

## Nakuru - a study in urbanization by Lucky Lowe. page 1

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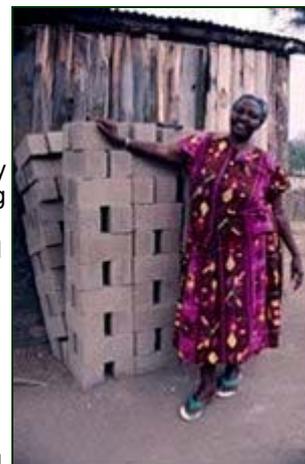
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### Abstract

The goal of ITDG's Integrated Urban Housing Project is to contribute to the international programme of work to increase the access of the low-income households and the poor to adequate safe and secure shelter. More specifically the project purpose is to identify and promote a sustainable shelter delivery strategy for the urban poor, which can be adopted by governments in Kenya and India. The project, supported by DFID, is researching and acting at the local level to inform and influence the wider debate among agencies, public sector bodies and policy makers. In addition to practical interventions, reviews of the literature and practice to date is contributing to our understanding of the differences between single-sector interventions and integrated ones, in this case linking small business development with improved housing. This study looks at the work done in Nakuru, Kenya.



Nakuru Intergrated Urban Housing Project

### Urban poverty in context

A significant proportion of humanity is housed in conditions that are impermanent, risky and detrimental to health. Add to this picture the rising trend in rural-urban migration, increasing settlement densities, overloaded infrastructure, depletion of natural resources and marginal living standards for over a billion people, and the powerful influence of our built environment on the well-being of humanity is clearly apparent.

#### The growth of urban communities

The world is rapidly becoming more urban; in 2001, half of its population (three out of six billion) is living in urban areas. By 2025, this proportion will have increased to two-thirds (1). The current urbanization rate is particularly high in the poorest countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, the urban population is growing at 6% per year, and will double in the next twelve years (2).

Although rapidly growing cities pose problems, for instance to the environment, they are a vibrant force for economic growth (3). Urban population growth is inevitable and will place growing demands on an already strained supply of land, housing and services. At the same time, urban productivity will continue to be constrained by inadequate infrastructure, restrictive regulatory frameworks and the incapacity of urban authorities to deliver. This has a negative effect on urban opportunities, particularly in the informal sector.

#### Poverty reduction - an overriding priority

Poverty reduction is now an overriding priority for all major donors and most development agencies. External trends and shocks, including natural and man-made disasters, rapid population growth and urbanization, the AIDS pandemic, structural adjustment and debt repayments, have all contributed to the increase of poverty. The definition of poverty is broadening, from one focused only on income (1\$ per capita per day), to a human development index incorporating health, nutrition, literacy and service indicators (4). Some authorities extend it to include the lack of voice and choice of the poor (5).

#### Poverty reduction through shelter

Secure housing is a valuable asset, which can be a significant factor in helping people to work their way out of poverty. Widening access to shelter requires a twin track approach; increasing poor people's incomes, and reducing housing costs via lower, adequate standards and alternative technologies and participatory processes which increase the available options. Over the last 20 years, the agenda of those involved in shelter and human settlements has shifted significantly. Ideas and policies have shifted from direct construction of shelter by the public authorities to 'sites and services' programmes and from there to urban upgrading and urban management. A shift from sector specialisms to a holistic approach to poverty reduction is gaining favour. Support for poor people to build up their assets and tackle economic and political constraints in a way that builds sustainable livelihoods is essential.

#### The role of ITDG in poverty reduction through shelter

The non-governmental organization (NGO), ITDG, focuses on the means by which interventions in shelter can contribute to reducing poverty and increasing productivity rather than on design or construction. The goal of ITDG's International Shelter Programme is to improve access to adequate and secure shelter by poor women and men in urban, peri-urban and rural areas of developing countries. This programme comprises a range of work organised into five international themes, namely:

- **The environment:** to improve the environmental sustainability of low-income housing.
- **Markets:** to enable poor men and women to participate more actively and on better terms in the markets for building materials, construction and shelter.
- **Reform:** to tackle inappropriate institutions, laws and processes that prevent access by poor men and women to shelter.
- **Partnerships and alliances,** that require to be strengthened and empowered to achieve pro-poor changes in shelter programmes and policies.
- **Advocacy,** to make a case for shelter in improving the livelihoods of poor men and women.

