



Recruiting and Training Community Mobilizers and Co-Researchers

Recruiting and training residents to undertake data collection and mobilize other residents is central to a community's capacity to co-plan with local governments. Enduring investments in informal settlements require building more than just infrastructure. Resilience demands investment in local leadership and community capacities and livelihoods. The concepts in this Guide are foundational for the Guides and Methods in [COMMUNITY-LED DATA COLLECTION](#) and [COMMUNITY CO-PLANNING](#).



Who

Most useful for:

- Local Champions
- Residents
- CBOs
- Urban Poor Federations
- Federation-support NGOs

Also useful for:

- NGOs
- Academia
- Local Governments

What

Recruiting residents to be trained and work as co-researchers and community mobilizers is an essential component of locally-led, participatory and inclusive informal settlement upgrading for climate resilience. It supports both advocacy for a local government commitment to an upgrading initiative and subsequent research, planning and even implementation activities.

Co-researchers are residents that are recruited to undertake data collection and other research activities in collaboration with action researchers and planning professionals from local government, NGOs and academia. **Community mobilizers** organize residents to co-plan with local government and other development partners. In practice, these are most often the same people. However, to undertake larger data collection processes like **Household Numbering and Enumeration**, additional data collectors in each area will likely need to be recruited and trained by co-researchers (who may not work as community mobilizers).

Local community leaders will help facilitate entry into the settlement and, in turn, recruit other residents to participate in the training process. Train a core set of co-researchers and community mobilizers who can then recruit and help train additional residents from their areas/neighborhoods (using a ‘training of trainers’ model). Recruit residents from as many areas/neighborhoods as possible so that everyone is invited to participate and so that they can support additional recruitment, training, mobilization and planning activities across the settlement.

Develop training materials according to the level of experience of recruits and the specific challenges the upgrading initiative seeks to address. This should include both technical training (e.g. data collection) and interpersonal skills training (e.g. leadership, communication, facilitation).

Use a process of action–reflection–action: training should be a mix of classroom learning and field tasks for practical learning. As challenges arise during the training, data collection and community mobilization process, discuss them in the classroom and come up with effective strategies for dealing with them together, in particular for approach, communication, group facilitation and conflict resolution. Also include additional training topics as needed as they come up. See **How** for more detail.

While the focus of recruitment and training should be on the core tasks of data collection and community mobilization, organizing small **savings and loans groups** in parallel can complement and expand upgrading activities. However, savings groups should not be the main organizing strategy as not all households will have the willingness or resources to join savings groups. Through savings groups, residents can expand their livelihood opportunities, and



Trainees in class in Mukuru (2018).

improve their living conditions. Through the practice of savings and loans, they can also gain valuable experience that builds a credit history. This is useful to access credit finance from either the government or the private sector. In addition, savings can support access to any low-cost, social housing programs from the government.

“ Our work was to also give information. Because they also say information is power. It was to inform the community that there is SPA coming and it has been gazetted Mukuru as a Special Planning Area. Number two was also to do door-to-door campaigns to sensitize people that this thing is there and it involves us community members. So that was also our work. Number three was also to organize those home cells and educate them that SPA is coming and it will help in this and that in the community. ”

James Musembi Community Mobilizer – Sinai, Mukuru Viwandani (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 18 May 2022

Why

Involving residents at scale is essential for fostering shared ownership of the upgrading process. Ownership helps ensure more locally-appropriate plans and better outcomes. There is no formula for a successful upgrading initiative; instead, invest in residents’ capacities so that they can become its champions and work together to steward the process through its many challenges, setbacks and pitfalls.

Not only are outsiders (whether civil society staff or hired consultants) too few and costly to undertake data collection and planning alone, involving residents at scale is crucial because they know their neighborhoods best; will be trusted because their neighbors know them and are distrustful of outsiders; and will benefit from training to build greater capacity and expertise locally. Most importantly, residents can begin to understand their challenges collectively instead of individually, enabling them to speak together during negotiations and work together during planning.

Through training, data collection and mobilization activities, residents can begin to know each other and their settlements better. Residents cannot organize themselves if they do not know each other. Communities can only move themselves if they have internal facilitators to navigate the many internal and external challenges they will face. Practically, this can look like mobilizers learning how to approach local officials (e.g. ward chiefs and administrators) and gain confidence to work with them. Or, it could be mobilizers bringing residents together to ask local political candidates to pledge to support their upgrading initiative if elected.



“ I think if SPA was being led by outsiders, most of the things we have got, we couldn't have got them since outsiders don't know what we are going through. They don't know what we need. ”

Priscila Onyango Tenant – Bins, Mukuru Kwa Reuben (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 20 May 2022.

