



# **Evaluating the Effectiveness of Redevelopment Projects in Informal Settlements**

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## **Introduction & Methodology**

As per UN estimates, over a billion people are living in informal settlements (commonly known as slums) around the world. These settlements hinder their inhabitants' basic human rights, such as access to healthcare, education, food, water, and sanitation. As a result, SDG 11 highlights the need for sustainable cities and communities, calling for the redevelopment of such settlements.

This research paper attempts to evaluate redevelopment strategies that have been implemented around the world, to then build recommendations for future redevelopment programs. To do this, a case study approach will be taken wherein three redevelopment programs, differing in time period, duration, stakeholders, and location, will be examined. This way, a large number of strategies will be analysed, improving the validity of the recommendations that the paper looks to form. The three programs chosen for this analysis are the Favelo-Barrio project in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil (1994-2008), the Dharavi Redevelopment Program in Mumbai, India (2024- Present), and the Kampung Improvement Program in Jakarta, Indonesia (1969-1989). Not only do these programs differ in their location, but they are also different in terms of when they were implemented and the duration they were implemented for. While the programs in Jakarta and Rio were longer and implemented decades ago, the program in Mumbai helps provide a more recent perspective on strategies currently being implemented.

The analysis itself will be conducted using both primary and secondary methods. The majority of the evaluation, particularly for the Indonesian and Brazilian programs, will be done by comparing social and economic indicators before and after program completion. Quantitative analysis will then be complemented using primary research conducted on key stakeholders, such as residents, NGOs, and government officials. This latter research type will be beneficial for the Dharavi project, where there is limited data available due to the ongoing nature of the program. Using these evaluation techniques, the strengths and limitations of each program will then be outlined, making it easy to identify what strategies could be extrapolated and applied to current and future development programs around the world.

### **Kampung Improvement Project (Indonesia)**

Indonesia's Kampung Improvement Program (KIP) was one of the world's most significant and influential slum upgrading initiatives, transforming the lives of millions of urban residents over two decades. Launched in Jakarta in 1969 by Governor Ali Sadikin, KIP pioneered an in-situ upgrading approach that avoided forced relocation while providing essential infrastructure and services to informal settlements. This comprehensive analysis examines the program's structure, implementation, stakeholders, and measurable impacts as part of evaluating redevelopment programs in informal settlements globally.

## **Program Overview**

The program emerged as Indonesia's innovative response to rapid urbanization and the rise of informal settlements that housed approximately 60% of Jakarta's 4.8 million inhabitants by 1969. Unlike traditional slum clearance approaches that displaced residents, KIP's in-situ approach was defined as paradigm-shifting in the development world.

Initially conceived as a local Jakarta initiative, KIP expanded into a national policy over its 20-year implementation period from 1969 to 1989. The program ultimately covered 500 square kilometers across Indonesia and directly benefited 15 million people, making it the world's largest slum upgrading program of its era. The program's core philosophy centered on providing basic urban services – roads, drainage, water supply, sanitation, and community facilities – at affordable costs averaging \$13-100 per beneficiary.

## **Key Stakeholders**

### **Government Leadership and Coordination**

- *Jakarta Provincial Government (DKI)*: The provincial government established dedicated implementation units and coordinated across multiple municipal departments to ensure comprehensive service delivery. The government's commitment extended beyond initial funding to creating institutional frameworks for long-term program sustainability around Indonesia.
- *National Government*: As KIP expanded beyond Jakarta, the Indonesian national government incorporated slum upgrading into successive five-year development plans (Pelita I-III).

### **International Financial Partners**

- *World Bank*: Beginning in 1974, the World Bank became KIP's primary external financier, providing soft loans totalling approximately \$438.3 million through 1982. Beyond financing, the Bank contributed technical assistance and helped establish KIP as an international model for replication.

### **Community Stakeholders**

- *Kampung Residents*: As both beneficiaries and active participants, kampung dwellers contributed between one-third and one-half of total upgrade costs through labour, materials, and ongoing maintenance. Community participation varied significantly across different settlements, with some demonstrating high levels of engagement in planning and implementation, while others remained primarily recipients.
- *Community Leaders*: Traditional and elected community leaders served as intermediaries between government agencies and residents, facilitating consultation processes and organizing community contributions to program activities.

## **Implementation Partners**

- *Municipal Technical Departments:* Various city departments coordinated through committee structures to manage planning, design, construction supervision, and ongoing maintenance.
- *Private Contractors:* Local contractors implemented physical improvements under government supervision, providing employment opportunities within upgraded communities.
- *International Organisations:* Technical assistance came from organisations including UNICEF, UNEP, and various bilateral development agencies, contributing expertise in community development and infrastructure design

## **Key Components of the Program**

- **Transportation Infrastructure:** Improving internal road networks through paving and widening existing pathways, constructing new access roads, building bridges over drainage canals, and creating pedestrian footpaths to enhance connectivity within kampungs and to city-wide transportation networks.
- **Water Supply Systems:** Installing public standpipes and distribution networks to provide reliable access to clean water, upgrading existing wells and water sources, and connecting settlements to municipal water supply systems where feasible.
- **Sanitation and Drainage:** Developing public toilet facilities and communal washing areas, constructing comprehensive stormwater drainage systems to address flooding, installing sewerage connections where technically and financially viable, and improving overall environmental health conditions.
- **Waste Management:** Providing standardised garbage collection points, establishing waste collection routes and schedules, introducing organised disposal services, and promoting community-based waste management practices.
- **Community Facilities:** Constructing primary schools to improve educational access, building neighbourhood health clinics (Puskemas) for basic healthcare, creating community centres for meetings and social activities, and developing markets and commercial areas to support local economic activity.

