

Design for a Better Future,  
for Widows and their Children in Kibera



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Design for a Better Future, for Widows and their Children in Kibera

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## Abstract

At right this moment- there are many widows in Kibera who are sitting at home and looking at their young children who are hungry. The reason behind this is the fact that she does not have any social and economic support and thereby do not afford to buy food or water for the family.

This is a Master Thesis presenting some of the social and economic problems that the widows in Kibera face and a solution to them via creation of an organization for them. The thesis also presents a proposal for the function of the organization as well as an architectural proposal for a place where these activities shell occur. The concept behind the architectural proposal is based on the traditional architecture amongst the five major tribes in Kenya.

My approach is based on telling the information and facts as dialogs. The main reason to that is that most of my knowledge was gathered by interviews and what I experienced during my time in Kenya. Another reason to why I chose this method is that I want the thesis to more simple and interesting to read for everyone, no matter what level and field of education.

I studied the different methods of Story Telling amongst others via the book Story-Telling by Lena Mossberg and Erik Nissen Johanssen. The problem that I faced was the fact that none of the methods was fully suitable for my thesis- which is why I could not follow any one of them up to 100%, but I used the gathered knowledge as much as possible and it was very helpful. It is important to clarify that the research was not done during one day- as it says in the story. I personally made the story in that way in order to make it more interesting. A large part of the dialog between Naimo and Payam is made up, but all the facts and statistics in the dialogs are correct and based on the mentioned sources.

The thesis represents some part of the information and the knowledge that I gathered during my study visits in Kenya. I decided to write my thesis about widows and their children in Kibera when I was in Kenya as a student in the course Reality Studio at Chalmers University of Technology. I gathered further information and experience regarding this topic when returned to Kenya as an exchange student at Maseno University, in Kisumu, within the exchange programme Linnaeus Palme and my research was finalized through my study visit in Kenya, sponsored by SIDA's scholarship for Minor Field Studies.

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# Introduction

## Reality Studio

It was around the evening time in the middle of the Swedish summer. You could hear the heavy rain drops falling on the tree leaves. It was a so called summer, a Swedish summer. Every year almost all Swedes hope for a sunny summer to come, all Swedes beside those who work in the travelling agencies. The travelling agencies hope for a rainy summer, because that's when Swedes travel to other countries for enjoying the sunlight and avoid the rainy summer days like this one.

All of a sudden the thunderstorm started. That's when Payam started looking at his electric torch. It was a reflection that had remained in his mind from the study trip to Kenya from around one and half year ago. That is when the electricity was turning off as soon as it was thunder storm.

Payam went to Kenya for the first time with his classmates when he was studying the course Reality Studio while at Chalmers University of Technology. The students knew that they would remember what they experienced and learned during this study trip and talk about it with their friends for the rest of their life. Payam felt that, through Reality Studio, he experienced a way of using all the broader knowledge and understanding that he obtained regarding his professional work in relationship with social, political, economic and cultural issues in a society.

He learned how to analyse a local situation from macro to micro level and a way of designing and assessing concrete proposals and solution for local sustainable development. That is why Payam wanted to go back to Kenya in order to do research for his thesis. He wanted to learn by seeing and experiencing the Kenyan lifestyle, instead of only reading facts and information about it from different sources. Based on his previous experience, he felt that he had learned so much more by seeing the problems with his own eyes instead of only reading about them.

The study visit was two months long and started in the middle of February. That was around the time when the summer was ending and the fall was starting in Kenya. Payam and his classmates were staying at a hostel in Kisumu. The electricity at the hostel stopped working every time there was a heavy thunderstorm and that was the time when the students' electric torches were useful.


The thunderstorm in Sweden reminded Payam about a memorable experience he had in Kenya while he was working on a project for Reality Studio. It was the time when he and his group-mate, Estelle, had to build a model for the next day and right in the middle of the model making process the thunderstorm started and the electricity turned off.

It was impossible to see anything, but the model had to be done. It was extremely necessary for Payam and Estelle to have a model for their proposal. They had to present their idea in the middle of the city centre to the general public of Kisumu city including, big politicians and people from different organizations who were invited. It would be very difficult to explain their idea without a model.

But luckily one of his classmates had a head-torch. With the help of this torch, Payam could keep on working with the model. He and his friends where laughing at the situation and he knew that he would remember this forever.



Picture: Sooper Guesthouse  
by: Adam Peterson



The electricity came back right when the model was finished. The model was showing Estelle and Payam's proposal for a centre where widows, orphans and residents with disability would produce handicraft products - products that they hopefully would sell to visitors. The idea was that also the visitors would be able to participate in the production, together with the local artists.

The artists would teach the visitors how they could produce the product. Later on the artists would give the visitors the opportunity of coming up with new ideas. It could be about the form and shape of the sculptures, the production method or anything else. In this way the organization would create a social interaction amongst the visitors and the local residents of Kisumu. This corporation would also develop the creativity and the art in the area as well as present it for visitors.

The goal with the conceptual project was to give the possibility of economic and social development amongst the widows and residents with disability around Kisumu. They believed that, by improving the economic conditions amongst the widows they would also afford to pay the education fees for their children. The children, who are part of the future society, would then have the possibility for further education and thereby better economic and social development prospects in the future.



## Background to the Project

This initial idea of the project Payam was doing with Estelle came up amongst others through a workshop called “Household Reading Systems” as a part of Reality Studio. The aim and goal with this exercise was to understand the resource flows into the household as well as out of the household. It was to understand the family’s life and work condition as well as the way the residents of the area perceive their daily life. Payam, Estelle and a student from Maseno University by the name Frank had to try to participate as much as possible in the daily activities of the family in order to receive a deeper understanding of their host’s daily life.

Within this workshop, Payam, Estelle and Frank visited a family from the Luo tribe in the village of Osiri, located near Kisumu. The family consisted of 16 children and mother Jacinter. Eight of the children were her own and the other eight were from her husband’s second wife. During the visit Jacinter told Payam, Estelle and Frank many things about her life from the time when her husband passed away in January 2001 until now. She told them about the difficulties that she had to face, especially because also her husband’s second wife passed away soon after her husband.

One of the reasons to Jacinter’s success was that she had learned the way of producing handicraft products made of water hyacinths. She learned this through the organization “Osiri Water Hyacinth Organization”. She was working with selling fish and vegetables at the market during the day and produce handicraft products at home during the evening. The handicraft products were later on sold at the market, with help from other widows in the organization. Jacinter’s life history proved to Payam, Estelle and Frank that it is possible for a single mother to take care of a family, even if it is a large one, in a good and successful way.

Payam was really amazed by the positive influence from the handicraft production on the social and economic issues in a family. He felt that Jacinter had proved him that it is possible for a widow to work at home, during the evening time, while taking care of 16 children in a family. He was really happy that they visited Jacinter and her children and was sure that he would never forget about this experience.

Payam was really amazed by Jacinter’s initiative as well as her achievement in her lifestyle. He also realized that the widows are those who face the biggest problems in Kenya. Jacinter reminded him about the widows who lived in the slum area Kibera in Nairobi. He believed that they had a more difficult life situation and started to wonder why the widows in the slum area Kibera did not move to rural areas in order to have a better life condition as Jacinter had.

## Kibera

Payam found out about the problems in Kibera in a lecture at Chalmers University of Technology by Mr. Lars Reutersward, who at that time was working in UN-Habitat. Mr Reutersward informed the students about problems regarding the waste management, water management, hygiene, the lack of security and many other issues in Kibera. Payam got interested and decided to do further research about different slums around the world, especially Kibera.

While sitting on the sofa at Jacinter's home Payam started to think about what he found out about Kibera during and after the lecture. He found out that Kibera is the largest slum in Africa with an area of 2500 square meter allocated in Nairobi.

All the sudden Frank walked in to the living room. He noticed that Payam is thinking about something and asked him:

-What are you thinking about?

Payam said:

-I'm thinking about what I have read about Kibera

Frank said:

-oh yes I know a bit about it, but not very much. I just know that it is in central part of Nairobi with a large population. Do you know how it was created?

Payam answered:

-I read the best description of the creation of Kibera in a PHD work called "Creation of Kibera and Neubians Proefschrift" by Johan de Smedt. He has written that "In 1904 an area of 4197.9 acres was given to the army as military exercise grounds. The Kibera area was surveyed by the government in 1917, and gazetted as "Nairobi Military Area" in 1918. <sup>2</sup> It was in this area that the retired Sudanese soldiers would be allowed to settle, a place that they would call "Kibra": a bushy place, a forest; empty, save for the occasional Masai herder and wild animals."



Map of Kibera in Nairobi

<http://www.openstreetmap.org/export>

Frank said:

-That's interesting. But I thought Sudanese soldiers were the first people who settled there, at least that is what my brother told me.

Payam could clearly remember this discussion while sitting in his bedroom in Sweden and waiting for an email regarding his application for a fund that would give him the possibility of going back to Kenya. Payam could remember that he told Frank that:

-Well by Sudanese soldiers he means the Nubians. Nubians are essentially a mix of

1 <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kibera>

2 <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kibera>

individuals from many different parts of Sudan and the surrounding areas that merged to become a new, military and Islamic, community. They created the basis of a new ethnic group that developed in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century and are a tribe which can be found all over East Africa. They are basically “recent immigrants”, descendants of (slave) soldiers of the Egyptian army in southern Sudan.

