

**Final Technical Report
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Institution: University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
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Synthesis

Urban poverty is a problem in a variety of developmental and cultural contexts. It is characteristically spatially concentrated, with residents experiencing similar challenges including issues such as low income, low employment, lack of housing, homelessness, lack of access to services, violence, low rates of education.

In spite of the challenges, there are examples of community-based organizations and local governments collaborating to improve social and economic outcomes for those living in poverty. Innovative approaches to addressing poverty and inequality are being experimented with great success in many cities around the world. Many of these experiences are led by energetic grassroots women's groups, community organizations and local government bodies. The challenge is to build on these individual success stories to identify more comprehensive solutions. There are many barriers, however, that these local groups face in their struggle to scale up their actions, gain recognition, influence public opinion, orient policy and spending, influence academic teaching and transform practice. The project "Innovative practices of inclusive urban development and poverty reduction" was designed to support the systematization and dissemination of these practices and policies with the aim to meet our stated objectives to 1) build capacity and raise awareness; 2) generate recommendations to improve practice; 3) contribute to education and professional development; 4) contribute to an international network of knowledge, practices and policies; 5) contribute to policy formation relevant to poverty reduction.

The Research Problem

Urban poverty, often concentrated in the inner areas or peripheries of major urban centres, is a problem in a variety of developmental and cultural contexts. Traditional strategies of addressing urban poverty have largely been through the provision of a series of disparate and fragmented services, each aimed at one dimension of the visible effect of the problems such as low income, low employment, lack of housing, homelessness, lack of access to services, violence, low rates of education, and so on, and most often through assistance-based approaches. In general, the overall effect of these approaches has done little to eradicate poverty or to address its underlying causes. Indeed, the international debate around the post 2015 development agenda is increasingly focused on the structural issues of equity and inclusion, particularly in the urban context where the majority of the world's population lives. Lack of equality of opportunity, social exclusion and insecurity are increasingly understood as barriers to achieving human development and overcoming poverty. The main theme of the seventh World Urban Forum is "urban equity in development", highlighting this new focus. The Forum will seek to identify ways to operationalize this new conceptual framework through governance mechanisms, policies, technical tools and operational methodologies at local, national and international levels.

In practice, however, innovative approaches to addressing poverty and inequality are being experimented with great success in many cities around the world. These range from participatory urban planning processes, women's safety audits, community development initiatives, local economic development and social economy initiatives, community housing schemes, urban agriculture, schemes for urban waste management and green energy production and many others. Many of these experiences are led by energetic grassroots

women's groups, community organizations and local government bodies. The challenge is to build on these individual success stories to identify more comprehensive solutions.

However, there are many barriers that these local groups face in their struggle to scale up their actions, gain recognition, influence public opinion, orient policy and spending, influence academic teaching and transform practice. The aim of the project "Innovative practices of inclusive urban development and poverty reduction" has been to support the systematization and dissemination of these practices and policies, both through their presentation during a networking event during the Seventh World Urban Forum that took place in April 2014 in Medellin, Colombia and through the publication of a special thematic issue of the electronic international journal: Universitas Forum published in April 2015.

Project Objectives and Outcomes:

Outcomes aligned with the objectives outlined in our proposal include:

1) Build capacity and raise awareness of innovative practices of inclusive urban development

Thirteen innovative development projects in 12 cities, representing 10 countries and 4 continents were selected by the editorial committee. Ten were provided with a grant in the amount of \$2000. Eight of the projects were supported through IDRC funds. Two of the projects based in Winnipeg were supported through the Manitoba Research Alliance (MRA) – A SSHRC funded project administered through the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Project proposals were submitted to an editorial committee including the Principal Investigator, the co-applicant and 3 collaborators representing the MRA, Huarion Commission and the University of Toronto.

In addition to the production of 13 systematization papers, 4 films were produced and edited for consistency. As outlined in our proposal, papers and films were published in a special issue of Universitas Forum (www.universitasforum.org) in April 2015.

This process was intended not only to share knowledge and practice about inclusive urban development, but to build local capacity for participatory systematization. To do this, a methodological guide was produced and served as the basis for a participatory process of reconstruction of the experience and an analysis of the results generated and challenges that emerged. In most of the cases, this process involved the participants of the experience themselves and also researchers, video makers and journalists.

