Action Plan
for the
Nairobi Slums

By

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The challenges of the Nairobi slums are not going away. Sending in good money after bad will not solve any of the problems there. As the estimated population in these slums grows to well over 2 million there will be more mouths to feed, more trash piled up, more sewage, more disease and less water. Currently the growth of these slums is a huge issue, although HIV/AIDS is taking a serious dent out of the total number, somewhat slowing the growth.

The largest slum in Nairobi, Kenya is called Kibera and has over 800,000 inhabitants. The roads or pathways are littered with animal waste, garbage and human waste. Although most of the children do not wear shoes the roads often have jagged rocks. Many travelers come to visit Kibera and "Slum Tourism" is getting popular, still no major improvements to the area have been done despite the popular topic in the media. Humanitarian band-aids are helpful, but not enough.

Recently the rents were raised there and it became a political hot topic leading to severe violence, fires, protests and riots. Most feared for their lives. The sewage runoff from the Kibera slums runs into the already highly polluted Nairobi River, which is used downstream for people washing their clothes. Still even worse most of the landlords of the slum (60%) are government officers or politicians, corruption is another huge issue. [UN Human Settlement Programme (UN Habitat) Study].

Kibera means "forest" but it seems the city officials of Nairobi are having a hard time seeing the forest for the slum. Not long ago, The Kibera Urban Environment and Sanitation Master Plan was introduced even so the problems run much deeper than the proposed measures and it appears to have been more political window dressing. The Kibera Slum, golf course adjacent, is not the only shanty town in Nairobi, just the largest. One other shanty town in Nairobi, "Korogocho" got street lighting after a huge vocal firestorm to prevent civil unrest, so much more is needed.

The sanitary situation in Nairobi's shanty-towns and slums causing serious health issues such as;

- Skin Disease
- Worm Infestation
- Typhoid

Due to the altitude and temperature Malaria is not as bad as other parts of the Nation, but Climate Change promises to change all that. Volunteer health clinic workers say that over 50% of the problems they see are hygiene related. One huge problem has been that poor folks with no jobs cannot afford to pay for some of the open pit latrines and instead hold it until night time and defecate into a plastic bag and throw it into the street or on a neighbor's roof. They call these "Flying Toilets" and unfortunately nearly all the roofs leak or are in a state of disrepair.

Today over one billion people live in Urban Slums on Earth and that number is rising at an alarming rate. Kibera in Nairobi is merely one humanitarian crisis and there are many more like it Africa, Asia, South America and Indonesia. Africa had an estimated 14 million orphan children of HIV/AIDS victims and that was a figure from 2001, some believe the number now is nearly double if not triple today. Even without the AIDS crisis, 32.5% of the Earth's human population lives in Urban Slum areas with very similar living conditions.

Is it really that bad?

Indeed, it is worse than that. What is being done? Well, there have been many "total plans" floated, but none have worked because they do not address the real issues. One large project built Low income housing multi-story buildings, but the people of the slums do not want to live there. Caring water up stairs was another factor. As soon as they were built many who were eligible, sub-let the rooms or used them to shelter animals. Worthy cause, nice attempt, but it turned out to have been a complete waste.

There are people, literally Angles or Mother Teresa Types working with the slum communities from the inside, but they are overwhelmed with the HIV/AIDS victims, orphan children, disease, starvation and sanitation issues. And without such basic necessities as;

- Trash and Rubbish Pick-up
- Running Water
- Electricity and Power
- Sewer Hook-ups
- Shelter from Weather (marginal roofing, repairs)
- Fire Fighters or Fire Stations
- Police other than Neighborhood Watch

These extraordinary folks just cannot keep up and those in need are growing in numbers, dying of HIV/AIDS or have no way to support themselves. The filth taxes even the strongest with the most robust immune systems; 15% die before age 5. Many young girls take to the streets to make extra money to eat and risk getting HIV/AIDS and their chances are not very good. 26% will be sexually abused by age 14 and most start their sexual promiscuity between ages 9-12.