A group of them were cut off from the rest of the army 1885 and recruited into the British and German East African colonial armies. That is when they were moved out of Sudan into East Africa. Once the war was over- some of the old soldiers started to work as tax collectors for the colonizers.

They had to go to Africans homes and collect their taxes and thereafter keep some percentage of the collected money or take something extra from the population. Kibera remained as a “rural area” dominated by Nubis, until in the 1970s and 1980s- when it rapidly filled up with “outsiders” that were looking for cheap accommodation.

Frank said:

-Oh that is why it is so crowded now.

Payam said:

-Yes! And there are many different statistics regarding the population within the area. The 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census reports Kibera’s population as 170,070 while the majority of nongovernmental organizations state a population of over 1 million residents.

Frank said:

-It is strange that the government presents such a low population in comparison with the majority of the other organization that have studied this issue.

Payam said:

-It is because the majority of the residents in Kibera are not registered as residents and a large percentage do not even have an identification card. As a result- many of the residents do not have the right to receive economic support from the government or a bank loan. They do also face problem with employment within official organization, legal right and many other problems. The economic problem is much larger in households where a female resident is the only source of income.

The mother has to take care of her children and the household meanwhile she has to earn money for the families living expenses. She has to earn money first of all for the payment of households rent. A problem in Kibera is that there are very few families who own their resident- which is why the majority of the widows have to pay rent.

Frank said:

-Yes that is true- the single mothers, especially the widows, have a difficult life condition here in Kenya.

Payam said:

-Yes. And it is more difficult for the single mothers in Kibera to find a job.

Frank asked:

-Why?

Payam said:

-Because it is difficult for them to leave the children at home in order to look for a job. They prefer working inside of Kibera in order to be able to take care of their children at the same time as they earn money. There are not many job opportunities suitable for the single mothers in Kibera. As a result, the percentage of unemployment is very high within this group. In most cases the single mothers can only find temporary jobs and

do not have a constant income. The percentage of the residents in Kibera who have any savings is very low- which is why the women do not have any capital for starting their own businesses once they divorce or their husband passes away.

In many cases the female residents see prostitution as the only solution to the economic problems in the family. Prostitution is seen as a social problem which results in to a difficult life situation for single mothers and their children. In some cases the single residents even use their own daughters for this purpose. This social problem also results in propagation of HIV and other sexual related diseases in the area. The economic problem amongst the residents make so that they do not afford the medical treatments and this leads to a high percentage of mortality within the area.

Frank was a bit shocked and said:

-That sound terrible. I didn't know that the problems were so big.

Payam said:

-There are many other problems- such as the waste management. There are no toilet facilities in most part of Kibera and there are very few households that have their own toilets. He remembered that he read in a homepage that "Kibera's 1.5 million residents share 600 toilets, meaning that on average one toilet serves 1,300 people".<sup>3</sup>

The majority of the toilets are built with economic support from different organizations outside of Kibera. Once a toilet has been built- a group of residents within Kibera will get the responsibility of the function of the public toilet. They will have to deal with function as well as charging the users. There is no sewage system in Kibera- which is why they use holes in the ground. Once the hole is full, young boys are employed to empty – they take the contents to the river. Many agencies, amongst others UN-Habitat, and NGO's that are trying to help and improve this situation.<sup>4</sup>

Payam also said:

-I read in a book by the name Planet of Slums that some economic professors in USA saw the creation of public toilets as a solution to the sanitation crises- meanwhile in reality they are more as an industry.<sup>5</sup> The public toilets are used as a source of income and are not affordable for some of the local residents. Some female residents have to face the problem of the insecurity within the distance between their resident and the public toilet- which is why they have to use plastic bags. The bags will later on be thrown in the sky with the hope that they will on a roof or a corner on the way. That is why they are called flying toilets.

Frank said:

- Yes. I have heard about the flying toilets.

Payam said:

-Yes. And another problem is that the households in Kibera do not have any access to water pipes. There are some public water pipes allocated in different parts of Kibera, where the residents can buy water.

A problem that the local residents face is that this water is not drinkable unless treated in advance. There are several simple methods of treating the water before drinking it, such as boiling it or using the sunlight. But the problem is that many of the residents do not afford the cost of these treatments and face medical problems.

Frank said:

-I see!

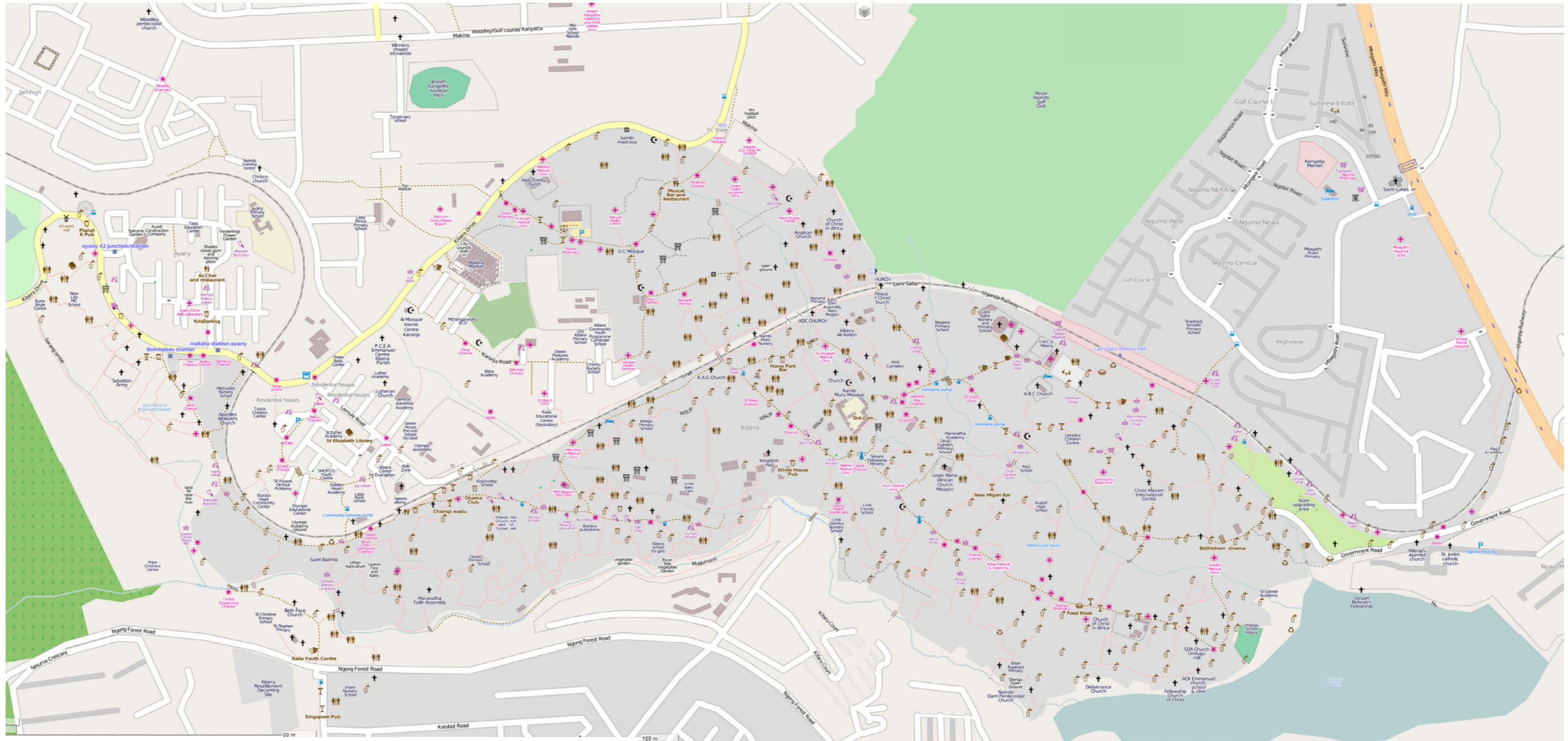
Payam said:

-There is a group who have done a map of Kibera which is showing where the water pipes and the toilets in Kibera are Located. (see next page)

3 <http://shininghopeforcommunities.org/about/about-kibera/>

4 <http://www.kibera.org.uk/Facts.html>

5 Book title: Planet of Slums, Author: Mike Davis p141



Map of Kibera in Nairobi  
<http://www.openstreetmap.org/export>

Frank promised to look for the map on internet when he would get back home- and then he left the room. Payam could remember that- when Frank left the room was trying to ignore the situation with the ground water from Lake Victoria in Jacinter's food and instead keep on thinking about Kibera when all the sudden a chicken jumped on top of the sofa in Jacinter's living room. He found the situation of having a chicken in the living room strange at the start.

