



## Alagados: Integrated slum upgrading in Salvador, Brazil

*Supported by the State of Bahia, the Cities Alliance, the World Bank and the government of Italy\**

**SUMMARY:** This community upgrading project in Brazil highlights the importance of local ownership and buy-in in creating a successful program. The partnership between the urban development experience of a government entity and the social expertise of an NGO, with the support of international experts, allowed for a flexible program that could address both the infrastructural and social blocks to neighborhood upgrading.

### Background

Salvador, the capital of Bahia state, is Brazil's third-largest and fastest-growing city, with more than 2.8 million people. While the city has experienced rapid economic growth, wealth has been unevenly distributed. Middle- and upper-class neighborhoods have emerged along the prized coast while fully one-third of the residents, many of them nonprofessional workers, migrants and the unemployed, live in favelas (slums) further from the city center.

The suburban district known as Alagados, which cradles inlets off the Bay of All Saints, has for 60 years been a place favored by low-income people seeking a location with cheap land and good access to jobs and transportation. When all dry land was occupied, new residents built wooden shack housing on stilts straddling mangrove swamps and stagnant water fetid with garbage, human and industrial waste. By 2000, more than 150,000 people lived in the area, and some 3,500 families lived over the polluted waters.

### Alagados slum upgrading

In the mid-1990s, the Salvador Metropolitan Region Development Co., or CONDER, and the Italian NGO Association of Volunteers in International Cooperation, or AVSI, with financial support from the World Bank's Municipal Administration and Urban Infrastructure Development Programme, or PRO-

DUR, launched a pilot neighborhood upgrading program in a neighborhood of 15,000 called Novos Alagados. Actively involving community-based associations, the Novos Alagados project combined a set of physical improvements financed by the PRODUR program — new housing, relocation, environmental cleanup, sanitation — with social investments such as job training, securing land rights and environmental education. This participatory program in Novos Alagados was so successful that the same principles were used in the new Riviera Azul Urban Poverty Reduction Programme program launched in 1999. This program focused on neighborhoods near Novos Alagados, with technical supervision provided by the World Bank.

In 2001, upon request from the Bahia state government and the Italian governments, the Cities Alliance agreed to provide additional technical support to the Riviera Azul program through a Technical and Social Support Project, or PATS. PATS took place between 2001 and 2006, with \$5.7 million in grant funding provided by the Italian government and managed by the Cities Alliance.

## Objectives and operations

The overriding objective of the Riviera Azul program was to improve the quality of life of about 135,000 people (40,000 families) living in the Alagados area through:

- Urban development and environmental recovery works.
- Removal of all stilted houses and the construction of replacement housing.
- Housing improvements to other residences.
- Construction and repair of community amenities and equipment.
- Human development (social) projects.

The physical works were undertaken through CONDER, with about \$70 million in financing from the World Bank PRODUR project and the State of Bahia. The infrastructure works included improved access to main roads, stormwater drainage, improved water supply, basic sanitation and solid waste collection, and restoration or preservation of 53 square meters (570 square feet) of mangrove swamps.

PATS provided technical support to the project management and coordination units. It also supported:

- Housing construction improvements.
- Strategic social actions and social amenities.
- Community participation activities.
- The adaptation and dissemination of the lessons learned in Novos Alagados.
- Urban planning training for public employees.
- Assistance in preparing a proposal to the World Bank for scaling up the results to the entire Salvador metropolitan area.
- Assistance in preparing an environmental management plan for the entire Cobre Basin.

Social projects included day care centers, food and nutritional aid, support for at-risk children and young people, literacy training (mostly for women), and professional skills training and income-generation activities through local cooperatives. One of the most effective contributions of PATS was the strengthening of about 70 existing community-based associations. These associations were then able to actively engage in the design and completion of the physical improvements and social programs.

## Results

There were some outcomes that did not live up to expectations; the major ones being dissatisfaction with lack of space and privacy in the new replacement housing (even though the size is comparable to middle-class housing in the country) and dissatisfaction with the quality of construction. The municipality has also been criticized for poor garbage collection, street cleaning and drainage system maintenance.



However, the Ribiera Azul and PATS projects have significantly improved the quality of life in Alagados. Through the projects, 1,268 stilt houses were removed and 984 families moved into new homes in the area, 373 new homes were built, and more than 200 homes were improved. New paved roads and access ways improved circulation and public safety. Household garbage collection coverage rates increased from 50 percent to 80 percent, water connections increased from 37 percent to 71 percent, electrical connections rose from 72 percent to 88 percent, and sewage connections increased from 21 percent to 84 percent. The number of homes without sanitary facilities decreased from 31 percent to 3 percent. The social programs were credited with improving health and diet, expanding educational opportunities for children, and generating some new employment opportunities.

## Keys to success

The Alagados program demonstrated that to be more successful and sustainable, urban upgrading programs must combine physical improvements with strong social interventions. Participation by the community from start to finish was essential. The institutional arrangement, which married the urban development experience of a government entity (CONDER) with the social expertise of an NGO (AVSI), supported by international experts (World Bank and Cities Alliance), resulted in increased flexibility, inclusiveness and improved communication with community residents.

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*\*This case study is based on “Alagados: The Story of Integrated Slum Upgrading in Salvador (Bahia), Brazil,” The Cities Alliance, 2008 and “Integrated Upgrading for the Urban Poor: The Experience of Riberia Azul, Salvador, Brazil,” by Judy Baker, World Bank Policy and Research Working Paper 3861, 2006.*



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