Mobilizers play a pivotal role in ‘leaving no one behind’, a central principle for locally-led planning that seeks to involve all residents – independent of their gender, age, affiliations or status – in every stage of the process. To achieve this, recruit mobilizers from all stakeholder groups, in particular the most marginalized groups (e.g. tenants, women, youth, disabled people) but also groups with vested business interests in the status quo (e.g. resident structure owners, small-scale informal service providers).

There are many reasons beyond improved infrastructure and services to invest in recruiting and training residents to build their technical capacities and interpersonal and leadership skills. Residents of the Mukuru informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya, who undertook a large-scale participatory planning process called the Special Planning Area (SPA) with the city government, attested to these benefits.

“ SPA has taught us one thing as a community, it has taught us about skills that is communication skills, listening skills and teamwork. Because if you want to succeed in something, you can't succeed alone, you must be in a team and a team that is focused and understands each other. ”

Emily Wanyama Community Mobilizer – Rurie, Mukuru Kwa Reuben (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 20 May 2022.



“ Through the SPA we are doing in the community, I have been able to grow. I didn't know how many villages are there in my settlement, I was able to know, I was also able to know the chairmen in those villages, I discovered a lot of things about Mukuru at large. I knew how to mobilize and bring people together, before I didn't have the courage to bring people together, I was not courageous enough to address a committee. But now I can say that it has empowered me because I got a chance to sit with the county government, I have talked to the county officials until they understood that in informal settlements there are women who do not want to be pulled backwards, we need change. ”

Christine Mwelu Community Mobilizer – Lunga-Lunga Centre, Mukuru Viwandani (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 18 May 2022.

“ I learned several things and they have helped me now in that I undertake/do several things in the community and one of them is research. Now the information I got from the SPA in regards to the eight consortiums helped me in the work that I do right now. It was empowering because I got knowledge from there, I got to understand how the county government works in several areas. ”

Lijodi Linneah Musimbi Tenant – Riara, Mukuru Kwa Njenga (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 15 June 2022.



“ So for us mobilizers, we have benefitted by being teachers of groups, we have been able to be recognized by other NGOs. Because were taught how to collect data, we have been able to take that information to other groups, so no wonder we are doing well. ”

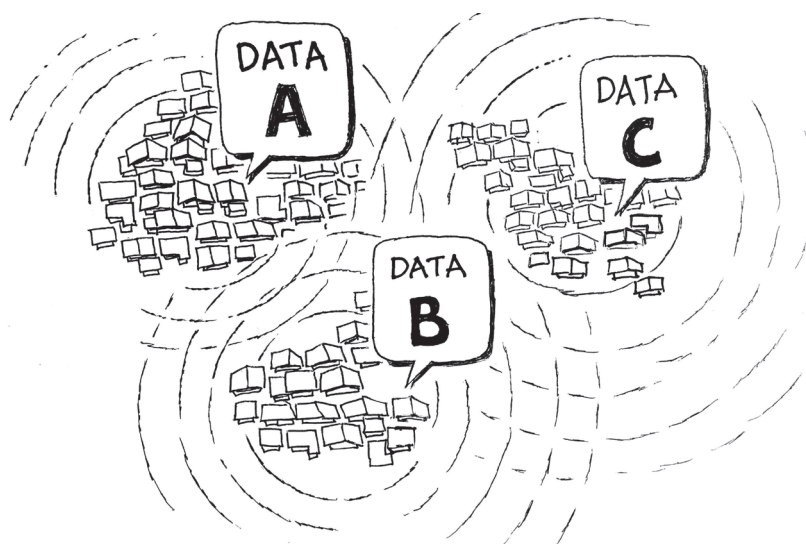
Edith Murage Community Mobilizer – Kingstone, Mukuru Viwandani (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 18 May 2022.

Where

Trust is often scarce in informal settlements. Co-researchers and community mobilizers must be locals from each area/neighborhood. Residents will not trust outsiders, including residents from nearby areas in the same settlement, because they do not know them.

Residents are used to being taken advantage of; recruiting locally therefore is essential for building trust.



If not possible to recruit and train residents from all areas/neighborhoods in the settlement, begin where there is greater interest and/or need. Other areas can be included once there is greater understanding of, and confidence in the process.