But after few seconds he saw the situation as a symbol of the close connection between the natural resources and the residents in the rural areas. He thought about the fact that the widows in rural areas have the possibility of planting vegetables, using the meat or the eggs from their own chicken and drinking the milk from their own cows, instead of buying them from supermarkets- a possibility which is almost impossible



Chicken on the sofa at Jacinter's home

in Kibera. He was wondering about why the widows move to Kibera when all the sudden he noticed that Estelle is talking with him. She told him that it was getting late and it would be better to return to Kisumu. They thanked Jacinter and started heading towards Kisumu.

On the way to Kisumu Payam decided to call his friend Naimo Abdullah as soon as he and Estelle would reach the hostel in Kisumu. Naimo was one of the residents in Kibera who was working in the organization "Kenya Water for Health Organisation" (KWAHO). She informed Payam and the other students from Reality Studio about KWAHO, which is a non-governmental organisation based in Kenya. Naimo told the students that the efforts in the organization are geared towards providing sustainable water and sanitation for the disadvantaged communities in Kenya.

After the presentation Payam told her and her colleague that he is interested in doing more research about Kibera and write his theses about this slum neighbourhood. She and her colleague wrote their phone numbers on a sheet of paper and gave it to Payam right before the students left Kibera. They promised Payam to answer all his questions and show him around in Kibera more - if he would come back.

Payam called Naimo and made an arrangement to meet her outside of Kibera. Arriving few minutes late, Payam saw Naimo waiting for him with a friend of hers. She had asked him to accompany them so that Payam would feel safer and secure in Kibera. They started walking around in the neighbourhood while talking about different problems that exists in the area. They visited several families that consisted of a widow and her children and a school that was driven by a group of widows. Payam felt very sad and touched by what he had seen. He wished that he could help the widows and their children in Kibera.

After a while they visited Naimo's mother's home. Payam asked if they could stay there few minutes and talk about what he wanted to write his thesis about.

## Goals, Aims, Objective

Naimo asked Payam:

-What are your objectives with this study?

Payam said:

-Last year I attended at a lecture by Mr Lars Reutersward. After that lecture I decided to do further studies regarding slums. I felt a strong desire for doing research regarding slums and methods of reducing the economic and social problems within different slums in the world- starting with Kibera.

I felt that I need to start by studying the social, economic and cultural problems in Kenya, which is why I decided to study the course Reality Studio. As a result of the knowledge that I gathered during the study trip in Kenya- I realized that there are large social and economic problems amongst women, especially widows, in Kenya.

I also noticed that these problems are more extreme in slum areas such as Kibera. That is why I decided to study and propose a way of solving, or at least reducing, the social and economic problems amongst the widows in Kibera. I wanted to find a way of improving the living condition of the widows in Kibera.

Naimo interrupted Payam and asked:

-Yes that is correct. Why have you chosen to work only with the widows in Kibera? Why not all women in Kibera or at least other single mothers as well? They have to face problems as well.

Payam said:

-You are right. In fact all women in Kibera have to deal with big social and economic problems. I want to concentrate my research on a special group that, in my opinion, have to deal with the problems in a bigger extend then the other women in Kibera. Based on what I noticed during this visit was the fact that majority of the married women in Kibera can receive an economic and social support from their husband into

some extend. But the single mothers have to deal with these problems into a larger extend.

When it comes to single mothers- the women who have divorced from their husbands can also receive some economic support from their ex-husband- at least for their children's education fee or medical costs. There are even laws which indicate that the fathers have to support their children- even if they are divorced from their mother. The divorced women do not have to deal with the cultural problems in the same extend as the widows have to. The husband's family will not put a big pressure on the divorced women- as they might do on a widow for example for the inheritance of land, property or custody of her children.

Naimo said:

-Yes that is true.

Payam said:

-A large percentage of the female residents in Kibera do not have an identification card or a birth certificate. This makes it impossible for them to receive a bank loan or an employment at an official organization. It is also impossible for them to receive any kind of economic support from the government. The social and economic problems amongst the widows have a negative effect on their children's living condition. I noticed that there are widows who do not afford to eat anything during several days in a week.

The children do not get the possibility of studying due economic problems in the family. As a result they will have a smaller chance for employment or other income generating activities in future. If the children do not get educated- they will have a smaller chance for employment in their future life. In most cases the girls have to stay at home and help their mother with household activities meanwhile the teenage boys spend their time outside of the household.

I believe that the economic problem amongst the widows and their children increases the social problems within the area. The social problems can be issues such as unemployment, prostitution, rape, robbery, violence and in some cases murder. Some of these problems were mentioned at the lecture by Mr Lars Reutersward and I started doing research regarding different goals and theories concerning solving the problems in slums. In this research I read amongst others about the eight Millennium Development Goals in United Nations Development Programs homepage. These eight goals were created in year 2000- when 189 nations made a promise to free people from extreme poverty and multiple deprivations.

During my stay in Kenya with students from Reality Studio I noticed the major problems amongst the residents and thereby got a further interest for some of the goals within the Millennium Developments Goals. I wanted to find a way of getting closer towards achieving these goals.

Naimo said:

-That sounds interesting. Which goals did you become more interested in?

Payam said:

-I want to work with four out of the eight Millennium Developments Goals- goals number one, two, three and seven.



-Goal 1 is: "Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger".

-This goal consists of three targets:

Target 1A says:

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day.

Target 1 B says:

Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.

Target 1 C says:

Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.



Goal 2 is: "Achieve Universal Primary Education"

The first target of this goal is called:

Target 2A- which says:

Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling



-Goal 3 is: "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women"

This goal consists of one target:

Target 3A:

Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Naimo seemed very interested and asked:

- Can you explain this target more specifically?



Payam said:

- well- according to United Nation, the reason for why target 3A has been chosen is that:

- For girls in some regions, education remains elusive.
- Poverty is a major barrier to education, especially among older girls.
- In every developing region except the CIS, men outnumber women in paid employment.
- Women are largely relegated to more vulnerable forms of employment.
- Women are over-represented in informal employment, with its lack of benefits and security. • Top-level jobs still go to men — to an overwhelming degree.
- Women are slowly rising to political power, but mainly when boosted by uotas and other special measures.

Naimo eagerly asked:

-Which is the fourth goal that you find important?

Payam answered:



-Goal 7: “Ensure Environmental Sustainability”

In this goal I find one target as most interesting and that is Target 7D which says: To have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dweller by 2020<sup>6</sup> .

I have a strong interest in these goals- which is why I have decided to have the following two objectives for my thesis. My first objective is:



-To examine how income generating design activities can mitigate social and economic problems amongst widows in Kibera.

The second objective in my research is:



-To find out whether the income generating design activities shall occur in Kibera or in the widow's origin villages.

Naimo asked:

-Is it not obvious that the activities shall occur in Kibera when you want to help the widows in here?

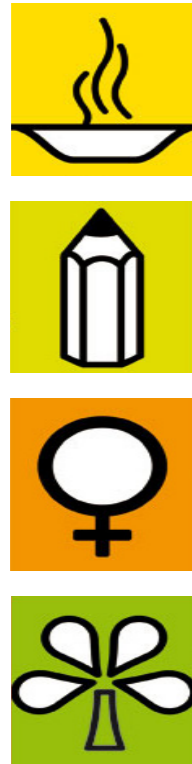
Payam said:

-When I was in Kisumu I met Miss Margaret Auma who is working as, Director of The Spring Ministry Board of Trust. I mentioned what I am planning to write my MA thesis about. I also mentioned that I was considering proposing income generating design activities for them. She asked me about the reason to why I want to propose the activities here in Kibera- despite all the problems that the widows have to face when they live here. She asked me why I do not help the widows in Kibera to move to rural areas by creating the income generating design activities for them in rural areas. In her opinion the activities shall occur in their origin villages where their relatives live. By that I will help the widows in moving back to rural area where the surrounding environment is much better than in Kibera.

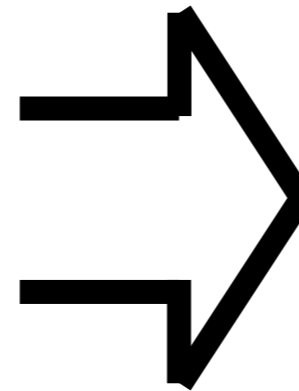
<sup>6</sup> United Nations “End Poverty”: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>

## Summary of Aim and Goals:


My aim is to find a way of accomplishing the mentioned goals within the Millennium Development Goals in order to create a way of solving the economic and social problems amongst widows within different slums in the world- starting with Kibera. I believe that I will find a way of reaching some of the Millennium Developments Goals by accomplishing my objectives.



- Goal 1 is: "Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger".
- Goal 2 is: "Achieve Universal Primary Education"
- Goal 3 is: "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women"
- Goal 7: "Ensure Environmental Sustainability"



## Summary of Objectives:



- To examine how design can mitigate social and economic problems amongst widows in Kibera.
- To find out whether the income generating design activities shall occur in Kibera or in the widow's origin villages.

## Method

Naimo asked:

-How are you going to do your research- what is your method?

Payam answered:

-I will start with reading books, articles regarding the social and economic problems that women in Kenya have to face. I will also visit homepages and interview professionals in order to find further information regarding these issues. I want most the information and facts in my thesis to be based on my interviews with organizations who are working with the social and economic problems that the widows in Kibera have to face.