2) Generate recommendations for local government leaders and technical staff

All of the 13 systematization papers included recommendations for governments and technical staff. Recommendations are intended to address existing policy and program gaps and/or means by which programs might be improved.

- 3) Contribute to student learning and professional development related to local development and urban planning through educational material designed for university teaching and professional development.

To date, our project has contributed to student learning through the hiring of an intern (externally funded through the KIP International School) and the hiring of a Masters in Development Practice student at the University of Winnipeg.

Film and publications will be used by the Principal Investigator in university courses taught in the department of Urban and Inner City Studies at the University of Winnipeg beginning in the fall of 2015. These courses include an introductory level course titled "Introduction to Urban and Inner City Studies" as second year course titled "Urban Poverty and Policy" and a third year course titled "Community Organizing". Materials are being promoted to other university teachers for potential use in courses through the [Manitoba Research Alliance](#); the [principal investigators websites](#); the international Universitas network, and to other Canadian universities collaborating with the project (St Francis Xavier University, University of Toronto).

Materials have been provided to the non-university community for use as educational tools through the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNET) and through the networks of the KIP International School.

- 4) Contribute to an international network of knowledge, practices and policies of inclusive urban development and poverty reduction through international policy forums such as the World Urban Forum.

The PI, Co-Investigator and one member of the editorial committee attended the World Urban Forum in April 2014. During a special networking event organized by the KIP International School, we presented a preliminary outline of our project at a networking event and encouraged those who attended our session (approximately 120) to submit proposals. Of these proposals, two case studies, from Medellin, Colombia and Lima, Peru submitted proposals. The case from Lima was accepted for funding through the project, while the case from Colombia was self-financed. Both are published in the issue of Universitas Forum.

- 5) Contribute to government policy formation related to inclusive urban development and poverty reduction through various activities.

A workshop will be planned in the host city (Winnipeg) at the annual Community Economic Development Network gathering in October 2015. Over 400 practitioners and policy makers attend this conference.

Research Findings

Systematization papers and films have now been published in a special issue of Universitas Forum Vol.4 N.2 titled "[Inclusive Urban Development and Poverty Reduction: Learning From Innovative Practice](#)". As anticipated, we have found that significant challenges toward poverty alleviation continue to exist. However, we have also

found that community-based efforts to engage in poverty reduction are making a difference in the lives of many living in poverty. Through film and papers submitted, those engaged in community-based poverty reduction efforts share what they have learned about what is possible and how we can scale up these efforts through greater collaboration between community, government and the private sector.

Aligned with our knowledge mobilization aims, the special issue allows us to present a variety of successful experiences of inclusive urban development that have addressed the different dimensions of poverty as they are lived in diverse urban settings. These experiences come from very different developmental and cultural contexts: Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe in Africa; Bangladesh and India in Asia, Winnipeg, Canada, Mexico, Colombia and Peru in Latin America. But whether in the inner city of Winnipeg or the slums of Delhi, the experiences show that residents of poor, spatially concentrated areas of cities experience similar challenges – low income, low levels of employment, lack of housing and access to services, violence, low rates of education. They also show that poor communities have valuable knowledge about their problems and potential solutions and through this project describe many innovative examples of community organizations, researchers and local governments collaborating to improve social and economic outcomes for those currently living in poverty.

Running through the different experiences presented in this issue are several common themes and similar approaches. Each of them highlights, among other things, community-driven solutions to complex problems.

Access to land, housing and control of property rights is fundamental to ensuring safe and permanent housing, children's education and access to livelihoods for vast numbers of people, especially women, living in informal urban settlements. This is the theme of the case study and video produced by the Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association based on their experience in the urban slums of Harare. As mothers of children with handicaps, they face multiple barriers: abandoned by husbands and families, objects of discrimination and violence and with no property or means to earn a living, these women were forced to live a nomadic life. Their success story is based on the awareness of their legal rights, their capacity to organize and to advocate constructively with local authorities, traditional leaders and other stakeholders. In their view, moreover, "the presence of women in public offices makes it easy for grassroots women empowerment programmes to be effective, efficient and sustainable".

