



Les Cahiers d'Afrique de l'Est / The East African Review

44 | 2011

Slum Upgrading Programmes in Nairobi

Foreword

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Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/eastafrica/512>

DOI: 10.4000/eastafrica.512

ISSN: 2790-1076

Publisher

IFRA - Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 September 2011

Number of pages: vii-viii

ISSN: 2071-7245

Electronic reference

Christian Thibon, "Foreword", *Les Cahiers d'Afrique de l'Est / The East African Review* [Online], 44 | 2011, Online since 07 May 2019, connection on 09 December 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/eastafrica/512> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/eastafrica.512>

This text was automatically generated on 9 December 2021.

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- 1 Despite the progress made in reducing the overall number of slum dwellers between 2000 and 2010, developing countries have seen their slum population increase by about 6 million people every year. Nearly half of the urban growth in the developing countries (48%) can be attributed to slum expansion. While a considerable proportion of this slum growth (38%) has improved over time, there is still about 10% of it that does not manage to do so and the slum populations continue to live in poor conditions¹.
- 2 Among all the major regions or areas in the world with urban populations living in slums, Sub-Saharan Africa has one of the highest percentages with 61.7% of its population being slum dwellers. Indeed, the urban growth rate of this region (4.6%) is almost the same as that of slum formation (4.5%). For instance in Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya, the living conditions in informal settlements are among the worst in Africa due to extremely high population densities. More than 1 million urban dwellers are slum dwellers (32% of the total population) spread across 200 informal settlements¹ ² and concentrated on 5% of the city land area. To assist in tackling the rapid proliferation of slums which is often accompanied by weak urban planning and housing policies as well as poor performing government institutions, many initiatives from international and national agencies and local communities have been undertaken to improve the living conditions of slum dwellers in Nairobi over the last decade. One such example of slum upgrading projects in Nairobi is the Kenya National Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP).
- 3 However, in spite of the willingness of various Kenyan Ministries and of institutions such as the French Agency for Development (AFD), the World Bank, the Italian Development Cooperation, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) etc., which are all key supporters of slum upgrading projects in Nairobi, there are still some major challenges in implementing these projects in the deeply marginalized urban poor communities. On the whole, greater efforts are still needed to enhance links between the ministries, the departments, institutions, practitioners and professionals in charge of these projects and to improve the communication between professionals

and communities. In spite of these good intentions, some institutions seem to continue privileging a technocratic approach when working with the local communities.

- 4 It is within this background that the French Institute for Research in Africa (IFRA) Nairobi, which has conducted research projects on informal settlements in Eastern Africa cities (Nairobi, Kisumu, Dar es Salaam, etc.) for many years, hosted the Conference: *Challenges in the implementation of slum upgrading projects in urban areas in Nairobi* on 6th and 7th April 2011. This conference sought to bring together all the key stakeholders involved in slum projects to discuss challenges related to the implementation of slum upgrading projects in Nairobi. It also jointly looked at ways in which the implementation of these projects could be managed more comprehensively through exploring various avenues for the future.
- 5 This publication is a result of presentations from institutions involved in research and development projects such as the Ministry of Housing of Kenya, IFRA, the University of Nairobi, together with non governmental and community-based experts working in slum upgrading projects like Pamoja Trust, Umande Trust, Muungano Wa Wanavijiji/ Federation of Slum Dwellers and Nairobi People's Settlement Network (NPSN).
- 6 In this spirit, IFRA presents the various articles from this conference in two parts. Part I presents the theoretical framework with regard to slum upgrading while Part II reviews the various approaches that are currently being pursued in the implementation of slum upgrading interventions in Nairobi. The articles presented in this publication open a debate into the discussion of slum upgrading programmes whilst providing opportunities for professionals and the people from the slums to exchange experiences and decide on concrete steps for collaboration on various initiatives in the area of slum upgrading.

NOTES

1. UN-HABITAT. (2008). *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011 – Bridging The Urban Divide*. Washington: Earthscan.
 2. UN-HABITAT. (2010). *The State of African Cities 2010 – Governance, Inequality and Urban Land Markets*. Nairobi: UN-HABITAT.
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