The reason to that is that in my opinion they are the ones who have the most recent information regarding the current situation within these issues. They know more about the problems that exist in Kibera right now, while most books are old and present the problems from long time ago.

Later on I will interview 25 widows in Kibera regarding the social, economic and cultural problems that they have to deal with in their life. I want to interview five widows from each of the five major tribes in Kenya. In my opinion the widows know which problems that they face more than any other source of research.

I will ask questions regarding their daily life.

- The source of income in their family
- The amount of income in their family
- The social and economic problems that they have to deal with.
- The reason to why they live in Kibera
- If they would prefer to live in the rural area, Kibera or another part of Nairobi

Later on- I will study the social, economic and cultural problems as well as the benefits that widow's would face if they would return to their origin villages. I will do this by visiting origin villages of five widows' who have moved to Kibera. Each widow will be from one of the five largest tribes in Kenya. I will stay about two days in each village and ask five widows almost the same questions as I asked the widows in Kibera.

Naimo asked:

-Why do you want to visit their origin villages?

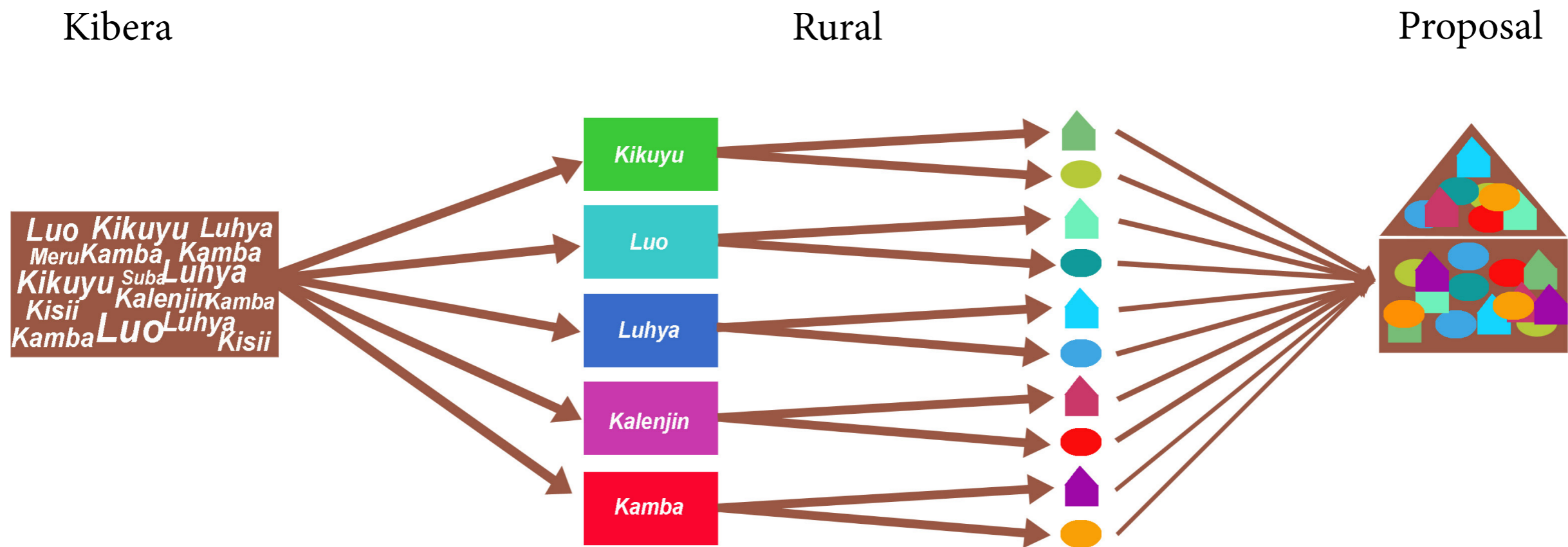
Payam said:

-One of the purposes with these study visits is to figure out the reasons to why the widows move to Kibera from the rural area. I also want to find out if the widows will have a better lifestyle if they live in the rural area or in Kibera. I will observe the social, economic and cultural problems that widows have to face in rural areas by interviewing them and observe their life condition in their homes.

During my visits at the rural areas- I will also observe and study the traditional craft and architecture in each village. For this research I will also visit museums and do further literature studies regarding the traditional architecture amongst the selected tribes. I will use the inspiration from these studies for design of a sustainable building, where income generating activities will occur.

The inspiration from the craft and architecture in the villages will also be used for income generating activities, such as production of handicraft, by widows in Kibera. The purpose with the income generating activities is to support the widows in Kibera in social and economic point of view, either in Kibera or outside of Kibera. The location will depend on the result of the research.

# Method



## Mashimoni Women Group

Naimo said:

-In that case I know an organization that you can work with. The organization is called Mashimoni Women Group. They are working in the village Mashimoni here in Kibera and I believe that they have a gathering right now.

Payam said:

-That sound very interesting. Can we go and visit them now?

Naimo said:

-Sure- we can actually go right now.

While Payam was steering at his laptop in his bedroom- waiting for a response regarding the application for a fund- he could clearly remember how happy and excited he felt when they started walking towards Mashimoni from Naimas' Mothers' home. He remembers that they were walking quickly towards Mashimoni, while Naimo was talking in phone with the chairlady to inform them about their visit. Once they arrived the women in the organization were sitting in the chairladies home and their weekly meeting had just ended. They welcomed Naimo and Payam and asked them to have a seat.

Naimo presented Payam for the members and they welcomed him. Payam explained for the widows what his intension with his visit in Kibera was and asked if he could ask them to present the organization for him.

The chairlady of the organization Jemime Qanyanga said:

-It was 2009 when I called my friends together in order to see if we could empower us selves by putting our minds together. We decided to create an organization in order to help each other. The organization started with 25 members whereby the majority were widows who had children. We did not have any start capital and decided to start by using "Merry-go-round" in order to support each other in economic point of view.

Payam asked:

-What do you mean by "Merry-go-round"?

Jemime said:

-Merry-go-round is a method where the members in an organization meet once in a week. All members will contribute with certain amount of money which has been decided in advanced. The collected amount of money will be given to one of the members in the organization each week.

Payam asked:

-How do you decide which member that should receive the money?

Jemime said:

-There is a list which we follow.

Payam asked:

-How much does each member contribute with?

Jemime said:

-The members had agreed on the amount of 20KSh per person per week- but in a later stage- we decided to save our weekly contribution in the organizations saving in order to be able to buy materials for producing beed necklaces. We started the production once we had enough money to buy enough with material.

Payam asked:

-How much money was it?

Jemime said:

-4000Ksh at the start. But the income was very low and the project ended as a failure for the organization. Many of the members left the organization and it collapsed.

Payam asked:

-When was that?

Jemime answered:

-It was 2011- two years after we had started the organization

Payam asked:

-What happened later?

Jemime answered:

-We started the organization again very soon after that. We became up to 15 members and decided to keep on with the Merry-go-round again, but this time with 100KSh per week.

Payam said:

-That is a much higher amount. What if someone does not afford to pay?

Jemime answered:

-In that case she pays a less amount, but she will get the same amount back when it is her turn. So if someone donates only 50 KSh when it is my turn to receive the money- I will donate with 50KSh when it is her time to receive the donation.

Payam asked:

-What are your future plans?

Jemime answered:

-At the moment we cannot do anything else because we don't have any capital for it. But our current goal is to start producing soap. We know that there is a high demand and need for it here in Kibera.

Payam liked the idea very much. He felt that the production of soap in Kibera, by local residents, will result in economic benefit for everyone in Kibera- both the producers and the consumers. The local residents do not need to buy soaps from big companies with a high price, which is not affordable for many residents in Kibera. The fact that the soaps are too expensive for some of the residents increases the number of medical problems. The soap production will help the local residents, especially the widows, in social and economic point of view.

Payam asked the chairlady:

-So why don't you save some money, in same way as you did before, in order to be able to start a new activity?

Jemime said:

-That is what we have started to do now. We have started to save the money which the members contribute with every week in order to gather a capital. And soon we will be able to start.

Payam asked:

-Do you have any other future plans?

Jemime answered:

-We are also thinking about starting a project where one of us is taking care of the other members' children so that the others have time for finding a job. We want to expand the project in future and also take care of non-members children- but for that we need some more capital. We need enough money for renting of a place where we take care of our children, as well as making food for them.

Jemime said:

-That is our biggest problem. We neither have enough capital or a place for implementing these activities.

Payam felt very sorry for the women that were sitting there with their children. He thanked them for sharing the information with him and promised to help them with their project as much as he could. But he felt that he had to do further research and see how effective the soap production would be. He hoped that they ladies would start the production soon and to see if it was any way of improving the activity once they had started. But he felt that he first needs to do his research as he had planned to do.

He wanted to find out what social and economic problems the widows in the area face and why they have moved to Kibera. He needed to know if it is better for them to stay in Kibera or move to another part of Nairobi or back to their home villages- before he was supporting or creating any kind of method for social and economic development for widows in Kibera.

