Kibera Informal Settlement

Policy Intervention for Housing Improvement in the Informal Settlements

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The Kenyan Government has acknowledged the existence of informal settlements and is willing to improve the living environment in these settlements. In order to achieve this objective there is need to develop an informal settlement improvement policy and also implement housing improvement project for the poor.

Kibera is the largest informal settlement in Nairobi and comprises of 12 villages covering approximately 225 hectares. The population is estimated at 500,000 people translating to a density of 2,200 persons per hectare. The land is owned by the Government leading to insecure land tenure.

The Government has identified Kibera Informal Settlement for development through the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) The settlement will be developed in phases due to the scale of the project.

The social and physical mapping for has been completed. The development plan has also been prepared and the project will involve the development of housing, physical infrastructure and social amenities. The construction of houses on a site where the tenants will be relocated to during the project implementation.

Shelter Situation in Kenya

Kenya lies between latitudes 5 ∘S and 5 N and longitude 34 E and 42 E. It is, located in the Eastern part of Africa. It is bordered by Somalia to the East, Uganda to the West, Ethiopia to the North, Sudan to the North West, Tanzania to the South and the Indian Ocean coastline to the South West.

Climate

It experiences two rainy seasons namely long rains from March to May and short rains from October to December. Average temperature range between 20 C – 30 C. It is

much hotter in the semi-arid northern region and colder in the central highlands. 80% of Kenya is semi-arid while only 20% is productive.

Topography

It has varied topography ranging from plains, to plateaus, valleys including the Great Rift Valley hill, mountains, rivers and lakes. Mt. Kenya is one of the highest points in Africa and receives snow at a height of above 5,000 meters above sea level. Kenya also enjoys having Lake Victoria, the 2nd largest fresh water lake in the world and the source of the river Nile.

Area

The total area of the country is 592,909Km2 with 11,230 Km2 being water and the rest land. The country is divided into eight (8) administrative provinces namely Nyanza, Western, Rift Valley, Central, Nairobi, Eastern, North Eastern and Coast Provinces. Nairobi is the Capital City and the Administrative centre and covers an area of 600Km2

Economy

Kenya's economy is mainly supported by Agriculture and Tourism. The country experienced 5.8% economic growth rate in 2005. This growth rate was supported by growth in Tourism and Hotels (13.3 %), Transport and Communication (8.3%) Building and Construction (7.2%) and Agriculture and Forestry (6.7%). The GDP per capital is $ 555 and the Government Revenue in 2005 was $ 4.7 Billion. The inflation has been fluctuating   and in 2005 it was 10.3%. About 6,407,000 persons are employed in the informal sector representing more than 80% of the labour force. The poverty levels ranges from 35% to 70% in the provinces with an average poverty level of 55%

Education

Primary school education is free since 2003 leading to an increased enrollment. Enrollment in primary schools and secondary schools is 7,591,500 and 928,100. Enrollment in universities and other institutions is 158,400.

Population

The population of Kenya is estimated at 33.4 Million people with 16.2 million male and 17.2 million female. The national population growth rate is estimated at 3.3 percent while the urban population growth rate is 4.4 percent ban population growth rate is 4.4

percent. The total fertility rate is 4.9 and the infant mortality rate per 1000 is 77. The life expectancy at birth is 51 years and 50 years for males and females respectively.

The country experiences a shortfall in housing stock arising from a demand that outstrips supply particularly in urban areas. This situation has been caused by population growth, rapid urbanization, poverty levels and high costs of providing housing.

This shortage in housing is manifested in overcrowding, slums and proliferation of informal settlements in urban areas while in the rural areas, and the shortage manifests itself in the poor quality of the housing fabric and lack of basic services such as water.

The national growth rate in the number households is 1.65% while for the urban areas it is 2.01% [1]

Owner occupancy is more prevalent in the rural areas than the urban areas where most households are renters. In Nairobi 82.2% of the households live in rented units. The average persons per room in Nairobi is 1.76 [1]. Most of the households that live in one room dwellings are renters as opposed to owners. The scenario changes such that the households with higher numbers of rooms are mostly owner occupiers.

The estimated current urban housing needs are 150,000 units per year. It is estimated that the current production of new 'formal' housing in urban areas is only 20,000-30,000 units annually.

30% of the national population gets piped water, 21 % get water from the well/borehole and 28% from the lakes/rivers. The situation improves in Nairobi where 91% of the population gets piped water and 2% get water from borehole/well. The regularity and the water source vary. Most of the population especially in the slum areas depends on vendors for access to water and others rely on trucks or private operators. This water supply is expensive and insufficient.

