

Plotting A Better Life In Ugandan Slums

This film explores how Uganda's National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF) is working with local NGO ACTogether to mobilise slum communities in Kampala. It focuses on the informal settlement of Kibuye, one of Kampala's 63 slums, capturing everyday life and documenting how technology is helping the community participate in decisions that affect their quality of life.

Historically, the Kampala Capital City Authority has had little information about the make-up of the city's slums — and what it did have was outdated. ACTogether and the NSDF have engaged the residents of the slums, helping them to map their own neighbourhoods, and detailing both the demographics and the locations of physical structures such as toilets.

ACTogether set up forums in which residents and other stakeholders, including city authority officials, use the knowledge gained from mapping to discuss issues affecting the community, empowering residents to start taking control of life within the slums.

ACTogether is also keen to increase the involvement of academics in the slums' future planning. It initiated the "Urban Studio" project a partnership with Makerere University in which students spent time interacting with residents and learning first-hand about life in the slums — something that was missing from their academic courses.

Al Jazeera ~ Gert Corba ~ Uganda: Queen Of The Slums

Those who are born in the hopeless slums of Kampala start with a setback in life, and being born a girl doubles this setback.

In Kibuli, a slum community of single mothers and neglected children, the youth learn to survive the hard way.

But mostly they learn from a young age to accept their miserable situation.

This also applies to Phiona,14, who lives with her chronically-ill mother in a shack with walls made of corrugated iron.

But when a social worker teaches the poor girl how to play chess, her slum life takes an amazing turn.

See: <http://www.aljazeera.com/etterfrommychild>

Ken Worpole ~The Law Of The Forest And The Freedom Of The Streets



“ This was the order of human institutions: first the forests, after that the huts, then the villages, next the cities, and finally the academies.”

Giambattista Vico, The New Science

‘What the fuck do you think an English forest is for?’ raged Johnny ‘Rooster’ Byron, when served with a notice to move his caravan from its woodland clearing, in Jez Butterworth’s 2009 anti-Arcadian play, Jerusalem. The kids who come there, he claimed, are safer than at home. This is where the wild things are. The opening stage direction: ‘England at midnight’.

Butterworth's explosive 'state of the nation' drama raised many questions about the state of the nation. In a highly urbanised society, talk of the 'meaning' of the forest today might seem anachronistic. Yet it raises anew the spectre of waking up to find that many historic freedoms—about rights to roam and freely associate (and on occasions run foul of the law)—have been subtly suborned, or deleted.

As the 1215 Magna Carta is being celebrated, it is a good time to remember its significant addendum, the 1217 Charter of the Forest. The Forest Charter formalised the right of unbonded men to access and use of the goods of the royal forests (grazing, fuel, food), while implicitly assuming the right to wander freely in the landscape as well as providing a place of refuge for those cast out of the social order. Forest sentiments still run deep, it would seem. It was public protest against the sale of Forestry Commission woodlands which prompted the first political turnaround of the present Coalition government in 2011.

Read more: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/law-of-forest>

Avery Cullinan ~ CDS Brings Green Living To Urban Slums



Courtesy of CDS

As the global population surges, urban environments, particularly in the developing world, are increasingly strained to accommodate the influx. While urbanization has its economic, health, and environmental benefits, cities unable to keep up with the growth are marked by overcrowded, unhealthy, and unsafe slums. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, 71% of all urban dwellers live in slums (World Health Organization). When the devastating standards of living are

combined with the environmental impacts of slums, the problems of both are amplified.

Read more: <http://groundupproject.net/cds-brings-green-living>

Hend Taher ~ There's The Slum, Then There's Cairo's City Of Dead (Photos)



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For those who cannot afford living in Cairo's slums there remains only one option: to live in the cemetery. According to official statistics, one and half million people are now living amid mausoleums in the desert.

The main street is full of parked cars. At the corner of the mausoleum there are workshops, cafés and small shops. Men smoke Narghile, play domino and drink tea. Through open doors you can see women who eat and talk to each other.

Read & see more: <http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/city-of-dead-photos>

Nicola Davison ~ 3D-Printed Cities: Is This The Future?



WinSun's 3D-printed building in Suzhou industrial park. Photograph: Imaginechina/Corbis

The words “we print architecture’s future” adorn the wall of a showroom on the outskirts of Suzhou, a rapidly urbanising city in eastern China. Arranged around the room are samples of odd-looking concrete wall of varying thickness. Outside, across the car park of this otherwise unremarkable industrial estate, is a grand, neoclassical mansion that recently became a global internet sensation . It is the world’s first 3D-printed villa.

Read more: <http://www.theguardian.com/3d-printed-cities>