Revisit to incremental housing focusing on the role of a comprehensive community centre: the case of Jinja, Uganda

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Abstract

Incremental housing is a gradual process whereby residents incrementally improve or extend their houses by themselves, whenever funding or time becomes available. This approach has attracted attention as an affordable way of improving poor living conditions in slums often with sites-and-services scheme. In many cases, this approach is coupled with an emphasis on self-help sweat equity, which can be strengthened by active community involvement. This study seeks to suggest a way of combining a scheme of empowering self-reliant communities with incremental housing. Based on the lessons from previous slum upgrade projects in Jinja, Uganda, this study points out the necessity of 1) more sustainable approach with self-help incremental housing than one-time grant-based projects, 2) an assisted way of empowering community and providing training schemes, 3) a temporary shelter for original dwellers who are affected by slum upgrade projects, and 4) an inclusive scheme for tenants who are frequently ignored in many slum upgrade schemes. This study proposes a ‘Self-Reliance Centre (SRC)’, which is designed to function as a space for community empowerment, a training centre, and a temporary shelter for incremental housing scheme in slum upgrade. As an assisted self-help approach, the SRC in incremental housing has a feature of initial involvement by public sector to invite eventual self-reliance of communities for sustainability in incremental housing.

Keywords: incremental housing, assisted self-help, comprehensive community centre, self-reliance centre, Jinja

1. Introduction

The concerns of governments, international organisations (IOs) and non-profit organisations (NGOs) about housing are based on the necessity for housing as an essential social good in human life. As Smith (1970) observed, housing provides shelter from external threats, a basic social space to make a home and lead a life and a means to accumulate family assets. Currently, a third of the urban population in developing countries live in deprived slum areas (UN-Habitat, 2012). According to the Interim Report of Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2013), the actual number of slum dwellers increased to 650

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1 This study is based on a joint consulting project of “Development of an incremental and affordable housing policy toolkit and pilot city case studies” by the World Bank and the Ministry of Strategy and Finance of Korea. The views expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of any agency involved in the project.
million in 1990, 760 million in 2000 and 860 million in 2013. UN-Habitat (2008) predicts urban population of the developing countries will be 4.9 billion by 2030 including 2.8 billion without adequate shelter. Fast pseudo-urbanisation in developing countries is the root cause of the formation of slums. For various reasons ranging from deprivation of lands in rural areas to higher income in urban areas, most urban poor have come from rural areas to seek a living in cities. As the formal housing markets in urban areas are not affordable to them, their residential choice tends to be limited to the informal housing. In most cases, a surge in urban population through the rapid immigration is coupled with a failure to effectively satisfy the growing need to accommodate the population. Insufficient serviced land and a lack of effective planning systems leads to an expansion of urban area in a haphazard manner through the creation of slums (Davis, 2007). As most of these slums are built without proper infrastructure, continuous inflow of urban poor results in an aggravation of the living environment, such as densely-packed narrow houses, limited access to water and lack of sanitation facilities. Residents in slums suffer from poor living condition ranging from insecure tenure to inadequate basic facilities despite informal settlements may help rural migrants and urban poor to adapt to cities and settle there with low-cost residence (UN-Habitat, 2004).

However, as the slums’ function as temporary accommodation for rural immigrants settling in urban areas becomes permanent, deprivation problems in slum areas becomes more serious. In terms of residence, education and health care, slums are becoming more inadequate place for reproduction of labour power, which perpetuates deprivation in slums. Moreover, slums settled on wetland, riverside, seashore, or steep slope are vulnerable to natural hazards, and slums also expose residents to social problems and crimes (Davis, 2007; Gilbert and Gugler, 1992).

IOs, NGOs, and governments have been making efforts to tackle the problems of slums. However, the conventional approaches, such as supplying public housing and establishing urban master plans, have not successfully addressed the problems (Gattoni, 2009), and the recent policy trend to support housing finance has also failed and resulted in an increase of debt and poverty among the urban poor (Jones, 2012). Keivani and Werna (2001) points out that as the expensive conventional approach have just little number of beneficiaries the urban poor have no choice but to resort to informal modes of housing provision.

In this context, the effectiveness of self-help incremental housing has been highlighted as an alternative way of improving poor living conditions in slums in an affordable manner. Incremental housing is a gradual, step-by-step process whereby residents improve or extend their houses by themselves when funding, time or building materials become available (Smets, 2006). There are various reasons why this approach is regarded as a feasible alternative. Firstly, the self-help incremental housing actually provides nearly 70% of housing stock in developing countries (UN-Habitat, 2005). Many urban poor improve their living environment in an incremental way. Secondly, as many residents in developing countries cannot afford to purchase outright or construct their dwellings as a one-off event, this step-by-step approach is an affordable option for the urban poor without large-scale financial support. Thirdly, this approach is even more affordable to the urban poor as they use their own labour power.

