Employment creation through participatory urban planning and slum upgrading: The case of Kitale, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper reviews the experience of an action research project that aimed to improve the living conditions and lives of urban poor communities in three slums in Kitale, Kenya. The project set out to test whether a participatory planning approach and the creation of partnerships between slum communities and the public, private and NGO sectors could build local capacity to assess and address the needs of slum dwellers through slum upgrading, which has a known potential link to employment creation. Drawing on the experience of the project, the paper examines how far this potential was realized and makes recommendations for coordinated policies and action on employment creation through participatory urban planning, partnership building and working, and slum upgrading.

Keywords: Urban planning; Slum upgrading; Participation; Infrastructure; Employment

Introduction/context

Urbanization processes in most developing countries are intensifying. However, two, in particular, are posing unprecedented problems for governments and local authorities—rapid urban population growth and the urbanization of poverty.

In the face of rapid population growth, escalating poverty and inadequate institutional capacity, the cities and towns of the developing world are unable to provide the necessary infrastructure, housing and employment opportunities. Consequently, a growing proportion of the urban population is living in ‘housing poverty’ in slums and informal settlements (UN-HABITAT, 2006b). These are characterized by inadequate

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1The concept of ‘housing poverty’ refers to “individuals and households who lack safe water, secure and healthy shelter with basic infrastructure such as piped water and adequate provision for sanitation, drainage and the removal of household waste” (UNCHS, 1996, p. 109).

2There is no internationally accepted definition of a slum. However, a UN Expert Group Meeting on a generic definition, which it recommended for future international usage. In this definition, a slum is defined as “an area that combines, to various extents, the following characteristics (restricted to the physical and legal characteristics of the settlements, and excluding the more difficult social dimensions” (UN-HABITAT, 2003, p. 12): inadequate access to safe water; inadequate access to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing; overcrowding; insecure residential status.” This is the definition that will be used in this paper; and the terms ‘slum’ and ‘informal settlement’ will be used interchangeably and together in this context.

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housing conditions; deficient urban services (water supply, sanitation, drainage, solid waste disposal, and roads and footpaths); unsanitary and dehumanizing living conditions; extremely high densities (of both people and dwellings); and, frequently, long travel distances to job opportunities. Tens of millions of slum dwellers live under constant threat of eviction, in contravention of their rights and with no recourse to due process of law. The proliferation and expansion of slums and informal settlements is thus presenting a major challenge to city and municipal authorities in developing countries, as well as to the international community.

Slums and informal settlements are an integral and inevitable part of most developing country cities and are playing a key role in their socioeconomic development. Their importance in housing the growing urban poor majority cannot be overstated. As Table 1 shows, they are home to more than 4 out of every 10 urban dwellers in developing regions; in sub-Saharan Africa this figure is 7 in 10. With the numbers continuing to grow at unprecedented rates, this scenario is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. In many cities, slums and informal settlements are also the principal location of informal sector enterprises, including micro- and small-enterprises (MSEs) and home-based enterprises (HBEs). They consequently make a significant contribution to employment creation, local economic development (LED), the urban economy and national growth.

The three key societal sectors—public, private and civil society—can all play a role, at various levels—global, regional, national and local—in addressing the urgent challenge of slums. Doing so, however, calls for the formation of partnerships between the three sectors, the latter of which includes the urban poor and their organizations. For such partnerships to be effective, the urban poor and their organizations must be enabled to participate meaningfully and realize their full potential in solving the problems confronting them (UNCHS, 2001).

The Cities Alliance, launched in May 1999, is a global partnership of cities and their developmental partners that aims to radically improve the living conditions and lives of urban poor people in the developing world. In joining the Cities Alliance, four principal constituencies—bilateral and multilateral agencies, national governments, local authorities and their associations, and the urban poor and their organizations—commit themselves to innovative ways of partnering to improve the efficiency and impact of urban planning, development and management in two key areas:

