

# **Developing Participatory Planning Practices in Kitale, Kenya**

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# Developing Participatory Planning Practices in Kitale, Kenya

*Michael Majale*

## Introduction

The world's urban population is growing at a faster rate than the total population of the world. By 2030, the global urban population is projected to increase by over 2 billion; at the same time, the rural population will stabilize and then decline by an estimated 20 million. More than 90 per cent of this urban population growth will be in developing countries, and by 2030 the urban population will have far surpassed the rural population (Millennium Project, 2005; United Nations, 2004). In Africa, rural-to-urban transformation is taking place in a context of far higher absolute population growth, far lower levels of socio-economic development, and significantly less institutional capacity, at all levels, than was the case during the urbanization of the now-developed world. Consequently, although Africa remains the least urbanized region of the world, it is where urbanization is posing perhaps its most difficult challenges.

Developing country local authorities are facing considerable challenges in trying to plan and manage urban development and deliver services. The problems they face are compounded by the urbanization of poverty. The most visible manifestation of this are the slums and informal settlements in which the growing urban poor majority live and work, and which have developed outside formal urban planning and regulatory frameworks.

It could be argued that the poor, who organize, plan and build slums and informal settlements illegally, are "*the most important organizers, builders and planners of [developing country] cities*" (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989:15). However, most governments do not see them as such, and many refuse to recognize them as citizens with legitimate rights. Slums and informal settlements are, consequently, seldom supplied with infrastructure and services essential to health and well-being. Where they are, the provision usually takes place long after the settlement first developed. Many developing country cities are thus being built essentially 'back to front' (Zetter, 2002:32)—with development preceding planning; building first, and regularization of tenure and provision of infrastructure services last.

If the problems posed by rapid urban growth in developing countries, in particular the proliferation and expansion of slums and informal settlements, are to be effectively addressed, and sustainable urbanization achieved, there is urgent need to review the institutional and regulatory frameworks governing urban planning and development. In particular, the contribution of "[t]he true planners and builders...the poor" (Hardoy and Satterthwaite, 1989: back cover) to urban development must be recognized, and institutional and regulatory frameworks should enable their participation in planning, decision making and implementation processes.

This case study reviews a participatory action research project, 'Building in Partnership: Participatory Urban Planning' (BiP:PUP), implemented by the international non-governmental organisation (NGO) Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG)<sup>1</sup> in Kitale, a rapidly growing secondary town in Kenya.<sup>2</sup> The project sought to address some of the above-mentioned problems, which Kitale, like many other developing country cities and towns, is experiencing. The overall goal of the project was thus to enhance the effectiveness

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1. In July 2005, ITDG changed its name to Practical Action.

2. The BiP:PUP project was implemented between April 2001 and March 2004 with funding from the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID).

of urban planning and management by addressing some of the deficiencies of existing institutional and regulatory frameworks that have contributed to the growth of slums. The case study reviews what impact the NGO interventions have had, and presents the key lessons learned in implementing the BiP:PUP project.

**Table 1. Distribution of urban population in Kenya by size of urban centre, 1948–1999**

	1948		1962		1969		1979		1989		1999	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Over 100,000	1	6	2	6	2	4	3	3	6	4	20	10
20,000–99,999	1	6	2	6	2	4	13	15	21	15	82	42
10,000–19,999	2	12	3	9	7	15	11	12	19	14	18	9
5000–9999	3	18	11	32	11	24	22	24	32	23	23	12
2000–4999	10	58	16	47	25	53	42	46	61	44	51	27
<b>Total number of urban centres</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100</b>
Total urban pop. (millions)	0.28		0.75		1.08		2.31		3.88		9.90	
Total country pop. (millions)	5.4		8.6		10.9		15.3		21.4		28.7	
Urban pop. as % of total country pop.	5.1		7.8		9.9		15.1		18.1		34.5	

Source: Mano Promotion Committee 2005: 3–4.