If we really look at the slums of the World in places like Africa, Haiti, Palestine, India, China, Indonesia, South Africa, South Asia and Central America much of the problems are indeed similar in nature. Is there a solution or is the solution so horrific to consider that no one will talk about it, such as;

- Sterilizing humans
- Eliminating people
- Bulldozing the slums
- Paving over the slums
- Burning the slums down
- Kicking all the people out
- Moving them to another location
- Allowing HIV/AIDS to Kill the People

The aid that the first world citizens send is more about allowing donors to satisfy themselves so they can feel that they are doing something, yet in reality often they are making the problems worse. Many times the money and aid never even makes it to the people that really need the help. Of course you cannot tell them that or they get hostile and even accuse you of having no empathy. Throwing good money after bad is a silly waste and although the cause and calling are noble, the ends fall far short.

People do not like to hear these things, but this is the reality. Removing someone's suffering for or month or a year might be nice, but in the end they go back to the same old life. It often, crueler to show someone something they can never have than to help them in their own chosen environment or the slums where they live? Straight out giving also inhibits self-reliance.

To fix these issues responsibility must be placed back onto those slum communities to solve their own problems for themselves from within. But first, these slums need basic infrastructure;

- Water
- Sewer
- Schools
- Paved roads
- Trash pick-up
- Health Centers
- Local Government

These are the very basics, as a starting place. But how can you fix an area that has 2 million plus (estimated) and growing, where HIV/AIDS is running ramped? It will take some brave people to make the challenges to be met. It appears that once the basic infrastructures are completed most of the major challenges will be met and then the HIV/AIDS issues can be tackled.

In considering all this there seems to be 150 to 220 different shanty towns or slums in Nairobi depending on your method of counting and it makes sense to put a deadline on the project to revitalize the areas; less than a decade should be the goal; that will mean 15 to 22 slums per year.

Now then, such a project is obviously easier said than done because each of these slums consists of 10s of thousands, if not 100s of thousands of people. Although 60% of Nairobi's population lives in Urban Slums these shanty-town inhabitants only occupy 5% of the land area of the city.

Where Do We Start?

To start such a massive undertaking we need to consider a grid plan of attack and it must be done in sections. Although slums of Nairobi are all around the city, they do not completely surround it, as they are checkered throughout. They are sprawling they, not a perfect circle. Nevertheless to visualize this action plan concept think of a clock and each phase will be a slice of the pie. These areas must be bulldozed and people will have to leave temporarily and indeed also employed to work to build their section or other sections of the slums during re-vitalization.

Obviously the first step is to build a massive sewer treatment plant at the lowest point of the area and it will need its own source of power or hook to the city grid. Sub-sewer treatment plants or pre-treatment plants will be needed in smaller slums at their lowest points. This will take huge funding and industrial talent and should not be compromised by political corruption.

The second step that must take place is the cleanup and the trash removed to four new separate landfills which will be built as the project progresses. People will be employed to remove trash and work 3 to 4 hour shifts with push carts and this operation will go on 24-hours a day in each section which is planned to be next.

Others slums can also remove trash if they set up teams to do this on their own; the project will also fund the labor as part of the project. By paying them for each load delivered they will find the trash and bring it to the land fill in bulk. There is already one very organized Youth Organization doing this, The Kibera Youth Help Group using the slogan "Trash is Cash" and this model can be expanded with their assistance. [see www.Kibera.net "Youth Link"]

The Caterpillar Bulldozing efforts for the section in progress will be 24 hours a day until completed. The goal is to bulldoze one of "4-sectors" of each "section" or slice of the pie. Visualize a tall pyramid-like triangle with horizontal lines. The pyramid is the section and the areas inside the sectors. By doing the bulldozing quickly, there will not be time for protests, riots or attacks on the bulldozer crews. This has to be done, there is no easy way.

At the sector level pre-surveys will identify those areas where people have built private compounds and the new structures will be re-built in the same configuration. These people will be recommended for town-city leadership positions, showing they have united their local folks.

Kenya's Minister for Roads, Public Works & Housing, Raila Odinga said that during the last "Kenya Slum Upgrading Project" that he was adamant against "Forced Evictions" during the upgrades, but asked for volunteer temporary evacuations during the work. This is a nice way to keep peace and keep riots from occurring, yet if the people are there during the upgrades then the upgrades themselves cannot be meaningful or substantial enough to solve any real problems.

Ring Roads in slums like Kibera are needed to be put into place along with direct roads to the city. The current interior roads or paths in many slums are narrow, unpaved, unlit and dangerous after dark, after 7 pm a female has a good chance of being raped. One takes their life into their own hands to be alone on the narrow pathways at night. There is no way to get a water truck or

fire truck in, there are no ambulance services and no police come into the area. Any long term solution must take into consideration the need to accommodate such things in the future.

