Unity is a Weapon of the Poor
Nairobi Slum Dwellers Cooperatively Save for Housing Developments

Community Upgrading
Kambi Moto, Kibera, Greenfield

Purpose

Sustained improvement in quality of life

"The purpose of slum upgrading is to ensure that even the [poorest of the poor] have access to the basic services like water, like sewerage, good sanitation, proper infrastructure, good access roads, and better housing, cheap but better housing that is affordable to them."

Finance

Microfinance Savings Schemes

"Part and Parcel"

"But if they are painfully set on that project, they feel it. It's part and parcel of them. That's what keeps them good—solidarity together."

Involvement

Access to all basic rights

Cooperative Banks

"Participatory Processes"

The government and UN-HABITAT proceeded with a model that influenced the Settlement Executive Committee members, representative of stakeholders in the Soweto East slum, to passively accept the designs the administration produced in exchange for maintaining the peace in the community (with bribes dispensed on the side). The revenue is reinvested for future housing upgrading.

Future Housing

Optimism for In Situ & Relocation Projects

"You know, the government of Kenya today it tells you this, tomorrow it tells you this. So we are not sure on what will happen exactly. Even saving for that cooperative houses, there is no clear information that will enable you to say that surely this one is something that is really open to [slum dwellers]."

"The Programme aims at improving the lives of people living and working in the slums and informal settlements in all urban areas of Kenya and to contribute to poverty reduction and fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals, specifically Goal No. 7 Target 11—of improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020."

BUT

Members of savings schemes agreed that if in situ upgrading could not be arranged, relocation was a viable and attractive alternative.

"...we are used to staying in this area. When you move, you change your mind to another area and you change your idea of living in a slum. That's an advantage."

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"It's the best solution...We can make a wonderful slum upgrading."”

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prefer in situ (in place) projects for reasons relating to sentimentality of the place, business, family, and friends.

Government official perspective

"...because you need now to get these communities on board and then see how they can start saving and from the little bit they have saved you can deliver it for more funding."

Kambi Moto resident with her Savings and Loan Pass Book

Kibera residents in the toilet block (toilets, showers, clean water) they themselves constructed for income generation. The revenue is reinvested for future housing upgrading.

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Soweto East

Access to all basic rights

Poverty reduction

"It's the best solution...We can make a wonderful slum upgrading."

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Resident perspective

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Soweto East Zone A upgrading during construction phase.

Langata Decanting Site (Relocation site during construction on Soweto East upgrading).