The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme is politically supported by the ACP Secretariat, financed by the European Commission (EC) and implemented by UN-Habitat. Since 2008 the program is being implemented in 35 countries, out of which five are in the Caribbean (Antigua and Barbuda, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago). The PSUP methodology looks at informal settlements in a holistic way aiming at improving the lives of slum dwellers on environmental, economic, social and physical spheres.

Through data collection and analysis PSUP has a good overview of the economic realities in informal settlements as well as needs for green informal settlement upgrading. Evident became the important productivity and livelihood dynamics operating in informal settlements which not only provide livelihoods to the informal settlers but also have key links, contributions and relevance for the overall urban economy. Therefore PSUP is aiming at mindset changes with urban administrators that informal settlers are valuable elements of the urban economy. PSUP advocates for integration of ecological as well as economical and livelihood improvements beyond the classic physical upgrading during informal settlement upgrading. In ideal cases informal settlement upgrading should contribute to formalization of economies, improved livelihoods and job creation as well as improved direct and overall city environment and climate resilience.

In its submission PSUP will share its findings on economic and environmental statuses of informal settlements such as income levels, economic activities, the role of the informal economy, environmental risks and damages. From there conclusions on realistic informal settlement upgrading scenarios which link physical upgrading of provision of security of tenure, water and sanitation with ecological and economic opportunities for the poor urban neighbourhoods as well as the city as a whole. Therefore PSUP findings are also relevant for Caribbean countries in localizing and implementing the SDGs and NUA as well as giving valuable contributions into the discussion around a Caribbean Urban Agenda.
Other good examples include:

Title: Our Voices, Our Outcomes: The Case of the Implementation of Phase II of the UN-Habitat Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme in Jamaica

Theme: Green Space

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ABSTRACT

Economic and socio-political disenfranchisement has long been a causal factor shaping the settlement patterns of a number of lower income working class communities in Jamaica. The result is a proliferation of squatter settlements across the length and breadth of the country with no structured approach to curtailing or addressing their expansion and needs.

The present paper describes the UN-Habitat Participatory Action Planning Methodology, as a tool in harnessing the voices of residents and relevant stakeholders within three urban centres in Jamaica, in shaping recommendations for their regularization under Phase II of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme.

The methodology includes active multi-agency and community stakeholder involvement in the formulation of five outputs: 1) A City-wide Slum Situational Analysis, 2) Policy and Regulatory Framework, 3) City-wide Slum Upgrading Strategy, 4) Resource Mobilization and 5) The formulation of Concept Papers - for the implementation of tangible projects in select communities. The application of the methodology was undertaken in the cities/towns of Montego Bay, St. James; Old Harbour/Old Harbour Bay, St. Catherine and May Pen Clarendon.

The results of the process indicate that people are capable of formulating decisions to improve the social and physical ecology of their urban spaces if given the opportunity to participate through purposeful strategies and coherent interventions.
Title: Green Building in Trinidad and Tobago – Constraints and Opportunities: An exploratory approach

Sub-theme: Green Space

By

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Abstract

Increasing urbanization has to be met by innovative approaches to minimize concomitant challenges and improve the quality of urban ecosystem services. In response to this, there has been increasing growth in the ‘greening’ of several aspects of the construction industry, with the production of green buildings, made so through the employment of energy saving architectural facets or from the conversion of standard buildings via the creative use of foliage on wall surfaces or trees on roofs. Green buildings, which can utilize efficiently both energy and land; conserve water; enhance air quality; and incorporate recycled and renewable products, may ultimately promote sustainable development and enhance the climate change adaptive capacity of urban areas.

This study explores the green building ethos in Trinidad and Tobago, via semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the area. Thematic analysis of these interviews extracted sentiments on the current state of the industry, the challenges involved in green building development, the character of the clients who prove to be early adopters, and the potential for growth. In addition, an attempt was made to mine social media posts to gauge local and global views of the general public for comparison.

Preliminary results reveal perceptions that adoption of green construction in Trinidad and Tobago has been slow, mainly because of inadequate human and financial resources; lack of understanding and appreciation by the general public of the role of green buildings in combating climate change; and lack of support from Government.

Key words: Green building, urbanization, thematic analysis