Mentoring on upgrading informal settlements

Developing Integrated and Sustainable Human Settlements

Rethinking the Upgrading of Informal Settlements: The Case of Welbedagt East, Durban
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We would like to acknowledge the contributions made by the following people (in alphabetical order):

Ahsha Nansook
Andile Ncapai
Anil Goral
Anita Gia Martinez
Ann Petty
Bheka Ndhle
Bisini Naidoo
Bongumusa Mbenhe
Carlos Esteves
Chris Hardy
Collin Pilay
Dumisani Nkomo
Esther Madeleine Leblanc
Faizal Seedat
Fesile Nkoweni
Geoff Griffiths
Jabulani Msomi
Jacque Subbar
Jonathan Edkins
J. Floriano de A Marques Neto
Kenneth Mgadi
Khambuzile Mkhize
Kollin Citera
Kuben Samie
Lauren Hunt
Lawrence Pato
Lekha Allop
Leonardo O Barchini Rosa
Little Phewa
Logan Reddy
Lucas Nobre
Marcelo Rebelo de Moraes
Mark Byerley
Nonquhlelele Mncadi
Morrie Magierman
Nancy Cavalle da Silva

After being exposed to the Sao Paulo Initiatives and working with colleagues from Sao Paulo in Welbedagt, the core team looked beyond the provision of housing units and road infrastructure as the main outcome of upgrades and Greenfield project that typically represent public sector lower income housing provision. The core team undertook site visits, discussion with stakeholders and evidence based research in proposing several interventions from construction of higher density units housing units to accommodate people living in transit camps and to further prevent relocation of families not accommodated in the project area and to maximize on land and services of the project area, and improvement of traffic safety, pedestrianisation and traffic flow through a rearrangement of the road plan, to proposals of educational spaces within social interest housing projects, providing appropriate environments for people. The team was daring in their proposals to redefine the landscape with special attention to detail and seeking environmentally friendly alternatives. The urban form, public spaces and facilities group designed the project based on the deployment of housing units and rearrangement, aiming at lesser environmental impact during the interventions, especially at those settlements located on environmentally sensitive areas. Among the challenges that were identified, the work done by the eThekwini Municipality – City of Sao Paulo team enabled us to see that the art of interacting with spaces – free from assumptions and stigmas – is what fosters professionals and enables them to contribute to the construction of a better city.

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ACRONYMS

DCM Deputy City Manager
BRT Bus Rapid Transport
CBD Community Based Organisation
COGTA Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
EPWP Extended Public Works Programme
FBO Faith Based Organisation
HOD Head of Department
LED Local Economic Development
LEFTA Less Formal Township Establishment Act, 1991 (Act No. 113 of 1991)
MEC Member of Executive Committee
MILE Municipal Institute of Learning
NGOs Non Governmental Organisations
POS Public Open Space
ROD Record of Decision
SACN South African Cities Network
SR650 Special Residential 650
UCLG United Cities and Local Governments
As South Africans, we know that Brazil has made deliberate changes to inculcating a history of democracy and community participation. As a result of that, they have successfully dealt with a number of housing, economic, social and environmental challenges that we are currently experiencing in South Africa. The two contexts are not the same, but eThekwini Municipality has a lot to learn and share from their experiences. Although eThekwini has been rolling out an impressive average of 9000 housing units per annum over the last 18 years, the backlog remains extremely high as a result of high urbanization trends and new formation of households that been occurring since the late 80s. In essence, this means that the provision of housing for all will be a challenge. This can be attributed to the lack of resources, skills, institutional capacity, intergovernmental cooperation and community participation as well as extensive stakeholder involvement.

Today’s politicians are challenged to assume two critical scenarios. Firstly, they need to have the capacity to make decisions over complex issues and over citizens that are impatient with the slow pace of delivery and have been waiting for a long time for change. Secondly, to propose community projects that will bring desired outcomes based on priority. Given the limitations on funds and well located land and stigma and legal challenges to integrated planning, including that of public and private housing, race and class, eThekwini has been rolling out housing units and creating settlements that further perpetuates apartheid planning of exclusion and segregation, sprawl, increased travel distances and unsustainable settlement patterns devoid of thresholds and facilities that make for decent living environments. As local government, we have been held accountable by the citizens to provide proper and decent roads and bridges, storm water drainage, social facilities (such as community halls, schools, crèches, sports fields, and parks – open spaces), public transport, local economic development amenities, and so on. It has been very costly to extend infrastructure because most of these settlements are located on the outskirts of the city. For people living in these areas, they are often far away from places of employment and opportunities. To this day, we are struggling to deal and reverse what apartheid planning had caused. The creation of a compact and integrated city remains a challenge.

The area of Welbedagt East is a perfect choice for the Sao Paulo - eThekwini Mentorship programme. The area of Welbedagt tells a story of the proliferation of informal settlements, rapid urbanization, and availability of land on the outskirts and the outcome of apartheid planning in the city. In order to transform our city, we need to seek for learning opportunities and best practices in countries such as Brazil. The Sao Paulo housing engagement creates an opportunity for change and the need for transforming our housing projects into decent human settlements and neighbourhoods.

Developing a lifelong learning mindset, understanding and acquiring the skills needed to achieve our goals, integrating sectors and professionals keeping up with global practices, and developing our professional capacity will determine the success of the eThekwini Municipality in all areas of service delivery, financial management and good governance. As we have experienced in this peer exchange with the City of Sao Paulo, housing is not only the provision of shelter. The eThekwini Municipality should strive to create decent human settlements with proper public transport networks, sanitation, storm water drainage, solid waste collection services, public health and education facilities, as well as public spaces comprising of green and recreation areas and the social interest and capital to continue the positive change of areas like Welbedagt in partnership with the Council and NGOs. The idea of creating a linear park is most desirable in the Welbedagt area. In areas that have been occupied by informal settlements and are posing a risk to the environment as well as human beings, “regularisation” efforts and initiatives need to be negotiated. It not only about protecting the environment but giving the environment social protection, social value and social identity.