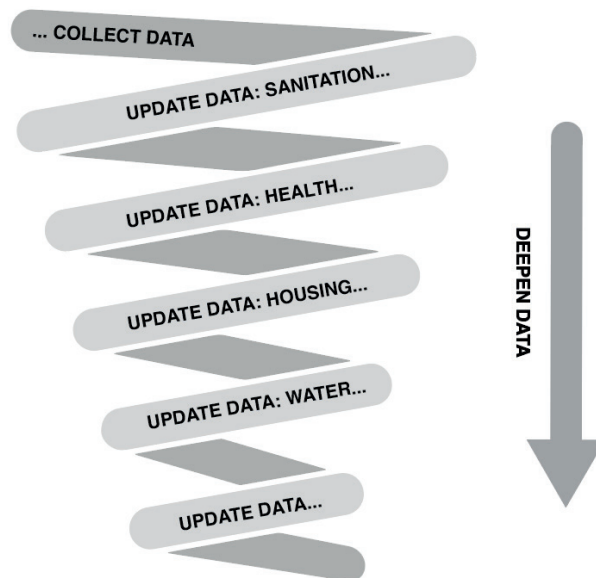
Community methods training and data collection often follow a concentric instead of linear pattern. This is because community mobilizers and co-researchers often start in familiar territory in their own neighborhoods and expand out from there. The data collection processes also typically don't have one beginning or end point, instead happening iteratively. Civil society or CBOs often undertake the initial training of local leaders and other motivated residents (youth can be excellent candidates because they learn quickly and may not be employed). Once this initial class of co-researchers and mobilizers is trained, they can recruit additional candidates in their neighborhoods to be trained as well.

When

Recruitment and training typically happens before the planning phase. It supports advocacy, data collection and mobilization and builds the local systems needed for community co-planning at scale.

The time required for training will depend on the scope of the current upgrading initiative. Only do as much as is required when it is required. You can build on this for ongoing efforts as needed. Training for data collection can take as little as one to two weeks (but to deepen skills for larger-scale initiatives, can take up to three months). Training for community mobilization and organization can take up to three months. Additional training that may be needed as the process progresses might add a few weeks to a month or two.

Community training is not a one-and-done process. In the context of resource-poor informal settlements, data collection, mobilization, and planning activities have significant costs — you should only do as much as is required at the time to further current advocacy and planning efforts. The environments in informal settlements also change rapidly and data will quickly become out-of-date. Therefore, training is a highly iterative process. You will continually return to sectors to update data and fill in gaps where data lacks the depth needed for detailed sector-level planning.



How

Determine Scope

Before you recruit co-researchers and mobilizers, you first need to establish the scope of the upgrading initiative.

- How many households are there in the settlement or target area? This will determine how many co-researchers and mobilizers you should recruit. The number is subject to the needs, opportunities and constraints in your settlement. But, a general rule of thumb is five to ten residents per cluster (of up to 1000 households).
- What are the main challenges the initiative seeks to address? While the data collection and mobilization activities that co-researchers and mobilizers undertake will largely determine challenges and priorities, there are likely some prominent, visible challenges that can help shape the initial set of topics for trainings.

Develop Training Materials

Priority topics for training sessions will depend on the prior experience residents have and the most pressing challenges in the settlement. Below is a list of general topics to include in trainings, divided by technical (hard) skills and interpersonal (soft) skills. Use this list to begin creating an appropriate training curriculum. You do not need to develop — and likely will not have — all the topics before starting trainings. Develop the curriculum and materials for the first set of trainings (likely data collection methods and associated soft skills like communication and contact building and rapport); you can develop other topics as needed as they arise during the training process. Keep in mind that the training process is intended to build the confidence of trainees as much as their technical skills.

Draw from the Guides and Methods in [COMMUNITY-LED DATA COLLECTION](#) and [COMMUNITY CO-PLANNING](#) to begin developing technical training curriculum.

Training Topics

Technical Training

Hard skills

Data collection methods

- Settlement Mapping
- Settlement Profiling
- Household Numbering and Enumeration
- Risk Profiling: Identifying Risks, Assessing Solutions and Determining Community Priorities

Data collection practices

- Key informant interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Filling out data collection forms
- Quality checking data collection
- Compiling data
- Validating data

Community mobilization and organization

- Formation of cells
- Consolidating cells into clusters and segments
- Social investigation
- Meeting minutes/note taking

Planning and implementation

- Issue identification, development, framing and prioritization
- Visioning
- Roles and functions of local government officials and departments
- Community governance systems for operation and maintenance
- Monitoring and evaluation

Documentation

- Minutes and report writing
- Photo and video documentation

Key sectoral challenges (e.g. health and hygiene, disaster management, etc)

Approach/Interpersonal Training

Soft skills

Leadership

Communication

Contact building and rapport

Group and individual dynamics

Meeting facilitation

Meeting presentations

Expectation management

Conflict resolution

Recruit Residents

To begin, recruit an initial class of residents that will form a core team of co-researchers and mobilizers. This team can then continue the recruitment process as more people are needed for subsequent data collection and mobilization activities as the upgrading initiative progresses.

