

Organising slums

There is a profound statement in the Slum Dwellers International (SDI) Annual Report for 2016. Made by Sheela Patel, Chairperson of the SDI Board of Directors, it surely encapsulates just how valuable are partnerships in upliftment programmes: “There are 101 impediments to having meaningful partnerships in which each party is considered an equal. You can’t have growth and scale without those partnerships. For those to be meaningful, the community must be organised.”

Organised is the key word. For SDI, this means structuring urban poor slum settlements into organised communities using tools and strategies that encourage savings and peer-to-peer exchanges as well as carrying out settlement profiles, enumeration and mapping of these environments.

The role of women is emphasised in this process, with SDI having determined that it is women that are ‘key drivers of change’, thus ‘the savings collectives that form the building blocks of the SDI network provide supportive spaces for women to become active local organisers and later drivers of city transformation that is rooted in gendered, local and community priorities.’

Slum Dwellers International (SDI) recently released its 20th Anniversary Edition Annual Report. This special issue documents SDI’s history, including its presence in Africa from 1991; a journey of extraordinary upliftment for poor slum communities that have, and continue to, struggle against circumstances that leave many of them in destitute circumstances.

BY KERRY DIMMER

One of SDI’s most notable campaigns is Know Your City. In association with UCLG-A and Cities Alliance, SDI motivates for slum dwellers to collect citywide data and information on informal settlements. This work creates alternative

systems of knowledge that are owned by the communities and have become the basis of a unique social and political argument that supports an informed and united voice of the urban poor.

SDI’s databases are becoming the largest repositories of informal settlement data in the world and the first port of call for researchers, policy makers, local governments and national governments. To date, SDI communities have profiled over 7,000 slums across the global south and conducted citywide profiles - meaning that 80 percent of all identified slums in the city have been profiled - in over 200 cities.”

What SDI has determined from such data is that African slums are no different from those in Asia or Latin America. “In essence, the conditions in these slums are very similar from one continent to the next,” says Ariana MacPherson, Advocacy & Communications Officer at the SDI Secretariat in Cape Town, South Africa.

“They are all characterised by insecure tenure, unsafe and inadequate housing, and a lack of access to safe, hygienic basic services like water, sanitation, energy, etc.



Ugandan slum



Malawian women motivating for SDI’s Know Your City

In Africa, SDI's presence spans the southern region with seven active arms, which it calls Federations – Federation defined as a branch that has achieved national or citywide scale and has worked with governments to secure and develop land for the urban poor. Within the southern region there are a total of 4 648 slum settlements, with 33 that have been profiled. The eastern zone has three federations and 730 settlements, of which 31 have been profiled; while the western area, with seven federations has profiled 21 of the 398 slums.

As mentioned previously there are no real differentiators within African cities to those anywhere else in the world except that regionally there may be extenuating circumstances, be those political, social, or other circumstantial effects. In the case of Zambia and Zimbabwe for example, a sharing of similar economic and social environments has brought the SDI's two Federations in those nations together, with a focus to promote the sustainability of their respective Urban Poor Funds (UPF), through a Zambezi Charter.

The two UPF's are largely unsupported by local government and so it has become necessary for the local poor communities to organise their own savings for their daily needs as well as enabling contributions to settlement upgrades. It is somewhat different in Lusaka, where the City Council has contributed land to SDI to ensure upgrading in partnership with slum dwellers. This is the type of outcome that SDI motivates, and has clearly impacted on Zambian Federation leader, Joyce Lungu, who says: "When I joined the Federation in 2001 I was sleeping in a mud house. I managed to save and through the UPF I have changed my life. I now live in a proper house with electricity. I am independent!"

In yet another example, a partnership between the Kenyan and Ugandan slum dwellers have undertaken a biometric enumeration of informal venders, the purpose of which is to ultimately create more productive and safer workspaces for these traders. The residents and traders in the slums of Kasubi in Kampala, and Kianduttu in Thika Town Kenya have been fingerprinted, their tenure and employment status noted, educational details taken, all in an effort to understand what it takes to combat poverty and high unemployment.

