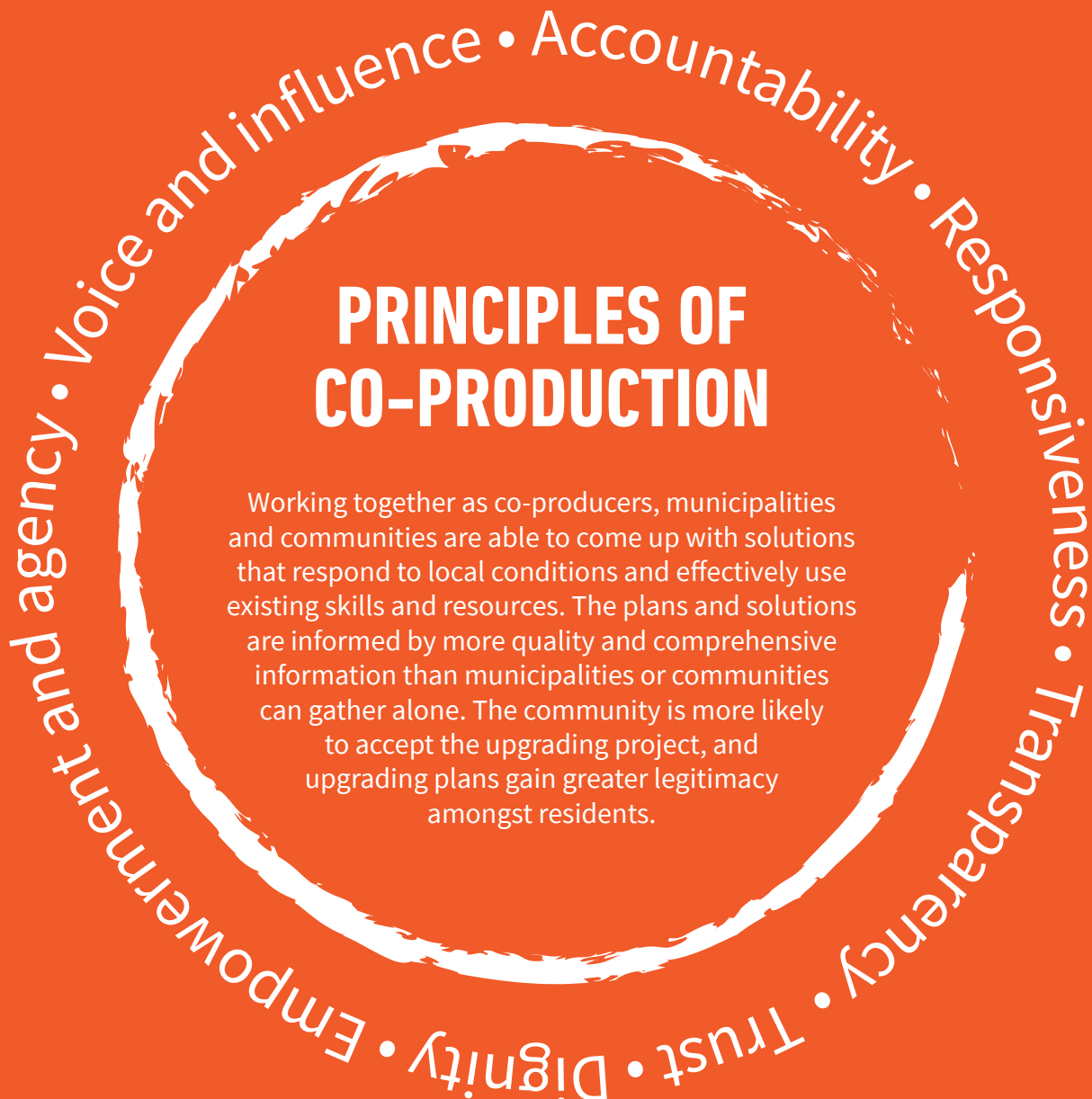


BUILDING BETTER NEIGHBOURHOODS THROUGH CO-PRODUCTION

Informal settlements provide people with a foothold in cities and access to economic opportunities. They are places of resourcefulness, ingenuity and agency, as well as unsafe and undignified living conditions. And, like other communities, residents of informal settlements want to be involved in improving their living conditions and in demanding accountability from government.