In many cases, the incremental housing is coupled with an emphasis on the self-help spirit, which can be strengthened with community involvement. There are some exemplary cases of self-help

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2 For example, Bokumjari village, a successful community-initiated settlement movement in South Korea, was built with the help of committed leaders in the community, including Paul Jeong-gu Jei and Jesuit John Vincent Daly. Based on a loan of USD$100,000 from Misereor, the German Catholic Social Aid Fund, a village for 170 families was developed on new land, by their own hands, from sewage system to completed housing, when they were evicted from a slum area in Seoul in 1977. Houses built with community labour in an incremental way initially cost USD$50/m², largely using self-made construction materials which are one-third the cost of commercial materials. The community was in a position to repay the loan after two years of the initial settlement. However, as Misereor declined the
incremental housing with active community movement, where committed leadership played a vital role. However, the committed leadership cannot be expected in every community. In a similar vein, Bredenoord and van Lindert (2010) emphasise potential of assisted self-help in addressing problems of the urban poor from rapid urbanisation and urge to put the assisted self-help to the central on the urban development agendas. They emphasised a need for an ‘assisted’ way to promote self-help housing. However, there is limited discussion about the assisted self-help incremental housing with focusing on a community empowerment. On top of this, most of these discussion about self-help made little room for tenants group in slums.

The purpose of this study is to suggest a way of combining a scheme of empowering self-reliant communities with incremental housing, overcoming the limits of conventional approaches in improving residential environments in slums. This study focuses on the case of Jinja, Uganda in Africa where most of countries face challenges in providing adequate housing for the low income population, particularly in the era of rapid urbanisation. 30%, the proportion of slum dwellers in Jinja’s population, presents the urgent issue from inadequate infrastructure in accommodating population increase in many cities in developing countries. Jinja’s case can be applied to other medium sized cities which are facing the similar problems from pseudo urbanisation.

2. Literature review on incremental housing

In the 1960s, John Turner, a pioneer in self-help housing research, discovered a continuous improvement of residential areas of low-income households in self-help manner, in cases in Peru and other South American countries, and stated that housing provision through self-help served as a social-emancipation of poor people (Turner, 1967). He insisted that squatting was not a social malaise, but a triumph of self-help, and promoted the terms ‘housing as a verb’ and ‘freedom to build’ (Turner, 1982; Jenkins, et al., 2007; Pugh, 1995). Abrams (1966) and Mangin (1967) also strongly support the so-called informal housing solutions in the 1970s and 1980s. They point out the limits of the conventional approach of expensive standard housing projects and proven capability of slum dwellers in building their own houses upon the condition where governments lift oppressive regulatory systems like land tenure issues.

Marcussen (1990) emphasises the practical effectiveness of self-help housing in terms of ‘use value’, and Jimenez (1982a; 1982b) argues that self-help housing could be a means of asset accumulation, which offers a possible opportunity to escape from poverty. Bredenoord and van Lindert (2010) point out the vital qualitative aspects of self-help housing: use value of house especially due to relative safety; the commercial value of the property; platform of income generation with various scales of enterprises; and further source of income from letting and sub-letting. UN-Habitat (2005: 166) also advocates a self-help approach, highly valuing its efficiency as it is affordable, provides an opportunity to develop skills and offers flexibility for the spatial needs and financial ability of households.

Many studies in the field argue that security of land tenure is the most important pre-requisite for the self-help incremental housing (Beattie et al., 2010; Greene and Rojas, 2008; Hanzic, 2010; Harris, 1998; Minnery et al., 2013; Tunas and Peresthu, 2010). Choguill (1999) emphasises the importance of security of tenure in residential improvement saying that residents in informal settlements would invest their resources such as time, effort, and money in housing and infrastructure if they feel secure in their residential circumstances. Bhanjee (2000) also argues that a pre-requisite for self-help approach is de
facto and/or de jure tenure security, because it eliminates the fear of eviction and will lead to the participation of the residents in terms of financial and labour investment.

This trend in the 1970s and 80s influenced policy transformation from slum eradication to supporting the urban poor by upgrading slums and establishing an equitable land policy. Following the Habitat Conference, held in 1976, pro-self-help housing policies have been accepted in the most developing countries, and governments have switched their housing policy to supporting neighbourhood upgrading (Fernández-Maldonado, 2007). Many supportive arguments on self-help incremental approach were followed (Gattoni, 2009; Goethert, 2010; Greene and Rojas, 2008; Siddiqui and Khan, 1994; Wakely and Riely, 2011). Case studies vary across developing countries: Brazil (Handzic, 2010); Chile, Mexico, Brazil, Kenya (Beattie et al., 2010); Colombia and South Africa (Lizarralde, 2011); Indonesia (Tunas and Peresthu, 2010); Pakistan (Aliani and Sheng, 1990; Hasan, 1990; Siddiqui and Khan, 1994); Peru (Sakay et al., 2011); and Philippines (Santos-Delgado, 2009).

Many sites-and-services projects, the schemes to provide plots of land including basic infrastructure inviting self-help incremental housing development by residents, were implemented in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Advantages of sites-and-services scheme are securing legitimate ownership, speeding up incremental housing process, promoting community cohesion and shared responsibilities, being a part of city growth plan, and lowering housing cost (Gattoni, 2009; Wakely and Riely, 2011). However, the self-help approach encountered various criticisms in the 1980s and 90s (Burgess, 1982; Mathéy, 1992; Ward, 1982). For the implication dimension, difficulty to secure land in urban areas for residential use and it requires vast capital investment to develop the land is pointed out. For the socioeconomic dimension, the aspect that self-help efforts impose a double exploitation on the residents in slums is pointed out. In addition, as most of the projects was located in urban peripheral areas seeking for affordable land, there are many problems deterred the projects such as high cost of connecting infrastructure to the sites and losing job opportunities in the city centres due to their peripheral location (Aliani and Sheng, 1990; Bredenoord and van Lindert, 2010; Lizarralde, 2011). In the same context, Smets et al. (2014) point out that even site-and-services programme is not popular these days and not very efficient since they are located far from income-generating activity and residents’ original zone of life. In addition, there were beneficiary selectin problems (Wakely and Riely, 2011). Bredenoord and van Lindert (2010:280) point out that “Due to the lack of financial resources, such interventions were too incidental and too small to be effective in coping with the urban challenge”.