## Story

Payam was thinking about his memories from his visit in Kibera when he all the sudden heard the sound of receiving a new email from his computer. He checked the email. It was from the university. His teacher had informed him that he had been accepted the fund and could plan for his trip.

Payam started shouting of happiness and then emailed Naimo to inform her that he would go to Kenya. Right after that he started to look at different flight companies home pages. He bought the most affordable ticket that he could find for the coming week. He started preparing everything for his journey during the week.

A week passed very fast and the journey from Gothenburg to Nairobi started at 6 am. The journey was 13 hours long and tiring. Payam was seeing forward towards reaching Nairobi and meeting his friends in Kenya and doing further research when the pilot announced that the plane will land at the Jomo Kenyatta International in few minutes. The few minuts felt like hours. He contacted his friend Naimo in Kibera as soon as he could and they arranged a meeting for the day after.



# Existing problems amongst Widows in Kibera



## Social Problems

### Sanitation

Payam took a taxi to Kibera's outskirts where he saw Naimo was waiting for him. After some greetings they started walking towards the chairladies home in the village Mashimoni in Kibera. The members in the Mashimoni Women Group had gathered there for their weekly meeting as every other Saturday. Payam wanted to meet them again in order to find out how they were doing and whether there had been any progress in the organizations activities.

While they were walking towards Mashimoni village in Kibera Payam said:

-I remember that the first time that I came to Kibera I was worried about "flying toilets". I had read about the problem that the majority of the homes do not have any toilets and as a result they have to use plastic bags and throw them up in the sky. It happens often that the plastic bags will fall on the walking path.

Naimo smiled and said:

-The problem has reduced very much. But based on the research that we have done in the organization Sustainable and Viable Organization, SAVO, Kibera generally does not have enough with toilets. People have to struggle to find toilets. Some residents go to what is known as Pay toilets. These toilets charge a fee of 50cts per usage, and which can only be available during the day.

Those who cannot afford the fee for using these toilets have no choice but to use the "flying toilets" or open ground/spaces, which contaminates the environment even more. This therefore adds more to the normally pungent smell around the slum. Moreover some of the pit latrines have filled up and the landlords are not very helpful.

Emptying these toilets is also a challenge for it is done manually and can be a health hazard for those who have to do it for they do not have adequate protective aids. Also lack of space does not allow for many more pit latrines.

Payam said;

-I'm very sorry that the "flying toilets" still exist. This issue is one of the issues that a lot of people from different parts of world think about- as soon as they hear the name Kibera.

This problem was something that Payam had done a lot of research about. Based on what he had studied- he knew that there are many NGO as well as Governmental organizations, at local as well as international level, which have tried and are still trying to solve the problem with the sanitation in Kibera. Most of the actions that have been taken until now have been in form of creating public toilets in different parts of Kibera.

These public toilets can be used during certain time of the day by the local residents. The toilets can be used only by the residents who pay a certain amount of fee. There are also few exceptional cases where the public toilets are free of charge. But Payam knew very well that the issue of sanitation is one of the biggest social economic problems that the widows and their children in Kibera have to deal with in their daily life.

One of the problems that the widows and their children have to deal with is the cost of the public toilets. In many cases the families do not afford to pay the fee for using the toilets. What is known as a "pay" toilet - costs around 5 – 10 KSh, per use. In some other "pay" toilets the residents have to pay a monthly cost of 300-500 KSh per month for a household.

Naimo said:

-There is actually a public toilet that is sponsored by SIDA, which I believe is a Swedish organization.

Payam said:

-Yes! Sida stands for Swedish International Development cooperation Agency. It is a Swedish authority under the jurisdiction of Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Their

overall target is to ensure that those in poverty have the ability to improve their living conditions. To carry out this assignment effectively and strategically, it encompasses all areas of society. Their main efforts are presented in five areas:<sup>7</sup>

- Democracy, equality and human rights.
- Economic Development
- Knowledge, health and Social Development
- Sustainable Development
- Peace and Security.
- Peace and Security.

Payam asked Naimo:

-Can we go and see the toilets that are sponsored by Sida?

She answered:

-Yes. It is actually on our way to Mashimoni Women Groups' meeting point.

Payam said:

-That's perfect because I had heard about this project before and discussed the situation with Mr Alex Muigai who is a Program Manager at SIDA in Härnösand Sweden. Mr Muigai told me that SIDA's policy in most cases is to support the local community in starting a project. How the project will develop is the local resident's responsibility.

Naimo said:

-I understand. The organization that has received the economic support from Sida is called Maji Na Ufanisi. The organization has had the responsibility for observing the function of the project once the toilets were built. But as far as I know the fee for using the toilets are too high for many widows who live around.

Payam said:

-That's sad. Well- Mr Muigai also informed me about a new invention by the name "Peepoo" from 2005, by Swedish architects Camilla Wirseen and Anders Wilhelmson.

They invented a personal, fully biodegradable toilet bag that can be used by people who are living in slums in order to improve their health and safety.

The bags are made with the substance urea which in a short time deactivates bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause disease and contaminate the surrounding environment. All harmful bacteria will disappear one month after the disposable toilet has been sealed. Peepoo has a self-sanitizing operation and will no harm the environment. The bag itself is transformed into carbon dioxide, water and humus within a year. Peepoo bags are supposed to be very cheap and affordable for the residents in slums such as Kibera.

Payam told Naima and Wali that he was fascinated by this invention. Not only because it would reduce the economic problem with sanitation amongst the widows- but also because he felt that "Peepoo" can help to prevent women and children from facing violence on the way between their home and the public toilets.



Picture of a PeePoo bag.

<http://thingscanalwaysgetbetter.blogspot.se>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sida.se/English/About-us/our-fields-of-work/>

All the sudden Payam saw the toilets with the sign of the tree crowns, which is a symbol of Sweden. Naimo informed the lady who was sitting by the toilets about what Payam was doing research about and asked if it was ok for her if Payam interviewed her. She seemed to be enthusiastic and willing to speak with Payam. She invited Payam to sit beside her. Once Payam had sat down another lady walked towards them. The lady who was sitting by the toilet said that she is the president of the organization and that she will be able to answer all questions.

Payam started asking questions once he had presented himself and his intentions.

Payam asked her:

-What is your name?

She said:

-My name is Betty Nafula

Payam asked:

-When were these toilets built here and by who

Betty said:

-The toilets were built 2010 by the organization Maji Na Ufanisi, which is a very old organization working for improvement of Kibera. They built these toilets through a donation from SIDA.

Payam asked:

-Who is responsible for the function of these toilets?

Betty said:

-A group of residents in Kibera who work together. Any resident can join our group as member by paying 500KSh for once. We have a small board of comity including an employee from the organization Maji Na Ufanisi.

Payam asked:

-How much do you charge those who use the toilets?

Betty answered:

-We charge either per household or per visit. Those households who are members can pay 300Ksh per month and households who are not members pay 500Ksh- Otherwise we charge 5Ksh per visit.

Payam asked:

-How much has your average income been and what do you do with it?



Public toilet in Kibera, sponsored by SIDA

Betty answered:

-Each day 50Ksh will go to the person who sits here for collecting money from visitors. Each family will receive 100Ksh per week from the income and the remaining will be put in a bank account. The average money that has been put in the bank has been about 7000Ksh per month.

Payam asked:

-And what do you do with the money that is saved in the bank?

Betty answered:

-They will be divided amongst the members once a year.

Payam asked:

-How many members do you have right now?

Betty answered:

-Currently 40 households are members. But we are supposed to have between 50 to 100 households as members.

Payam asked:

-How come you have so few members?

Betty answered:

-We believe that it is because there are two other toilets around here, and their charges are already included in the rent of their residents.

Payam asked:

-Are the toilets open only during certain hours?

Betty answered:

-Yes, between 6am and 7pm. These are the times that it is less insecure to work here. Other times it is dark and no one would dare to come anyway.

Payam asked:

-Has the organization faced any problems until now?

Betty answered:

-Yes. The first person who started the project misused the money 2012 and ran away and we had to start again.

Payam asked:

-Do you have any compensation for widows and other groups who have more social and economic difficulties in Kibera?

Betty was quiet for few seconds. Payam could see that this was an issue that she had never considered and thought about before. It was obvious that the only thing that the organization had considered was progress and higher income, as most other organizations in Kibera.

Payam said:

-Based on what you told me a household has to pay 500Ksh for membership and 300 for the monthly fee. This means that a widow has to pay 800Ksh in order to be able to start using your toilets. Based on my experience that amount is almost a quarter of her households' monthly income.

Betty said:

-No we don't have any compensation for widows. Sometimes we have an exception for the elderly- but not the widows.

Payam told Betty:

-I believe that donations are for helping everyone, especially those who need it most. You should consider this issue and somehow have compensations for those who do not have 800Ksh for joining for the first time. Maybe you could at least divide the 500 in several months' payment- together with the monthly fee, for those who have large economic problem in Kibera. They could for example pay 350Ksh the first 10 months.

Payam was looking at Betty who was thinking when all the sudden Naimo said. It is better if we move on before it gets late. Payam looked at his phone and saw that it was getting late. So they thanked Betty and moved on.

