

RESEARCH UPDATE

Improving Access to Justice and Basic Services in the Informal Settlements of Nairobi

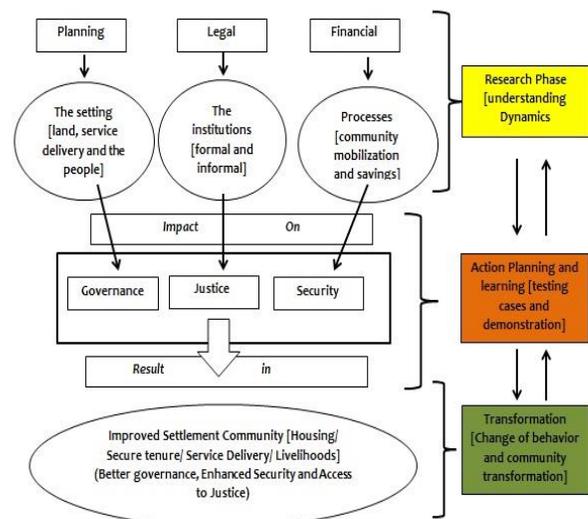
Collaborating Institutions	Akiba Mashinani Trust, Katiba Institute, University of Nairobi & Strathmore University
Project Title	Improving Access to Justice and Basic Services in the Informal Settlements of Nairobi
Funding	International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
Project Period	February 2013 - April 30, 2015

A grounded approach to settlement improvement: This research aims to trigger action towards Improving Access to Justice and Basic Services in the Informal Settlements of Nairobi. The research is collaborative effort by Akiba Mashinani Trust (AMT), the University of Nairobi, Strathmore University, Katiba Institute, Mukuru community and a wider network of communities living in informal settlements called Muungano wa Wanavijiji.

The study is designed to explore the potential of applying public interest oriented legal, planning and financial tools to strengthen the legitimacy and accountability of public institutions to improve access to justice and basic services in Kenya's informal settlements. In addition, the research seeks to monitor, track and assess the applicability of the new legislation and the institutions created under the new constitution and laws in the provision of secure tenure and access to basic services to the urban poor.

Mukuru kwa Njenga and Mukuru kwa Reuben together form one of the largest sections of informal settlements in Nairobi with extreme overcrowding, inadequate and inaccessible basic services and a constant threat of eviction due to land tenure and land use contestation.

Conceptual Framework



Towards a sustainable urban future: With the adoption of the new constitution of Kenya, and its provision of the right to accessible and adequate housing and to reasonable standards of sanitation for every citizen, renewed focus is being placed on improvements in the informal settlements. The lack of land rights and tenure for squatters, however, still poses significant challenges to improving these settlements. With tenure issues still at the forefront, and housing upgrades yielding little improvement for the actual residents, it is clear that a renewed effort is needed to understand the underlying realities and dynamics, particularly in the ownership and control of land, access to

justice, governance insufficiency, housing, infrastructure and basic services.

Collaborative Process

The research builds on the on-going AMT collaborative grassroots approach involving partners and the community of Mukuru and other informal settlements. University of Nairobi has supported the grassroots work of AMT and other civil society organizations working informal settlements by preparing the settlement profiles and research in understanding the dynamics behind ownership and control of land tenure and basic services. AMT and Katiba Institute have been working on secure tenure and land-rights in informal settlements. Strathmore University is developing legal and financial models in support of slum upgrading.

IDRC Support



IDRC/ UoN/ SU, Katiba Institute & AMT Consultative at AMT Offices, Ngong Road, Nairobi

The role of IDRC goes beyond funding. Beginning with the phase of proposal IDRC project officers have shared international experience in similar research designs and provided useful critique of methodology. They continue to engage the team through the research phases.

Last week (12-16 August) IDRC program officer, Adrian Di Giovanni held several consultative meetings with the research team and visited their institutions. The visit served to familiarize with study area and review progress made, including preliminary observations and challenges from the study.

IDRC Visit University of Nairobi

On 16th August, Mr. Adrian paid visit to University Nairobi, School of the Built Environment. During the visit he held discussions with the Dr. Mary Kimani, the Acting Dean. The Dean thanked IDRC for the research support. She pointed out that University role was critical in the implementation of on-going reforms.

The School mandate was to provide innovative ideas on the development of sustainable human settlements. She was keen to see the Departments link with service providers (such as water services) to develop viable solution for secure tenure and access to basic services to all as per constitution. Mr. Adrian pointed out that IDRC emphasized on multi-disciplinary research and innovations to improve access to justice and security



Dr. Mary Kimani, Acting Dean School of Built Environment welcomed Mr. Adrian, IDRC Programme Office. Present were Arch. Erastus Abonyo (Chairman Department of Architectural Science) & Prof Peter M Ngau (CURI Director)