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Case Study: Nairobi Railway and Community Relocation

Tags: Investment, Housing, Land, Relocation Plan, Transport, Case Study



With around 1 billion urban residents living in informal settlements, there is an urgent need to reconsider how development is delivered. This challenge is not just mobilising sufficient finance. It requires rethinking how urban development is structured to create an investment environment where all available resources and capabilities can be mobilised. In a new in-depth study found [here](#), ICED explored how community finance organisations can help to overcome barriers to private-sector involvement in the development of informal settlements. This paper sets out one of 8 case studies from the paper.

Nairobi Railway Relocation and Community Safeguarding

The effective planning and delivery of vital infrastructure is central to realising the full economic potential of cities to drive growth and development. In Nairobi, improvements to the operation and safety of the rail network were impeded by large scale occupation of land along railway lines through the Mukuru and Kibera informal settlements. In 2006, the operation of Kenya railways was contracted to Rift Valley Railways, a private company given responsibility to run passenger and freight services for 25 years. Rift Valley Railways identified that the presence of informal settlements, along the line, created serious hazards and limited the profitability of the service. In response government initially identified that settlers were to be removed and compensated, with a free standing wall to be constructed to prevent future encroachments.

Following extensive consultation it was concluded that constructing a wall would be an ineffective deterrent to reoccupation of the land along the railway line, many of the residents would prefer help with relocation rather than cash and there were significant detrimental effects to disrupting the livelihood opportunities of people in Mukuru and Kibera. An alternative plan was negotiated with the community whereby homes and businesses were able to remain, but were restricted to an area outside of an exclusive corridor (a reserve of 20 metres each side of the line) of the railway. The new plan involved the construction of small housing units and market stalls in a 10 metre strip beyond the reserved area, which created a 'living wall' against encroachment. The plan used local enumeration data to inform planning of footways to direct pedestrians away from the track and

minimise the demolition of existing structures. Additionally, relocated traders did not have to move more than 500m away from their original place of work and five market sites were set up for these vendors.

Outcomes and Lessons Learned

To deliver this large scale programme agreement was negotiated between the World Bank and Government of Kenya to produce and implement a Relocation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP has full engagement of affected populations who are facilitating the delivery of the programme. This includes enumerating and verifying those households who are impacted by the development; input into the technical design to meet the requirement of the railways company while also protecting the interests of low income communities; and support for construction of housing and business units. This highly participative approach has enabled important improvements to rail infrastructure to go ahead, while protecting the interests and livelihoods of affected communities.

For more information please download the [full working paper](#) on contact the ICED Facility at iced.programming@uk.pwc.com