Given our aspirations of being an integrated and inclusive city that encourages community participation, the importance of empowering our social networks cannot be over emphasized. As senior management, we are indeed inspired by the City of Sao Paulo and their experiences (particularly the case of Cantinho do Céu) and would like to see the transformation of Welbedagt East come into fruition and in doing so rethinking how we create not just housing units but create environment for communities.

The history of Welbedagt East is an interesting one but presents itself as an opportunity for redressing past imbalances. The city needs a solution for high capital and operating infrastructure costs (i.e. services, transport, etc.), high construction costs, and universal accessibility concerns and of course, the urban design challenge. Successful experiences for the transformation of new neighborhoods in Sao Paulo have in common a central focus: the construction of a future project linked not only to the building of new housing, but also to the overcoming of deficits related to infrastructure, accessibility and services. This mentorship programme, undoubtedly, will enable the city to fulfill its special role and ensure the social, economic, and cultural development of its people. Indeed, it is with good reason that eThekwini Municipality welcomes the effort of making Welbedagt a better place to live in.

In phase one of the mentorship programme, Sao Paulo shared its experiences and presented the challenges and responses that they have been finding for upgrading areas that today are real neighborhoods. The interaction between these cities poses an opportunity to focus on best options to move forward and to create new solutions. Since then, the
interaction and the sharing of good practice have been intensified, making room for this important partnership. This publication – along with other previously published – is a great mirror that reflects the responsibility of local government for training and developing new technologies, approaches to development from infrastructure deployment and the construction of new housing units, the nature of environmental assets and use and public facilities, and planning have all come under sharp focus. Sao Paulo has many critical situations to overcome, but perhaps like no other city in the world today, it gathers great professionals and a performance capacity that surprises everyone. The mentorship programme is a rich moment for Planners, Architects, Engineers – and Social Workers. Sao Paulo is an instrument of great contribution to capacity enhancement, because facing and overcoming the city challenges can sharpen their creativity and make Practitioners more capable of managing challenging situations. Exchanging experiences is very enriching and creates innovative solutions for projects of high quality in physical, spatial and social form.

“The city should be thought of as transforming, with innovation, creativity, and controversy, which was only possible from a deep understanding of reality, not just of the territory but, above all, of the population living there.” (CSP, 2012).

“Upgrading informal settlements should be understood as a solution for those who live there, not just as an intervention that minimizes the problems.” (CSP, 2012).

The promise of housing for all has been one of the focus areas of the eThekwini Municipality since the first South African Local Government elections in December 2000. Although this is not deliberate, the promise has been focused on the provision of housing and not necessarily “integrated and sustainable human settlements” based on several factors including resources, professionals used or not used in the process, lack of social capital and engagement in the process and access to well located land and resources for investment in the public realm as opposed to the individual unit are some of the key approaches that has created the environments we see today.

As a result of the UCLG Urban Strategic Planning Learning Exchange held in June 2011, it was noted that there is a need for cities to learn from the experiences of other cities in the world engaged in creating housing opportunities and neighborhood and “urban citizenship” for people previously excluded, and segregated and in particular the Black African community.

The purpose of this programme has been to understand and learn how the City of Sao Paulo has achieved breakthroughs, constructed, converted and manipulated their “favelas” that have grown exponentially in Brazil’s urban environment over the decades. The City of Sao Paulo and eThekwini Municipality have achieved important milestones with regards to the provision of housing. However, eThekwini’s emphasis has been providing housing units whilst the provision of social, recreational, public transport, cultural and economic facilities has not been satisfactory prioritised.

Learning from the Sao Paulo experience will enhance eThekwini’s future efforts of upgrading informal settlements and transforming them into viable places to reside.
This mentorship programme has been defined as a developmental partnership through which one municipality shares knowledge, skills, information and perspective to foster the professional growth of another municipality, the sharing of ideas has gone beyond profession and includes universities and community workers that play an important role with City governments in creating new livable opportunities. The power of mentoring is that it creates a one-of-a-kind opportunity for collaboration, goal achievement and problem solving. Formal mentoring refers to a structured process supported by the municipality and addressed to target areas. However, very early on in the process both cities learnt that whilst a mentoring relationship may exist, mutual learning is also taking place.

Taking into account the difficulties of building a new neighborhood, transforming a "precarious" reality into a pleasant setting beyond scope, scale, and resource limitations, or managing social, legal, and economic conflicts, is surely one of the most complex tasks. Professionals involved in public housing complex legislation designed for first world standards and the private sector continue to delay and frustrate development that is urgent and organic and where a level of innovation and flexibility and bold decision making is required. Especially in a democratic country, urban interventions are the result of a lengthy process of decision making, and they have normally occurred in complex environments where a diversity of factors makes it difficult to understand the issue and, consequently, resolve the problems the project is intended to. When there are few or simpler issues and clear and well presented alternatives, the decision is usually easier to take.

We are drawing on the eThekwini Municipality – City of Sao Paulo Mentorship Programme that focuses on the upgrading of informal settlements in Welbedagt East with an attempt to showcasing the creation of a sustainable human settlement. The purpose of the mentorship programme was to engage with information, skills and experience from the City of Sao Paulo in order to improve housing delivery standards, thus making a sustainable development contributions to local communities. Through UCLG, opportunities have been created to engage meaningfully to benefit marginalised communities to feel part of the society.

Metropolis is a world association of affiliated metropolises whose main objective is to facilitate international cooperation and the exchange of experiences between political authorities, administrations, public as well as private organizations of large cities. The purpose is to promote and disseminate acquired knowledge and policies implemented in these cities. Furthermore, Metropolis also facilitates research and studies aimed at improving public spaces and the environment. The mentorship initiative between eThekwini Municipality, City of Sao Paulo and UCLG was funded (60,000 Euros) by Metropolis for a period of three years concluding in December 2014.

Metropolis and UCLG have identified and undertaken a number of similar initiatives, particularly in the southern African cities and this is not the first learning exchange, but one that is very different where a well resources and performing city is still learning from another city and learning jointly. The main goal for eThekwini Municipality is to learn from Sao Paulo's experience of servicing and upgrading informal settlements (also known as "favelas" in Brazil) as well as planning, building, participatory and financing methodologies and tools used. It is envisaged that through this initiative, the lessons learned can be shared with other South African cities as well as national and provincial departments responsible for human settlements with the intention of recommending meaningful changes to the policy and planning environment in South Africa in support of informal settlements. This will be done through the Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE), South African Local Government Association (SALGA), South African Cities Network (SACN) and

02.
ABOUT THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

2.1.
HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

2.2.
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA). These learning experiences will be up-scaled internationally through Metropolis and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) so that other cities beyond South Africa can benefit from the knowledge created by the initiative.