In approaching city governments for support, such data is invaluable. By working together with organised urban poor communities on slum upgrading, local governments are able to provide solutions that speak directly to communities needs and are inclusive and sustainable. "Through the involvement of the community in the design and implementation of solutions, there is a much greater chance that they will be taken up by the community and really expanded to make a difference at scale.

"Slum upgrading is necessary in order to create the "inclusive" cities that member states have committed to work towards in the recently adopted New Urban Agenda," MacPherson stresses, "and work with grassroots communities is, in our experience, an essential ingredient to achieve this end. We have many examples of African local governments that have seen major improvements in their slum upgrading work thanks to partnerships with urban poor federations."

What this means for African slum communities is the transformation of slums into resilient neighbourhoods and inclusive cities. In the words of Ghana Federation member Janet Adu, life-changing programmes like SDI mean a future for her children. "I did not get grade 12," she says. "I don't want my daughter or my son to remain where I remain. Without this federation I can't do this. Most of women through this also, have undertaken these small small loans and they have built their own houses and are saying ... 'we are changing our lives'. •



Sierre Leone Slum rules



Ugandan slum meeting



Namibian Slum women

Sleeping giants

It has become increasingly obvious that secondary cities are no longer absolutely defined by the size of their population. Rather it is their interconnectedness to networks of trade, be that global, regional or national; and the answers to questions about their functionality, their urban systems, and developing economy.

By Kerry Dimmer

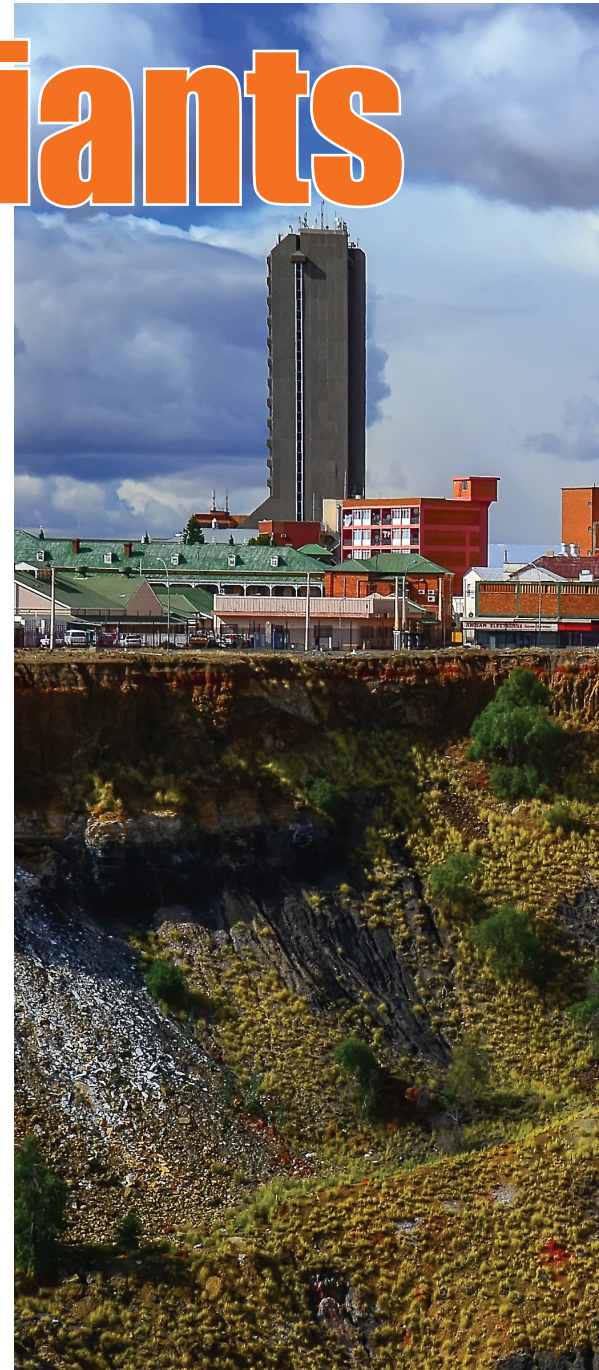
Defining a secondary city is not as easy as using its size, population or economic activity. It all depends on context. Many definitions have been presented over a number of decades and while academics might not exactly agree on a definitive, there is concurrence that economically, secondary cities are game-changers.

