

# Upgrading Informal Settlements: Taking a Proactive Approach

*G M Katongo*

Urban Planner,  
Luanshya Municipal Council



*The author holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Urban and Regional Planning obtained from the Copperbelt University and is a Member of the Zambia Institute of Planners. He is currently working as a Director of Planning for Luanshya Municipal Council a town located on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. His work involves facilitation of the enforcement of the development control. He facilitates local economic development and participates in the delivery of housing for the informal settlements.*

Informal settlements are a common feature of all municipalities in Zambia. Establishments of informal settlements have had varying histories. Regardless of the history, what has come out is the fact that the local authorities do not take any proactive role in addressing the problem of informal settlement. They have always looked at informal settlements as illegal which should be demolished when time allows. What has been the experience to the contrary is that most of these 'illegal settlements' have ended up being legalized through upgrading due to pressure. When that happens, important factors related to physical risks, geographical location or legal statuses of the settlements are usually compromised. Further, as a result of this delay providing for services during upgrading of already established settlements becomes extremely difficult.

The paper looks at this approach by local authorities towards informal settlements and proposes a proactive approach as a solution. The Local Authorities should act quickly and provide guidance to the establishment and growth of informal settlements. This will ease upgrading and integration of informal settlements with the rest of the urban set up at a later stage.

# General Data on Country and Municipality

## Geography and Administration – National

Zambia is one of the countries in Southern Africa and measures about 753 000sqm.

Zambia is a landlocked country with eight neighbors namely: Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Angola, Namibia and Congo DR. Zambia’s capital city is Lusaka and for easy of administration Zambia is divided into nine (9) provinces.

Zambia has a population of 10,285,631 distributed as 5,070,891 male and 5,214,740 female with a growth rate of 2.9%.

Life expectancy is estimated at 38.1 while HIV prevalence is estimated at 16.5%.

## Luanshya District

Luanshya is located on the Copperbelt Province of Zambia and lies about 337 Kilometers to the north of the Capital of Lusaka.

The district shares boundaries with Ndola District on the North East, Masaiti District on the South and Kitwe District on the North West.

Luanshya covers approximately 100,760.87sqm and lies at 1225 meters above sea level. Luanshya’s population is estimated at 162 660 with a growth rate of 0.8%.

### Population distribution by sex and age

Age	Male	Female	Total
0-4	14,374	14,019	28,392
5-9	1,665	9,948	11,613
10-14	11,396	11,475	22,872
15-19	9,666	10,209	19,875
20-24	9,133	9,045	18,178
25-29	7,171	6,733	13,904
30-34	5,332	5,859	11,191
35-39	4,531	4,840	9,371
40-44	4,208	3,778	7,986
45-49	3,174	3,036	6,209
50-54	2,723	1,909	4,633
55-59	2,081	1,204	3,285
60-64	1,319	828	2,147
65-69	720	539	1,259
70-74	466	376	842
75-79	284	197	481
80+	238	184	422

Source: Central statistical Office 2000

The population of Luanshya is representative of most towns across the country. The population is generally young, below 55 years. This is part of the population that is in its prime for employment and housing. Unfortunately the economy of the town cannot provide for these. Their solace is in the informal sector both for employment and housing.