## Program Phases

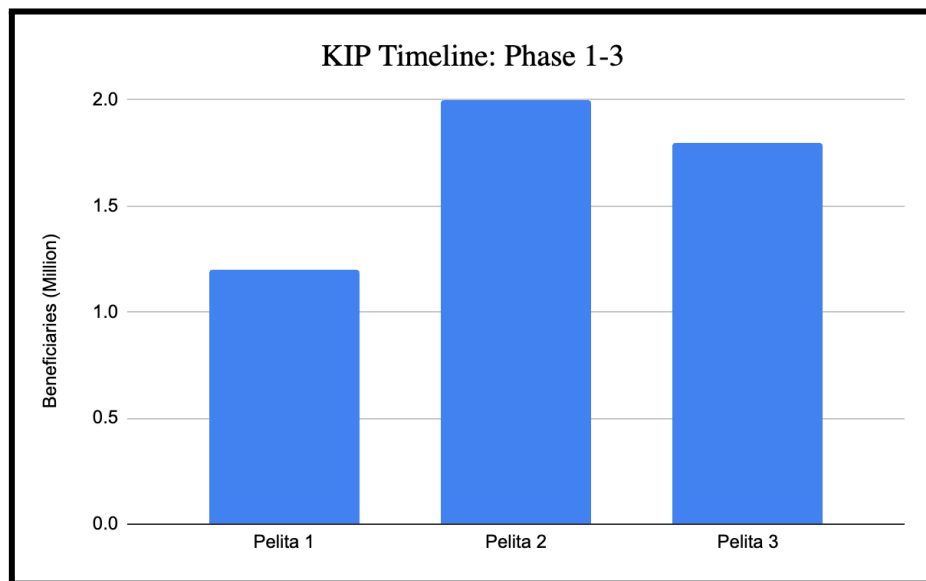


Figure 1: KIP Phase Timeline

- Pelita I (1969-1974): The foundational phase focused exclusively on basic physical infrastructure using Jakarta government funding. This period established the low-cost, high-impact approach that would define KIP, with average costs of \$13 per beneficiary. The emphasis was on roads, drainage, and water supply as the most essential services for immediate improvements in quality of life.
- Pelita II (1974-1979): World Bank partnership enabled significant scaling and improved technical standards. This phase expanded infrastructure provision to include social facilities like schools and health clinics, recognizing that physical improvements alone were insufficient for comprehensive community development. The number of beneficiary numbers increased substantially as the program expanded beyond Jakarta.
- Pelita III (1979-1984): The most sophisticated phase introduced comprehensive community development approaches that integrated social and economic dimensions with physical improvements. This period emphasised participatory planning processes, skills development, and income generation activities alongside continued infrastructure provision.

## Innovation in Implementation Methodology

KIP pioneered several methodological innovations that distinguished it from conventional development approaches:

- *In-Situ Upgrading*: The fundamental strategy of improving settlements without relocating residents avoided the social disruption and economic hardship typically associated with slum clearance programs.

- *Community Cost-Sharing*: Residents contributed substantial resources through labor, materials, and cash contributions, creating ownership and sustainability while reducing program costs.
- *Flexible Design Standards*: Rather than imposing uniform technical standards, KIP adapted infrastructure specifications to local conditions, available materials, and community preferences.
- *Institutional Coordination*: The program established dedicated implementation units that coordinated across multiple government departments, ensuring integrated service delivery.

## Quantitative Analysis of Program Impact

The transformation achieved through KIP can be measured across multiple dimensions, demonstrating substantial improvements in living conditions over the 20-year implementation period. This analysis examines social, economic, and environmental indicators before and after program implementation

### Social Indicators

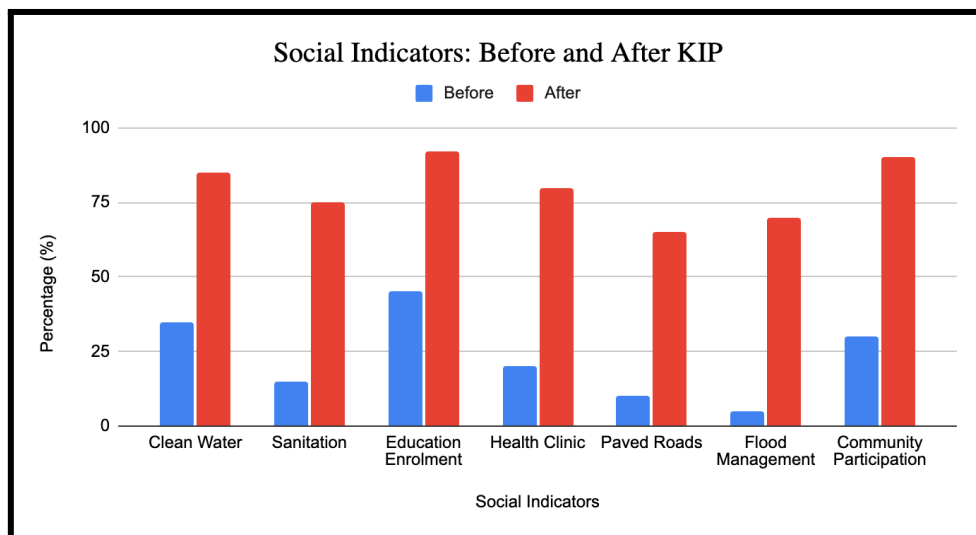


Figure 2: Impact on Social Indicators

The social dimension showed the most dramatic improvements, particularly in basic service access. Access to clean water increased from 20% to 75% of residents, representing a 55 percentage point improvement that directly impacted health outcomes and daily quality of life. Similarly, sanitation access rose from 15% to 65%, a 50 percentage point improvement that significantly reduced waterborne disease risks.

Educational access demonstrated substantial progress, with primary education enrollment growing from 45% to 80%—a 35 percentage point improvement facilitated by school construction and improved neighborhood conditions that made education more accessible to kampung children. Health clinic access

expanded dramatically from 10% to 70%, a 60 percentage point improvement that brought basic healthcare within reach of most residents.

Infrastructure development showed the most striking changes. Paved road access increased from 5% to 85%, an 80 percentage point improvement that enhanced mobility, economic opportunities, and emergency service access. Flood management coverage was established from a zero baseline to 60% coverage, addressing one of the most persistent challenges facing low-lying kampung areas.

