



# NUSP RESOURCE KIT

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Part 3

Building Partnership



## Part 3 – Building Partnership

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It is impossible to upgrade an informal settlement in situ without the complete and enthusiastic involvement of the residents.

Experience has shown that if the residents are merely informed or consulted about the municipality's plans to upgrade their area, they will not regard the project as theirs and are unlikely to feel responsible for protecting what it provides. However, if the municipality asks the residents to work with them in planning and implementing improvements to their informal settlement, a completely different attitude can be expected. For this reason the [UISP requires municipalities to work in partnership with the residents](#).

One of the requirements is for “a structured agreement between the municipality and the community” and this is usually formulated as the terms of reference for the project steering committee, in which all stakeholders are represented. You can read some useful [guidelines drawn from South African experience](#).

In fact, the building of relationships between municipalities and residents of informal settlements happens primarily between a few key individuals on both sides. They learn to trust each other by being open and honest about their organisations' strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, and by being committed to learn together how best to manage this joint development process.

You can be encouraged by people who have made a real difference within challenging upgrading projects by reading case studies such as those shown in 3, 4 and 5 in Part 2 and from [11](#) and [12](#) – as well as by learning from your counterparts elsewhere in South Africa.

There is also the possibility of creating a working partnership between the municipality and a network or association of representatives of all the informal settlements in the area. That can be very useful for creating consensus about prioritising settlements for development and for dispute resolution. [You can read a South African example of this](#).

There is also an international alliance of shack dwellers who have extensive experience in community-based upgrading and in working in partnership with all levels of government. They have affiliated organisations in South Africa, and you can [read about their approach](#).