

Participatory action planning for informal settlement upgrading



Development Action Group

101 Lower Main Road
Observatory, Cape Town
South Africa, 7925

Phone: +27 21 448 7886

Fax: +27 21 447 1987

Website: www.dag.org.za



Department Human Settlementment

240 Justice Mahomed Street
Govan Mbeki House
Sunnyside, Pretoria,
0002

Private Bag X645 (Minister)
Pretoria
South Africa, 0001

Phone: +27 12 421 1311

Website: www.dhs.gov.za



human settlements

Department:
Human Settlements
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Housing Development Agency (HDA)

6 -10 Riviera Road
Riviera Office Park, Block A
Killarney, Johannesburg

PO Box 3209
Houghton, South Africa, 2041

Phone: +27 11 544 1000

Fax: +27 11 544 1006/7

Website: www.hda.co.za



Acknowledgement Development Action Group (DAG)

Disclaimer

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Cover photo - Participatory Mapping
in RR Section Informal Settlement,
Khayelitsha Cape Town

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PART 1

Introduction to Participatory Action Planning for Informal Settlement Upgrading

1.1 Background to the Guidelines

The viability of all informal settlement upgrading projects is largely determined by the extent to which the residents are involved in the participatory planning process. Local level upgrading projects offer government and other stakeholders a unique opportunity to explore and develop more democratic forms of cooperative governance in which citizens become active social agents in relevant and meaningful discussions that involve their present and future livelihoods and settlements. Healthy discussion, negotiation, trust-building exercises and cooperation are key aspects of a sustainable approach and methodology to underpin any informal settlement upgrading (ISU) process.

While every community has its own unique constraints and opportunities, participation has proven to be the main building block for building thriving neighbourhoods. This approach varies in each local context but, in all cases, emphasis needs to be placed on participatory processes rather than on a formalistic ticking of boxes that is not necessarily responsive to the conditions of a particular informal settlement. If people's voices are heard and their advice heeded they begin to feel an increased sense of ownership of their surroundings. This in turn leads to increased understanding between residents and other key stakeholders, encouraging a more trusting and healthy relationship between the City of Cape Town and local citizens, and can lead to the creation of safe, affordable and more vibrant formal settlements that can increase the standard of living for all - especially those most afflicted by and vulnerable to cycles of unrelenting and chronic poverty.

Zizi, a development facilitator with DAG, on the expert status of participants: 'Most people are going to meetings and undermining the role of the community. They do not respect the local knowledge of those who have lived there and who know the area best. Unskilled people with a technocratic approach, rather than facilitative approach, go without respect for local knowledge.' Interview, 5 December 2013

1.2 Purpose

These Guidelines on Participatory Action Planning are based on practice and lessons emerging from DAG's socio-technical support to the City of Cape Town in 2013 with respect to Participatory Action Planning in a number of informal settlements. They are designed to support officials, communities and practitioners in the planning phase of an ISU. The intention is not to be prescriptive or to provide a detailed step-by-step process. Users are encouraged to review more comprehensive toolkits for guidelines on implementation and monitoring and evaluation project phases.

1.3 Some recommended reading

The following articles and reports provide useful background reading on Participatory Action Planning and ISU:

- Abdelhalim, K. (2010). Participatory Upgrading of Informal Areas. A Decision-makers' Guide for Action. Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas in Egypt, Cairo.
- Bolnik, A. (2010). Informal Settlement Upgrading. Towards an Incremental People Centred Approach. Cape Town.
- Centre for Criminology (2009). Forum on in-situ Informal Settlement Upgrading. Gugulethu Comprehensive School, Cape Town.
- Chege, P. et al (2008). Participatory Urban Planning Toolkit based on the Kitale Experience. A Guide to Community-Based Action Planning for Effective Infrastructure and Services Delivery. Nairobi.
- Jordhus-Lier, D. and Tsolekile de Wet, P. (2013). City Approaches to the Upgrading of Informal Settlements. Bonn.
- UN – Habitat (2011). Housing the Poor in African Cities. Quick Guides for Policy Makers 8. Local Government: Addressing Urban Challenges in a Participatory and Integrated Way. Nairobi.
- Frediani, A. et al. (eds) (2013). Participatory Informal Settlement Upgrading and Well-Being in Kisumu, Kenya. MSc Social Development Practice Student Report. The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, London.
- Ziblim, A. (2013). The Dynamics of Informal Settlements Upgrading in South Africa: Legislative and Policy Context, Problems, Tensions, and Contradictions. A Study Commissioned by Habitat for Humanity International/EMEA Office.
- Final Research Report. Bratislava.

PART 2

Principles and approach to Participatory Action Planning for Informal Settlement Upgrading

2.1. The rationale for a Participatory Action Planning approach

The benefits of a participatory development planning process have been extensively documented. One of the greatest benefits of participation is that it enables people to form cooperative partnerships with diverse stakeholders where they are able to identify, own and manage the outcomes of decisions directly impacting on their lives and settlements. As a consequence, medium and longer term interventions have a greater likelihood of being effective, efficient and sustainable.

‘The challenge of informal settlement upgrading must be approached from a pragmatic perspective in the face of changing realities and many uncertainties. Informal settlements should also not be viewed as merely a “housing problem”, requiring a “housing solution”, but rather as a manifestation of structural social change and political endurance¹.’

