

Research into Use Summary

- 1. Research Project:** *Gender and sanitation: the experiences of Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia*
- 2. Lead researcher:** *Diana Mitlin, IIED, Anna Muller, Melkisedek Namupolo, Jane Gold*
- 3. SHARE Partners:** *SDI, IIED*
- 4. Research budget:** *£15,000*
- 5. Location:** *Namibia*

Research description:

The purpose of this research is to provide information about the influence of gender and age upon community decision-making within the Shack Dwellers Federation of Namibia (SDFN) and among other residents in poor urban settlements where SDFN is active. The research aims to understand if, and how, household development at the settlement level differs by gender or age, and to review previous experiences with toilets. The research aims will be met by the analysis of existing household level data, focus group discussions, and semi-structured household interviews.

What is the relevance of the research to national and/or global sector challenges?

This research is particularly relevant for policy-makers in Namibia as it aims to provide better estimates of the country's urban sanitation challenges. Accurate estimates are needed because of the existing discrepancies between official census data and SDFN data. According to census data, 33 per cent of Namibia's two million people live in recognised urban areas, and a further nine per cent live in smaller and emerging urban areas. However, data collected by the SDFN on informal settlements indicates that census data grossly underestimate the scale of the problem of emerging urban areas. Census data suggests 82 per cent of households have proper sanitation in urban areas; SDFN information indicates that 50 per cent of households in informal urban settlements do not have basic sanitation and go to the toilet in the bush. It is hoped that the findings will be used to guide national sanitation policy.

Who are the intended users of this research?

A research report will generate internal discussions within SDFN to increase awareness of the equity and gender implications of its work, and the approaches towards addressing the need for sanitation. Two regional Federation exchanges will share and discuss the findings, and use this information and related activities to build links with government officials and politicians that are involved in the emerging sanitation strategy (urban sanitation policy is currently under review in Namibia). The research findings will be presented (through the report and the regional exchanges) to national government sanitation policy-makers and interested local government officials. A summary of the research findings will be made publicly available on the SHARE website and will be disseminated within the SHARE consortium and to a broad range of users.

