

Participation in Informal Settlement Upgrading

A CBO's role in partnership with other actors

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Introduction

Definition of Housing

'Housing is more than houses'.

*Adequate shelter means more than a roof over one's head. It also means adequate privacy; adequate space; physical accessibility; adequate security; security of tenure; structural stability and durability; adequate lighting; heating and ventilation; adequate basic infrastructure, such as water supply, sanitation and waste-management facilities; suitable environmental quality and health related factors; and adequate and accessible location with regard to work and basic facilities; all of which should be available at an affordable cost.*¹

A house therefore is to be seen not only in terms of what it physically is but also in terms of what it does socially, economically and environmentally for the people who have to live in it.

Housing Attributes

A structure occupied by a household will satisfy a range of needs felt by its occupants with the different attributes it provides. Five attributes of shelter, location, tenure, space and infrastructural services have been identified as the most important attributes of a house.

1. **Shelter** – A house serves as a shelter i.e. it provides, to varying degrees, protection to its occupants from the elements of weather. The quality of the structure will determine to what degree the attribute of shelter will perform in the provision of protection. Shelter should also be seen as a work place, a source of

rental income; and a physical statement of status and security.

2. **Location** – The location of a house will determine whether or not its occupants have access to employment opportunities or social services such as health and educational facilities, markets, shopping areas etc. The location will also determine the quality and nature of community contacts and the pattern of friendship networks of a household.
3. **Tenure** – This will be important to the physical, emotional and financial security of the occupants. If the households are assured of security of tenure and the fear of evictions / demolitions is eradicated, the house can serve as a stable basis for the family and provide a sense of identity and belonging. It will increase the household's willingness to invest in the maintenance and improvement of the dwellings and the environs.
4. **Space** – The space available to occupants within a house or a plot will influence the range of activities they can engage in and their overall health conditions. However a little space near one's place of work is always better than a big space remote from employment.
5. **Infrastructural Services** – Services such as water & sanitation facilities, electricity, proper access etc facilitate economic upliftment, maintenance of personal health and may lead to improvement in the quality of life if properly used.²

The Housing Problem in Kenya

- 2 KOPPENHOFFER, L. et al., *Housing Policies in the Third World – The Case Study, Kibera, Nairobi, University of Stuttgart, 1982. p.35.*

¹ THE HABITAT AGENDA. Paragraph 60.

The housing problem in Kenya and indeed most developing countries is acute in major urban areas due to, among other factors, rapid rate of urbanisation which is unplanned for and therefore cannot be coped with by the authorities. The problem is worse in the 'very' low – income areas where the majority of rural – urban migrants settle in. Apart from in-migration, the growth rate of these settlements is further increased by natural growth that is a resultant of complex social issues. The housing problem therefore is basically lack of adequate shelter (with its attributes) for the urban poor.

Informal Settlements

The urban poor, in an effort to house themselves build their 'houses' where they find vacant land; with materials that are available to them; with the technology they best know; with their instincts guiding them on how to plan and with the basic human need for shelter giving them the authority to build. These settlements play a dual role; they provide cheap shelter for a large proportion of the urban poor at affordable rents and the inhabitants also earn their living by operating small-scale informal income generating activities.

These informal settlements therefore end up characterised by 'unauthorised & unplanned' construction, dilapidated housing stock, quasi – legal tenure status, lack of adequate infrastructure & communal services, high household & settlement densities, high levels of poverty among other characteristics. These characteristics lead to a score of negative social (anti-social) practices, acute health related problems and economic hardships which render a part of the community generally unproductive or not as productive as it potentially should be.

Housing Policies Related to Informal Settlements

Housing policies of the Government of Kenya fall into three categories namely: -

- 1) **Laissez – faire policies** – This is where the government basically ignored housing issues and directed financial resources to other development sectors. This was however prior to the 1960s when the urban population was still low and could be 'comfortably' housed.
- 2) **Restrictive policies** – This is where the government attempted to solve the housing problem by eliminating low-income communities from their planning. The official policy from independence (1963) to the late 1970's was that of demolition of informal / squatter settlements.
- 3) **Supportive policies** – The government then adopted the third policy despite the continuation of evictions and demolitions. The need for a supportive planning strategy, especially for low – income housing was recognised and attempts made to house the urban poor and improve their living conditions. These attempts have been mainly in the form of site &

services schemes, public housing projects and in recent times, community upgrading programmes.

The current housing strategies that also fall under the supportive policies were formulated in the National Housing Development Programme 1990 – 2010. The objective of this National Housing Strategy is to produce a concrete plan of action for the 20 year period by which the public and private sector working together and in collaboration with the international community, can produce a higher volume of acceptable quality housing and community facilities sufficient to meet the needs of new households and make inroads into upgrading the existing stock of substandard housing throughout the country. The basic policy principles are: -

- i) To achieve a maximum addition to the stock of acceptable housing.
- ii) Lower income groups will be the focus of government actions.
- iii) The resources of informal sector will be exploited and encouraged to contribute more to production of acceptable housing.
- iv) An increasing share of all housing finance will be provided through housing finance institutions.
- v) Local communities will be increasingly involved in the formulation of housing programmes, preparation of infrastructure and shelter projects, maintenance of facilities and management of the local habitat.³

These principles have however only been on paper and not much in terms of actual implementation has been realised. More literature has been added to the housing policy documents in the name of 'The National Plan of Action' derived from Habitat II's 'Global Plan of Action' (the Habitat Agenda). With the noble ideas this document has, not much has been achieved in terms of implementation.

Objectives

This paper's objectives are derived from the major weaknesses of the government's past housing policies.