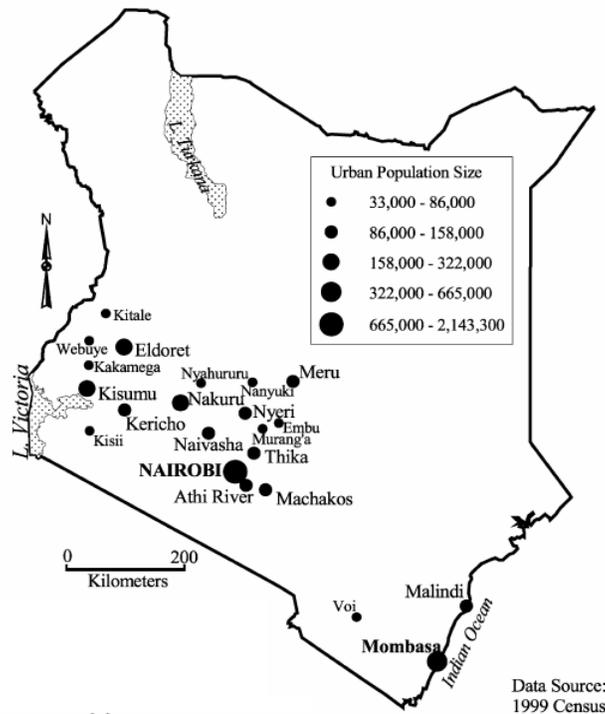
## Urbanization in Kenya

The process of urbanization in Kenya has accelerated since independence from British colonial rule in 1963. As Table 1 shows, in 1962, only one in twelve people lived in an urban centre, defined as a gazetted settlement with a minimum of 2000 inhabitants. However, by 1999, this proportion had increased to one in three. This ratio is projected to increase to one in two by 2015.

The urban population was initially concentrated in the two largest urban centres: Nairobi, the capital city, and Mombasa, the principal port (see Figure 1). However, the past three decades have seen a decline in the population primacy of the two cities. In 1969, they accounted for 70 per cent of the entire urban population; but their combined proportionate share dropped to 29 per cent in 1999. Statistical evidence also indicates that secondary towns are growing at a relatively faster rate. What is important for urban planning is that rapid urban growth will continue, posing significant and unprecedented challenges.

## Local Context: Kitale and main dimensions

Located about 380 km to the north-west of Nairobi (see Figure 1), Kitale is the administrative and commercial capital of Trans-Nzoia District. The Municipality's immediate hinterland is well-known for its historically high agricultural potential. Kitale also serves as a frontier town for the dry and drought-prone northern Kenya region.



**Figure 1: Major urban centres in Kenya**

Kitale’s annual population growth rate of 12 per cent is higher than the national urban average of 7 per cent. Fuelled by rural-urban migration, largely as a result of decreasing economic opportunities in the outlying farmlands and recurrent drought in northern Kenya, in-migration from other urban centres, and natural growth, the population upsurge has overstretched the capacity of Kitale Municipal Council to effectively plan and manage the town’s growth. Indeed, it has far outstripped the supply of planned and serviced land; infrastructure provision; formal housing development; and employment creation. As a result, 65 per cent of the 220,000 population live in slums and informal settlements characterized by insecure tenure, inadequate infrastructure and social services, poor quality housing, overcrowding, unemployment and socio-economic marginalization. They consequently face multiple threats to their health, well being and security; and are also largely disenfranchised with respect to participation in planning and decision-making processes. In this respect, Kitale is similar to rapidly growing cities and towns throughout the developing world.

At the time the BiP:PUP project was conceived, urban development in Kitale, as in other municipalities in Kenya, was becoming increasingly unsustainable for several reasons, including:

- ineffective urban planning methods and inadequate development control;
- poor standards of urban infrastructure and services;
- poor maintenance of council assets, including rental housing;
- inadequate revenue collection for services; and
- lack of community participation in urban planning and management.

Furthermore, slums and informal settlements were lowest on the Council’s list of priority investment areas. Those in the inner areas of the town are on public land, and inhabitants either have no security of tenure or may have letters of allotment issued by the Council. Those

in the peri-urban areas have developed on farms which were bought from white settlers by land-buying companies and co-operatives and then subdivided into smaller plots and distributed among shareholders and members. They are thus located on land which was until recently classified as agricultural, but is now urban following municipal boundary expansion. Consequently, they present a significant challenge not only for urban planning and development control, but also for service delivery, which is made more problematic because the plot owners do not pay rates to the Council which could help finance infrastructure development. Furthermore, they are not included in the outdated master plan.