Rights to land title and municipal services in poor urban areas are also at the centre of the experience of participatory planning as part of the Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) Scheme in Raipur and Gangtok, India. RAY is a government programme aimed at correcting the deficiencies of formal urban planning that has not created inclusive conditions for poor urban families. Instead, they "are forced to create encroachments and slums and lead extra-legal lives in deprived conditions". The experience recounts community engagement in planning urban development projects in two municipalities in India, as part of the RAY scheme. The process is presented through the lens of two young planners working for RAY who learned that simple solutions to complex problems are often easily identified by creating the opportunity for community members to engage their knowledge and experience in government-led urban development processes. They also learned,

though, that such participatory processes require time, patience and the willingness of politicians and bureaucrats to shift their plans and priorities according to people's demands and aspirations; the alternative is disengagement and loss of confidence in the institutional process, and poorly planned cities.

Colombia is another country that has seen a rapid and unplanned increase in the urban population, many of whom are living in precarious settlements. It is also a country that has been plagued by violence with many of these new city dwellers displaced from rural areas as a result of the violent conflict over the past 40 years. This is the context for the experience in Bogotá realized by TECHO, a community organization that has focused on developing social infrastructure – roads, bridges, community centres – in neglected communities in ways that facilitate community empowerment, social cohesion and improved relations between institutions and the members of the communities themselves. The author underlines how the process of participation is incremental, expanding step by step as community members are empowered, see concrete results and identify new projects, thus developing more complex responses to their needs as the process progresses. In their experience this empowerment begins with local citizens who build the vision of their communities and local government that supports and facilitates them, “so that they feel closer to institutions and the state that they are citizens”.

Colombia and India are the settings for two other experiences that address housing issues from a different perspective, that of self-construction practices. The action research experience in Delhi, India presented by Micro Home Solutions (mHS) was addressed to poor and low-income households resettled by government as part of slum eviction programs. These families are usually given tiny empty plots of land in city suburbs with unclear legal titles. Self-construction is a common practice, but as these households usually comprise workers in the informal sector who are unable to access mortgage documents, they are thus unable to afford construction loans or design assistance. The authors show how a combination of actions including facilitating access to micro-credit, individual technical design assistance to owners, sensitizing community members and training local masons on safe construction practices and advocacy with government and international agencies has led to positive results. Among these have been important proposed policy changes to the microfinance sector, to allow microfinance institutions to offer housing loans to homeowners with right to possession even if they do not have full property title and to increase the lending cap from Rs 50,000 to Rs 500,000.

COMFAMA is a private non-profit workers compensation fund in the Department of Antioquia, Colombia. The author describes the experience of a major housing upgrading program for low-income families in the municipality of developed with multiple stakeholders, including COMFAMA itself, private companies and the municipalities of the Department of Antioquia. As in the other cases, access to small loans for families without legal property title is a major problem, and thus the provision of loans to these families from COMFAMA was strategic. Given the scale of COMFAMA's intervention, by combining provision of affordable loans, technical assistance to homeowners, negotiating prices with a network of local suppliers of building materials, the program was able to improve the living conditions of 13,571 families, revitalize the local economy

and generate more than 40,000 jobs in the construction sector, mostly in the informal sector. From a more qualitative viewpoint, the author recounts the benefits of home improvements for health and sanitation, greater privacy, and simply more attractive housing that increases families' sense of self-esteem and belonging. Moreover, the value of the homes increased and thus improved the families' assets.

Violence, and particularly, youth violence is the theme of the case study from Lima, Peru. Youth are both the object and subject of the experience of "Peace Defenders", a pilot initiative in a poor neighbourhood of San Juan de Lurigancho in Lima, characterized by many forms of violence including gangs. This experience focused on building youth leaders as "peace defenders" through working on their individual and collective capacities and self-esteem to address the underlying factors that make them vulnerable to violence, such as poverty, social exclusion, precarious housing, mental health issues and other factors often associated with constant migration. The experience adapted and innovated existing participatory approaches such as community safety mapping and social photography. The importance of this experience, in the eyes of the author, is not only in addressing the social stigma associated with poverty and exclusion that makes youth more vulnerable to violence; it lies in the ability to see the community through the eyes of its youth and to understand the many factors that contribute to the cycle of poverty and violence they live with. Thus it provides a vital lens, including a gender lens, for public policy and intervention aimed at addressing the multiple risks of poor and vulnerable communities.