Experience to date confirms that an incremental in situ upgrading approach has a higher chance of improving living conditions given that it does not disrupt social networks or livelihood strategies. In other words, wherever possible, City of Cape Town officials, community leaders and other stakeholders should attempt to facilitate a structured in situ upgrading of informal settlements, as opposed to relocation. This approach would recognise and formalise the tenure rights of residents within informal settlements, provide affordable and sustainable basic municipal engineering infrastructure that allows for future up-scaling, and address social and economic exclusion by focusing on community empowerment and the promotion of social and economic integration. This approach can use participatory methods to build social capital and address broader social needs of communities.

A good approach to ISU, based on DAG experience, would include: building local organisational capacity and leadership, security of tenure, access to basic services, sustainable livelihoods approaches, community-based and driven upgrade approaches, policy inputs, ISU research and case study documentation, implemented through a principle-based approach. Some of the key principles underpinning this approach are outlined on page 5.

¹DAG, 2007:03

2.2 Key principles

A good understanding of local settlement context is key to developing a relevant Participatory Action Planning approach at settlement level.

Working with existing Community-based Organisations (CBOs) and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) avoids duplication of stakeholder bodies.

Empowering people to participate in their own development process enables citizens to become active partners in the development process, including the design, implementation and sustainable management of development interventions.

Active participation enhances local capacity and resourcefulness.

Active participation contributes towards the achievement of desired goals.

Fostering an inclusive process for everyone strengthens local ability to respond proactively to the differential capabilities of citizens.

Focusing implicitly on using Participatory Action Planning as a way to strengthen cooperative governance and establish meaningful partnerships between citizens and a wide range of multi-sectoral partners.

2.3 Phasing engagement and participation

Community engagement and participation in the planning for an informal settlement involves a number of phases or steps to ensure that all stakeholders are on board. It is a common mistake for officials and practitioners to fast track participatory activities without first ensuring that all the relevant stakeholders are on board in phase 1, or that the process is inappropriately exited and community members are left unclear of the next steps as in phase 5. The different phases of engagement and participation include:



Six phases of Participatory Action Planning

Phase 1: Identifying key stakeholders and gaining entry

Identifying key stakeholders and gaining entry to an informal settlement is a sociopolitical process and needs to be informed by an understanding of local leadership and power dynamics. This requires a comprehensive scoping of stakeholders via one-on-one meetings with councillors, ward committees, local NGOs and social movements; workshops with City of Cape Town officials; introductory meetings and site visits with local CBOs; and establishing local level institutional arrangements. This initial process of gaining entry is critical for building trust, and employing the skills of an experienced development facilitator at this stage is critical. It forms the basis for the future institutional arrangements so it is worth taking one's time. It also helps to ensure that gatekeeping is prevented in the future. This baseline and entry stage could take anywhere between one week to a few months.

Zama, a development facilitator with DAG, on the establishment of Working Groups: 'It can be problematic when members don't know their roles. Consideration should be brought to selection criteria. Appointments should be without emotion. For instance, the difference in tone between a funeral where emotional language is appropriate to that of a boardroom. Choosing a boardroom person rather than a charismatic person for an ISU Working Group is best.' Interview, 19 November 2013

Phase 2: Establishing institutional arrangements

Various institutional arrangements can be established once there is broad consensus and agreement on the level and detail of participatory planning required. For instance, this can include a working group, a project steering committee (PSC) or a memorandum of understanding. Each choice depends on the scale at which the participatory action planning takes place.

It is important in establishing local-level institutional arrangements that these are in alignment with local and City of Cape Town institutional practices to avoid the duplication or establishment of parallel structures. One of the important decisions to be taken by the group is a commitment to a non-sectarian and inclusive style of working, with new stakeholders being admitted as they begin to play a role in the planning process.

During the subsequent stages of the action planning process, the PSC or a representative working group will play a key role in guiding local ISU interventions and will assist in keeping stakeholders informed on progress, as well as monitoring and evaluating future interventions and projects. Building the long-term capacity of a PSC or working group members is critical to the success, accountability and development of these local-level institutional arrangements.

Phase 3: Participatory Action Planning

Participatory Action Planning as implemented by DAG involves three sequential workshops hosted at the local settlement level with a working group or PSC, which engage local participants in identifying their key development priorities over the short, medium and long term. The workshop modules include: Introductory Participatory Action Planning, the Participatory Mapping Process, and Development Options. A range of participatory methods and tools used in the workshops includes: focus group discussions, one-on-one interviews with selected community members, desktop reviews, in situ observations, participatory mapping exercises, stakeholder mapping, interviews with officials and councillors, and aerial photography.

Phase 4: Multi-stakeholder forums and learning platforms

Capacity is strengthened and horizontal learning occurs in round table discussions and workshops with an emphasis placed on enabling an inclusive process for diverse stakeholders. Different forums are established as learning forums for citizens at different levels – neighbourhood, settlement and city-wide. These forums ('invited spaces') act as learning platforms with the potential to become transformed into longer term reference groups during the development and implementation of the ISU programme.

Astrid, a participatory architect with DAG, on classification and the prioritisation process: 'The social environment was analysed in some instances relative to stories heard at public meetings, through political decisions taken and through communities' self-determination in the prioritisation of settlement areas and needs.' Interview, 25 November 2013

Phase 5: Exit strategy

Invariably, longer term expectations are raised in citizens as settlements engage in a participatory action planning process. The process outlined above equips PSCs and working groups, who are left with detailed settlement maps and planning tools and some basic ability to identify and prioritise development interventions. However, there is often a time-lag between the devising of action plan priorities and actual implementation. Therefore it is important to prepare participants for the reality of a time-lag between planning and resource allocation, and to integrate an exit strategy into the overall Participatory Action Planning approach.

