



**WORLD BANK GROUP**

Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience & Land

# TENURE SECURITY AND IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN KENYA'S CITIES

## KENYA INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

**PARTNERS: MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING,  
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (MTIHU), AND THE NATIONAL TREASURY**

**DURATION: 2011-2019**

**FINANCE: US\$100 MILLION**

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## AT A GLANCE

Country: Kenya

Total population: 47.6 million (2019)

Urban population (% of total population): 27

Urban population growth (annual %): 4.1

Population living in informal settlements: Nearly 61% of the urban population

## 1. CONTEXT: INFORMAL HOUSING IS THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR MOST PEOPLE LIVING IN KENYA'S CITIES

Kenya, a country of approximately 48 million people, is rapidly urbanizing. Its urban population is growing at about 4% a year.[1] In 2018, more than a quarter of Kenyans lived in urban areas. By 2050, about half of the population will be living in cities.[2] With the urbanization trend, the percentage of poor people living in cities has risen from 14% in 2005/06 to 23% in 2015/16.[3] While the proportion of people living in urban centers with access to improved sanitation facilities and electricity has increased across the country over the past decade, the share of those with better access to water has dropped in some places, an indication that urbanization has outpaced the provision of infrastructure in those areas. The gap in access to essential services between poor and richer people remains wide.

Formal housing is not affordable for most of the new residents in cities. The majority of Kenyans have informal incomes and few of them can afford homes built by formal developers; only about 10.2% of urban households could afford the cheapest newly built houses in 2015.[4] While less than 50,000 new housing units are built every year, the national Vision 2030 Strategy has targeted the provision of 200,000 housing units annually for all income levels to address housing demand.[5] The current housing deficit is over 2 million units[6]—and growing. The result: informal housing has become the only solution for most Kenyans living in cities. Nearly 61% of urban households in Kenya live in informal settlements,[7] which have poor living conditions, inadequate infrastructure, and high poverty rates. They suffer from overcrowding, low-grade dwellings, sporadic access to public services, and environmental degradation. Only 3% live in a house with permanent walls, water, and electricity.[8]

[1] World Bank staff estimates based on the United Nations Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects 2018 Revision.

[2] United Nations Population Division's World Urbanization Prospects 2018 Revision.

[3] World Bank, 2018. "Kenya Poverty and Gender Assessment 2015-2016."

[4] World Bank, 2017. "Kenya Economic Update."

[5] *ibid*

[6] *ibid*

[7] *ibid*

[8] 2011 number.

Unemployment is another challenge. While unemployment rates have dramatically dropped in urban areas, a significant fraction of urban poor people, women, and youth remain unemployed or working in informal jobs with no security. In Nairobi, the country's capital and largest city, more than 20% of the poor people are unemployed.[9] Many informal settlements are far from job sites, limiting the opportunities for employment. For these reasons, many urban poor are marginalized and inequality is on the rise, often causing social tensions, violence, and insecurity.

Kenya Vision 2030, the country's development program, considers the importance of well-functioning cities and metropolitan regions for the country's economic future. The World Bank is contributing to this vision through four programs: the Kenya Urban Support Program (KUSP), the Nairobi Metropolitan Services Improvement Project (NAMSIP), Kenya Devolution Support Program (KDSP), and the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP), which is described below. KISIP is also coordinated with the Water and Sanitation Improvement Project (WASSIP) and the Electricity Expansion Project to ensure an integrated response to the country's urban challenges.

## 2. THE KENYA INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The main objective of the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP) [1] is to improve living conditions in informal settlements in selected urban areas in Kenya.[2] The KISIP operated in 15 urban areas: Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Eldoret, Malindi, Naivasha, Kitui, Machakos, Thika, Nyeri, Garissa, Kericho, Kakamega, and Embu. It took a comprehensive approach to slum upgrading by improving living conditions through infrastructure upgrading, tenure security, and neighborhood planning.

The project also supported the government's efforts to address slum formation beyond targeted settlements and to invest in preventive measures including: institutional strengthening and capacity building for selected ministries, institutions, and municipalities; the development of policies, frameworks, systems, and guidelines for slum upgrading; and planning and development options for future urban growth.

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[9] 2011 number, which includes unemployed and underemployed workers, meaning those who are employed less than full-time or in jobs that are otherwise inadequate with respect to their training or economic needs.

[10] Project Task Team Leader: Sheila W. Kamunyori

[11] <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/601011468273684250/pdf/582670PAD0P1135420IDA1R20111004611.pdf>

## A. SPATIAL INCLUSION: IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES AND CURBING CRIME

The project supported investments in settlement level infrastructure, and, where necessary, the extension of trunk infrastructure to settlements, such as access roads.

Project activities include:

- **Tertiary infrastructure:** The infrastructure included roads, bicycle paths, walkways, street and security lighting, vending platforms, solid waste management, stormwater drainage, water and sanitation systems, electrification, public parks, and green spaces. Settlements received a package of infrastructure projects, often including roads, stormwater drains, high-mast lighting, and improved water and sewer facilities. The public works was connected to city's trunk infrastructure and maintenance systems.
- **Enhancing Tenure Security:** The project worked actively on providing tenure security. Interventions included: i) assisting with all steps to regularize tenure, from community mobilization to the preparation of development plans, surveying, registration, and the issuance of titles to individuals or groups, and, ii) streamlining land regularization processes, including simplifying the steps, reducing fees for title registration, and waiving fees for urban poor people.
- **A pilot project for violence prevention through physical planning:** The project adopted settlement-specific designs to reduce crime and violence, and to build a sense of security for residents. Potential interventions included improving outdoor lighting, creating public spaces for public surveillance, and focusing on access into and out of buildings and neighborhoods.