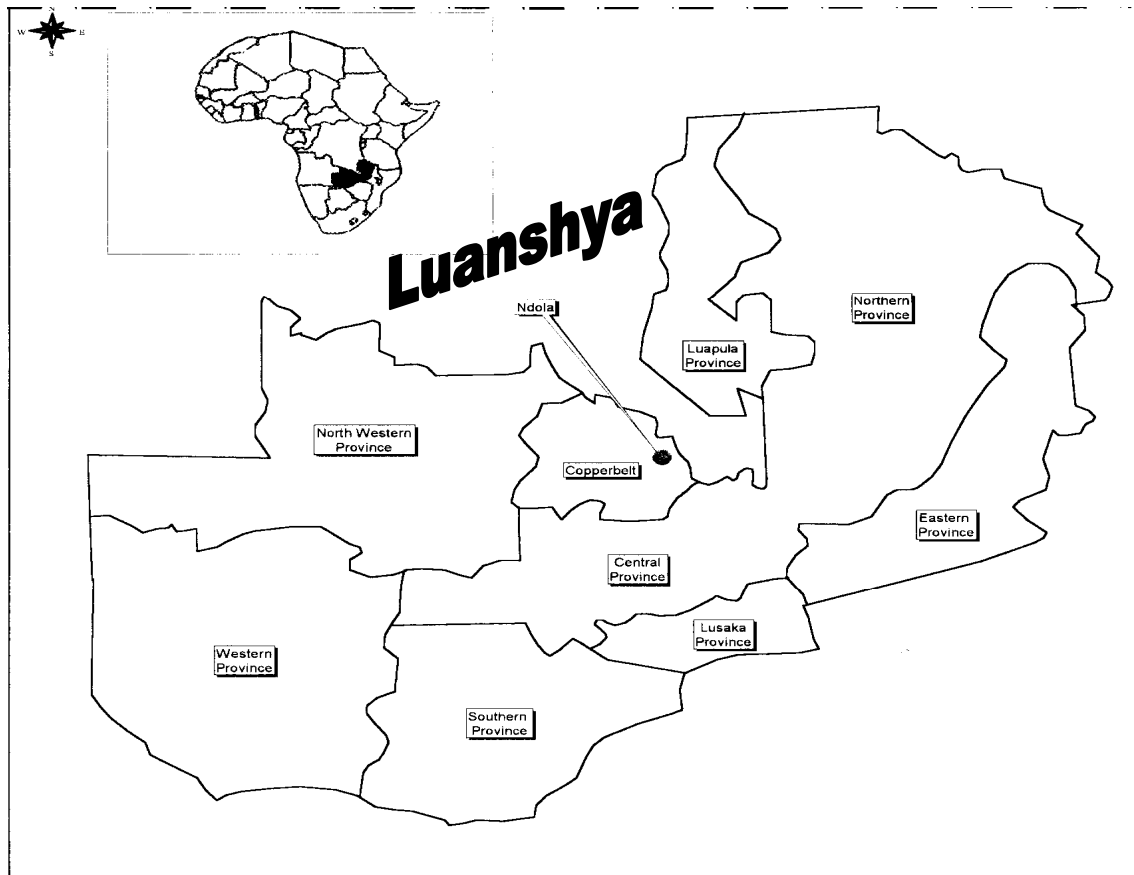


Figure 1: Location of Luanshya in relation to Zambia

## Administration

The District Commissioner (DC) represents the central government at district level. Luanshya Municipal Council (LMC) is composed of 30 elected councilors two of whom are councilors by virtue of being members of Parliament.

Administratively, the Town Clerk is the Chief Executive of Council. The Town Clerk is assisted in his duties by six (6) Directors drawn from the departments of Housing and Social Services, Town Planning, Engineering, Administration and Finance. Together they form Council Management. The two, that is, management and councilors form Council and formulate and enforce by-Laws.

## Economy

Luanshya is a mining town and most industries were or are established to supply their products and services to the mines directly or indirectly. After the sale of the mines of Luanshya to Luanshya Copper Mines two mine shafts were closed and drastically reduced volumes of operations, out of over 6000 workers previously employed only 1 500 were retained. This affected many companies. Some reduced their volume of operation while many others had to wind up. Poverty levels now stand at 57%.

## Shelter Related Facts

A number of 49 950 have access to piped water representing 40% of the total population. The rest, the majority of which are in the informal settlements, access their water from boreholes with hand pumps and shallow wells as well as streams. As regards waste disposal 2% benefit from municipal collection services, 10% benefit from private collection services, and 88% have no access to municipal or private collection services. The 88% are those mostly in the informal settlements. Their disposal sites are usually open spaces and road sides.

In terms of home ownership 53% of housing stock is in informal settlements with no legal ownership to land while 47% of the housing stock is in planned areas of town and is owned on title.