The Council was unable to oversee urban development largely because of lack of local-level institutional capacity in urban planning and management, including the absence of a municipal planner. Institutional instability caused by frequent changes in the offices of mayor and town clerk also undermined good governance.

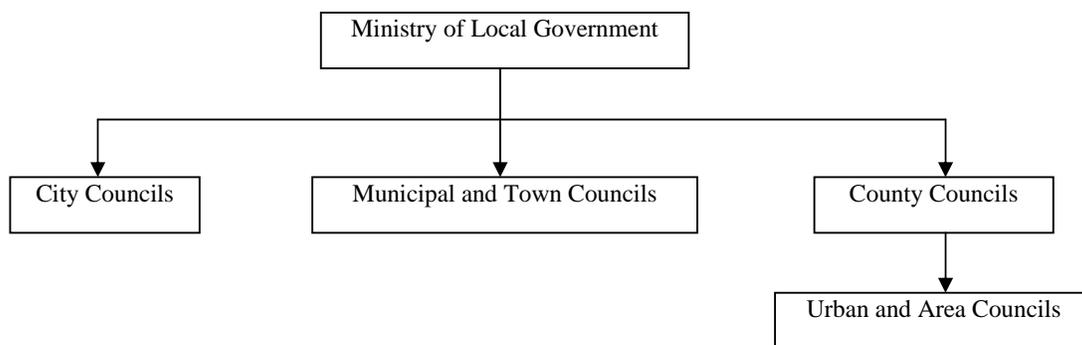
### The Local Governance System in Kenya: An Overview

The structure of local government in Kenya (Figure 2) has its roots in the Local Government Regulations of 1963, which underwent several amendments before being converted into the Local Government Act, Cap 265 of the laws of Kenya in 1978. The Act distinguishes four types of local authorities:

- Municipal councils;
- Town councils;
- County councils; and
- Urban councils.

Under the Local Government Act, and over 30 other statutes, the Ministry of Local Government facilitates the operations of all 175 local authorities. Specifically, its mission is: “[t]o facilitate Local Authorities to achieve good governance and improved service delivery for enhanced socio-economic development” (Republic of Kenya, 2005:25).

The Local Government Act places significant responsibilities on local authorities, but also provides for legal, administrative and regulatory powers on the basis of decentralised authority. Under the Act, local authorities have responsibility for, among other things, land use planning and delivery of infrastructure and social services. They are also responsible for overseeing urban development, which is governed by various legislative acts, the main ones of which are listed in Box 1. However, they have neither the capacity nor the resources to carry out many of their functions and responsibilities.



**Figure 2: Structure of Local Government**

### **Box 1: Legislation governing urban development**

The main legislation governing urban development includes the Constitution of Kenya, 1969 (as amended to 1997); the Land Titles Act, Cap 282 (1908); the Government Lands Act, Cap 280 (1915, revised in 1984); the Registration of Titles Act, Cap 281 (1919); the Land Acquisition Act, Cap 295 (1983); the Valuation of Rating Act, Cap 266 (1956); the Rating Act, Cap 267 (1963); the Housing Act, Cap 117 (1953); the Rent Restriction Act, Cap 296, 1959; the Landlord and Tenant (Shops, Hotels and Catering Establishments) Act Cap 301, 1965; the Physical Planning Act, Cap. 286, 1996; the Local Government Act, Cap 265, 1998; the Environmental Management and Coordination Act, 1999.

Kenya's rapid rate of urbanization has also eroded the efficiency of "*traditional planning approaches*" (Watson, 2007:16), such as master plans. The problem has been compounded by the phenomenon of 'land grabbing'—"privatization of public land through wanton and illegal allocation of such land to private individuals and corporations in total disregard of the public interest" (Ministry of Lands, 2006:8). As the report of a Commission of Inquiry into the Illegal / Irregular Allocation of Public Land affirms, during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, "'land grabbing' became part and parcel of official grand corruption..." (Government of Kenya, 2004:8).