There are a number of activities that have been undertaken as a result of this initiative and these include:

- Technical visits by officials from Sao Paulo and eThekwini
- Establishment of the mentorship programme
- Specification of the project scope
- Developing a clear roadmap
- Joint meetings with UCLG’s Strategic Planning programme
- Initiating reports and changes to the planning in the Welbedagt and that included changes to the planning standard and approach, the environmental EIA, rethinking and retrofitting engineering standards and road layout, all with the intention of creating a softer, people and more opportunity driven environment.

Although both cities have large numbers of informal settlements and/or “favelas,” Sao Paulo has a longer history and success stories in delivering at scale and, integrated settlements with impressive community engagement and ownership of development. It has been noted that eThekwini Municipality can learn from the experiences of Sao Paulo with regards to the following:

- What planning, design tools and core skills are applied in the prioritization and upgrading of settlements;
- What strategies the cities use to acquire suitable land;
- Integration strategies, with due regard to community and social and economic opportunities and cross department and levels or spheres of government cooperation in budgeting and project and programme deliver;
- What interim services are provided before “favelas” are fully upgraded;
- What financing methods are applied;
- The planning and building standards used;
- How the communities are involved in the planning, development, and management throughout the project cycle;
- And how projects are linked to job creation initiatives.

Developing the capacity and knowledge of eThekwini Municipality through the mentoring process will go a long way in producing a clear outcome that can be applied in planning and housing management. Although the project is building on the commitment of the two cities, it is expected to serve as a pilot experience from the current reform process of the South African housing policies and practices.

2.3. SO WHAT DOES THE INITIATIVE REALLY ENTAIL?

The eThekwhini Municipality and City of Sao Paulo have a promising partnership that will benefit both cities as well as fulfill the obligations of UCLG and Metropolis. The starting point has been to accumulate as much knowledge about the two cities and establish best practices. In order for eThekwini Municipality to benefit, action learning is desirable in the learning exchange and peer review sessions. A number of aspects will have to be visited. Firstly, as eThekwini, we need to undertake an assessment and establish where we are now and where we want to go to. It is only through evaluation that the municipality can be able to improve continuously. City to city learning will assist in developing a methodology for improvement and the exercise can bring additional dimensions. In the implementation of the project, the importance of leadership (i.e. political, community and professional) cannot be over emphasized. The private sector and communities need to be involved as partners in the project. Most importantly, the outcome of this mentoring exchange will be an attempt to influence government and their policy development structures in the delivery of human settlements.

3.1. THE CONTEXT OF ETHEKWINI

The eThekwini Municipality and City of Sao Paulo have a promising partnership that will benefit both cities as well as fulfill the obligations of UCLG and Metropolis. The starting point has been to accumulate as much knowledge about the two cities and establish best practices. In order for eThekwini Municipality to benefit, action learning is desirable in the learning exchange and peer review sessions. A number of aspects will have to be visited. Firstly, as eThekwini, we need to undertake an assessment and establish where we are now and where we want to go to. It is only through evaluation that the municipality can be able to improve continuously. City to city learning will assist in developing a methodology for improvement and the exercise can bring additional dimensions. In the implementation of the project, the importance of leadership (i.e. political, community and professional) cannot be over emphasized. The private sector and communities need to be involved as partners in the project. Most importantly, the outcome of this mentoring exchange will be an attempt to influence government and their policy development structures in the delivery of human settlements.
3.1.1. CHALLENGES AND STRENGTHS

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<th>eTHEKWINI CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SAO PAULO STRENGTHS</th>
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<tr>
<td>• The focus is on the delivery of housing units</td>
<td>• Focus on building Communities through: community networks, project funding for integrated delivery of social facilities, basic access, infrastructure, service provision</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Housing provision by Government Outcomes: low density, peripheral locations, sterile environments</td>
<td>• Home owners build and finance own dwelling unit/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>• An environmental goods and services approach (with a level of resistance)</td>
<td>• Focus on in situ development – connection to existing opportunity social and economic investments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Environment is seen to be in competition with housing land and yield and lacks social integration and ownership</td>
<td>• Focus on public realm, urbanism design and landscape</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Poor cooperation and integration</td>
<td>• Budget and institutional integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Lacks core skills to drive human settlements</td>
<td>• Skills and capacity: architects, social workers etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Driven by need to deal with environment/water issues, security of tenure, legal right and integration to the city and holistic environments</td>
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The eThekwini Municipality hopes to learn from the City of Sao Paulo the following aspects:

**Housing Plans:** Given the overview of housing and informal settlements in the eThekwini, does the city need to increase densities in order to reduce costs of development, increase investment opportunities, and ensure a viable public transport system, higher density mixed use corridors.

**Housing Finance and Budgets:** What legislation, criteria and subsidy types, standards, prioritization mechanisms does City of Sao Paulo use in the delivery of Housing?

**Planning Requirements:** What information is needed to make planning decisions and what are the cost implications?

**Project Cycle:** What is an outline of a project cycle that ensures the completion of an integrated and sustainable human settlement?

**Engineering Standards:** Does the City of Sao Paulo apply conditional engineering standards based on the nature and condition of the site?

**Social and Economic Data:** Does understanding socio-economic aspects of a project important in the delivery of human settlements?

“In a way, a city is by definition the place where different neighborhoods, poorer and richer ones, can coexist and share the same place.”

“Informal settlements can progress only as components of the city and that it is a mistake to consider slum upgrading outside of a general understanding of the city….informal settlements should be treated like the rest of the city….informal settlements can progress only if seen as opportunities for the city as a totality…as such, they are crucial places for the construction of the city and the for the construction of a collective memory that could be shared by all its inhabitants, without distinctions of income, race, or gender.”