- supporting inclusive participatory approaches through which local stakeholders define their vision for their city and establish priorities for action to tackle urban poverty and growing inequality; and
- strengthening partnerships with local authorities and community-based organizations (CBOs) to support city-wide slum upgrading and nationwide scales of action (UN-HABITAT, 2006a).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>% Slum 1990</th>
<th>Slum population (000's) 1990</th>
<th>% Slum 2001</th>
<th>Slum population (000's) 2001</th>
<th>% Slum 2005</th>
<th>Slum population (000's) 2005</th>
<th>Slum annual growth rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>714,972</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>912,918</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>997,767</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed regions</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>41,750</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>45,191</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>46,511</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EURASIA (countries in CIS)</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>18,929</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>18,714</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>18,637</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European countries in CIS</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>9208</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8878</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>8761</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian countries in CIS</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>9721</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>9836</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>9879</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing regions</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>654,294</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>849,013</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>933,376</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>21,719</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>21,355</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>21,224</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>100,973</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>166,208</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>199,231</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>110,837</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>127,566</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>134,257</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Asia</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>150,761</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>193,824</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>212,368</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Asia excluding China</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>12,831</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>15,568</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>16,702</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Asia</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>198,663</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>253,122</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>276,432</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Eastern Asia</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>48,986</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>56,781</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>59,913</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Asia</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>22,006</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>29,658</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>33,057</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: % slum indicates the proportion of the urban population living in slums; 2005 figures are projections (UN-HABITAT, 2006b, p.16).
The ‘Cities without Slums Action Plan’, developed within the framework of the Cities Alliance, challenges “donors, governments and slum communities to improve the lives of 5–10 million slum dwellers by 2005 and 100 million by 2020” (Cities Alliance, 1999, p. 6). It was endorsed at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000 which yielded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and is reflected specifically in Goal 7, Target 11: ‘by 2020, achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers’ (see Table 2). Slum upgrading is widely seen as the most proactive and effective way to achieve this target. The United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers affirms that successful slum upgrading is best carried out by local authorities and communities working in close partnership, and that, where possible, community organizations should be allowed and supported to play an active role in developing and executing plans for slum upgrading (UN Millennium Project, 2005a).

Role of local government in urban poverty reduction and employment creation

Urban local governments have the political, legal and fiscal mandate to promote sustainable urban development, pro-poor slum upgrading and urban poverty reduction. They can have a substantial impact in several significant ways, including the following (Tuts, n.d.):

- planning and management of land resources, because access, location and cost of land have significant implications for livelihood development and sustainability;
- facilitating access to infrastructure and basic services, owing to health benefits versus costs of water supply and sanitation and solid waste management;
- developing local economic policies that support the informal sector, MSEs and HBEs;
- stimulating LED, as this determines the resources available for capital investment in land and infrastructure;
- improving access to justice and law enforcement, because this can reduce corruption in public office and enhance security in slums; and
- strengthening the capacity of the urban poor to influence local decision making, through participatory planning and budgeting.

However, one of the most important contributions local authorities can make is to enable the urban poor to influence employment creation more directly where provision of urban services using public funds is concerned. In particular, investment in providing or upgrading basic infrastructure in slums—such as water and sanitation services, drainage, and roads and pathways—can maximize the use of labour-based methods (Bakker, Kirango, & Van der Ree, 2000, p. 1), and generate employment opportunities for slum dwellers.
Participatory urban planning and development

While urbanization may be slowing down or even reversing in some developed countries, it is intensifying in most developing ones. The majority of the latter are ill-equipped to deal with the accelerating urban population growth, and the expansion of cities and towns is outstripping the capacity and resources of governments and local authorities to plan and manage development, and provide infrastructure, housing and employment opportunities. This situation is being aggravated by the urbanization of poverty, which, in many parts of the developing world, is accompanied by another phenomenon—the feminization of poverty. In urban areas in general, and also in slums in particular, up to 50% of households are headed by women, who are typically among the poorer strata of the population (Kuiper & Van der Ree, 2006).

The result is a twin development process, in which a ‘formal’ and an ‘informal’ city are developing in parallel. In most cases, the latter predominates, as evidenced by the proliferation of slums in which the growing urban poor majority lives and works. Cities are essentially being built ‘back to front’ (Zetter, 2002) with development taking place before the formulation, enactment and implementation of planning strategies and control mechanisms—building first, and servicing and regularizing afterwards; and the urban poor are playing a leading role in this process. Developing country cities are also characterized by ‘the side-by-side existence of two equally significant subeconomies, a formal sector and an informal sector’ (ESCAP, 1996: para 40). The great majority of poor urban dwellers are operating within the latter, outside existing regulatory frameworks.