Thus, like many other countries, Kenya has been reforming its system of local government with the aim of strengthening the capacity of local authorities to effectively fulfil their responsibilities, particularly in regard to urban planning, management and service delivery, and improving urban governance.

### **Kenya Local Government Reform Programme**

The Kenya Local Government Reform Programme, started in 1996, aims to strengthen and expand the capacities and revenue base of local authorities through legal, financial management and institutional reforms; and by improving operational relationships between central and local government, and between local authorities, local communities and the private sector. A key element of the Programme is the Local Authority Transfer Fund, which provides 5 per cent of national income tax to local authorities in line with population, resource base and financial performance.<sup>3</sup> Local Authority Transfer Fund conditions require local authorities to prepare Local Authority Service Delivery Plans. A structured annual cycle of participatory planning and budgeting, the preparation of these plans aims to inform the strategic prioritisation of municipal allocations from central government and provide an institutional framework for pro-poor spending on infrastructure and services. It is also intended to provide the link between planning and budgeting, which is essential if plans are to be implemented (Watson, 2007). Local Authority Service Delivery Plans also seek to create partnerships by matching this budget with other government, private sector and development partner resources. This approach builds on a strong tradition of widespread community participation in mobilizing and supporting funding and development of public facilities, such

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3. The Government of Kenya has put in place a decentralized system for funding local level development projects. Such funding mechanisms include the Local Authority Transfer Fund, the Constituency Development Fund, the Constituency/District HIV/AIDS Fund and the Poverty Eradication Fund. The Constituency Development Fund was established by an Act of Parliament in 2003 and is divided equally among all the constituencies, with a small weighting in favour of the poorer ones (NCCK, 2005). The devolvement of the Constituency Development Fund is intended to ensure that local communities can participate both in the prioritisation of projects to be funded, and in monitoring the expenditure (KHRC, 2006).

as educational and health facilities, promoted since independence, called ‘*harambee*’ (Lyons et al., 2006).

### **The Physical Planning Act (Cap 286 of 1996)**

Another important action on the part of Government to address the challenges of urban planning and development was the passing of the Physical Planning Act (Cap 286 of 1996) and the Physical Planners Registration Act (No. 3 of 1996). The former repealed the Land Planning Act and Town Planning Acts, which were a colonial heritage, and was intended to:

- harmonize planning procedures and requirements provided for in other pieces of legislation;
- provide an effective institutional framework to regulate planning practice;
- provide a framework for public participation in planning and plan implementation; and
- provide a legal framework to protect public land intended for public amenities and utilities from misappropriation (Ogero, 2004).

Under the Physical Planning Act, overall responsibility for national, regional and local physical development policies, guidelines and strategies, and preparation of all regional and local physical development plans, lies with the Director of Physical Planning, who heads the Department of Physical Planning in the Ministry of Lands and Settlement. The key role of the Department of Physical Planning is the production of physical development plans, and it is represented at provincial and district levels. There is a Provincial Physical Planning Officer in each of the eight provinces, but only 47 of the 149 districts in the country currently have physical planning offices, staffed with one or two trained planners. The Department of Physical Planning works closely with local authorities in matters related to physical planning within municipal boundaries. At the same time, the Urban Development Department in the Ministry of Local Government also gives guidance and provides technical assistance to local authorities, and liaises with them to formulate and implement urban development policies and growth strategies. However, institutional capacity at the local authority level is also a problem. At the time the BiP:PUP project was implemented, only four local authorities (Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu and Thika) had staffed planning units; and, to date, still only 16 of the 175 local authorities have a trained planner—amongst them Kitale. Most local authorities are consequently unable to exercise the powers conferred on, and perform the functions assigned to, them under the Physical Planning Act.

### **Kenya Rapid Urban Sector Profile**

The Kenya Urban Sector Study identifies poor governance as “*the key issue that has led to poverty and weak institutional responses in all aspects of the urban sector*” (UN-HABITAT, 2005:8). It blames weak institutions, a highly centralized system constrained by bureaucracy, and lack of local accountability.