Government's policy is to upgrade informal settlements, but progress is slow. This can change if municipalities recognise informal settlement residents as co-producers of development, rather than passive recipients, and if they equip municipal officers with the skills to work with communities. Effective upgrading requires trust between communities and municipalities, and an understanding that meaningful community participation is demanding and resource intensive. Investing in communications and relationships between the municipality and community is crucial for enabling co-production.



WHY CO-PRODUCTION?

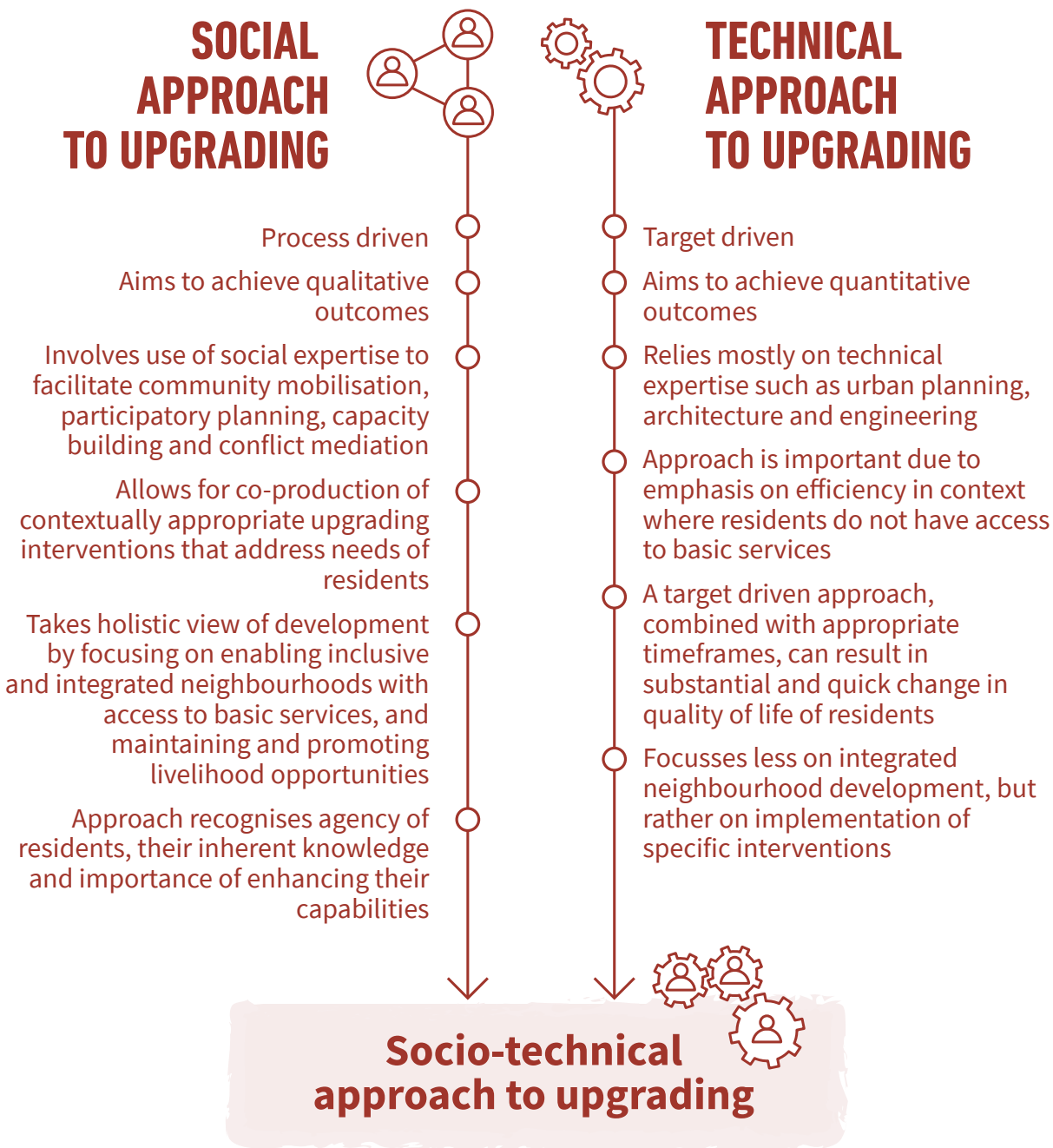
South African law and policy compels municipalities to provide platforms and processes for meaningful public participation. What we often see is that municipalities allow for public engagement at particular moments, like when the draft Integrated Development Plan is discussed or before passing the annual budget. But very few of these moments actually enable *meaningful* engagement between the municipality and its residents.

