

Emergency Architecture
& Human Rights

Master Class on Climate Change and Poverty Study Case

Organization name: Architects Without Borders Denmark

Project title: Slum transformation through land value capture - pilot project

Country: Uganda

Project description

The concept aims to transform slums into sustainable neighbourhoods, by formalizing land ownership and generating finance for new homes. It does so by capitalizing land value gains which is generated by rapid urban growth and increasing demand for land. The concept involves two key steps: land formalisation and establishment of housing cooperatives.

Many informal settlements can potentially achieve formal rights, if planning requirements are met. If the residents of an informal settlement can acquire formal ownership, they have the opportunity to form a housing cooperative that enables them to collectively vacate and sell a piece of their land.

The residents can thereby obtain the two main building blocks for a better future: a land title and income from land sale, both collectively owned. With their land as collateral and the income as down payment, the residents can now approach financial institutions who can provide their cooperative with matching funds on market terms, so that construction of new homes can be fully financed. (See concept diagram, page 4)

The project aims to undertake the above process in a small scale, in an informal settlement in Kampala, Uganda, together with local development partners and authorities. A successful pilot project is necessary to gain support for scaling up the effort and achieve impact.

Initial problems and background (connection with climate change)

Across the developing world housing demand vastly outstrips supply. The result is large numbers of informal settlements where millions of urban poor struggle to make a living. Most slums have few or no public services such as water, sanitation and electricity, resulting in harsh living conditions where residents are often trapped in poverty. In Sub-Saharan Africa more than 50 % of urban populations live in slums. Lack of land rights exacerbate the negative consequences of climate change impacts, resulting in reduced resilience. Communities with formal land rights and a cooperative organisational structure will not only be better equipped at securing infrastructure investments, but also at resisting climate shocks.

Goal and objectives of the intervention

Primary goal: To reduce urban poverty by providing affordable housing, in a scalable way

Objective 1: formalize land ownership in informal settlements

Objective 2: assist slum communities with the establishment of housing cooperatives and sale of land

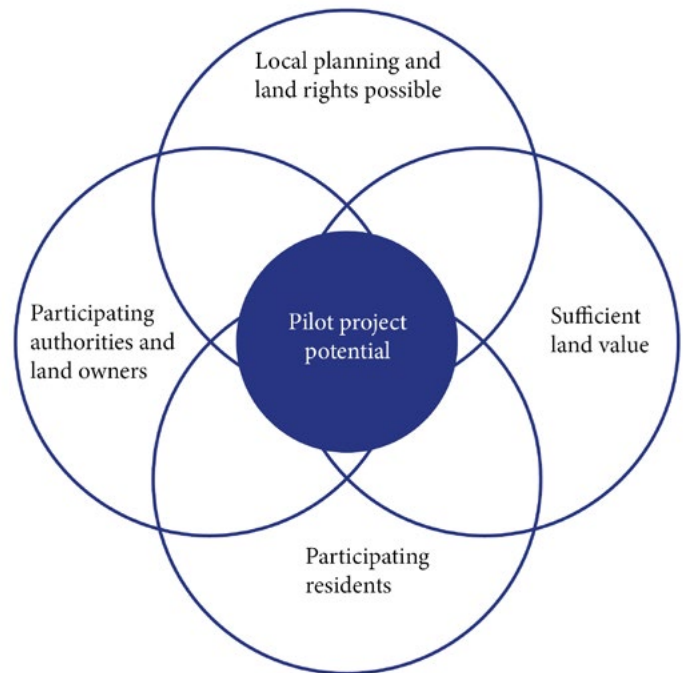
Objective 3: assist slum communities with achieving matching funds and manage construction of new homes

Potential risks and challenges

The concept will only work where land rights can be formalised, through approval of a new local plan. It also requires a location where land is sufficiently valuable and will cover the majority of construction costs. It may be a challenge to identify slums with a high probability of success for an initial pilot project.

