

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE



A woman with dark hair, wearing a purple sweater and a colorful, patterned scarf, is looking down and writing in a white notebook. She is holding a red pen. The background shows a weathered wall and a blue bag hanging from above.

The Challenge

More than half of Nairobi's residents live in informal settlements, or slums, plagued by cramped living conditions and poor access to basic services. That's over 2 million people living in over 150 slum villages, with inadequate housing and little access to clean water, sanitation, health care, schools, and other essential services.

Even more striking is the fact that despite this, ***92% of all informal settlements' inhabitants pay rent to structure owners.***

Cartels often control these slums, charging extortionate rates for access to essential services and threatening residents with violent evictions and forced demolitions.

Since 2012, IDRC has been working with a consortium of partners in Kenya who have been generating practical knowledge on how to improve lives and livelihoods in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Mukuru Kwa Ruben and Viwandani informal settlements.

Research findings reveal a staggering "poverty penalty" in Mukuru. ***Slum residents pay more for services that are inferior to those provided in Nairobi's formal housing estates***

The Mukuru Study Area

Mukuru is one of the largest of over 150 informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya covering an area of 525 acres.

The settlement is comprised of 3 areas, Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Mukuru Kwa Reuben and Viwandani, which are situated in an industrial zone approximately 7 Km southeast of Nairobi's central business district .

The settlements are separated by the Kenya Railway, which runs along the border between Kwa Reuben and Kwa Njenga, and the Ngong River, which divides Kwa Reuben and Viwandani.

Despite the transfer of land titles to private developers for light industries in the 80's and 90's, the land remained largely undeveloped and was quickly settled upon by migrant families and industrial workers drawn to jobs in the neighboring industrial zone and Nairobi's city center.

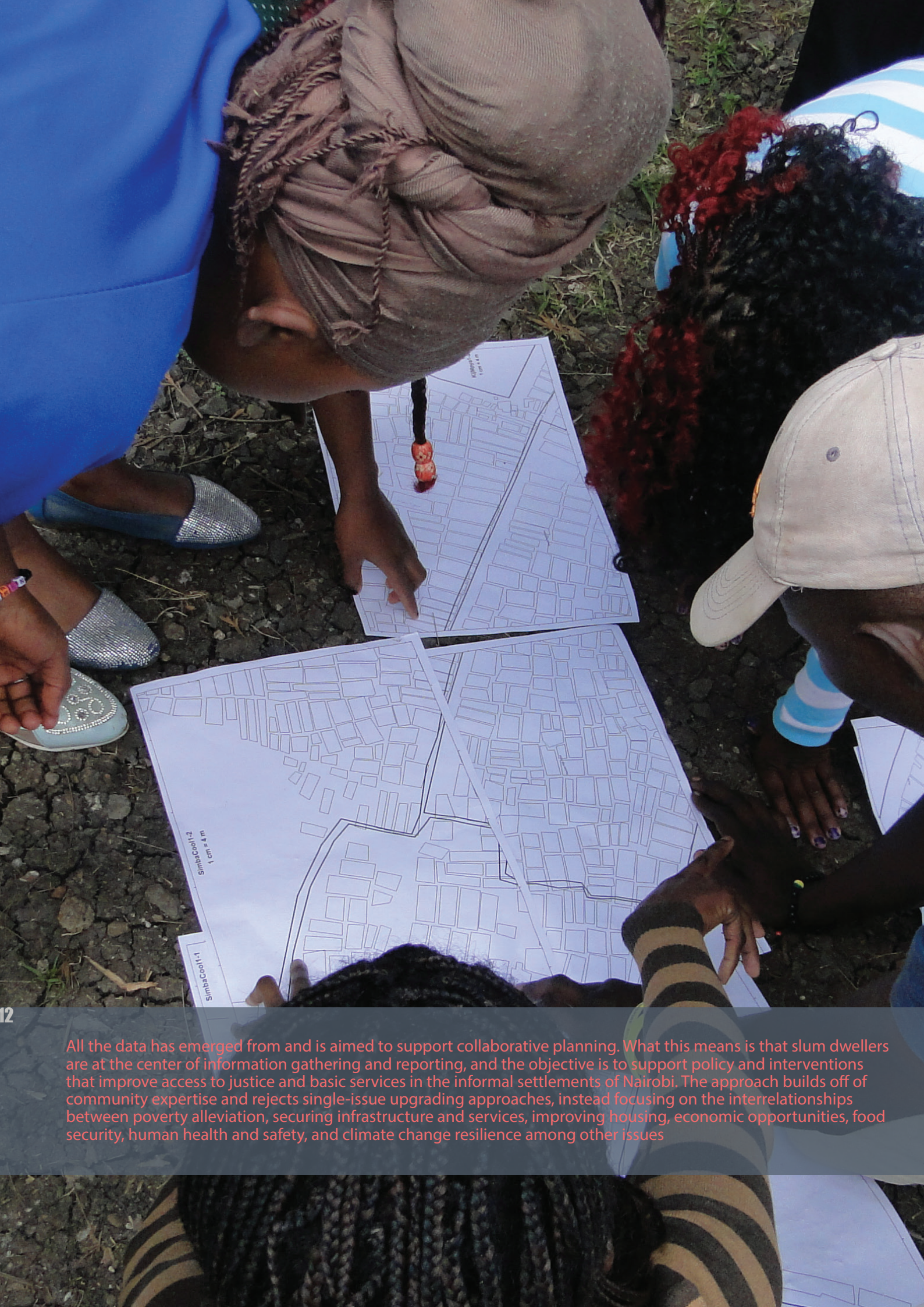
Based on profiling and enumeration conducted by Slum Dwellers International in August 2016, there are 100,561 households and approximately 210,641 persons



A few facts about the settlement



- Over 90% of residents are tenants with the typical rent range between Kshs. 1,500 and Kshs. 2,000 per month
- Most Mukuru residents primarily utilize either a standing tap or a water kiosk as means of access to water. The cost per cubic metre of water is nearly three times more expensive compared with the formal water rates
- The highest number of households per public water point is found in Moto Moto, Mukuru Kwa Njenga, with a total of 5,050 households per water point
- The highest number of households per public toilet is found in Riara, Mtgyy.0ukuru Kwa Njenga, with a total of 8,466 households per public toilet
- There is a robust informal economy, often controlled by cartels, generating at least Kshs. 7 billion annually.