Community engagement metrics showed meaningful but more modest improvements. Community participation in development activities rose from 10% to 65%, a 55 percentage point improvement, indicating increased civic engagement and collective efficacy.

### Economic Indicators

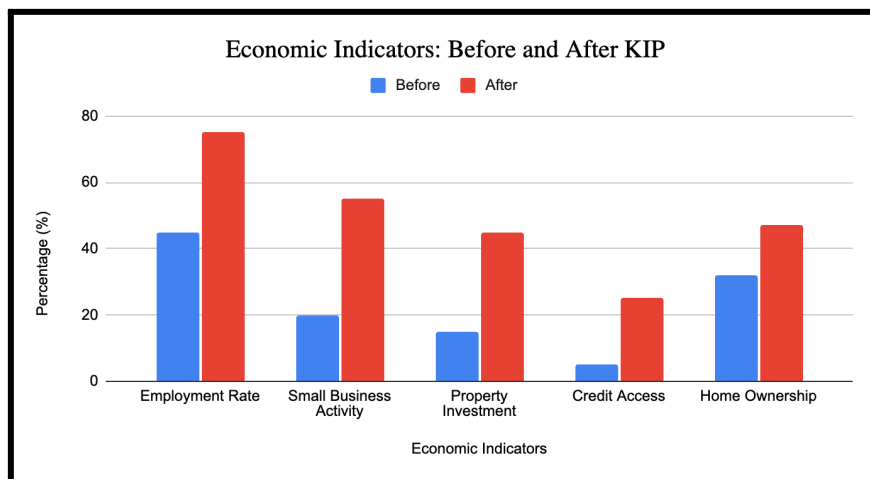


Figure 3: Impact on Economic Indicators

Economic conditions demonstrated consistent but moderate improvements across multiple indicators. Average household income increased from \$25 to \$60 per month, representing a 140% increase that reflected improved economic opportunities and stability within upgraded settlements. The employment rate rose from 45% to 75%, a 30 percentage point improvement linked to better transportation access and increased local economic activity.

Small business activity expanded significantly from 20% to 55% of households, a 35 percentage point improvement that demonstrated how infrastructure improvements catalyzed entrepreneurial activity and local economic development. Property investment grew from 15% to 45% of households undertaking improvements, a 30 percentage point increase indicating increased confidence in settlement permanence and future prospects.

Access to credit and microfinance services expanded from 5% to 25%, a 20 percentage point improvement that facilitated further economic development and housing improvements. Home ownership claims increased from 32% to 47%, a 15 percentage point improvement reflecting enhanced tenure security and formal recognition of resident rights.

## Environmental Indicators

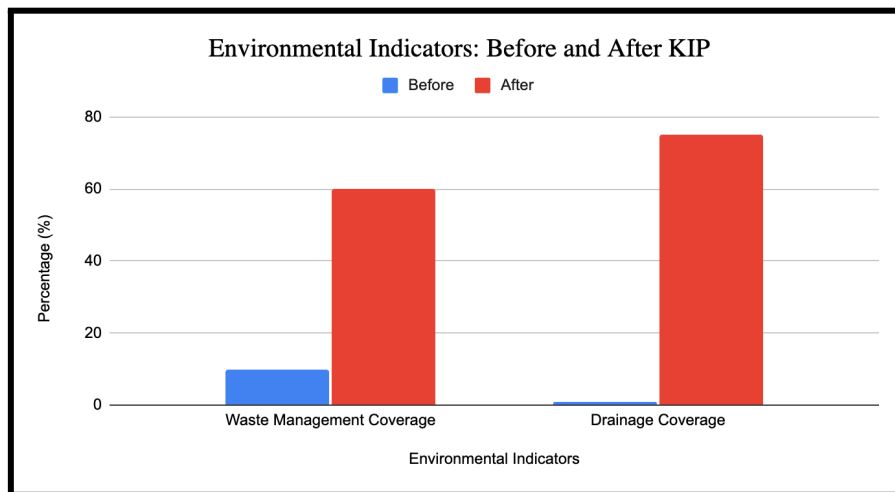


Figure 4: Impact on Environmental Indicators

Environmental conditions improved significantly across multiple measures. Waste management coverage expanded from 10% to 60%, a 50 percentage point improvement that directly impacted public health and neighbourhood appearance. Drainage system coverage developed from zero baseline to 75% coverage, fundamentally transforming flood management and reducing water-related health risks.

Water quality improvements were substantial, with the water quality index rising from 3 to 6 on a 10-point scale, representing a doubling of water quality standards through infrastructure improvements and source protection. Green space per capita increased from 2 to 8 square meters per person, a fourfold improvement that enhanced environmental quality and community recreation opportunities.

Air quality showed modest improvement, with the air quality index decreasing from 150 to 120 (lower scores indicate better air quality), representing a 20% improvement in ambient air conditions. Disease outbreak frequency declined dramatically from 12 to 4 incidents per year, a 67% reduction that demonstrated the public health impact of improved sanitation and water quality.

## Primary Stakeholder Perspectives

### Government Official Assessments

Governor Ali Sadikin and Jakarta authorities viewed KIP as a strategic response to mounting political pressure from kampung residents lacking basic urban services. Government officials emphasized the program's role in establishing "permanence of the kampungs" and providing formal recognition to previously ignored informal settlements. The Jakarta administration highlighted KIP's success in avoiding the social disruption and political backlash associated with slum clearance approaches while achieving measurable improvements in living conditions.

National government officials incorporated KIP into successive development plans, viewing it as a replicable model for addressing urban challenges across Indonesia's rapidly growing cities. The program's relatively low cost per beneficiary made it politically attractive as a way to demonstrate government responsiveness to urban poor constituencies.

### **World Bank Institutional Evaluation**

The World Bank's comprehensive 1995 evaluation concluded that KIP "improved the quality of life of Indonesian urban areas at a low cost of investment". Bank officials highlighted the program's success in avoiding gentrification while achieving measurable improvements in health, education, and housing conditions. The evaluation noted that infrastructure improvements stimulated private investment in housing upgrades, creating a multiplier effect that extended program benefits.