Since the 1980s, realising sites-and-services of individual level or settlement upgrade projects cannot meet the increasing housing need, the view on self-help has been changed. Bredenoord and van Lindert (2010) describe the change as the shift from housing policy to comprehensive habitat approach including urban development and governance. Smets et al. (2014) also argue that policies and strategies should go with multi-disciplinary, holistic, and pluralist approach, and long-term programme support for institutional capacity building as well as partnership between public, civic, and private sectors. Payne (2014) describes political, institutional, legal, technical and regulatory, financial, attitudinal constrain to explain the reason why efficient and equitable land policies are difficult to be furnished in developing countries even though there are various innovative policies.

In this context, Bredenoord and van Lindert (2010) suggest to put ‘assisted self-help housing’ 3 in the central on the urban development agenda. They emphasise the active involvement of local government and NGOs in terms of technical, legal and financial assistance in self-help housing, pointing out the importance of municipal international cooperation. They also suggest a low-threshold ‘building advisory bureaus’ for the function, which may come to “play a key role in heading participatory

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3 The approach of ‘organized self-help housing’ by Santos-Delgado (2009) is similar to that of assisted self-help.
planning in the settlement level” (Bredenoord and van Lindert, 2010: 285). UN-Habitat (2005:166) also values assisted self-housing as it describes that “assisted self-help housing is the most affordable and intelligent way of providing sustainable shelter.” The reasons UN-Habitat praises it so high are because it is “cheap” making use of sweat equity and minimum standards, “useful” acquiring precious skills, “practical” taking resident’s actual need and levels of affordability, and “flexible” as dwelling units can be expanded over time favouring resident’s budget (UN-Habitat, 2005:166).

3. Slums in Jinja, Uganda

3.1. Context and Background

Jinja District has a population of 471,242 in 2014 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2017) and the land size of 702 km². Jinja Municipality known as Jinja is home to 92,100 people (ACTogether, 2010) and the total land area is around 30 km² and its radius measures about 3 kilometres, which enables the town centre to be reached within 30 minutes by walk from anywhere in Jinja. Jinja was an industrial centre of Uganda from the 1950s to the 1970s. The Jinja Municipal Council (JMC) has been attempting to revitalise the economy and improve the physical environment in spite of lack of budget and human resources. Although the physical environment was yet to be developed, people migrated from other rural regions of Uganda to Jinja, mostly seeking job opportunities. Population growth resulted in a housing shortage, leading to the mushrooming of slums. There are seven commonly known slums in Jinja: Loco Railway Quarters, Rippon Market Landing Site, Masese1, Mpumudde Market Zone, Soweto, Walukuba-Zabef and Babu Patel Zone (ACTogether, 2010).

Table 1   Overview of slums in Jinja

According to the enumeration data by ACTogether, a working NGO in Uganda, the total land area of the seven slums is approximately 57.2 hectare, 2% of the total land area of Jinja. The population living in the seven slums in 2012 was 25,565, forming 27.7% of Jinja’s total population. The living environments of the seven slums are similar: dilapidated housing structures; very small dwelling units; limited water or electricity connection to the individual housing units; absence of sewerage and drainage systems (ACTogether, 2010).

However, Jinja has favourable conditions for slum upgrading. Unlike many capital cities, where land is fully occupied and the land price is high, Jinja still has available and inexpensive lands to develop on the outskirts of the city. Given that its radius is around 3 km, theproximity to work and job opportunities can be secured. This can allow the residents accept a temporary move with less resistance.

3.2. Main features of Masese1

Masese1 is selected as the case study site from among the seven slums as a prototype of slums in Jinja. Masese1 is situated in the east side of Jinja city along the banks of Lake Victoria, which is 2.5km away from the town centre. About 2,680 people, 2.9% of Jinja’s total population and 8.1% of the slum population in Jinja, reside in Masese1, a total area of 6.5 hectares. The land in Masese1 is officially

4 www.jinja.go.ug

5 The official figure from Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2017) is 72,931, but JMC contested against this saying this under-counted the real population.

6 This feature of Jinja provides favourable condition for sites-and-services schemes. Most of sites-and-services schemes were criticised for reduced job opportunities and expensive cost of connecting infrastructure because they were mainly located far from original residence seeking for cheap land in outer area.
owned by JMC. However, the residents claim their ownership as they have occupied the land for a long time.  