“A project is about using imagination (to throw away; to focus; to extend; to prolong; to plan; to intend). It is to use intellect, reason, love, and desire; it is to create the new. Under the scope of city development, to project is to idealise a new setting, a new space; it is to throw an idea to the future and wait until time shows the rights and wrongs of the choices one made. A project starts from the existing, no matter if the existing is nothing, the blank sheet. ”

“From a broader picture, the positive predisposition of considering this possibility would be based on the importance that education has over the people’s lives, affecting key aspects of their well being and being a first order agent for integration and social inclusion, by creating opportunity and ways for people to enter the job market and have access to other cultural assets. Moreover, education also helps to develop human resources to leverage economic, technologic, and social development of a country.”

(CSP, 2012).
3.1.2. URBAN DESIGN AND HOUSING

Looking at Welbedagt from a place perspective, it represents a type of urbanism that is characterized by the occupation of instant spaces over a period of time. The occupation of the Welbedagt East area can be traced back to the year 2002. It is located at least 25 to 30 kilometres away from places of employment and opportunity. The concept of instant spaces is evident in the Welbedacht area whereby people are trying to negotiate the environment through, landscaping, creating more “site” by retaining banks, level change, house colours, roof pitches, house extensions, window sizes, house use, informal (backyard) development, the creation or social interaction spaces, and so on.

The existence of the Urbanist Movement is to make places for human settlement as opposed to allowing them to occupy instant spaces. Kevin Lynch’s legibility theory defines place in terms of paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks that characterize an area.

In making spaces, “siting” is important for positioning and urbanity, quality urban environment, optimized resources and threshold. Positioning and urbanity defines the use of space, privacy and security as well as expansion and addition. This applies to both “non street” and “street” related units. There are advantages of placing houses close to the street.

A set of guiding principles are proposed to enhance urban form and house design, and these are as follows:

- Legal compliance with building regulations
- Minimum house size (40m2)
- Narrow street frontage
- Positioning the house close to the street
- Short service runs from street to building
- Privately expandable incrementally
- Increased densities
- Room dimensions based on basic furniture layouts
- Clear thresholds between public and private space
- Variation of street facades
- Stand dimensions to allow for incremental subdivision
- Varying road widths.

From an urban design point of view, varying basic typologies are proposed and this depends on whether the slope is flat, gentle or moderate and this can perhaps determine whether the frontage will be narrow, medium or wide.

Quality urban environment are characterized by the quality of street space, spatial quality, pedestrian quality and vehicular impact.

Optimised resources relate to the cost of infrastructure, street lighting and the amount of space for gardens. Threshold can be defined in terms of community integration as a result of social interaction, resident control and defensibility. Threshold is reduced if the units are detached from the street or the units’ active edge is turned away from the street. If this occurs, services tend to cluster at site threshold.

The existing units are a “growing” pain to the beneficiaries. For example, for those who are extending their units, there are limitations to the roof given its current height. The units have minimum foundations and are not designed as load bearing walls to allow for double storey extensions. However, despite the characteristics of the housing units, people are using them to achieve their economic aspirations and this can be witnessed with the range of business activities in Welbedacht East.

The people of Welbedagt are negotiating places by:

- Concentrating economic activity at the north entrance to the area
- Delineating sites
- Increasing site platforms
- Formally and informally increasing unit sizes
- Reconfiguring unit components to suit habitation (i.e. doors, windows, etc)
- Use site materials – reuse and recycle materials.
3.2. THE CONTEXT OF THE CITY OF SAO PAULO

At the turn of the 21st century, Sao Paulo experienced a period of explosive population growth, which has made it into one of the largest cities in the world, a city of contrasts, where 30% of its citizens live in precarious circumstances, such as favelas and informal settlements (CSP, 2012). Since the 2000s, the Brazilian economic boom has favoured and boosted the growth of a new middle class, formed mostly by families living in informal settlement areas.

In some way, the transformation of Sao Paulo into a livable metropolis of the 21st century has a lot to do with how they “deal” with the favelas. There is a lot that we can learn from these neighborhoods. People living in these settlements use their own feet as their means of transportation, and have the street as the most natural and important public space, where these people engage in collective activities. There is developed micro-economy in these neighborhoods, as well as ability to work and creativity in people building and transforming their own properties and houses. However, these factors do not necessarily eliminate the existing risky conditions (CSP, 2012). Sao Paulo supports investment into service provision, public facilities, public realm, and programme development to access education, social services and the economy is favoured by government.

Urban plans that have been developed in Brazil have helped city leadership and management think strategically about where and how they need to replace the existing built fabric with new houses and improvements. In certain instances, it made sense to resettle families affected by natural conditions such as environmental areas such as flood lines and areas where bulks and public facilities are required or bigger infrastructure that has a neighborhood or city interest, people that are affected by such developments are relocated and rehoused. The upgrading process also looks at units that are regarded as unsafe to habitat and in such circumstances certain provisions to assist (with part payment) to relocate or enhance and make the structure safe.

The City of Sao Paulo has been responsible for cooperating with several foreign delegations interested about good practice for providing a better quality of life. The programmes that the Sao Paulo Municipal Housing Secretariat has developed – aimed at assisting families living in settlements or in poor housing conditions – have attracted the interest of practitioners in different parts of the world, and have provided fruitful exchange of technical knowledge.

3.2.1. CHALLENGES

In Sao Paulo, there are hundreds of “favelas” and an immense challenge to transform them in integrated neighborhoods into the entire city. Almost one third of a population of 20 million inhabitants is living in informal settlements. The inherent complexity of the “favela” upgrading is a tough challenge. For each community reached, new deadlocks arise, and a new range of solutions comes into place. Sociologists are called into question; Architects are called to answer questions that they are not necessarily posed in their everyday jobs. Organising the space from a green field is a lot easy, but it is very difficult to do the same in a fragile, and complex environment, and densely populated space like favelas. By proposing wide participation of the community’s population and not giving up on high quality Architectural projects as iconic for the areas in most need, giving back the city to all people including the best realm and facilities, Sao Paulo goes beyond upgrading. Truly speaking, they have constructed and reconstructed a new urban space.

There are many problems that have been brought by economic globalization, but there is a need to globalise solutions as well. The Sao Paulo Municipal Housing Secretariat has developed the biggest favela upgrading programme in Latin America. It has fostered innovative exchange of solutions in order to intervene in the city’s informal settlements.