Ben Fisher, World Bank Vice President during KIP implementation, noted that Indonesia's experience provided valuable lessons for avoiding the mistakes of U.S. urban renewal programs that had "neglected the poor and the community". The Bank emphasised KIP's demonstration that participatory approaches could be implemented at scale without sacrificing efficiency or cost-effectiveness.

### **Community Resident Perspectives**

Resident perspectives varied significantly across different kampungs, reflecting the program's decentralized implementation and varying degrees of community consultation. The World Bank evaluation noted that while consultation occurred in some areas, "the degree of participation varied" considerably. In successful implementations, residents expressed strong appreciation for improved access to basic services and flood control measures.

Community members frequently highlighted infrastructure improvements that "stimulated home improvement" and increased property values, indicating that residents viewed KIP as legitimizing their settlements and encouraging further investment. However, some communities reported insufficient meaningful involvement in initial planning phases, suggesting that participation was often limited to implementation and maintenance rather than design and priority-setting.

Residents in areas with comprehensive implementation praised the integrated approach that addressed multiple needs simultaneously. However, some expressed concerns about ongoing maintenance responsibilities and the sustainability of improvements without continued government support.

### International Recognition and Expert Assessment

The program received significant international acclaim, winning the prestigious Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1980. The jury citation praised how KIP “improved living conditions, helped to integrate the informal sector with the city economy and encouraged individual initiative in the improvement of housing”. This recognition established KIP as a global model for slum upgrading.

International experts emphasised KIP’s innovation in demonstrating that large-scale upgrading could be implemented without displacing existing communities. The program influenced urban development policy worldwide, with elements of the KIP approach subsequently adopted in over 500 cities globally.

Academic evaluations highlighted KIP’s success in balancing top-down technical expertise with bottom-up community knowledge and resources. Researchers noted that the program’s flexibility and adaptability were key factors in its success across diverse urban contexts.

### Overall Assessment of Strengths and Limitations

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Limitations</u>
Physical Infrastructure	
Successfully provided basic infrastructure to 5 million residents at exceptionally low cost (\$13-100 per beneficiary), demonstrating financial sustainability and scalability	Basic infrastructure had a limited 15-year design lifespan, requiring ongoing maintenance and periodic upgrades that strained municipal budgets
A comprehensive approach addressing water, sanitation, roads, drainage, and community facilities simultaneously created synergistic benefits	Quality standards sometimes prioritized coverage over durability, leading to premature deterioration in some areas
Social Impact	
Dramatically improved health outcomes through better sanitation, water quality, and healthcare facility access, reducing waterborne disease incidence by 67%	Limited consultation with residents in planning phases resulted in varying degrees of community participation and occasional misalignment with local priorities
Enhanced educational access through school construction and improved neighbourhood conditions, increasing enrollment from 45% to 80%	Social improvements were primarily infrastructural rather than addressing the underlying issues of poverty, inequality, or social exclusion
Strengthened community cohesion and collective efficacy	

through shared improvement processes	
Economic Impact	
Stimulated substantial private investment in housing improvements and small business development, creating multiplier effects beyond direct program investment	Did not significantly alter income distribution patterns or address structural causes of urban poverty and informal settlement formation
Provided de facto tenure security that encouraged residents to invest in property improvements, increasing average household investment by 200%	Limited integration with broader economic development strategies or job creation programs
Improved access to formal financial services and credit, facilitating continued economic development	Benefits were primarily local, without strong linkages to city-wide economic opportunities
Implementation	
Pioneered an innovative in-situ upgrading approach that avoided the costly and socially disruptive relocation of 5 million residents	The centralised planning approach limited local government capacity building and long-term institutional development
Created highly replicable model adopted by over 500 cities globally, establishing international best practices for slum upgrading	Heavy reliance on external World Bank financing created dependency and limited program sustainability after loan periods ended
Demonstrated effective coordination across multiple government agencies and sectors through dedicated implementation units	Limited integration with broader urban planning processes and master development plans
Community Engagement	
Successfully mobilised community resources through cost-sharing arrangements, with residents contributing 33-50% of total project costs through labour and materials	Participation was often limited to implementation and maintenance phases rather than meaningful involvement in planning and priority-setting
Strengthened community ownership and responsibility for infrastructure maintenance through participatory processes	Varying levels of community organisation and leadership capacity resulted in uneven participation across different kampungs

## **Favela Barrio Project (Brazil)**

### **Program Overview**

The Favela-Bairro Program is Brazil's most ambitious and internationally recognized slum upgrading initiative, operating from 1994 to 2008 under two distinct phases. This comprehensive urban development program was designed to integrate Rio de Janeiro's favelas into the formal city fabric through infrastructure improvements and social services.

The program emerged from a fundamental shift in policy thinking, moving away from the historical approach of favela eradication and relocation toward in-situ upgrading and integration. Launched during Mayor César Maia's administration, the initiative was conceived in collaboration with the Federal University of Rio's School of Architecture and Urbanism (FAU-UFRJ), the Brazilian Institute of Architects (IAB-RJ), and received substantial funding from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Operating across two phases – Phase I (1994-2000) covering 38 favelas and Phase II (2000-2008) extending to 89 additional communities – the program ultimately reached approximately 600,000 residents across 127 communities. The total investment reached \$600 million, with each phase receiving \$300 million (\$180 million from IDB loans and \$120 million from municipal counterpart funding)

### **Government Entities**

- Rio de Janeiro Municipal Government: Primary implementing agency through the Municipal Secretariat of Housing, coordinating multiple municipal departments, including Social Development, Education, Public Works, Urban Development, and Environmental Affairs
- Executive Group for Popular Settlements (GEAP): Created in 1993 as the coordinating body with representatives from all municipal agencies
- Federal Government: Provided supplementary funding for specific components like income generation and sports programs

### **International Financial Institutions**

- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB): Primary funder providing \$360 million across both phases, also offering technical assistance and methodology development
- European Union: Additional funding support

