

HOUSING AND PLANNING POLICY:  
THE CASE OF SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS  
in  
DAR-ES-SALAAM, TANZANIA

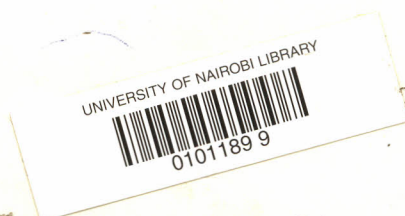
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ABSTRACT

The problem of uncontrolled settlements in Dar-es-Salaam is too vast and resources available too meagre to support wholesale clearance and resettlement in public housing. Squatter settlements are fast-growing, and usually twice as fast as established city areas and form up to 35 per cent of city population. United Nations experts say that the transitional settlements will continue to grow rapidly until at least the year 2,000, by which the world's population will have doubled and more than half will live in cities and towns.

Tanzania must, therefore, accept and support the long-term existence of transitional areas, by taking a series of actions to progressively integrate the uncontrolled settlements into the full range of urban services and facilities. Government must anticipate a continuation of the forces that in the past have led to transitional settlements. Therefore, proposals for anticipatory measures must be undertaken to speed up progressive physical improvement of future low income settlements.

Housing is not just a sectoral problem in the economy; it is a structural one. The former view is popularly held by planners and administrators and places more emphasis on conventional housing programmes. Those who regard the problem as structural would capitalize on the economic and social potential of urban squatter settlements in alleviating not only the housing, but also the employment problem.

Operationally, this means determining the present and future extent of uncontrolled settlements and evaluating the existing policies directed towards low income areas with regard to land, employment, urban planning and development, community services, finance and credit, and technical assistance. Land ought to be viewed as a resource to be developed for basic economic and social well-being of all individuals in society. Since Tanzania cannot guarantee employment to every man who is able to work, people can engage themselves in constructing their own houses, thus avoiding waste of labour. The construction industry is normally labour intensive and if properly developed it should provide job opportunities for rural migrants. These people should also be allowed to live near the central city so that they have easy access to odd jobs. These efforts must be supplemented by technical assistance and small scale savings and credit programs tied to housing and home improvement.

Hence, urban planning and development should primarily be looked upon as improving the environmental context of settlements. This is sure to arouse strong, initial institutional opposition, but it is the best hope.