

Informal Settlements

Sociology

How informal settlement works, and what upgrading policy assumes.

A large share of global urban growth is unplanned but not unorganised.

What is found

Tenure is insecure but locally recognised.

Rental markets exist within settlements.

Services are bought informally, often dearly.

Incremental building over many years.

Dense internal organisation and associations.

Policy responses

Clearance: fast, displacing, often re-forms.

Titling: de Soto's case, mixed evidence.

In-situ upgrading of services and access.

Sites and services provision.

Recognition without full formalisation.

Educational reference. Evidence that titling alone unlocks credit and investment is weak and contested across countries.