### **Professional and Academic Partners**

- Brazilian Institute of Architects (IAB-RJ): Organised design competitions and provided technical expertise
- Federal University of Rio (FAU-UFRJ): Academic partner in program development
- Private architectural and engineering firms: 15 multidisciplinary teams led by architects implemented Phase I projects

### **Community-Level Actors**

- Neighborhood Associations (Associações de Moradores): Served as primary community representatives and facilitators of resident participation

- Favela Residents: Participated in planning consultations and decision-making processes, though with limited authority
- Civil Society Organisations: Provided social services, including daycare, job training, and community development programs

### **Key Components and Strategies**

The Favela-Bairro Program employed an integrated approach combining physical infrastructure improvements with social service provision:

- Infrastructure Development: The program prioritised basic urban services, including water supply systems, sewerage networks, storm drainage, electricity grid connections, street paving and lighting, and solid waste collection systems. These improvements aimed to bring favelas up to formal city standards and facilitate municipal service provision.
- Spatial Integration: Physical connectivity was enhanced through road construction linking favelas to surrounding neighbourhoods, pedestrian pathway systems, public space creation, including parks and playgrounds, and environmental protection measures such as reforestation to prevent erosion.
- Social Service Provision: The program included construction of daycare centres, health clinics, and schools, along with community centres and sports facilities. Phase II expanded social components to include adult education and literacy programs, job training and income generation initiatives, youth leadership and crime prevention programs, and counselling services for domestic violence and substance abuse.
- Innovative Implementation Methodology: The program employed public design competitions for architectural firms, community participation in planning and service selection, systematic criteria for community prioritisation based on size, consolidation level, and accessibility, and coordination mechanisms between multiple municipal agencies.
- Legal and Tenure Security: Property rights formalisation provided legal recognition to residents, enabled official address registration for mail delivery and formal services, and facilitated access to credit and formal employment

### **Quantitative Analysis of Program Outcomes**

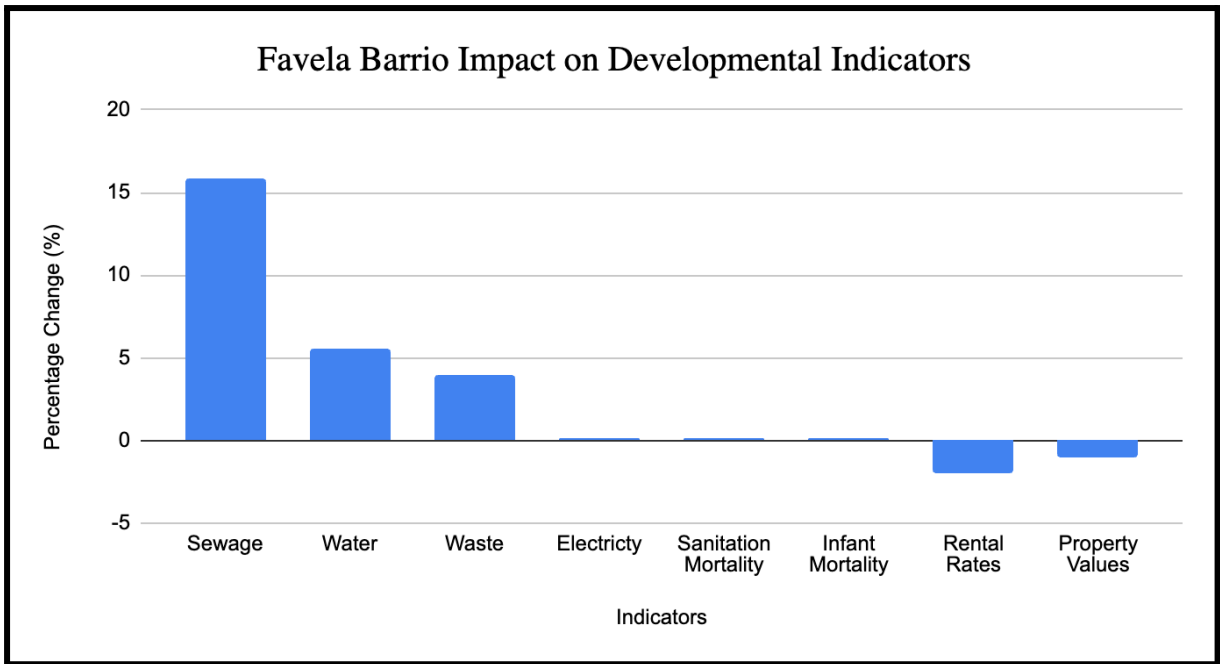


Figure 5: Impact of Favela Barrio Program

The quantitative evaluation reveals a mixed pattern of outcomes across different indicators. Infrastructure improvements showed the most significant positive impacts, while health and housing market outcomes demonstrated limited or negative effects.

**Infrastructure Service Improvements:** The program achieved measurable improvements in basic services, particularly benefiting the poorest residents. Sewerage access increased by 15.8% in treated communities, representing the program’s most significant infrastructure success. Water access improved by 5.6%, while garbage collection increased by 4.0%. However, illumination and electricity services showed no improvement and even negative performance in some eligible communities.

**Health and Safety Indicators:** Despite infrastructure improvements, the program failed to achieve significant health outcomes. Mortality due to sanitation-related diseases showed no statistically significant reduction compared to control communities. Infant mortality rates declined citywide but not more substantially in treated favelas. Most concerning, homicide rates showed no significant reduction, indicating limited impact on community safety.

**Housing Market Effects:** Contrary to expectations, the program produced negative housing market outcomes. Observed rental rates showed depreciation in treated favelas relative to control communities. Predicted rental rates based on housing quality indices also showed negative impacts. This suggests that improvements did not translate into increased property values or housing market benefits for residents.

## **Primary Stakeholder Opinions**

### **Community Residents**

Resident feedback revealed mixed experiences with immediate improvements overshadowed by longer-term concerns. Sandra Nogueira, president of the Grota neighborhood association, noted: “Our quality of life has improved a lot. We no longer walk in mud because our streets are paved. We no longer drink polluted water because we have our own water tank. And when people see that the community improves, they start to take care of their own homes”.

