South Africa has witnessed explosive growth in urban population in recent decades. The majority of this growth has come in the form of densely populated informal settlements.

In post-apartheid South Africa, these areas delivered poorly planned and constructed single unit housing that lack adequate and necessary services, leading to economic and social exclusion. In the context of poverty, basic hunger, poor health and sanitation, violence, environmental degradation, as well as fire risk and flooding are some of the core challenges facing sustainable settlement redevelopment.

*How can you provide urban upgrading and redevelopment while meeting the needs of the community sustainably?*

The City of Cape Town (CoCT) and the Department of Human Settlements (DHS) are working together to implement the Southern Corridor Integrated Human Settlement Program, which seeks to improve the living conditions of informal settlements, including the Kosovo Informal Human Settlement.

The Kosovo Informal Human Settlement is located in Cape Town, South Africa. It is one of the oldest and most dense informal human settlements, settled in 1998 on 28 hectares of land with a population density of approximately 910 inhabitants per hectare.

By providing a sustainable urban redevelopment to Kosovo we have the opportunity to implement a design that improves living conditions sustainably. DesignSpace Africa (DSA) was awarded the opportunity to create a redevelopment proposal for the Kosovo settlement. With a sustainable redevelopment we can improve the households of the current residents, reduce community health and safety risks, and provide residents better access and opportunities to an improved livelihood.

**The Informal Settlement Challenge**
Kosovo is facing numerous sustainability challenges that need to be addressed; overcrowding, lack of suitable and safe housing, ineffective infrastructure for waste
disposal and removal, absence of proper public transportation, health and safety issues, and minimal opportunities for economic development and employment.

**Design Approach**
As a project team we focused on a 2-hectare region on the western edge of Kosovo for urban redevelopment. The design is to create an integrated and sustainable human settlement that provides for low and middle-income earners while creating a community that is inclusive and integrated, with businesses and social facilities close to residences.

The new urban plan connects the selected area of Kosovo with its surrounding context and facilities, addressing multiple areas of concern.

**Community Assessment and Sustainability Principles**
By conducting interviews with different community and religious leaders, and residents we gained a better understanding of Kosovo’s needs for the future of their community. The most common developmental changes that were recorded were:
- No community member displacement
- Opportunities for economic and educational development and employment
- Suitable and safe residential structures

Tackling the needs assessment of a community provided the opportunity to match the issues with sustainable design and development principles for future planning:
- Think small - less resources, less environmental impacts
- Use local and natural materials - reduce the carbon footprint and decrease costs
- Build to last – build and introduce structures that are designed for maintainability

Moving forward, DSA will implement the urban plans and implementations within their design process. They will connect the 2-hectare development with a planning module to be expanded across the entire settlement. With this it will allow the redevelopment to happen at a quicker pace than initially anticipated.