The contributions from Winnipeg, Manitoba (Canada) illustrate that poverty exists even in countries viewed across the world as places of wealth and opportunity. Complex challenges such as income inequality, poverty, social exclusion, and urban decline persist in Winnipeg, but are also being addressed with comprehensive, long-term, multifaceted, and integrated approaches that are community led—through an approach referred to as Community Economic Development (CED). CED organizations have become a force for neighbourhood resilience, poverty reduction and building human capacity and hope, while creating more sustainable livelihoods and communities for many in the city.

While poverty in Canada affects people from all backgrounds, Indigenous people continue to fare poorly on a number of social and economic indicators when compared with non-Aboriginal Canadians. The reasons are complex, but are in part attributable to colonial policies that have left a legacy of despair and distrust, particularly in the education system. The experience of creating an intergenerational educational hub in Winnipeg's inner city was born through collaboration among community-based organizations, post-secondary education institutions, local governments and others committed to building a holistic education model that provides opportunities for Aboriginal people and other multi-barriered residents. In addressing needs for education and employment sensitive to the specific cultural context of the local community, the hub is also contributing to revitalizing the neighbourhood where it is located, providing much needed affordable housing and generating economic recovery.

Also in Winnipeg's north end, activists and social entrepreneurs, guided by CED principles, are creating social enterprises that generate employment and work toward changing the character of the neighbourhood. Two recent projects from the city's North Main Street illustrate that ambitious urban renewal projects are possible and that there are diverse ways of using CED principles to achieve community vitalization, including through strategic renovation of historic buildings for community infrastructure. The initiatives described in "Our Hearts on our Streets" show how these and other community driven initiatives are creating opportunities by building a network of interconnected and socially responsible businesses and services dedicated to the health and well-being of Winnipeg's most vulnerable individuals and neighbourhoods.

While women are disproportionately represented among the urban poor and bear the burden of being impoverished, many dynamic and energetic grassroots women's groups are leading the initiatives to transform that reality, for themselves and their communities. For example, the relationship between urban violence and women's economic empowerment is the theme of the action research experience from Aquiles Serdán, Chihuahua in Mexico. The author, director of the action research centre Bufete de Estudios, illustrates the process of creating a Centre for Solidarity-based Economy for Grassroots Women (CENESO, acronym in Spanish) in the municipality. The premise was that by encouraging women's financial autonomy and improving the financial situation of their families this would also have a positive impact on preventing violence against women. The author describes the participatory process of constituting the Center that involved an innovative use of several tools such as workshops on the participatory design of the centre and on solidarity-based economy; community safety audits, a grassroots organizations' academy and local-to-local dialogues. The process, facilitated by Bufete de Estudios Interdisciplinarios AC, brought together grassroots women from Aquiles Serdán and surrounding municipalities; the municipality and pertinent state government programmes and also points to collaboration between grassroots organizations and institutions as the key to its consolidation and future sustainability, as well as the facilitating role played by the innovative research process itself.

Improved livelihoods and women's empowerment are the main themes of the video and case study of the Home-based Care Alliance in the periphery of Kampala, Uganda in the urban slum of Mbuya Parish. Theirs is the story of a social movement of grassroots women and men, themselves infected by HIV, who provide home-based care for people with HIV/AIDS in their community. Their experience highlights the strength of grassroots women organizing collectively and advocating with government to improve the provision of care, access formal training and recognition as caregivers, improve their collective incomes, the health and sanitation of their community and strengthen their political participation. Their success story is based on their capacity for dialogue with local government using the local-to-local model promoted by the Huairou Commission network and their inventiveness with a variety of income-generating activities such as kitchen gardens, mushroom growing techniques in small spaces to generate income and contribute to collective mechanisms for savings and credit.

Local economic development is also the theme of the case study exploring how harnessing traditional knowledge about artisan production of leather goods has driven the local economy in the Commune of Ngaye Mékhé in Senegal and combatted poverty. The author shows how, in the face of mass importation of foreign products made of synthetic materials, enhancing this value chain specific to the local culture, history and know-how of the territory linked to leather has generated an entire system. This system has had a multiplier effect on the local economy, has increased family incomes, had an important impact on women's economic empowerment and generated significant revenue for the local public budget, in turn leading to improved services and quality of life, and a more attractive and vibrant territory in general, with its shops, ateliers, cooperatives, micro-finance institutions and services.

