

**Management of Existing Housing Stock - BUQS 7008**

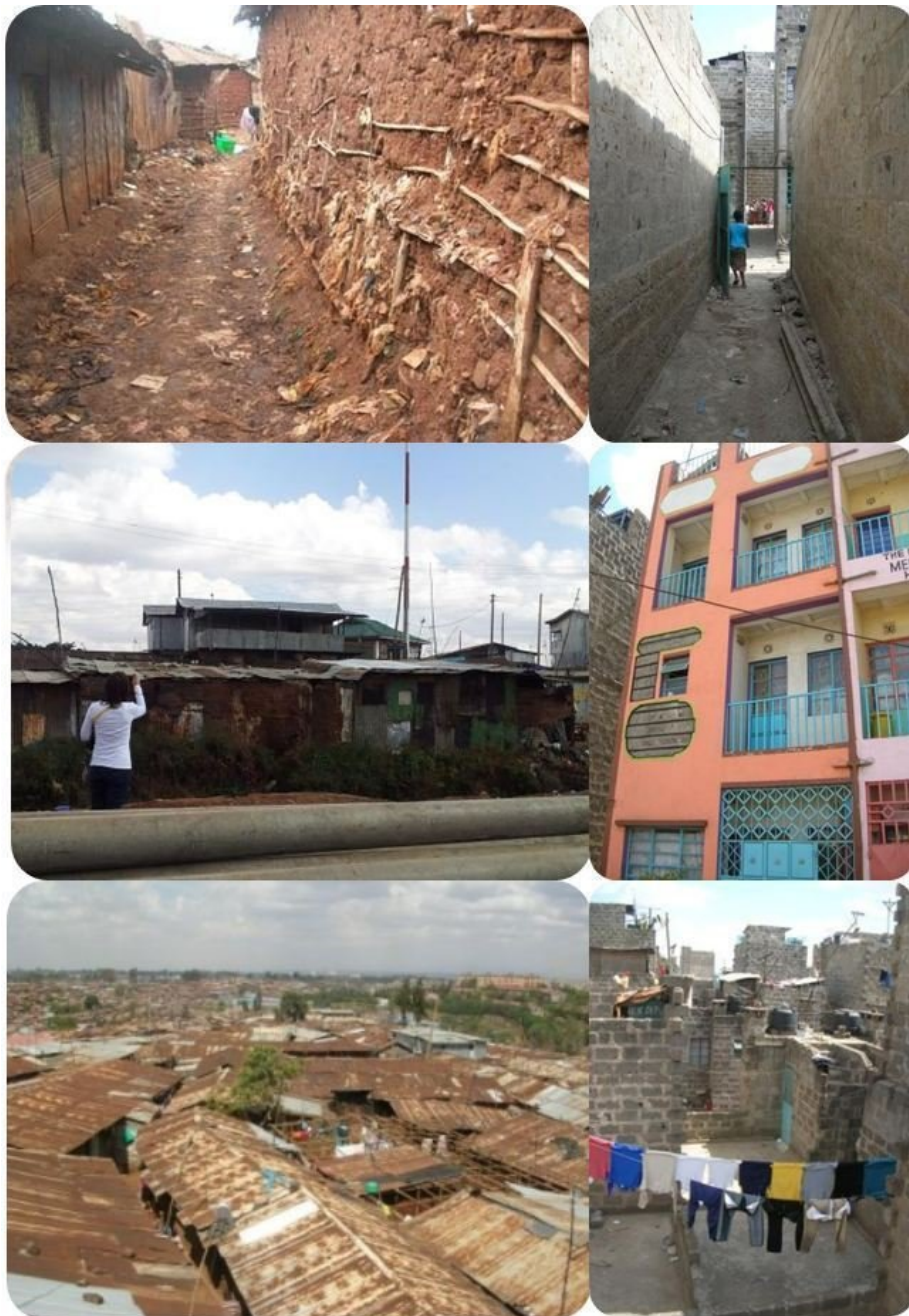
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**FIELD TRIP REPORT ON NATIONAL SLUM UPGRADING AND PREVENTION POLICY,**

**KENYA: 11<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

**Perspective: Non-conventional Management Practices between Landlords and  
Tenants**



## 1. Introduction

As part of the MBE Housing Course on Informal Settlement Upgrading and Management of Existing Housing Stock at the University of the Witwatersrand, a field trip was organised to Nairobi, Kenya. The aim for the trip was to enable students to gain insight in Informal settlement upgrading on an international level and for them to make contributions to a Slum Upgrading and Prevention Policy being conceptualized for the Kenyan Government. Students were also to be exposed to other forms of housing being provided by the private sector in Nairobi and how they are being managed. The highlight of the trip was a conference on policy organized by Pamoja Trust, a local NGO, where articles were presented by students on key themes to showcase how informal settlement upgrading is has been tackled in some parts of the world.