In planned areas houses are built with permanent materials e.g. concrete blocks, corrugated iron sheets. Before they are built one has to follow a legal procedure as demanded by the Local Planning Authority. While in the informal settlements houses are usually crowded and built of any material available. There is no land use classification or a pattern of any sort. There is no control in plot sizes and this causes irregularities in the grid. There is high level of irrational use of space.

### Access to electricity

Settlement Area	Service Level
Residential High Cost	100%
Residential Medium Cost	100%
Residential Low Cost	30%
Industrial	90%
Informal Settlements	0%

Source: Luanshya Municipal Council Structure Plan 2000

## Access to telephone

Settlement Area	Service level
High Cost Residential	100%
Medium Cost Residential	100%
Low Cost Residential	30%
Informal Settlement	1%
Industrial	80%

Source: Luanshya Municipal Council Structure Plan 2000

## Existing Policy

The government has created the National Housing Authority, which provides houses for rent and sale. Mostly these houses are provided in the capital city of Lusaka and usually for middle and high-income groups. As a result of its policy the government has allowed private developers to come on the market and provide houses. Again this is common only in Lusaka and usually for the high-income groups. Government allows the forces of supply and demand in the housing market.

## Other Actors

*We for Zambia, Missioner Group of Solidarity*

The NGO is involved in shelter provision for disadvantaged members of the informal settlements. They provide food and clothing to their target groups. They also provide educational and health support through provision of community schools and clinics with associated medicines. We for Zambia only operate in selected informal settlements.

*Programme Urban Self Help (PUSH)*

This is a Quasi Government programme. They are involved in road empowerment in informal settlements through food for work. They also provide other infrastructure like community halls. They also provide skills training especially among women. They too operate in selected settlements.

*Resident Development Committee (RDC)*

RDCs are community-based organization existing in almost all informal settlements. RDCs provide leadership in informal settlements. In most cases RDCs are involved in allocating plots and settling land related conflicts in informal settlements. Councils

recognize these as the conduit of development at grass root levels. Among another mandates are they are involved in resource (financial and human) mobilization for community based projects.

*Local Development Programme (formerly Zambia Social Investment Fund (ZAMSIF))*

Build the capacities of communities to identify their developmental needs, prioritize them and when funded by ZAMSIF implement them. Communities have been able to offer solutions to their own problems. Through this programme schools, clinics, bridges and roads have been built in communities.

## Need for Proactive Approaches to Informal Settlements

Local Authorities in Zambia and Luanshya in particular do not take a proactive approach towards informal settlements. Informal settlements are usually left to grow on their own for a long time without any control from the local authorities. Local authorities only come in when there are demands of upgrading such settlements. Usually this is at such times when these settlements have grown and are demanding for recognition from the authorities. Upgrading such settlements is never easy. This is because settlements were left to grow without any guidance. As a result they have grown without provision for basic infrastructure and services. In trying to provide for these services during upgrading availability of space far outweighs other reasons in locating basic infrastructure and other services. Other factors such as risk, geographical location and legal status on which settlements are located have usually not been considered at the time of upgrading. This is because relocation of already grown settlement becomes political and almost none practical. Further, it is important that Local Authorities continuously monitor these settlements to ensure they are growing in accordance with the guidance being offered.

## Analysis of Current Approach to Informal Settlements

Informal settlements have been left to grow without quick intervention (control) from the local authority. The Resident Development Committees involved in allocating plots in those informal settlements do not follow any guideline. People are given plots without considering where the road will pass, the children will go to school or

where they will go when they get sick. The local authority does not intervene early enough to control and guide the growth of informal settlements.

Proposals to upgrade such settlements usually come in when the settlements have grown beyond capacities.