Given the above scenario, it is clear that traditional urban planning paradigms and practices are incompatible with prevailing urban growth and development patterns and characteristics in developing countries. Especially inappropriate are top-down planning approaches in which government agencies, acting independently in a non-consultative process, identify problems, determine the response and formulate and implement strategies, action programmes and projects. The part that the urban poor are playing in developing cities and towns, and the settlements in which they live and work, needs to be recognized and validated. Good urban governance practices, such as participatory urban planning and partnership approaches, do exactly this (Hamdi & Majale, 2004; Majale, 2005a, b).

Good urban governance means “promoting subsidiarity, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security of individuals and their living environments” (UN Millennium Project, 2005a, p. 4). At the local level this means enabling the urban poor and their organizations to participate as equal partners in planning, decision-making and development processes, including slum upgrading. Indeed, the right to participation is enshrined in international human rights law. General Comment No. 4 (1991) of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), on the Right to Adequate Housing states that governments should adopt a national housing strategy that reflects “extensive genuine consultation with, and participation by, all of those affected, including the homeless, the inadequately housed and their representatives” (CESCR, 1991, para 12).

Slum upgrading: its potential for employment creation and local economic development

Slum upgrading typically involves physical, social, economic, organizational and environmental improvements to existing slums. Actions carried out to improve the living conditions and lives of the slum dwellers generally include the following (Cities Alliance, 1999):

- regularizing security of tenure;
- installing or improving basic infrastructure, e.g., water supply, sanitation; waste collection, storm drainage; roads and footpaths; security lighting, and electricity;
- home improvement;
- removal or mitigation of environmental hazards;
- constructing or rehabilitating community facilities such as health posts, nurseries and schools, community open space;
providing incentives for community management and maintenance;
- enhancement of income-earning opportunities through training and micro-credit;
- building social capital and the institutional framework to sustain improvements; and
- relocation/compensation for those displaced by the upgrading interventions.

Infrastructure, in particular, is key to improve the living conditions and livelihood opportunities of slum dwellers. Lack of infrastructure restricts the productivity of existing enterprises, constrains the establishment of new ones, and hampers potential employment creation. Infrastructure provision is important not only as an end product, but also as a vehicle for employment generation. Local resource-based employment-intensive approaches can be adopted for a wide range of infrastructure works, including water supply, sanitation services, sewerage and drainage networks, roads and pathways, low-level bridges, and electrification. These methods are particularly appropriate in densely populated and built up slum areas. The procurement system can be used to advantage as a pro-poor tool to enhance the economic and social benefits of slum upgrading investments. Given the capital inflows involved, even a minor shift toward more employment-intensive technology options in infrastructure investment can have a major impact on aggregate employment creation (UN Millennium Project, 2005a) and the lives of slum dwellers. The factors which impact on employment creation in both housing and slum upgrading projects in various ways are summarized graphically in Fig. 1.

UN-HABITAT advocates a holistic assessment of slum policy using an index of normative policy inputs ‘dos’ and ‘don’ts’, which is presented in Table 3. A key ‘do’ is to combine slum upgrading with employment generation and LED.

Local economic development (LED)

LED, as defined by the ILO, is “a participatory development process that encourages partnership arrangements between the main private and public stakeholders of a defined territory, enabling the joint design and implementation of a common development strategy, by making use of the local resources and competitive advantage in a global context, with the final objective of creating decent jobs and stimulating

![Fig. 1. Key factors affecting employment in housing-slum upgrading projects (After Robbins et al., 2006).]
economic activity” (Rodrı´guez-Pose, 2001, pp. 8–9). The LED approach is characterized by the following elements (ILO, 2006a, pp. 2–3):

- a bottom up approach that fosters participatory processes and decision making, as well as a long-term approach through public–private partnerships;
- brings local stakeholders around one table, helping to build trust, encouraging innovation, promoting the creation of social networks and contributing to conflict resolution;
- is area-based and thus focuses its actions on a defined territory or territories, which may be confined by administrative, economic, historical or social–cultural borders and thus vary from one territory to another;
- mobilizes and [makes] use of endogenous resources, maximizing, at the same time, the competitive advantage for the attraction of investments to the territory; and
- a comprehensive approach that integrates many disciplines, enhances networks among local, national and international stakeholders, and facilitates the integration of local priorities and development strategies in national policies and legislation.

The LED approach commonly involves actors from the following stakeholder groups (ILO, 2004a):

- Public sector: Public institutions, local and municipal governments, etc.
- Private institutions: Banks, private sector companies and businesses (both formal and informal), MSEs, etc.
- Civil society: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs), professional associations, universities and learning institutions.