While walking towards Mashimoni Payam remembered a part of a text that he read in the book Planet of Slums where it was written "The solution to sanitation crisis- at least as conceived by certain economic professors sitting in comfortable armchairs in Chicago and Boston- has been to make urban defecation a global business. Indeed one of the great achievements of Washington-sponsored neoliberalism has been to turn public toilets into cashpoints of paying off foreign debts- pay toilets are a growth industry throughout Third World slums."

Payam asked Naimo:

-Does this mean that all those who do not afford to pay this amount of money use flying toilets?

Naimo said:

-There are also those who use Potty at home for disposing the waste. That is difficult- because the home consists of only one room. Sometimes the woman has to ask the others to leave the house in order to use the Potty. Based on the research that we have done in SAVO- 16% of the residents use potty and 17% use flying.

Payam said:

-Well in my opinion the Peepoo is a much better solution than the flying toilets.

Naimo said:

-Yes that is correct

Payam felt sad because of the fact that the donation had come without consideration regarding where they should be allocated and who they should help. Currently the situation is in a way that those who use the toilets would afford to use other public toilets which are allocated nearby, meanwhile there are those who live in areas where the closest public toilet is allocated far away.

There are also those who do not have a job and income in order to afford to pay the use of these toilets. In Payam's opinion it would have been better if a group of unemployed widows would have got the responsibility of leading the project and that the toilets would have been allocated in an area where there is lack of them. The project would have helped those who were mostly in need of social and economic support.

Payam felt that there are both positive and negative points with this policy. The positive point is that the project will create job opportunities and economical profit for a certain group within a community. The negative point with this policy is that, in many cases, only a small group within the community will benefit from the economical profits of the project.

## Insecurity

Payam said:

-I don't say that only because "Peepoo" would reduce the problem of "flying toilets" and the economic costs for the widows and their children. I say that because, as I mentioned earlier, it will also help them to avoid the violence that they might face on the way between their home and the public toilets.

As I have understood from my research- in many cases the female residents in Kibera, especially the youth, are in risk of facing sexual abuse. The women and their children are also in danger of facing violence and robbery. Due these conditions- the widows and their children are trying to stay close to their residence as much as possible. But in some cases they have to walk a long distance, for example when they have to go to the public toilet.

Naimo Said:

-Yes that is true. Based on the research in SAVO the 29,3% of the respondents saw security in Kibera as bad, 25,2% as Poor and only 2,25 as good. In-Security was seen as being caused by

- Lack of Police station
- Youth un-employment
- Congestion, overpopulation and Overcrowding
- No one seems to care about security
- Poverty
- Poor accessibility
- Drug abuse
- Lack of street lighting
- Some vigilante groups cannot be trusted

And in order to improve the security we suggest the following:

- Community initiative through community Policing
- Reporting insecurity to the police and other authorities
- Individual Responsibility
- Establish groups that can be trusted
- Creation of awareness and sensitization
- Frequent discussions with leaders
- Reinforce gates and house doors and windows

Payam said:

-That sounds interesting

Naimo said:

-There is a person who is working with amongst others this issue in Kibera. His name is Mr Amman Salim. He is Nubian and Member of the community of this district. Mr Salim is also Chairman of the Community that is policing the whole of Kibera and Coordinator of the Community that is policing Nairobi. He handles some gender based cases, domestic violence, drug abuse and with orphans. Professionally he is accountant- but he is retired.

Payam asked:

-Do you think we have time to see him today?

Naimo said:

-He lives where we will pass by. We can see if he is at home or not.

After some distance they reached Mr Salims' apartment. Naimo spoke with him and explained what is Payam's research about. He welcomed them and agreed on informing Payam amongst others regarding the insecurity in the area and the actions that has been taken.

Payam asked Mr Salim:

-How do you deal with the insecurity in Kibera?

Mr Salim answered:

-The Insecurity is a tuff thing in this area. For the last 20 years law and order has been something of the past. The government could not provide the necessary development, such as security, infrastructure etc when Kenya was a one party state. At that time if you were not in the government you were in the opposition. As a result some areas received further support as others, which is why a lot of areas in Kenya where not developed. Multi party came in 1992.

Payam asked:

-So in your opinion the situation based on the political system in the country?

Mr Salim answered:

-Yes. The government is making a lot of money for the donations that comes from overseas for Kibera. But Kibera is not changing and is growing day by day. We have a population of almost one million people living in the slum here. We have only one police station which is supposed to be controlling this area. The police station is in Kilimani. It is a big area and we don't have enough with police men. We have about 500 policemen for the Kilimani area. Even statehouse is in this area. These include CID, traffic, office workers, and police. So if you bring down the number- it is about 200 policemen for Kilimani area- an area with a population of 1, 8 million. We have a police camp around here with 150 police officers, but half of them are either on estate

duty. Some are guarding the residents of ministers.

So if you bring the number you got about 30-40 police men for the whole Kibera- which is not enough. Here in Kibera we have cases of rape, child prostitution, drugs, unemployment, orphans and single parents. And the law enforcement is not enough. Even the policemen could not handle the situation- which is why people decided to do something by themselves. The police do not want to get involved with the community and many people within the community do not want to follow the laws.

Mr Salim also said:

-Earlier in the 90s the law and order and security was maintained by the youth in the governing party. But after a time it become something else. They started stealing money from people and it did not work well.

Around 2003 the sea of Community Policing came. That was to assist the community to bring the guard ship and law enforcement into the community. The reason was because we knew that people in the community do understand what the problems within the community are. And those people who became in as community policemen were trained in all manner of security issues by international NGOs like "Peace and Development Trust" or "Safer world"- The idea behind this action was to create an initiative that will break the gap and bring corporation between the community and the police. So that the police can understand what the problem in the community is. And the community can understand why the police are not cooperating.

The reason to why the policemen could not understand the problems is because they do not live in here and thereby do not understand the problems. You can't work in the slums without knowing what is happening in the slums, so the community people who are policing are the ones who understand what is happening in the village and they understand why the police cannot access the village.

They understand why the element of trust between the local residents and the policemen was lacking. We came in as a people to bridge the gap and so that not all cases would go to Klimani police station.

Right now we can even solve some cases in here. Today if you call a policeman and report a crime it will take those two to three hours to get here- by then everything has gone bad. But here we are neighbours and can intervene very fast for small disputes, domestic child abuse, extortion etc.

At the start everything was going fine until after a while when a small problem was created. The problem was that was the youth started using guns. Since then the type of crime has gone up to a level that the community police cannot deal with. How can you deal with a group who have guns while you are not armed? So what we are doing now is to try and understand and locate where they are and having informants on the ground. But in cases related to criminal activities and drugs will be dealt with in the police station.

Payam asked:

-How does this situation have an effect the widows' life situation?

Mr Salim answered:

-Some of the group members are orphans. The mothers cannot maintain the children's life and that's how they get out of control. It's all because the mother is the only means of neighbourhood.

Payam asked:

-How is the insecurity for widows?

Mr Salim answered:

-The widows face many social problems, mostly because they have no income. There

are very few who might be working. There are very few cases where their husband leaves them something such as small properties.

Many of the widows are young and do not have any one who is protecting them at home during the night time or in the morning when they are going out to work. We have cases where women wake up at 4am, some are cooking "mandazi", and they come with it and sell it and all the sudden the youth are coming in biting them up and taking their money. So they end up going home empty handed in the evening. They will have to face and deal with the insecurity in the area.

Mr Salims' coment reminded Payam about his interview with Naomi Mogoria who is working as a teacher at Bondo University. She is currently teaching Social planning, Social ethics and integrity and planning theory at the university. Miss Mogoria mentioned the issue of the insecurity as one of the problems amongst the widows in Kibera.

She also said that:

- "Some widows will stay with a man for security of their homes, but without any formal agreement. The widows do that, as a social desperation, they decide to come and stay with a man in an informal arrangement and then this man feels that he is doing you a favour and thereby requires the widow to give him money and food. In the end of the day the money that the widow get is being spent on making this man comfortable.

As a result you will not have the possibility of making economic progress. And if the money is gone they will leave. A problem is that some widows do not afford to buy food for them- and without energy they cannot work well. In some cases they will not receive money when they do not work well enough."



Payam notice that there is a silence in the room. He realized that Mr Salim is waiting for him to ask the next question so he asked:

-How can we reduce this problem?

Mr Salim answered:

-You will do a lot of justice by empowering the widows. Empowering is just one word- but it carries allot. Empowering them so that they can be able to live a normal life- a life where they can provide for themselves, sustain themselves, where they can live with respect. Because what do we do otherwise? They are widows and have kids- but no source of income. Should they end up with prostitution? And where does that lead your kids?

Woman is an important factor in the society- you'll have a good society if you bring her rights. If there is any income generating activity project- then they can sustain themselves. There are many income generating activities that the widows can do- but they don't have the finances for it.

Insecurity is an issue- but it comes in because of lack of development and poor environment. In my opinion every problem has a solution, but only if people want that solution. But most of people don't want solutions that are coming from up to down. They want solutions that are coming from down and developing upwards. You must prepare the ground.

You must understand who you are dealing with and what their basic needs. How desperate is a widow to be living in a rental house outside of Kibera with a rent of 2000-3000Ksh a month without an employment? Tomorrow she'll be thrown out and does not have any other choice then going down to the slums with terrible living conditions.