The first problem is that it has not been realised (or acknowledged) that the root cause of the housing problem is poverty. The income levels (where they exist) are so low such that no amount of cost reduction on construction technology and materials will make adequate housing affordable to these poor people. If technology cannot 'get down' to them, they have to be economically uplifted to 'come up' to the real housing costs. *'The poor will only eat, house and clothe themselves better if they are more fully employed and better paid ...'*⁴

Secondly, apart from the fact that strategies used have been 'top down', the communities have not been

³ GOK, Ministry of Lands and Housing – NHDP 1990 – 2010, April 1991

⁴ TURNER, J.F.C., Housing by People. op. cit., p. 108.

involved even as 'active recipients'; while other important actors have also been left out of the process. Community participation at all levels is fundamental as lack of it lessens the chances of success of community projects. Participation creates understanding and a sense of responsibility in the community which in turn ensures sustainability of projects. Strategies should therefore be 'bottom up' and the community's full and active participation a condition for all projects. The third problem is lack of implementation of policies. Lack of commitment on the part of actors is one factor that inhibits the implementation process and this can be partly attributed to the fact that the policies in place do not give direction for the formulation of detailed strategies that can be understood and used by the range of actors involved. There is therefore need to take the policies a step further and formulate detailed implementation strategies at local levels. This paper proposes a framework within which a local plan of action for improvement of Kibera 'slums' can be prepared. It outlines how a community (Makina-Kibera) through a CBO (Gange youth group) in the process of economic upliftment, should *strategise* in partnership with other *actors* to *design*, plan and implement a settlement upgrading project for their neighbourhood. It focuses on participation not only by the community but also by other partners, and how the emerging partnerships should co-ordinate as they carry out their specific roles in the formulation of strategies and actual implementation of these strategies on the ground.

The Informal Settlement

Makina, Kibera

Location and Origin

Kibera is located on the south western part of the city of Nairobi. The main spatial features in Kibera are the railway line that crosses through the settlement; Kibera Drive, a major artery that defines the northern limit of the settlement; and a heavily polluted river that runs through the settlement. The settlement is bordered to the north by the middle income Woodley Estate; to the east by the 'Golf Course' Estates; to the south by the 'Southlands' Estates and to the west by the formal Kibera Estates. The name Kibera means forest in kinubi⁵ due the fact that the original site occupied in 1913 was wooded. It was the first informal settlement to develop in Nairobi and the study area, Makina village is the spot where this settlement began before it spread to its current boundaries. Kibera was established during the colonial era for the resettlement of Nubian soldiers who helped in the colonial administration and fought for the British during the war. The land was therefore allocated to this particular group by the powers of the day although no ownership documents were issued.

⁵ Kinubi is the Swahili word for the Nubians' native language.

Demography

Population

The total estimated population of Kibera was 500 000 in 1993 and this was believed to have doubled by 1998.⁶ The average household size is estimated to be 6. The population distribution by sex shows that males comprise of about 55% of the population as opposed to the national figures, which show population of females almost twice that of men.

Marital status of household heads

Approximately 70% of household heads are married with the remaining 30% single, divorced, widowed or separated.⁷ This community has a comparatively unusually high proportion of female-headed households. The result is usually very poor 'fatherless' families with malnourished children.

Mortality rates

Figures show that males register a higher death rate than females in most of the age groups. As expected, the under fives (esp. 0-11 month infants) register the highest death rates.

Population movement

A reasonable part of the population comes to the settlement from their rural area base to seek a livelihood in the city. Other major sources of migration include formal settlements and other informal settlements within the city. People migrate into the settlement for a variety of reasons including to seek cheap accommodation, to seek employment, to stay with relatives and even for speculative purposes. Speculations are hinged on the hope that the government may decide to allocate land to the inhabitants at some point in time.

There is also outward movement though its occurrence is much less than inward movement. However, despite the in and out movements, between 30% and 40% of the population are potential permanent residents and form a core group whose contribution would be vital for the development initiatives in the area.⁸ Makina for example, is dominantly Nubian, a community of Sudanese origin, who settled in this area during the early colonial period. This community therefore, unlike others in the settlement and indeed the country as a whole, knows no other home except Kibera.

Economic Status

Income levels

⁶ MATRIX DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS, Nairobi – Informal Settlements: An Inventory for USAID/REDSO/ESA. March, 1993.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

Income level is an indicator of socio – economic status and can therefore be seen as an important determinant of resources for obtaining access to health care, education, adequate housing etc. Based on the government’s definition of income groups, about 70% of the households in the settlement are in the low-income group and many (about 60%) earn below the minimum salary/wage set by the government. The latter group includes the large number of unemployed youth in the settlement who basically have no income. The status of the income generating activities, housing conditions, access to water, sanitation, health and education facilities etc.; is also an indication of the low socio – economic standards in the settlement.

Formal employment

The majority of those in employment draw their income mainly from the city’s main industrial area which is quite a walk from the settlement. They offer unskilled and semi – skilled assistance as clerks, security guards, messengers, loaders, machine operators etc. A good number also work in the numerous construction sites in different parts of the city.

The informal sector (‘Jua Kali’)

The settlement, especially the road sides, is very active with informal income generating activities like ironmongery, carpentry, small kiosks and open stalls selling all sorts of new and used merchandise and foodstuff, etc. Engagement in informal business ranks second after formal employment but it is envisaged that with the rapid population growth and no creation of new employment opportunities, the informal sector will soon become the backbone of not only the settlement’s and the city’s economy, but of the country as a whole.