### Market and community enablement

A dominant trend, particularly in urban development, is towards improving the efficiency of markets and communities in providing shelter and services by:

- Increasing supply through co-financing with community-based organizations (CBOs) or NGOs, and support to small and community enterprises;
- Tackling constraints through legal and regulatory reform;
- Improving fiscal and land markets;
- Devolving control to local authorities;
- Maximising partnerships between formal and informal private enterprises and public sector institutions;
- Improving infrastructure management.

New political, professional and popular ways of thinking and acting are transforming the ways authorities and communities relate to each other. CBOs and NGOs are seeking to participate to a greater extent in the planning, implementation and management of shelter and services. It is realised, though, that there are limitations to community participation, e.g. where inequalities of power and gender are great, and where agendas differ too much.

### Environmental sustainability

Urban environmental degradation is seen as a key constraint to social and economic urban development. Current environmental policy is aiming to improve the conditions, which promote the well being of the 650 million people living in the hazardous environment of informal human settlements. Improved systems of taxation and environmental regulation are seen as priority tools. The problems to be tackled include space and quality standards of housing; sanitation; drainage; supply of safe water; waste disposal; and industrial pollution.

Statistics can only provide a partial picture of problems in health, housing, or poverty alleviation. Failure to differentiate between gender, age, class, ethnicity, disability or location lead to inadequate definitions of poverty in terms of levels of vulnerability, exposure to risk and access to housing or services.



Morris Keyonzo  
Nakuru, Enabling housing  
Standards

### Dissemination

Dissemination is now recognised as a key component in scaling up success and capacity building. Information and knowledge about better practice does not transfer easily to potential users, such as Local Authorities (LAs), NGOs, CBOs, and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the developing world; and new ways must be explored. Current priorities for donors include both improving dissemination technologies and devising new models of access through information centres, databases, networks and the Internet. The emphasis is on media, technologies and institutional arrangements which facilitate three principal lines of access, from the centre out to local organisations; from CBOs, NGO's and LAs at local level to policy makers and planners; and between communities and implementing agencies.

### **Nakuru - burgeoning town or vulnerable community?**

Located on the floor of the Rift Valley, Nakuru is Kenya's fourth largest town, situated 160 km North West of Nairobi at an altitude of 1859m above sea level. Derived from the Maasai dialect, Nakuru earns its name as 'the place of dust' from the volcanic soil that engulfs it in the whirlwinds of the dry season. Centred in a rich agricultural hinterland between the Menengai Crater and Lake Nakuru (home to the famous pink flamingos), Nakuru was once dubbed 'the cleanest town in East Africa'. Rapid urban growth and industrial activity, which provides employment but causes pollution, together with a decline in urban services and infrastructure poses vast challenges for sustainable urban development. Increasingly, overcrowding and poverty mean that most people live in congested and inappropriate homes. The Integrated Urban Housing Project is working in Nakuru, a low-income settlement, but began with women, men and young people in low-income groups in Kwa Rhonda, Lakeview and Bondeni.

### High density housing

Housing density and land cover, as high as 90%, has reduced the available open spaces for recreation and vegetation to almost nil. The project's baseline survey indicates that 68% of the houses have only one room, which is occupied by an average of four persons. Poor sanitation and environmental hygiene poses a major health threat. Kwa Rhonda has a mean of 49 households sharing one latrine while the average for Bondeni and Lakeview is 22 and 19 households respectively. These problems are compounded by costly building technologies, expensive and inaccessible building materials, and homes that are poorly designed for the climate. A natural hazard caused by Nakuru's geology is the band of localised underground faulting, which runs through Kwa Ronda, leading to significant subsidence and sometimes wholesale collapse of housing units into craters.

## Nakuru Municipal Council (NMC)

Nakuru Municipal Council has designated seven settlements within its boundaries as low-income settlements. ITDG began its work in the Kwa Rhonda neighbourhood and has subsequently developed working relationships with residents in Lakeview and Bondeni. Partnerships and interventions now extend further into the neighbourhoods of Kaptembwa, Mikiri and Lanet.

## **Communities in Nakuru**

### The neighbourhood of Kwa Rhonda

Urbanization in Nakuru occurred during the first half of the 20th Century when many colonial British farmers settled in the area. Kwa-Rhonda Estate is located on land formerly owned by a white settler known as Rhonda. African settlement on the farm started in the 1970s after Rhonda left. Many changes have taken place in the community since that time. Today, the natural resource base (land, water and trees or timber) is under pressure, due to over-exploitation from the increasing population. Physical structures such as roads, water distribution services and drainage systems, garbage dumping sites and houses are not formally planned, and they are insufficiently maintained. The majority of the residents are landless tenants without formal employment, whose cultural origins are mixed. Civil clashes in 1992 and 1997 mean people do not live in full trust with one another.