Project Implementation and management

1. Establishment of the project research committee and editorial committee (January 2014)

Canadian members: Shauna MacKinnon, principal investigator (University of Winnipeg), John Loxley (University of Manitoba), Diane Roussin (The Boldness Project), Lynne Fernandez (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba/Manitoba Research Alliance), Connie Guberman, (University of Toronto), Eileen Alma (Coady Institute, St Francis Xavier University).

International members: Sara Swartz (KIP International School Universitas Programme), Katie Gillett (Huairou Commission, US).

2. Call for experiences (January 2014)

The editorial committee prepared the Call for experiences, the template to be filled in by the applicants and the background conceptual note. All these documents were made available in English, French and Spanish.

3. Circulation of the call (January 2014)

The call for experiences and related documents were published on *Universitas Forum* and on several websites and circulated through the project partners' mailing lists. In particular, the call was circulated through the following mailing lists: *Universitas Forum* registered users (600+ people); UN-HABITAT; Huairou Commission. Canadian Community Economic Development Network; Manitoba Research Alliance, and the Coady Institute.

4. Selection criteria

Universitas Forum received 21 applications from 12 different countries: 4 from Winnipeg, Canada, 9 from Latin America, 3 from Africa, 4 from Asia, 1 from Italy. The editorial committee developed criteria based on project objectives. Applications were reviewed and rated accordingly.

5. Evaluation of the applications (March – May 2014)

The editorial committee completed the first stage of evaluation of the applications received and asked all the members of the editorial board to complete the evaluation template using the agreed criteria. Some of the applicants were asked to provide further information and/or clarifications on the experience proposed. The

information received was assembled by the editorial committee and sent to the members of the editorial board for the final evaluation. On the basis of the comments received and its own evaluation, the editorial committee prepared the final ranking of the applications received. Among the 10 applications selected for a grant, 2 are from Asia, 3 from Africa, 3 from Latin America and 2 from Canada. As the project had funds for only 8 grants, it was agreed that 2 grants to the experiences from Winnipeg would be provided directly by Manitoba Research Alliance.

6. Communication with the applicants (May 2014)

The editorial administrator notified the grant winners at the beginning of May 2014 as well as the applicants that were not selected for the grant, inviting them, if interested, to submit an article proposal to *Universitas Forum*. All the applicants were provided a systematization package, with guidelines for videos and case studies and a guide to systematization.

7. Issuing of small grant contracts (May 2014)

The process of issuing the contracts was initiated in May 2014 when the Universitas team prepared the grant agreement document for all the grantees. The grant agreements were signed by the Principal Investigator Shauna MacKinnon in early May and by the end of May all were signed and returned.

8. Payment of the first instalment (July 2014)

The payment of the first instalment of 1,000 CAD was subject to the approval of an outline of the case studies and videos, due by June 13, 2014. Due to delay in receiving the drafts and in transferring the grants internationally, only by the end of July all the grants had been received.

9. Draft systematization papers received (December 2014)

Systematization papers were received and reviewed by members of the editorial committee. Comments were sent to authors with a deadline to submit final publications.

10. Payment of the second instalment (January 2015)

A second instalment of 1,000 CAD was sent to each of the 8 selected authors once the papers had been scrutinized and sent back for final changes. All payments were processed by early February.

11. Draft video and revisions process (January-February 2015)

Videos were reviewed by the editorial committee and technical experts. Videos were edited by producers with further technical edits made by the project technical team. Final videos were released after approved by producers. Subtitles included where required.

12. Translation (March 2015)

Final systematization papers and editorial were translated to ensure accessibility to English, Spanish and French, Italian.

13. Final production (March 2015)

Technical/Design team prepare final documents aligned with Universitas templates.

14. Issue goes live (April 2015)

15. Dissemination and knowledge mobilization (April – July 2015)

The editorial team created a circular to accompany the dissemination of UF, containing a brief description of the topic of the issue and the table of content with hyperlinks to each article. The circular was translated in the four working languages of UF.