Infrastructure & Services

*Basic infrastructure and services at the community level include delivery of safe water, sanitation, waste management, social welfare, transport and communications facilities, energy, health and emergency services, schools, public safety and the management of open spaces. The lack of adequate basic services, a key component of shelter, exerts a heavy toll on human health, productivity and the quality of life, particularly for people living in poverty. Local authorities have the primary responsibility to provide and enable delivery of services, regulated by appropriate legislation and standards.*⁹

In Kibera, the government has invested very little in terms of provision of infrastructure and services. The situation with regard to this issue is in some way a ‘catch 22’, where the settlement is regarded as an illegally settled area for which rates are not payable and therefore no provision of these basic facilities will be made by the authorities.

The settlement is therefore characterised by overcrowding in poor housing units without adequate roads, water supply, waste disposal system etc. Due to lack of these basic services, the community has adopted a range of survival strategies. Most of these strategies have been devised in the context of what has been termed ‘economy of affection’. These characteristics coupled with heterogeneity, polluted environments, high morbidity rates, low incomes and lack of recreation facilities create intense social pressure. The result is a mix of problems that include crime, drug addiction, alcoholism, prostitution, high mortality rates etc.

Water Supply

Water is one of the key determinants for health for all age groups. Its source, treatment and storage are all stages where problems of contamination can occur with dire consequences of gastro – intestinal diseases. However, the poor in Kibera do not have water piped to their individual houses, as is the practice in other parts of the city. They have to either buy water from the few communal water points that have been installed in the village for commercial purposes (water point: household ratio is about 1:150),¹⁰ or buy from vendors who bring water in tanks. Long and time consuming queues of mostly women and children are therefore a common feature in the settlement. The irony about the sale of water in this settlement is that due to the fact that the water passes through a second media before it gets to the people, the poor end up buying water much more expensively than the middle and high income groups who get water directly from the City Council. Due to the high cost of purchasing water, the water that is bought is used very sparingly and is only used as drinking water and at times for cooking purposes. Water for bathing and for washing utensils and clothes is fetched from the polluted river or drains that run through the settlement; or tapped from the roof during the rainy season.

Sanitation

Sanitation is grossly inadequate in this settlement. Traditional pit latrines are the most commonly used method of waste disposal as there is no water-borne sewage system in the settlement. Other disposal methods used include drop-hole latrines that empty into open drains, drop-holes latrines that empty into sewer lines, the river, the bushes next to the railway line, ‘wrap and hull’ etc.

Part of the population that uses these unorthodox disposal methods are those who do not have access to toilet facilities and this group comprises about 1/3 of the population. For the 2/3 who have access, a very small fraction have separate individual family toilets while the remaining majority share communal toilets. The average distribution of toilets is about 90 households per toilet.¹¹

⁹ THE HABITAT AGENDA, Paragraph 84.

¹⁰ Study carried out in Jan. / Feb., 1999

¹¹ Ibid.

The existing latrines are generally in deplorable and dangerous condition. Most have no covers for the pit openings and have very unstable floors. This plus the fact that they are shallow and are not regularly cleaned and emptied leads to unsanitary conditions which gets to its worst during the rainy season when the whole place floods. This is a dangerous environment for the survival of children.

Most toilets are constructed next to the railway line or the river where there is available space. Space within the settlement is considered prime and thus reserved for construction of rental houses only. A good number of toilets within the settlement have had to be demolished to make way for rental rooms.

Bathing facilities are minimal and inadequate. A good number of residents use basins in their houses. Some use basins in the toilets while the majority have separate bathrooms which are mostly communally used. Children however have their bath outside the houses or in the polluted river.

Drainage

Household waste water and storm water are the main sources of water to the environment. Drainage is poor and there is frequently no conscious provision made for it. Wastewater from households is therefore disposed of on the paths / drains outside the houses, leading to pools of dirty stagnant water if the wastewater does not find its way to the river. During the rainy season floods occur especially in the low-lying ground and in shallow pit latrines which heightens the health risks.

Refuse disposal

The City Council does not collect refuse from this area but limits collection to occasional clearing of garbage heaps next to Kibera Drive when they become a health hazard. The area is therefore littered with refuse and contaminated with decomposing waste with the attendant risks. This not only creates eyesores on the landscape, but also causes air pollution, water pollution, infectious diseases and propagation of animal pests.

The residents try to look for their own ways of addressing this problem and usually find solutions in different ways. Most use inadequate composting methods, some incineration while others do not practice proper refuse disposal and scatter their household trash indiscriminately in the drainage ditches, gullies, pits and river.

Access

Access to Kibera is through a number of informally interlinked dirt tracks some of which serve as main routes into various parts of the settlement. Vehicular access into the settlement's interior is rather difficult and causes problems especially for local traders when restocking their businesses. The inadequacy of access also implies that ambulances or fire engines cannot access victims in cases of emergency. People thus end up dying or losing property in infernos just because they are beyond the reach of emergency services.

The footpaths that lead to clusters or individual houses are usually very narrow, uneven and are not paved. During the rains the paths become muddy and make walking through the settlement an unpleasant experience if not an impossibility. During the dry season, the paths become dry and dusty thereby causing air pollution.

Electricity

Very few people have electricity connected to their houses and out of these most have illegally and dangerously made connections and mostly use it for lighting purposes. Most families use paraffin for cooking and lighting as it is considered cheaper and easier to handle. It is however a major cause of air pollution due to the toxic fumes it produces and has serious implications on respiratory health especially of children. Its safety has also been questioned, as it is believed that its careless usage has been the cause of fire outbreaks that often occur in the settlement.