The lowest elevations must be done first so the sewer infrastructure can be built along with large scale pipes so that more flow can be added as other sections are built. Current sewage ditches should be pumped into the pipes being built. Trenches will be dug by hand using the massive labor force available. Future grading will be needed for any storm water run-off.

The labor for digging the trenches for the pipes will be 3 to 4 hour shifts with a maximum of six hours to employ the most number of people and this operation will go on 24-hours per day with regional weather considerations. Workers will get a meal and paid each day they work. The catering efforts will need to be robust and anyone may work if they wish.

Community water fountains in a grid plan will also be built this in addition to water pluming in each house, pipes to be buried. Presently some living in the slums in Nairobi pay, as much as a sixth to a third of their income just for water. Many are gouged and can do nothing about this.

Next roads will be built and paved with compacted dirt paths as sidewalks along both sides of street, so people can walk barefooted. Again, this operation must be running 24-hours a day in order to prevent any equipment, materials or hand tools from being stolen.

The homes will be built in concrete box like or honeycomb structures with small rooms and toilets all single story or double story with lofts in some places for families. We are building basic shells nothing more. These small structures will be made in a "tilt-up" fashion on-site. Concrete will be re-enforced with recycled materials from current structures.

Houses can be built in a courtyard configuration or other configuration between walk-ways and/or roads as needed. Those who are temporarily displaced will be surveyed and the learn-as-you-go strategy will be employed here, with a goal of speed to completion. They can point to the picture of the type of home or surroundings they wish. A popular vote using this method will prevail and everyone will be notified. This will alleviate unnecessary rioting.

Schools will also be built (solar powered) and town center squares will also be made for celebration. Each area will be divided into town-cities, with councils to run their communities. Buildings for local government (town-councils) will be located next to the town squares and schools. Healthcare drop in centers will also be near this area. These areas recreation areas and town-center locations will be built.

After this is done the people can move back in provided they meet criteria of the local council such as;

- No Prostitution
- Drug Sales
- Known Rapes
- Crime Gangs

The accepted people and their families can sign up for local jobs, as teachers, trash collectors, council, healthcare people if qualified or for education re-training or school. Volunteer groups, clubs and community organization plans will be available for town-center representatives to help organize. Local representation offices for NGOs will also be built near the town centers provided they are staffed, if not they will be converted into add-on health-care centers or other use deemed by the local town councils.

Small businesses can be set up outlining the streets near the town centers. At first they will be cargo container based businesses, eventually with the town council permission they may build permanently. To visualize this concept think of mini-booths similar at World-wide fairs or rodeo in cargo containers (able to be secured and locked up). Water hook-ups and sewer clean-outs between streets and sidewalk paths will be set every 28-40 feet near town centers and every 150 feet in other areas for future expansion.

This will also attract micro-loan funding for new business start-up enterprises. Small Cargo Containers can host 2-4 separate businesses and large cargo containers up to 3-6 small enterprises. With roads built products can be brought in and out easily, without theft. Roads will be built wide in anticipation of future use. Once things warrant more services, power can be brought in and will be affordable due to the numbers that have the funds to pay for it.

This revitalization project of the Nairobi Slums will employ tens of thousands of people and they can make enough money to live for a year working their 3-4 hours a day if they wish too. As each phase is built the sewer lines will be added to existing lines. As the project grows and the details are learned and challenges met, additional sections can start on opposite ends of the city and run simultaneously, while the original section is completed.

This model will undergo constant evaluation of each phase and should be studied by academics, construction personnel and taken to other slum areas throughout the world such as;

- Haiti
- Rio de Jinero
- Bombay
- New Delhi
- Beijing
- Shanghai
- Karachi
- Istanbul
- Mexico City

This model will be considered a "Franchise-able Model" which can be duplicated and available for any large slum area anywhere in the world though such gouprs as the UN, World Bank and other large NGOs. This will make it possible so any large city or nation-state can apply under strict a franchise agreement terms to participate, with funding and stipulations such as;

- Acceptable Constitution
- Human Rights Guarantees
- Return of Costs over 50 years
- Self-Governance Clauses - Voting
- Non-Tolerance of Political Corruption
- Good Standing in International Community

This particular "Module" can also be part of a larger package or part of a "Total Franchise Program" for a Nation-State's master economic re-vitalization plan or Complete Make-Over. Team Partners may include the World Bank, NGOs, International Corporate Sponsors and/or UN (or other future World Franchise Group of Human Civilizations).