Meaningful community participation requires transparency and accountability, which builds trust between the residents and the municipality. This in turn provides opportunities for further engagement between communities and authorities. Working together to address the living conditions in informal settlements is key to bringing about sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods.

CO-PRODUCTION IS ABOUT COMMUNITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES WORKING TOGETHER TO PLAN, IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR UPGRADING OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS TOWARDS LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS.

COMBINING COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE FOR BETTER RESULTS

A combination of social aspects and technical components is needed to develop well-established, integrated and sustainable neighbourhoods. This is referred to as a socio-technical approach. The social aspects alone will not address the living conditions in informal settlements, and the technical components alone will not meet residents needs and aspirations. In combining the two approaches, upgrading produces better, more locally appropriate, results at community level.



A socio-technical approach is about the interaction between people, the space in which they live, work and play, and the technical tools, instruments and expertise used to improve those living and working spaces.

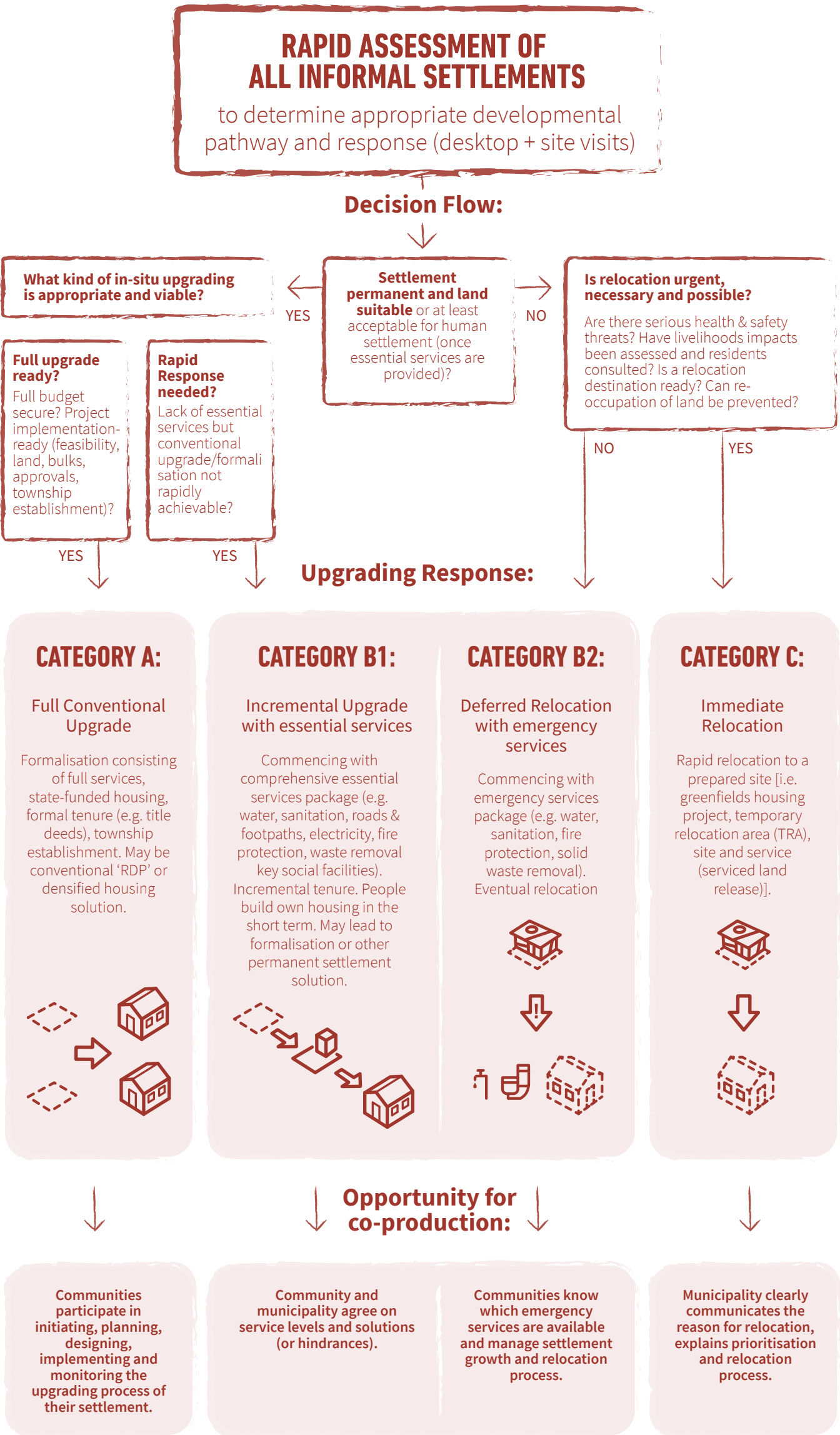
Examples of a socio-technical approach in action:

