

Media Release: 17 October 2016

Militaristic responses to urban violence don't work, new film from slum dwellers argues

Slum dwellers call into question the effectiveness of militaristic responses to urban violence in a new film, 'No One Left Behind' produced by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) which will be screened at the United Nations Habitat III Conference.

Research for the film highlighted a grave security message from the poor: aggressive policy interventions led by institutions such as the police and military have had limited success and often create long-term instability. The research suggests that viewing urban violence in terms of a public health issue and supporting reformative interventions that foster a sense of shared ownership over public spaces can lead to sustainable gains.

The film highlights the threats to security and wellbeing that city communities in Afghanistan, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ghana, South Africa and Uganda face on a day to day basis. It also offers specific and optimistic proposals for positive and achievable change that contribute to the central ambition of the Global Goals to 'leave no one behind'.

IDS's Jaideep Gupte, who led the development of the film, said: "The persistence of localised poverty and vulnerability in cities represent major policy challenges of our time. Finding workable solutions to these challenges can only come from understanding the impacts of insecurity and exclusion on the day-to-day lives of the poorest and most marginalised in cities."

Gupte continued, "Rather than ostracise or criminalise city dwellers through hard-nosed responses, the key is to involve the most marginalised in initiatives that address the challenges that face us all. This film shows, once again, that the most marginalised are the experts on their own condition, that they are willing to make the trade-offs and bargains needed to function in the city, and that they are continually innovating to improve their own prospects."

Other recommendations from the research include: fostering urban safety through inclusive policies and practices, for example supporting community champions to continue to initiate local solutions to prevent violence; using innovative measures to accurately understand people's vulnerabilities; police reform; and putting inclusivity at the heart of infrastructure.

The film, details of the event, and accompanying research papers are available for download at www.ids.ac.uk/safecities from 19 October 2016.

For more information or to request an interview with the researchers, contact Tina Nelis [+447749399332] or t.nelis@ids.ac.uk.

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Notes to editor:

1. The **Institute of Development Studies** (IDS) is a leading global institution for development research, teaching and learning, and impact and communications, based at the University of Sussex. Our vision is of equal and sustainable societies, locally and globally, where everyone can live secure, fulfilling lives free from poverty and injustice. We believe passionately that cutting-edge research, knowledge and evidence are crucial in shaping the changes needed for our broader vision to be realised, and to support people, societies and institutions to navigate the challenges ahead. www.ids.ac.uk
2. **Shack/Slum Dwellers International** (SDI) is a network of community-based organisations of the urban poor in 33 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 of the urban poor, engaging international agencies and operating on the international stage in order 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. www.sdinet.org/
3. **The research** undertaken for the film was a collaboration between IDS and SDI in 6 focus countries: South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Cambodia, Bolivia, and Afghanistan. The project aimed at exploring what a fruitful, violence-free life means to poor and marginalised city dwellers. The project is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).
4. Copies of the **research paper and a one-page summary** of key messages 'Creating safe and inclusive cities that leave no one behind' including more detailed analysis and mini-case studies on innovative interventions (in Colombia; India; South Africa; and the Solomon Islands), and urban approaches can be found at: www.ids.ac.uk/safecities.