Building cities: neighborhood upgrading and urban quality of life

Eduardo Rojas, editor
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"…..In an effort to improve the quality of life for inhabitants of informal settlements and their surrounding neighbourhoods, governments and international development aid agencies have expressed a growing interest in settlement upgrading programmes. The Millennium Development Goal to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020 offers an added incentive to take action. As investment levels have increased, so too have the number and diversity of programmes targeting the problems confronted by the populations living in informal settlements.

The persistence of some of the problems and the emergence of new challenges—the result of the deepening of recent trends and new social and economic situations—have led designers and implementers to create a wide range of innovative programmes. The analysis and exchange of information on the principles, design methodologies, and implementation and evaluation methods for new interventions assist in this process.

Lessons drawn from past experiences can serve as a trustworthy guide to confronting emerging problems. Among these new challenges are the persistent difficulties encountered by the inhabitants of informal settlements to join in the formal economy of the cities, the increase in violence and other antisocial behaviours in the informal settlements, and the physical decay and social deterioration occurring in neighbourhoods where there is a concentration of government-built housing—the result of the physical, economic, and social marginalisation of their inhabitants…..

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