Governance problems related to the institutional framework include the following:

- Local governments are weakened and constrained by strong central government administrative and financial control.
- The Ministry of Local Government supervises and resources all local authorities as powers, resources and revenue raising capacity have not been fully devolved to the local level.
- Service delivery by local authorities is constrained by inadequate resources, weak administrative capacity and political interference.

- Urban services, in the absence of strategic plans, lack coherent planning, which limits implementation and monitoring of projects.
- Non-comprehensive planning leads to inadequate allocation of resources and erratic implementation of development interventions.
- Opportunities for partnerships between the public, private and civil society sectors have been underexploited (UN-HABITAT, 2005).

As regards the regulatory framework:

- Local by-laws proposed by local governments must be approved by the Ministry of Local Government and then passed by parliament.
- The Physical Planning Act gives local authorities planning responsibilities, but few have trained planners and must refer issues to the central government Physical Planning Department.
- The Local Authority Service Development Action Plan process, which enabled ward-level participatory decision-making and budgeting, is not effectively implemented as “*it is little understood by municipalities and citizens*” (UN-HABITAT, 2005:8).

The above problems were all being experienced in Kitale when ITDG conceived the BiP:PUP project.

### **The Building in Partnership: Participatory Urban Planning (BiP:PUP) project**

The overall goal of the BiP:PUP project was “*to enhance the effectiveness of city and municipal planning and management*”; more specifically, the project purpose was “*to test, develop and disseminate a partnership approach to the planning of urban space with [local institutions]*”.

The BiP:PUP project brought together three methodologies: participatory planning, partnership and local development. The aim was to achieve locally appropriate development which is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable; and a momentum and institutional framework for planning and urban development that will continue to function in the long term. The project also included funding for the construction of small-scale demonstration projects. It thus provided an ideal opportunity to operationalize the principles of the Kenya Local Government Reform Programme and the Local Authority Service Development Action Plan process, as well as the provisions of the Physical Planning Act.

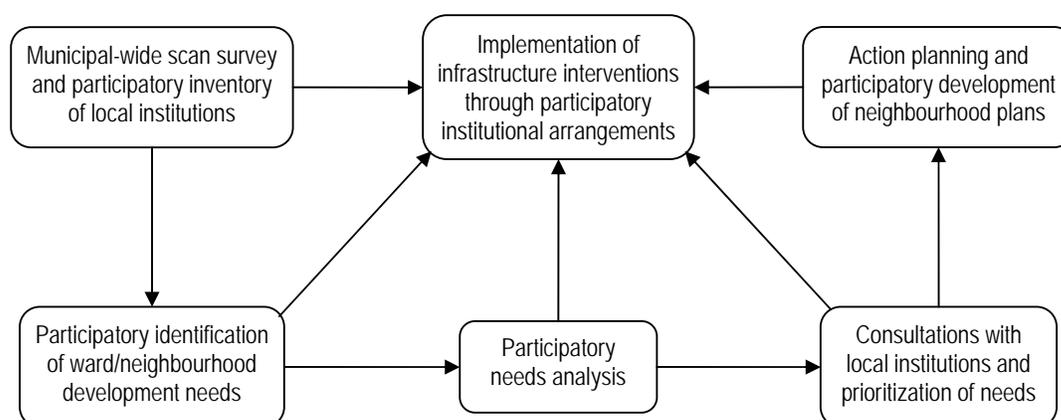
The first partnership formed under the BiP:PUP project was between Kitale Municipal Council and ITDG. A most important element of the partnership agreement was that the former would provide the latter with space for the project office in the Town Hall. As the office was close to the Mayor’s Parlour, it proved invaluable in helping secure the backing of the Mayor and in galvanizing much needed political will and support among local councillors.

In addition to the local communities, two other key partners were the University of Nairobi’s Department for Urban and Regional Planning and the Kenya Institute of Planners. Links to the Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya and the Municipal Development Programme – Eastern and Southern Africa were intended to enable project experience and policy issues to be shared and discussed nationally, regionally and internationally.

## The participatory planning methodology adopted in Kitale

The BiP:PUP project followed the methodology outlined in Figure 3, with the aim of improving urban planning in the municipality, and providing efficient and cost effective services, leading to more equitable and sustainable development of the town.