Recruit this initial class from different areas/neighborhoods across the settlement. Engage leaders in each area (e.g. elders, CBO and federation leaders, etc) and ask them to nominate residents (five to ten per cluster of up to 1000 households). It is essential to recruit people locally in each area/neighborhood as residents will not trust people they do not know, even residents from other parts of the settlement. Make sure that different socioeconomic groups (people of different genders, ages, incomes, educational levels, occupations, and disabilities) are represented equally.

To give the training course greater weight, it is a good idea to provide a 'letter of admission' to trainees. You can also include details on the course goals, schedule, topics and outcomes (see [Example Materials](#)).



Organize the Training Schedule

While you should schedule training sessions according to residents' general availability and what makes the most sense, it is a good idea to hold sessions weekly. **For every group, schedule one class for every one to two 'segments'** (segments are groupings of one to three areas/neighborhoods). The number of trainees per group will vary but should not be more than 80 people.

For trainees, this means attending one class per week of about 3 hours each. For trainers, it means leading one class for every group. The number of weeks or months this requires depends on the level of experience of trainees and the data collection and mobilization activities they are to carry out.

A typical schedule might look like this:

3 months	Data collection
3 months	Community mobilization, organization and coordination
1–2 months	Additional topics and skills as needed

For classrooms, use what community spaces are available (e.g. church, social hall, community center, etc). When possible, organize horizontal learning exchanges with other communities in your city (or even other cities or abroad) that have experience in the methods and skills you seek to teach. Learning exchanges are an invaluable practice for community work.

Determine Course Format

The course format will likely evolve during the process to meet the training needs and local traditions.

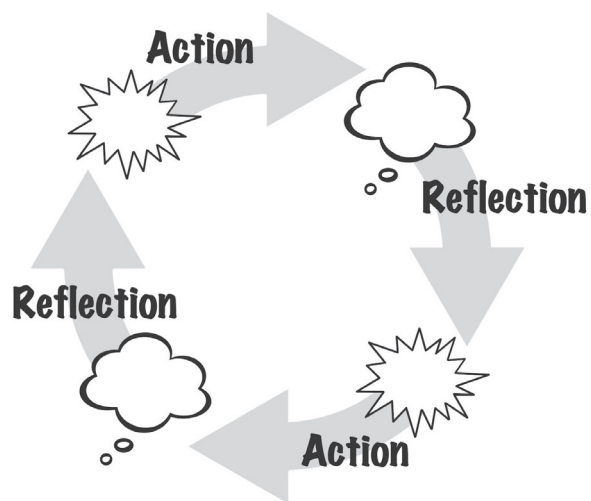
A typical format might look like this:

Introduction	Welcome; introduce session’s topic; select someone to take meeting minutes/ notes; sign attendance form; etc.
Review	Note taker from the last session summarizes what was covered for their fellow trainees.
Report, reflect and discuss	As a group, both trainees and trainers discuss and provide feedback as each trainee reports on their field work from the previous week, challenges they encountered as well as lessons, insights, and questions. It is also an opportunity to fix any errors in data collection. <i>This discussion will inform topics and activities for subsequent sessions.</i>
Discuss new topic	Introduce new skill or topic; discuss in-depth; answer trainee questions.
Assign practice	Based on the topic as well as reflection of the previous week, assign field tasks to be completed by each trainee before next class.

Keep in mind that learning about approach and interpersonal skills will most often happen simultaneously with technical skills training, not as separate, standalone training sessions. These soft skills are essential for carrying out the technical tasks for data collection; community mobilization, organization and coordination; and planning and implementation.

Official documents support the training process. These include (also see [Example Materials](#)):

- A course schedule and curriculum (to help trainees navigate the course).
- A certificate at the end of the training for those who complete it (to recognize the work that trainees did).



Train Recruits: Data Collection

Training in **COMMUNITY-LED DATA COLLECTION** methods should be hands-on. Co-researcher trainees will likely struggle to understand and remember how to use the methods without putting the skills into practice. Also, given resource constraints in informal settlements, training should also double as actual data collection.