The LED approach establishes a forum for participatory planning and implementation of local development initiatives, facilitating negotiation and consensus building between different interest groups. It increases the capacities of local institutions and civil society to work together on specific projects, and improves accountability of local governments (ILO, 2004a).

The main differences between traditional top-down development policies and bottom-up LED approaches are summarized in Table 4. The possibilities for LED may, however, be limited by planning frameworks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dos and don’ts of slum policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote good urban governance systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish enabling institutional frameworks involving all partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implement and monitor pro-poor city development strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage initiatives of slum-dwellers and recognize the role of women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure secure tenure, consolidate occupancy rights and regularize informal settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involve tenants and owners in finding solutions prioritizing collective interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt an incremental approach to upgrading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate municipal finance, cross-subsidies and beneficiary contributions to ensure financial viability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and negotiate relocation plans only when absolutely necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combine slum upgrading with employment generation and local economic development (LED)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop new urban areas by making land and trunk infrastructure available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that do not recognize the institutions that exist within poor communities (GHK Research and Training, 2001).

A pro-poor and pro-employment urban development strategy: the ‘Building in partnership: participatory urban planning’ project

The Building in Partnership: Participatory Urban Planning (BIP:PUP) project3 was implemented in Kitale, a secondary town in Kenya, whose population is estimated at 220,000. With an annual growth rate of 12%, it is expanding even more rapidly than the national urban average of 7%. The town’s growth rate, which is fuelled by an unabating influx of both rural and urban migrants, has far outstripped the pace of infrastructure and service provision, formal housing development and employment creation. As a result, two-thirds of the town’s residents live in slums, without access to municipal infrastructure services, and with high levels of waterborne disease, unemployment, socio-economic marginalization, delinquency and crime (Chege & Akall, 2006). In this respect, it is similar to rapidly growing cities and towns throughout the developing world.

The goal of the project was thus to enhance the effectiveness of city and municipal planning and management, with a view to addressing some of the institutional inadequacies and capacity deficiencies of urban local authorities that have contributed to the growth of slums. More specifically, the project sought to test whether the creation of formal and informal partnerships between the public, private, NGO and community sectors can build local capacity to assess and meet the needs of poor slum dwellers, as asserted in the development literature and by international development agencies.

The project worked in three slums in Kitale Town, namely Kipsongo, Shimo La Tewa and Tuwan, which were selected from the 10 civic wards in the Municipality through city-wide ward-based baseline surveys. The three slums were used as pilot sites to test, develop and disseminate approaches and methodologies that encourage stakeholder participation and partnerships in assessing slum communities’ needs and concerns, and developing sustainable upgrading interventions. The detailed participatory needs assessments conducted in each slum informed the design and preparation of neighbourhood plans that integrated improved access to infrastructure with employment creation and LED, while recognizing gender needs. This was consistent with the principles of CESCR General Comment No. 4 on the Right to Adequate Housing.

In line with one of the key ‘dos’ of slum policy advocated by UN-HABITAT (see Table 2), the project established and developed constructive partnerships between key stakeholders to identify employment creation and LED opportunities through slum upgrading and translate these into action. The key partners were the international NGO Intermediate Technology Development Group—ITDG (now known

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional development policies</th>
<th>Local economic development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top-down approach in which decisions about the areas where intervention is needed are taken in the centre. Managed by the central administration</td>
<td>Promotion of development in all territories with the initiative often coming from below. Decentralized, vertical cooperation between different tiers of government and horizontal cooperation between public and private bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sectoral approach to development Development of large industrial projects to stimulate other economic activity</td>
<td>Territorial approach to development (locality, milieu) Maximizing the development potential of each area to stimulate a progressive adjustment of the local economic system to the changing economic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support, incentives and subsidies as the main factor for attracting economic activity</td>
<td>Provision of key conditions for the development of economic activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rodríguez-Pose (2001, p. 10).

3An action research project funded by the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID) and implemented by the Intermediate Technology Development Group—ITDG (now known as Practical Action) between April 2001 and March 2004.
as Practical Action), Kitale Municipal Council (KMC), Shelter Forum, the Kenya Institute of Planners (KIP), the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and, most important, the slum dwellers themselves and their organizations. Various other local and international NGOs operating in the town were also brought on board as partners, which improved the ability to engage with the local communities, in particular those living in slums. Public sector interest and capacity was secured and maintained by engaging KMC staff and local councillors in the planning and implementation of project activities on the ground, and in dialogue and debate on pertinent issues. The project thus brought together actors from all the stakeholder groups commonly involved in the LED approach.