*Before and After*



## B. SOCIAL INCLUSION: ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The project enhanced participation in local planning processes and programs. The KISIP promoted community participation by investing only in communities that prepare upgrading plans through full participatory processes.

Activities include:

- **Establishing settlement executive committees:** Each community appointed a settlement executive committee to lead its participation and to develop a vision and upgrading plan for the settlement. The committees' members were trained. Participants included young people and representatives from the business community as well as women groups, disabled groups, religious groups, local professionals such as teachers, members of nongovernmental organizations, landlords, tenants, and a local member of county assembly. The structure of the committees made it possible for each member to represent their groups in decision-making processes when infrastructure projects were being rolled out.
- **Establishing grievance redress mechanisms (GRM):** The project had a three-tier GRM in all targeted settlements. Each settlement had a grievance redress committee (GRC) to address all project-related grievances. Cases not resolved at the settlement's GRC level or those appealing decisions at this stage were forwarded to the county-level GRC. Similarly, the county GRC refers cases it cannot resolve as well as appeals to the National Project Coordination Team.
- **Beneficiary Assessment:** The project used an approach of qualitative data collection through a series of focus group discussions and informant interviews to understand the project's impact on beneficiaries along six themes: (i) beneficiary participation, (ii) relevance of implemented interventions, (iii) effectiveness of project interventions (intervention use or non-use, and beneficiary coverage), (iv) the socioeconomic impacts of project interventions, (v) sustainability, and (v) challenges. The findings have been used in designing the follow-up to the project, called KISIP2.

## C. ECONOMIC INCLUSION: BOOSTING INVESTMENT AND WIDENING ACCESS TO CREDIT

By enhancing tenure security, the KISIP contributed to multiple economic benefits such as increased investment and access to credit.

With the tenure provided through the KISIP, residents feel more certain about the security of their properties and more comfortable in making investments in them. Some have reported using the new titles to access bank loans. Housing consolidation has taken place where permanent buildings have replaced temporary shacks.

*Outdoor Lighting*



### 3. RESULTS: PRIORITIZING COMMUNITY NEEDS

The project closed on November 30, 2019 and achieved the following results:

- Over 1.3 million people are benefiting from tenure security or better access to basic services, improving the living conditions in informal settlements for more than the original target of 1 million people.
- Approximately 1 million people are benefitting from roads, stormwater drainage, high-mast floodlights, and footpaths.
- 262,780 people are benefiting from improved water sources.
- The KISIP has also undertaken the preparation of settlement-level development plans, surveys, registry index maps, and letters of allotment and titles that have strengthened the security of tenure for about 125,000 people, more than the original target of 100,000.

## 4. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED: APPROACHES FOR SECURING TENURE

- Standard planning regulations can displace a large number of residents. Adaptive planning, on the other hand, is more suitable because it uses flexible standards to ensure in situ upgrading. Under the KISIP1, road widths were reduced to reflect the original layout of the settlement. In some settlements, narrower roads cut down on the displacement of residents by up to 85% when compared with what would have happened if standard planning regulations had been used.
- The improvement of informal settlements cannot be achieved without the active involvement of communities. However, community mobilization and engagement are time-consuming, and so this must be factored into the project's design. Upgrading programs need to be citywide to sufficiently augment the supply of improved settlements, integrate them into city systems, and avoid market distortions. It is only by investing at a large scale and dealing with the broader housing market that upgrading programs can successfully hope to benefit poor people.
- Tenure security can be achieved through a variety of approaches even without full legalization, including by taking simple actions, such as having the communities and the relevant government authority sign a memorandum of understanding.
- To gain the support of the general public, tenure regularization must be done with community participation and be supported by clear government policy. Large-scale regularization requires capacity building at multiple institutional levels, from the community to the county and national levels.
- In urban areas such as Nairobi, where most of the residents in informal settlements are renters, tenure regularization may need to adopt an alternative approach to titling in order to enhance tenure security.
- Providing a comprehensive package of infrastructure upgrading projects raised the level of service provision across the settlements and contributed to increased economic activities for the residents. For example, residents can now use their motorbikes as a taxi service and businesses can extend their closing time from dusk, or 7 p.m., to 11 p.m.

*The case note is prepared by Urban Poverty and Housing GSG and Urban Poverty and Slum Upgrading KSB. The team comprised of: Phoram Shah, Waad Tamaa, Reyna Alorro, Rodica Tomescu-Olariu, Mansha Chen, Judy Baker and Dean Cira. Project Task Team Leader, Sheila W. Kamunyori provided substantive inputs. Charles Newbery provided editing support.*

*Please visit GSG website for additional information (<https://worldbankgroup.sharepoint.com/sites/gsg/uphgsG/Pages/index.aspx>).*

*For questions on the project, please follow up with Sheila W. Kamunyori ([skamunyori@worldbank.org](mailto:skamunyori@worldbank.org)).*

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