

Laura Bliss & Aarian Marshall ~ How High-Tech Maps Could Help Urban Slums Plan Better Streets

In slums, buildings are often so densely packed that many are cut off from streets and pathways. This creates a literal roadblock to much-needed public resources.

“In South Africa, governments will often say that informal settlements are too dense to install adequate services,” Charlton Ziervogel, deputy director at the Communities Organization Resource Centre, a Cape Town-based slum advocacy and support NGO, tells CityLab. “So you’ll find municipalities that install toilets, but only at the edge of a settlement, because they perceive that there is no space inside.”

It’s a serious matter. Across the global south, hundreds of millions live in slums lacking piped water, proper drainage, and sanitation—ideal breeding grounds for virus-carrying insects and other types of disease. To fight epidemics such as Zika, experts warn, living conditions for the urban poor must be improved. But to do so, many slum communities first need to open up space.

Read more: <http://www.citylab.com/high-tech-map>