- **Municipal-wide ‘scan’ survey:** This was carried out to identify the needs and concerns of townspeople with respect to access to land, infrastructure and housing; social services and amenities; funding for development interventions; and governance, in particular, corruption. The survey included a participatory inventory which identified formal and informal local institutions, such as NGOs, community-based organizations, churches and private sector businesses (including micro, small and medium-size enterprises and professional practices). A number subsequently participated in the planning process and implementation of development interventions.
- **Ward and settlement selection process:** Following an inclusive consultative ranking process, based on the results of the surveys conducted in the 12 wards, a consensus was reached among the residents on the priority development needs by ward. This led to the selection of three informal settlements—Kipsongo, Shimo la Tewa and Tuwan—as pilot sites to develop and test innovative institutional frameworks that encourage stakeholder participation and partnerships in assessing slum communities’ needs and concerns, and developing and implementing sustainable upgrading interventions.
- **Action planning<sup>4</sup> and participatory development of neighbourhood plans:** Using the survey findings, and informed by a literature and practice review and case studies, participatory neighbourhood planning exercises were carried out. This process enabled re-evaluation and focusing of development priorities, and guided the solutions to water supply and sanitation needs and other infrastructure priorities. It culminated in the preparation of actionable plans by local communities in the three settlements. The following were also agreed: roles and contributions of partners and capacity-building requirements; institutional arrangements for implementation; and locally appropriate methods of implementation.



**Figure 3: The participatory urban planning methodology in Kitale**

Source: After <http://www.kitale.org/pup.htm>

4. The action planning process was adapted from *Action Planning for Cities* (Hamdi and Goethert, 1997), *The Community Planning Handbook* (Wates, 2000), and the ward-focused planning process used in Mangaung Municipality in South Africa (Ward 2 Ward Committee, 2001).

## **Participatory planning and partnership interventions in the three settlements**

The main achievements through participatory planning and partnership working in each of the settlements are summarized below. The approach represented a move away from the traditional ‘top-down’ institutional framework to a more ‘bottom-up’ and ‘lateral’ approach in both the planning and implementation of prioritized interventions.

### **Kipsongo**

The residents of Kipsongo are primarily members of the traditionally pastoralist Turkana tribe who migrated to Kitale from Northern Kenya to escape perennial drought, conflicts over contested grazing lands and cattle rustling. They are amongst the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the town, and do not have security of tenure for the land they occupy, which is owned by the Council. Through a community-driven participatory planning process, with support from ITDG and Kitale Municipal Council, the residents prepared a strategic action plan that prioritized water and sanitation interventions and included future growth options (such as a women’s community centre, a health clinic and police post). This marginalized community was thus given a ‘voice’ in the institutional framework for urban planning and decision-making for the first time. Most elements of the plan, particularly the water supply and sanitation components, have been implemented through the joint efforts of community based organizations, ITDG and the Council—another first, as the latter had previously never involved itself in service provision in the settlement. Rather than insisting on piped water supply and water-borne sanitation, the Council relaxed the regulatory framework and allowed the use of more appropriate and affordable technologies. Protected springs and ventilated improved pit latrines were, therefore, provided at a fraction of the cost of conventional piped water and sewerage systems. Kipsongo is now included in municipal planning processes, and the provision of health services has been agreed upon in principle. A significant unexpected outcome is that the issue of the residents’ security of tenure is being addressed.

### **Shimo la Tewa**

Shimo la Tewa is located adjacent to an upmarket suburb, on land for which the Council has issued letters of allotment. A small, heavily polluted river separates the affluent homes from the densely populated slum. The development of a slum within such close proximity to a wealthy neighbourhood is not uncommon in developing country cities, and is one of the many challenges facing urban planning. Prior to the BiP:PUP project, some 3500 people, mostly tenants, lived in poor-quality housing, with inadequate access to clean water supply and sanitation, and poor pedestrian accessibility and linkages.