An important lesson that eThekwini Municipality can learn from the City of Sao Paulo is that for any human settlement programme, there is a need to set priorities; prepare integrated programmes; optimize resources; manage the environment and public spaces; seek partnerships; empower social networks and prepare knowledgeable and committed technical teams.
The Welbedagt East project commenced implementation in 2002 as a combined greenfields and upgrade project. The project fell under the “Slums Clearance Programme” initiated by the province of KwaZulu Natal. The land was acquired by the municipality from private property owners and transferred to beneficiaries of the subsidized housing units on completion. To date, approximately 4450 units have been constructed. Almost 30 informal communities have been accommodated in this project. There is a balance of 150 units that have not been built, yet there are approximately 850 households currently living in shacks and transit facilities that need to be accommodated, in essence, if the final phases of the area is developed, it will accommodate only 150 families, leaving 700 families without homes, despite having lived in the area since 2002. One of the learning interventions between Sao Paulo and eThekwini is to look at the difficult terrain, change the housing typologies, to maximize on the land, the resources and the necessary thresholds to support the community of Welbedagt East.

The site is approximately 38.5km away from the Durban CBD. It is located on the southern most part of the central spatial planning region. The site abuts the existing area of Chatsworth on its northern and eastern boundary and is accessed off Higginson Highway. The site measures some 600 ha in extent.

The site is rugged with a steep drop in ground elevation occurring between Chatsworth in the north and the Umlazi River on the south and west. According to the geotechnical report, the area is constrained by a few unstable zones and generally steep topography.

A positive Record of Decision (ROD) after a successful completion of the environmental impact assessment was issued for the Framework Plan in 2002, with a condition that future developments would have to comply with the Framework Plan. The framework plan had to be amended as some deviations did occur, the most significant being the construction of houses on the cemetery site and the inclusion of a medium density housing cluster in the northern part of the site which is currently informally settled on. The amended Framework Plan was approved in 2012.
4.3. PLANNING CONCEPT

When the project was initially planned, the government housing policy dictated the form of housing to be single detached dwelling units with freehold title. In Welberdacht, approximately 5000 units were proposed with sites sizes ranging from 120 to 400 sqm.

The road hierarchy includes a 12m taxi route which is supported by 10.5m and 8m roads. There is one main access into the area that links various phases together. This taxi road has been planned as a local activity corridor supporting mixed use development in the form of home business, as such residential sites along this route have been allocated for residential development with the land use condition that home business can be allowed as a free entry on these sites. A commercial and industrial node/hive has been proposed toward the eastern edge along the taxi route. A further four local nodes are proposed supporting educational facilities and community facilities. In total three secondary schools and five primary schools have been proposed, some of which have temporary/interim shelter constructed on it.

The entire site is currently zoned SR650 in terms of the Inner West Town Planning Scheme. Given that the development is already constructed, the land use controls have to match what is on the ground. Some of the post construction challenges include: encroachments onto building lines; sewer/storm water servitudes and road reserves as well as buildings on top of sewer and storm water services. Except for the first sub phase of phase I, already mentioned, no other phases have planning approval to date.

4.4. PROPOSED LAND USE CONTROLS

4.5. PROJECT VISIONING

It is envisioned that the proposed outlook of the project must be characterized by the following:

- Increased densities (i.e. double storey houses) for R0.00 – R3500.00 earners on the interface site between the formal area of Chatsworth and Welberdacht. Further interventions must take place in areas 3A, 3B, 1A and 1C.
- The promotion of mixed interventions in opportunity areas.
- The encouragement of mixed housing typologies.
- The area around the school must be developed and opportunities for social intervention must be prioritised.
- All interventions must ensure social integration and must be linked and guidelines that can be translated to other proposed sites.

4.6. DENSIFICATION STRATEGY

A densification strategy can enhance place making and foster urban restructuring. In order to achieve increased densities in Welberdacht, there is a need to institute multiple responses, identify additional land which can be re-negotiated from the previous layout for the area, introduce varying typologies with narrow and medium frontage, double storey and semi detached units, simplex and duplex combinations, row housing, mixed use activities, increased pedestrianisation. The multiple responses can be presented in various forms, for instance:

- Identifying additional land within open space
- Rethinking space and function requirements of non-residential sites
- Introducing alternate housing typologies and co-ownership
- Arranging units around pedestrian paths and courtyards
- Subdividing existing sites to double housing yield
- Revising zoning conditions for existing sites
- Subsidizing retaining walls to reduce site sizes and improve utility.

Additional land can be identified by relooking at locations and areas of vacant public sites. Negotiations can commence with the already serviced land parcels within the POS which is non-essential to wetlands conservation. Retail and residential sites can be integrated alongside community facilities and clusters.

The introduction of alternate housing typologies will enable more units on available land. Frontages can be narrowed and double storey, row housing and semi detached units constructed. Adding a mixed use typology will further provide non-residential space and develop activity "centres" along busy routes. Existing large properties need to be incentivized by eThekwini Municipality to sub divide. Although Welbedagt is fairly steep, smaller sites will increase densities.
There is currently 8 hectares available in Phases 1A, 1B and 3B of Welberdacht. This means that given the funding constraints, densities of 65 dwelling units per hectare can be achieved on the slopes. The original plan consists of 520 units and an additional 370 units that is available, considerations need to be made to increase net densities from 21 du/ha to 24 du/ha. The location of higher densities should be where it makes “sense” such as plots adjacent to community facilities and potential Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) routes.

Taking a closer look at the proposed densification strategy, 100% of the units are detached single storey freehold houses on minimum 200 sqm. The average residential density in the municipal area is approximately 13 units per hectare whereas the gross residential density in Welbedagt is eight dwelling units per hectare (the net planned densities being 21 dwelling units per hectare). The challenge is Welbedagt East is to accommodate an additional 850 households on the 150 vacant sites within the existing town planning layout using available funding.