Links to the Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya (ALGAK) and the Municipal Development Programme (MDP)—Eastern and Southern Africa were intended to enable project experience and policy issues to be shared and discussed nationally, regionally and internationally. The same was also facilitated through ITDG’s regional and country offices and the Building Advisory Service and Information Network (basin).

The key achievements of the project in terms of pro-poor participatory slum upgrading interventions, employments creation and LED are discussed below.

**Kipsongo**

Covering an area of 6 ha on the eastern outskirts of the town, Kipsongo is home to some 4000 people and suffers many of the archetypal problems of the peri-urban interface. The residents of Kipsongo are primarily members of the traditionally pastoralist Turkana tribe who migrated to Kitale to escape perennial drought and human conflicts over contested grazing lands and cattle rustling. They do not have security of tenure for the land they occupy, which was once the municipal dump site but is now a slum characterized by rudimentary dwellings. Most had no previous experience of urban life and, owing to their lack of education and skills, have been unable to secure decent work. They have consequently been marginalized and remain amongst the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the town, often scavenging and begging to eke out a living.

Prior to the project, most residents drew water for domestic use from the local stream, which is polluted by upstream sources, and there were neither sanitation facilities available nor the tradition of allocating particular spaces to sanitary activities. Disease vectors thus multiplied and there were frequent outbreaks of water-borne and infectious diseases.

Through a community driven participatory planning process, with technical support from the ITDG and KMC project staff, Kipsongo residents were actively involved in drawing-up the Kipsongo Neighbourhood Plan spelling out a Strategic Action Plan (SAP). Indeed, NGOs have a crucial role in helping slum residents and CBOs, including women’s and youth groups, to join in the decision-making processes of the city. This should lead to improved democratic governance, well-informed decisions and a more effectively managed transition towards sustainability (ILO, 2004a). In line with MDG 7, Target 10, the plan prioritized access to

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4Shelter Forum is a coalition of institutions and individuals who, through collective action, facilitate access to affordable and decent shelter for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities and the illiterate people. It conducts research, facilitates sharing of knowledge and information, champions advocacy and builds capacity through exchange visits.

5KIP is an independent institute formed in 1997, which has as its main goal to bring together urban planners in the country in a forum in which planning issues in Kenya can be addressed.

6KBC is a state corporation established by an Act of Parliament to undertake public services. Its stated aims include ‘to inform, educate and entertain the public through radio and television services’ and ‘to promote an effective approach to the use of radio and television as tools for national development’.

7The Municipal Development Programme is an active and hands-on capacity building facility with the aim of enabling effective self-governance at local level in sub-Saharan Africa. It promotes alternative development approaches to problems and issues that affect local authorities by placing emphasis on ownership and direct participation of key stakeholders.

8ITDG has its head office in the United Kingdom and works directly in four regions of the developing world—Latin America, East Africa, Southern Africa and South Asia, with particular concentration on Peru, Kenya, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal.

9basin was set up in 1988 to provide information and advice on appropriate building technology and to create links with know-how resources around the world for all those in need of relevant information.
safe drinking water and sanitation, which has considerable benefits at the household level owing to the strong link between health and household livelihood security. Inadequate access to water and sanitation leads to increased morbidity, a decreased ability to work, and high health costs relative to income. Equally, an adequate water supply is vital to the success of many MSEs and HBEs (UN Millennium Project, 2005b).

The plan has been implemented through the joint efforts of the community, KMC, ITDG and other partners. Five sanitation blocks comprising two ventilated improved pit (VIP) latrines and two bathrooms, each serving a cluster of households, have been built. The superstructure for the sanitation blocks was built using stabilized soil blocks (SSBs) produced by unemployed youth from the settlement contracted by the project to do so. Indeed, employment among young people aged between 15 and 24 years is a particularly acute problem in urban areas, and even more so in slums, in which the population is often relatively youthful (Kuiper & Van der Ree, 2006). Youth group members in all three settlements were trained in the production of SSBs, and each group given a block press to enable them to start a business. Notably, the Kipsongo Youth Group has been the most active and successful at undertaking contracts, earning money and disseminating training (Lyons, Majale, & Chege, 2006). Community contracting empowers local populations by giving them more confidence in their technical, organizational and financial capabilities, and improving their bargaining and negotiation skills (ILO, 2004a, b; Tourneé & Van Esch, 2001).