The issue was promoted through different channels: Social media (KIP's Facebook page, several tweets); E-mailing lists (universities, Canadian and international development actors); various platforms (UWinnipeg website, Manitoba Research Alliance website, Comfama website).

Expenditures

In accordance with the overall project budget, so far IDRC funds have been used to contribute to the following project activities:

- Editorial coordination and assistance
- Funding for systematization (papers and films)
- Research assistance
- Technical support for video editing
- Small research grants
- Technical support – video editing
- Travel (Universitas Forum editor for participation in World Urban Forum and editorial work with project staff)

The activities supported throughout this project align with the research program initially proposed. The main problems encountered have been a function of working with researchers and community-based organizations located across the world, representing 3 international languages and two African languages. In some cases film footage could only be sent via traditional mail and this caused some delays. However, we have been fortunate to have a very skilled, responsive and flexible team of researchers and technical support and as a result, challenges have been relatively minimal.

Specifically, activities supported under the project during the reporting period include:

- 1) Preparation, translation and dissemination through Universitas Forum readers and project partners' networks of a call for experiences. A call document outlining the research problem and including a template to be completed by interested organizations or individual researchers was prepared in English and translated into French and Spanish.
- 2) Selection of experiences to receive a small research grant through our project. The research team provided a template for themselves and editorial committee members to comment on the proposals received and then collated these comments. Based on this, we proposed the eight cases that were considered of greatest potential interest to policy makers and practitioners in Canada and globally. These proposed grant recipients were then agreed on with committee members. Of the twenty-one proposals received, 8 were selected to receive a grant from IDRC

- contribution to the project, 2 received grants through the MRA project, 2 were self-funded. A further proposal was considered more pertinent to the topic of social protection than urban poverty and therefore was published in an issue of Universitas Forum dedicated to social protection. This case was also self-funded.
- 3) Issuing of small grant agreements and providing first of two payments to recipients.
 - 4) Production of a brief methodological guide summarizing a paper on participatory systematization available through Human Resource Development Network (HRDNET)'s website was provided to authors as a support tool in preparing their case studies and videos.
 - 5) Liaising with video authors to agree on work and further footage needed for editing purposes. For each first draft, two members of the project team and/or the editorial committee provided detailed feedback to the authors on content with suggestions on how to make the experience presented be as clear and pertinent as possible to readers in a variety of settings. These comments were then integrated into the second drafts sent by the authors for final editing by the project team.
 - 6) Editing of second drafts of case studies and videos and submission to authors for approval. In some cases, this work has been quite intensive. Quite significant work was required to reduce some case studies to the required article length and significant video editing work was required by two of the videos submitted.
 - 7) Preparing documents and film for Universitas Forum
 - 8) Dissemination

Project outputs and dissemination:

The following twelve systematization papers, one 'viewpoint' article and four videos were published in the June 2015 special issue of [Universitas Forum](#).

Case Studies published in the "In Practice" section of Universitas Forum:

- Theresa Makwara, Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association (ZPHCA), Zimbabwe: "Women taking action on land and property rights: A grassroots housing initiative in Harare, Zimbabwe"
- Roshnila Gurung, Tatabrata Bhattacharya, Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY), India: "Engaging community in slum redevelopment in Raipur and Gangtok"
- Daniel Quintero, TECHO, Colombia: "Construction of urban public infrastructures in informal settlements in Colombia: TECHO's experience"
- Rakhi Mehra et al., Micro Home-Based Solutions (mHS), India: "Brick by brick – a model for self-built housing in India"
- Ana Milena Vera Girón, COMFAMA, Colombia: "Innovative alliances for improving housing in the department of Antioquia, Colombia"
- Olenka Ochoa, Defenders of Peace, Peru: "Promoting safety among young Peruvians in post-conflict areas: Defenders of Peace in San Juan de Lurigancho, Lima"
- Shauna MacKinnon and Jim Silver, Winnipeg, Canada: "Tackling poverty through holistic, interconnected, neighborhood based intergenerational learning: The Case of Winnipeg's Selkirk Avenue"
- Tyler Pearce and Wanda Wuttunee Winnipeg, Canada: "Our hearts on our street: Neechi Commons and the Social Enterprise Centre in Winnipeg"
- Magdalena García, Magdalena Huerta, Mujeres Iberoamericanas en RED: por la Igualdad – CENESO, Mexico: "Women's economic empowerment in Aquiles Serdán, Mexico: The experience of CENESO"