You will likely start with **Settlement Mapping** and **Settlement Profiling** to support advocacy for a declaration or commitment by local government to undertake an upgrading initiative. Other methods like **Household Numbering and Enumeration** and **Risk Profiling: Identifying Risks, Assessing Solutions and Determining Community Priorities** can be taken up later once they are required.



Photo Credit: Akiba Mashinani Trust

Trainees in class learning about filling out data collection forms in Mukuru (2018).

In each class, discuss and demonstrate how to undertake methods. Then assign trainees field tasks to practice. In the following session, invite each trainee to share their challenges, lessons, insights, and questions. Discuss as a group and ask other trainees to provide feedback.

To demonstrate both challenges and successful approaches, have trainees role play. For example, if a trainee says they struggled to fill out the profiling survey with a household, ask them to reenact the exchange so both trainers and trainees can better understand their challenges and provide feedback. The same can be done for trainees that had few challenges to demonstrate to others what approach they used.

This is also an opportunity to fix any errors in data collection and practice quality checking each other's work. You should also cover how to fill out data collection forms, conduct key informant interviews and focus group discussions, compiling data, and validating data.

These sessions are also opportunities to discuss and learn the essential **interpersonal skills** needed for successful community work. In particular, leadership, communication, contact building and rapport, and individual dynamics. While you may deem it useful to hold individual sessions for these skills, you may find that they are best covered here for their role in facilitating technical work.

Note that some people may struggle initially to participate because of a lack of confidence. Practicing skills, in particular interpersonal skills, in the classroom will be particularly important for them to build confidence.

Train Recruits: Mobilization, Organization, Representation and Coordination

For **COMMUNITY CO-PLANNING**, community mobilizer trainees need training in mobilizing residents, organizing them into location-based groups of neighbors (cells of 10 households and clusters of 10 cells), guiding them to select representatives to enable coordination and communication of planning activities from the household level up to cells, clusters, and segments (groupings of one to three areas/neighborhoods). Learn more about these ideas in **Community Mobilization, Organization, Representation and Coordination Strategy**.

These trainings will take a similar format as data collection, pairing classroom learning with field-based learning. Using maps created during data collection, community mobilizers will identify plots and individual households to group into **cells**. In the classroom, trainees practice talking about what the upgrading initiative is about and what it hopes to achieve for residents (both in terms of services and local capacities). Then have trainees practice their mobilization, communication and leadership skills as they organize residents into cells and help residents select their cell representatives.

Also have them invite cell representatives to a training session. Trainees will explain what the upgrading initiative is, what it hopes to achieve, why it's important, and how work will be done with the cell, cluster and segment representatives. Trainers can support trainees to present and facilitate discussion as needed.

Community mobilizers can then begin to form **clusters** of 10 cells (100 households). At this point, mobilizers should start holding cluster meetings to begin discussing residents' issues and priorities. Mobilizers will go to their cluster meetings together; two can facilitate the meeting, two can take minutes, and other mobilizers can support as needed or simply observe. Introduce the idea of discussing challenges by sector/theme (e.g. water and sanitation, health, education, etc) to give focus to the discussions (and to support subsequent sectoral planning).

Mobilizer trainees should then discuss and reflect in class to learn from each other and get feedback from trainers.

The facilitators can discuss challenges and successes in leading meetings and managing participants; minute/note takers can compare their notes and discuss how to improve them; and other trainees can share their observations.

Starting in class, all trainees should learn **how to take meeting minutes** (day, time, venue, attendee names, and what was discussed throughout the meeting). At the beginning of each class, select one or two trainees to take minutes. They should then report what happened in that class at the beginning of class the following week. They can then practice this skill in the field during cluster meetings. Note that meeting minutes will not be records that are kept to

GATOPÉ CLUSTER	NO. OF STRUCTURES	HOUSEHOLDS FORMS FILLED	CELLS CONTACTS	SUB CLUSTERS OF 100 HS
A	368	2/3 698	33/70	7
B	308	3/3 445	26	
C	156	2/3 414	16	
D	421	1/3 381	18	
RURIE	103	1837	93	54%
A	180	66/52	15	
D	12	302 Filled 126		
E	170	300 Incomplete 162	20	2
		4423		

Photo Credit: Akiba Mashinani Trust
 Trainees in class learning about community mobilization in Mukuru (2018).

be shared with planning consortia. They instead serve to support the process of community organization, coordination and communication, aid mobilizers to convene and facilitate meetings as they go, and help mobilizers reflect on the process and keep track of meetings as the process progresses.