Housing

A house – shelter is a basic need and its availability and quality determines the quality of life led by its inhabitants. Kibera has a wide range of housing types in terms of construction methods and materials, living space and condition of dwellings.

Construction methods and materials

The mode of construction is usually based on traditional construction methods and materials that are easily, cheaply or freely available. The main classifications of houses are 'permanent', 'semi-permanent' and 'temporary'. The 'permanent' houses which comprise a very low percentage of the settlement's housing stock are built with materials such as concrete blocks, masonry stone, bricks (for walls); cement screed, tiles (for wall / floor finishing) and a variety of metal sheets and tiles (for roofs). The 'temporary' houses are built with mud & wattle, tin sheets, poor quality timber (for walls); a variety of metal sheets (for roofs) and compacted earth (for floors). 'Semi-permanent' houses are therefore those built with a mix of 'permanent' and 'temporary' materials. The majority of houses in Kibera can be classified in the last group, 'semi-permanent', due to the widespread use of GCI sheets for roofing purposes and mud & wattle for walls. There is a small percentage of houses with tin sheet and timber walls. These structures are therefore considered illegal by the NCC as they do not conform to the specified building standards.

The mud & wattle walls are difficult to keep clean while the tin and iron sheet walls and roofs have very poor temperature regulation properties and cannot keep in or out cold, heat and toxic fumes. This has adverse effects on the inhabitants' health.

Living space

This is limited and a large number of households live in congested conditions. A household comprising of an

average of 6 people usually occupies one room of about 3.2 x 3.2 metres.¹² Each room usually has one external access and one or no window, resulting into poor ventilation and lighting within dwellings. In slightly larger rooms, sleeping space is often separated from living / cooking space by a simply hung curtain. Children and visitors sleep on mats on the floor, though in large families with little space, little children sleep under the parents' beds.

Most houses, especially those built for tenancy purposes are built in rows of 6 – 8 rooms with very narrow spaces in between. The partition walls between rooms are not built to the roof thereby giving inhabitants little privacy. This is made worse by the continuous noise caused by high room occupancy rates. This high density (at dwelling and settlement levels) causes problems such as spread of fires, inadequate air movement and difficult movement of people in the chaotic maze.

Condition of dwelling units

The condition of houses is pathetic such that during rainy seasons many roofs leak and walls get washed off. The condition is even worse, if not fatal when heavy rains come. Families, especially those living close to the river have been known to perish with their property in the floods.

When dwelling units are not built on high ground, compacted earth floors usually turn into muddy quagmires during the rains. During dry seasons dust penetrates into dwellings through eaves or wall cracks and floors generally dry up and become dusty.

Rents

The rents are high considering inhabitants' level of income and condition of houses. Inhabitants complain about rents charged by landlords who take advantage of high housing demand to frequently increase rents. Due to this situation, families, relatives or groups of friends live together and share the burden of paying rent. Although there are rent control regulations, they 'cannot' be enforced in informal settlements where inhabitants are considered to be living 'illegally'.

Land Ownership & Land-use.

Land ownership

The land within the study area is entirely government owned. None of the tenants or landlords therefore possesses official land title deeds. The Nubian's history in Kibera is a case the government is aware of but is silent on the issue of ownership documents. However, they have also not been threatened with eviction, as is the case in other parts of the settlement.

Process of land allocation

To acquire a plot in Kibera, the interested party, usually low-cost rental housing developers and the landless and homeless; has to go through the area chief who then uses his discretion to allocate or not allocate. The land is allocated for a fee of about Ksh 5000/- (approx. 83 USD) for a small plot of about 72sqm.¹³ The payment is usually unrecorded and no receipt issued making it an illegal transaction. This is however the de-facto allocation process in Kibera and indeed other informal settlements.

Land-use

As far as the city's land-use plan is concerned, this area is not planned and is not fit for human habitation. It is in fact a reserve area for the river, the railway line and a way-leave for services like sewer lines, power lines, water etc. This could partly explain the government's reluctance to officially recognise the settlement.

The residents however make use of the land as best as they can. Housing construction is the most important land-use activity and occupies the prime and flood-free areas. These areas have however been built up forcing building activities to move closer to the river and the railway line. Other features in the landscape are toilets and small-scale urban gardens which usually occupy the river banks and the area next to the railway line.

The Community Based Organisation (CBO) Gange Self – Help Youth Group

*'The needs of children and youth, particularly with regard to their living environment, have to be fully taken into account. Special attention needs to be paid to the participatory processes dealing with the shaping of cities, towns and neighbourhoods; this is order to secure the living conditions of children and youth and to make use of their insights, creativity and thoughts on the environment...'*¹⁴

Who are they?

Gange, a Swahili colloquial word for hard work, is a youth group based in Makina village, a section of the sprawling Kibera 'slums' in the city of Nairobi. The group is made up of a membership of about fifty uneducated and unemployed youngsters drawn from different parts of the village.

The group's life history dates back to around 1986 when some traders began selling timber in this area due to a high demand created by ongoing construction activities in and around the settlement. These youngsters would hover around the timber area waiting for buyers who would pay

¹² Study carried out in Jan. / Feb., 1999.

¹³ Study carried out in Jan. / Feb., 1999.

¹⁴ THE HABITAT AGENDA. Paragraph 13.

a token fee (about 1USD)¹⁵ to have them physically carry the timber to the buyers' sites. At this point in time the group was quite informal but as time went by they became acquainted to each other and people in the neighbourhood also started recognising them, nicknaming them the 'gogo' boys ('gogo' meaning logs).

As the group became more organised, they got engaged in discussions on how to strengthen their resource base by involving themselves in other income generating activities as they realised only they could improve their living standards. These discussions also led to their seeking for registration with the Office of Provincial Director of Social Services, Nairobi area. With the help of the local Councillor who was already aware of the group's activities, they managed to get registration.