- A community identifies the need for a safe pathway across a central area of the settlement, and this need is incorporated by the municipal practitioner in the layout design of the settlement.
- A municipal planner identifies geotechnical conditions (soil types, slopes and water bodies) during a site visit led by a community member who knows areas of the settlement.

UNDERSTANDING INFORMAL SETTLEMENT CATEGORIES

There are different categories that municipalities use to determine the feasibility of upgrading and to identify the types of possible/required interventions. Municipalities have to determine whether a settlement is suitable for formalisation or less formal permanent settlement. Factors like environmental conditions, proximity to employment and educational and health facilities, and whether the municipality can acquire the land on which the settlement is located, are all important considerations that influence this decision. If you know your settlement's category, you can find out from the municipality what to expect and how you can get involved. It is important for you to be organised, because community readiness is one of the factors that municipalities use to prioritise the upgrading of a settlement.

According to national policy, relocation should be used as a last resort, when a site is not suitable for development or when there are serious health and safety threats that cannot be alleviated through the provision of essential services.



MANAGING EXPECTATIONS AND CONFLICT

Co-production is not easy to achieve. It requires active citizenry, transparent partnerships and a shared vision. What helps is for the community and the municipality to share a longer-term vision of what the informal settlement could look like in future, and to agree on the necessary infrastructure, facilities and spatial layout. Both parties have their role to play: the community must appreciate that the upgrading process takes time, as the municipality needs to follow certain processes in order to unlock land and funds; the municipality must treat the community as a partner, and be held to account for the visions and plans developed and for the promises made.

Within the community, people will have different views and expectations of the upgrading process: some may see opportunities to advance their own interests, while others may feel threatened by a possible loss of power or control over resources. Conflict may arise because of the need for people to relocate or the influx of people hoping to benefit from the public investment in upgrading. It is important to manage potential conflict and expectations, some of which may be unrealistic. To diffuse or resolve tensions, it may be necessary to call on the expertise of an external social facilitator or mediator.

The foundation for managing expectations and conflict is a partnership of trust between the municipality and the community, characterised by transparency and clear, open communications. All parties need to understand their roles and responsibilities, as well as the constraints that will affect the timeline for upgrading the settlement. Informal settlement upgrading is complex and challenging, but successful outcomes can be achieved through co-production, which seeks to build consensus and reach a common agreement over the necessary trade-offs.



Municipality
drive, plan, develop, manage, facilitate, monitor

Community
mobilise, organise, engage, participate, take ownership

NGO
and other support organisations
support, facilitate, partner, assist

WHAT CO-PRODUCTION IN UPGRADING COULD LOOK LIKE

Co-production is about community-centred development, which is very different from the traditional target-driven approach. Here are some ideas of techniques and structures that can be used to promote co-production.