Phase 6: Taking forward the planning – next steps

Once the rapid participatory action planning process has been concluded, one can move onto the subsequent phases of the development process. This can include the development of Local Area Action Strategies and the design of Urban Design Frameworks, which run parallel with the implementation of short-term and medium-

term prioritised actions and interventions. In the longer term an Implementation Phase with an integrated Operations and Maintenance Strategy should ideally be built into the process. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is important in measuring and correcting the programme's impact, ensuring continuous participation and feedback. Underpinning all these short-, medium- and long-term processes is the active participation of local-level stakeholders.

2.4 Enabling participation at different scales (settlement, area and city wide)

Currently environmental and geographically specific information, along with that of policy and grant instruments, informs the City of Cape Town's classification of informal settlements eligible for upgrading to Full Upgrading, Interim Basic Services, Emergency Basic Services, or Relocation. This classification approach influences how much facilitation, and what level of detail planning, is possible during the PAP process.

At the local government level, the PAP approach utilised by DAG facilitates the City of Cape Town's mandate of governance through different platforms employed to engage citizens at various scales: city-wide platforms, neighbourhood, and settlement-specific working groups.

In settlements with Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme (UISP) funding, which have undergone a pre-feasibility orientation, a PSC is set up and the three phases of the Participatory Action Planning process undertaken to determine development priorities.

In settlements located on land that does not allow for development and qualifies for interim or basic infrastructure development, working groups are set up which are not formal PSCs.

In an area-based approach, neighbourhood scale working groups, rather than settlement-specific ones, are set up and the PSC remains representative of many smaller informal settlements in an area.

In some neighbourhoods or settlements that may not yet be ready to undergo a thorough Participatory Action Planning process due to complex political or social dynamics that require resolution at a settlement level, the approach is to undertake a rapid settlement assessment, compiled as a profile, which can provide deeper insights and understanding of obstacles and constraints that need to be overcome in order to undertake a future PAP process towards ISU in the settlement.

PART 3

Participatory Action Planning – a practical tool for officials, communities and practitioners at a settlement level

3.1 Overview of DAG's PAP workshops at a settlement level

3.1.1 Quick overview of the Participatory Action Planning workshops at a settlement level

The DAG approach to rapid Participatory Action Planning currently involves three workshops hosted at the local settlement level with a working group. These sequential workshops engage local participants in the process of identifying their key development priorities over the short, medium and longer term. One of the key outcomes is that local partnerships between the local committee and the City of Cape Town are strengthened and, over the longer term, the City has the ability to plan and implement informal settlement upgrading interventions in a more programmatic manner. The workshops are held both in a closed workshop setting as well as on site in the targeted informal settlement. A wide range of participatory methods and tools are used to enable participation. The workshops are facilitated by experienced facilitators, including a participatory architect or planner and development facilitator.

The three workshops include:

Workshop 1: Introduction to Participatory Action Planning – a rapid approach to identifying stakeholders and reaching consensus on the purpose and process.

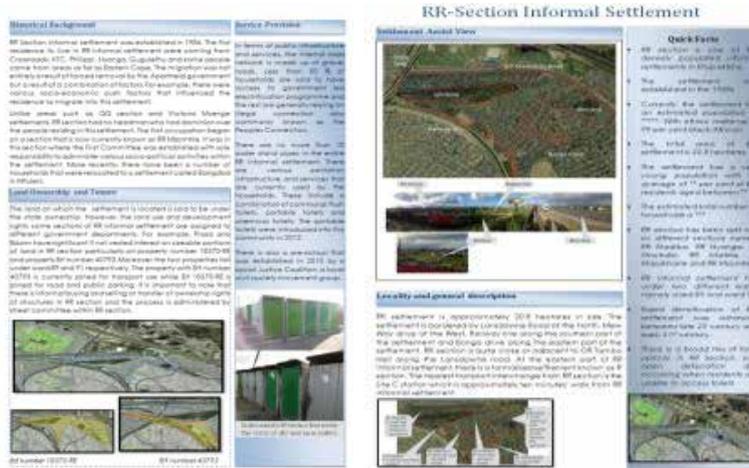
Workshop 2: Community Mapping – a rapid approach to identifying and mapping settlement priorities. This involves local residents working with aerial photographs to map relevant settlement information, such as the location of toilets and standpipes, high flooding risk areas, local shops and shebeens, crèches and churches, movement routes for cars and pedestrians, and public open spaces.

Workshop 3: Development Options – a rapid approach to identifying settlement level development options.

3.1.2 Participatory Action Planning outputs

At the end of the workshops a number of useful outputs are produced, including:

- Advanced community and settlement profiles that document the locality and general description of the site, history of the settlement, review of service provision, demographic profile, tenure and land administration, environmental and disaster risks, current community affairs, and organisational profiles.



Snapshot Community Profile, RR Section Informal Settlement, Khayelitsha

- Review of local-level stakeholders and, in some cases, the establishment of local-level institutional arrangements.
- Geographic information system (GIS) maps depicting current settlement challenges and priorities, including the location of key services, amenities and facilities, local business and livelihood activities, environmental and social risks, and main transport routes/mobility.



PJS/ Nonqubela informal settlement map depicting road/footpath accessibility and services/ infrastructure

- Audit of current service level provision.
- Recommendations in order to take forward the development priorities identified by the community. The recommendations are aimed at both the community and the City of Cape Town.