**Figure 1  Location of Masese1 in Jinja**

To investigate the characteristics of Masese1, a in-person questionnaire survey among 115 households, key informant interviews, and field visits were conducted. The results are summarised in Table 2. The average monthly housing rent ranges between UGX 10,000 and 20,000 (USD 4 ~8), which is 5.1% of the average income. Housing structures are not permanent, as they are made of timber or mud and wattle. There is no garbage collection, drainage or sewerage system. The roads need to be widened and paved. According to the survey, the reason for settling in Masese1 is mainly job-related (44.3%). The occupation of household heads is mostly self-employed and their education attainments are relatively higher than the national average. People declared their income source to be trading, selling farm products at local markets or simple labouring. 84.4% of the respondents declared their monthly household income to be less than UGX 300,000 (USD 120), 37.4% earning less than UGX 75,000 (USD 30) a month. Households mostly spend their money on food (35.6%) while spending a relatively small amount on rent (5.1%). Thanks to vibrant activity by the NGOs and community based organisations, there are number of savings groups in Masese1. This promotes a saving habit in residents, although the actual amount of savings is not large enough to purchase housing within a few years. The survey result shows that, among those who save, 46% use a savings group and their savings range between UGX 50,000 and 200,000 (USD 20~80). The residents were willing to borrow funds for housing improvement (93.9%) and preferred a self-help and incremental approach for housing development (65.2%).

**Figure 2  Housing condition of Masese1**

**Table 2  Main features of Masese1**

### 3.3. Previous slum upgrade projects in Jinja and their limits

There have been several attempts to improve housing conditions and to empower residents of Jinja’s slums. For example, the *UN-Habitat Mpumudde Low-Income Women Housing Project* was conducted in cooperation with JMC and a private real estate developer. JMC donated an area of land in Mpumudde, Jinja, the private developer provided technical support for housing building and UN-Habitat invested USD 300,000 for the project, which produced 20 new houses for low-income women (Kinuthia-Njenga, et al., 2008:41). *Masese Women’s Low Cost Housing Upgrading Project (1989-1994)* aimed at improving housing conditions and empowering women to increase their income. JMC provided the land and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) provided funds (USD 1.3 million). When the external fund was sufficient, the project employed 300 people (1992-95) and completed 370 houses. However, because of mismanagement of the initial capital, the project lost its sustainability (Byaruhanga, 2001). Overall, the beneficiaries were limited to a small number and these projects stopped as the funding ended. A self-help incremental housing approach, *Kawama Low Cost Housing Project (2010-)*, was launched by the Kawama savings group. Participants negotiated with JMC for the land and acquired 3 hectares of land in Jinja. This self-help approach was adopted and the entire construction was carried out by the participants. The participants constructed temporary shelter near the

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* It is hard to tell how long, however according to the residents, they have been residing longer than 50 years. It is suspected that someone subdivided the land and sell them to the current residents illegally, and the residents believe they have legitimate ground for their argument.
construction site and started constructing their own houses. However, since the final structure was planned to be high-standard housing, the construction cost was increased and it has been taking a long time for the residents to finance. This slow implementation has exhausted the participants; only six units had been completed by 2013.  

To sum up, the reasons behind the limit of these projects in the scale and sustainability are as follows. The first reason is the absence of committed leadership and vigilant community participation. In most cases, leaders tended to make use of their power in beneficiary selection. Also, the communities were not mature enough to prevent the leaders from abusing their power. Secondly, the projects failed to assign clear roles and responsibility to each party involved in the project. It has been pointed out that community involvement is a key success factor in housing improvement and previous projects tried to mobilise the community in this sense. However, there were no systematic tactics or task force for capacity building and training. The absence of an umbrella organisation in cooperation with the local government was also a problem. Thirdly, most of the projects were one-time ‘grant’ based projects that lacks sustainability. As the fund was ‘granted’ to the small number of beneficiaries, it resulted in beneficiary selection problems and made the beneficiaries passive, which makes it difficult to sustain the project when the initial fund dried up. Fourthly, there was little concern for the tenants, and they were excluded from the projects’ benefits. This would continuously raise slum issues as the tenants would have to seek another informal settlement when improvement projects were implemented in their original residence.

4. Strategies for slum upgrade in Jinja

4.1. Securing Land Tenure and Land Readjustment

In slum upgrade projects, the importance of securing the land tenure is commonly emphasized (Beattie et al., 2010; Hanzic, 2010; Tunas and Peresthu, 2010). The residents need assurance that their assets will be intact, regardless of the length of time their resources are invested in housing and community improvement (Choguill, 1999). The land of Masese1 is officially owned by JMC. The current residents claim the ownership on the land as they had occupied the land for decades, while JMC has not been allowing the residents to construct permanent structures. The Land Act (1998) which approves customary tenure by issuing a Certificate of Customary Ownership (CCO) can be a starting point of securing land tenure in Masese1. As the residents in Masese1 were trying to acquire a CCO, JMC recommended the issue of a CCO in accordance with the Land Act.

Currently, the land cadastre in Masese1 is complicated with irregular sizes and shapes, which needs re-blocking. Also the infrastructure, such as road, drainage and sewerage are underdeveloped, but JMC lacks financial capacity to provide them. In this situation, land readjustment 9 can be a useful economic strategy to organise complex land subdivision and to provide infrastructure and public spaces with little