- A compacted neighbourhood, with thresholds and land investment in services and the public area can and should be supported.
- Improving the urban design with a social and environmental approach and mixed uses
- Reviewing and updating the urban legislation as often as possible to meet the social housing requirements and new standards
- Social rental replacing the temporary resettlement
- Monitoring the post implementation
- Maintaining the integration among departments and support structures to carry on the territory and citizenship transformation
- Looking for other technical and strategic

A detailed citizen building and social strategy will have to take into account environmental aspects, waste management, LED, social interventions, community facilities, public spaces, health, education, culture, maintenance and operations.

It is not known how much consultation is needed in order to capture the entire audience in the area. However, it was noted that there needs to be an interface with formal and organic representation by all stakeholders in the area including, but not limited to Councilors, FBOs, CBOs, NGOs, youth organizations, government departments and agencies, and so on. Funding resources and staffing arrangements are needed to ensure comprehensive participation processes. At least 3 to 4 qualified and dedicated full time social development workers need to be on the ground at all times.

Municipal departments need to align budgets, timeframes and work together on an integrated plan leading to better informed investments and delivery. An integrated plan will reduce competition for limited budget resources, particularly for public facilities between areas. In order to achieve this, information, a certain percentage of departmental or sector budgets need to be allocated for new human settlement areas, and a missing institutional gap the department to be delegated to drive the provision of social facilities and programmes within human settlement areas.

The current available social research data within the municipality is outdated and narrowly looked at. There is a need for more recent and new data trends that makes planning and development more socially responsive, that can be derived from a comprehensive social survey and focus groups for the participants for housing and planning areas are being created for. It will be good to know who is aged, what they do, the gender economic activity, home business and small businesses in the community, the school going children and the schools, plans for economic, social and educational facilities for the community that is going to live, work and play in the area and also be able to access wider opportunities from other neighborhoods and the wider city. Funding for research is critical and perhaps it would be pertinent to partner with local tertiary institutions and also convince the Council and the national and provincial government of human settlements to think and work through the challenge differently. Research techniques and the tools that are used have become more advanced as a result of technology. Technology can now be used for real time capturing as well as an innovative way of conveying information. The engagement with the participating community cannot be overstated, real engagement with the various interest that make up the community is important; the role of the NGOs and the university in this case UNISA with its social worker programme and its research programme can prove to be invaluable in planning and developing in a practical, needs based and real way.
In advancing social development in an area, it is important to create a sustainable local economy. Welbedagt East has a number of local economic development and job creation opportunities that were discovered. Engagements can be made with the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) - and “Zibambele” (a Zulu word loosely translated as ‘embrace’) Programme to employ, especially local women, youth and the disabled, to undertake minor road maintenance, alien plant clearing, stream cleaning etc. The power line servitude that runs through the area has created an opportunity for the establishment of community vegetable gardens and animal grazing. The productive and creative use of open spaces can be adopted from the City of Sao Paulo's “Linear Parks Concept.” This concept ensures that the linear parks link communities and in turn create ownership of open spaces. The involvement of communities ensures the long term sustainability and maintenance of open spaces.

As densities increase in the area, there will be enormous recycling opportunities that will emerge. Higher housing densities is required not only for recycling, but for public transport and more economic development opportunities. Although, social research survey will reveal existing business and the possible interventions, LED activities need to be concentrated along the major roads and intersections. The existing economic activities need to be enhanced and opportunities for commercial and light industries need to be created and developed.

Apartheid style planning ensured that racially segregated communities are not linked. In our bid to restructure and foster integrated human settlements and communities, there are opportunities to link Welberdacht, Chatsworth, Umlazi and eNgonyameni area. There are further opportunities to link parts of the greater Welbedagt area. Linking the different parts of the area cannot be limited to roads but through, for example, the use of communal community facilities such as parks, sports, halls and so on. Sports and culture development programmes in the area need to be upscaled.

Although the focus of this project is limited to Welbedagt East, there is an opportunity to do an assessment of need in older housing projects as well. For instances, the various municipal departments need to make commitments to provide facilities in older projects. Signed service level agreements between departments have ensured such commitments in the past. Reference can be made to the Area Based Management Programme that was co-funded by the European Union and the municipality in 2003. In addition, a plan with timeframes needs to be developed to deal with past projects. The municipality, in general, needs to create a balance and commit to lower income areas as they do to higher income areas.

A detailed urban form that includes public spaces and facilities will have to take into account planning; typologies and layout; services (roads and stormwater); transportation and parking; housing consolidation; planning approvals; zoning; land title allocations; interim tenure; and full tenure.

As an urban response to Welbedagt and urban strategy for this area needs to take into account existing paths, densify through infills, create mixed use nodes, and develop landmarks. The formation of linkages and linear parks features prominently in the proposed urban design of Welberdacht.

**URBAN FORM: PUBLIC SPACES AND FACILITIES:**

4.8.

**DETAILED PLANNING AND PROJECT PACKAGING**

- The social sector is missing and should be taking a lead in our human settlements. The importance of social surveys and participation before, during and after implementation is critical.
- Failure to protect the environment and children. We need an EGS model that is socially owned and protected and it must create a balance between environmental and social value. Currently, we have a process where the environment area is offset and this area has and takes on no social identity, in fact, it becomes a health and safety issue for the community, the social integration of the environment with communities is key for environmental and community protection. As an example, in Welbedagt, we have small children walking to and from school and to home based shops through the environmental open space, this raises issues for children
- Joint budgeting and implementation between eThekwini and provincial government.
- Where are the Architects and Urbanists in Housing delivery
- Intervene with incentives and innovation.
The power of reflections and lessons learned should be the highlight of this project. The benefits of reflection and that of sharing new perspectives are the highlights of the mentorship programme between the City of Sao Paulo and the eThekwini Municipality. These are elaborated below in respect of the Welbedagt East project selected as the vehicle for this programme and are some of the lessons that have been learnt so far in the project.

THE VALUE OF PRIMARY RESEARCH is critical to understand the real issues faced by end users of low income housing. Research processes yield appropriate municipal responses to develop a range of housing processes and choices for the poor. The use of technology in research is also important in order to offer “just in time” solutions.

LOW DENSITY HOUSING SOLUTIONS in suburban areas targeting the poor are not sustainable without its corresponding social and economic investment. Greater integration and commitment from key sectors must be placed before integrated human settlements can hope to be realized.

