

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

HOUSING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

progress report, period may 1976 - march 1977

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INTRODUCTION

The last Joint Advisory Board meeting was held on Thursday 3rd June 1976. A major item discussed at this meeting was the financial situation of the Housing Research and Development Unit. The Board recommended that the Ministry of Housing and Social Services should attempt to find additional funds to cover the anticipated deficit for the financial year 1976/77.

In November 1976 the Ministry of Housing and Social Services informed the HRDU that no supplementary funds would be available, but that the Ministry had allocated the sum of K£ 17,000 for the HRDU for the coming financial years i.e. an increase of 70% over the previous years (see appendix A-B-C-D).

The difficulties of financial nature have not directly influenced the work of the HRDU so far, however a number of papers have been completed and their publication has been delayed because of the uncertainties surrounding the finances of the Unit.

Two fully funded staff members have been appointed, an architect\* and a civil engineer\*\*, and the post of the architect/planner has been filled, as has the post of secretary. The HRDU now has the post of services engineer and economist remaining to be filled. The advertising for these posts has been temporarily suspended due to the financial situation. The HRDU appointed two counterparts, an architect and a sociologist in August 1976. The sociologist was selected for further studies in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and left the Unit in November 1976. The architect remained in the Unit until the expiry of his contract after 6 months.

The Housing Research and Development Unit has been in existence for a period of 10 years. It is planned to mark this by a seminar on low-cost housing. A number of Government officials at various levels and people from the private sector have been contacted and have expressed interest and willingness to participate in the seminar by submitting papers for discussion. The students from the Faculty have been invited to participate.

Members of the HRDU have participated in a seminar/workshop organized by the Institute of Development Studies and presented two papers, one of which has been selected for publication by the HRDU.

\*(as replacement for Otto Kaszner who left the HRDU in August 1976)

\*\* (these two new staff members are expected to take up their duties in the Unit in the near future)

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UNHHSF (Habitat and Human Settlement Foundation) has asked the HRDU to prepare a housetype for demonstration and a project: An Autonomous Housetype for Low-Income Families has been developed.

The County Councils of Baringo and Kiambu have requested assistance from the HRDU, and these have been visited and preliminary surveys been carried out with recommendations.

The HRDU report Future Planning of a Majengo, Swahili Village Masaku (M.C Hoek-Smit 1975) has been accepted by the Ministry of Housing and Social Services and recommended for implementation (NHC). The work is planned to start in July this year.

Implementation of research findings in another field have been more difficult. After lengthy discussions with the Nairobi City Council (Health Authorities) the Minister of Housing and Social Services decided that the HRDU participation in the Kibera Experimental Self-Help Scheme should be limited to 12 houses from the original 520. This means that the research of 3 years will remain untested. The outcome in terms of research findings of 12 houses can be said to be negligible.

The ongoing work of the Housing Research and Development Unit and its future activities will attempt to complement the studies undertaken in the past. Guidelines for the planning of plots, including such determinants as densities and land use are well under way. A more comprehensive set of guidelines for planning and building of low-cost structures is under consideration and with it research to be continued into field such as self-help activities, materials and building components.

  
(K. P. Andersen)  
Director

Nairobi March 1977