INTRODUCTION

Harare has a population of a million inhabitants and an official housing waiting list of 500,000. Given the average household size, these figures imply that over 52 percent of the city’s population is on the waiting list. This, unfortunately, probably understates the demand; surveys suggest that only a small proportion of the poor and homeless are even on the city’s waiting list. Given this context, the emergence of slums within and around the city has come as no surprise.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

In 2007, the Ministry of Urban Government Rural and Urban Development formally allocated the land of the Dzivarasekwa Extension (DZ Ext.) to the City of Harare. The City Council proceeded with a rapid and ad hoc upgrading pilot for ten, which included a full housing, appraised basic infrastructure, renewable energy, and an option for the use of the land for other purposes. This project aimed to demonstrate that overcrowfaction can result in more affordable housing and town costs for the city.

In preparation, the community undertook an extensive member of existing, which produced a menu of design options that was presented to the community. Typical designs included semi-detached plans, with the floor area for each unit averaging 12 square meters with construction cost around $120.00/square meter.

The DizExt community organized itself into construction teams and, in less than twelve months, was able to complete sixteen house models on its own. This success, in turn, paved the way for the implementation of additional houses, with more than twelve teams building over 250 houses in the first year. The city council recognized slums as part of the mainstream urban space and recognized the importance of slum dwellers as a crucial governance aspect and砖-and-mortar issues.

As part of the project, the Harare project has also shown that pilots in themselves are not enough; restrictive policies and regulatory environment still hinder access to urban services. The Harare project has also served as a proving ground for a variety of innovative ideas for minimizing the urban development footprint. Elements of project design are already proving influential; the use of decentralized water and sanitation facilities (like eco-san toilets and boreholes) has been cited as a potential model by other local authorities. The incremental model of the program proves that upgrading doesn’t have to be a highly disruptive, all-or-nothing proposition.

The Harare project has also shown that pilots in themselves are not enough; restrictive policies and regulatory environment still hinder access to urban services. The Harare project, by addressing both governance aspects and brick-and-mortar issues, has created significant space for scaling-up.

Credit and Links


CONCLUSION

The Harare project has served as a proving ground for a variety of innovative ideas for minimizing the urban development footprint. Elements of project design are already proving influential; the use of decentralized water and sanitation facilities (like eco-san toilets and boreholes) has been cited as a potential model by other local authorities. The incremental model of the program proves that upgrading doesn’t have to be a highly disruptive, all-or-nothing proposition.

Outside of the tangible benefits, the intervention has also enhanced the urban governance architecture within the city as part of the project, the Harare initiated a project at Shelter and mobilized other organized communities in the city to review the city’s policies, planning its housing and transport and services can be developed with the urban poor, who are part of the urban poor. In addition, the project has adopted decentralized water and sanitation facilities (like eco-san toilets and boreholes) has been cited as a potential model by other local authorities.

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SUCCESS STORIES

The DizExt community organized itself into construction teams and, in less than twelve months, was able to complete sixteen house models on its own. This success, in turn, paved the way for the implementation of additional houses, with more than twelve teams building over 250 houses in the first year. The city council recognized slums as part of the mainstream urban space and recognized the importance of slum dwellers as a crucial governance aspect and brick-and-mortar issues.

Within the community, a menu of design options that was presented to the community. Typical designs included semi-detached plans, with the floor area for each unit averaging 12 square meters with construction cost around $120.00/square meter.

The DizExt community organized itself into construction teams and, in less than twelve months, was able to complete sixteen house models on its own. This success, in turn, paved the way for the implementation of additional houses, with more than twelve teams building over 250 houses in the first year.
The semi-detached terraces were met with a warmer interest but there was still doubt about this building type. Once the re-worked row-houses were presented, they were met with applause, as that is what they all wanted for themselves. Just as much, there was also a strong response to the suggestion that these could be incrementally built. This would be critical in making these houses affordable for them.

Other comments worth noting was that once the designs were understood, the idea of open plan living room, kitchen and dining were rejected. For a variety of reasons, they all preferred uses to have their own separate rooms. It became obvious that there was need for more time than had been originally allowed for.

Second Round Consultation (continued)

There were mixed comments as people found issues understanding the plans properly. Furthermore, it was also difficult for them to imagine and understand the spaces drawn properly, as most of them have had little or no experience in this. Common patterns in the feedback were that they wanted a sense of ownership and individuality. Design features such as the continuous row houses, giving the effect of a on-going wall or the communal entrances for the semi-detached houses were contrary to this and were rejected. Demarcation was central to achieving this sense of individuality.

The comments from the initial consultation were taken on board and with a new architect (from SDI), the designs were re-worked to try and maximize spatial efficiency and explore new ideas that could plug into these prototypes. The design changes weren't a radical departure from the original plans but by building them as 3D models, this allowed a more holistic view of the designs. This would also prove to be a valuable tool for communicating the designs to a community of people who had little or no experience in reading architectural drawings. The designs were also discussed inhouse within DOS and further comments were received.