### Lakeview estate

Lakeview was a settlement estate for the British before independence. The British sold the estate to Goans who re-sold their estate houses to Kenyans. At this time, the construction of more houses led to the densification of the population in the Lakeview settlement. The resident population continues to increase as people migrate to Nakuru town in search of employment opportunities. Colonial houses were built of durable materials but today many informal and temporary houses have been put up, especially on the lower side of the estate away from town. The natural resource base in Lakeview has been exploited to near depletion. The Lake Nakuru Park, from which the estates name was derived, has since been fenced off by the Kenya Wildlife Service to prevent conflict between humans and wildlife. The gap between high-income and low-income households is evident, with the former having piped water services and access to electricity, whilst the latter rely on water sold by vendors and fuel sources such as kerosene and charcoal.

### Bondeni

Bondeni is a Kiswahili word meaning valleys; settlement began in this area around 1914 by Swahili speaking people settled in this area and were mainly employed by the white settlers as porters. In the 1960s and 1970s people with other ethnic origins arrived, since most houses were available to rent. The culture of Bondeni is mixed, but the majority of people are Muslims. The Muslim and Christian residents have lived harmoniously as neighbours for many years. Bondeni estate was popular, since the infrastructure was adequate to meet demand. Today, the population in the area is thought to be over-populated; most of the mud-walled and tin roofed houses are said to be over 80 years old and infrastructure, such as roadside drainage, toilets, sewerage systems, streetlights, and refuse collection facilities are in a very poor state. The land allocated for plots was intended to accommodate 130 units that are now privately owned and occupied. With many plots poorly demarcated, some plots overlapping each other and not all title deeds issued, there is potential for conflict in the area. Most residents are tenants.

## **The impact of urban poverty in Nakuru**

- Lack of essential services such as water and sanitation leaving the population prey to serious health hazards, and causing poor hygiene and diseases
- Subdivision of land and inward migration
- Insufficient essential services such as schools has lead to illiteracy, which in turn makes it even harder for residents to find work, or to develop the knowledge and skills to secure an income from either the formal or informal sector
- An absence of local health facilities, and remoteness and high cost of accessing even limited services, has lead to low life expectancy and an increase in infant mortality.

Income levels for the three low-income neighbourhoods in Nakuru have gone down since 1970. Most government departments were active in the 1970s but in the 1980s, services such as education, roads, water declined. Administration, security and garbage collections have also been scaled down. The lack of essential infrastructure and services has had a detrimental effect on people's livelihoods.

## **How can the voices of the poor be heard?**

To support the creation of sustainable livelihoods, governing institutions and public sector professionals must find a way to listen to the needs of the poor. ITDG's Shelter Programme is supporting efforts to build community based organisations linking local, household and community level realities with public sector institutions and professional associations. Key individuals have been effective catalysts in creating social capital through linkages. These key personnel have included:

- those working for the Municipal Council of Nakuru
- those working with the Architectural Association of Kenya
- individuals willing to participate in community based committees

- cross-sectoral networks such as Shelter Forum
- individuals willing to share the risk of innovation
- individuals who all bring their own interests and opportunities to increase the impact of interventions.

### The participatory approach

The participatory approach is being used to achieve outputs envisaged by international policy through private and popular sector partnership and alliances. A people-centred and responsive, dynamic approach to world development is dependent upon the effective collaboration between those experiencing poverty and those with the power, resources and responsibility to eliminate poverty. Development practice and theory increasingly talks about participation, but also reassess questions about who participates. Governments can only fulfil their social responsibility to meet basic housing needs by assuming a new role; providing a political environment that will foster partnerships and facilitate the activities of a range of stakeholders in the process of sustainable urban development. But how can the 'enabling environments' outlined by global policy makers such as the UNCHS be created in practice?

## **Addressing institutional barriers**

### Regulatory frameworks

ITDG is involved in creating regulatory frameworks, which improve life for people living in poverty. For over fifteen years, ITDG's International Shelter Programme has been working in Kenya and elsewhere to influence the national regulatory environment. International action research, supported by DIFD, has built on experiences in Kenya and Zimbabwe and drawn on worldwide expertise by commissioning reports of the national regulatory frameworks in thirteen countries, spanning three continents. At the same time, project activities in low-income settlements are demonstrating alternative technological options permitted under revised by-laws. Enabling environments have become a local and national reality in Kenya and Zimbabwe through the creation of partnerships and linkages at the neighbourhood, city and national levels.