We visited Kibera, considered the biggest slum in Africa, the Kenyan National Housing Corporation (NACHU), offices of the UN-Habitat, some tenements in Huruma and an upgraded settlement called Kambi Moto all in Nairobi.



Fig. 1. The group From University of the Witwatersrand that embarked on the trip in a photo with personnel of Umande Trust. In the background, Kibera Informal Settlement. 12/09/12. Photo taken by Frederick Amuok

The experience gave me deeper insight on the high of impact housing provision on the socio-economic, political, spatial, and infrastructural development of any country. A particular observation that struck me was the deepcommunity participation, NGOs and private investment in housing provision as a result of the absence of public efforts for the sector. My main conclusions are that tenements such as those found in Huruma, contribute immensely to solving the housing inadequacies and must be closely regulated and assisted by government to curb exploitation by landlords. This will help deal with problems such as unfair rental practices and to achieve better living standards for about '84%' of Nairobians who live in rental housing(which includes informal settlements) (Ondieki, personal communication 14/09/12).

## 2. Agencies and Sites Visited

### 2.1. Umande Trust -12<sup>th</sup> September 2012

This is a civil society organisation which works together with Bankable Frontiers, a 'strategic international private sector consultancy firm' (Umande Trust, 2012: 1) to provide sustainable sanitation for poor communities in Nairobi. This is achieved through 'access to decent and affordable sanitation; convert[ing] human waste into clean energy (biogas) and fertilizer for urban greening; provid[ing] income generation and access to information to community-based enterprises' (*ibid.*). These communities, mainly informal settlements, are referred to as 'human settlements' by the agency (Ongato, Personal Communication, 12/09/12).

Discussions centred on how the agency assists communities to manage waste through biogas facilities (about 52 constructed so far). From the onset, communities are involved through capital formation of 60%, then 10% from Sanitation and Development Fund, and 30% from maintenance team (Ongato, Personal Communication, 12/09/12). A caretaker from the community is dispatched daily to maintain each facility where an amount of KSH 5 is paid per use (*ibid.*). Households also pay a monthly fee of KSH150 and can purchase a 'jitigeme' (as shown below) to be used at their convenience which can be emptied at the bio-facility for a fee (*ibid.*). 'Pit latrines' in homes can be connected to the facility at the request of landlords (*ibid.*). The trust makes profit from the operations of the toilet facilities, community bathrooms, meeting halls and spaces for rent which are all constructed as part of the biogas facilities (*ibid.*).



Fig. 2.A 'jitigeme'. 12/09/12. Photo taken by Marie Huchermeyer.



Fig. 3. The first Biogas facility, Katakwera Tosha Centre. 12/09/12. Photo taken by Marie Huchermeyer.

Key challenges faced by the trust are inaccessible roads to the 'human settlements' which make it difficult for service trucks to access the bio-gas facility and the problem of unregistered community groups which make it difficult for such groups to partake in sustainable projects such as the one offered by Umande Trust.



## 2.2. Kibera Informal Settlement - 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012

We embarked on a tour through the Kibera settlement to see some of the projects undertaken by the Umande Trust. Ongato (*ibid.*) explained that the settlement has been part of the socio-economic lives of most Nairobians as it has existed for decades. The government is managing it by demolishing but agencies such as Umande Trust assists with incremental upgrading programmes such as the bio-gas projects. The Kenyan government has built flats which act as temporary sites where people whose homes are demolished are given homes for rent whilst they wait to move into permanent formal housing (*ibid.*).



Figs. 4,5,6. Sections of the Kibera settlement above showing the deplorable state of houses and infrastructure. Below (6), the temporary site – formal rental housing provided by government - located nextto the settlement. 12/09/12.Photos taken by Marie Huchermeyer.



### 2.2.1. Observations and Key findings

The tour through Kibera Movement was difficult as a general maximum space of about 1.2 meters wide serves as area for drainage, footpath, children's playing ground, business activities, and so on. A scope from above showed rusted, tattered aluminium roofing covering the extent of the area with randomly placed few green spots.

The huge size of the settlement got me questioning whether it will be possible to totally upgrade the area and how long it will take for such efforts to be achieved. For instance, the 5 sites by Umande trust we visited, although seemed to be serving communities to an extent, were so few, making the effort seem useless. In addition there were concerns over the quality of the temporary rental housing provided by the government, making it difficult to ascertain if adequate housing can be achieved for Kibera residents.

### 2.3. Kenyan National Housing Corporation (NACHU) - 13<sup>th</sup> September 2012

This is a National Housing Co-operative Organisation which aims to 'provide affordable and decent housing and infrastructure especially to the urban low and mid income communities' (NACHU, 2012, 10). It achieves this through 'housing microfinance', 'capacity building' and 'technical services'. Target group covers the landless, poor in need of affordable housing finance homeless, evictees and generally people who have difficulty in accessing secure tenure (*ibid.*).

