

SPATIAL INFORMATION ON SHELTER INTERVENTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Key words:

ABSTRACT

Shelter is one of the basic needs for all human beings regardless of age, sex, creed, race, status or other orientation. There seems to be a direct relationship between sustainable development and shelter interventions for all peoples and yet in accessibility to relevant information regarding desired parameters is appallingly predominant.

By and large, poor housing conditions are clearly a reflection of poverty and as it were inadequate housing has a direct influence on poverty. If housing is too crowded, poorly built, located in unsafe areas, or inadequately serviced with water and sanitation, it can lead to increased incidence of sickness and death; conversely, good housing can lead to better health and higher rates of labour force participation. Improved housing also influences the alleviation of poverty in indirect ways. Residential space can be rented out to either residential or commercial users, generating income in the process. Moreover, a house is often the most important asset owned by households; as such it is subject to capital appreciation and, if legal and financial systems are adequately developed, it can be used as a source of collateral for either increased consumption or investment.

It is the submission of this paper that shelter interventions have a bearing on sustainable development in Kenya and elsewhere and that readily available information on the subject will inevitably lead to desired outcomes and/or informed decisions.

The paper is written with full realization that whereas the world today has become one global village where information is supposed to flow easily to users, the practice on the ground is different. It is expected that systems should be in place where information is readily shared with the aim of replicating good interventions and discarding bad ones.

The paper begins with an overview of shelter interventions in Kenya, actors in the shelter sector and outlines vital spatial information for shelter development. It then goes on to address the issues of spatial information providers and the question of accessing the information. The paper next focuses on the benefits of accessing information on shelter interventions for sustainable development vis a vis the cost of inaccessibility.

The paper is concluded with a section of recommendations on generating, availing and utilizing information on shelter interventions for sustainable development in the light of the Habitat Agenda.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Enosh M. Onyango holds B.A. Land Economics (Hons), 1983-86 and M.A. Housing Administration, 1986-88 from the University of Nairobi. He has been Full member of the Institution of Surveyors of Kenya since 1990 and is Registered Estate Agent. He has been Housing Planning Officer, Ministry of Roads and Public Works, 1988-1996, Deputy Property Manager Office of the attorney General, 1996-99 and from 1999 Acting Property Manager.

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