- Regular planning forums** bring together informal settlement communities and municipal officials. The forums demonstrate that the municipality recognises the value of community contribution, and that communities are organised and informed. Forums can be established at three levels: neighbourhood level, area-based/ward level and city/municipal level.
- A community action plan (CAP)** captures the vision and development trajectory of the settlement, and guides the upgrading process. Key stakeholders and role-players come together to harness the local knowledge of informal settlement communities, to negotiate and broker solutions, and to strengthen settlement-level planning. Components include the following:
 - Community mobilisation and participation
 - Gathering of accurate household-level data
 - Settlement profiling and mapping
 - Asset identification
 - Visioning and planning
 - Monitoring and evaluation
- A rapid participatory appraisal** is used to assess community needs and to highlight how the community uses and manages its resources. The aim is to learn and understand behaviours, opinions and attitudes before planning and implementation take place. Some of the tools that are used to do the appraisal include:
 - Checklists – direct observation
 - Diagrams
 - Maps and photographs
 - Ranking of needs and preferences
- Community management and maintenance groups** look after the service infrastructure, such as roads or footpaths or stormwater drains, in an informal settlement. In this way, the community becomes part of the solution, with the municipality being responsible overall. By participating in these groups, community members are empowered and have the opportunity to generate income, and to receive training and upskilling.
- Regular communication** between municipality and communities. Clearly and transparently communicating the plans and processes helps build trust, which is the foundation of co-production. Communities must be informed about not only policy and strategies, but also the upgrading processes and timeframes, as well as the housing allocation policies. When municipalities share the settlement-specific information early on in the process, communities are able to understand the choices and trade-offs available to them.
- Agreements on service levels** Co-production recognises that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot apply to the provision of essential services. The municipality together with the community should determine the appropriate service levels for a settlement and align essential service provision with municipal targets. The community should agree on stand sizes, densities, service levels and project phasing.



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Isandla Institute works towards the realisation and enactment of urban citizenship, for current and future generations. We seek to promote and contribute to systems and practices of urban governance that are democratic, inclusive, equitable, accountable and sustainable. Since 2014, we have facilitated a community of practice on informal settlement upgrading in Cape Town and developed numerous knowledge products and submissions. The project has been supported by Comic Relief.

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CO-PRODUCTION IN THE UPGRADING PROCESS

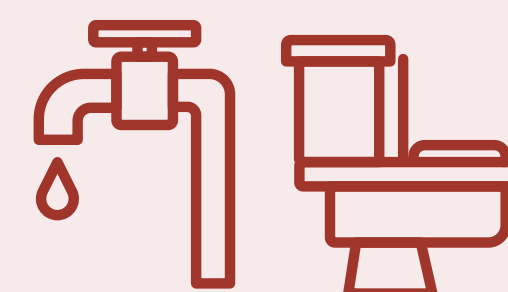
The upgrading of informal settlements is not a linear process. An upgrading process involves planning, essential services, land and tenure decisions, settlement design and spatial layout, and incremental housing consolidation. Depending on the settlement category, it can take years, even decades, to complete an upgrading process because of the various processes and regulations involved. Therefore, municipalities need to manage expectations, while communities need to demand accountability and transparency from municipalities.

The provision of essential services addresses people's basic constitutional needs, promotes human dignity and is an important step towards the development of a sustainable neighbourhood. **Co-production in essential services means that services are prioritised based on community needs.** When technical experts work alongside the community, what emerges are innovative ways of design and delivering services that are best suited to the needs of the community. Involving the community in maintaining the services provides an opportunity for up-skilling and income generation.