Two protected springs have also been constructed by community members, amongst them several women trained and supervised by the project team. The springs are managed by a women-led Water and Sanitation Committee, who are establishing a seedling nursery and hoping to develop a laundry block to generate income to cover maintenance costs. The group also plans to establish a commercial vegetable garden to support them in protecting the stream’s catchment area. UNCHS/ILO (1995) underlines the positive inputs to social cohesion that community involvement in service delivery can provide, in addition to the care which is taken of infrastructure for which the community is responsible. The development of income generating activities (IGAs) to support the operation and maintenance of infrastructure developments is critical to their long-term sustainability. Other LED initiatives have also been undertaken on a group basis: there is a daily savings scheme for women, who plan to establish a handicraft workshop, and another has been initiated with men.

When it came to the promotion of enterprise in the context of Kipsongo, it was especially important to consider the “enterprise culture” among the youth and women. This is the “set of attitudes, values and beliefs operating within a particular community or environment that lead to both ‘enterprising’ behaviour and aspiration towards self-employment” (Gibb, 1988 cited in White & Kenyon, 2001, p. 13).

**Shimo La Tewa**

A bigger settlement area-wise than Kipsongo and with residents who are slightly better off, Shimo La Tewa is located adjacent to the upmarket suburb of Milimani. A small polluted and garbage-choked river separates the expensive homes of the Kitale elite from the densely populated slum, in which, prior to the project, 3500 people lived in poor-quality housing, with inadequate access to clean water supply and sanitation, and poor vehicular and pedestrian accessibility and linkages (Chege & Akall, 2006). The development of a slum within such close proximity to an affluent neighbourhood is not uncommon in developing country cities.

The SAP for Shimo La Tewa was differently prioritized, with larger infrastructure works on the one hand, and more emphasis on individual ownership and enterprise initiatives on the other. Improvement of public infrastructure focused on the construction of a 130 m span footbridge across a ravine that divided the settlement causing pedestrian safety, accessibility and connectivity problems. Whenever there were heavy rains, access was cut off and travel distances to employment opportunities more than doubled. This was a crucial concern because, firstly, a long time taken travelling to and from work means less productive time; and, secondly, long-distance travelling on a daily basis affects both physiological and mental health (Werna, 2001).

The bridge was designed by a team comprising the Municipal Engineer, a government engineer, and a private sector engineer who did not charge for his services. This team also supervised construction, which was in line with good practice in the construction sector, whereby quality control testing on labour-based works is essential for approval purposes (ILO, 2006b). The local community participated actively by providing timber for the decking and ‘sweat equity’, in the form of voluntary labour, both skilled and unskilled. UNCHS/ILO
(1995) affirms that unpaid voluntary inputs are acceptable in minor infrastructure works, but this does not prevent participants being paid if resources allow. Other building materials were supplied by a local private enterprise at reduced cost. With its limited financial resources, KMC met 30% of the monetary cost of the bridge and the project the remainder.

The additional development of two protected springs and a water kiosk managed by a women’s group, the latter of which allows people who do not want to walk down to the spring to pay for piped municipal water, have combined to radically improve access to safe water. Both initiatives are self-sustaining in that community labour and IGAs contribute to long-term maintenance. Also, when the municipal water supply fails, non-residents come to draw water from the protected spring, and a charge is levied, which further supports maintenance (Lyons et al., 2006). Training in labour-based alternative building technologies (ABTs) has also taken place among women and youth (mainly young men) and been disseminated, and various construction projects, some of which are providing those involved with a significant income, are underway.

**Tuwan**

With 5000 plots and an estimated population of 65,000, most of whom are tenants, Tuwan is the largest of the three settlements and also the most populous in Kitale town. Characterized by a high density of mud-and-wattle housing structures with corrugated iron roofs, Tuwan is somewhat more prosperous than the others. However, in common with other slums, landlords have not provided latrines and, before the project, many tenants were forced to resort to ‘flying toilets’10 (Chege & Akall, 2006).