A typical example of a project undertaken is one which involved a group of people who were displaced after the post-election violence in 1992 (Kamau, personal communication, 13/09/12). The group approached NACHU with their capital in the form of land (*ibid.*). NACHU provided support through finance sourcing, technical advice, construction to completion of project after which the project was left to the co-operative to maintain (*ibid.*). At that stage, individual owners get titles to their homes and land (*ibid.*). Most co-operatives rarely default on loans as the value of properties increase upon completion of project (*ibid.*). Also buildings are constructed such that they can be incrementally developed.



Fig. 7. A typical model of a semi-detached house design which can be developed incrementally. 13/09/12. Photo taken by Marie Huchermeyer.



Fig. 8. A Green fields community led housing for 227 members of Faith Foundation Housing.13/09/12. Photo taken from NACHU

### **2.3.1. Observations and Key findings**

Co-operatives who use NACHU's services stand to gain from communal capital which they can use to source for other properties. Capacity building activities undertaken by the organisation enables members to gain personal development for sustenance of their properties and other businesses (NACHU, 2012).

An interesting observation I made was the fact that although rental housing forms about 84% of Kenya's housing market (NACHU, 2012), NACHU is only interested in providing assistance with private owned housing. The organisation must consider giving more assistance to the rental housing sector as it is the preferred choice for a majority of Kenyans. Also, NACHU relies mostly on community initiation before services are offered and may eventually marginalize groups which may not be registered or well informed about the organization.

### **2.4. The UN-Habitat - 13<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

The slum upgrading unit of the UN-Habitat works in line with the Global Housing Strategy, 2025 (GHS2025) and focuses on 'building equitable, prosperous and sustainable cities' (Sommer, personal communication, 13/09/12). There are currently over 860 million people globally living in slums (UN-Habitat, 2012) and the main factor for this situation in developing countries is security of tenure (Sommer, 2012). Other challenges globally are housing finance and failure of financial markets to respond to a variety of housing demand.

On a rights based perspective, the declaration of human rights makes adequate housing a basic human right and therefore development of slums and unconsented evictions is a violation of human rights. Some countries such as South Africa and Vietnam have managed to secure tenancy rights for a large number of the homeless.

### 2.4.1. Observations and Key findings

The aim of the GHS2025 to 'utilize[ing] an urban framework to ensure availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, affordability...' is a realization of the basic human right to adequate housing. Urban tenements, whether formal or informal, also contribute to the realisation of this right. The UN-Habitat's principles used to achieve inclusive cities, one of which is urban planning for integration and housing has an 'instrument for ensuring variety of tenure options' (UN-Habitat 2012). This instrument, if well instituted, will help minimise the exploitation of tenants by landlords and achieve a level of secure tenure and access to basic services to a large number of the urban in rental housing.

### 2.5. Huruma Tenements- 15<sup>th</sup> September 2012

These tenements are located close to the CBD of Nairobi and is part of masses of developments that emerged over decades of irregular land appropriation which favours a few elites, corruption in the public sector, regulatory breakdown, to name a few (Huchzermeyer, 2011). These factors have led to high private investment in rental housing to cater for the wide gap in housing delivery in Kenya. Most tenants of the tenements are middle to lower income social groups.

#### 2.5.1. Observations and Key findings

Then tenements in Huruma have basic facilities such as water and electricity which are rationed, making life difficult. The government can do more by ensuring regular supply of these services. Average amount of KSH3000/month that residents pay for a 12.25m<sup>2</sup> space is not adequate for families. Landlords need to provide less denser housing with spaces for kitchens as in its absence there is high fire risk. In addition, there is no laundry area, open recreational area for children who resort to playing in the narrow corridors, streets, and staircases. This is also dangerous as parental guidance becomes difficult. Lastly, the design of these tenement does not consider the handicapped.



Figs. 8,9. Aerial view of the tenements and close up of another from street, showing drying lines, electrical lines and rusted roofing. 15/09/12. Photos taken by Marie Huchzermeyer.



Fig.10,11. Spaces left in roof and on floors to emit sunlight into dark corridors.15/09/12. Photos taken by Marie Huchzermeyer.



Fig. 12,13. Interior of the dark staircase and corridors. 15/09/12  
Photos taken by Marie Huchzermeyer.



## **2.6. Kambi Moto Housing Project – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

Kambi Moto is made up of 6 villages with 86 completed houses and 56 under construction (Pamoja Trust, 2012). During 1990-1996, when residents faced eviction from the land which belonged to the City Council, they partnered with NGOs to assist with acquisition of the land (Chege, personal communication, 15/09/12). Acquired land will eventually come in the form of one communal title and a lease for each member (*ibid.*). Criteria for qualifying to be a member is a minimum of 6 years active participation in the group's activities, particularly in member's consistency in savings (Chege, 2012; Pamoja Trust, 2012).