3.1.3 Who attends the workshops?

The workshops are attended by a wide range of stakeholders, including CBOs, local Ward councillors and Ward committee members, informal settlement residents, and officials from the City of Cape Town, such as planners, field officers and project managers. The more diverse the stakeholder participation, the greater the likelihood of new and existing partnerships being forged, which is critical if the process of planning is to be taken forward into implementation phase.

Location

Workshops are ideally held within the vicinity of the informal settlement, at either a local hall, councillor's office, crèche or church.

3.1.4. Prior engagement with communities and officials

In order to ensure that participants attending the workshops are the most suitable and appropriate attendees, it is critical that these workshops are preceded with processes outlined in Phase 1 of the Participatory Action Planning process: stakeholder identification and engagement via one-on-one meetings, site visits and desktop research. It is critical that all participants are briefed on the scope of the participatory planning and are made aware of the opportunities as well as limitations of the planning process. This prior engagement with communities and officials can also clarify roles and responsibilities during and after the Participatory Action Planning process. As discussed earlier, this may be formalised in a set of local-level institutional arrangements, such as either a PSC or a working group.

Shaun, a participatory architect, on workshop outcomes: 'Generally, there is a positive vibe after workshops.'

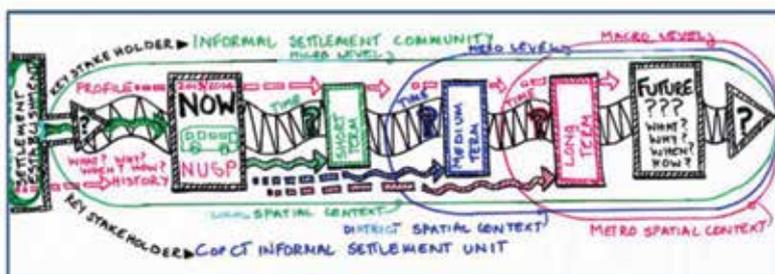
Comments from participants in a workshop in response to: What did you learn from today's workshop?

- I am leaving with hope.
- Gave me hope that we can build working relationship with CoCT.
- Community can work with the government.
- We have to have a plan.
- Without involvement of people, the government can not do much and vice versa.

Interview, 4 December 2013

3.2 WORKSHOP 1: Introduction to Participatory Action Planning – a rapid approach to identifying stakeholders and reaching consensus on the purpose and process

The aim of Workshop 1 is to introduce participants to Participatory Action Planning principles and practice with the intention of achieving consensus on the purpose and process. The workshop focuses specifically on identifying the specific roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders operating at a settlement, neighbourhood and city level. Understanding how the settlement has changed over time – in the short, medium and longer term – is a key workshop activity. The diagram below is enlarged and used as the basis from which the facilitators focus these activities.



Historical and current status of the settlement – Facilitators’ questions:

Using a timeline, what are the key history/development/events that have taken place in the informal settlement? This is followed by a discussion on where the informal settlement is now, including what the current conditions are and what activities are being undertaken to address the key challenges and improve the conditions of IS communities? This information will be summarised and included in the community and settlement profile.

What is Participatory Action Planning? – Facilitators’ questions:

- Using the action learning reflection cycle, why do you think we use the Participatory Action Planning process?

Who are the key stakeholders? – Facilitators’ questions:

Activity

Step 1: Divide into different groups – informal settlement committee, local community organisations (i.e. ABM, SANCO), City officials and councillor/s, support organisations (DAG).

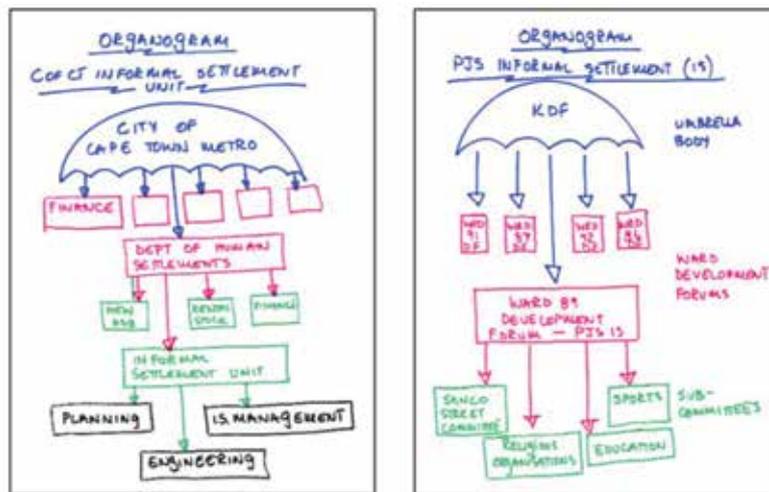


Action Learning Reflection Cycle

Step 2: In your group, discuss who you are, what your structure is and your affiliations, who you represent, what your mandate is, and roles and responsibilities.

Step 3: As a group, prepare an organogram showing the structure of your organisation and affiliations.

Step 4: Report back to the plenary, giving information on your organisation and describe the organogram.



Stakeholder mapping and organogram, Khayelitsha

Step 5: Discussions, reflections on formations, organisations and relationships.