The encouraging quality of this group is that they engage in productive activities not only for economic gain but also because of their concern for the environment; and as much as they do not have the financial and technical means to effect major improvements, they are willing and are able to use their vast energies. This is the main factor that determined the identification of Gange as a youth group to work with in the improvement of Kibera 'slums'. To generate some income and also improve the environment the group is involved in constant clearing of garbage heaps in parts of the settlement. They also build footbridges during rainy seasons when the river overflows and washes off bridges and footpaths become muddy and impassable. They usually charge a small fee for the use of the bridges. The garbage clearing exercises are however a free community service though in one instance, they managed to turn a garbage dump into an income generating activity area. Isn't this commendable?.

The Turning Point

The site, with an area of about 1200sqm, is the open space between the NCC Makina market frontage and the busy Kibera Drive.¹⁶ Before Gange's intervention the space had been a massive garbage dump for years. The group, to people's disbelief, transformed this site into a clean open space and is currently operating a car-wash facility on it. Garbage bins are now confined to one side of the site and the group makes efforts to either burn up or dispose of the refuse.

The group is however experiencing infrastructural problems on this site. The site gets waterlogged due to its unevenness and gets quite muddy during the rains. This creates difficulties in the operations of the car-wash business and makes work difficult as well as putting off customers. There is no water on site and the group has to either buy water from the market or fetch it from a nearby river.

The Market Front Development Project

Together with the group, other interested actors have come up with proposals as a response to the problems the group is experiencing as well as other environmental problems. The short term objectives of this project referred to as the Market Front Development Project (MFDP) include:-

1. Turning an urban void into productive and sustainable use.
2. Designing a scheme to be approved by the local authority to enable the group to legally use the space as a business premise.
3. Assisting the youth in vulnerable conditions (Gange in particular) to:-
 - set up an enabling environment for income generating activities
 - improve their immediate environment and subsequently
 - improve their housing and living conditions

The MFDP is to be used as a stepping stone to a larger programme with a long-term objective of improving the living environment in the entire Kibera 'slum' area. This is an attempt to implement the Habitat Agenda at the local level where it is recognised that access to safe and healthy shelter and basic services, is essential to a person's physical, psychological, social and economic well-being and should be a fundamental part of actions for people without decent living conditions. The long-term objective of the MFDP thus includes both the physical / environmental improvements of the settlement and the social / economic empowerment of the community. The MFDP which is basically the group's project is given priority with the hope that the youth once mobilised and economically empowered will play an important role in organising the wider community and mobilising local resources to assist in achieving the long-term objective of upgrading the settlement. This is in line with the belief that to improve the quality of life in low - income settlements, efforts have to be made to reduce poverty.

Participation in Upgrading Kibera 'Slums'

Actors & Roles

Sustainable human settlement development requires the active engagement of civil society organisations, as well as the broad-based participation of all people. It equally requires a responsive, transparent and accountable government at the local level which together with civil engagement will ensure that all voices are heard in identifying problems and priorities, setting goals, exercising legal rights, determining service standards,

¹⁵ Discussions with group members.

¹⁶ Site located and measured by 5th year architecture students – 1996 (JKUAT).

*mobilising resources and implementing policies, programmes and projects.*¹⁷

Upgrading of Kibera will require the participation of a wide range of actors from both public and private sectors. Below is a brief outline of who the participants are; why they are or should be involved in this project; and what their specific roles and responsibilities are or should be. For purposes of specifying roles of different actors, an action plan will be formulated for water and sanitation problems which have already been identified by the community as requiring priority action. It is however important to note that these problems cannot be tackled in isolation as most of the settlement's problems are interrelated and would therefore require an integrative approach when seeking for solutions. The plan of action gives an outline of the identified problems; proposes practical solutions (actions) for these problems; suggests the type of resources (human, technical, financial etc.) required for implementation of actions; proposes a practical time frame (immediate, short or long term; incremental etc.) within which the actions can be effectively implemented; and proposes the actors to be involved. See Implementation Programme in Table 1 below:

Problem	Proposed Actions	Resources	Time frame	Actors
Water	*Increase the # of water points	*Unskilled labour *Skilled labour *Technical *Financial	*Incremental (to start immediately)	*Community *CBO *NCC *AAK *Manufacturers
Sanitation	*Introduction of water-borne sanitation. *Construction of appropriate latrines. (VIP) *Demolition of dangerous latrines.	*Unskilled labour *Skilled labour *Technical *Financial	*Incremental (to start immediately)	*Community *CBO *NCC *AAK *Manufacturers *Local leadership *Well-wishers

For every problem to be effectively tackled there are four crucial stages which the process has to follow. These are inception stage, planning and design stage, implementation stage and the maintenance stage. These stages, apart from helping in the organisation and programming of the project, also assist in outlining exactly when and in what form the different actors' participation is required. .

The Community

*'When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contribution to design, construction or management of their housing; both the process and the environment produced stimulate individual and social well being. When people have no control, nor responsibility for key decisions in the housing process, dwelling environments may instead become a barrier to personal fulfilment and a burden on the economy.'*¹⁸

The community as the most important actor will have a major role to play in the development of this project. The inhabitants of Kibera will have more responsibilities than other actors, and these responsibilities will span throughout the project's life i.e. from inception stage right through to maintenance stage.

For the community to participate actively and effectively they will need to first look at themselves as a community with a common goal; and identify / prioritise their needs / problems. This will help them in understanding how proposed design solutions relate to their needs during design stage. Having fully participated in the initial stages, it is hoped that the community will have developed a sense of commitment to participate in the rather demanding implementation stage.

