

Jane Weru - Security of Tenure for The Urban Poor

A Critical Tool For Sustainable Social and Community Resilience

rockefellerfoundation.org. January 27, 2013.

In our new publication, titled *Rebound: Building a More Resilient World*, we asked leaders from various disciplines to share their lessons of what resilience means and what it requires of us. Through the lens of their own experiences, we can begin to explore some of the ways we can help prepare for, withstand and emerge stronger from the acute shocks and chronic stresses of the 21st century. Jane Weru, Executive Director of The Akiba Mashinani Trust explains how vulnerable communities could become resilient, citing the Mukuru people as a prime example.

Nairobi is a thriving metropolis that unfortunately suffers from high levels of inequality and violence. 65% of the city's population of 4 million lives in the highly marginalized densely populated slums of the city, where residents face conditions of considerable insecurity and indignity characterized by single 10' x 10' shacks made of galvanized sheets, wood, polythene, wattle or mud with little access to clean water, sanitation, health care, schools and other essential public services. The poor who live in these fragile areas are at the mercy of environmental vagaries, especially flooding. Overcrowding raises the risk of respiratory illness. Contaminated water supply and unsanitary waste disposal causes gastrointestinal problems, skin ailments, cholera, typhoid and other infectious diseases. Malnutrition is highly visible among children. At almost every turn, these factors thwart efforts by these communities to become resilient.

Read more: <http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/security-tenure-urban-poor>

John Lee Anderson - Excerpt: Letter from Caracas - Slumlord

The New Yorker. Jan., 28, 2013. What has Hugo Chávez wrought in Venezuela? By Jon Lee Anderson.

LETTER FROM CARACAS about the Tower of David, which is the world's tallest slum, and the man who runs it, Alexander (El Niño) Daza. Hugo Chávez has said that he wants to remake Venezuela into "a sea of happiness and of real social justice and peace." His pronounced goal was to elevate the poor. In Caracas, the country's capital, the results of his fitful campaign are plain to see. For decades, as one of the world's most oil-rich nations, Venezuela had a growing middle class, with an impressively high standard of living. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the rest of Latin America and from Europe helped give Caracas a reputation as one of the region's most attractive and modern cities.

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Excerpt: <http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/anderson#ixzz2JYDw9KXs>

Over Break, Cornell Students Build Sustainable House In Nicaragua

www.sustainablecampus.cornell.edu - By Emma Jesch via the Cornell Daily Sun

Over winter break, Cornell students began building an affordable and environmentally sustainable model house in Nicaragua.

The students, who are part of Cornell University Sustainable Design — an

organization that promotes sustainability through design — traveled to Nagarote, Nicaragua to build the house. The house will serve not only as a home for a family, but also as a platform to demonstrate ideal eco-friendly housing initiatives, said Kai Keane '14, one of the students who led the project.

The house and its landscaping — part of the Sustainable Neighborhoods Nicaragua project — are the product of more than three semesters' worth of research on designing sustainable and affordable housing for low-income Nicaraguan families, according to Keane. The house is scheduled to be completed around mid-February 2013, according to SNN's press release.

The project team said it hopes the house can act as a precedent to ameliorate Nicaragua's housing shortage.

"Nicaragua currently faces a severe housing shortage," the team's press release said. "Two out of every three Nicaraguans confront difficulties related to housing."

As the project team looks to the future, it hopes to eventually broaden the scope of its work, according to Keane.

"We hope that this project can extend much farther than just this one house," Keane said. "It can be replicated all over and eventually [can be] nationally implemented."

Read more: [Over Break Cornell Students Build Sustainable House In Nicaragua](#)

Planning, Connecting, and Financing Cities Now

January 24, 2013. Worldbank Publications.

This report provides Mayors and other policymakers with a policy framework and diagnostic tools to anticipate and implement strategies that can avoid their cities from locking into irreversible physical and social structures.

Full text: <http://issuu.com/world.bank.publications/docs/9780821398395>

Scientists Looking to Solve the Problem of Slums Devise a New Way to Look at Big Data

by Rebecca Ruiz - January, 22, 2013 - txchnologist.com



Photo txchnologist.com

Around the world, slums are home to an estimated 1 billion residents. From Manila to Sao Paolo to Mumbai, they are crucibles of urbanization where the poor try to eke out an existence without crucial public services like sewage, electricity and water.

For years, Slum Dwellers International, a network of community organizations working in 33 countries, has collected data from thousands of slums globally in an effort to provide leverage to settlements during negotiations with local officials to improve living conditions.

Looking at the details inside the big picture

Now, in the era of big data, that information may have a reach far beyond slum limits. In November, [SDI](#) partnered with the Santa Fe Institute, a nonprofit research center, to study the collected facts and figures to better understand slums worldwide and build a scientific view of cities.

Read

more:

<http://txchnologist.com/scientists-looking-to-solve-the-problem-of-slums-devise>

Social Housing Crisis Calls for a New Vision for Architecture

guardian.co.uk. Jan. 23, 2103. Semi-detached houses were a revolution in affordable 20th century modernity, but social diversity and high density housing must be part of a new future.

In times of housing crisis such as these architects have traditionally asked, how can we create better social housing? What should it look like?

One answer is that social housing should look like other sorts of housing; or, perhaps, other sorts of housing should look like social housing.

Between the two world wars, architectural visionaries certainly agreed. Influenced by the radical ideas of Russian constructivism, Italian futurism and the great modernist architect Le Corbusier, a vision of state-funded, egalitarian housing with all mod cons and fabulous standards for space was implemented in the UK in an attempt to mend Britain's bomb ravaged and slum ridden cities following the second world war.

Read more: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/crisis-vision-architecture-social-housing>