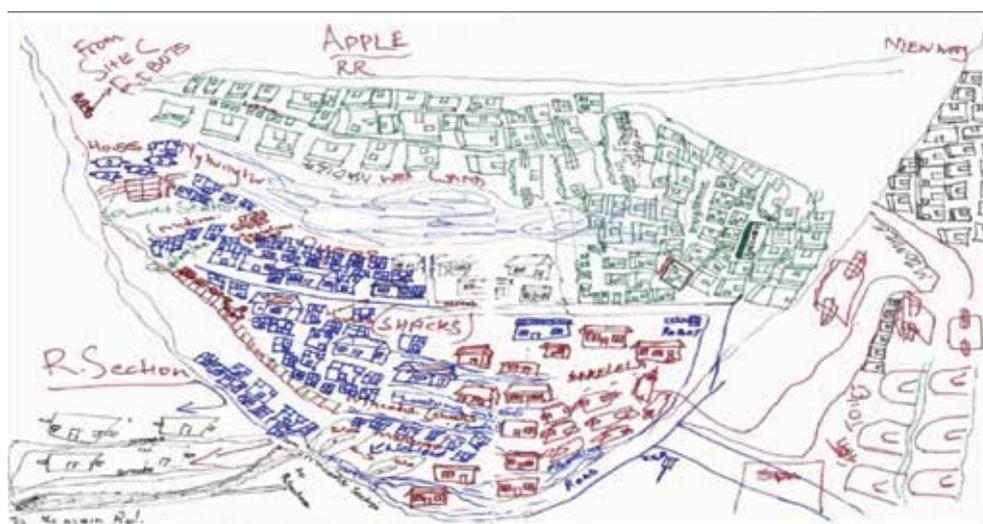


Participatory mapping, RR Section Informal Settlement, Khayelitsha

WORKSHOP 2: Community Mapping – a rapid approach to identifying and mapping settlement priorities

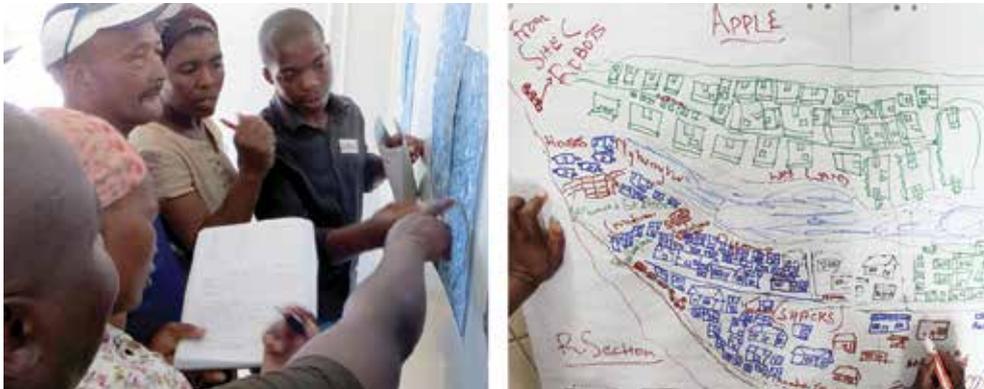
The aim of Community Mapping is to enable the local stakeholders and officials to identify and map key settlement priorities. One of the key outcomes is that both local stakeholders and officials have a more nuanced understanding of settlement-level issues. This in turn provides the basis for robust settlement-level plans, enhanced security of tenure, exact locations for improved services, or the basis for future land use and layouts.

Community Mapping involves local stakeholders working with both hand-drawn maps and up-to-date aerial photographs to map relevant settlement information, such as the location of toilets and standpipes, high flooding risk areas, local shops and shebeens, crèches and churches, movement routes for cars and pedestrians, and public open spaces.



Settlement memory mapping, RR Section Informal Settlement, Khayelitsha

Community Mapping is first introduced in a one-day workshop on 'thinking spatially' – how to use aerial photography and GIS and then prioritising the mapping exercise. Thinking spatially is realised through a number of activities, one being a memory game where participants are asked to draw a settlement map from memory. Prioritising the elements to be mapped is another key component of the workshop. Participants are introduced to the six key elements of a Community Mapping exercise. This provides the basis for the fieldwork and the key mapping priorities. It may be neither necessary nor feasible to map all elements.



PJS/ Nonqubela assessing development options

This workshop is followed by a four-week period of on-site mapping by local volunteers. Experienced facilitators visit the volunteers on a weekly basis to check up on progress and assist them with identifying priorities. Once the mapping is complete, the rough aerial photographs are handed over to the local metropolitan GIS department for processing. These maps are then analysed and included in the City of Cape Town's community and settlement profiles.

Important note: In some cases volunteers can be paid for via the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). This needs to be arranged via the Department of Human Settlements prior to the Participatory Action Planning process.

Community Mapping outcomes

Some of the key outcomes for participatory GIS planning include:

- Accurate maps that reflect the opinions of all participants.
- Comprehensive synthesis of all data gathered onto one easily understood report (preferably with clear and simple visuals).
- All participants receive a chance to draw on maps and have their voices heard.
- Participants find constructive solutions to spatial problems from the grassroots level, hence increasing their capacity and ownership over their land.
- All participants are given a clear vision of where the community as a whole wants to go in the future (in the form of GIS maps, reports or other tangible material).



PJS/Nonqubela introduction to community mapping

WORKSHOP 3: Development options – a rapid approach to identifying settlement level development options

The aim of Workshop 3 is to rapidly identify a number of priority settlement-level development options for the short, medium and longer term. The recommendations, targeted at the residents of informal settlements, local committees and the City of Cape Town, include:

- What kinds of issues the community can attend to.
- What is required from the City of Cape Town to address key challenges.
- What kinds of services need to be delivered.
- What the potential joint issues are and actions to be taken.