For Professor Brian H Roberts, author of the book 'Managing systems of Secondary Cities' published by the Cities Alliance two years ago, the factors that are pertinent in not only defining a secondary city but also in elevating their significance and progression are:

- Population size remains a determining factor in the definition of a secondary city, but in an age of growing competition, trade and exchanges between cities globally the meaning of the term has changed. A secondary city will likely have a population or economy ranging in size between 10 and 50 percent of a nation's largest city. Today, however, it is the function and the role that are increasingly defining a secondary city's status within the global system of cities.
- 75 percent of the world's population lives in rural areas or urban settlements of less than 500 000 people.
- There are more than 4 000 cities in the world with populations exceeding 100,000 people. Some 2 400 of

those have populations of less than 750 000 people. More than 60 percent are located in developing regions and countries. Many of these cities are struggling with the problems of rapid urbanisation, poverty and job creation.

- Globally, there is a growing gap in levels of socioeconomic development disparities occurring between secondary and primary cities that has a significant consequence on their capacity to develop and compete for trade and investment.
- There is very poor data and information available on the economy, land, finance, infrastructure and governance of secondary cities. This situation is severely affecting their capacity to plan and manage urban development and promote employment and economic growth. There is an urgent need to support national and regional research centres.
- Most secondary cities are subnational capital cities responsible for secondary level of government; a key manufacturing, primary or resource-industry centre or a global centre of cultural, natural or advanced-industry significance. They can also be major satellite cities forming a cluster of cities in a metro-region city.
- The development of inland secondary cities in developing regions lags well behind those located on coastlines or major river systems.



There are three broad types of secondary cities economies emerging globally: "lead", "lagging" and "laggards." Most fall into the latter category and are located in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. These cities are largely driven by population growth and consumption. Most are poorly managed, have weak infrastructure, poor communication systems within and between cities, and are not very competitive.



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A secondary city's performance, in terms of the above categories, is largely shaped by the level, quality and global orientation of the connectivity of its supply chains and logistics systems that support the development of the local regional economy and trade and services it provides to cities nationally and internationally.

There must be a greater focus on

supporting endogenous growth in secondary cities, since many do not have the capacity or advantages to engage in exogenous, export-orientated growth. New combinations of exogenous and endogenous growth strategies are necessary to develop secondary cities in poor regions.

International development agencies are showing interest in supporting

Kimberley, South Africa

the development of secondary cities because of their importance as hubs and catalysts in unlocking the development potential of subnational regions.

International development partners could play a key role in unlocking the development potential of secondary cities by providing assistance through a Development initiative for Secondary Cities (DiSC). The focus of such an

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Kano, Nigeria

initiative must be on improving linkages and connectivity in urban systems management that will result in improved urban governance, building economic development capacity and investment in key strategic infrastructure to spark investment in local economies.

Roberts has revealed that research for his book, along with another study co-authored with G. Anyumba, undertaken for the Cities Alliance in 2013 which remains unpublished, 'Background Study in Secondary Systems of Cities in sub-Saharan Africa, brought to light some distinctive African trends in the region. Preferring not to be quoted from this research but from his own knowledge base, Roberts explains that in comparison to metropolitan regions in Asia and Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) secondary cities are expected to grow faster and that it is: "push rather than pull factors that drive development."

"African economies are not driven by industrialisation, or indeed by value when adding in the agricultural and mineral processing sectors, but rather by migration and consumption," says Roberts. "Consequently there is a very high level of information sector employment. Further inter-city communications, especially road and internet, in SSA are poor. Transport costs and skills migration are high and access to micro credit and international markets is also weak."

Becoming bogged down with any number of solutions or trying to meet a

huge percentage of challenges may not quite be the answer for a secondary city. Instead he believes that three crucial components can change the landscape and the first is to provide better and cheaper internet and ITC services.

"Rwanda is rolling out broadband and expanding local areas' telecommunication services because it recognises it will never be, for example, a major manufacturing base, given its land-locked status. The focus of the country's economic development is instead to develop a modern service economy and be the Manila 'offshore back office business processing call centre' in Africa, one that provides English and French language business services. These ITC services will facilitate more online banking, as has been the case in India.

