

# LESSONS LEARNED

## Internal processes

- Open internal communication is key to successful partnerships on projects that are being managed remotely. Frequent physical visits have been crucial in building a shared understanding and profound mutual respect.
- Continual dialogue with, and support to, staff around their goals and expectations helps them feel more valued and is likely to improve retention.

## Policymaker engagement

- Targeting civil servants, often through personal connections, within ministries allows individuals to cut through the politics & grants access to people less politically exposed and thus more receptive to new ideas.
- Knowledge exchange visits can have a transformative effect in changing participants attitudes. But applying new attitudes in practice is a political as much as a technocratic process.
- Providing briefs that summarise key findings of reports and studies are critical ways to ensure that busy policymakers are reading SLURC materials.

## Community interaction and learning

- Networks, partnerships and collaborations are key in building the profile and credibility of SLURC among policymakers, international partners and within informal settlements. The partnership with FEDURP has been fundamental to SLURC's success.
- SLURC's role as a mediator - bringing together residents of informal settlements, civil society and government - has facilitated conversations that were not being had.
- Residents of informal settlements not only value being part of the research or trainings but emphasised the importance of research validation processes in ensuring their views are captured correctly.
- The CAAP project highlighted the important roles that locally developed maps can have in helping communities think about urban planning challenges.

## Creating and sharing knowledge

- Ensuring that research produced is disseminated in formats tailored to different audiences will increase and improve its reach and impact.
- High quality research processes, analysis and outputs are key to building institutional credibility and enhancing and sustaining research partnerships.
- The identification of four key thematic areas for research have enabled SLURC to cover, comprehensively, the cities urban challenges whilst retaining a clear focus.
- Creating the library as a venue to store key urban documents that could be accessed by the public was a positive step but not enough thought was given to creating an enabling environment for its use.

## Building institutional sustainability

- Online courses have been widely subscribed to and offer an excellent way of raising the centres international profile.
- SLURC is most successful in winning additional grants for its work when it partners with international organisations in a consortia.