Their main role at this crucial stage will be the provision of unskilled labour and skilled labour whenever possible. For the water / sanitation project, the community will provide labour for excavation of trenches for laying water pipes and drains; and for laying of the pipes themselves. They will also be required to provide labour for excavation and construction of pit latrines / toilets and for demolition of dilapidated latrines.

The community being composed of different individuals in terms of gender, age, skills, etc., will organise themselves with the CBO's assistance to decide on who should provide what kind of labour.

Besides the labour element, the community will be required to make financial contribution towards the project's implementation. This additional role should serve a dual purpose of instilling a sense of responsibility in the community, as well as a sense of ownership of the project. The modalities of carrying out this exercise will be worked out in partnership with the community. It is also hoped that the high sense of responsibility developed from active participation will ensure that the completed project is properly maintained – a task which solely lies with the community.

This is the community's project. It is a project initiated by them as a response to problems they are experiencing. The community is therefore the pivot of the project and their role thus has to shift from that of a passive recipient to an active participant, in this project and any other process concerning the development of their settlement. Participation by the community in all aspects of their development will mean more than simple identification of problems. They will need to go a step further to understand the implications of solving these problems in terms of financial, technical, legal and human resources;

¹⁷ THE HABITAT AGENDA. Paragraph 181.

¹⁸ Quoted from TURNER, J.F.C., Housing by People. Back cover.

time frame; and their role and other actors' roles and responsibilities.

The community here refers to all the individuals living in Kibera i.e. women, men, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly etc. All these groups of people are an important part of the community in their own right and their specific needs should therefore be considered in the development of the neighbourhood.

The Community Based Organisation - CBO

Community groups should be facilitated to participate in development and also be helped to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities through open and effective participatory processes. They should be prepared to participate in current and future decision-making processes.

The CBO here refers to Gange Youth Self Help Group, though other youth groups or women groups in the area could be involved in the implementation of the wider Kibera project. Gange's and any other CBO's major role will be the mobilisation of community's human and financial resources.

The CBO, being part of the community is better placed to organise the community to agree on how and when contributions can be made; and who should provide what kind of labour, at what stage, at what point etc. The CBO here becomes the very much needed mediator between the community and other actors, as it is easier to meet and discuss with a group as opposed to a community of hundreds of thousands.

The CBO – Gange, apart from acting as a mediator, will still play the role of providing labour - a service they have always given and are willing to give even more of.

The Architectural Association of Kenya - AAK

The AAK is a professional organisation made up of five chapters each composed of architects, quantity surveyors, engineers, planners and landscape architects. The membership basically comprises of practising professionals but is also extended to students and technicians in the various professions.

Apart from its professional activities, AAK has lately emerged as a strong pressure group with a voice that is listened to and appreciated. It has raised its voice against allocation of public land (especially forests) to private entities for private development; construction of illegal and dangerous structures in the city; and eviction of squatters in informal settlements among other sensitive issues in the Kenyan human settlements scene.

The architects' chapter has a community services committee which addresses human settlement issues and specifically focuses on informal settlements ('slums'). It is currently carrying out pilot mini-upgrading project in Mukuru 'slums'¹⁹. This project involves construction of an ablution block and a bridge across the polluted Ngong River which runs through this settlement.

The Mukuru project was initiated by the residents themselves in terms of identification and prioritisation of

their problems. The AAK came in to assist with design and implementation in terms of funding and co-ordination of both financial and human resources. The community is willingly and happily providing labour while the local leadership (chief and councillor) is encouraging the people on and showing a real sense of commitment to the project.

As a volunteer who had been working with the youth in Kibera, I realised I needed to work with a larger organisation to make effective change in these people's lives. I formally made an application to AAK and sent a brief write-up of short / long term proposals for the upgrading of Kibera. The response was positive and indeed, because of AAK's awareness of my activities in informal settlements, I was elected to be the convenor of the community services committee in February 1999. The Kibera upgrading programme is therefore on AAK's community services committee's top agenda and this paper is going to form the basis on which detailed and focussed plans of action will be formulated.

The Kibera project will however, unlike the Mukuru project which only involved practising professionals in AAK, also involve students of architecture (University of Nairobi & Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology) and students of Urban & Regional Planning (University of Nairobi).

AAK's major role as a professional organisation is to co-ordinate the activities / actors in the proposed programme to achieve an appreciable level of improvement in the living conditions in Kibera. Besides co-ordination, AAK has the specific role of providing technical advice especially during planning, design and implementation stages. This, the organisation intends to provide by sending its professionals (both practising and studying) to the field (Kibera) to work with the people to formulate appropriate and affordable designs for the water / sanitation project.

AAK's other role as a co-ordinator – project manager, is to solicit for funds or any other kind of assistance from other bodies it has links with and to ensure that the project does not stall for reasons within its control.

AAK as a pressure group is also charged with the sensitive role of advocating for the acceptance of informal settlements by the government, and subsequent regularisation and allocation of ownership documents.

Manufacturing Industries

Industries manufacturing building materials come in a variety of types and sizes. All these industries have a role to play in the development of informal settlements, first as employers of informal settlement inhabitants and secondly, as suppliers of building materials for construction in both formal and informal sectors. They should therefore, as major stakeholders in the building industry be involved in the process of finding solutions to informal settlement problems.