Colonial powers imposed foreign legislation on many of the world's developing countries. The imposition of inappropriate building standards has resulted in most urban housing being deemed 'sub-standard' and thereby illegal. It remains common for housing standards to recognise only industrialised, often imported, building materials and housing technologies. These are inaccessible to most people, and place an unnecessary burden on national economies. ITDG's research has identified that the reasons for the slow rate of change, and an inability to accept minimum affordable standards as a start point for low-income housing, stem from:

- professional elitism
- an unwillingness among politicians to be seen to lower standards
- lack of human and financial resources
- individual and institutional vested interest
- systemic inertia.

Yet there is a clear need for change in supporting both in the provision of adequate, affordable new housing and in upgrading existing informal settlements. ITDG's research and action project aimed to discover how 'enabling environments' can be created to support the activities of numerous stakeholders in meeting the housing need of the majority in the towns and cities of the world.

This research found that, despite the overall lack of change, there are certain factors, which can trigger processes to amend national regulations, structures and processes. These include:

- concern for public health and safety
- national economic interests
- lobbying by private sector interests
- social and political pressures
- the impact of hazardous events.

Policy processes are clearly the preserve of professionals and politicians.

### Making building standards accessible

Elitism, inaccessible language and high charges prevent people from accessing building regulations. Illiteracy, low levels of education and a lack of access to information make the regulations themselves incomprehensible, and thus stop people from knowing about affordable, legal technologies. They do not know how to approach institutions or where to go and what to do to comply with regulations. Another key constraint may be people's lack of confidence in dealing with public sector officials and procedures. It is often too expensive and time-consuming to comply with all the procedural requirements. For example, there may be a requirement to submit several copies of professionally prepared drawings or to pay fees, which may, or may not be, artificially inflated.

### Design clinics - a route to affordable appropriate design

ITDG is keen to broker linkages between CBOs and professionals from the public, private and NGO sectors in order to address the institutionalised barriers which people with low-incomes face in accessing affordable, legal housing. A 'Design Clinic' provided a forum for the communities living in these areas to interact with housing experts, to explore and define specific preferences in urban housing designs.

Some 50 participants in the Design Clinic represented the men, women and youth in Nakuru, Local Agenda 21 Nakuru, and related NGO representatives, the Municipal Council of Nakuru (MCN), the Provincial Housing Office, the District Security Intelligence. Members of the Architectural Association of Kenya were key players. The workshop was held to raise awareness of regulatory changes, to share experience on how the community groups could be assisted; to develop area-specific plans using affordable housing technologies and to develop an action plan for affordable housing. A range of activities was facilitated to enhance common understanding whilst recognising the attributes each partner brought to the process. These included plenary sessions to present experiences and views on each of the four settlement areas in question, the related by-laws, appropriate building technologies and design options. Group discussions focused on specific topics and planned site visits. During site visits, rapporteurs held informal discussions with fifteen families in each of the target neighbourhoods, to find out about preferred housing styles, building materials, levels of existing infrastructure provision and land use, planning and management.

The workshop resulted in:

- an awareness and dissemination of revised by-laws
- the foundation for improved safety of the neighbourhoods being laid down.
- enhanced participatory technology development of appropriate building technologies, including sanitation and safety standards.
- enhanced consultative mechanisms between the communities, experts, and the Municipal Council of Nakuru

In May 1998, drawings for 50 cost-effective houses and mixed-use units were completed. Of these, 21 drawings have been approved by the town planning committee; the remaining 29 designs will benefit from the shortened approval process the MCN now has in place. The AAK has subsequently formed a community development programme to assist low-income groups by providing professional advice on housing design.

### **Providing skills training**

Training activities continue to be an important element of ITDG's project activities in the neighbourhoods of Nakuru. Artisans' groups are currently receiving micro-enterprise support under the business development component of the Integrated Urban Housing Project.

#### **Set shaded text below as Case Study**

##### **Case study 1: Building technological capacity.**

ITDG collaborated with local residents and group members to select eleven local artisans, train them and provide back-up during the construction of 30 demonstration houses using affordable building materials and improved technologies within KwaRhonda.

The Chairman of the Kwa Rhonda settlement, artisans' group, David Kahoru, recalls:

'Before Omotto (ITDG's Programme Manager) found us, we didn't know each other or work together. ITDG trained us and then gave us a soil-pressing machine. One of the conditions was that we would use it to train others, and we have now trained eleven more artisans who have become members of our group. There is great demand for these blocks and so we can train new artisans on site as we work.

'Formerly we didn't know about this technology. When we see a new technology we should try to use it. We're trying to get the means to fight for a living and this has already increased our knowledge. It's easier and cheaper for the landlord to build, so it brings us more work than before.

