

Al Jazeera Witness ~ Clifford Bestall ~ Hillbrow: Between Heaven And Hell

Filmmaker Clifford Bestall takes a personal journey to the heart of one of South Africa's most dangerous neighbourhoods and through the stories of some of its residents reveals a rich seam of today's urban South African experience.

One Carefree Night

A short documentary shot in South Africa. We follow four teenagers growing up in Manenberg, a suburb of Cape Town, where gangsters roam and drug use is rampant. Lauren-Lee, Ryaad, Cameron and Cohen are among the few teens who still attend school. They hope a high-school diploma will get them out of Manenberg. But there's another promise that keeps them attending: senior prom. They save up all year to rent a fancy car and to buy ball gowns and tuxedos. The post-exam prom is their Cinderella moment: one magical evening when the dream of escaping their bleak reality seems like it just might come true.

Rose Molokoane ~ Know Your City: Slum Dwellers Count



Earlier this month, SDI launched a landmark publication: “Know Your City: Slum Dwellers Count,” showcasing the extraordinary contribution of the Know Your City (KYC) campaign to understanding and taking action to reduce urban poverty and exclusion. Over the next weeks, we will post a chapter from the book to our blog weekly and related material on our social media platforms every day. Enjoy!

When I told people at the launch of our Know Your City campaign at Habitat III that SDI would profile 100 cities before World Urban Forum 9 (WUF), people thought I was making empty promises like everyone else. I told people that SDI was done with all the talking. Yes, it was good to talk and get the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in place, but now the talking should end and the work should begin.

Sometimes when I’m in the community, I gossip about the Member States arguing about commas and which words to put in their documents. While they argue, we’re in the informal settlements counting toilets, negotiating with mayors, and building our own houses. I tell the community that we were the ones who put words into the New Urban Agenda about participation and community knowledge, and that now we have to show everyone how it’s done in practice.

If you want to know what it means to Know Your City, I want you to talk to one of the SDI federation members. You’ll find them in more than 30 countries. They’re easy to spot. Usually they’re singing and making a lot of noise. I want them to tell

you about measuring shacks that are so close together you need to climb up on roofs to see what's what; about mapping settlement boundaries and trying not to fall in drainage channels lined with garbage; about going house to house and hearing stories that make you want to cry; and about being chased by dogs and even by people with weapons as you administer enumerations. SDI members will tell you why they go to all that trouble and why they're always screaming, "Information Is Power!"

Read more: <http://knowyourcity.info/know-city-slum-dwellers-count/>

Oscar Perry Abello ~ Welcome To San Francisco. Would You Like To Make A Deposit?

A groundswell of interest in public banking has advocates pondering how city-owned banks could transform the way municipalities collect and spend their money.

It's no surprise that Malia Cohen worries about what local public dollars are doing. As a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the municipal legislative body, it's her job to know how, where and why the city's money is coming in and going out. But recently, Cohen has joined a growing number of public officials around the country who are wondering what happens in between — what happens when the money in the city coffers goes to sleep at night.

In fiscal year 2017, the city of San Francisco took in an average of \$508 million a month in revenues and put out \$467 million a month in expenses. But in between, the banks that handle all that cash sometimes used public dollars in ways that, in the opinions of Cohen and others, contradict the reasons why that money is coming and going in the first place.

"The existing banking and financial structures we're operating in don't always

mirror our city's values," Cohen says. "For example, we had many people opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline. Many of the banks we bank with support the funding of this pipeline."

Read

more: <https://nextcity.org/welcome-to-san-francisco-would-you-like-to-make-a-deposit>

Rowan Moore ~ A Blueprint For British Housing In 2028

Imagine this: in two years, riots force the government to transform planning, design and building - and make Britain a world leader in housing. A utopian dream? It's not as unlikely as you think.

It is 2028, and in the old mill towns of east Lancashire terraced houses once destined for demolition have been rescued and renovated by residents who bought them for almost nothing. In the garden towns that have grown up in Bedfordshire you can walk to work through natural landscape. In Somerset, as in other shires, the next generation no longer has to move out, thanks to additions to villages planned by and for the people who live in them.

London borough councils are jointly building tens of thousands of the homes the city needs each year. Luxury towers in London, Manchester and Birmingham, left empty after the Great Crash of 2019, have been colonised by squatters who have formed themselves into cooperatives. In the outer suburbs of the big cities, declining high streets have been revived through the construction of four- and five-storey apartment buildings.

Read more: <https://www.theguardian.com/blueprint-for-british-housing-2028>

The Economist ~ Why “Affordable Housing” In Africa Is Rarely Affordable

ETHIOPIA’S flagship social-housing programme is probably the most ambitious in Africa. But for most locals the houses are still barely affordable. The poor cannot afford the down payment for even the most subsidised units. And those who can often struggle to meet repayments, opting instead to rent out the houses and move elsewhere. In this respect, though, Ethiopia is hardly alone in Africa. Take Angola, where a recent \$3.5bn social-housing project on the outskirts of Luanda, the capital, offered apartments from \$84,000, in a country where incomes per person are just over \$4,000. Or Cameroon, where the government’s social-housing scheme is out of reach to 80% of the population, according to the World Bank. In Ethiopia the state has spent over a decade building cheap homes on an almost unprecedented scale, but supply still fails to match demand. Why?

Read more: <https://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/>