It is proposed that industries to be involved should be those producing building materials like cement, iron sheets, timber, concrete products, clay products, glass etc.; though participation would be welcome from other well wishing industries. The industries producing these

¹⁹ Mukuru is an informal settlement in Nairobi.

materials are numerous with the production of each or a combination of materials being carried out by a number of industries, e.g. Nairobi area has three large -scale cement producing industries i.e. Bamburi, East African Portland and Athi River Mining.

Manufacturers of building materials have strong links with the AAK as the umbrella body of all professionals in the building industry. They benefit from this link by advertising their products to the professionals especially architects who are charged with the responsibility of material specification for building projects. It is therefore proposed that AAK should take advantage of its cordial relationship with manufacturers to request them to participate in the development of informal settlements and especially in the upgrading of Kibera.

The manufacturers' main role would be provision of building materials required for the programme. The manufacturers can either donate these materials or sell at discounted prices. For the water / sanitation project they would be required to provide materials like water pipes, sanitary ware, cement, walling materials, roofing materials etc.

The Nairobi City Council - NCC

Local authorities should be on the frontline in achieving the goals of Habitat II.

Urban informal settlements always fall under the jurisdiction of local authorities who usually find it easier to ignore the informal settlements inhabitants and their problems. The local authorities and the NCC in this case, choose not to address informal settlement problems partly due to lack of adequate legal, institutional and financial capacity to deal with these problems; and lack of autonomy to make their own decisions.

Problems faced by residents of Kibera cannot be addressed effectively without some form of participation by NCC . We are therefore calling on NCC to take on these challenges with open, accountable and effective leadership. Its role has to be strengthened to make it an effective participant in the whole process and this can only be achieved by strengthening its capacities and increasing its co-operation with other actors.

NCC as the local authority in the area needs to be aware of the proposed programme, and even requires to give approval before its implementation commences. Besides giving approval, NCC as the sole water undertaker in the city would need to be involved in the water / sanitation project to make the necessary connections and provide water metres.

Local Leadership - LL

Local leadership here refers to the offices of the area chief and the local councillor. The chief is a government official based in the area for administrative purposes, while the councillor is elected by the people for representation in the local council, in this case the NCC. These are leaders with authority who if sensitised on human settlement issues can be quite instrumental in achieving positive results.

The leaders' role is to mobilise the community in terms of creating a sense of togetherness which the programme

will very much require. They need to help the people understand their problems and what causes them; as well as the implications of the proposed solutions. The leaders also serve as a mediator between the people and the other actors, especially the local authority and the central government. For this particular area and project, the chief should enforce the demolition of hazardous latrines and construction of new ones while the councillor should strive to ensure NCC's full and active participation.

The Central Government - GOK

The government as the 'people's custodian' always has to be involved in the development of human settlements albeit with less responsibilities. It should strive to decentralise shelter policies and their administration to provincial or local levels within the national framework whenever possible.

For this particular project the government's fundamental role is to be a facilitator – an enabler; in the problem – solving processes the community and other actors are involved in. To effectively perform this role the government needs to openly accept the existence of informal settlements and in particular address the sensitive land - ownership issue head - on.

Well – Wishers (WW)

In a programme of this nature and magnitude, the list of actors should always be left open for those willing to offer assistance in any form – financial aid, technical advice, legal advice etc. Organisations that already come to mind are:-

SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency)
The agency's Urban Development Division has been informally informed about the programme and will be receiving updates on the programme's progress; while also looking into ways of participating. SIDA's clear role in this project would be to assist the AAK in advocating for the acceptance of informal settlements, disseminating information about similar programmes in other developing countries, and any other kind of assistance they would be able and willing to provide.

LSK (The Law Society of Kenya)

This society would assist with legal problems which are bound to arise in a programme of this nature.

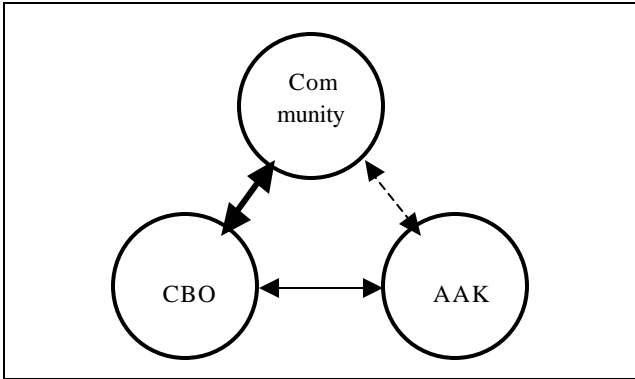
Housing finance institutions

HFCK (Housing Finance Company of Kenya), EABS (East African Building Society) etc.

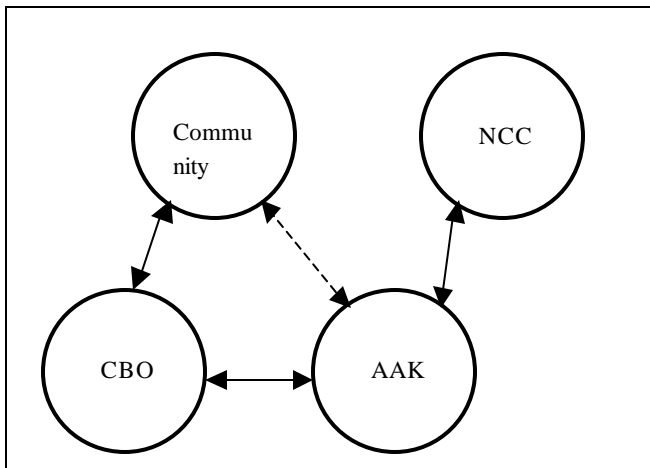
The Partnerships

The implementation programme table clearly illustrates the need for co-operation between all actors. It shows how for the water / sanitation project all actors are either involved simultaneously or have roles overlapping in terms of time. This calls for all actors to know and understand the other actors and their roles in the project. It calls for the development of partnership trust which can only be achieved if all the actors are transparent and accountable in their specific responsibilities.