7.7 % of the national population use sewer for human waste disposal while 72% use pit latrines. In Nairobi 48% of the population use sewer while 42% use pit latrines.

Housing/Living Environment Administration

The Ministry of Housing coordinates issues related to housing and human settlements. Among others the Ministry is responsible for Policy formulation, review of policies and regulations, Shelter and slum improvement, Facilitation of research on low-cost building materials and technologies and dissemination of the same, Rent Restriction Tribunal, Maintenance of Government Pool Housing, Development of houses for sale to civil servants and National Housing Corporation

In Kenya, the Government has acknowledged the existence of slums and informal settlements and is committed to addressing the conditions through Upgrading. It is therefore in the interest of the Government that slum improvement has been embraced as a principal policy of housing and urban development.

Many human settlement development policies and strategies have been used in the past to deal with slums in Kenya. Such policies and strategies have ranged from forced eviction, resettlement, site and service schemes and upgrading. Experience has shown that forced eviction, demolition of slums and resettlement of slum dwellers create more problems than they solve. Eradication and relocation destroys large stock of housing affordable to the urban poor, while new housing provided has frequently turned out to be unaffordable resulting to the movement of relocated households back to slum accommodation. Resettlement also shifts slum dwellers from their employment sources, destroys their productivity and disrupts their livelihood networks.

National approaches to slums and informal settlements have generally shifted from negative policies such as eviction, neglect and involuntary resettlement to more positive policies such as self help housing, on site upgrading and enabling and rights based policies. Where appropriate improvement policies have been put in place, slums have become increasingly financially cohesive, offering opportunities for security of tenure, local economic development, improvement of income and shelter among the urban poor. The accepted best practice for housing interactions in developing countries is now participatory slum upgrading, with holistic neighbourhood improvement approaches taking into account health, education housing, livelihoods and gender (UN-HABITAT 2003). Although such success stories have been few in comparison to the magnitude of slum challenges, experience suggest that in site slum upgrading is more effective and should be the form in most slum improvement project. The key to success of such projects lies in creating access to livelihood opportunities as the central pillar.

Critical Shelter Problem

Kenya has experienced a rapid urbanization. Kenya's urban population increased from 0.75 million in 1962 to 9.90 million in 1999 representing an increase of 1,220%. There growth in the number of the dwelling units was not adequate to accommodate the increased population. The problem of housing led to overcrowding and development of substandard human settlements such as slums and squatter settlements. The squatter settlements are characterized by insecure land tenure because most of them are developed on government land or privately owned land.

Urban Population in Four Census Years in Major Urban Centers.

URBAN CENTER	CENSUS YEARS			
	1979	1989	1999	2005
Nairobi	827,775	1,324,750	2,143,254	3.0 M
Mombasa	341,148	461,753	665,018	1.0 M
Kisumu	152,643	192,733	322,734	0.5 M

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1999

Due to the insecure land tenure, no concerted efforts have been undertaken by the stakeholders i.e. the tenants, the structure owners NGOs, the land owners or the authorities to improve the housing environment. The settlements have only been growing in size and in numbers.

On one hand are the landowners (private or public) who do not have the capacity or the political will to develop the informal settlements and on the other hand are the structure owners/tenants who are not willing to invest in housing improvement because of tenure insecurity.

Analysis of Critical Shelter Problem.

The evaluation of policies and interventions dealing with informal settlements in Kenya fits well in five stages namely: clearance and forced migration; clearance and public housing; provision of minimum services; extension of tenure security and physical upgrading; and recognition of the legitimate role of low income settlers and other stakeholders in urban development.

These stages and interventions have introduced shift in slum policy that have in turn immensely contributed to the nature and extent of slums and informal settlements today (Agwanda 1997)

Recognition of the Legitimate Role of the Low Income Earner in Urban Development.

This is the latest stage in the evolution of policies and interventions dealing with informal settlements. In 1986, the Government ushered in the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAPs) which were expected to lead to economic growth. SAPs required that the state withdraw from service provision and government subsidies and instead facilitate and provide enabling environment for housing development. At this stage, a variety of policies governing land delivery, building and infrastructure, land use, long term financing and cost recovery and the role of private sector were brought to harmony with the objective of fully and productively integrating

the low income majority into the urban development process. This is the enabling approach in which the Government moved away from direct housing provision and concentrated more on creating incentives and facilitating measures to enable other stakeholders provide housing and basic services.