Regional Variations of this "Franchise Module for Slum Re-vitalization" are paramount. Although the basic plan will be cut from the same mold there are vast differences in culture, weather, customs, economies and neighbors to be considered. It must be noted that a "one-size fits all" will fit "no" slum revitalization challenge.

Other Franchise Modules will have similar "turn-key" models established for various stress situations in human civilizations or societies. A nation-state can choose; A La Carte or a Comprehensive Complete Make-over. Either way a preliminary feasibility a study will be quickly completed (1-2 weeks) for review and a full-feasibility study within 1-2 months. This will allow for new leadership coming into power to quickly get the ball rolling.

The Shanty-Town type Slums of Nairobi or anywhere for that matter need a comprehensive and well thought out plan to succeed. If not all the Band-Aids and aid money sent in will only prolong and worsen the problem. A systematic plan must be incorporated and launched without years and years of discussion and committees. Just get it done and do it right.

The United States of America funds Kenya some 1.6 Billion in Aid and yet we have human rights issues and slums in Nairobi, other large cities and in rural areas where people make even less money. In fact the farm workers are coming to the city for work, because they cannot make enough working in agriculture. Agriculture and rural jobs pay only $.60 to $1.50 per day and those living in the slums of Nairobi can earn as much as $1.50 to $2.60 per day if they are lucky.

The United States of America and the State Department should lean harder and offer to forgo aid money in trade for US Navy Seabees and Army Corp of Engineers assisting if action is not taken in Nairobi if something is not done. Kenya must also address the issues with the neglected rural areas where death by starvation is common place, forcing families to move into the city to find higher paying jobs so they can eat.

This economic disparity is driving more and more people into the shanty-town urban slums and draining the rural areas, which also desperately need help, often more so, as their crisis is even worse. Due to the political influences the city gets the money first, the slums second and the rural areas rarely. Many rural areas have had issues with both floods and droughts causing catastrophic challenges with crop failures and food shortages and further price increases.

The corruption factor is also a huge issue in Kenya at all levels of government and it is impeding their free-markets and causing the slowing of the flow of goods, labor and money. This causes foreign investment to seek greener pastures and is part of the reason for the huge divide in classes in Nairobi and throughout Kenya. This is not a lost cause, as Kenya is probably one of the safest countries in Africa to invest in and yet, taking the ethical standards in both business and politics up a notch would do wonders to reduce poverty levels.

The Strategic Construction Plan and Grid
Upgrade Projects for Nairobi's Kibera Slum

[GlobeXplorer/teraserver.com]