The Tuwan residents chose to address their sanitation problems through the construction of a communal, gender-segregated two-storey sanitation block, comprising water-borne latrines, showers with provision for hot water, laundry facilities and a multi-purpose room that would also serve as an HIV/AIDS voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) centre. With KMC having ensured the availability of the site, the local community participated in design clinics conducted by ITDG through which the design of the facility was generated. Also prioritized were reduction of water borne diseases, income improvement through water kiosk management and other IGAs.

Community members, in particular women, were introduced to and trained in the production of various ABTs, including SSBs and the ‘laddi’ (lattice) pre-cast flooring system. The latter reduces the cost of upper floor slabs in multi-storey buildings, which can optimize utilization of available land in slums where space is at a premium. The laddi system elements—pre-cast concrete beams and floor slabs—used in the construction of the sanitation block were produced on site by a local women’s group, while the SSBs used in of the walls of the upper floor of the sanitation block, were produced by youth groups from Kipsongo and Tuwan. Such small-scale, labour-intensive building material production has significant multiplier effects, creating local employment while reducing transport costs (UNCHS/ILO, 1995). Unskilled workers, in particular, benefit from the income derived when labour-based technologies are utilized, and they can thus have an important income distribution effect in favour of the poor (ILO, 2004b).

The sanitation block utilizes an environment friendly closed-loop water recycling system and methane-generating waste-treatment method. The methane will be used in heating water for showers, keeping down operating costs, while the decomposed waste will be used as manure in an income-generating vegetable-growing project for the women’s group. A water kiosk has been developed at the sanitation block, and elsewhere in the slum two protected water springs similar to those developed in the other two settlements have been built. Tuwan’s proximity to the town centre, and the location of the kiosk close to the main road, mean that the kiosk will provide the women’s group with income from selling water to non-residents when municipal water supplies in the town are low.

The communal sanitation block is managed by a locally appointed committee, and settlement residents are charged a small fee to use the latrines, showers and laundry facilities. Thus, the sanitation block will generate income, which will help ensure continued operation and maintenance by the women’s group running it. The construction and management of the sanitation block recognizes that women play a central part in socio-economic development through their triple role as producers, reproducers and community managers (Moser,
Furthermore, the block has become the inspiration and focal point for the realization of most of the slum's development initiatives.

An additional grant acquired from the Sigrid Rausing Trust has been used to establish a revolving fund for on-plot sanitation improvements in Shimo La Tewa and Tuwan. The fund is managed by the Catholic Diocese and a board of trustees composed of local partnership members. It is presently proving loans to individual plot owners to construct latrines, which will serve not only the owners, but also their tenants and neighbours, in some cases generating income for the owners.

**Recommendations for coordinated policies and action on employment creation through participatory urban planning, partnership building and working, and slum upgrading**

Making specific references to the BIP:PUP project, this paper has discussed and analysed the interfaces between partnership formation and working, pro-poor participatory slum upgrading, and employment creation. Drawing on this discussion and analysis, recommendations for coordinated policies and action on employment creation through participatory urban planning, partnership building and working, and slum upgrading are presented below.

**National level**

The slum situation facing KMC is typical of that confronting other local authorities nationwide and developing countries worldwide. The BIP:PUP project has thus demonstrated the potential of participatory urban planning and partnership models in addressing the challenge of slums. The case studies clearly show that there are significant benefits to be derived from adopting pro-poor participatory slum upgrading and infrastructure development strategies and projects that mainstream employment-intensive approaches and promote LED. The adoption of participatory and partnership processes that integrate slum policies, investment and employment creation is, however, contingent upon national level reforms towards good urban governance. In Kenya, these have been initiated through the Kenya Local Government Reform Programme (KLGPR), which, since the mid-1990s, has attempted to strengthen the local government system so as to transfer financial resources to local authorities, enable them to deliver services and to increase local accountability. Indeed, the governance framework has a strong bearing on the ability of national and local governments to respond to the slum challenge.

It is imperative that governments, at the national level, recognize the importance of slum upgrading for employment creation and promotion of the decent work agenda within the framework of comprehensive long, medium and short-term national development plans, programmes and projects. Initiatives such as the BIP:PUP project can help in this regard and should, therefore, be supported by funding bodies.

