

Jonathan Kalan - Bringing Mod Cons To The Slums

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There's an urgent need for sustainable housing solutions for the urban poor around the world. Meet the people hoping to revolutionise slum living with their hi-tech, low-cost ideas.

Migration of people to cities has reached unprecedented levels in recent human history. Over a third of these people – around one billion in total – now live in slums, informal settlements and shantytowns, often in little more than corrugated iron and zinc sheet shacks lacking access to even the most basic sanitation, clean water, security, or clean energy sources.

Africa boasts the fastest rate of urbanisation, and it has the highest share of informal settlement residents (62% of sub-Saharan Africa's urban population live in slums). If trends continue, by 2050, there will be an estimated 1.2 billion people inhabiting Africa's swelling slums, according to the UN.

Slums are often hubs of impressive innovation and creativity by residents working to get by – rigging electricity, sanitation and water systems in the absence of real infrastructure. But there is an enormous and urgent need for better, more sustainable solutions to house the urban poor in Africa, and worldwide.

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