As with data collection, these sessions are also opportunities to discuss and learn the essential **interpersonal skills** needed for successful community work. In particular, leadership, communication, contact building and rapport, and group and individual dynamics, meeting facilitation, meeting presentations, expectation management, and conflict resolution.

Train Recruits: How to Deal With Challenges

Throughout the training process, challenges will arise for trainees. These should come out in the classroom and inform both the content of training sessions and additional training topics to be covered in additional sessions as needed.

In particular, challenges will come up regarding **group dynamics, expectation management** and **conflict resolution**. Plan on discussing strategies for dealing with these challenges throughout training sessions as well as scheduling sessions to cover them in greater depth. Key strategies include recognizing personality differences and inviting stakeholders to think about these differences and set the expectation that others do not need to think like or agree with you; inclusion of all stakeholders regardless of status, affiliations, gender, age, occupation, income, etc; and patient dialogue.



Photo Credit: Akiba Mashinani Trust

Trainees in class learning about conflict resolution in Mukuru (2018).

Train Recruits: Other Topics As Needed

Both through discussion of challenges in the classroom and discussions in cluster meetings, trainees should help assess the need for training in additional topics. Beyond challenges, these could include education about sectoral challenges (e.g. health and hygiene, disaster management, etc). Schedule additional training sessions as needed.

Considerations

Who should co-researchers and community mobilizers be?

They can be any resident – tenant, structure owner, local leader, etc (but should not be outsiders). Women and youth often make good candidates as they may have more time free during the day. In particular, seek out people that demonstrate commitment to community work and data collection processes.

Should we compensate community mobilizers and co-researchers?

Yes, provide some small compensation as possible. Residents' time is precious and few may be able to contribute consistently without some consideration of the cost of their time. However, it should likely be volunteer-based and therefore not remunerated like a job. The funding needed for remuneration could severely limit the scope of community research and mobilization activities.

When and where should training sessions be held?

It is a good idea to hold training sessions weekly during the training period. Do not hold them during the main work hours as they are educational, not a job to be remunerated. However, they should likely be held on a weekday so that when trainees do field tasks, they have the weekend between sessions to engage residents who are not available during the day on weekdays (because they are at work).

Trainings should be held in the area where trainees live so they can easily attend. Use any community centers available, including at churches, mosques, schools and social halls.

Challenges

Data Collection Errors

Errors are inevitable, especially when community co-researchers have little experience in data collection. You can minimize errors by starting small. This way, co-researcher trainees can make mistakes, discuss together and learn so that once they scale up they are better prepared. This approach also saves resources, minimizing work that would need to be redone during quality checks by other co-researchers and during the community validation process.

Residents' Distrust and Misinformation

Residents in informal settlements have faced a long history of land grabs and evictions as well as many development projects that have failed to produce tangible results. There are also inevitably opportunists inside and outside the community that will seek to use upgrading efforts to their own benefit. Residents are therefore often skeptical of upgrading projects and fearful when they see you walking around with a map in your hand. Some residents will resist the process and you may even be threatened. You can overcome this through patient dialogue, inviting trusted local leaders to speak about the project, inviting local government staff to speak to residents, and striving to provide near-term, incremental benefits to build confidence in the process. It is also essential to include community participation from the start as residents will not trust people they don't know. Additional strategies include: training a core team that understands the method and its promise for bringing benefits to the settlement; and involving trusted local leaders, including from the local government administration (e.g. ward chiefs).

“ We were trained, we did mapping, and after mapping we did data collection. During data collection is where we experienced a lot of challenges because here in the slum when someone sees you standing on their door and you are writing things, they want to know what you want to do. So we tried explaining to them that this is not [only] a Muungano project but also the government is involved but it took time. ”

Caroline Aluoch Community Mobilizer – Uchumi, Mukuru Viwandani (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 18 May 2022.



“ Mobilizers encountered challenges, when we went on the side of structure, the people who attacked us most were the landlords. They said that we wanted them to lose their houses. [They] would follow us even in our houses, saying that we are contributing to them losing their houses. Same applied with water and also electricity. But because they knew that we are residents of the area and we have brought many developments in the area that is what saved us. We went through a lot of challenges but through explaining to them, we say information is power; when we gave information it saved us. ”

Mary Nyambura Community Mobilizer – Wape Wape, Mukuru Kwa Njenga (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 15 June 2022.

Fear of Evictions

“ So as a mobilizer I was convincing my people because I am also a tenant that if it is eviction, the government will carry us with our land where we have been dwelling for more than thirty years. So I was making efforts to convince them that if they will be evicted I will be the first person to be evicted so we held together and said our strength is our unity so nobody should tell us that we are going anywhere. ”

Pastor Elizabeth Mijeni Community Mobilizer – Mukuru Kwa Reuben (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 20 May 2022.

