

Verah Okeyo ~ Low-Cost Housing Seen As Answer To Urban Housing Problems



K É A house in Mlolongo built using the Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) panels. Photo| Verah Okeyo

In 2011, the UN-Habitat estimated that African cities will become home to over 40,000 people and the shortage of housing an unattainable dream for most households.

With an urban population growth at 4.2 per cent annually, Nairobi alone requires at least 120,000 new housing units annually to meet demand, yet only 35,000 homes are built, leaving the housing deficit growing by 85,000 units every year. Coupled with the acute shortages, is the rising number of issues that any aspiring homeowner or institution seeking to set up facilities has to confront: HassConsult Real Estate's 2015 report indicated a steep climb in land prices and ownership processes in Nairobi.

Read more: <http://www.nation.co.ke/Low-cost-housing>

sustainablecitiescollective ~ Four Lessons From Beijing And Shanghai Show How China's Cities Can Curb Car Congestion



Photo:

sustainablecitiescollective.com -

Photo by Alan Sheffield/Flickr

Although Beijing, China has struggled in previous years to adopt strong transport demand management (TDM) strategies, the city is now looking to expand its TDM policies to combat growing car ownership.

A century of car-centric urban development has left our cities polluted, congested and searching for sustainable solutions. Transport Demand Management (TDM) strategies can provide these solutions by combining public policy and private sector innovation to reverse over-reliance on private cars. The Moving Beyond Cars series—exclusive to TheCityFix and WRI Insights—offers a global tour of TDM solutions in Brazil, China, India and Mexico, providing lessons in how cities can curb car culture to make sustainable transport a reality.

As China's GDP has grown, so has the number of cars on its roads. From 2008 to 2010, the country's vehicle ownership almost doubled, from 38 vehicles to 58 per 1,000 people, and is set to hit 269 vehicles by 2030. This growth in car ownership not only means that the auto industry and infrastructure investments will

continue booming, it also means more air pollution, energy consumption and traffic crashes.

Read more: <http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/car-congestion>

Newsweek ~ Quora Question: What Is It Like To Live in Hong Kong's Cubicle Apartments?



Photo: en.wikipedia.org

Quora Questions are part of a partnership between Newsweek and Quora, through which we'll be posting relevant and interesting answers from Quora contributors throughout the week. Read more about the partnership [here](#).

Answer from David Yu.

It's a different mind set. I lived in Hong Kong for 12 years, and in the U.S. for 17 years (different cities/suburban). Most of the cities feel like a giant Monopoly game, but no other city comes close to Hong Kong. Everything is tighter in Hong

Kong; it's important to have a good concept of caching your stuff (not in a computer programming way, but similar).

Read more: <http://www.newsweek.com/hong-kongs-cubicle-apartments>

Christina Culwick ~ Why Gated Communities Threaten Democratic Cities



Photo: futurecapetown.com

Recently I tried to drive through a gated section of Westcliff , an affluent suburb in Johannesburg, to avoid traffic, only to be stopped by the guard at the boom and informed that I was not permitted to go through. I insisted that I had every right to enter, since it was a public road so I couldn't legally be prevented from entering. The guard was not convinced. I went on to claim my right to freedom of movement and he maintained his position to restrict it. Our back and forth continued - neither party budging, and both getting more indignant. Eventually I stormed out of my car, lifted the boom myself and was instructed by another guard to "Just go".

Reflecting on this incident, I feel I should declare that I am a white, middle class South African who benefited from apartheid, and live adjacent to Westcliff. I acknowledge that the private security guard with whom I argued has likely experienced restriction of movement to a degree I cannot comprehend, and his experience of exclusion in Westcliff is likely far greater than mine. His job is to

implement a system. My issue lies not with him but with that system.

Read more: <http://futurecapetown.com/gated-communities>

Samantha Spooner ~ Hubs Of Innovation, Art And Culture; These Are The Hidden Treasures Of Africa's Slums



Photo: Mail & Guardian

As part of the BBC's "A Richer World" season, renowned Swedish statistician Hans Rosling recently discussed how West Africa managed to contain the Ebola virus.

It is a fascinating presentation, and part of it illustrates how the trajectory of things tend to change dramatically when they arrive in an African slum.

Sometimes it is for the worse, as in the case of Ebola. Other times, it is for the better, as with culture.

So it is with Semba, the type of infectious music that is always sure to snag the usual body wigglers in the room. Its rhythm combines a delicious mix of

lively African beats, smooth samba tones and fast-paced Caribbean *Zouk* flavour to produce a sound that will keep you hip-locked for hours.

It's easy to understand how this music got its name; semba comes from the singular *Masemba*, meaning "a touch of the bellies", a move that characterises the appropriate semba dance stance.

Semba's roots

Semba originated from the slums or *musseques* of Luanda, Angola, in the early 1960s. Urban Angolans began to take advantage of reforms in colonial policy and began to improve their daily lives, which included the creation of new cultural spaces. The production of semba, a local form of urban popular music, was at the forefront of this process.

Today the music is as alive and popular as it ever was, with new artists emerging every year. In fact, any conversation about contemporary Angolan music must always begin with semba. It has also achieved international popularity, particularly in Lusophone countries and across West Africa.

It goes to show, you cannot judge a book by its cover.

Read more: <http://m.mgafrica.com/the-hidden-treasures>

Uttam Kumar Saha ~ Action Needed In Bangladesh Urban Slums



Bangladesh has been facing the fastest urbanisation in South Asia. Currently, around 30% of 160 million people live in urban centers and contribute 60% of the GDP of our country. The Urban Authorities (11 city corporations and 324 municipalities) are responsible for providing a wide range of basic infrastructural (e.g. water supply, sanitation, waste management) and social services for a livable and healthy environment for all urban dwellers. Slum dwellers and low income communities (around 20-25% of total urban population), essential and important stakeholders who are contributing USD 5.5 billion annually to GDP), remain deprived and excluded from formal services. Slums are characterised by high population density, limited sanitation and hygiene facilities, poor housing, a very low socio-economic status for a majority of residents, a lack of security of tenure and poor governance. Where those services do exist, quality is low and costly to afford. Despite their significant contribution to the urban economy, unplanned growth leads to polluting environment and adverse impact on public health and poverty reduction.

Read more: <http://practicalaction.org/bangladesh-urban-slums/>