These strategies are articulated in the revision of Housing Policy, revision of the building by laws and planning regulations, research in and dissemination of low cost building materials and technologies and the restructuring of the financial institutions to provide for private sector participation in the housing development process. The approach has seen the increasing involvement of non-governmental organization in various informal settlements improvement projects.

Although these interventions have had considerable impacts on informal settlements, the settlements have continued to thrive in most urban centers of Kenya. The schemes provided under public housing programmes were successful in meeting some of the demand for shelter, but they tended to exclude target groups from the planning process and were subject to corruption in the allocation procedures due to shortage of supply.

The problem of housing is that of acute shortage in the number of dwellings, inadequate infrastructure, community facilities and services, overcrowding and substandard human settlements. This situation has been aggravated by recent changes in socio-economic development strategies in a liberalized world economic order.

The population of Nairobi has grown at a rate of 5% p.a. over the last thirty years. From 350,000 inhabitants in 1964 to the current population estimated at 3.0 million. An increasing number of the city's residents live in informal settlements estimated at 60% of the total population. However the land area of the city covered by informal settlements is just over 5% of the total area used for residential purposes.

Proposal for Change and Improvement

Strengths

a) Existence of Informal Settlements

The government has acknowledged the existence of informal settlements and is willing to reduce the number of people living in the informal settlements in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

b) Housing Policy and Land owner

The Ministry is responsible for the Housing Policy. The Ministry can therefore fast track the adoption of policies which will address the problems of the informal settlements. Most of the land on which informal settlements are developed is also owned by the government/local authorities. The Ministry is well positioned to ensure that the land is released to the intended beneficiaries

c) Finance and Networking

The government has the financial capability to allocate funds for housing improvement. It can also network with other stakeholders including the NGOs, Communities and international Agencies

Weaknesses

a) Bureaucracy

The decision making process is slow.

b) Long procurement Process

Delays occasioned by the long procurement process due to bureaucracy

c) Political Environment

The political environment in each settlement is bound to change and this always affects the relationship between government and the community and therefore project implementation

Threats

The improvement of housing is faced with many constraints, chief among them are:

Complexities of Slum Settlements especially as regards Tenure Arrangement

Slum settlements have no formal tenure arrangements. Their high densities, haphazard development, lack of planning, religious, cultural and political inclinations are some of the conditions that pause a challenge in proposing the type of tenure that can best fit their situation.

Varied Political and Religious Inclinations

Political, cultural and religious inclinations amongst the residents and those of their leaders have contributed in creating suspicion and mistrust amongst the residents thus

slowing down decision making. The political and religious leadership of the settlement should be involved in decision making.

Lack of Adequate Information

Residents of informal settlements lack adequate and relevant information. A comprehensive information and communication strategy is necessary to serve and inform the residents.

Competing Interests of Various Interest Groups

Interest groups e.g. NGO's, Central Government, Local Authorities, Other agencies have their own interest in housing improvement which are in conflict.

Lack of Adequate Land

There is limited land space to cater for all residents within the slum settlements.

Partnership Concepts and Governance

Partnership concepts have its down side of generating several parallel activities that often derail the implementation schedules. The issues of governance and involvement of communities in decision making has various complexities.

Informal Settlements Improvement

In order to systematically upgrade slums in urban areas it is necessary to create conditions that can sustain long-term slums improvement through harnessing political will, strengthening forms of organization of slum dwellers and promoting an inclusive process based on consensus and partnership. The experiences of existing and past interventions should be consolidated to undertake an integrated slum improvement process that will eventually improve the conditions of those living and working in the informal settlements within the national Policy Framework.

Principles and Values of Informal Settlements Improvement

Decentralization

The policy will embrace processes that guarantee subsidiarity of authority and resources to the closest appropriate level. This will include allocating the responsibility for provision of services and decision making to the closest appropriate level consistent with efficiency and cost effectiveness and thus improving responsiveness of policies and initiatives to the priorities and needs of slum dwellers.

Democratization and empowerment

This will include building voices and consensus, encouraging formation and growth of community organizations so as to achieve collective decision making, responsive community driven development and focused services delivery. Settlement communities should be empowered to make and be responsible for certain decisions which have hitherto been the preserve of the central government ministries and local authorities. Settlement residents and stakeholders will have a chance to participate in all priority setting, resource allocation process and provision of back services.

Transparency and Accountability

The authorities should be accountable to the citizens and settlement residents and the principles of transparency, accountability and inclusivity should be observed. Adequate access to information should be provided to ensure clarity on who is benefiting from decisions and actions.