All the data has emerged from and is aimed to support collaborative planning. What this means is that slum dwellers are at the center of information gathering and reporting, and the objective is to support policy and interventions that improve access to justice and basic services in the informal settlements of Nairobi. The approach builds off of community expertise and rejects single-issue upgrading approaches, instead focusing on the interrelationships between poverty alleviation, securing infrastructure and services, improving housing, economic opportunities, food security, human health and safety, and climate change resilience among other issues

Our data indicates slum residents pay more for services that are inferior to those provided in Nairobi's formal housing estates.

Only 3.6% of the households have access to adequate bathrooms, and only 29% have enough water.

And yet Mukuru residents pay as much as 172% more for their meager, brackish water than formal water customers.

Though the informal economies are robust and have proved essential for survival, they remain inadequate as pathways out of poverty for most. The challenge of financing therefore remains critical in actualizing the efforts for improving livelihoods.

Ultimately the best incentive for investment of any kind is its return. Our research indicates that in terms of return, slum areas in their current state can easily compete with the best

Some key findings



The research findings have been well received prompting the Nairobi County Government to take action in a neighborhood of Mukuru.

The team is working closely with the County to support its efforts to declare a Special Planning Area in Mukuru.

According to the Physical Planning Act, Kenya's County Governments may designate an area as a Special Planning Area (SPA) if it is distinguished by key possibilities or problems.



Impact and Next Steps

The findings this far contribute to ongoing debates about improving well-being among the urban poor, and help to fulfill the promise of equitable development in Kenya's Constitution and devolution reforms.

The close working relationships with the County governments have potential to shape Nairobi and Kiambu upgrading policies and practices, at county-level and at the pilot sites.

In Kiambu County, the consortium is working with the County government in Planning 110 acres of the Kiandutu slums with an estimated 6,100 families.

The research has also directly benefited community members and their efforts to advocate for improved conditions. For example, 8,000 community members were trained on advocacy, human rights, settlement dynamics, and financial literacy.

These efforts helped improve community cohesion. Making residents aware of their housing rights has also helped to prevent additional evictions

In the next phase the consortium seeks to generate new findings and recommendations aimed at achieving positive change at a settlement- and hopefully city-wide scale.



Mukuru Kwa Reuben, Kwa Njenga and Viwandani, as large informal settlements that have not benefited from past upgrading projects and pose unique planning challenges and opportunities

Designating the Mukuru Settlements as an SPA can allow for the development and implementation of upgrading plans that can address the settlements' unique challenges, while also integrating the settlement into the greater metropolitan region and aligning development with the Nairobi

Partners



Acknowledgement

This Research was Supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a crown cooperation established by an act of Canada's parliament in 1970. IDRC funds research in developing countries to create lasting change on a large scale.



Canada

Partners

Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT), established in 2003, specializes in researching, innovating, advocating, piloting social housing finance & basic services solutions for low income people.. AMT builds capacities of community organizations to undertake all aspects of financial intermediation, to reach low income people with appropriate high quality financial & related services on a sustainable basis; thereby develop financial systems and improve livelihood security of low income communities.

<http://akibamashinani.org>

Katiba Institute (KI), Located in Nairobi, was established in 2011 to promote knowledge and studies of constitutionalism and to facilitate the implementation of Kenya's new constitution. The principal objective of KI is to achieve social transformation through the constitution.

<http://www.katibainstitute.org>

Muongano wa Wanavijiji is the Kenyan Federation of Slum Dwellers that was founded in 1996. Muungano primarily organizes communities around issues affecting them and mobilizes through daily savings in savings schemes, conducts community-led enumeration, propagates cross-settlement learning and sharing through periodic exchanges and implements community driven projects.

<https://muungano.net/>

Shack / Slum Dwellers International (SDI) is a network of community-based organisations of the urban poor in 33 countries and hundreds of cities and towns across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In each country where SDI has a presence, affiliate organisations come together at the community, city and national level to form federations of the urban poor.

<http://sdinet.org>

Strathmore University is a leading University in the region, whose mission is to provide all-round quality education in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility; excellence in teaching, research and scholarship; ethical and social development; and service to society.

<http://www.strathmore.edu/en/>

University of California Berkeley Insitute of Urban and Regional Development Center for Global Health Cities: Through collaborative, interdisciplinary research and practice, IURD supports students, faculty, and visiting scholars to critically investigate and help improve processes and outcomes that shape urban equity around the world.

<http://iurd.berkeley.edu>

University of Nairobi The Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Nairobi provides both undergraduate and postgraduate professional training in Urban and Regional Planning. It was established in 1971. Since then, the department has trained most of the urban and regional Planners in Kenya and has also trained for Eastern and Southern African countries.

<http://urbanplanning.uonbi.ac.ke>