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9 Procedure of land readjustment is as follows: (1) the owners of the land parcels are identified and their consent to land readjustment needs to be secured; (2) the land value of each parcel is evaluated for later distribution after subdivision and infrastructure upgrade; (3) a new subdivision and infrastructure plan for the designated site are prepared. In doing so, governments can plan parcels of land for communal facilities, such as parks and schools, and reserve parcels of land to cover the costs of subdivision and infrastructure upgrade, which imposes little fiscal burden to the governments; (4) when the land owners agree on the plan, subdivision and upgrade begins; (5) finally, newly subdivided land with infrastructure are distributed to the land owners according to their initial land value. For example, in a land readjustment project, 30% of the lands can be used for road and communal facilities, 10% of the lands can be reserved for development costs recovery, and 60% of the lands can be redistributed to original land owners. What makes this scheme feasible is increase in land value from subdivision and infrastructure upgrade.
financial burden on governments (Larsson, 1993). The residents and JMC in the discussion meeting agreed that land readjustment is the acceptable and feasible scheme to improve the land with infrastructure although there were some concerns about compensation of small-sized lands and rights of absentee landlords. Although land readjustment can organise land subdivision and provide infrastructure, it cannot directly link to housing upgrading, because sometimes the owners may sell their land to other people and simply find another residence (UNCHS, 1982). Even though the original land owners have agreed to stay and carry out the land readjustment, they still need to find temporary residence during the period. In addition, tenants have no choice but to move to other informal settlements under this scheme and this could result in endless slum issues. For these reasons, land readjustment scheme under self-help housing requires a temporary shelter for affected residents.

4.2. Introduction of a comprehensive community centre for self-reliance

Based on the lessons from the limitations from previous slum upgrade projects in Jinja, four aspects are considered to introduce a community complex for Masese and other slums in Jinja.

Firstly a self-help incremental housing is more sustainable approach than grant-based projects. The residents in slums cannot afford housing in the formal market and the case of Jinja is not an exception. Taking this economic constraint into account and residents’ preference in housing development, self-help incremental housing is an appropriate approach for improving residential environment in Masese. External funds can be a useful source to lift the constraints, but this is not a sustainable option. One of the main reasons of the failure of previous slum upgrade projects in Jinja is that the limited beneficiaries depended too much on external resources without using and developing their own resources, which made the slum upgrade intermittent and unsustainable. In this context, a self-help approach is more sustainable and feasible direction.

Secondly, an assisted way of empowering community and providing training schemes is necessary. It is desirable to provide training programme in self-help housing strategy. The benefits of training programme are manifold: 1) the programme enables residents to build their houses with their own labour in decent standard; 2) residents can produce and prepare affordable building materials of bricks and cement blocks for their housing during the programme; 3) the skills acquired in the programme can develop into jobs of the residents later. However, it should be emphasised that this approach cannot be sustainable without organised community. Community itself should be main agent in the development process. Although the importance of community participation in self-help incremental housing has been emphasised in many literatures, many of them lacks detailed ways to stimulate this in specific circumstances (Davidson et al., 2007). This is why an assisted self-help approach is emphasised.

Thirdly, it is essential to provide a temporary shelter for original dwellers who are affected by slum upgrade projects. Most of slum upgrade projects other than sites-and-services schemes are based on on-site redevelopment. In the process of redevelopment original dwellers need to have a temporary residence. However, the issue is that, in most cases, the slum dwellers cannot afford to find the temporary residence. This is why slum upgrade projects including on-site redevelopment requires to have a temporary shelter for the original dwellers.

Fourthly, there needs to be an inclusive scheme for tenants who are frequently ignored in many slum

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1 For more about the discussion meeting, see 4.6.

1 65.2% of the surveyed residents in Masese prefer self-help incremental way in housing delivery.

2 Majale (2008) points out that slum upgrading process has a good opportunity for employment creation in the case of Kitale, Kenya.
upgrade projects. The rights of tenants in slums are rarely protected in slum upgrade projects as even landowners/de facto landowners or house owners struggle to find their rights for tenure security in the projects. However, a considerable proportion of slum dwellers are tenants, who are least likely to be beneficiaries in the projects. Masese1, the case site, is not an exception where the proportion is 44% which are not negligible. The rights of landowners, house owners, and tenants can be secured only by increasing dwelling units. One possible approach is increasing floor area ratio (FAR) where cost of acquiring land is relatively higher than building cost. The other is providing parcels of land in outer area where cost of acquiring land is relatively lower than building cost.

A comprehensive scheme is suggested considering these factors for Jinja slum upgrade. It is designed to empower communities to be more self-reliant, to provide training programmes for building skills for self-help incremental housing, and to provide temporary accommodation for affected slum dwellers when land readjustment takes place. The scheme is also expected to support all the slum dwellers including tenants. To this end, a specific space needs to be procured where programmes for intensive community empowerment and training for building skills can take place, and where residents can temporarily reside during land readjustment and self-help housing process.

**Figure 3** Concept of Self-Reliance Centre

As such, it is recommended that a space, tentatively named as a ‘Self-Reliance Centre (SRC)’, be established. An SRC is a centre for communities of residents in slums which is supported and nurtured to carry out incremental housing development. An SRC has three main functions in accordance with its purpose: to mobilise and empower the community, to serve as a training centre for self-help housing and to provide temporary shelter. The community centre in SRC would serve as a venue for community empowerment and a capacity building programmes. An SRC needs to be a space of cooperation between governments, IOs, and NGOs to empower the communities at multilevel for community-oriented settlement upgrade. The operating body of the SRC can be a joint organisation of community based organisations, NGOs, and local governments. The role of the body is to operate the SRC by designing community mobilisation and capacity building programmes, managing the training centre and temporary shelter.

