



United Nations

— HABITAT III —
SIDE EVENT REPORT

Submitted by Lead Organization	
Name of the lead organization	University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Built Environment and Development Studies
City and country where the lead organization is based	Durban, South Africa
Title of the event	Grassroots approaches towards self-reliance in South Africa: the ISULabantu Project (Informal Settlements Upgrading led by the community).
Date	10/17/2016
Room number	Room 6
List of partner organizations	University of Westminster; UTshani Fund (part of Slums Dwellers International - SDI SA Alliance network); EThekweni Municipality (Human Settlements Unit)
Number of attendees	21-40
Percentage of women participating	31-40%



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Background information on the event (themes, issues, context).

Informal settlements represent one of the biggest challenges worldwide, as a consequence of the accelerated process of urbanisation in developing countries. They are often characterised by the lack of basic services and infrastructure, poorly performing building materials without any building plans approved and often built on illegally-accessed and hazardous land. Despite all the efforts to reduce its growth, the number of informal settlements is still constantly increasing. Therefore, addressing the informal urbanisation challenge represents a key strategy that benefits not only the urban poor, but the city as a whole, towards inclusive and self-reliant communities. The ISULabantu Project is a collaborative and multidisciplinary research aimed at investigating the underpinning barriers and enabling drivers for participatory and grassroots upgrade of informal settlements in South Africa. The rationale of this research lies in understanding how participatory approaches can be utilised in an environmental and construction management strategy to achieve self-reliance in informal settlements in Durban metropolitan area. The overarching aim of the research is to develop and test an integrated “Collaborative environmental and construction management Toolkit” to enhance community self-reliance. This interdisciplinary project reconciles social science with built environment participatory action research to co-produce integrated approaches for community-led upgrading in informal settlements. It seeks to enhance skills, explore indigenous knowledge and share lessons between communities and local and national authorities and research institutions. The project unfolds through six interrelated phases to be implemented with the active participation of local residents, community organisations, community researchers, policy makers from eThekweni municipality and central government as well as practitioners. The event seeks to discuss the preliminary results of the Phase 1 (Local context and Gap Analysis) of this project. This phase, led by the School of Built Environment & Development Studies of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban, SA), with Dr C. Loggia as Principal Investigator, seeks to uncover barriers and drivers impacting on existing bottom-up upgrading of informal settlement and revealing factors that have enhanced self-reliance in informal settlements in the Durban Metropolitan Area. Fieldwork activities (based mainly on focus groups and interviews) in selected case studies in Durban Metropolitan area, have been conducted in collaboration with a local NGO, uTshani Fund. The core vision is to re-examine informal settlements through the lenses of the community and co-producing inclusive approaches for the upgrading of informal settlements. Interestingly enough is the leadership role that women have within the communities involved in the project. A comprehensive definition of Community-led approach and the existing gaps between local government and informal settlement communities revealed by this study, may be used as a platform for developing a new grassroots-based framework for upgrading informal settlements in South Africa.



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<p>Concise summary of the event proceedings, including key points discussed</p>	<p>During the interactive side event titled: "Grassroots approaches towards self-reliance in South Africa: the ISULabantu Project (Informal Settlements Upgrading led by the community)" the research team presented an overview of the research programme, including a short video/documentary on the Durban context and the fieldwork done so far, followed by a panel discussion with five high profile experts working on informal settlements upgrading in South Africa; namely: Beryl Mphakathi (Head of Human Settlements in Ethekewini municipality, Durban), Prof Marie Huchzermeyer (University of the Witwatersrand), Emily Mohohlo (SDI), Dr Graham Alabaster (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Urban Basic Services Branch), and Dr Zoleka Sokopo (South African National Department of Human Settlements). The discussion focused on critical questions affecting upgrading in informal settlement. It is essential to build trust with the communities, who should take ownership of the upgrading process. This should be reflected in the skills and capabilities that communities and local authorities need to develop further for effective community-led upgrading, including: 1) the development of effective interim tenure forms to enhance the occupational rights of local communities, 2) local administration and central accounting that incorporate community self-regulation and micro-financing schemes. The ISULabaNtu is an applied research project focusing on accurate and on-the-ground research.</p>
<p>Recommendations that emerged from these discussions.</p>	<p>For this kind of multi-stakeholders projects it is fundamental to find the right balance between soft skills and technical skills. It is also crucial to build trust between Municipality, Politicians, NGOs and communities.</p>
<p>Partnerships or collaborations that emerged from the event.</p>	<p>We have strengthened the existing partnerships between Academia, NGOs and Municipality</p>
<p>Name, nationality, title and organization of the 1st speaker at your event.</p>	<p>Dr Maria Christina Georgiadou, Greek, Senior Lecturer at the Westminster University, Principal investigator for the UK team of the ISULabantu project</p>
<p>Name, nationality, title and organization of the 2nd speaker at your event.</p>	<p>Dr Claudia Loggia, Italian, Senior Lecturer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Principal investigator for the SA team of the Isulabantu project</p>
<p>Name, nationality, title and organization of the 3rd speaker at your event.</p>	<p>Dr Isis Nunez Ferrera, Honduras, from Westminster University, Co-Investigator</p>
<p>Name, nationality, title and organization of the 4th speaker at your event.</p>	<p>Mrs Beryl Mphakathi, South African, Head of Human Settlements in Ethekewini municipality, Durban</p>



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<p>Name, nationality, title and organization of the 5th speaker at your event.</p>	<p>Prof Marie Huchzermeyer (University of the Witwatersrand), Advisory Board Member for the Isu Labantu project</p>
<p>Name, nationality, title and organization of the 6th speaker at your event.</p>	<p>Emily Mohohlo, South African, regional leader of the South African Federation of the Urban Poor, and member of the SDI Management Committee</p>
<p>Name, nationality, title and organization of the 7th speaker at your event.</p>	<p>Dr Graham Alabaster (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Urban Basic Services Branch)</p>
<p>Name, nationality, title and organization of any additional speakers at your event.</p>	<p>Dr Zoleka Sokopo (South African National Department of Human Settlements)</p>
<p>Dissemination of the outcomes of your event?</p>	<p>We have already started disseminating through our project website, social networks and university newsletters. Please visit www.isulabantu.org for more information.</p>