Capital for building construction was sourced with assistance from the Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT) with 80%, 10% loan from group, individual member's contribution of at least 10% of the total cost of ground floor (Pamoja Trust, 2012). Construction is done incrementally, with cheap technology and materials and labour from the group. Loan from (AMT) must be paid within 8 years at 6% interest. Also, members are prohibited from selling the properties but can rent out (Wamba, personal communication, 15/09/12). Key challenges faced by the group are the default of loans by some members (Pamoja Trust, 2012). They deal with the default by repossessing the house, renting it out to pay fully for the loan after which they return the house to the owner (*ibid.*). Maintenance of communal spaces is organised among youth groups who clean up periodically and are paid with contributions from the group. The group also undertakes a welfare association to assist members in times of need.

### **2.6.1. Observations and Key Findings**

The successes of the Kambi Moto project rests on enthusiasm of members to change their living circumstances and challenge the eviction they faced. This enthusiasm translated into innovative participation and attention from NGOs that partnered with them. Innovative property acquisition, construction and maintenance were also realised. My interaction with a few of the members showed a deep pride in the project they've managed to successfully embark on. They also understand and are committed to the daily savings. A tour of the settlement showed the innovative affordable construction methods as well as the architectural layout which makes judicious use of the limited space available.



Fig. 14. Innovative construction methods- waffle effect of the ceiling adding to strength and beauty of slab.15/09/12. Photo taken by Pumla Bafo.



Fig. 15. Spiral staircase saving up space and construction materials.15/09/12. Photo taken by Pumla Bafo.

As most members live on their properties which they contributed to acquire through their own sweat and funds, they see the need for proper maintenance. There is therefore a cleaner environment compared to the surrounding settlements: public refuse bins, open drains that were not choked and some man-made greenery.



Fig. 16. Open drains showing frequent maintenance.15/09/12. Photo taken by PumlaBafo.



Fig. 17. Man-made greenery and cleaner environment.15/09/12. Photo taken by Pumla Bafo.



Fig. 18. View from one of the homes showing vertical incremental construction. 15/09/12 Photo taken by Marie Huchzermeyer.

### 3. Conference Discussions - 14<sup>th</sup> September 2012

The Conference on slum-upgrading is in line with conceptualising policies to help realise the new housing rights in the amended Kenyan Constitution which gives directive of providing adequate accessible housing and sanitation. Significant efforts to tackle informal settlements are therefore vital to ensure the recognition of housing rights as majority of Kenyans reside in these settlements (Syagga, 2012). The conference aims at bringing to bare issues that cause the proliferation of informal settlements and how they can be tackled.

In the introductory speech, Prof. P.M. Syagga from the University of Nairobi talked about the negative perceptions attached to informal settlements, adding that they are a result of failure of national planning and implementation policies. Prof. M. Huchzermeyer also explained that in-situ slum upgrading seeks to improve the lives of residents with 'minimal disruption' in to their lives and that many new forms of achieving upgrading are currently on-going. She gave instances of landlord led upgrading projects occurring in Mathare as well as private investments in tenements which shows the willingness of people to improve living conditions and availability of funds from the private market to achieve this. The main concern and feedback from participants showed that land tenure is the main challenge to housing in Kenya.

### **3.1. Housing and Shelter Discussions**

My presentation on 'Non-conventional Management Practices between Landlords and Tenants' in Kenya also substantiated the land tenure issue. It discussed a typical slum upgrading program, means by which it was achieved and the main challenge it faces: land tenure. Ondieki (personal communication, 14/09/12) explained that housing should be regarded not only as a physical structure but access to land, infrastructure and other social amenities. He believes that for affordable housing to be achieved, standards and regulations must be lowered and relaxed. Also, different regulations should be applied to different settlements as each settlement has its unique needs: social mix, density, physical characteristics, etc. The main conclusion was for public land to be properly identified as a first step to ensuring security of tenure for the masses.

### **4. Emerging Issues and Conclusions**

The right to adequate housing is a problem to many Kenyans as a result of decades of the government's neglect of housing related issues for the masses. As a result, people find their own means of securing tenure in the urban area through various un-conventional means: community initiatives; representation by NGOs, religious bodies; community's commitment to daily savings schemes for capital; intensive private investment in tenements.

Although government interest is not seen much in these activities, public and NGO efforts are assisting to achieve better housing, inching closer to the realisation of adequate housing and sanitation which the constitution calls for. However, due to the high population under consideration, it is difficult to determine when this right can be achieved for all Kenyans.

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