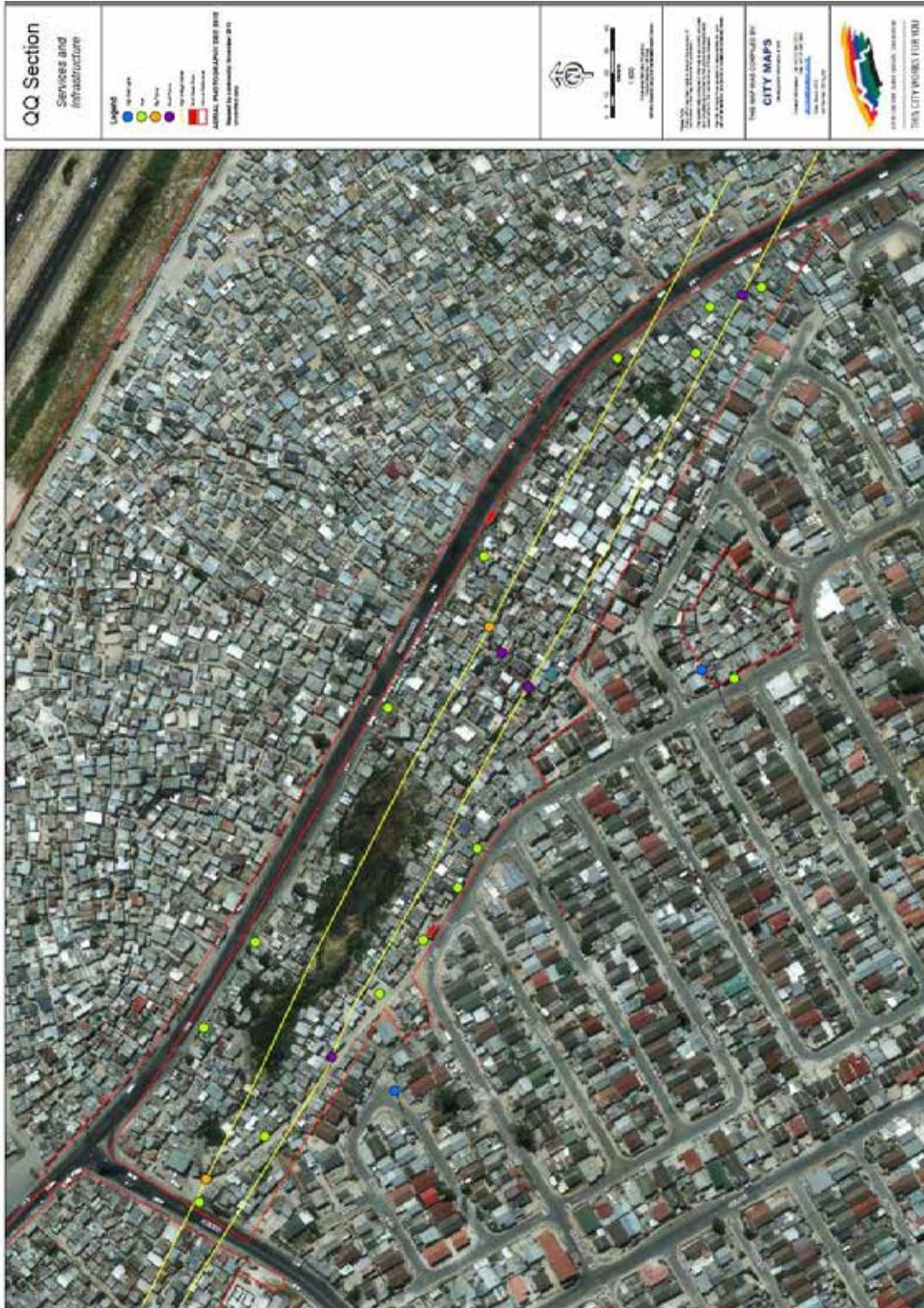
The workshop begins with an analytical review of the profile and settlement-level mapping, followed by a detailed discussion on emerging opportunities, constraints and considerations. Arising from this discussion is a series of priority recommendations. These recommendations are based on the four pillars of sustainable human settlements and integrated development (see comprehensive table on page 17):