"Africa's second priority for secondary cities is to ensure improvement in logistics infrastructure, especially freight and passenger transfers," Roberts expands. "The third is that African city governance and revenue collection must improve drastically, along with

decentralization of administration and finance, which through more equitable revenue sharing arrangements on fiscal transfers, is critical."

The enablers Roberts outlines do however enhance one very pertinent fact about SSA secondary cities, that they are a vital link in the 'system of cities', as is proven in the table below that shows population (per million) and percentage of population by settlement areas in SSA.

By adding together the percentages for small and rural cities (74.2 percent), the leap from metro's at 12.6 percent means that without a secondary city role, 74 percent of the country becomes disadvantaged. 'This compares with about 58 percent globally,' says Roberts. "It is hard to foster rural development but as secondary cities grow and develop services that support rural urban supply chains, trade is fostered."

But there is a problem, trade alone is not enough. SSA secondary cities,

Secondary Cities: Vital Link in 'system of cities'

	Metro	Secondary	Small	Rural	Total
Population Million	112.01	116.70	94.15	564.97	887.83
Percentage of Population	12.6%	13.1%	10.6%	63.6%	100.0%

according to Roberts will struggle because there is not enough value in the rural trade conditions. "Add to this the labour capital ratio, with input falling globally in the manufacturing sector, the prospects for SSA countries to develop competitive industries based on competitive low labour costs is poor. Throw into this the rising prices of urban land, the competitiveness of African cities as a whole is undermined."

There is a further rather serious challenge in SSA; the diaspora fiscal and social capital used for secondary city development, worth tens of billions, is more often than not invested in either

real estate or consumption. "Very little goes into small business development," says Roberts. "Finding ways to tap into the fiscal and social diaspora need to be found to advance the development of secondary and intermediary cities."

So many African secondary cities sit on the periphery of something great that economically it makes sense to awaken these sleeping giants. Among the myriad of reasons for an acute focus is that they don't have the burdens of a primary city, have more available land, and can manifest planned and structured neighbourhoods. What will help them to develop requires determining what

the key drivers to their growth are, and if nurtured with good governance and an enabling competitive platform there is no reason that they won't become the megacities of the future. •

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Case study: Jinja, Uganda

As the third-largest economy in East African Community, Uganda's second largest town, Jinja, sited on the shores of Lake Victoria, is somewhat of a revival city. In its heyday, up to the 1980s following the opening of the Owen Falls Dam in 1954, it was the industrial capital of the nation. When Asian entrepreneurs were expelled by then ruler Idi Amin in 1972, Jinja went into decline. With the collapse of successful factories, many of which had been under Asian management, job losses saw thousands of people migrate to other cities, or back to their rural roots.

Today, with a population of 90 000 people, Jinja is growing, and relatively fast. It has some significant infrastructure developments; two hydro powerplants; two international hospitals, four steel companies, an international school and further projects on the table that include East Africa's first shipyard, a car assembly plant and a potential road project that will half the driving time to the nation's capital Kampala, currently a two-hour journey by car.

But there is a problem. Like many secondary cities, Jinja sources its funds from the central government, and there isn't quite enough to cater for the supply of services, particularly to the 20 000 people living in pop-up informal settlements. Constrained too by the budget is that the municipality is struggling to prevent the sprawls from spreading as more people flock to the city in anticipation of gaining work.

This is where Future Cities Africa is going to make a difference. Its efforts in Jinja, one of 14 small cities that it has identified for assistance, is focused on helping them to

develop long-term strategic plans to grow in a more 'inclusive and resilient' manner. Part of the aid is helping Jinja to better manage finances and find streams of revenue independent of central government funding.

Under the circumstances, and with a limited municipal team, Jinja has actually performed rather well, having qualified for government funding over the past three years. The government has acknowledged this by promising to elevate Jinja's status from municipality to city, which not just justifies its qualification for an increase in funding but will send signals that Jinja is a place to invest.

In turn that will herald in a new decade of growth and there will be no reason not to assume that Jinja has the potential to become a megacity of the future.

