

ABSTRACT

Participatory slum upgrading programs are widely and popularly known as integrated approaches in alleviating slum conditions. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these programs is being scrutinized. A participatory slum upgrading program faces various challenges in fulfilling its essential components, such as improvements of physical settlement, infrastructure, finance and management, and also in strengthening the participation of slum dwellers, local government and other stakeholders.

By modifying UN-HABITAT's framework and using a deductive approach with qualitative methods, this paper investigates community perceptions on the effectiveness of participatory slum upgrading through row housing in Surakarta, Central Java, Indonesia. Research data were collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews and observations, then analyzed by using descriptive and narrative method.

This research found that a participatory slum upgrading project in Surakarta has relatively improved physical, social, economic, organizational and environmental aspects. Meanwhile, the degree and level of participation of each actor varied because participants had different perspectives. Several actors had dominant roles, whereas others preferred to be passive participants, or even hesitated to participate in the project. Therefore, community participation in this project is unclear. This research offers recommendations that can be used to overcome challenges in participatory slum upgrading.