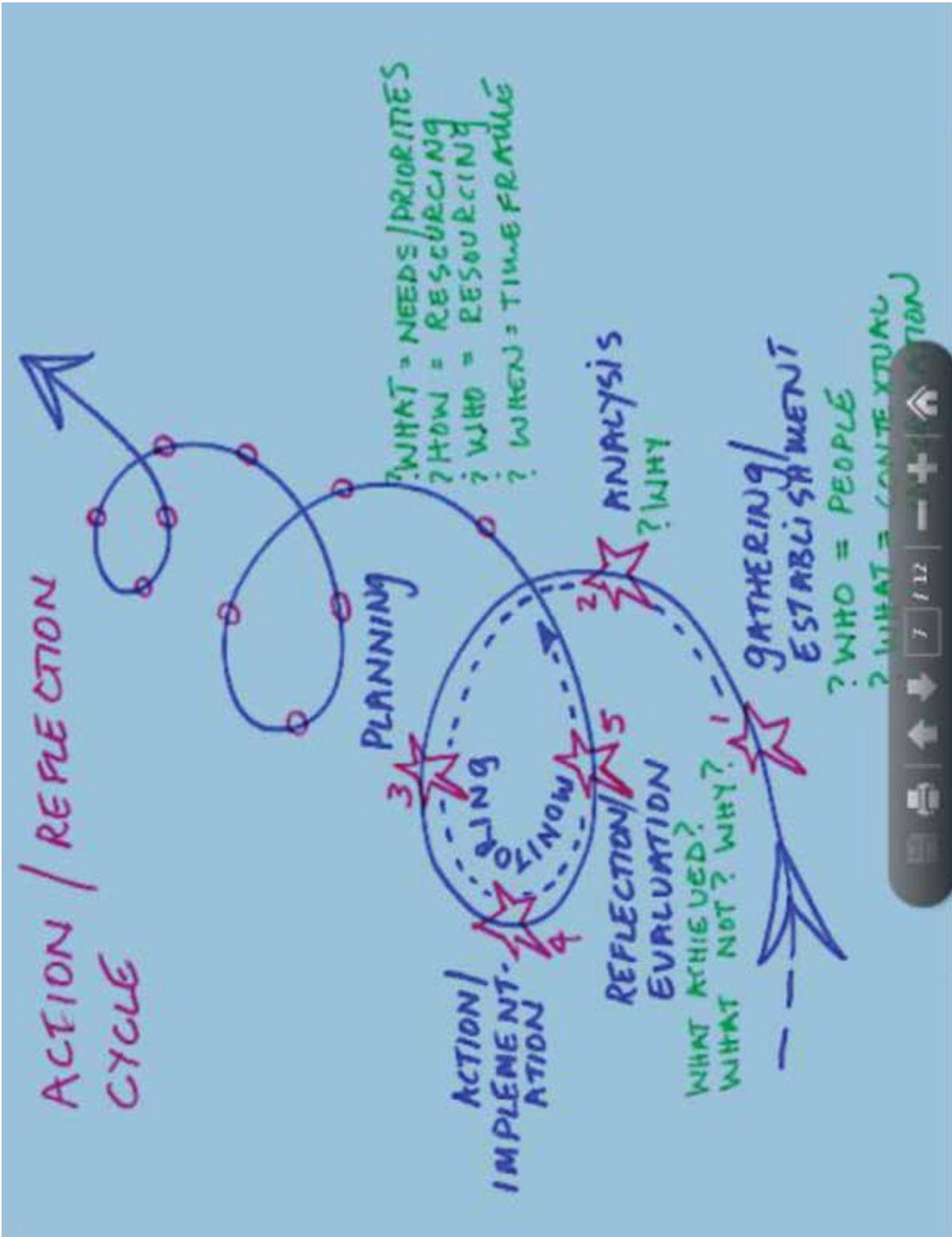
- Institutional arrangements/ governance
- Social
- Economic
- Environment (natural and built), i.e. bulk infrastructure and buildings

