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Safe, inclusive and integrated cities.

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OpenReblock

A new digital platform for informal neighborhood development places the power of urban planning and data in the hands of slum dwellers and their cities.

12:30 – 13:30pm

SDI Booth #189, Hall 1

World Urban Forum

Re-blocking is an element of incremental slum/informal settlement upgrading that supports area-based design and planning. Through spatial reconfiguration and the introduction of new streets and paths, each home or workplace gains an address and obtains urban services, especially water, sanitation, and drainage. These are essential elements of response to slum development, climate change, and to building community resilience at the local level.

SDI-affiliated communities have conducted re-blocking with many communities worldwide over the last 20 years. Now, SDI – together with partners Santa Fe Institute, Ona and WhereIsMyTransport -- are launching a new digital platform to make the slum planning process faster, simpler, and more scalable and to place it in the hands of local communities and other local stakeholders.

The OpenReblock platform is part of an ecosystem of open-source tools co-designed by slum-dwellers, technologists and scientists to re-plan and integrate slums and informal neighborhoods to their city networks with minimal disturbance and cost. Slum communities create an initial map that includes each structure, each available service and public open spaces and then obtain an automatic proposal for new streets and paths. This street layout proposal is then edited and adapted to local needs and preferences in coordination with other stakeholders, such as local governments. Ultimately, these layouts become plans for neighborhood development around a street plan that provides access to emergency services, regularizes addresses, and allows for drainage and the provision of services.

Maps are a powerful tool for the imagination, facilitating the question "How would I like my neighborhood to be?" OpenReblock integrates mapping at the community level, speeding up the process of community organization and decision-making to create better local solutions, improving design, and technical delivery.

Demonstrating the integration and connectivity of each community is essential to the re-blocking process. Roads do not only move cars and people, they carry the

infrastructure like drainage and fiber optic cable that connect neighborhoods to each other, to the city and the world. Transport links to the neighbourhoods are critical to accessing services, jobs, and keeping the community connected with the fabric of the city.

“Building true human-centric solutions requires comprehensive information and intuitive planning tools that allow people and their families to reimagine their neighborhoods and create detailed plans to rebuild them: OpenReblock combines local people’s knowledge in informal settlements with the best technology and data worldwide to enable each citizen to become an urban planner and to create a collaborative environment with their government towards better and faster sustainable development outcomes,” says Luis Bettencourt, External Professor Santa Fe Institute, now Director of the Mansueto Institute for Urban Innovation, University of Chicago.

The OpenReblock platform will be officially launched at World Urban Forum 9 on 10 February at 12.30pm at the SDI Booth (Hall 1 #189) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Launching with two communities in South Africa and Kenya, SDI and its partners intend to scale and expand the tool worldwide, supporting slum dwellers and their cities with the power to solve their own problems through better information and better physical, social, and economic connectivity.

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About SDI

SDI is a network of community-based organizations of the urban poor in 32 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Since 1996 this network has helped to create a global voice of the urban poor, engaging international agencies and operating on the municipal, regional and international levels to advance inclusive cities.

About the Santa Fe Institute

The Santa Fe Institute is the world headquarters for complexity science, operated as an independent, nonprofit, research and education center located in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA.

About Ona

Ona is a software solutions and design firm building the data infrastructure needed to drive change. Offering a suite of enterprise scale tools to collect, aggregate, and analyse information, Ona empowers humanitarian and development organizations by providing data driven intelligence. Ona worked closely with SDI to build open-source apps used to gather quality-controlled data directly from communities, and added a new dimension to the information collected through mapping visualizations and spatial insights. Ona has offices in Nairobi and Washington DC.

About WhereIsMyTransport

WhereIsMyTransport is a technology company with offices in London and Cape Town. We collect and provide access to public transport data from African cities, integrating complex networks and enabling customer success through our unique data and services. Cities, transport authorities, and third parties use our data and

technology to plan, optimise, and operate multimodal transport systems in emerging cities.

OpenReblock proof of concept development was generously supported by:



About Openideo

Openideo partners with leading organizations to drive collaboration, innovation and impact around the world's toughest problems, promoting human-centred design principles.