However, residents also expressed frustration with maintenance issues and rising costs. Many reported that improved infrastructure deteriorated within years due to poor materials and lack of ongoing maintenance. Rising living costs, including utility bills and property taxes, created financial pressures that some residents could not manage.

### **Program Managers and Officials**

José Brakarz, IDB project team leader, emphasized the participatory approach: “We did not have to look far to find what was needed. The people told us what they wanted”. Program manager Marcia Garrido highlighted positive security effects in some areas, noting how public spaces with children’s programs displaced drug dealing activities.

However, officials also acknowledged significant limitations. Pedro da Luz, one of the program’s architects, identified the core challenge: “The major challenge is carrying out maintenance on the developments, which is expensive. Introduced services like garbage collection, water, sewerage and electricity are eventually no longer maintained”.

### **Academic and Professional Assessments**

International experts praised the program’s innovative approach. Dr. Janice E. Perlman, president of the Mega-Cities Project, called it “one of the most ambitious and forward-looking neighbourhood upgrading programs that any city has ever launched to deal with marginal settlements, not only in Latin America but in the world”.

However, later academic assessments were more critical. A 2020 IDB evaluation found that while there were immediate improvements in quality of life, including access to sewerage, lighting, and water, the constructed infrastructure deteriorated rapidly, with some favelas returning to previous conditions. The report identified organized crime as a contributing factor, damaging roads and public lighting to impede access.

### **International Development Community**

The program received significant international recognition, winning Harvard’s Veronica Rudge Green Prize in Urban Design in 2000 for contributing significantly to urban life quality. The United Nations recognized it as a model project, and it influenced similar initiatives in at least six other countries including Argentina, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Uruguay.

However, this international acclaim contrasted with local perceptions of implementation quality. Many residents and local observers felt that poor execution, low-quality materials, and insufficient community participation undermined the program’s potential

### Overall Assessment of Strengths and Limitations

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Limitations</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Infrastructure Development:</b> The program’s most tangible success involved basic service provision, with statistically significant improvements in sewerage (15.8% increase), water access (5.6% increase), and garbage collection (4.0% increase), particularly benefiting the poorest residents.</li> <li>➤ <b>Institutional Innovation:</b> The program pioneered inter-agency coordination mechanisms, created new technical expertise for slum upgrading, and established systematic methodologies for community prioritisation and intervention design.</li> <li>➤ <b>Physical Integration:</b> Successfully connected many favelas to surrounding neighbourhoods through road construction, improved accessibility, and creation of public spaces, reducing physical barriers between formal and informal city areas.</li> <li>➤ <b>International Model:</b> Achieved unprecedented recognition as a global best practice, influencing similar programs across Latin America and receiving major international awards.</li> <li>➤ <b>Community Participation:</b> Despite limitations, the program introduced meaningful consultation processes, design competitions, and mechanisms for resident input into planning decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Health and Safety Outcomes:</b> The program completely failed to improve mortality indicators, with no statistically significant reduction in sanitation-related deaths, infant mortality, or homicides.</li> <li>➤ <b>Economic Development:</b> No measurable improvement in employment outcomes, while rising living costs displaced the poorest residents, undermining poverty reduction goals.</li> <li>➤ <b>Program Sustainability:</b> Rapid infrastructure deterioration due to poor quality materials and lack of maintenance funding led to program termination in 2008 without achieving long-term sustainability.</li> <li>➤ <b>Housing Market Benefits:</b> Property values depreciated rather than appreciated, providing no housing wealth benefits to residents and contradicting integration objectives.</li> <li>➤ <b>Social Development:</b> Insufficient investment in education, job training, and human development components limited the program’s impact on residents’ life opportunities.</li> <li>➤ <b>Comprehensive Coverage:</b> The program ended without serving the majority of Rio’s favelas, leaving fundamental housing inequality unaddressed.</li> </ul>

## Dharavi Redevelopment Program (India)

### Project Overview

The Dharavi Redevelopment Project represents one of the world’s most ambitious urban renewal initiatives, targeting Asia’s largest informal settlement. Led by the Adani Group through Navbharat Mega

Developers Private Limited (NMDPL), this massive undertaking aims to transform 620 acres of densely populated slum area in Mumbai into a modern urban township.

The project gained momentum when Adani Properties emerged as the highest bidder in November 2022 with a bid of ₹5,069 crore, significantly outpacing competitors like DLF Group's ₹2,025 crore offer. The Maharashtra government approved the master plan in May 2025, with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis emphasising that the redevelopment would preserve Dharavi's "soul" while modernizing its infrastructure.

#### *Key Project Specifications:*

- Total Area: 620 acres (259 hectares) with 296 acres earmarked for redevelopment
- Population Impact: Approximately 1 million current residents, reducing to 485,000 post-redevelopment
- Timeline: 7 years for rehabilitation phase, 17-25 years total completion
- Investment: ₹2.5-3 lakh crore total, with ₹95,790 crore allocated for rehabilitation

Construction officially began on January 14, 2025, starting with a 6.4-acre railway land parcel in Matunga West. The project incorporates international expertise, with partnerships including US-based Sasaki Associates, UK's Buro Happold, and renowned architect Hafeez Contractor.

### **Key Stakeholders**

The Dharavi Redevelopment Project involves a complex web of stakeholders with varying degrees of influence and interest in the outcome.