A MORE ROBUST AND WELL CAPACITATED SOCIAL SERVICE needs to be incorporated into all projects. Meaningful community engagement is essential for building mutual trust and confidence between the municipality and community.

NEW AND INNOVATIVE PLANNING RESPONSES to land use planning and management, housing policy and urban design, will meet the needs of the poor, especially with regards to inclusion and recognition of livelihood strategies and the role that these play in poor communities.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND APPROACH in the delivery of human settlements must maximize community participation at all levels of planning and implementation. What was learnt from City of Sao Paulo is that all departments of the municipality are required to be active role players to provide capacity, identify and deliver projects and resources in working for neighborhood developments for the poor; it is not peripheralised to one department as in the case of eThekwini Municipality. In addition, integration with other spheres of government and NGOs and CBOs are also actively engaged and committed to neighborhood areas for the poor.

RELAXATION OF LEGISLATION must be considered in order to improve service delivery and meet the demands of rapid urbanisation and lack of housing. A policy shift and relaxation of certain laws is needed to fast track delivery processes. Government needs to review its mandate and create new measurements and terms of reference for housing delivery. What was learnt in Sao Paulo was the focus on being practical and at the same time maintaining place of amenity and quality.

Unfortunately in the south African context, we have looked at relaxation legislation but to the extent that quality, amenity and practicality becomes compromised and even creating environments that are almost as bad, the environments that have not experienced any upgrading initiatives.

THE UPSCALING OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS and community participation needs to be enhanced in the delivery of housing. Furthermore, social development should be part of all aspects relating to design planning, architecture, housing, electricity, water, sanitation, roads and social amenities – and must have and comprehensive input.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION CAN BE USED TO MOBILIZE RESOURCES: The Sao Paulo model of community participation is based on a requirement the International Monetary Fund. In order to access funding from the IMF, eThekwini Municipality needs to adopt the model.

SKILLS AND RESOURCING: Municipalities must not rely so heavily on consultants and outsourcing. The management skills sit in the municipality. The current consultant approach used by the municipality is fragmented. Social facilitators should be more than just interpreters or messengers. The absence of social workers and social technicians, architects and urbanists in the delivery of housing should be revisited strongly.

PLANNING: All departments should sit together to plan regardless if it is short, medium or long term budgeting. In fact, all stakeholders must be included (i.e. education, health, etc.). Project sequencing, type and level of plans required and payments delay the planning and project close out. Budgets need to be allocated according to the plans and not the other way round. Planning models can also be reviewed. For instance, which aspect of delivery would be more effective; the provision of serviced land versus the provision of housing units.

INTRODUCE NEW HOUSING TYPOLOGIES by reviewing financial, cultural, and land legal arrangements. In introducing new housing typologies, architects and planners must be culturally sensitive and aim at educating communities with regards to new typologies, especially with regards to increased densities and the co ownership model.

PUBLIC SECTOR HOUSING SHOULD BE EMBRACED by all clusters, units and departments across the municipality. Service levels agreements must be put in place in order to stipulate clear roles and responsibilities as well as accountability and integration. Performance contracts can also be put in place and structured in such a way that it creates value. In Sao Paulo, it is a philosophical change that looks at interventions for the poor including housing as giving access to the city, re-correcting the past and exclusionist elitist development of the city.

THE INTEGRATION OF SOCIAL STRATEGIES and urban as well as infrastructure design creates opportunities for negotiating urban
restructuring, incorporating social places; increasing densities. At 55% of the Welbedagt site area is wetlands and valleys and hence there is a need to optimize the remaining 45%. Human needs must be integrated into environmental conservation.

A DENSIFICATION STRATEGY will address the topography response whereby 80% of the area is very steep. It must create opportunities for developing local economic opportunity, sustainable unit placement, design for unit adaptability, unpacking concepts of land, site and ownership, as well as facilitating identity and cohesion.

SWEAT EQUITY OR “PAYING IN KIND” ensures ownership, pride, instills responsibility, and improves service delivery, skills, and ultimately a tax base. Communities need to be educated that services are not entirely free. A mindset change amongst our communities is needed to ensure future sustainability of human settlements.

DOCUMENTATION AND DEVELOPING PUBLICATIONS – KNOWLEDGE management, talent management, and the retention of institutional memory needs to enhanced in order to avoid pitfalls in future projects.

**ZONING FOR PUBLIC SECTOR HOUSING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Zoning: Residential</th>
<th>Proposed Zoning: Public Housing Infill Zone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permits residential only</td>
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<td>Dwelling house primary residential FAR capped at 0.8</td>
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**THE DESIRED OUTCOME**

The expected outcomes of the initiative are such that eThekwini Municipality will be able to accelerate its informal settlement and upgrading programmes by adopting new and innovative, integrated, sustainable planning, design, participatory and financing approaches for informal settlements. The experiences will be shared with other cities. The Municipal Institute of Learning will disseminate the lessons learned and help improve the quality of human settlements internationally with a particular focus on southern African cities.

**05. THE FUTURE OF THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME**

As a result of the initial peer exchange sessions, the lessons learned will be piloted in Welbedagt East, an informal settlement that is earmarked from in situ upgrading. The detailed nature of the project, its scope and the target audience has been a key output of this process. Recommendations will be escalated to the department of Human Settlements at a national level. Ultimately, the focus of this initiative is to transform lessons learned and extend them to improve the quality of life of residents of informal settlements being serviced and upgraded so that they can be a learning example for informal settlement upgrades in southern Africa cities, institutions responsible for human settlements policy and practice as well as planning, housing and architectural services practitioners within the municipality.