You can pay your rent if you have an income. You can tell the landlord to come and fix the leaking roof only if you pay your rent in time. But if you don't afford to pay the

rent- you will have to stand out with the problem. Right now the widows do not have a choice and have to live with what they have. But by having an income they can choose if they want to stay here or not.

Some widows force their children to prostitution so that they can eat and pay rent. The mind is not working with an empty stomach you can't concentrate on what to do when you are hungry. If someone is sure that her meal for one or two weeks are guaranteed then they can think and go out and look for work. It's petty that some people live in such bad conditions and cannot do anything about it.

Give small loans to individuals, but educate a group and create a project for them. There are a lot of opportunities here. Change life of only 100 widows. At least you have done something.

This comment reminded Payam about an interview that he had with Professor Tom Anyamba who is working as Associate Professor at School of Built and Environment at Nairobi University. He had a different opinion regarding this issue. Payam remembered that Professor Anyamba said:

-It will be a stop gap, Kibera has become like a laboratory for NGO's. From 1972 you can see that everybody is doing something small but without impact. If you brought all of resources together- you could probably transform Kibera. But everybody is trying to do their own small thing and then they are leaving.

When it comes to the issue of water and sanitation- it will also be more cost-effective if you do a major thing for Kibera instead of small things. Most NGO's are working on a two or three year program and leave when it ends. They have to see what else to do and it has to be continuity in the work. When it comes to the issue of water and sanitation- it will also be more cost-effective if you do a major thing for Kibera instead of small things.

Payam thanked Mr Salim and promised to keep in touch in order to see how everything is moving on. He also promised to inform him regarding the method that he will propose as a way of reducing the insecurity in the area for the widows and their children. Payam said that at the moment he believes that one way of reducing this problem is to create income generating activities for the widows. He said that he wants to find a way of increasing the opportunities for these activities either in Kibera, in other parts of Nairobi or in villages.

Payam Naimo and Rukia started to walk towards Mashimoni village in order to meet the widows in the Mashimoni Womens Group.

## Education

While Payam was following Naimo he was thinking about what he had learned during this interview and tried to find a way for solving this problem. All the sudden he started thinking that it is so sad that the youth are not studying in order to increase their chances for finding a job. He believed that if the orphans were studying- they would also have something to do during the day and would not join the criminal gangs.

He remembered that when they visited the village Osiri with Estelle- Jacinter told them that her children were going to school during the daytime and were busy with doing their homework's during the evenings. He remembered that she told them that she was working with handcraft products during the evenings- while she was looking at her children doing their homework.

These thoughts reminded Payam about the interview that he had with Lillian Omondi, who is a teacher at Maseno University. Payam asked her:

-What are the major problems in Kibera from social and economic points of view?

She said amongst others that:

-“A problem is that opportunities that exist do not favour women- which come from a cultural issue. In many cultures still don't believe in educating their women up to a certain point. This is why many women who have moved to urban areas- just have a very limited education. This makes so that when they come to the job market they are not as qualified as their men counter. The reason to this is that most cultures think that educating your daughters more than a certain level is waste of money because she well anyway gets married and go away. This is a challenge that we have to deal with and needs to be addressed.

And a social problem, which is related to the cultural issue, is the fact that men look down at women. They think that there are certain things that a woman can't do- which becomes a challenge. If you are a woman- you have to work four or five times more than men do in order to prove yourself.”

Payam felt that it was very sad that some men in the society had this opinion. It was making the life more difficult for women, especially widows and their children. This situation made it more difficult for widows to find job and afford to pay their children to school fees as well as living cost.

Payam told Naimo:

-I feel so sorry that the widows cannot send their children to school during the day and keep them busy with doing homework during the evening?

Naimo smiled and said:

-Yes- problem is that many of the widows in Kibera do not afford to send their children to school. The school fees are too high and they have to pay for their uniforms, literature as well as pen and paper. How will a widow afford all that when she doesn't have an income?

Based on a Survey that we established in SAVO- few people of Kibera have attained above Secondary school education, The Survey results are indicating that a high level, at over 10%, do not have education at all. 50% are of Primary Level education while some 33.7% have Secondary level of school education. Only 1.3% has attained college/ institute or Tertiary education.

This might explain why a high percentage of the population at above 34% lack skills and those with only some/rudimentary skills being at 49%. Lack of skills and education means majority of Kibera residents may not find well-paying jobs, if at all they find some. Hence many people in Kibera have to remain un-employed or doing unskilled labour at casual level.

Payam, who looked surprised, said:

-I feel that it is very strange that the schools in Kibera expect people with such an economic condition to pay school fee.

Naimo said:

-The governmental schools are free. But the problem is that we have only nine nongovernmental schools in the whole Kibera. The other schools are sponsored by different non-governmental organizations (NGO's) or Community based Organization's (NGO's), where the students have to pay a fee for their education.

Payam said:

-That is very sad- because the education is a very important issue for the orphans' future life. Don't you have any organizations that are supporting the widows in economic point of view so that they can pay their children's' education fee?

Naimo answered:

-Yes we have- there are some organizations that do support children by paying their

childrens school-fees. One of them is called Chance and Change for Children, CHaCHaCHi.

The organization started 2007 after Heidi Burner witnessed the difficult life situation amongst the poorest people in Kibera. All of the members in the organization are working voluntary and they pay all the expenses, such as their visit to Kenya, by themselves. They do that in order to spend all the donation money for children in Kenya and not for their own expenses.<sup>8</sup>

There are other organizations as well but they are not enough for all children and youths in Kibera. Besides- there are many widows who do not even have an ID-card or proof of their husbands' death. That is why they cannot proof that they are widows and that their children orphans.

Payam said:

-I understand. That's very sad. It must be difficult for the orphans to see other children going to school while they themselves can't do that because of the economic conditions in their family.

Water

Naimo smiled and said:

-This is just one of the problems that they have to face. There are many more, and some that are more difficult to deal with.

Payam asked:

-Like what?

Naimo answered:

-Like access to drinking water. Based on the research that we have done in the

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.chachachi.org/>

## Water

Naimo answered:

-Like access to drinking water. Based on the research that we have done in the organization Sustainable and Viable Organization, SAVO- Water has always remained a problem in Kibera just as in many other areas of Nairobi. Either it is unsafe, unreliable or is not well handled.

Payam asked:

-Can you explain more detailed about what you found out?

Naimo said:

-There are several different ways that people can have access to water in Kibera. The most common one is through water pipes. About 81% of those we interviewed are water from Pipes. This is because the area is now served by two main water pipes, one from the UN and the other by the Government. Previously people were fetching water from Nairobi Dam or from streams both of which are highly contaminated.



Water pipe in Kibera

The water pipes that are owned by the governmental organization Nairobi Water Company releases water only once in a week- Tuesdays. There are some residents in different parts of Kibera that are employed by the organization. These residents have to fill large water tanks with 10000 liters of water and pay thereafter pay the water company 1500Ksh. The water will later on during the week be sold to the local residents with a cost of 5Ksh for each jerkin, which equals 20 liters.

Payam said:

-That is interesting. Are there any other water sources?

Naimo answered:

-Yes. 6.3 % are getting water From Boreholes, 13% from Vendors and 4.1% from the streaming water.

Payam said:

-oh yes! I remember that when we came to visit Kibera with my class in Reality Studio you show us a way of treating the water in order to reduce the number of Coliform Bacteria in the tap water.

Naimo said:

-Yes I remember. The method is called SODIS, Solar Water Disinfection. This method is seen as one of the most effective Household Water Treatment and Storage, HTWS, interventions.

Payam said:

-Yes I remember this from the brochure that you gave us. It was saying that “SODIS is a simple method used to treat drinking water at the household level. SODIS uses solar radiation to destroy harmful microorganisms which cause water-borne diseases. It is used to treat small quantities of water at household level” I remember also that it was

saying that the method has proved to be very effective in poor communities who can't afford expensive water treatment systems.<sup>9</sup>

Naimo said:

-Yes that is correct.

Payam asked:

-So why are some people not using the method in order to avoid the diseases?

Naimo said:

-There are two reasons. One is that some people believe that others might put witchcraft on the bottles when they are on their roofs. But in most cases the reason is that they do not afford to buy the bottles.



SODIS, Solar Water Disinfection.

Payam asked:

-Are the bottles expensive?

Naimo said:

-The bottles cost 10Ksh per bottle. But the financial constrain make so that some residents do not afford to buy them.

There are also those who treat the water in other ways. Based on the research that we have done in SAVO: 23% of the residents use chlorination, 46% boil the water and 21% use the SODIS method. But 32% of the people that we interviewed who said that they do not treat their water before drinking, although they are aware of the need to treat drinking water.

Payam asked:

-Why do they not treat the water?

Naimo answered:

-Because some feel that treating water makes it tasteless. Some others say that it takes time to treat the water or that they trust the water. But there are many who say that they do not do that because treatment methods are too expensive.

Payam said:

-This is terrible. The fact that they get sick because of economic problems is very irritating.