The action planning process in Shimo la Tewa prioritized construction of a 130 metre span footbridge across a ravine that divided the settlement causing pedestrian safety, accessibility and connectivity problems, especially during heavy rains (See Figure 4). The footbridge was built through a partnership effort involving public, private, and community institutions. A team comprising the Municipal Engineer, a government engineer, and a private sector engineer who did not charge for his services, designed the footbridge and supervised construction. The local community, including youth groups, contributed timber for the decking and ‘sweat equity’, in the form of voluntary labour, both skilled and unskilled, in the spirit of ‘*harambee*’. A local private enterprise supplied other building materials at reduced cost. The Council covered 30 per cent of the monetary cost of the footbridge from the Local Authority Transfer Fund and BiP:PUP project funds the remainder. Maintenance of the footbridge is the

**Figure 4: The footbridge constructed in Shimo la Tewa**



shared responsibility of community-based organizations and the Council, with the latter agreeing to meet some financial costs. The institutional framework for planning and implementation adopted in Shimo la Tewa demonstrates how the Local Authority Service Development Action Plan process can be fully operationalized, and can well be replicated more widely.

### **Tuwan**

With 5000 plots and an estimated 100,000 residents, most of whom are tenants, Tuwan is the largest, and somewhat most prosperous, of the three settlements. It is also the most populous slum in Kitale, having developed on an extensively subdivided former colonial large-scale farm bought by a land-buying company. When land is converted from one use to another, there is often a need for infrastructure services; hence, the priority needs identified through the participatory process included improved access to water supply and sanitation. The residents chose to address these needs through the construction of a communal ablution block, comprising water-borne latrines, showers with provision for hot water, laundry facilities and a multi-purpose room. Kitale Municipal Council ensured availability of the site, which was key as informal settlements have often been the target of land grabbing. The local community participated in design clinics conducted by ITDG, and attended by the local Councillor, through which the design of the facility was generated. Community-based organizations, especially women's groups, were trained and produced some of the building materials on site, again in the spirit of *'harambee'*. An innovative institutional structure for operation and maintenance of the facility was established, which includes a locally appointed committee and the Council. Minimal user charges are levied to defray operation and maintenance costs.

### **Conclusions**

NGOs have won a growing reputation for their work over the past few years. However, many NGO initiatives *"tend to be good but limited in scope"* and their *"impact...on the lives of poor people...highly localized and often transitory"* (Edwards and Hulme, 2002:53). One of the main reasons for this is the failure of NGOs to make the right linkages between their work at

the micro-level and wider structures and systems. To overcome this shortcoming, in implementing the BiP:PUP project, ITDG adopted the multiplicative strategy, in which NGOs achieve impact through deliberate influence, networking, training and policy reform (Edwards and Hulme, 2002). Hence, it engaged with Kitale Municipal Council, the Physical Planning Department, the Association of Local Government Authorities of Kenya, the Kenya Institute of Planners and the University of Nairobi's Department for Urban and Regional Planning. Linkages were also made with the on-going Kenya Local Government Reform Programme (KLGRP) and the Local Authority Service Development Action Plan (LASDAP) process. The NGO interventions through the BiP:PUP project have consequently had a significant impact on the institutional and regulatory framework for urban planning and infrastructure service provision in Kitale; and they have also influenced planning practice more widely nationally, as summarized below.

### **Influence of the BiP:PUP project on urban planning practice in Kitale and more widely nationally<sup>5</sup>**

- The BiP:PUP project helped create a broad-based participatory institutional framework for urban planning in Kitale, thereby giving the urban poor a voice in decision-making processes. The dialogue between local communities and Kitale Municipal Council which the project initiated is continuing, in particular through the Strategic Ward Development Plan process, which emphasises the active participation of local residents in the planning process so as to ensure that their needs are addressed. The process also aims to enhance the effective use of decentralised funds such as the Local Authority Transfer Fund and Constituency Development Fund.
- The BiP:PUP project developed and tested various generic neighbourhood-based planning approaches with the involvement of local communities which have been adopted in the Strategic Ward Development Plan process. These have been linked to the Local Authority Service Development Action Plan process, thereby helping institutionalise participatory planning. The experience gained in linking neighbourhood planning to the ward and town levels through the BiP:PUP project has helped remove institutional barriers that previously constrained the use of such approaches.
- The NGO interventions have significantly influenced urban planning practice in Kenya through the strategic partnership with the University of Nairobi's Department for Urban and Regional Planning, which trains most of the country's urban planners. The Department now teaches the BiP:PUP approach in its urban planning studio module; and in 2007, it supported Ruiru Municipal Council in preparing its Strategic Development Plan.
- A trained urban planner has been posted to Kitale, which has improved the Council's institutional capacity to plan and manage urban development. The appointment was expedited following a BiP:PUP project workshop attended by the then Minister for Lands and Settlement and the Director of Physical Planning (Kenya Institute of Planners, 2004).
- The BiP:PUP project has shown that concern should be less with the technical standards of infrastructure services and more with the prerequisites for their efficient provision (Rakodi and Devas, 1993): good information as a basis for planning,

