to more people joining in participatory decision-making processes at the neighbourhood and city levels. With 90–95% of residents being tenants who must negotiate shelter within a powerful, multi-layered, highly complex informal slum economy, capacitated associations are needed to negotiate with structure owners and land owners to ensure that tenants are not disadvantaged as informal areas densify and, in at least some cases, formalise.

Muungano's main present focus is the challenge and opportunity presented by the declaration of the local government, Nairobi County, of a Special Planning Area (gazetted in August 2016) in the neighbourhood of Mukuru.[5] Mukuru is a dense belt of

[5] http://blog.gdi.manchester.ac.uk/informal-settlements-mukuru/.

informal settlements, numbering 100,000 households, where over 30% of shacks are double storey. Many land titles are privately owned and zoned for light industry – compounding the complexity of upgrading and land regularisation. The Special Planning Area suspends planning regulations and freezes development to offer an opportunity for innovation. It is the culmination of a long campaign of mobilisation in the area by Muungano, its member savings groups, its support NGO (SDI Kenya), and AMT. Muungano, in particular, highlighted the poor living conditions, drawing on a research project undertaken in collaboration with SDI Kenya, Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT), the Universities of Berkeley, Strathmore University, and the Katiba Institute.[6] This move to a larger scale, as well as the politicised nature of urban development in Nairobi, has orientated the Federation's leadership towards greater engagement with County authorities, albeit one based on an autonomous movement able to define its own vision and negotiate on behalf of its members. From 2010, the engagement with the University of Nairobi has helped SDI Kenya and Muungano gain access to city planning processes.

Nairobi City Council and now Nairobi County have made efforts to engage with organised communities such as Muungano and officials are often interested in finding ways to work with residents' associations to improve living conditions. However, Nairobi's rapid redevelopment in the context of a growing economy provides frequent reminders of the need to shift the vision of authorities away from one that at best marginalises low-income residents (and at worst excludes them). Urban development in Nairobi is commercialised, and the city authorities must manage multiple pressures in a city growing in population and economic opportunity. In recent years, economic growth has been associated with infrastructure improvements, and while some provision has been made for the lowest-income households, little has been done to tackle tenure insecurity; generally the needs and interests of higher-income households continue to influence the city's vision and development trajectory. Despite increased powers under devolution, Nairobi County continues to argue that it is unable to finance informal settlement upgrading at the scale demanded by residents, including those groups organised by Muungano.

6. Conclusions and ways forward

Reflecting on the challenges and opportunities to scaling up participatory planning identified in our review of the literature, three trends which require further research stand out from our initial findings from Bulawayo, Johannesburg, and Nairobi:

First, scaling up participatory planning has to change the relationship between organised civil society within low-income communities and government institutions. In all three cities, SDI federations have to negotiate the mismatch between city

[6] https://www.muungano.net/publicationslibrary/2017/4/6/mukuru-studio-report-inclusive-upgrading-frameworks-for-nairobi.

government interest in engaging communities and processes that enable participation that is meaningful to community organisations. Academics have used the terms ‘invited’, ‘invented’ and ‘claimed’ spaces to represent the different ways in which communities ‘reach up’ to engage the state and states ‘reach down’ to engage communities. Our research demonstrates the synthetic nature of these representations, and hence their potential to mislead. Explorations at the local level show that the invented spaces of local community organisations become invited spaces as grassroots strategies are taken up and used by city governments and national programmes. The community networks discussed here are seeking to use such processes to create space for participatory planning at the city scale, building on their national activities and international profile to advance the legitimacy of citizen involvement in citywide planning. Hence our findings show that community innovations can be reintroduced as local government policy as, over time, their value is demonstrated. While such shifts away from invented and claimed spaces to invited spaces are acknowledged in the existing literature on participation, more research is required on when and how such changes allow organised low-income groups to integrate their needs and priorities into planning at the city level and, in so doing, advance citizen participation in state decision making. We will be exploring the circumstances under which this takes place, and what it means for academic work to date.

