Introduction—Part I: Conceptualization and Preparation of Slum Upgrading Programmes

Samuel Owuor

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/eastafrica/514>

DOI: 10.4000/eastafrica.514

ISSN: 2790-1076

Publisher

IFRA - Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 September 2011

Number of pages: 3-4

ISSN: 2071-7245

Electronic reference

Samuel Owuor, "Introduction—Part I: Conceptualization and Preparation of Slum Upgrading Programmes", *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/514> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/eastafrica.514>

This text was automatically generated on 9 December 2021.

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

Introduction—Part I: Conceptualization and Preparation of Slum Upgrading Programmes

Samuel Owuor

- 1 Part I of the publication raises a number of issues: The definition of a slum and slum upgrading; the process of slum formation and location; the spatial extent of slums and their populations; characteristics of slum conditions and slum dwellers; the dilemma between “world class” cities and the continued proliferation of slums; security of tenure in slums and slum upgrading processes; complex processes, participation in slum upgrading programmes, success stories and challenges in slum upgrading programmes.
- 2 Drawing on experiences from case studies in South Africa, Brazil and Peru, *Rosa Flores Fernandez* covers a critical debate on slum location and formation. The paper argues that the poor have creatively appropriated risky areas where urban settlement is prohibited, resulting in territories rich in organic and unique forms, adapted to the morphological territorial conditions and to different risk situations.
- 3 The growing debate on the spatial extent and population of (individual) slums has been discussed by *Amélie Desgroppes and Sophie Taupin*. They explore new ways of determining the population of slum areas. Their paper questions whether Kibera in Nairobi is actually the biggest slum in Africa as often reported. They argue that the population of Kibera has always been over estimated—resulting in a whooping 300,000 inhabitants per square kilometers. Using GIS techniques and A sample survey, their study estimated that Kibera has about 200,000 people instead of the popular “700,000 to 1 million” inhabitants. The survey also demystifies some of the often hyped socio-economic characteristics of Kibera’s population.
- 4 Using two narratives of slum dwellers in Nairobi (Kenya) And Harare (Zimbabwe), *Steve Ouma Akoth* demonstrates the struggle Between An ideal, modern And world-class city on the one hand And the invisible appropriation BY the urban poor on the other hand. The paper Argues that any Future work in urban centres cannot ignore the forms of

modernities being developed and practiced by a category that is now commonly known as the “urban poor.”

- 5 The remaining papers in this section focus largely on slum upgrading. It is important to note that interventions addressing slum settlements in sub-Saharan Africa have had mixed results. The main positive effects include increased housing stock and notable improvements in provision of services and infrastructure. On the other hand, the main negative effect has been unsustainable and non-participatory approaches in slum upgrading programmes.
- 6 *Ezekiel Rema* gives his personal account of slum upgrading. Based on his experience as a long serving member of a federation of slum dwellers in Nairobi, he touches on important policy issues on slum upgrading programmes. The paper takes us through the group’s activities and success story that can be replicated elsewhere. *Humphrey Otieno* provides another perspective of community involvement in slum upgrading. The paper presents the activities and “voices” of Nairobi People Settlement Network (NPSN)—a community social movement that draws its membership from groups operating in informal settlements. The network focuses on capacity building; information gathering and dissemination; advocacy and lobbying; and networking and linking.
- 7 Most observers have argued that security of Tenure is a major component in any slum upgrading programme. Based on a study of various slum settlements in Nairobi, *Peter Makachia* argues that security of Tenure is not necessarily a panacea to better housing and physical conditions in slum areas. Regardless of Tenure system, slum conditions are unavoidable at various stages of a householder’s economic progression. More important, The paper gives an overview of Land Tenure systems in slums and questions The commonly used quality of housing and physical indicators of slums in Nairobi. On the contrary *Paul Syagga* advocates for security of Tenure and infrastructure improvement as a sustainable path To slum upgrading. The paper goes further To discuss various Tenure options that can Be considered in The process of slum upgrading.
- 8 In conclusion, shelter problems cannot be seen in isolation from broad issues of economic and social development, decentralized governance and local democracy. Poor shelter, like poor nutrition, health and education has its roots in poverty and political exclusion while The processes that give rise To it also sustain poverty. Strategies aiming at improving shelter conditions, especially for The lower-income groups, cannot, Therefore, be divorced from overall poverty alleviation and social and political inclusion.

INDEX

Geographical index: Kenya