The aerial Satellite Photo above was taken in 2004 from GlobeXplorer/Terraserver.com and was part of a study done by The United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat).
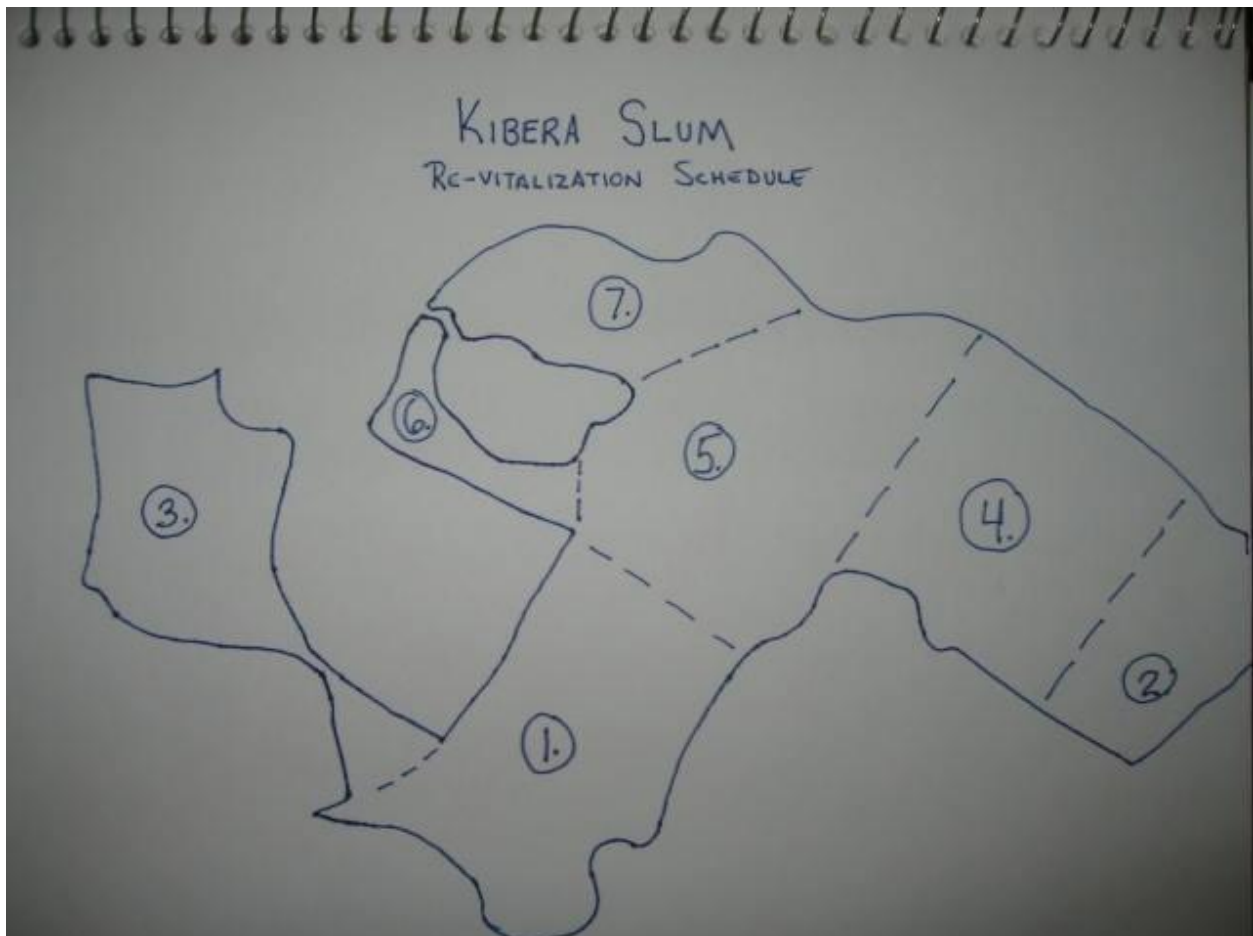
Depicted in red is the Slum and Shanty-Town of Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya and home to 800,000 people, packed in like sardines, with no sewer system, flowing water, power or roads. Trash is often stacked up as high as the one story shanty-homes. The Kibera Slum is discussed throughout this paper. The Green area is merely a large golf course to help contrast and allow for visualization and scaling, so the viewer can understand sizing of these slums and the density.

Previously, we had talked about working the massive slum revitalization project in sections. The huge Kibera Slum should be broken into 7 sections each with 3-5 sectors. Since the Kibera Slum is so huge, it might be wise to start in the some of the smaller slums around the Capital City Nairobi first to get an idea of how best to attack the problem and learn how best to deal with the temporary displacement of people during the process and to refine the process prior to starting on the first sector of the first of seven sections in the Kibera Slum.

Kibera will indeed be the biggest challenge of all for Nairobi, as this humanitarian crisis is one of the largest problems in all of Africa. Some of this land is private and Nairobi has some interesting property laws however, Eminent Domain Strategies might be necessary in some sections or sectors to keep political peace, as all politics is local. The revitalization project may wish to employ property purchases thru negotiation VS straight out eminent domain procedures.

If the property owners will not sell or eminent domain strategies are not feasible, property owners should agree not to raise the rent of inhabitants for 20-years after re-vitalization project is completed or they forfeit the property. Perhaps these types of options should be explored, as it makes it fair for all concerned even is some have been less than fair in previous dealings.

Visualization of Sections of
Kibera Re-vitalization Project

[Sketch from Scientific Portfolio of Lance Winslow]

Next, see a break down of the "Master Plan" and schedule order of the Kibera Slum re-vitalization project. Note the size of Sections number 1, 3, 4 & 5 and see the massive undertaking. These areas need to be broken down into 5 separate sectors. Remember the total areas or sections 1 thru 7 represent 800,000 inhabitants.