Second, multiple approaches are being followed to influence local government and legitimate the contribution of organised communities. In Bulawayo, this is being attempted through the signing of MOUs with the municipal government and the local university (NUST). The engagement of the university serves both to legitimate community involvement and to open up more avenues for engagement as academics are regularly consulted by local government, and to change the academic education of planning professionals. In Johannesburg, SDI groups are pressuring local authorities at the city and provincial level to implement national legislation on citywide participatory planning. With state subsidies for housing managed primarily at the provincial level, a multilevel approach is required. However, the success of first securing the People’s Housing Programme, followed by its limited reach and depth (Fieuw and Mitlin, 2018), points to the need to move beyond initial engagement to embedding changes in policy, programming and practice at the city scale. Efforts in South Africa are enhanced both by the availability of finance, and by experiences which have matured grassroots approaches but are constrained by the complexity of multilevel government engagement and highly professionalised developmental approaches. In Nairobi, SDI groups have been successful in engaging with county authorities, especially in the context of national legislation to support participation and a history of civil activism in this city. As is the case in the other two cities, success at the local level through ‘projects’ has built the confidence of city authorities and made them more willing to engage with grassroots networks. The county government’s announcement of the Special Planning Area in Mukuru has led to a very specific challenge to scale up the work of Muungano. We will research specific strategies and approaches to learn about

their relative success, benefiting from the 20-year time horizon over which these networks have engaged the state.

Third, in all three cities, scaling up activities from small neighbourhoods to bigger neighbourhoods (ie Mukuru) and to the city level leads to new challenges particularly around securing citizen participation both at scale and with depth. Gendered approaches with a focus on women-led savings schemes and the strengthening of both peer–to-peer learning through community exchanges and vertical networks through city and national federations have been effective in some contexts.[7] In South Africa, the SDI South African Alliance helped to establish and has been working with the Informal Settlement Network (Bradlow et al, 2011); the Network was introduced in part because of high levels of politicisation in low-income neighbourhoods and contested political party involvement. As noted above, the strategy has led to some tensions that have still to be resolved, and the value of the dual processes is still being assessed. In Zimbabwe there has been discussion about how to reach out to male-led traditional organisations but no changes to savings-based organising have been introduced, as the Federation has been able to expand its work within its current approaches. In Mukuru, the Kenyan Federation are experimenting with augmenting the savings methodology by trying to use savings as a catalyst to support a participatory planning process that engages savers and non-savers alike. To date, academic research on participatory planning has not engaged deeply with the organising modalities that enable both depth and breadth to be established, such that high levels of involvement across diverse groups can be secured. Further, there is a lack of attention within the existing literature to the complex politics characterising such changes around scale. We will engage with these themes.

Our action-research network, which brings together academics, community networks and NGOs whose work includes innovative and collaborative local experiments in participatory planning in Bulawayo, Johannesburg and Nairobi, seeks to address these knowledge gaps. This network thus aims to develop the knowledge needed to move from participatory community-led neighbourhood planning to city-scale planning processes. The objectives are (1) to develop frameworks that build on effective and context-specific modalities of community-led planning for informal settlement upgrading at the neighbourhood level, and to scale these to the city level within the three cities; and (2) to develop a grounded methodological framework for the co-production of knowledge that enables the incorporation of community understandings and innovations with professional and academic knowledge. Once these frameworks have been developed locally and in exchange with the different network partners, this grounded and inductive framework generation will then be fed back into academic and practical debates around participatory and co-productive planning and inclusive urban development. They will thereby permit the crafting of a broader research agenda that

[7] Anna Muller, director of the Namibian Housing Action Group, personal communication. The Namibian Federation has a membership of 22,200 households (SDI, 2016) with an estimate of 100,000 households living in informal neighbourhoods across the country.

can test and further develop this framework in the context of the cities in which our network partners are based but also in other cities situated in the Global South.

The aim and objectives of our action-research network are critical to achieving inclusive urban futures, particularly in Africa where more than half (63.7%) of urban residents lived in informal settlements in 2010. In the African context, acute urban development challenges include insecure tenure, inadequate access to basic services, insecure livelihoods and lack of citywide integrated, holistic and participatory development. As we have shown in this paper, existing planning legislation and practice remains incapable of resolving such problems. Local residents try to address their own needs, but such efforts are fragmented, partial and local – despite emerging attempts at up-scaling in some settings. Governments may at times seek to improve this situation through legislative reform. Yet there remains a gap between legal discourse and practice, particularly in contexts where government officials are under-capacitated, lack adequate resources and/or follow different political priorities. Academic institutions seek to identify new concepts and methodological tools for scaling up participatory planning, but such efforts are often not grounded in city governance structures or embedded in political processes. Only if all three groups collaborate can we address the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) commitments to "leave no one behind" and achieve the implementation of SDG 6 (water and sanitation), SDG 11 (inclusive, safe and resilient cities) and the New Urban Agenda. Hence our initiative.

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