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Militaristic responses to urban violence don't work, new film from slum dwellers argues.

Institute of Development Studies

Slum dwellers call into question the effectiveness of militaristic responses to urban violence in a new film, *'No One Left Behind'* produced by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) which was previewed at the United Nations Habitat III Conference.

Research for the film highlighted a grave security message from the poor: aggressive policy interventions led by institutions such as the police and military have had limited success and often create long-term instability. The research suggests that viewing urban violence in terms of a public health issue and supporting reformatory interventions that foster a sense of shared ownership over public spaces can lead to sustainable gains.

The film highlights the threats to security and wellbeing that city communities in Afghanistan, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ghana, South Africa and Uganda face on a day to day basis. It also offers specific and optimistic proposals for positive and achievable change that contribute to the central ambition of the Global Goals to 'leave no one behind'.

IDS's Jaideep Gupte, who led the development of the film, said: "The persistence of localised poverty and vulnerability in cities represent major policy challenges of our time. Finding workable solutions to these challenges can only come from understanding the impacts of insecurity and exclusion on the day-to-day lives of the poorest and most marginalised in cities."

Gupte continued, "Rather than ostracise or criminalise city dwellers through hard-nosed responses, the key is to involve the most marginalised in initiatives that address the challenges that face us all. This film shows, once again, that the most marginalised are the experts on their own condition, that they are willing to make the trade-offs and bargains needed to function in the city, and that they are continually innovating to improve their own prospects."

Other recommendations from the research include: fostering urban safety through inclusive policies and practices, for example supporting community champions to continue to initiate local solutions to prevent violence; using innovative measures to accurately understand people's vulnerabilities; police reform; and putting inclusivity at the heart of infrastructure.

Research for the film

The research undertaken for the film was a collaboration between IDS and SDI in six focus countries (South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Cambodia, Bolivia, and Afghanistan) during 2016. The film was made by slum dwellers themselves as part of SDI's Know Your City TV initiative. The project aimed to explore what a fruitful, violence-free life means to poor and marginalised city

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dwellers. The work was funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

For more information, see our webpage www.ids.ac.uk/safecities or read our [one-page summary of key messages for Habitat III](#) or our [research paper](#) which includes more detailed analysis and mini-case studies on innovative interventions (in Colombia; India; South Africa; and the Solomon Islands), and urban approaches to safe cities.