#### Primary Stakeholders:

- Navbharat Mega Developers Private Limited (NMDPL): The special purpose vehicle executing the project, with Adani Group holding 80% stake and Maharashtra government retaining 20%
- SVR Srinivas: CEO of the Dharavi Redevelopment Project and Chairman of NMDPL, serving as the key administrative leader
- Dharavi Redevelopment Project/Slum Rehabilitation Authority (DRP/SRA): The special planning authority appointed by the Government of Maharashtra

#### Government Entities:

- Maharashtra Government: Primary regulatory authority holding 20% stake in the project through Urban Development Department
- Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM): Controls 45% of Dharavi's landmass and provides civic infrastructure oversight

- Railway Land Development Authority: Provided 45 acres of adjacent land crucial for the project's feasibility

#### Community Stakeholders:

- Eligible Residents: Approximately 300,000 people living in ground-floor structures built before January 1, 2000, entitled to free 350 sq ft apartments within Dharavi
- Ineligible Residents: 300,000-700,000 people in upper floors or post-2000 structures, facing relocation to sites outside Dharavi
- Industrial Unit Owners: Over 10,000 small-scale industries generating \$1 billion annually, requiring commercial space rehabilitation

#### Opposition Groups:

- Dharavi Bachao Andolan: Local resistance movement demanding in-situ rehabilitation for all residents and transparency in the master plan
- Neighboring Communities: Residents in Mulund, Malad, and Kurla protesting against relocation of Dharavi residents to their areas

### **Current and Proposed Strategies and Initiatives**

The project will construct 72,000 total rehabilitation units, including 58,500 residential units for eligible residents. Each unit provides a minimum 350 sq ft carpet area—17% larger than previous Mumbai slum rehabilitation schemes—with separate kitchens, toilets, and living spaces. The developer will provide free maintenance for the first 10 years, with 10% of built-up area allocated for commercial spaces to generate long-term revenue for maintenance.

#### **Eligibility Framework:**

- Eligible residents (pre-January 1, 2000): Free 350 sq ft apartments within redeveloped Dharavi
- Renewal tenements (authorized structures): 405 sq ft units with 35% additional fungible area
- Upper-floor residents (as of November 15, 2022): 300 sq ft homes outside Dharavi through hire-purchase scheme over 25 years
- Ineligible residents: Affordable rental housing at external locations including controversial Deonar landfill site

#### **Infrastructure Modernization:**

The master plan envisions state-of-the-art infrastructure, including underground drainage systems, reliable power and water supply, comprehensive road networks with 9-12 meter wide streets spaced every 125 meters, and 16% open space allocation—double the mandated requirement.

#### **Economic Transformation Strategy:**

The project aims to formalize Dharavi’s \$1 billion informal economy through modern commercial and industrial spaces, skills development centers, MSME incubation hubs, and R&D facilities. All businesses will receive GST refunds for five years to enhance competitiveness, with the goal of integrating Dharavi’s economy with Mumbai’s broader financial district.

**Phased Implementation:**

- Phase 1: Railway land development (6.4 acres) for initial rehabilitation and railway employee housing
- Survey Phase: Comprehensive door-to-door documentation using drones, LIDAR technology, and alpha-numeric house numbering
- Relocation Phase: Gradual movement of residents to temporary and permanent housing as construction progresses

**Impact Assessment**

Metric	Current/Baseline	Projected/Target	Impact Assessment
Total Population Affected	10,00,000	485,000 (in Dharavi)	Major population reduction
Eligible for Free Housing	3,00,000	300,000 (free housing)	Positive - modern housing
Ineligible/Displaced	7,00,000	700,000 (relocated)	High risk - toxic relocations
Small Industries Affected	10,000	10,000+ (formalized)	Critical transformation needed
Annual Economic Value at Risk	\$1 billion	\$1 billion+ (formalized)	Potential growth if managed well
New Housing Units	0	72,000	Significant improvement
Population After Redevelopment	10,00,000	4,85,000	Decongestion achieved
Total Investment Required	0	Rs 2.5-3 lakh crore	Massive financial commitment
Construction Jobs Created (Est.)	0	100,000+ (estimated)	Substantial employment generation
Years for Completion	Ongoing delays	7-17 years	Long-term commitment required

**Environmental Impact Assessment:**

*Positive Environmental Changes:* The redevelopment promises significant environmental improvements through modern sanitation infrastructure, underground sewage systems, and green building technologies. The project incorporates rainwater harvesting, energy-efficient systems, and allocates 16% of land for open green spaces—double the mandated 8%. These improvements will replace the current inadequate sanitation affecting over 1 million residents.

*Environmental Concerns:* However, the project faces severe criticism for relocating 50,000-100,000 ineligible residents to the Deonar landfill, which violates Central Pollution Control Board guidelines prohibiting residential construction within 100 meters of landfills. Deonar, one of India's top 22 methane hotspots, releases 6,202 kg of methane hourly and lacks proper environmental impact assessment for housing development. Additionally, the allocation of 255 acres of salt pan land threatens coastal ecology and traditional fishing communities.

### **Social Impact Analysis:**

*Quality of Life Improvements:* For eligible residents, the transformation promises dramatic improvements from cramped, unsanitary conditions to modern 350 sq ft apartments with private toilets, kitchens, and reliable utilities. The project includes healthcare centers, schools, community halls, and recreational facilities, addressing long-standing deficits in social infrastructure.

*Social Displacement and Fragmentation:* The project's most significant social challenge involves displacing 300,000-700,000 "ineligible" residents, potentially destroying established social networks and community bonds built over decades. The eligibility criteria based on arbitrary cutoff dates may separate families and disrupt the rental income that many residents depend upon. Cultural preservation remains questionable as the redevelopment may erase Dharavi's unique character as a "melting pot of diverse beliefs, cultures, and languages".

### **Economic Impact Assessment:**

*Economic Formalisation Potential:* The project could formalize Dharavi's substantial \$1 billion annual economy by providing modern commercial spaces, reducing the 225 sq ft limitation that currently constrains many businesses. Skills development centers and MSME incubation facilities may create new economic opportunities, while integration with the Bandra-Kurla Complex could attract investment and higher-value activities

*Livelihood Disruption Risks:* The redevelopment poses severe threats to Dharavi's existing economic ecosystem, which employs over 250,000 people across 10,000+ small-scale industries, including leather processing, pottery, recycling, and garment manufacturing. The transition from expansive informal work areas to standardised 225 sq ft commercial units may prove inadequate for many businesses. Home-based enterprises such as papad-making, bidi production, and leather crafts face particular vulnerability as these activities require specific spatial arrangements and supply chain networks that may not survive relocation.