What makes the SRC different from previous resource centre and community centre is that grouped communities of affected slum dwellers from land redevelopment can be trained for self-help incremental housing while they temporarily live in the SRC. Urban resource centres mainly provide technical assistance to house builders, which is necessary for sustainable house constructions by self-help house building (Hasan, 2009; Wakely and Riley, 2011; Bredenoord et al., 2014). SRC can be more intensive in terms of training and incremental housing as the affected slum dwellers in get trained as a community in the temporary shelter in SRC.

**4.3. Features of the comprehensive community centre**

The SRC is to provide organisational structure for capacity building and strengthening of the

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1 In most cases, compensation for tenants in redevelopment projects are not enough, which eventually lead to formation of other slums in nearby areas.

2 Joint redevelopment project (JRP) in South Korea is a typical example of this approach. This scheme is appropriate where land price is increasing. For more information on JRP, refer to the works of Ha (2001a), Ha (2001b), and Shin (2009)

3 The cases of Makhaza and New Rest in South Africa shows the importance of a meeting hall for social gathering and cultural activities of communities in sustainable social networking (Massey, 2013).
community. The community is better to be mobilised into multi-layered communities, ranging from savings group to production cooperatives. Although the basic form of a community will be a residential community, the SRC can encourage the residents to participate in the community by organising regular meetings, such as birthday parties, outings and festivals. It can be further developed into an economic community, education community, welfare community, and even a production community. Members of the residential community could take care of the members’ children as a form of a welfare community and, at the same time, save money for housing improvement as a form of an economic community. They could form a scholarship committee for students in the community and a production cooperative to sell home-made products in the local market. The programmes in the SRC would contribute to fostering this process and consult on how to develop the community further. According to the survey, among the people who save, 46% use a savings group. This active savings group in Masese can be a base community that can be developed further.

The training centre in the SRC will provide building skills for incremental housing. In the training centre, there could be a small factory to produce building materials, such as bricks and cement blocks, which could reduce building cost. This small factory could be connected to the residents’ production community. As most of the residents are simple labourers or unemployed, the training programmes provided in the centre could also function as a vocational training centre, benefiting these residents with eventual income generation.

The temporary shelter in the SRC accommodates slum dwellers who are affected by land readjustment. As the temporary shelter does not have to be a permanent structure, the first generation of the temporary shelter users can build the shelter, while future generations could pay a small monthly fee for maintenance. Operation of the temporary shelter can be overseen by the SRC operating body which requires involvements of local government, IOs and NGOs. They can set up rules for period of occupancy, amount of monthly fee and other regulations. There is still a concern that the residents of the temporary shelter may refuse to move out after the decided occupancy term has expired. For this reason, the SRC should have the prime function of nurturing communities and the training centre. All sorts of community activities, including living, nursing children, learning, having fun, planning and building their residence, could contribute to smoothly resettling into the new residence as a community. In order to secure residents’ active involvement, it is important to set visible and tangible achievement goals in the early phase. Achieving these goals could increase confidence and inspire them to closely engage in the programmes.

4.4. Strategic community grouping
Before admitting residents to the SRC, it is necessary that surveys to ensure residents’ intentions to participate in the programme in the SRC or move out are conducted. Residents can be roughly categorised into three types according their tenure: freeholders who own both land and housing; leaseholders who own the housing, but not the land; and tenants. Figure 4 shows examples of the detailed categories of residents. Residents can be divided into two community groups. Community mobilisation and empowerment programmes need to be tailored according to the eventual settlement of residents. Group 1 is for the freeholders and a part of leaseholders who want to return to the original

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16 The community in Bokumjari village, a successful community-initiated settlement movement in South Korea in 1970s, was strengthened by multi-layered groups, such as credit association, scholarship committee and cooperatives.

17 Greene and Rojas (2008) point out the necessity of external help in incremental housing when it comes to affordable materials, housing standard, consideration of expansion of dwelling units.

18 The level of the fee would be the cost of maintenance of the dwelling units. However, the dwelling units should not be free of charge in order to prevent residents’ refusal to move back to original site or move into new site.
settlement when the land readjustment process is completed. Group 2 is for a part of leaseholders and tenants who wish to develop a new settlement. Both groups are recommended to live in the temporary shelter in the SRC so that they could intensively participate in programmes for training for self-help building and community empowerment. However, some of the programmes would be different. For instance, for Group 2, as their eventual purpose is to build a new settlement, construction skills to procure basic infrastructures, such as roads, drainage and sewerage, could be taught, which might need more time for Group 1.

**Figure 4** Grouping of residents for a Self-Reliance Centre

### 4.5. Rotational redevelopment

Reluctance to on-site slum upgrade mainly comes from unaffordability to alternative residence including temporary shelter as most of the projects affects the whole site at the same time. In this context, one of the other virtues of the SRC is that it enables rotational redevelopment for other slums, as shown in Figure 5. While the slum is under infrastructure upgrade process, such as land readjustment, the residents in the area could move into the temporary shelter in the SRC with community and training programmes for incremental housing. During the period of training, residents of Group 1 can take steps to build their houses at the original settlement after land readjustment. Residents of Group 2 can participate in the construction process of basic infrastructure and core units of housing in a new settlement, which is similar to most of sites-and-services projects. After the initial phase of construction is completed such as subdivision of land and core units of housing, residents can move into their original or new settlement and carry out further improvement, such as plastering, attaching an additional room or toilet. Once the first generation of residents in the SRC has moved into new settlements or the upgraded original settlement, affected residents in the slum could move into the temporary shelter while their site is undergoing redevelopment, such as land readjustment. The community from slum can take the same process as the community from slum in the SRC. Graduated communities from the SRC are recommended to build a community centre in their original or new settlement, as in the SRC, with close cooperation with the SRC. The community centres in each new development site is expected to function as the centre for maintaining the strengthened community network in the SRC and developing it further. This procedure could be carried out under the supervision of the SRC operating body. After graduation of the second generation, residents in the slum could move into the SRC. This rotational redevelopment in series can upgrade the residential environment in slums with a long-term urban growth plan for Jinja with less fear of eviction.