**Municipal level**

As stated earlier, traditional urban planning paradigms and practices are incompatible with the prevailing proliferation and expansion of slums and informal economies that are developing outside existing regulatory frameworks, and in which the urban poor are playing a leading role. The results of the project show that it is possible to improve the capacity of local authorities to engage in pro-poor participatory planning and management and partnerships to empower slum dwellers by giving them a voice in decisions affecting their living conditions, livelihoods and lives. An enabling environment for participatory planning and partnership working should, therefore, be created and institutionalized at the municipal level, in conjunction with a pro-poor regulatory framework conducive to participatory slum upgrading, employment creation and LED. Doing so will also reduce the number of poor urban dwellers operating outside the legal regulatory regime.

The case studies point to the effective role that slum communities can play in the delivery, operation and maintenance of basic urban infrastructure and support the recommendation that pro-poor slum upgrading frameworks that facilitate community participation and contracting in local infrastructure construction and maintenance should be established at the municipal level. In this regard, municipal governments should systematically consider and adopt labour-based, local resource-based and employment-intensive methods in slum upgrading. In particular, the employment needs of the urban poor, and especially those of disadvantaged
groups such as women and youth, should be targeted. Indeed, in line with ILO recommendations, the case studies underscore the significant role the latter can play in infrastructure delivery.

The four principal Cities Alliance constituencies—bilateral and multilateral agencies; national governments; local authorities and their associations; and the urban poor and their organizations—have committed themselves to innovative ways of partnering to improve the efficiency and impact of urban planning, development and management in two key areas. One of these is strengthening partnerships with local authorities and CBOs to support city-wide slum upgrading and nationwide scales of action. The World Bank (2004) similarly affirms that scaling up and replication of pro-poor participatory slum upgrading interventions are more likely to succeed if the rules for effective collaboration are defined within an enabling institutional framework, which will often include strengthening of governance and partnership structures at various levels. One of the key outputs of the BIP:PUP project, a book entitled *Partnerships in Urban Planning: A Guide for Municipalities* (Hamdi and Majale, 2004), points to ways in which this can be done and is recommended reading for municipal planners, managers and policy makers.

Local authorities and their associations are one of the four principal constituencies named by the Cities Alliance that have committed themselves to innovative ways of partnering to improve the efficiency and impact of urban planning. The linkages established with ALGAK were intended to facilitate the sharing of project experience and knowledge amongst local authorities nationwide and the discussion of pertinent policy issues towards this end. This should not only be continued, but also extended so that more municipal actors can learn from the Kitale experience.

Community level

Good urban governance means enabling the urban poor and their organizations to participate as equal partners in decision-making and development processes, including participatory planning and slum upgrading. The case studies have underlined the benefits of ensuring the participation of the urban poor, and in particular disadvantaged and marginalized groups such as women and the youth, as major stakeholders in all aspects of project identification, planning and implementation. There is need therefore to build community capacity to participate effectively in planning and implementation of slum upgrading interventions.

The other key area in which the four principal Cities Alliance constituencies commit themselves to innovative ways of partnering to improve the efficiency and impact of urban planning, development and management is supporting inclusive participatory approaches through which local stakeholders define their vision for their city and establish priorities for action to tackle urban poverty and growing inequality. The BIP:PUP case studies have provided practical examples of how this can be achieved, in particular at the community level, that should be followed.

The development literature calls for the mobilization and use of local resources—building materials, labour, skills, artisans, small contractors, tools, light equipment, finance, organizational capacities, and local creativity. Local resource-based employment-intensive approaches aim at optimizing employment and local resource mobilization in any given infrastructure investment, using preferably light equipment only when necessary (Tourné & Van Esch, 2001). The case studies have shown that the combination of labour-based methods with community participation in slum upgrading presents many advantages in terms of community empowerment, job creation and income generation. The effective use of labour-based methods is dependent on suitable designs and working methods, and needs to be accompanied by training and capacity building, while optimizing the employment impact of upgrading strategies and promoting the creation of decent work imply mobilizing and maintaining effective partnerships between local authorities, civil society and the private sector, both formal and informal. The cases studies offer examples of starting points for this process. They also demonstrate how the LED approach can increase the capacities of local institutions and civil society to work together on concrete projects, and improve accountability of local governments. It is important, therefore, to develop synergies to enhance the employment and livelihood outcomes of slum upgrading.

In sum, the project results are consistent with the assertion by the United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers that successful slum upgrading is best carried out by local authorities and communities working in close partnership, and that community organizations should be allowed and supported to play an active role in developing and executing plans for slum upgrading that promote employment creation and LED.
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