'We charge the landowner according to his ability to pay, then we take our income, and we keep a little profit for the group. We haven't met yet to decide how we will use these profits, but our aim, in order to disseminate this technology, is to have our own offices and a few demonstration houses next to them so that we can advertise ourselves.'

Officers of the Municipal Council of Nakuru (MCN) were key participants in the materials testing and technical training workshops. The opportunity to play a key role in both pilot production activities and 'hands on' testing of the materials produced was crucial in securing the support of local engineers for these 'alternative' building blocks. Municipal engineers, working with communities in Nakuru, reported how their confidence in Stabilised Soil Blocks (SSB's) was built up through field testing soils and blocks, and finding them to be compliant with the Kenyan National Bureau of Standards' stipulated performance criteria. Without such authoritative back up, any professional is likely to err on the side of caution and 'conventional', proven options.

Training for residents, landlords and local artisans has enabled people to develop their own knowledge and capacity to produce affordable building materials. According to Mama Susan, the pilot housing that she had built in Nakuru demonstrated that poor people could access improved living conditions. Mama Susan's in-depth knowledge of soil testing

procedures and construction has given her confidence in SSB walling technology as a viable, accessible housing option for people experiencing poverty.

Mama Susan, and others like her, have been vital in supporting the up-take of new technologies. The Visitors Book kept by Mama Susan bears witness to the number of people who have been to visit her in her new house. Community based groups are increasingly able to handle enquiries and specific details on the costing, viability and availability of technologies.

## Catalysts for change

### Development partnerships and alliances

The Enabling Housing Standards Project (EHSP), 1996 -2000, working in Nakuru, created linkages and brokered new partnerships at several levels. Starting with the EHSP, ITDG has forged numerous partnerships, which continue to develop and change to the present day. The nature of such alliances reflects the diversity of interests held by those involved. Partnerships are aimed at promoting a more integrated approach to project design and implementation, generating local ownership and thereby sustainability.

Often poor people can do little to influence how the built environment is governed; the arena is dominated by professionals with a sense of superior technical or legal knowledge which is often divorced from social reality. Some coalitions have, however, created a climate of change and have pushed through a programme of legislative reform. Alliances such as Kenya's Shelter Forum, which engages a broad spectrum of stakeholders, have been effective in keeping the regulatory reform debate alive. Shelter Forum has created a platform for exchanging ideas, drawing together popular organisations, professionals and their associations, politicians, policy makers and public sector officers.

### The influence of public sector officials

Housing standards are applied at the local level, and ITDG's international research has demonstrated how influential local public sector officials can be in blocking or facilitating the housing process. In Nakuru, engineers and public health officers have been critical to the introduction of sustainable building technologies. The designation of seven settlements as low-income housing areas, and the adoption of revised housing standards promoted under Code '95, has created the framework for increasing the number of homes for the low-income peri-urban population.

ITDG has been developing working relationships with numerous individuals in the Municipal Council of Nakuru (MCN). During 1999, supported by several international agencies, MCN undertook a strategic planning exercise to initiate planning and management interventions to improve the quality of urban life and efficiency of MCN activities.

### **Case study 3: The influence of individuals: Mr S Masese**

The District Co-operative Officer, Mr S Masese, is in charge of the council's service department and offers training and support to community groups seeking to register as co-operatives. Local Government policy is to train people in ways of working as a co-operative group. People learn about the formalities, which have to be followed under Kenyan law in order to gain official recognition and achieve compliance with relevant statutes. This includes economic appraisal, development of group by-laws and registration. Groups achieving official registration can access facilities and services, such as credit, provided by the Kenyan Union of Savings and credit organisations. Over one hundred individuals have been trained by the District Co-operative officer's staff, selected from 17 self-help groups in Bondeni, Kwa Ronda and Lakeview. The Kwa Ronda Neighbourhood Association (KRNA), one of the first groups to be formed, has served as a role model for other groups.

### Local groups and community based organizations

Linkages between micro-level and mid-level institutions increase access to those procedures and processes, which govern the business and built environment. In the same way, project linkages at all levels facilitate peer to peer learning, as demonstrated by the Kwa Ronda Neighbourhood Association. The association's strength in leadership and co-operative self-help has enabled its members to access credit and construct improved housing units for rental in the Kwa Ronda neighbourhood.

