

David Weiss - From Slums To Significance: The Communities Shaping Our Urban Future



Photo: A meeting of Global Communities staff and community members of Ravine Pintade to plan the reconstruction of the neighborhood.

urb.im.September 2014. The two megatrends of demographic growth and urbanization are rapidly transforming human settlement from rural to predominantly urban environments. This is particularly true in Asia and Africa, where the UN forecasts that the urban population will grow from 2.3 billion people in 2011 to 4.5 billion in 2050. Many large cities in these regions are struggling with how to provide services, housing and jobs for large numbers of rural migrants. These migrants are often highly vulnerable: although they have moved to the city in search of jobs and access to services, the informal neighborhoods that receive them lack infrastructure and are often removed from main centers of economic activity. A lack of economic opportunities and poor living conditions set the stage for marginalization, instability and violence.

At the same time, this raw influx of human capital, ideas and energy are at the core of providing sustainable answers to the challenges that cities face. Too often slum dwellers have been considered a problem. I believe they are the solution.

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