In upgrading established settlements location of infrastructure of public use is usually based on the availability of land or space. The choice of site for infrastructure of public use is limited. The providers who are in most cases NGOs working in informal settlements spend considerable time and money in locating projects of public use and usually when sited and implemented they are far from the intended group or community. The beneficiary spends considerable time and energy in accessing that service. Going by the nature of services provided in informal settlement it is usually the women and children who are affected. They have to walk long distances to schools, water points, clinics etc. Resources are inadequate and when available they have to be spent effectively. Informal settlements have to be looked at critically as they account for 53% of the total population of Luanshya.

The other problem witnessed in letting settlements grow without early intervention is that other important factors have been compromised when the time of upgrading comes.

The factors referred to in this regard are firstly physical risks of the settlement. It is important to establish how secure the settlement is from disasters. When it is established that the settlement is risky it may not be a good idea to spend money on it in upgrading. It should not be upgraded and therefore should be relocated. Where settlements have been let to grow relocation is unlikely and this factor is usually compromised.

Secondly is the geographical location of the settlement. Consideration of the location of the settlement is very important. Settlements should not block other developments such as expansion of high ways etc. When it is established that the settlement is located near such developments it may not be a good idea to spend money on it in upgrading. It should not be upgraded and therefore should be relocated. Where settlements have been let to grow relocation is unlikely and this factor again is usually compromised.

Thirdly is the legal status of the land on which the settlement is located. It is important to establish the legal status of the land on which the settlement is sited.

Settlements sited on privately owned land have always proved difficult to deal with. Settlements sited within the urban expansion boundary may easy integration of such settlements with the rest of the town once upgraded.

It is important therefore that the local authority quickly controls the growth of these informal settlements. This control should be continuous and not a one off project. It is important at this stage to look at the current upgrading practices to fully understand what the paper is trying to discuss. As mentioned earlier Luanshya municipality has 18 informal settlements most of which are in their formation stages. So far four settlements namely Buntungwa, Mwaiseni, Zambia Compound and Fisenge have been upgraded. The process of upgrading is spearheaded by the department of housing and social services through the settlement unit.

The main areas addressed in upgrading these settlements have been improvement of accessibility by working on the road network. Redesign of layout plan (showing the existing infrastructure and the new residential plots to accommodate those displaced in the process) and the rights to land (issuance of land allocation forms) after upgrading.

The process has had its own problems. Intervention by the Local Authority has always been reactive to the demands coming from the settlements. Local authorities only come in when there are demands of upgrading such settlements. The demands usually come from either the residents of the settlements wanting recognition or the local politicians. As a result of this selection of settlements for upgrading has always compromised the risks, geographical location or physical characteristics and legal status of the settlements. E.g. Zambia Compound is an upgraded informal settlement that is located between Ndola –Kitwe Dual Carriageway and 330kv power line making the expansion of both infrastructures difficult. In addition the area is squeezed such that it has no space for school and other services. The nearest school is built 5km away from the settlement. Further more the layout plan has always shown the grid pattern of existing infrastructure and residential plots enough to cater for existing household in the settlement. Land provision for services such as schools, clinics etc has always been very difficult. Worse still upgrading has always been treated as a one off project that only ensures the existing settlement is upgraded. Once that is done the project is considered completed. Unfortunately the settlement continues to grow beyond the boundary of the upgraded settlements.



The process has however scored some success worth building on. For example, after upgrading people have tended to improve their structures with much more permanent materials such as cement, burnt bricks, corrugated iron sheets etc.

The intervention proposed in this paper builds on the successes of the current upgrading practices and most importantly address the short comings as outlined above. The interventions should ensure quick intervention in the informal settlements especially in their early stages of formation. This will enable the Local Authority carefully assess informal settlements for physical risk, geographical and legal factors before they could be allowed for establishment and or expansion. Further the local authority should develop layout plans that provide for adequate space for basic infrastructure (special emphasis in this regard will be to those settlements still in their formation stages) and provides for possible growth of settlements. It is also important for the local authority to continuously monitor informal settlements to ensure their growth and or expansion adheres to the layout plans developed above.