Main risks:

- Lack of participation among residents due to varying interests. Some may want to await formalization in order to cash out a later stage, rather than to participate in a cooperative structure.
- Lack of matching funds on affordable terms
- Lack of authorities' ability or willingness to provide basic infrastructure
- Corruption may prolong the process or incur costs



Target groups

- Slum dwellers in central urban locations, who will achieve formal land rights and affordable homes.
- Municipal and state authorities, who will achieve impact on politically agreed slum reduction targets.
- Ethical investors, who will achieve a return on investment + an ethical outcome
- Land owners whose land has been taken over by slums, and who will achieve a negotiated solution in which slum dwellers voluntarily vacate occupied land

Partnerships

Lead: [Architects Without Borders Denmark](#)

Ugandan development partners: [ACTogether Uganda](#), [National Slum Dweller's Federation of Uganda \(NSD-FU\)](#), [Action Aid Uganda](#)

Ugandan authorities: [Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development \(MLHUD\)](#), [Jinja Municipal Council](#)

International agencies: [UN-Habitat/Global Land Tool Network \(GLTN\)](#), [Cooperatives Europe Development Platform](#)

Danish partners: [Action Aid Denmark/Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke](#)

Strategy and expected results of the intervention

The concept is complex due to the involvement of cross-sector stakeholders and as it revolves around the notorious difficult issue of land rights. Hence the strategy is to begin with a low-cost, small scale intervention that reduces the risks of participation for all involved, but remains valid as proof of concept.

Path of intervention:

1. Along with partners, identify a potential Kampala case slum area where conditions are favourable.
2. Engage with slum dwellers and authorities to confirm willingness to participate in pilot project.
3. Build a prototype-home in this area, so that the outcome – new homes – becomes tangible for the slum community, and to grow support for the project.

3. Select a small group of 10-30 families, who will participate in a pilot project that includes all steps of the project concept.
4. Evaluate and disseminate results.

Post-pilot steps:

5. Gain support for a full scale intervention that covers the rest of the slum
6. Scale up in other slums

Expected results of pilot project:

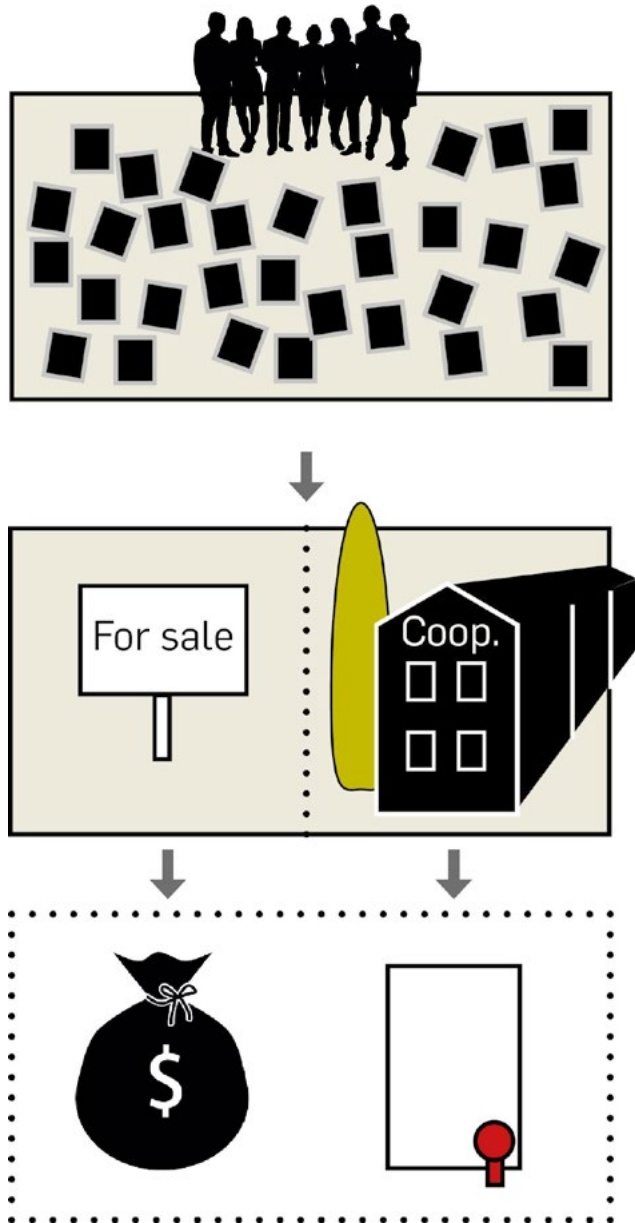
- A group of 10-30 families achieving formal land rights and new healthy homes.
- A proof of concept that results in increased support for land value capture as catalyzer for inclusive, pro-poor urban development

Photos

From informal settlement in Jinja, Uganda



Concept diagram



1. Informal community on high value land, assisted with formalisation of land ownership and establishment of a housing cooperative.
2. Collective decision to vacate and sell land, and move together on the remaining land.
3. Income from land sale + land title obtained.
4. With land as collateral and income as down payment, a financial institution agrees to provide a 20-year construction loan. The cooperative can now fully fund construction of new affordable homes.