



UN-Habitat Support to Sustainable Urban Development in Kenya

Addressing Urban Informality

Volume 4: Report on Capacity Building for Community Leaders

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Executive Summary

This is the fourth in the series of reports titled *UN-Habitat Support to Sustainable Urban Development in Kenya*. The reports addresses the topic of urban informality and reports on a capacity-building session conducted by UN-Habitat for informal settlement leaders, which was also attended by county technical officers, members of county assemblies, national government officers, development partners, and civil society organizations.

This report covers a broad background of various important topics related to urban informality and planning, along with an overview of the course and outcomes of the capacity-building session. It is organized as follows. The first chapter provides a broad background on the institutions, international organizations, and past and present programmes addressing Kenya's urban issues. The second chapter explores Kenya's current urban situation, while the third chapter addresses the planning challenges and responses to informal settlements specifically. The fourth chapter discusses the outcomes of the capacity-building session and concludes by summarizing the key issues on urban informality in Kenya and the workshop outcomes.

Background

In 2010, the World Bank approved the Kenya Municipal Programme (KMP), which is co-financed by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and implemented by the Government of the Republic of Kenya through its Urban Development Department. The programme was developed to support service delivery and governance improvements in Kenya's major urban centers, which accommodate the largest share of the country's urban population and contribute substantially to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP).

The Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP) is another national urban programme designed to improve living conditions in informal settlements; it is also financed by both the World Bank and the Swedish International Development Agency. This project has four components: strengthening institutions and project management, enhancing tenure security, investing in infrastructure and service delivery, and planning for urban growth.

UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) was launched in 2008 as a joint effort between UN-Habitat; the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) States; and the European Commission. It recognizes informal settlement upgrading as a crucial strategy for enhancing the sustainability of cities and improving the living conditions of the urban poor – it revolves around the idea that real change requires a systemic outlook and a citywide implementation. It, therefore, works on policy change, budget allocations, good governance and management practices, and pilot projects, as well as partnership building.

UN-Habitat Support to the Sustainable Urban Development Sector in Kenya is funded by the Swedish Embassy in Kenya and has several main objectives: to improve coordination within the urban sector in Kenya; to improve the capacity of key actors for participatory urban planning management; to mainstream poverty reduction and human rights based approaches; to strengthen the Kenya urban network; to improve waste management; and to improve revenue mobilization.

Working towards these objectives, UN-Habitat collaborated with the national government Department of Urban Development Department to support the KMP planning process by building county governments' capacity, particularly targeting the human capital development of county technical officers, political leaders, and community leaders. To this end, UN-Habitat designed a capacity-building programme

structured according to the KMP implementation Clusters. Three main training phases have so far been carried out: Phase I for Clusters III and IV, Phase II for Clusters I and II, and Phase III for Informal Settlement Community Leaders in Kilifi and Mombasa Counties. This report focuses on Phase III, which sought to inform community leaders about urban planning, informal settlement upgrading, and local economic development. This effort is premised on the notion that community leaders play a critical role in – and should, therefore, engage actively with – urban planning and informal settlement upgrading at the county and urban levels. Indeed, many of the problems facing informal settlements would be better addressed by initiatives scaled to the municipal level.

Meanwhile, the Sustainable Urban Development Goals: Agenda 2030 includes a goal (Goal 11) to “make cities and human settlements inclusive safe, resilient and sustainable,” while the related New Urban Agenda will act as the framework to rethink how cities and human settlements are planned, built, managed, and inhabited for sustainable urban development.

Urban Informality and Kenya’s Urban Context

Urban informality is a defining characteristic of Kenya’s urbanization patterns. As cities and towns grow, informal settlements increase, while the informal economic sector continues to support a significant portion of the urban population. One of the main factors supporting the development of informal settlements is the inability of local and national governments to adequately manage rapid urbanization and to meet the evolving needs of cities and towns for urban planning and investment. Formal wages are also not able to cope with income generating needs of the increasing urban population, contributing to growth of the informal sector.

In 2009, 54.7% of Kenya’s urban population lived in informal settlements and it is estimated that this number increased to 56% in 2014¹. A similar trend has been observed in the informal economic sector. According to the World Urbanization Prospects, the 2014 Revision, Kenya’s urban population in 2014 was projected to be 11.5 million people.