**5.1. WAY FORWARD:**

- **Dialogue and debate** within the organizations political leadership and administration to learn from this initiative.
- **Several by laterals with key units**, managers, deputies and heads
- **Policy discussions with province** – sequencing, levels of planning required, funding options
- **Planning assessments** on where projects are and unpacking and resolving delays – policy decisions
- **Development** of an eThekwini public sector housing code
- **Design workshop** – better control and information for site implementation, roles and responsibilities, including the management of the contractor
- **Social surveys and participation**, participation to test the concepts further
- **Funding assembly**
- **Project management** and planning and implementation for both social and urban development

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**4.11. THE DESIRED OUTCOME**

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IN CONCLUSION

Our relationship with the City of Sao Paulo will generate opportunities for meaningful change. For eThekwini Municipality to survive and thrive in the future, the impetus for smart change must come from a diverse array of sources. Significant changes in the social and dynamics of certain areas may be promoted by interventions, more specifically in urbanization projects aimed at connecting the informal settlement to the city. In this sense, the production of social interaction spaces is an important requisite in urbanization projects. Community centres, daycare centres, schools and basic health centres, along with squares and leisure spaces, are indispensable features to build and develop social relationships. Good streets and natural pedestrian pathways are important in public space. Active streets contribute to a lively and secure neighborhood. However, the street alone will not bring the necessary transformation. The buildings that form this streetscape are to be considered as well together with the better use of the ground floors along those streets.

It is important to begin thinking about the potential of integration — economic, social, political, morphological, etc. — that combat the destructive apartheid acts of separation. As the saying goes, “it’s never too late to learn.” There is a lot that can be learned from the City of Sao Paulo’s experience and in fact from the rest of Brazilian cities. Some of the things that immediately come to mind is the level of interaction between social activities and the environment; community ownership; post construction management; recycling; economic transfer stations; and the management of public spaces. The partnership between the two cities is remarkable to say the least. It will go a long way benefiting other cities in the rest of South Africa.

However, there was one question that was not sufficiently answered: who must be the driver of human settlements... should it be one integrated unit or line departments must have dedicated public sector housing units. For example, should development engineers, public sector housing and planning take the lead... and social and urbanists fill the gaps. This idea was flagged and will be outlined in future publications.

PEOPLE DO NOT LIVE IN HOUSES, BUT IN NEIGHBORHOODS...

The great American urbanist Jane Jacobs defined the urban scale in three stages: first, the street and its surroundings; second, the neighborhood; and third, the entire city. Successful neighborhoods are those that offer several functions, an innovative atmosphere, and a small grain street network that connects the larger public infrastructure network to the rest of the city. An urban plan should, therefore, address the metropolitan scale and its integration with the neighborhood, especially in terms of public transport and mobility, but also to meet the daily needs of its residents, including access to job opportunities, schools, commercial and institutional programmes, and green and recreation areas. This has a lot to do with the neighborhood identity, reinforcing and completing the dwellers’ identity to the place, and evidencing future opportunities and risks. A strong identity guarantees that residents engage and take care of their neighborhood.

Furthermore, the planning defines zones of different sizes, intensity, and character. This enables the creation of dense and urban typologies in some areas, but also the maintenance of the low density character and of typology of row of house with gardens in other parts. This could, for instance, result in building rules that allow for an extension of the houses in certain areas, which could be done by the residents themselves, as they are used to doing, but under the monitoring of the municipality and an architect. Therefore, an urban plan’s main objective is to point out the future development and transformation potential of a neighborhood or district. An instrument with which architects and planners can define their projects could become, considering its context, potential, and limitations, and that formulates flexible development scenarios to reach that vision over a long period of time, considering the future economic potential and limitations. Such vision should reflect the wishes and needs of the local population, but also of the entire city.
This vision usually contains programmatic and spatial elements, as well as long term, large scale transformations, but also specific interventions. Traditionally, the physical form of a city has been put on the same level as its successful development and urban plan. But so-called “soft factors”, such as citizenship and social networks, are just as important. It is not enough to implement a nice square or design a beautiful riverfront. Citizens need to be engaged, in order to later on take care of the place and defend it against disregard and invasion through irregular occupation.

An often heard argument is the one that open spaces need to be occupied with buildings or to be fenced in, in order to hinder new occupation, be it spontaneous or organized. This mindset is worth reconsidering. It might be the lack of spatial and programmatic qualities of a neighborhood or of green and open spaces that make people occupy empty land nearby or within an urbanized area. The “cultivation” of a public culture in favelas is therefore not only a spatial issue, but also a programmatic one. The value of open riverfronts or untouched natural areas need to be part of the identity of a neighborhood, so that citizens defend and nurture them. The implementation of green spaces should therefore be supplemented with environmental education or additional programmes such as community gardening, especially because such activities are often an explicit wish of the community itself. Only if all those involved understand the importance of an issue, for instance, accessible and enjoyable riverfronts, can the problem be resolved.

In a way planning within and for favelas and irregular settlements means dealing with the edges and borders of the city. It means thinking about the relationship of the rich and prestigious city centre and its poorer and very poor outskirts. Green and protected areas are in great danger and need to be protected, in the interest of the entire city. Cities need to compete globally with other large cities and be able to attract international companies and investments. The quality of life is a crucial factor for people that want to come to cities and work for a while.

Source: City of Sao Paulo (2012) Urbanism within Pre-existent Territories and the Sharing of Ideas, Sehab and ETH Zurich, UCLA, Berlage Institute
## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRAMME FOR THE ETHEKWINI – SAO PAULO MENTORSHIP EXCHANGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY DATES</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JUNE 2011</td>
<td>Project initiation and commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST TO SEPTEMBER 2011</td>
<td>Four day visit to Durban, Initial Project Scope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visits and workshops, Durban to Sao Paulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER TO DECEMBER 2011</td>
<td>Submission and approval of Metropolis application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JANUARY TO FEBRUARY 2012</td>
<td>Pilot site assessments, data gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCH TO JUNE 2012</td>
<td>10 day visit Sao Paulo to Durban detail project design and site assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JULY TO DECEMBER 2012</td>
<td>Community consultations, redesigns, approvals, Planning, environment, funding approvals, implementing units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JANUARY 2013 TO JUNE 2014</td>
<td>Tender documents and preparation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SCM and project implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2014</td>
<td>Peer reviews (Sao Paulo to Durban) and preparation for international learning exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER TO DECEMBER 2014</td>
<td>International learning exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JANUARY TO MARCH 2015</td>
<td>Policy recommendations report and design manual and close out report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### USEFUL RESOURCES

City of Sao Paulo (2012) Urbanism within Pre-existent Territories and the Sharing of Ideas, Sehab and ETH Zurich, UCLA, Berlage Institute