**Figure 4** Operation of the Self-Reliance Centre

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1. The tenants (44% of residents) in Masese1 might be reluctant to land readjustment scheme because 1) it takes much time for land readjustment and following incremental housing and 2) level of rent payment would increase to unaffordable level after the development.

2. There are some available land of JMC in outer area of Jinja municipality. As the lands are located around 4km away from the city centre, residents can commute to existing work places after the upgrade, which can overcome the typical problem of sites-and-services, lack of job opportunities by locating in far peripheral area from city centre. Actually, JMC has experience of providing land for slum upgrade in previous projects such as Masese Women’s Low Cost Housing Upgrading Project (1989-1994) and Kawama Low Cost Housing Project (2010-)

3. In order to reduce construction cost, residents’ labour need to be mobilised in infrastructure upgrade in new settlements. This is a similar approach in Hyderabad’s case which followed land—people—works procedure as Turner (1986) described ‘historically normal process of housing delivery) not land—works—people procedure in normal sites-and-services projects (see Aliani and Sheng, 1990).
4.6. Implementation

Establishing and operating the SRC would involve many stakeholders. Among them, the major stakeholders can be as follows: the slum dwellers who will be the direct beneficiaries, local governments, in this case JMC, IOs and NGOs in the region. The local government is recommended to take legal procedure to officially approve the customary landownership and provide land for the SRC and lands for new settlements with a long-term lease. Its benefit is that it can upgrade slums in the city under a long-term urban growth plan with a rotational redevelopment procedure. They will have ownership of the SRC back when the development of slums in the municipality is completed with the rotational redevelopment process. The community centre itself can be used for public purposes after slum upgrade programme, such as cultural or educational facilities, by the local government. The local government is recommended to actively involve itself in the operation of the SRC with NGOs by assigning a task force team for it and mediating rotational redevelopment plan with its master plan for the city.

Figure 5  Tentative Location of the Self-Reliance Centre

Figure 6 shows the tentative location of the SRC in Jinja. The suggested location is designated on the public land owned by JMC in the town centre, to which slum dwellers in any region in Jinja can easily gain access. The proposed site is located near Jinja Train Station, which is currently out of service, which makes the current market value of the land low, despite its central location. IOs can provide initial funding to build an SRC, including such necessary facilities as community centre with meeting hall and several classrooms, training centre, and temporary dwelling units. NGOs need to take a core role in support of designing programmes for community mobilisation and empowerment and training programmes for construction skills with local governments.

A meeting with key stakeholders was held to share and discuss the proposed strategies in this study to upgrade slums in Jinja on February 2014, at Jinja. At the meeting, around 100 people from JMC including the Mayor of Jinja, residents including tenants of Masese1, programme managers of ACTogether (a local NGO), and staffs from World Bank Uganda and HQ participated. Participants paid careful attention to the proposed strategies with land readjustment and the Self-Reliance Centre, and agreed that the proposed schemes would be a feasible plan to upgrade slums in Jinja considering the current budget constraint of JMC, complicated interests of landowners and tenants, sustainability of the plan. JMC was positive in providing the land for SRC. Programme managers of ACTogether empathised with the importance of self-help incremental housing in Jinja. They also introduced the launch of a centre where skill training and development programmes are provided, which is similar to training centre of the SRC, and suggested that the centre can be developed into a SRC.

Based on these suggestions for Jinja, World Bank had set a project to build a SRC and upgrade slums in Uganda, which was followed by a feasibility study in 2015. It is still corresponding with the regional office over the implementation of the project based on the recommendations from the feasibility study. In the meantime, JMC, ACTogether and the slum dwellers in Jinja agreed and initiated a project to upgrade Kibugambata, a part of Masese.

5. Conclusion

2 Parcelling out land to residents at new settlement may cause a problem of speculations for a one-time windfall profit as Beattie et al. (2010) point out.

3 JMC agreed to use this empty land for the purpose of the SRC in the discussion meeting in Jinja.
The lessons from the limitations from previous slum upgrade projects in Jinja can be categorised into four aspects. Firstly, a self-help incremental housing approach is more sustainable than grant-based projects. One of the main reasons of the failure of previous slum upgrade projects in Jinja was that the limited beneficiaries depended too much on external resources without using and developing their own resources, which made the slum upgrade intermittent and unsustainable. Secondly, an assisted way of empowering community and providing training schemes is necessary. This would enable residents to build their houses with their own labour in decent standard, and slum dwellers can develop the skills into jobs opportunity later. Thirdly, it is essential to provide a temporary shelter for original slum dwellers who are affected by a slum upgrade project. The slum dwellers cannot afford to find temporary residence in most of on-site slum upgrade projects. Fourthly, there needs to be an inclusive scheme for tenants who are frequently ignored in many slum upgrade projects. As the main constraint of landowners, house owners, and tenants are lack of enough dwelling units, a scheme which can increase dwelling units needs to be arranged.