Residents Lack of Awareness, Understanding and Confidence

“ At first I did not understand it well and the time I got the trainings bit by bit I completely understood its importance. I was able to get views from my fellow tenants, their views are the most important in improving our area. Saying that their views are important made them happy and were able to contribute in saying what they need and what they do not need because at first they were taking it as negative. Maybe it's the doubts of what people have come to do in their plot. Later on they came to realize that their views are what contribute a lot in improving our area, and from there work became easier and we started collaborating. ”

Dominic Mulinge Tenant – Vietnam, Mukuru Kwa Njenga (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 15 June 2022.

“ I think the challenges we got at that time is that the residents didn't have the knowledge; they did not understand what it was and that's why they were bringing chaos in meetings. But when we sat down and explained, it necessitated that we go from door-to-door so we can explain to them the advantage of this thing. They later on came to understand, what was on their minds was that their village was being finished, but they came to understand and we explained to them the benefits of SPA and the life we would live as compared to the life we were having that time and even now we are living, but they later came to understand. It was just lack of knowledge. ”

Veronica Nthenya Structure Owner – Vietnam, Mukuru Kwa Njenga (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 15 June 2022.

Fear from Small-Scale Informal Service Providers

“ We were called for the first SPA meeting on matters concerning electricity. Most of us feared because we did not know what we were going to do there, maybe we could go there, you do some research and give us out to the government, so we had fear, but when it was explained to us we understood what SPA matters meant and we accepted and we were in agreement. ”

Joseph Odhiambo Informal Electricity Provider – Wape Wape, Mukuru Kwa Njenga (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 15 June 2022.

“ We went through a lot of challenges through cartels. So when they knew there were ongoing meetings, mostly in Riara, there are meetings which did not happen because we were sent away and told there were not going to be such meetings and we started dodging them, changing meeting hours and venue so we can meet in other places because in the normal areas meetings would be disrupted. But they came and realized that we succeeded and no other way so we joined efforts. ”

Joseph Mwenja Community Mobilizer – Riara, Mukuru Kwa Njenga (Nairobi, Kenya)

Personal communication, 15 June 2022.

Examples from the Field

Mukuru, Nairobi (Kenya)

To ensure widespread participation in the Mukuru SPA upgrading initiative and simultaneously build the capacities of new grassroots leaders, the Muungano Alliance – an association comprised of the Kenyan urban poor federation Muungano wa Wanavijiji (MWW), the Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT) and Slum Dwellers International-Kenya (SDI-K) – recruited and trained over 450 community mobilizers (and even more data collectors) across Mukuru.

About 70 percent were youth and women without prior experience engaging in settlement-level activities (they tended to be available at different times of the day to undertake data collection, especially those without permanent employment). Mobilizers selected data collectors considering residence location, gender, age, ethnicity and proven commitment to process to provide diverse representation. More than anyone, these mobilizers organized the community forums and championed the SPA through patient dialogue and the many negotiations the planning process required with diverse community stakeholders.

A core team of MWW mobilizers provided oversight of the technical planning process by forming part of the consortia planning teams and working closely with partners. See [Forming Interdisciplinary Consortia](#) for more.

Mobilizers also fostered horizontal and vertical accountability throughout the planning process: they mediated community conflicts and misunderstandings and informed local officials of progress. In these roles, mobilizers built new relationships between Mukuru communities and government and gained trust and stature in their communities because of the confidence the training and mobilization processes gave them to speak out and lead. For some, it even led to new opportunities like jobs with NGOs and even potential nominations as political leaders.

The training process was a concentric, not a linear, process. Field staff from AMT and SDI-K held trainings for mobilizers over about three months, requiring six hours per week from trainees. This was done at different periods in different areas of Mukuru. mobilizers in turn trained data collectors to carry out the required data collection activities. Those who completed the trainings received a certificate (some did not finish the training for a variety of reasons, including personal priorities, politics that prolonged the training and lack of funds for compensation).

The trainings covered a broad array of topics and skills. This included data collection methods like enumerations and settlement profiling, the Tujuane Tujengane approach and organization of residents into territorial units (e.g. cells, sub-clusters, etc; see [Community Mobilization, Organization, Representation and Coordination Strategy](#) for more) as well as contact building and rapport; conflict management; group and individual dynamics; leadership; facilitation skills; savings and loans; health and hygiene; disaster management; and minutes and report writing. In addition, 29 young people received training in photo and video documentation.