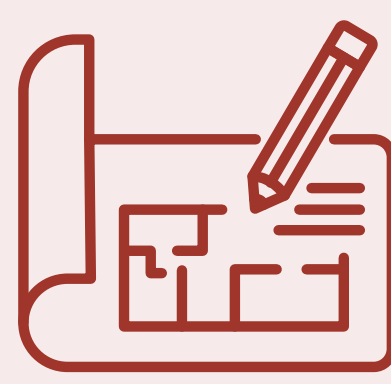
Planning directly impacts the social, spatial and economic landscape of municipal spaces. **Co-production in planning focuses on engaging communities in the visioning and planning process from the start.** Municipalities need to bring planning closer to the ground because communities have local knowledge and insight. Communities know what they want their settlement to look like, and their involvement results in a stronger and more relevant plan. In sharing a longer-term vision of the settlement, the municipality and the community create the basis for agreeing on the upgrading process and outcomes.

Tenure security protects people from eviction and supports the dignity of residents. It makes it easier for residents to access basic services and finance, and encourages them to invest in their homes and neighbourhood. A range of tenure options – from basic functional tenure to full ownership – is important, as each type of settlement may have different tenure needs. **Co-production in tenure and land means that municipalities and communities engage ongoingly on available tenure options, which include alternatives to individual ownership and full formal tenure.** It also produces empowered communities who are committed to the upgrading process.

Incremental housing consolidation refers to households improving their living conditions over time, through building top structures on their allocated site or gradually expanding their structure. **Co-production is sensitive to the community cultures and preferences and allows residents to invest directly in their homes.** Government can support self-build efforts by households through housing subsidies, providing a database of registered small-scale contractors, or other technical support, such as setting minimum standards. The housing consolidation process creates a sense of belonging, enhances social cohesion, creates opportunities for partnerships, and builds assets.



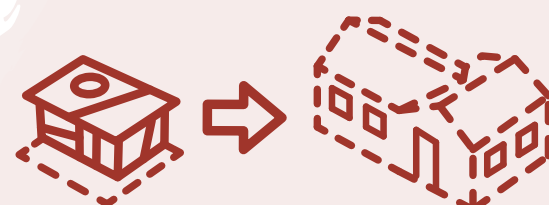
ESSENTIAL SERVICES



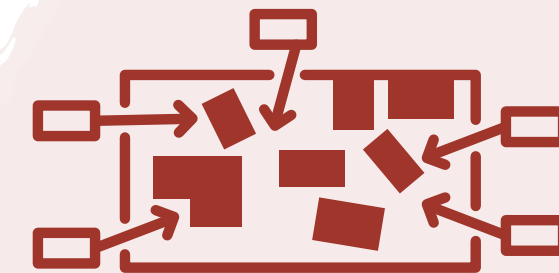
PLANNING



TENURE AND LAND



INCREMENTAL HOUSING CONSOLIDATION



SETTLEMENT DESIGN & SPATIAL LAYOUT

Settlement design and spatial planning is about making the best use of space in a settlement, creating spaces between existing top structures, to allow for access and the installation of infrastructure services. The spatial layout of a settlement should accommodate public/community facilities and public space within a settlement, which should be discussed as part of the visioning and planning process. **Co-production enables residents to be fully involved in the highly sensitive process of negotiating an agreement on the layout and infrastructure design,** which will require trade-offs. The resulting spaces respond better to the needs of the residents and can evolve over time to meet changing needs, and the community takes ownership of the facilities.



Isandla Institute is a key role player in the local governance sector, an important analytical voice on urban development issues, a convener of spaces of dialogue on urban citizenship, a producer of quality research, and a thought leader on issues such as informal settlements upgrading, urban governance and local level planning systems in South Africa.

Our vision is just, equitable, sustainable and democratic urban habitats. Our change goal is to help bring about systems and practices of urban governance that contribute to the realisation of this vision. We focus on three key outcomes, which we believe are instrumental in achieving the systemic change we seek. These are:

- Well-informed, engaged, inspired and connected cohort of urban sector leaders/change agents.
- Enabling and progressive policy, planning frameworks, programmes and practices.
- Strategic partnerships and coalitions for change.

We see change as multi-faceted and holistic, including personal, organisational, institutional and societal aspects. Working to achieve change at different aspects is necessary to achieve lasting and systemic results.

Promoting urban citizenship acts as both the lodestar for all our work and the yardstick to measure our work against.

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