A successful self-help incremental housing requires the active engagement of communities as well as involvement of governments and NGOs. The scheme for the assisted self-help for nurturing communities and capacity building can lead to the residential improvement of slums in a sustainable way. In this context, an establishment of a comprehensive community centre, tentatively named a Self-Reliance Centre (SRC), is suggested for Jinja. This centre has multiple roles, providing temporary shelter, a training centre for incremental housing and, most importantly, a community empowerment. This centre is expected to provide a space for community organisation and empowerment for a sustainable self-help incremental housing while residents affected by on-site redevelopment are accommodated in the temporary shelter in it. These functions of SRC would enable a rotational on-site redevelopment scheme which can minimise the negative impacts from projects. In addition, a strategic community grouping of tenants and non-tenants is emphasised as an inclusive scheme in slum upgrade projects.

The suggestions from this study can be characterised in three ways. First, a policy package with a SRC, a comprehensive community centre, can be a sustainable way to provide a basis for residents in slums to upgrade their houses. Initial top-down efforts of governments and NGOs to empower communities with this scheme can invite bottom-up development of self-reliance of communities. Second, this approach can benefit a much wider proportion of residents in slums than the direct provision of infrastructure or housing units with given resources. Affordable cost and sustainable approach, based on community empowerment and self-help incremental housing in this scheme, can alleviate the problem of small number of beneficiaries and unaffordability from one-off grant-based projects. Third, this scheme incorporates the tenants group as one of the main targets, who are frequently excluded in discussion of self-help incremental housing projects. An inclusive approach for tenants group in this scheme could lead to more equitable upgrade of slums than previous approaches.

The slum dwellers, JMC, central government, and NGOs are still working for the improvement of living environment of the slums in Jinja. In this process, the SRC based on the lessons from previous slum upgrade projects in Jinja can be a small cornerstone for slum upgrade programmes in Uganda. Given that many small and medium sized cities like Jinja have limited resources in addressing slum issues, a self-help incremental housing focusing on community empowerment can be a sustainable approach. The introduction of a comprehensive community centre which enables rotational and inclusive slum upgrade can be applied to other small and medium sized cities facing challenges in providing adequate housing for the low income population, particularly in the era of rapid urbanisation.
References


Revisit to incremental housing focusing on the role of a comprehensive community centre: the case of Jinja, Uganda

**Figure 1** Location of Masese1 in Jinja

![Figure 1](image1)

**Figure 2** Housing condition of Masese1

![Figure 2](image2)

**Figure 3** Concept of Self-Reliance Centre

![Figure 3](image3)
Figure 4  Grouping of residents for a Self-Reliance Centre

Figure 5  Operation of the Self-Reliance Centre

Rotational Redevelopment
Figure 6  Tentative Location of the Self-Reliance Centre
Revisit to incremental housing focusing on the role of a comprehensive community centre: the case of Jinja, Uganda

Table 1 Overview of slums in Jinja

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Land Ownership</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Monthly Rent (UGX/USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babu Patel</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>JMC &amp; Private</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>35,000/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loco Railway</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Uganda Railways</td>
<td>1,085</td>
<td>13,000/5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masese1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>JMC</td>
<td>2,680</td>
<td>10,000–20,000/4–8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumudde Market</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>JMC</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>25,000/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rippon Market</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>JMC</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>20,000–25,000/8–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soveto</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>Customary</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>25,000/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walukuba-Zabef</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Customary</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>30,000/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>57.2 (1.9%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>25,165 (27.7%)</td>
<td>Average 26,250 (USD 10.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jinja</strong></td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td></td>
<td>92,100</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2012 Enumeration data adapted from ACTogether.

Table 2 Main features of Masese1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land and Housing Tenure</th>
<th>[de facto] customary ownership (officially owned by JMC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land tenure</td>
<td>Owner occupier (51%), Tenant (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Tenure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Condition</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Unit Size</td>
<td>11 m² (median)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Material</td>
<td>Floor: Cement screed (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roof: Corrugated iron sheets (72.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wall: Timber (59.1%), Mud and wattle (9.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathing facility</td>
<td>Private outdoor bathing facility (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet</td>
<td>Pit latrines (84.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Communal taps (50%), Private taps (40%),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubbish pit (44.3%), Open dump site (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>Natural drainage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewerage System</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road in front of the housing</td>
<td>Less than 3 meters wide, no paving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Socioeconomic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Settling in Masese1</th>
<th>Job/Economic opportunities (44.3%), Marriage or other family reason (20.9%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Household(HH) Size</td>
<td>4.66 persons (mean)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation of HH Head</td>
<td>Self-employed (74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level of HH Head</td>
<td>Primary (42%), Secondary (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Source</td>
<td>Trade (23.5), Service workers (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Monthly Income</td>
<td>Less than UGX 75,000/USD 30 (37.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UGX 75,000–300,000/USD 30–120 (47.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than UGX 300,000/USD 120 (10.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Expenditure Item</td>
<td>Food (35.6%), Transport (10.2%), Housing Rent (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving or not</td>
<td>Saving (66.1%) [Savings groups (46%), Bank (29%), others (25%)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Housing Delivery</td>
<td>Incremental &amp; Self-help (65.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Most of the land in informal settlements in Jinja is considered to be under the residents’ \[de facto\] ownership.