Compensation for community mobilizers was an important consideration. Mobilizers themselves decided that their work would be on a voluntary basis, with some limited compensation for their time spent in training, collecting data, mobilizing residents and the costs of making phone calls. Therefore, the financial resources required to pay mobilizers, and the distorted incentives that might create, did not interfere with reaching the 100,000 households living in Mukuru. This proved important as well because funding (from Slum Dwellers International and Caritas Switzerland) was exhausted within the first three months.

Along with community savings groups, learning exchanges are a core practice of the Muungano Alliance and their SDI affiliates across the world. These horizontal exchanges played a crucial role for mobilizers in Mukuru who visited different parts of the settlements as well as other informal settlements elsewhere in Nairobi (and even as far as Tanzania) where expertise was shared, including new ideas, information, and skills to empower residents to confront their own problems instead of waiting on professionals. In interviews and focus groups for this project, mobilizers and other residents expressed their desire for more learning exchanges, armed as they are with the experience and new skills gained through the SPA process.

“ So the teachings were many and SPA has empowered a lot of people within the community. Others were quiet when we started but when we were finishing, they were the best teachers; you find somebody you have given them the idea and they go and teach another person, so in that process we saw the community was educated and at the same time we saw we opened up, like SPA has opened up a lot of people’s lives. Even there are others who did not comprehend what was going on but when we go to explain to them, you find they leave way for the road to pass through, or they reduce the house according to how the road has been put. So it brought the cooperation of the implementers and the structure owners and at the end of the day we saw the roads were opened. And we won’t hesitate to congratulate SPA because, the story of disaster, it was burning every day and every time, when there is fire it burns. But now we see, after the road has been constructed, even if there is fire, we saw the fire extinguishers get to the interior in a short time. SPA will be a good example to be emulated from Mukuru Kwa Reuben and the whole world. ”

Benrodgers Musee Community Mobilizer – Gateway, Mukuru Kwa Reuben

Personal communication, 20 May 20 2022.

Materials

For each training course:

1. Admission invitation letter
2. Course schedule and curriculum
3. Certificate of completion

Example Materials

[1] LETTER OF ADMISSION FOR TRAINING IN
CITIZEN-LED RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

From: {Your organization's name}

To: _____, Trainee

Gender: _____

House address: _____

ID number: _____

Phone number: _____

Dear trainee,

You have been selected to participate in the training course Citizen-led Research and Data Collection. The course will be facilitated by {your organization's name}. It is part of the ongoing informal settlement upgrading program {name of initiative}.

As a trainee, you will gain skills and undertake practical tasks in the field, including:

- Mapping the settlement
- Profiling the settlement
- Creating a settlement-wide address system and undertaking a census of all residents

The training will take place over a period of three months from July 12, 2022 to October 11, 2022.

This includes:

- Weekly classroom sessions of three hours each
- A minimum of four hours per week for each field assignment

The course emphasizes experiential learning; between sessions, you will put what you learn in the classroom into practice each week. Including classroom and field assignments, the course will take a total of 60 hours.

Training fees for this course have been waived by {your organization's name} and therefore NO amount shall be charged to the trainees. In addition, we will provide all the necessary training materials and provide a small stipend of Ksh 3000 per month to cover your communication costs.

Upon completion of the course, you will be awarded a Certificate of Completion.

If you have any questions, please let us know. We wish you the best in the training course.

Yours,

Charity Njuguna

Charity Njuguna, Director

Week	Topic	Class activities	Field assignment	Outcomes
1	Contact building	How many of your neighbors do you know?	Community entry Contact building Mapping Numbering	Community maps Physical address system Resident database
2	Organization	Organizing households into cells and clusters	Form cells and clusters	Households organized into cells and clusters
3	etc			
4				
5				
6				

[3] CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

<p><i>Certificate of Participation</i></p> <p><i>This certificate is awarded to</i></p> <p>Joseph Mwenja</p> <p>For completion of the course</p> <p>Citizen-led Research and Data Collection</p> <p>October 2022</p> <p></p> <p>[org logo]</p> <p>[trainer signature]</p>

Related Components

Guides

- [Determining Roles](#)
- [Community Mobilization, Organization, Representation and Coordination Strategy](#)

Methods

- [Settlement Mapping](#)
- [Settlement Profiling](#)
- [Household Numbering and Enumeration](#)
- [Risk profiling: Identifying risks, assessing solutions and determining community priorities](#)

Sources

Interviews (2022) with staff from SDI-Kenya and AMT as well as a review of relevant documents and data collection forms from these same organizations.

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