Sections 2 and 6 will need three sectors, perhaps with proper refinement, by the time the revitalization teams and crews get to section six, they might feel comfortable with only two-sectors to finish it up faster. Section 7 appears to be worthy of either 3 or 4 sectors. The teams will cross that bridge when they come to it as they will have adequately refined their process by then.

Potential Eventuality for Nairobi City Annexation of Parts of Kibera Slum

Sectors number 3, 6 and 7 appear to be potentially good candidates for city annexation over time, as they can be separated from the whole of the Kibera Slums, once the re-vitalization takes hold and the communities are controlled internally. Using a divide and conquer strategy, other communities in sectors 1, 2, 4 and 5 will be working towards total annexation, as the local micro-economicies take hold. This will mean additional work such as bringing power and water to each home and a WiMax system to help cross digital divide and internet access to all, not just in the schools or town center offices.

All Slums of Nairobi on Satellite Photo

[GlobeXplorer/teraserver.com]

Slums Near Airport Critical

Now then, one major issue with the Nairobi Slums are the areas around the airport. There are slums both on the approach end and departure end of the runways. Due to surface-to-air hand-held missiles and knowing that slums are often areas which attract International Terrorism or organized crime elements, those slums must be moved at least 1 mile adjacent flight paths of any aircraft under 2,000 AGL (above ground level). This will insure airport safety. The larger slum just South of the airport is not a critical as aircraft on the ground at those lateral cross points.

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This also means expansions of nearby slum areas, to be further upgraded perhaps by as many as 5,000 units. Considering 3-4 persons occupying a unit that is about 15,000 to 20,000 people permanently displaced to a new area. All slums around the airport can be considered one section done in 3-sector groups. These slums will most likely be relatively easy compared to the others.

It is important for the Nairobi's International Standing and to increase foreign investment to remove the plight that can be seen from the air as people fly in and out of the Nairobi International Airport. A major African Continent transportation hub cannot allow a negative image like this. It is not good advertising to hang out your dirty laundry, as it puts question marks in the minds of entrepreneurial capitalists who would invest money in Kenya.

Far Westside Nairobi Slum Areas

The West Side slums which dot the satellite map will need some consolidation and consideration of where those people work to adequately address those issues. It makes sense to complete those revitalization areas during inclement weather periods or between setting-up for major operations of the Master Project elsewhere.

Since these slums have space between and are already surrounded by urban city development it makes sense to use a standard downtown style revitalization strategy there rather than any sort of bull-dozing effort from the ground up efforts.

Indeed, this might be that areas quick way out of poverty into economic prosperity. It will provide labor for those communities within the area, yet allowing for the separation of classes without clashing until a better equilibrium is reached.
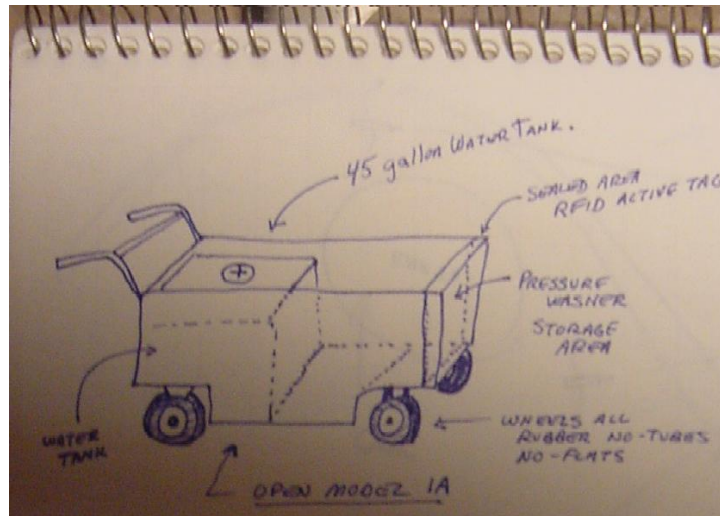
North East Nairobi Slums

The North East Nairobi Slums do present challenges, but nothing compared to Kibera. Some of these slums can be cleaned up simply by community support and as the rest of the city cleans up its act the synergy will increase the positive attitude and belief that; "Nothing can stop us now!"