Development of strong partnerships is therefore a task the AAK, as the co-ordinating actor, has to be willing and able to address during the inception of this programme. In the water project's inception stage, for example, the community identifies the problems, the CBO's role of mobilising the people has to start at this stage, while the AAK assists with the documentation of the outcomes and mapping out of existing water lines and points. These three actors therefore have to co-ordinate and cooperate for this first analysis stage to be successfully completed. See Relationship Diagram below.

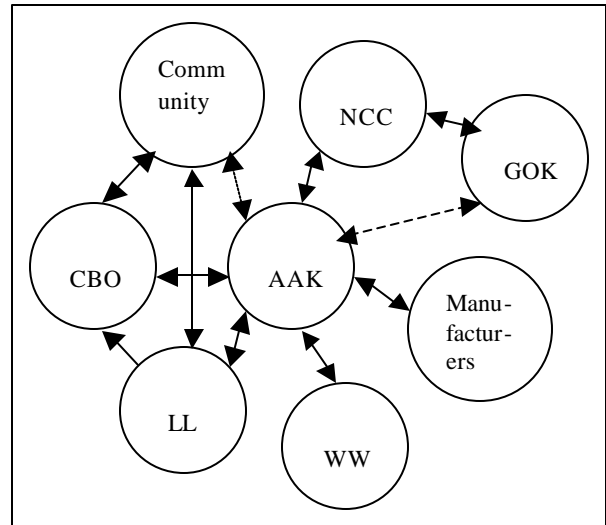


During the planning and design stage, the community, the CBO and the AAK are still active on the scene but with an additional actor – the NCC, who hopefully approves the layouts and agrees to make the necessary connections. The link to NCC is however the AAK who is charged with the responsibility of developing the technical drawings and submitting them to the local authority - NCC. See Relationship Diagram below.

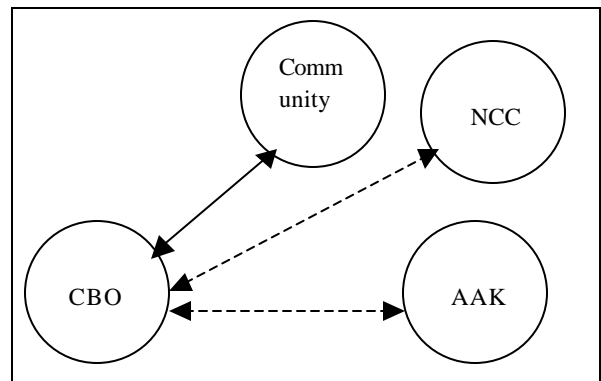


The implementation stage requires all the actors and this is when the spirit of teamwork comes in handy. The community is at this stage providing labour and making financial contributions - activities that require strong partnerships within the community itself. The CBO continues with their mediator role while also mobilising resources and providing labour. AAK's role of co-

ordination is most difficult at this stage when every actor's activity affects the others' performance. Besides the role of co-ordination, AAK has to supervise the installation of the works to ensure that the technical specifications are adhered to. The NCC will be approving the works at various stages while the manufacturers will be expected to continuously supply the project with materials. The local leadership will be expected to give moral support to the whole team. See Relationship Diagram below.



After implementation the project is left under the custody of the CBO who in partnership with their community has



to maintain and sustain it. The other actors at this stage are passive actors and can only make periodical evaluations and wish the project all the best.

Summary

The magnitude and complexity of the problems faced by inhabitants of informal settlements; and the manner in which these problems are growing from bad to worse, calls for urgent change in the approaches used to address these problems. The weaknesses of past approaches give

pointers as to what direction future interventions should take. The bottom line is that the past approaches have neither been **people oriented** nor **action oriented**. This paper has addressed **people in action** and has the following summary to make:-

Community Participation

Community participation at all levels is fundamental, and the community has the greatest role to play in the development of their settlement. Lack of their involvement lessens success chances of community projects. Full participation by the community helps in understanding and appreciating the project while also creating a sense of responsibility in the people and thereby making the project sustainable.

Economic Upliftment

'People in action' have to be people who can afford basic necessities. Ways of developing income generating activities therefore have to be explored to enable the poor communities to fend for themselves and thereby improve their living conditions.

CBO Involvement

The CBOs have been identified as the effective link that is required to bridge the gap between the people and the other actors – the leaders, the government, the AAK etc. The CBOs being part of the community are better placed to play this mediator role and have the mechanisms to reach and communicate with the people and back to the other actors.

Shift from top-down to bottom-up strategies

The problems are experienced by the people and are best understood by them. Proposals for solutions should therefore start from the people. This enables solutions to be practical / appropriate and affordable.

Variety of Participants

The complex problems in requiring integrative approaches also require different types of actors with different types of skills and powers to effectively address the different but inter-related types of problems. Each actor should be committed to carry out the role they are good at.

Strong Partnerships

Having actors with all the skills and powers the programme requires would be meaningless if the actors actions are not well co-ordinated. Apart from all the actors having commitment to a common objective for the success of the programme, there has to be a strong sense of transparency and accountability in all programme actions.

Localised Action Plans

Due to the complexity of the programme it is important that each actor clearly knows and understands what their roles are. This should be in the form of detailed local action plans where each actor's role is drawn out. This enables an actor to know what is expected of him / her, when this participation is expected, who is to be co-ordinated with etc.

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