Resource Mobilization

People are the principal wealth of urban areas and are both the object and means of sustainable development. The residents must actively contribute to their common good and should be empowered to actively and effectively participate in housing improvement, with due recognition of their capital and comparative advantages. This will secure ownership of the housing improvement as well as long term sustainability. Contribution from beneficiaries gives them commitment, sense of responsibility and rewards and makes them partners in the process.

Secure Tenure

Security of tenure is a fundamental requirement of progressive integration of the urban poor and basic component of the right to access adequate housing.

Partnerships and networking

Convergence between stakeholders who live, work or deliver services in the slum will lead to more openings for cooperation, reduce wastage of resources occasioned by duplication and competition and promote knowledge exchange. Multi-sectoral partnerships will be established to bring about transformations that create opportunities for the people.

Action Plan

Kibera Informal Settlement

The Kibera settlement is the largest in Nairobi and covers an approximate area of 225 Hectares. The settlement is made of 12 villages.

The following has been undertaken.

- Election of settlement committee members in Soweto Village. These are community representatives democratically elected by the residents to represent the various interest groups i.e. NGOs, CBOs Women, Youth etc.

- Socio-economic mapping of the settlement has been completed

- Physical mapping, to determine the existing spatial arrangements of various land uses including the physical enumeration and data collection of all the tenants and structure owners in the various villages has been completed.

- A draft Master Plan for Kibera, based on the above data has been completed.

- The process to assist the community in the formation of cooperatives, training and capacity building in the various villages is being finalized.

THE CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

NAIROBI - KIBERA

PROPOSED MASTER PLAN FOR KIBERA INFORMAL SETTLEMENT (NAIROBI,KENYA)
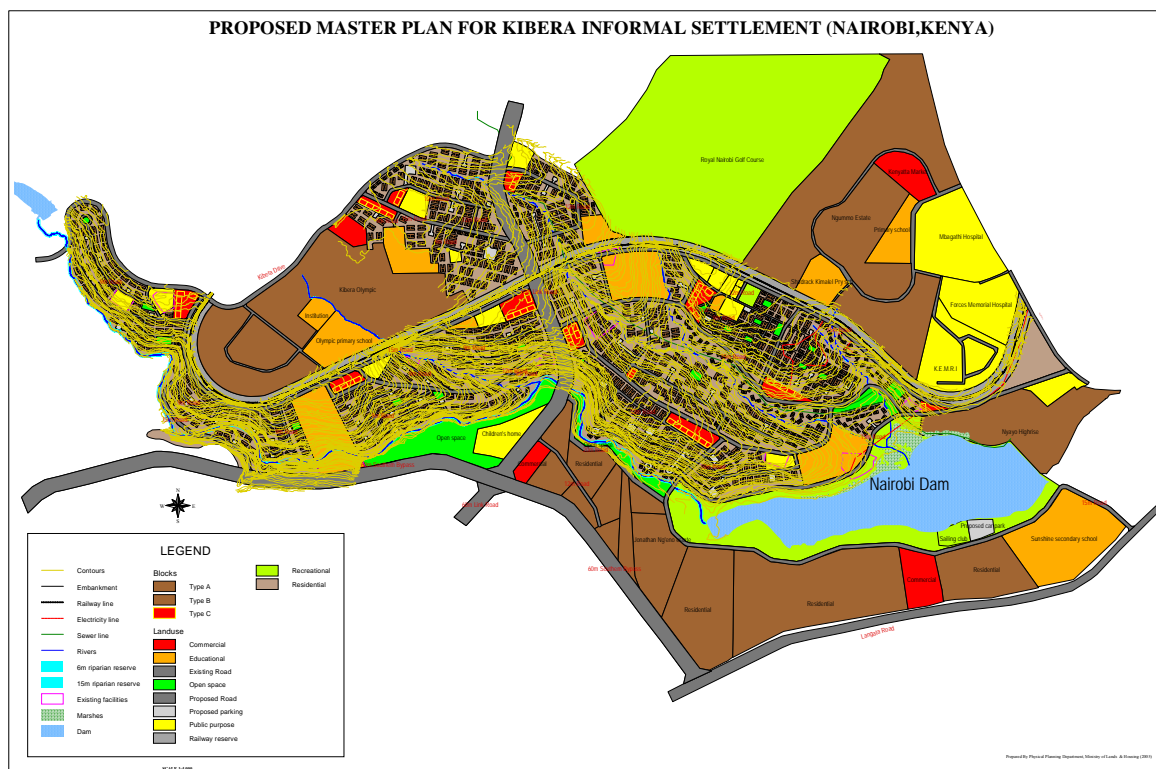
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