A survey of community based organisations (CBOs) in the seven informal settlements of Nakuru identified low-income groups, their location, composition, organisation, linkages and membership. Through this survey, the project team gained insight into the activities of the 260 groups identified, and ascertained what they were expecting from the development institutions operating within the municipality and their own roles in income generating and shelter activities. The survey highlighted the wide range of reasons for the formation of CBO groups; the following are common to many of them:

- Accessing social welfare
- Income generating activities, including embroidery, crocheting, basket weaving, selling snack foods, selling charcoal, running small retail kiosks, jua kali artisans making pans and sufurias (large cooking pots)
- Obtaining loans and savings
- Housing and shelter development activities
- Buying plots for group members
- Environmental improvements

### Landlords

Landlords have also been key partners in driving forward project interventions in the neighbourhoods of Lakeview, Kaptembwa and Bondeni. In Bondeni partnerships have developed more strongly with groups involved in social welfare and income generation. A good example is the progress in house construction by local individuals with the support and supervision of the Nakuru Affordable Housing and Environment Committee (NAHECO), a community based organisation through which project interventions are guided. In one instance, EU finance was secured to build 50 demonstration units in Nakuru, for which NAHECO adopted a revolving loan approach. Some of the wealthier members' of the community had used Stabilised Soil Blocks (SSB's) to build large houses, demonstrating that a wide range of dwellings was being built in this way. Loans have been made on the basis that people have three months grace before the payback period begins - the success of this approach is currently being monitored.

#### **Case study 4: Mr and Mrs Chege and their new home**

Mr and Mrs Chege, of Lakeview, have built a 4 room SSB structure that combines two residential rooms and two retail units for rental. The revolving fund contributed Kshs20 000 to the considerable sum (estimated at Kshs120 000) they had already invested, which enabled them to finish the construction work. Other demonstration houses are being built for residents of Kaptembwa i.e. a vegetable seller; a carpenter and a retired watchman have been the first beneficiaries of ITDG's intervention in their neighbourhood.

### **Achieving regulatory change in Kenya**

Regulatory reform has involved numerous committees, task forces, workshops, reviews and report writing that has spanned over thirty years. Persistence by activists, international donors, national coalitions and some politicians resulted in the introduction of 'Code '95'. This legislation caters for the needs of poor urban women and men. These statutory changes, accompanied by focused interventions, are raising awareness of what these policy changes mean in practice. For example, new by-laws now allow single room dwellings, reflecting the reality of many households in urban and peri-urban settlements.

When policies change, people have to know they have changed and understand what this means in practical terms. Because ITDG is well placed to create linkages between policy and practise, it began working in Nakuru with a group of residents and landlords living in the Kwa Rhonda neighbourhood. The Kwa Rhonda Neighbourhood Association was a proactive partner, constructing demonstration units and employing alternative, affordable technologies allowed under Code '95. Project funding enabled ITDG to share the construction cost, and thereby risk, with the first builders. Subsequently, construction along similar lines has demonstrated that local people are profiting by their new knowledge, applying their new technical skills in building materials production and construction.

### **Cross-sectoral linkages - the ITDG integrated urban housing project**

Since the provision of housing does not address all aspects of poverty alleviation, ITDG has developed new initiatives focused on integrating improvements in the built environment with enhanced income generation within an Integrated Urban Housing Project (IUHP). By adopting the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, ITDG's International Shelter Programme has found a way to improve understanding and to develop a common language around the complexities of poor people's lives.

Does Nakuru represent a picture of urban livelihoods or one of acute poverty? The Integrated Urban Housing Project (IUHP) demonstrates how interventions in housing and small business development can enhance people's livelihoods. It has often been the case that housing initiatives targeted at the poorest people in society fail to reach their target since the poorest are unable to keep a hold of such valuable assets. The IUHP is determining whether technical change driven by poor urban communities can make a substantial contribution to urban poverty alleviation. Whilst ITDG's Shelter Programme has a specific sector focus, it is tackling those issues which will have an impact on poverty and the quality of people's lives.

### Planning the IUHP activities

In planning the IUHP activities, the international team identified those elements, which were significant and relevant. The project's baseline survey provided detailed information at household and neighbourhood levels. Through workshops, members of local groups identified aspects of poverty prevalent in Nakuru:

- Unplanned houses lacking water, sanitation, good roads, refuse collection and drainage systems;
- Illegal and unlicensed businesses selling beers and illicit drugs
- Moral decay, which manifests itself in an increase in crime, especially prostitution and drugs peddling
- Lack of education, health care and recreational facilities
- Small houses made of poor materials such as paper and mud;
- Use of biomass and plastics for fuel, as cleaner fuels are too expensive
- The 'appearance of poverty' such as dirty, shabby clothes

### Shocks

Land clashes of 1992 and 1997, the severe hunger of 1982 and 1984, the drought of the early 1980s and 1992- 1993, which left River Ndarugu completely dry, the severe water problem and frequent fire outbreaks, are some of the shocks and trends highlighted by the poor communities (PUA Dec 1999).