Kenyan informal settlements are often close to major employment areas, such as industrial areas and commercial centers, along rivers and wetlands, along

infrastructure land reserves, on accessible peripheries, and on open public spaces. Overall, they are located in areas both suitable and suitable for development.

They face insecurity of tenure; are often composed of sub-standard housing; have inadequate infrastructure; suffer from socio-economic challenges; are excluded from formal planning regimes; and deal with environmental challenges. Several interventions have been undertaken in the past, ranging from forced evictions (“eradication”) and resettlements, to site and service schemes, redevelopment, in-situ upgrading, and regularization. However, the scale and impact of these interventions do not match the required outcomes.

Integrated Urban Planning Approaches to Informal Settlements

Informal settlements are a manifestation of urban exclusion and the socio-economic inequalities that have characterized urbanization not only in Kenya, but also around the world. In various cities, planning regulations and standards have been reluctant to adapt to the reality of urban informality, often designating the land on which informal settlements are located for other forms of development or imposing stringent regulations on their improvement; others simply fail to integrate them in city development schemes.

A citywide approach to planning and development that explicitly includes informal settlements as an integral part of the city has the potential to trigger wider, more extensive, coherent, and long-term upgrades to informal settlements. Such a strategy would introduce policies and strategies to identify and prioritize interventions, allocate budgetary funds, and establish systems for collaboration between different actors and mobilization of resources. Equally important, it has the potential to prevent the creation of new informal settlements.

There are three general approaches to upgrade informal settlements, which may be used individually or combined: 1) in-situ incremental upgrading; 2) re-blocking and redevelopment; and 3) relocating and resettlement. An intervention to a specific settlement can be a combination of two or even the three approaches. A number of cross-cutting issues inform each informal settlement upgrading project regardless of the approach used, and they should be taken into consideration when formulating strategies. Such issues include: institutional

and organizational arrangements; the financing aspects; participation; gender, youth, and human rights issues; and the socio-economic dynamics at play.

Outcomes of the Capacity-Building Session for Community Leaders

The session on integrated urban planning and informal settlement improvement took place in July 2015 in Mombasa, Kenya and was facilitated by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the KMP and the KISIP.

Participants included community leaders of informal settlements in Mombasa and Kilifi Counties², as well as leaders of Local Urban Forums in the respective counties, members of county governments (both technical officers and Members of County Assembly) and of the national government. The KMP and the KISIP, as well as the World Bank and the Civil Society Urban Development Platform (CSUDP), were also represented.

This session sought to a) enhance the integration of citywide planning interventions, citywide informal settlements improvements, and neighborhood-level planning and informal settlement improvements; b) promote shared visions and enhance the understanding of the roles of different actors and their areas of convergence; c) provide a common understanding of basic urban planning processes and emphasize a citywide approach to addressing informal settlements; and d) provide an opportunity to build partnerships between communities, civil society, international development actors, the private sector, and government to address urban informality.

land tenure; e) integrating the informal economy into urban planning; f) approaches to improve informal settlements; g) delivering low-cost water and sanitation infrastructure; and h) delivering affordable housing.

The participants raised concerns and suggested recommendations for a way forward. They stressed the need for citywide planning processes to adequately address urban informality and for these to be well supported by national and county policies. Governments should also scale-up delivery of affordable housing and strive towards universal access to basic services. The participants emphasized that good urban governance and inclusive urban management are absolutely necessary to achieve meaningful impacts in these regards.

Overall, the participants found the workshop useful and important for the implementation of the KMP and the KISIP and called for greater coordination between the two programmes. The workshop raised vital policy issues to address in order to accelerate urban reforms in the country. The participants also noted that community leaders play a significant role in addressing urban informality and, thus, there is need for their greater involvement in decision-making. They emphasized the need to improve community leaders' capacity with regards to urban planning, public policy formation, and county/municipal budgeting and financing in order to enable their active participation. Finally, it was noted that, in order to scale up efforts to improve living conditions in the informal settlements, it is important to promote integrated urban planning at the city/municipal level and to strengthen the capacity of institutions that are charged with urban planning and management.

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