Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

Project Management and Skills Enhancement in Informal Settlement Upgrading, in Durban, South Africa.

- **Format:**

Written paper and Verbal presentation

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

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One in eight people live in informal settlements, of which 80% is found in developing countries. In South Africa, around 50% of the population lives in urban centres, where more than 2,700 informal settlements exist. Informal settlements form a major challenge of the urban landscape, exacerbating issues related to poverty, inadequate infrastructure, housing and poor living conditions. Reflections on past upgrading efforts suggest that top-down policies have not been successful to date. By contrast, participatory techniques in planning and design, can be used to enhance community empowerment and a sense of local ownership. However, participation and collaboration can mean various things for informal upgrading and often the involvement of local

communities is limited to providing feedback in already agreed development decisions from local authorities and construction companies. The paper explores 'self-built' approaches in informal settlement upgrading, using experiences and lessons learned from good available practice in the Durban metropolitan area. The research has two key objectives:

- To identify the critical success factors in managing an upgrading project, discussing brief development, stakeholder management and project governance.
- To understand the formal or informal forms of procurement, uncovering the need to acquire '*the right resources at the right time*', exploring links with local industry and/or construction practice and considering the constraints involved in the process of complying with rigid municipality processes.

Empirical data are gathered in the form of semi-structured interviews, observations and focus groups with community leaders, NGOs, municipal officers and industry practitioners. The research aims to build capacity in local communities seeking to improve their quality of life and assist local authorities in enhancing their planning mechanisms. The findings can be also utilised by international agencies, policy-makers, implementers and practitioners working on upgrading programmes, plans and policies, particularly under the post 2015 UN SDGs and the Habitat III New Urban Agenda.

- **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

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Maria Christina Georgiadou is a mechanical engineer and a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Property and Construction, University of Westminster, London. She has extensive research experience in managing multidisciplinary research projects on: low-carbon construction and urban regeneration; future-proofed design; whole lifecycle thinking; and, built environment collaboration and integration. She is currently the Principal Investigator of ISULabaNtu "*Community-led Upgrading for Self-Reliance in South Africa: Integrated Construction and Environmental Management Systems in Informal Settlements*". This is a three-year (2016 – 2019) Economic and Social Research (ESRC)-funded project under the Newton Fund Urban Transformations Programme (www.isulabantu.org). She is also providing training and capacity building in the areas of Project Management, Procurement and Digital Construction to the School of Built Environment and Development Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa as part of a three-year (2016 – 2019) Royal Society Newton Advanced Fellowship entitled '*Building Urban Resilience for Self-Reliance in African Cities*'. This is in collaboration with Dr Claudia Loggia. Her research has provided her with a unique opportunity to communicate and disseminate findings to varied audiences, policy-makers (e.g. European Commission DG Research and Innovation, UK Government Departments, Environment Agency, NHS, South Africa's National Treasury); local

authorities (e.g. eThekwini municipality in Durban; UK Cambridge City, Manchester City, Cornwall, Cardiff and Neath Port Talbot Councils), industry bodies (e.g. ARUP, RICS, BRE, Tata Colours, Core Cities), and international agencies (e.g. UN-Habitat, UNIDO, UNDP).

Dr Claudia Loggia

Since 2016, Claudia is a Royal Society Newton Advanced Fellow (https://royalsociety.org/people/claudia-loggia-12815/), for a project in partnership with the University of Westminster (with Dr C. Georgiadou as co-investigator) and she is also Principal Investigator for the South African team of the ISULABANTU project (www.isulabantu.org), that is a 3-year *ESRC/NRF Urban Transformation in SA Grant* in partnership with the University of Westminster and University College London. Claudia is currently Senior Lecturer in the Housing Programme at the School of Built Environment & Development Studies University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa. She holds a PhD in Building Engineering and a MEng from Cagliari University (Italy). She has extensive experience in trans-disciplinary research projects and consultancy work in the areas of: energy efficient building design and retrofit, green infrastructure, sustainable urban regeneration, low-income housing design and policies. She is currently collaborating on valuable research projects in South Africa with local governmental institutions, NGOs and local communities, namely the 100Resilient Cities Programme, in Durban. Since 2012, she is a Green Star South Africa Accredited Professional with the Green Building Council of South Africa (GBCSA).