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5. The information presented in this section is largely based on personal communication with the Paul Chege, the BiP:PUP Project Manager in Kenya. The author would like to acknowledge his valuable input.

sufficient financial and human resources, and appropriate institutional arrangements and regulatory frameworks for installation, operation and maintenance.

### **Key lessons learned**

There are a number of important lessons to be learned from the implementation of the BiP:PUP project, in particular with respect to creating enabling institutional and regulatory frameworks for participatory urban planning and development, and partnership formation and working.

- **Importance of political will:** Political will is needed, initially and over time, to develop and proactively implement the institutional framework for participatory urban planning. Political commitment and support at all levels of government is essential to overcome resistance to devolution of power to local governments and communities. The BiP:PUP project has demonstrated that reform of institutional and regulatory frameworks for urban planning and development is possible if political will is mobilized.
- **Participatory planning remains an elusive concept to many local authorities and leaders:** Local authorities often misunderstand participatory planning and partnership approaches to mean failure on their part to deliver services or interference in established institutional structures and decision-making processes by ‘outsiders’. There is therefore need to raise awareness among, and build the capacity of, civic leaders and local authority staff in participatory urban planning and partnership working. NGOs can play an important role in overcoming opposition to institutional and regulatory reform to this end.
- **Need for improved institutional and regulatory frameworks for participatory urban planning:** Existing institutional and regulatory frameworks do not adequately recognize the potential contribution of civil society, and in particular slum communities, and the value their participation can add to planning and development processes. There is need, therefore, for institutional and regulatory reform to facilitate and support participation and partnership arrangements at all levels. Local governments can help create appropriate institutional and regulatory frameworks that will enable effective participatory urban planning and partnership working.
- **The development of effective planning tools and institutional frameworks through experimentation takes time:** The development of effective planning tools and institutional frameworks through experimentation is a gradual process wherein communities and other stakeholders should be given the necessary time to learn to participate and collaborate in development interventions. Given flexible institutional and regulatory frameworks which allow and sustain community participation, local authorities and communities can move towards shared decision-making and project implementation. The development of such institutional and regulatory frameworks which strengthen partnerships among stakeholders is a key element of slum upgrading in a context of rapid urban growth and limited municipal resources.
- **The relation between local effort and formal government at all levels is important:** The relationship between central and local government and community-level governance structures is key; and issues of legitimacy, representation and long-term viability need to be resolved. It is important to learn from the range of institutional arrangements within communities, NGOs, and governments how

participatory approaches can be integrated into urban planning and development processes. Participatory planning and budgeting can inform the strategic prioritisation of municipal allocations from central government and provide an institutional framework for pro-poor spending on local development needs and priorities. Partnerships that match local/municipal resources with other government resources and also private sector and other development partner resources, can significantly improve the resource base. So, too, can widespread community participation in mobilizing and supporting funding and development.

- **Replication and up-scaling of NGO initiatives:** There is much that can be learned from smaller-scale NGO initiatives that has wider relevance and application. However, scaling up NGO initiatives is complex, and it is critical to recognise and address the challenges involved in the process. When planning scaling-up strategies, it is important to ensure their quality and sustainability by establishing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the quality, sustainability and impact of the initiatives being brought to scale. Replicating and up-scaling of good practice is more likely to succeed within an enabling institutional framework.

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