## Stakeholder Interview

Based on interactions with a stakeholder working for the project implementation body, several critical insights emerged regarding the initiative's core objectives and implementation challenges.

**Primary Objective Clarification:** The stakeholder emphasized that the main goal of the initiative extends beyond mere housing provision to comprehensive area development. The focus centers on converting unsanitary and unsafe housing conditions into safer, larger, and more hygienic living environments. This transformation addresses the fundamental health and safety challenges that have plagued Dharavi residents for generations, including inadequate sanitation, overcrowding, and structural instability.

**Welfare-Focused Approach:** A significant emphasis was placed on prioritizing the welfare of original Dharavi residents, particularly long-term inhabitants who have established roots in the community. The stakeholder stressed the commitment to ensuring these residents are not forcibly relocated outside their familiar environment, recognizing the importance of maintaining social networks and economic ties that have developed over decades.

**Capacity Limitations:** However, the stakeholder acknowledged a critical constraint: it is impossible to provide accommodation within the redeveloped Dharavi for all current residents. This limitation stems from both the physical constraints of the available land and the massive population density that has accumulated over time. The stark reality is that while the project aims to improve conditions for as many residents as possible within Dharavi itself, the sheer numbers make universal in-situ rehabilitation unfeasible.

**Implementation Philosophy:** The stakeholder described the approach as "human-centric transformation," emphasizing that the project goes beyond infrastructure development to focus on restoring dignity and improving quality of life for residents. This perspective aligns with Gautam Adani's stated vision of the project as more than urban renewal—viewing it as an opportunity to showcase "ambitious, purposeful action" in addressing urban poverty.

**Practical Challenges:** The interview revealed ongoing tensions between ideal outcomes and practical constraints. While the welfare focus on existing residents remains paramount, the mathematical reality of accommodating over 1 million people in a finite area necessitates difficult decisions about who can remain and who must be relocated.

## Final Evaluation

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Limitations</u>
<b>Infrastructure and Housing Improvements:</b> The project's most compelling achievement lies in its ambitious	<b>Displacement and Social Fragmentation:</b> The project's most significant failure lies in its inability to accommodate all

infrastructure modernization. The provision of 350 sq ft apartments with private toilets and kitchens represents a dramatic upgrade from current conditions, while the 10-year free maintenance model reduces financial burden on residents. The integration of modern utilities, underground drainage, and 16% green space allocation addresses long-standing environmental health challenges.

**Economic Integration Potential:** The formalization of Dharavi's \$1 billion informal economy through modern commercial spaces and skills development programs offers pathways for economic advancement. The strategic location near Bandra-Kurla Complex and integration with Mumbai's financial district could unlock significant economic opportunities for residents and businesses.

**Comprehensive Planning Approach:** The project's scale and ambition, involving international design expertise and substantial financial commitment (₹2.5-3 lakh crore), demonstrates serious intent to address urban poverty systematically rather than through piecemeal interventions

existing residents, forcing 300,000-700,000 people into displacement. The controversial relocation to environmentally hazardous sites like Deonar landfill violates safety guidelines and threatens public health. This displacement undermines the project's stated commitment to resident welfare and community preservation.

**Economic Disruption Without Adequate Safety**

**Nets:** Despite promises of economic transformation, the project lacks comprehensive rehabilitation plans for tens of thousands of informal workers who depend on Dharavi's existing economic networks. The reduction of working spaces from expansive informal areas to standardized 225 sq ft units may prove inadequate for many traditional industries. The destruction of established supply chains and business relationships during the transition period poses severe livelihood risks.

**Insufficient Community Consultation:** The project faces significant resistance from resident groups like Dharavi Bachao Andolan, who argue that planning proceeded without meaningful community consultation. The lack of transparency regarding eligibility criteria and relocation plans has generated distrust and opposition, potentially undermining project success.

**Environmental and Regulatory Violations:** The decision to relocate residents to sites that violate environmental guidelines, particularly the Deonar landfill placement, represents a serious regulatory failure. The absence of mandatory Environmental Impact Assessments for relocation sites suggests inadequate environmental planning

## Concluding Remarks

This comprehensive analysis of redevelopment programs in Indonesia, Brazil, and India reveals critical strategic insights for designing successful informal settlement interventions. The research demonstrates that effective redevelopment requires balancing ambitious infrastructure improvements with community-centered approaches that prioritize resident welfare and participation.

In-situ upgrading emerges as the most viable strategy, avoiding the social disruption and economic hardship associated with forced relocation. Indonesia's Kampung Improvement Program exemplified this approach, benefiting 15 million residents at exceptionally low costs while preserving community networks

and economic relationships. This strategy should be prioritised over wholesale clearance or displacement models.

Community participation must extend beyond implementation to meaningful involvement in planning and priority-setting. The analysis reveals that programs limiting resident participation to maintenance phases, rather than decision-making processes, achieve less sustainable outcomes. Successful initiatives should establish robust consultation mechanisms that incorporate local knowledge and preferences into design decisions.

Integrated service delivery proves essential for achieving synergistic benefits. Programs addressing water, sanitation, transportation, education, and healthcare simultaneously create multiplier effects that extend beyond individual interventions. This comprehensive approach addresses the interconnected nature of urban poverty while maximising resource efficiency.

Sustainability mechanisms require careful attention to avoid infrastructure deterioration and program discontinuation. Brazil's Favela-Bairro Program demonstrated how poor-quality materials and inadequate maintenance planning can undermine long-term success. Future programs should incorporate robust maintenance frameworks, quality standards, and sustainable financing models from project inception.

Tenure security and economic integration represent fundamental prerequisites for successful upgrading. Programs should formalise property rights while creating pathways for residents to access formal economic opportunities and credit systems. However, this must occur without triggering displacement through rising costs or gentrification pressures.

These strategic insights emphasise that successful redevelopment programs require holistic approaches prioritizing community engagement, comprehensive service provision, and long-term sustainability planning over purely infrastructural interventions.

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