It is essential to get the masses behind the project and to recruit volunteer help from the middle class and upper class. Since the North East Nairobi Slums are somewhat broken up they must be stopped from the current spreading because once there is a solid sea of red that is when bulldoze plans are needed. It is best when possible to prevent such tactical strategies.

Economic Development After Initial Revitalization Completed

As the local Kibera Slum creates its own wind and small business environment this will need to be maintained. The goal is to have income and money coming into the area to remain in circulation in the slum. How will money come in? Monies will come in from those who have jobs outside the slum in factories, as cooks, maids and civil workers. Also since slum tourism is high, reporters will wish to report on the progress of the upgraded slums and the controversies surrounding the bulldozing. Dignitaries, philanthropists and government officials will wish to parade around and take credit for the incredible recovery to economic viability.

In addition to the local small enterprises and businesses which are near the town-centers, there will also need to be "mobile businesses" such as cleaners, sales carts and other incidental types of businesses. As more money is flowing in the area the 800,000 population will continue to support them. Mobile Cart businesses might look something like this below;
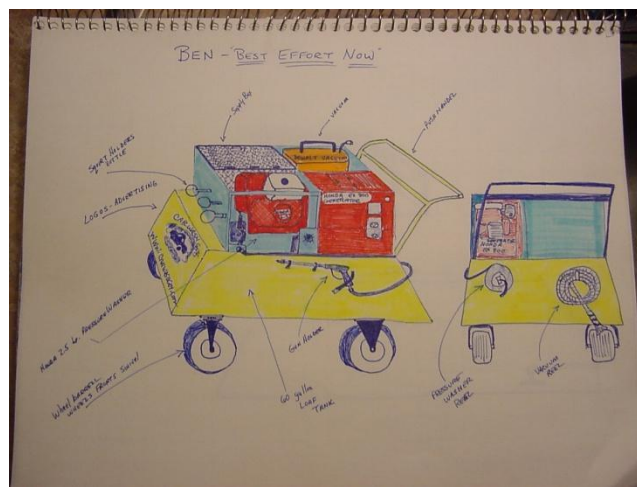

[Sketch from Scientific Portfolio of Lance Winslow]

These carts can be built for as water cleaning carts, food storage carts, dry good carts and the cost to build them will be anywhere from $65.00 to $450.00 where the higher costs will be for carts with pressure washers and water tanks. These carts can be equipped with RFID Active tags for tracking so that an entrepreneur who wishes to rent them out by the day as independent contractor units can do so safely. There base location could be a Cargo Container with the goods inside. The small business enterprise plans are available thru the Online Think Tank.

Additionally the units could disperse themselves throughout the Kiberia area in a grid formation allowing several workers in each sector to serve the needs of the emerging consumers. This will employ 1,000s of workers peddling wares, doing services or selling food items. These workers will in-turn have additional money to feed their families and maintain their health from the exercise of pushing the carts.

This type of business enterprise or program also adds eyes and ears to the community to insure neighborhood policing and reporting back to the town-councils. As things progress the needs of the consumers and the demand will also help in-town Nairobi businesses to make items that are desired and employ more people in the city, including those who need jobs in Kibera and other slum areas throughout. Of course for those who wish to leave the slums they will have a way out if they are willing to work hard and learn how to work smart.

This also provides a stepping stone from poverty to middle class Kenya. Eventually the businesses will become more elaborate with local-branding in Kibera and the slum areas. For instance the push cart businesses will expand and improve image, with uniforms and emerging brands. Sketch below will help visualize this.

[Sketch from Scientific Portfolio of Lance Winslow]

Eventually each town-center will have a sub-Chamber of Commerce, which will be part of the Kibera Branch of the Nairobi City Chamber of Commerce; this will further improve the chances of Nairobi Business Investment into the Kibera and Re-vitalized areas. It will further encourage local banking relations and micro-loans into these depressed by emerging regions of Nairobi.

The slums of Nairobi are not completely dire nor do the people there feel absolutely down and out, there is a sense of perpetual optimism and "strong will" despite the conditions. All is not lost, as the NGOs and volunteers around the world are pulling for them and doing what they can to assist. Once a permanent fix is completed and a future economic plan is in place, these once downtrodden areas of Nairobi will serve as an economic success model for the World. There is hope; it is time to make it happen. Implementing this action plan is paramount to winning the war on Poverty and re-vitalizing the Nairobi slums and using this model throughout the World.

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