## Proposals for Change

### Taking a Proactive Approach

The Local Authority should intervene early enough in the establishment and growth of an informal settlement. Time of intervention is critical. Local authorities should be proactive towards informal settlements. The intervention is only to guide the growth or expansion of old and new settlements based on agreed layout plans. The intervention is not to apply the building regulations to the structure being constructed but only to ensure that people develop on their allocated plots. The objective at this stage is to ensure that all adhere to the commonly agreed layout plan and other planned land uses are respected. It is hoped that this focus will increase the possibility of public investment in public facilities such as schools, clinics, community halls, recreational places in appropriate sites. This will ease the integration of the settlements with the rest of the town and help reduce urban segregation.

## Layout Plan Preparation

Once the settlements for intervention are identified the layout plan has to be developed. Stakeholders in the preparation of the layout plan should include office of Director of Environment, Housing and Social Services, Resident Development Committee executive, Director of Planning and residents through meetings and interviews. Residents' views are cardinal. This is so because the layout plan should try as much as possible to address their various activities in the area. Stakeholder participation should be enhanced and encouraged for ease implementation of the plan. This participation is existent in most upgraded communities.

The layout plan should show the road network. The roads should be in patterns that will easy installation of services such as water and sewer. Blocks of plots should approximately measure 12 x 27 as is existing in the planned low cost areas. The plan should further show plots/spaces for basic infrastructure such as schools, clinics, halls, recreational activities and for possible small economic activities.

### Land Use Type and Coverage for upgraded settlements

PERMITTED USES	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Residential	50%	100%
Commercial	0%	30%
Industrial	0%	50%
Local open space recreational	5%	20%
Light industrial	0%	30%
Institutional	5%	25%

Source: Luanshya Municipal Council Structure Plan 2000

## Approval by Council

Once drawn the plan should be approved by Council for legitimacy. The layout plan should be reported for approval to the plans works development committee and then to full council.

## Administration of the layout plan

Applications for new plots in informal settlements should be directed to Council through the Resident Development Committees/Housing and Social Services.

Successful applicants should be legally recognized as is the practice now through land allocation forms.

Town planning should come in to show the applicant the plots offered and ensure the layout plan is adhered to. The planning department should therefore be equipped in terms of transport to ensure maximum control of informal settlements. The department should be vigilant enough to spot and control any form of non adherence to the implementation of the layout plan. The department should be well staffed and trained. The Resident Development Committees should also be capacity built to enable them understand and interpret the layout plans.

### Expected Achievements

This approach should help ensure an informal settlement, whether upgraded or not, that provides for adequate space for basic infrastructure and other services and will ease its integration with the rest of the town. Further an informal settlement, whether upgraded or not, that is away from any form of risk but well located geographically and with no legal encumbrances. This will ease upgrading and integration of these settlements with the rest of the urban set up at a later stage.

## Action Plan

ACTION	LEAD PERSONS	TIME FRAME
REPORTING THE CONCEPT TO THE PLANS AND WORKS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL	DIRECTOR OF PLANNING	SHORT TERM
REPORTING THE CONCEPT TO FULL COUNCIL	DIRECTOR OF PLANNING/TOWN CLERK	SHORT TERM
MEETINGS WITH RESIDENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS EXPLAINING PROPOSAL AND CAPACITY BUILDING ON BASIC ASPECTS OF PHYSICAL PLANNING	DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, SETTLEMENT OFFICERS AND RESIDENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES	SHORT TERM
NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND LAYOUT PREPARATION	DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, SETTLEMENT OFFICERS AND RESIDENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES	SHORT TERM/LONG TERM
FEED BACK AND FINAL PREPARATION OF LAYOUT PLANS	“	SHORT TERM
REPORT THE PLAN TO COUNCIL	DIRECTOR OF PLANNING	SHORT TERM
MONITORING ADHERENCE TO PLAN	DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, SETTLEMENT OFFICERS AND RESIDENT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES	SHORT TERM/LONG TERM
LOBBY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT	TOWN CLERK/MAYOR	SHORT TERM/LONG TERM

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