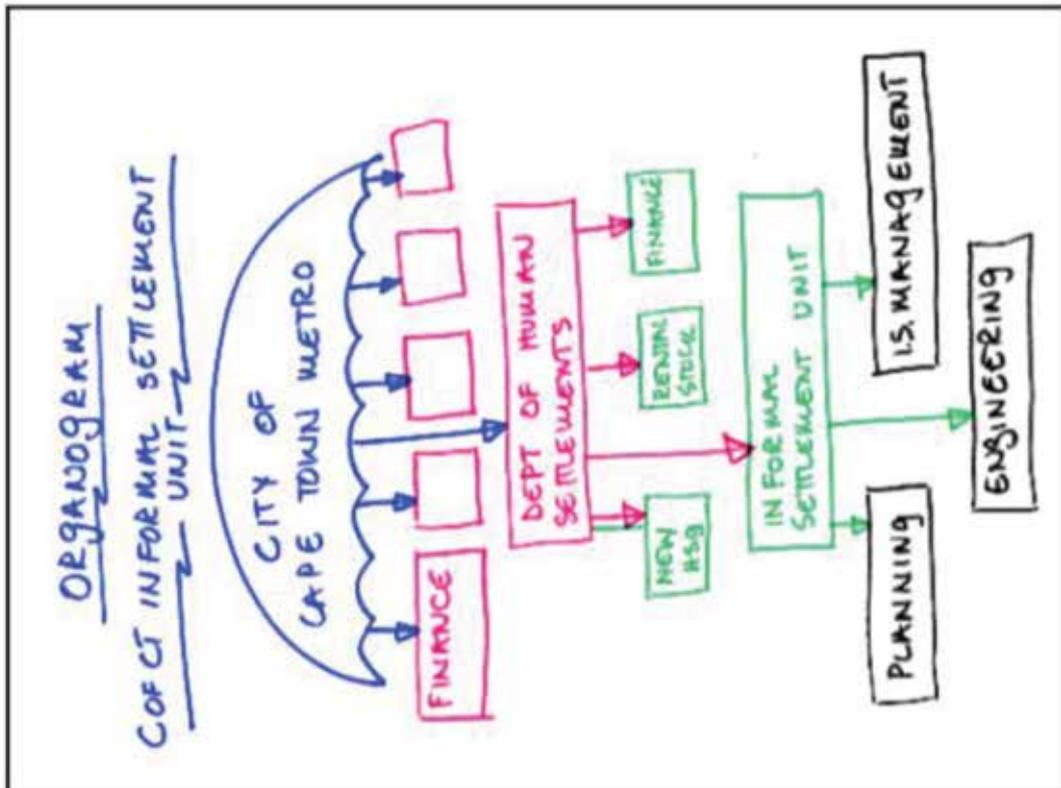
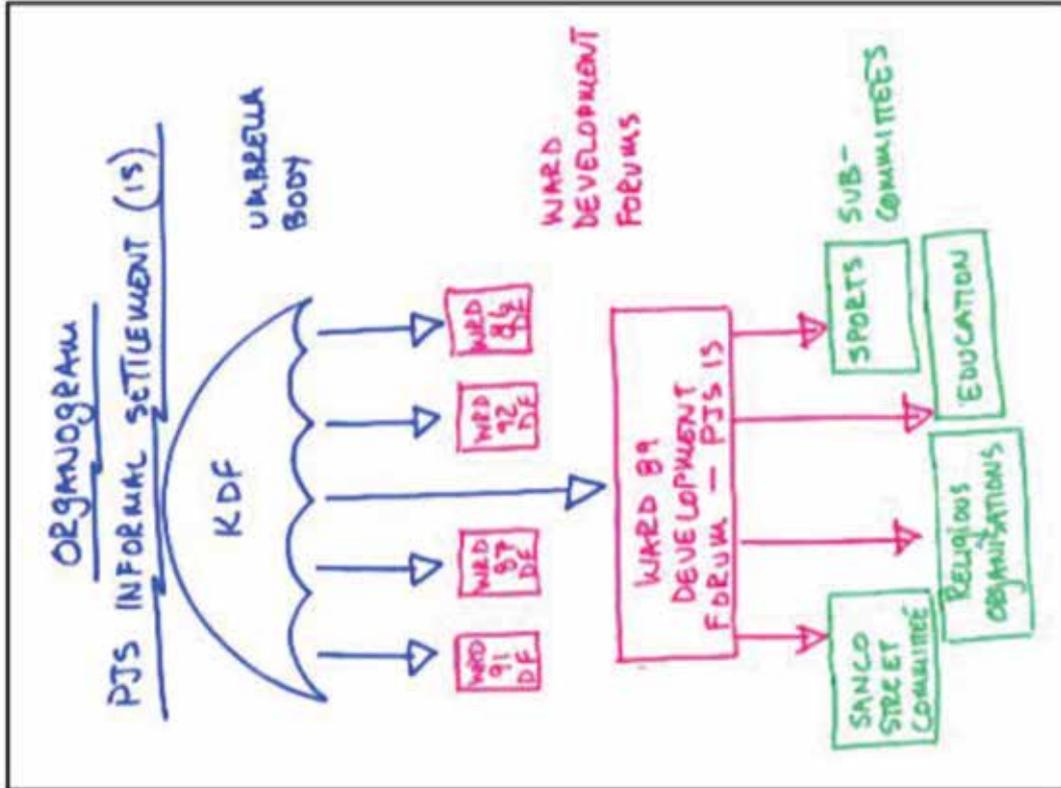
The recommendations are then included as a final section to the community and settlement profile. It is intended that the section on development options are taken forward by officials from the relevant departments and/or used by the local stakeholders in ongoing negotiations and liaison with the City of Cape Town and others on the developmental future of the informal settlement.

Four Pillars Of Sustainable Human Settlements And Integrated Development

ENVIRONMENT – PHYSICAL/ NATURAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land form / topography – slope, flat (contours) • Water bodies – detention ponds, wetland, rivers / streams • Vegetation – trees, bush, water reeds
ENVIRONMENT – PHYSICAL/ BUILT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical – spatial establishment / development • Land extent – boundary (which structures are part of IS) • Mobility access points – main vehicular and pedestrian pathways and hierarchy • Open spaces – social, gathering, recreation • Bulk infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Water points – types (stand alone, at toilets) o Sanitation (toilets) – types (flush, meshengu, pota pota) o Electrical – substations, pylons, high mast lighting, street lighting, and residential supply poles o Roads and pathways – mobility patterns o Solid waste – skips, bin collection points o Storm water – systems • “Top structures” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Housing o Social / community facilities – crèche, recreation, sport, faith, venues, offices, clinic o Commercial – shops, workshops, eating places / braai / fruit + vegetables / shebeens o Transport – bus / taxi shelter, drop off / pick up points
ECONOMIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built – spazas, shebeens, hairdresser, cell phone, mechanics, taxi depot, etc • Open air – fruit and veg, braais, car wash, etc.
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL	<p>Historical timeline – settlement formation / structures / spatial establishment</p> <p>Enumeration – number of people, number of structures, number of households (HH)</p> <p>HH surveys – demographics, family size / structures, income levels, social structures and networks</p>
INSTITUTIONAL	Organisations – spatial representation
COMMUNITY / ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH / RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social – hang out points, shebeens, un-defensible spaces and places • Environmental <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o water – flooding, grey water pooling, contaminated water bodies, storm water runoff o Fires o Solid waste - dumping o Illegal electrical connections / cables









Development Action Group

101 Lower Main Road
Observatory, Cape Town
South Africa, 7925

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Fax: +27 21 447 1987

Website: www.dag.org.za



Department Human Settlementment

240 Justice Mahomed Street
Govan Mbeki House
Sunnyside, Pretoria,
0002

Private Bag X645 (Minister)
Pretoria
South Africa, 0001

Phone: +27 12 421 1311

Website: www.dhs.gov.za



human settlements

Department:
Human Settlements
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Housing Development Agency (HDA)

6 -10 Riviera Road
Riviera Office Park, Block A
Killarney, Johannesburg

PO Box 3209
Houghton, South Africa, 2041

Phone: +27 11 544 1000

Fax: +27 11 544 1006/7

Website: www.hda.co.za