### Trends

Trends include:

- economic decline - market liberalisation, reduction in formal sector employment
- rural to urban migration - higher densities and demand on inadequate public sector service provision.

## **INSERT**

### **The role of small enterprise**

More than half a million people enter the Kenyan job market annually, which compounds formal employment problems caused by the economic recession. Kenya has an estimated 1,300,000 small and medium enterprises (SMEs), increasing at a rate of about 300,000 per year. Only about 48% are considered to be operating successfully; of the remaining 52%, many are stagnating or closing down.

Nakuru town has an unprecedented proliferation of informal income-generating activities, which, despite offering great opportunity for employment, are faced with major difficulties. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have failed to commit sufficient resources to absorb the shocks created by the competition brought about by economic liberalisation and a free market economy, thereby increasing the vulnerability of SMEs .

Income-generating activities in Nakuru's informal settlements were identified by surveys undertaken during the project's preparatory phase, and the socio-economic environment in which they operate was studied to inform future interventions. A second phase assessed the technical and operational viability of the income-generating activities. Major constraints identified included:

- Lack of access to sources of capital
- Prohibitive business regulations
- Lack of effective marketing strategies
- Inadequate business management skills

The project has begun to address the recommendations emerging from these early studies. Already, seventeen local groups have been given access to business planning skills. Through linking into a World Bank initiative, known as the Business Development Service Voucher Training Programme. In close consultation with NAHECO and the seventeen local groups, ITDG has prioritised viable income-generating activities:-

- Food processing
- Production of construction materials
- Beads,laces and curio products
- Energy saving equipment
- Carpentry and joinery
- Waste recycling

Training and activities provide skills for increased business capacities, diversification, increased market understanding and enhanced productivity.

### **Case study One - The need for new product initiatives**

Most of the income generating activities adopted by the groups in Nakuru are small scale, home based, activities catering for poor markets. Many groups are producing durable and consumable goods, which often occupy saturated market segments, such as crochet products, and offer little potential for adding value. These activities do, however, enable women to undertake commercially productive activities in their own homes, which is clearly an advantage given their domestic workloads. Members of the Mwangaza Women's Group agreed to pursue a new product idea of selling a low-cost lantern alongside their more traditional sales of crochet goods. The women agreed to pursue this new product idea

which developed during project workshop discussions and formed part of their new business plan. The Group commissions a local artisan to produce the lamps and then sell them on to local clients.

### **Case study Two - Income from waste**

Jane runs a waste recycling business supplied by the local street children who collect waste materials. Plastics provide the bulk of items collected and stored, and she also sorts bone and horn, some metal and glass, which are sold on to various individual and business outlets. Jane sorts plastics into three types of varying value; the lowest grade creates no profit, but she feels her raw material suppliers would not return if she became 'too fussy' about which plastics she bought. Tins and cans are sold to artisans wishing to produce low cost lamps. There is considerable interest among local groups in waste recycling, but they are often constrained by access to markets. Currently ITDG is forging links in Nairobi and Kisumu with those involved in processing plants, and is introducing equipment for people to process waste locally and thereby add more value.

### **Case study Three - Basic management skills**

Another partnership, with the District Social Office, has enabled 160 (102 women and 58 men) individuals to participate in training focused on development of group constitutions, basic record and book keeping skills. This project tackles access to credit, by encouraging groups to implement credit saving schemes and by creating strategic alliances with credit providers such as NACHU and KASCO.

## **Working with young people**

One of the greatest resources for any country is a well-trained and motivated young population. Young people account for about 60 percent of the Kenyan population. This translates into approximately 18 million persons out of approximately 30 million inhabitants. Problems that currently afflict the youth include:

- Unemployment
- Disease
- Illiteracy, exploitation and harassment
- Social exclusion

A good example of an active CBO is the Twaweza Bondeni Youth Group. Twaweza means 'we can' and reflects the self-motivation which drove these young people to form their groups which initially focused on cleaning up their neighbourhood environment before going on to develop income generating activities.

### **Case study Four - The Twaweza Bondeni Youth Group:**

The young men belonging to the Twaweza Youth Group have set-up a small carpentry business whilst their female counterparts have opted to process fruit into juices, prepare and package popcorn and are looking to diversify into waste recycling for income generation.