- Gertrude Nalubinga, Mbuya Home Based Care Association (MHBCA), Uganda: Mbuya Home Base Care Alliance: Grassroots women in action on HIV/AIDS in slum community of Mbuya, Uganda
- Mamadou Ndiaye, Ngaye Mékhé, Senegal: “Social-territorial innovations and local economics development: The case of Ngaye Mékhé in Senegal”.

The following brief case study was published in the “Critical Concept” section;

- Brendan Reimer, Sarah Leeson-Klym, Winnipeg, Canada: “Community Economic Development: A force for neighbourhood resilience”.

The following article was published in the “Viewpoint” section of the journal.

- Participatory Development Action Program (PDAP), Bangladesh: “Urban Disaster Risk Reduction in Vola bosti”

The following videos were included:

- Techo, Colombia
- Micro Home-Based Solutions (mHS), India
- Mbuya Home Based Care Association, Uganda
- Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association, Zimbabwe
- “Meet me at the Merch” Winnipeg, Canada

Three articles from past issues of UF were retrieved from the Archives section.

Impacts

Organizations doing development work often don’t have the time or resources to share their stories in a systematized manner. Providing organizations with resources and support to put their stories on paper and in video has given them tools that they can now use for public education and advocacy work. It also provides them a means to share their experiences with and learn from each other. In the case of the [Zimbabwe Parents of Handicapped Children Association](#), the project had a very direct impact. Their grant led to government commitment to housing for grassroots women in Zimbabwe.

Recommendations for policy and practice

Drawing on the lessons indicated by the authors, some common themes emerge for policy and practice:

- The best solutions are community-driven. All the cases illustrate that poor communities have valuable knowledge about their problems, the structural limits they face and potential solutions. Harnessing the knowledge that exists in poor communities leads to the most appropriate solutions to often very complex problems. The cases also illustrate the fundamental importance of collective action in making marginalized voices heard, in demanding fulfillment of rights and in bringing about necessary change.
- Still, without the partnership and support of government, including by committing the needed resources, community actions have little chance to scale up and become

sustainable in the medium to long term. Governments should enable and support community-led processes. Methods such as local-to-local dialogues, as promoted by the Huairou Commission, are useful means of facilitating constructive dialogue and collaboration between community groups and public institutions.

- Participation, however, is an incremental process and needs to be nurtured over time and lead to concrete benefits for communities. The different experiences recounted in this issue refer to tools such as women's safety audits, mapping exercises, street-corner meetings, social photography and other methods designed to facilitate the participation of even the most excluded groups in planning and decision-making. Such experiences are based on the recognition that participation should be an empowering process and that mass meetings or consultations with organizational representatives, without other deeper participatory processes, are unlikely to engage and empower such groups.

- Research can play a facilitating role. In developing several of the experiences presented here, research has had a determining role. Not only have researchers documented and analyzed existing processes, they have been directly engaged with local actors in conceptualizing and accompanying new initiatives, facilitating participatory processes and have contributed to innovations that have produced positive benefits. This has required adopting "hybrid" methods such as partnership research, participatory action research, participatory mapping, safety audits and others where researchers work with local actors in a process of co-construction, analysis and advocacy work.

- The best solutions are complex, addressing the multiple dimensions of poverty and the underlying factors. Whereas, all the cases published here have a thematic focus, in reality these are just entry points to a broader process of local poverty reduction. They show that education, violence reduction, local and community economic development, community vitalization, housing, urban planning, access to property and economic assets are all intricately related and cannot be addressed effectively in silos.

- Networks. An important opportunity comes from participating in international networks. Several of the experiences, such as that of ZPHCA in Zimbabwe, Mbuya Home-based care alliance in Uganda, CENESO in Mexico and the CED experiences in Winnipeg are part of national, regional and international networks. Networks facilitate peer learning and dialogue, exchanges of experiences, practices and instruments beyond providing opportunities to bring local experiences and lessons into the policy arena at international level.