

## Summaries of Friends of DAG Seminars 2007 - 2009

### Friends of DAG – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2009

*Land and informality: Is the State adequately prepared to address the mounting urban land crisis?*

The seminar took place at St George's Hotel, Central Cape Town. The seminar included presentations by Stephen Berrisford from Urban Landmark on how to make the urban land markets work better for the poor; myself on DAG's position on land and informality and the role of civil society and the local state in Re-imagining the City; Basil Davidson on the City of Cape Town's challenges to accessing land for housing; and Donovan van der Heyden from Hangberg on the challenges of accessing land in Houtbay.

The event was attended by over 64 community leaders from Backyarder forums, government officials within the City of Cape Town and the provincial Department Local Government and Housing, as well as NGO representatives such as COURC, LRC and African Centre for Cities, UCT.

The event gave DAG the opportunity to discuss its deepening strategic focus on access to well-located serviced land for poor and marginalised citizens and the importance of State intervention in the land market. The presentations discussed the implementation of financial and regularly mechanisms to capture value of land and property for pro-poor development and the State actively promoting engagement of civil society in the democratic management of cities to make them more equitable and inclusive.

### Friends of DAG – 18 June 2008

*Capacity Enhancement for Citizenship and Participation*

The seminar took place at the Riverclub in Observatory; speakers were Wahieba Naidoo and Lesar Rule of the Freedom Park Development Association and Ardiel Soeker of DAG. The seminar focused on the Freedom Park upgrade as a case study of the potential to strengthen citizenship and participation in urban development process through enhancing the capacity of poor communities.

Community leaders shared their experiences and shed light on the array of challenges they faced in leading the upgrading of their settlement. They also provided insight on how the challenges were confronted and in some cases overcome. DAG shared its experience of supporting self-help housing over two decades and highlighted some of the lessons it had learned about the limitations and potential of capacity enhancement. The Draft Freedom Park Case Study was distributed for comment at the event.

## **Friends of DAG - 31 October 2007**

### *Informal settlements: Myths, Challenges and Opportunities*

This seminar was convened to deepen debate on informality and the role of the state and communities in ensuring that poor people are fully able to enjoy the benefits of life in the city. The seminar took place in the wake of protests by residents of the Joe Slovo settlement which alerted urban development practitioners to the serious challenge which South African cities face in addressing the need for access to well-located land for low-income development.

Guest speakers included Mzwandile Sokupa, Director Informal Settlements in the City of Cape Town; Mzonke Poni, Community Activist from the QQ Section informal settlement, Marie Huchzermeyer from the University of Witwatersrand and Helen Macgregor, Informal Settlement Upgrading Programme Coordinator at DAG.

The seminar highlighted the range of perspectives regarding the prevention of the proliferation of informal settlements and the challenges and opportunities faced in the incremental upgrading of settlements. DAG shared its approach to informal settlement upgrading, advocating that a multi-sectoral, participatory and incremental model be adopted by government.

## **Friends of DAG - 26 July 2007**

### *Towards a Long Term Vision for the Greater Hout Bay*

DAG hosted a seminar to establish partnerships with community based organizations and government to initiate a process to develop a long term vision and plan for the Greater Hout Bay area with particular focus on the needs of poor communities. The seminar followed DAG's recent commitment to work on the in situ upgrade of the Hangberg informal settlement in Hout Bay which accommodates 360 families.

Development in Hout Bay has been debated widely revealing the complexity and contradictions of development processes that are purely market-driven. A longer-term, participatory, sustainable plan is needed for the development of the Greater Hout Bay area given its problems with land development and the overcrowded Hangberg and Imizamo Yethu informal settlements.

Visionary and deliberate plans are needed to address how the area should grow and change, where new development should be located, what the nature of urban development must be, and who should benefit from development. Such long-term vision is also needed for Cape Town in general. Cape Town's current unprecedented property boom largely only benefits the wealthy and promotes the exclusion of poorer people from the property market as, for example, high land costs dictate that new subsidised housing can only be located far away from existing and new commercial developments. Mass housing projects are mainly located on vacant land in the south-eastern metropolitan area, for example in Delft, Philippi and Khayelitsha, where land is cheap, reinforcing apartheid spatial patterns and the marginalisation of the poor, thus further limiting their chances of participating in the City's economy.

A coherent long-term vision for the spatial growth and development of the Greater

Hout Bay area is needed to address the current spatial inequalities and create new opportunities for both the rich and the poor. This plan should take cognizance of the broader development needs of the poor, the need to promote economic development, and to ensure environmental sustainability.

DAG used the seminar to kick-start a process for developing such a long-term sustainable plan through a participatory process involving local CBOs and the municipality. 19 Community-based organisations attended the seminar along with a variety of professionals, NGO representatives and officials from the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape provincial government. In total 66 people were in attendance and resolved to convene in a follow up workshop to map the process forward.

### **Friends of DAG - 22 March 2007**



Plenary Session: Friends of DAG Value Capture Seminar March 2007

From left to right: Mercy Brown-Luthango– DAG Researcher; Professor David Solomon – Economist at Sizanang; Godfrey Dunkley – Author of “That All May Live”

The Friends of DAG held on 22 March 2007 focused on access to land for the urban poor. The issue of access to urban land has assumed critical importance. In the face of growing urbanisation and a concomitant increase in the demand for infrastructure and services, notably housing, struggles over access to urban land have intensified. These struggles are a manifestation of an unequal land and property market which realizes tremendous benefits for those who are able to participate in this market whilst excluding the poor. While the rich are expanding and consolidating their investments in the land and property market, poor communities are facing evictions and forced relocations from well-located land to areas on the margins of the city on a daily basis.

The seminar included a presentation of DAG’s response to the problem of access to land, the introduction and use of value capture mechanisms to regulate the land market. It also included a presentation by Professor David Solomons of the School of Public Management and Development at the University of the Witwatersrand which focused on alternatives in implementing an agricultural land value tax.