During the business development training, facilitated by ITDG, Twaweza Youth Group developed their business plan, which is outlined below:

#### **TWAVEZA YOUTH GROUP AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BUSINESS**

- To raise the living standards of the members
- To create employment
- To exploit talents of the members who have the skills in carpentry
- To take advantage of the market opportunity

#### **PROJECTED ACHIEVEMENTS**

By the end of the next 12 months the group members of Twaweza hope to have achieved the following:

- We will have acquired more and better tools and equipment for making the furniture.
- We will have moved to a better production premises and have a storeroom for our raw materials and also a show room.
- We will have employed an accounts clerk and keep records
- We will start supplying quality furniture to house furnishing agencies in Nakuru
- We will become suppliers of furniture parts to other carpenters.

#### STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING THESE OBJECTIVES

- Be more creative in designs
- Buy a catalogue for latest styles and designs of furniture
- Buy good quality raw materials and make good finishing of products
- Save more members contributions towards working capital
- Request for a loan or credit facility from a loaning organisation

#### MARKETING

The market of our products is mainly the households within Bondeni, Lake view and Kwa Ronda areas. Also the schools for whom we supply desks and tables. The marketing mix.

#### Products:

- Tables (coffee, dining table, computer, office furniture)
- Sofa sets (executive and ordinary)
- Various designs of wall units (ordinary, deluxe, super deluxe)
- We shall emphasise quality in design and workmanship

#### PRICING:

- By reducing overhead costs, we expect to sell our products at 80% of the going prices of our competitors.
- We shall try to purchase quality raw materials at the most reasonable cost in order to be price competitive.
- We shall keep transportation cost to a minimum by using non-motorised means of transport to transport the finished products.

#### PROMOTION:

- We shall display our products in our small premises
- We shall photograph them and personally sell them through institution and by distributing fliers
- We shall visit the neighbourhood institutions and those that are up coming.

#### PLACE:

- For the time being, we shall continue to operate from our current premises.
- We shall occupy more spacious premises after twelve months.
- We shall buy own tools and equipment after the first year of operations.

### **Lesson learning internationally**

ITDG has facilitated learning across national and continental boundaries to enhance knowledge exchange, and relevant strategic guidance. This initiative monitors and evaluates urban development against a range of indicators developed by the UNCHS to inform the Habitat Agenda (GUO/LUO UNHCS [hyperlink](#)) These indicators will, in turn, be supplemented with locally pertinent indicators in city level decision making, to track progress in urban development. Indicators relate to shelter, social development and eradication of poverty, environmental management, economic development and governance, international co-operation.

Exchange visits between project teams in Kenya and India enabled staff and partners from within the Municipal Council of Nakuru (MCN) and the local community to benefit from site visits, informal discussion, workshops and formal training. The Social Development Society (SDS), ITDG's Indian partner, is the accredited training organisation for the UNCHS' initiative in Asia. It provides training for the UNCHS as it builds the capacity of public sector employees to participate in

the establishment of a Global Urban Observatory. Data collection, storage and analysis at the city level 'Local Urban Observatories' feed into National Urban Observatories.

### **International exchanges between Kenya and India**

One example of an exchange visit involved Symon Kiarie, Nakuru's Public Health Officer, accompanied by Kamau Kuria a young professional working in Nairobi, who attended a three-week training course in India with SDS. The MCN has created several specialist committees involving representatives from the public, popular and private sectors and aims to maintain 25% female membership. The work of these committees' aims to inform the implementation of Nakuru's Strategic Structural Plan.

### **What has been learnt from the Nakuru experience?**

There is an important link between shelter and poverty, although it is often not realised at the levels where it matters. ITDG's community-led approach to the development and dissemination of innovative shelter technologies can play an important and relatively unique role in this respect. Much of the programme's activities make important contributions, such as:

- Increasing technology choice to reduce vulnerability, improve health and make housing more affordable;
- Using shelter as a vehicle for skills development and income generation;
- Giving support to SMEs in building materials production;
- Tackling inappropriate policies and processes such as standards and regulations;
- Creating markets for informal sector enterprises;
- Mobilising community participation in needs assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities.

The benefits of good quality housing or infrastructure are often underestimated. Community driven housing projects can generate income and savings; they can also improve health and productivity and lead to the empowerment of those involved. These are all important, since ITDG believes that poverty is multi-dimensional, not just a lack of income. In many towns, over half the population is renting and spending a large part of their meagre income on rent. Secure land tenure and a house of their own can reduce those costs considerably. A house also is an asset, from which income can be generated e.g. by working from home, letting rooms, or using it as a security for credits. Poor housing and services, on the other hand, come at a great cost to residents: their health expenditure is high and they lose more days off work; they also are more vulnerable to disasters and violence.