Naimo said:

-Yes there are many. Based on our research

- Typhoid 64%
- Malaria 55.6%
- Cholera 46%
- Dhiorrhea 27.1%
- Amoeba 20.7%
- Dysentery 14%
- Bilharzias 12.6%
- Stomachache 1.4%
- Scurvy 0.9%

Naimo said:

-The issue is not only about drinking the water. There is also problem with hygiene in the area. There are many residents who do not wash their hands regularly, which can cause medical problems. Based on the research that we made in SAVO it was established that:

- 22% Of Kibera residents wash their hands before and after meals
- 32% Wash their hands before and after using the toilet
- 1.8% Wash hands before and after dirty jobs or at critical times
- 53% Use water and soap to wash their hands

Naimo noticed that Payam became very silent. They kept on walking towards Mashimoni Widows' weekly meeting. After a while she told Payam:

-You are very quiet.

Payam said:

-Yes. I'm thinking about all the residents, especially widows and their children who cannot treat the water because they do not afford to do that, or the fact that they do not wash their hands because of the fact that they do not afford to buy water and soap.

## Prostitution

Naimo said:

-I understand. The economic problem creates many social problems in the area. There are some women who are willing to sell their own body for making money.

Payam said:

-Yes I know about it. It is terrible. I remember the text that I read in a book called "Family Kinship Patterns and Female Sex Work in the Informal Urban Settlement of Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya" in the introduction of the book it was written that their research indicated that:

"basic kinship measures, including number of family members seen during adolescence and at present, not having a male guardian while growing up, and earlier times of ending relationships with both male and female guardians were associated with commercial sex work in Kibera. Multivariate analysis via logistic regression modelling showed that not having a male guardian during childhood, low education attainment and a small number of family members seen at adolescence were all significant predictors of entering sex work. By far the most important predictor of entering sex work was not having any male guardian, e.g., father, uncle, older brother, etc. during childhood. Results are interpreted in light of the historic pattern of sub-Saharan African child fostering and their relevance for young women in Kibera today."<sup>10</sup>

Naimo said:

-Yes that is correct. There are even widows who force their children to prostitution because of the economic problems in the home.

Payam said:

-I know. I read an article written by Jared Kefa and published in July 17th 2011 in the Kenyan newspaper "The People" where it was written that in some cases even parents and guardians fully support their children to engage in this action- in order to help the family in economic point of view.

10 Title: Family Kinship Patterns and Female Sex Work in the Informal Urban Settlement of Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya. Author: Elizabeth N. Ngugi & Cecilia Benoit & Helga Hallgrimsdottir & Mikael Jansson & Eric A. Roth

The reporter had written about some of his interviews. In one of them he had interviewed a girl by the name Jane Miheso who at that time was 22 years old. She had claimed that she was introduced to sex-trade by her classmate while she was in class eight. She had said that: “Coming from a poor single mother family of seven children, it was always a struggle for my mother to put food on the table, leave alone paying our school fees.” A friend of her who was familiar with her plight introduced her to some rich boyfriends and in that way she was able to pay her fees through high school to college.

Naimo said:

-That is terrible. I have a friend by the name Beatrice Iravonga who is working in an organization that is helping commercial sex workers to stop their work by creating income generating activities for them.

Payam seemed very interested and asked if they could go and interview her. Naimo made a phone call and arranged a meeting at her house. They got on a Matatu and headed towards a part of Kibera which Payam had never seen before. Payam was very surprised when he saw the houses in the area. He could not believe that they were still in Kibera. The residential buildings looked like the buildings that you could see in some expensive residential areas in Nairobi.

They entered the house and Payam started asking questions once Naimo introduced Payam for her friend. Payam asked:

-What is the name of your organization and how did it start?

Ms Iravonga said:

-The name of our group is Vlinja Ukimoi. It was funded by Professor Elisabeth Ngugi, who is working at Nairobi University. It started by a research regarding single ladies in Kibera. During this research she found out that commercial sex-workers were being harassed and thereby decided to fight for their rights.

Payam asked:

-Can you be more specific regarding the harassments?

Ms Iravonga said:

-For example some men were refusing to pay. The sex-workers could not do anything about the situation. The reason to why they couldn't do anything is that the court says that commercial sex-workers do not have any rights.

Payam asked:

-Is it true that the majority of the sex workers are widows or orphans?



Residential buildings in Kibera

Ms Iravonga answered:

-Yes that is correct. Some men go for the widow and her daughter and still don't pay anything.

Payam asked:

-How much are they asked to pay?

Ms Iravonga said:

-The women ask for about 200Ksh

Payam asked:

-Are the commercial sex-workers young?

Ms Iravonga answered:

-They are between 16-45 years old. Some of the youth get pregnant at the age of 16. And the father of the child refuses to take responsibility for his child

Payam asked:

-How come they don't use protection?

Ms Iravonga said:

-Because the men don't want and refuse to use protection

Payam asked:

-Are the men not worried for diseases such as HIV?

Ms Iravonga said:

-The women keep quiet and say that they don't have any problem, meanwhile most of them are HIV positive

Payam said:

-I have read in a book where it says that Researchers suggest that Nairobi informal settlement residents have been more highly affected by HIV/AIDS than any other sub-Saharan African population. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Kibera is estimated at 12 %, more than twice the current national Kenya rate of 5.1 %.<sup>11</sup>

Payam asked:

-Do the men go to the commercial sex-workers homes or somewhere else?

Ms Iravonga answered:

-Some are working outside some get visitors at home.

Payam asked:

-How come they start working as commercial sex-workers?

Ms Iravonga said:

-It is because they do not have any capital for doing anything else. That is why they go with their body. They do not have any education and cannot find a job. If the education would be free- then they would study and later on find a job.

Payam asked:

-How is your organization helping them?

Ms Iravonga said:

-We give them a small loan between 5000 to 10000Ksh in order to make it possible for them to start a business. We give them a loan so that they will do their best to earn the money back. If we would donate the money then some of them would just take the money and not do anything.

11 Family Kinship Patterns and Female Sex Work in the Informal Urban Settlement of Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya. By Elizabeth N. Ngugi & Cecilia Benoit & Helga Hallgrimsdottir & Mikael Jansson & Eric A. Roth



They decide by themselves what they want to work with and we support them economic and in some cases there are voluntary professionals who teach them how to work. We give them a loan and encourage them to live for their children and not give up.

Payam asked:

-Do all of them stop when you help them?

Ms Iravonga said:

-Some stopped working as commercial sex-workers and some other have reduced the amount of clients.

Payam asked:

-Are there any other organizations that are helping them?

Ms Iravonga said:

-There are some other organizations that pay their school fees. But they don't help them with their living costs such as rent, food and cloths.

Payam asked:

-What are the future plans within your organization?

Ms Iravonga said:

-Right now there are no development plans. The reason is that we do not have capital for that.

Payam and Naimo thanked Miss Iravonga and moved on towards the Mashimoni. Few steps away from Miss Iravongas' home- Payam told Naima:

-I feel so sorry that the organization does not have any capital for future developments.

Naimo answered:

-Yes- the economic problem has stopped many organizations from helping women in Kibera with starting their own businesses.

Payam said:

-That is very sad because. I remember a text, which I read in a book by the name Gender and Economic Growth in Kenya, which was saying:

“-Women are making important contribution to the economy as workers and entrepreneurs as well as to the welfare of their own family in Africa. They are a powerful force for growth and development. In many African countries, however, the women have to face unequal access to property, discrimination in the labour market and business-related obstacles. Removing these obstacles can not only to empower women, but also to unlock full economic potential of their nation.”<sup>12</sup>

I personally agree with this and I am sure that we can reduce the economic and social problems amongst the widows in Kibera, by creating income generating activities for them. But first I feel that I need to see some of the economic problems that exist amongst the widows in Kibera.

## Economic Problems

### Unemployment

Naimo told Payam:

-Well there are many issues that create the economic problems. One of them is the unemployment.

Payam said:

-Yes that is what I have understood as well. I have heard that there are many reasons to the fact that the unemployment is high amongst women. During my interview with Ms Lillian Omondi, who is a teacher at Maseno University, I was told that the issue of unemployment “extends to contemporary society, where men are those who are expected to do work outside of home- which is why a lot of people prefer to employ men even for casual labours. Thereby also finding a job as women becomes more difficult. It’s a challenge in that aspect. So in terms of our culture- we haven’t reached a point where we see a woman as an equal counterpart.”<sup>13</sup>

What is interesting is that many widows move to Kibera from their rural homestead in order to find a job. I remember that during my interview with Ms Naomi Mogoria, Teacher at Bondo University, she said:

-“One of the reasons to why widows move to Kibera is that the jobs in Nairobi are more paying than in rural areas and even other cities slums, for example in Nairobi you can be paid 400Ksh per household if you wash dishes and clothes. In some cases depends on the amount of cloths whereby you can get 400Ksh in one house. Meanwhile in Kisumu you would get 100Ksh. Also job opportunities are more in Nairobi. There are also many more NGOs’ in Nairobi that are able to defend the widows.” What is interesting is that some widows don’t know that they may not find any job at all in Kibera.

Naimo smiled and said:

-Yes that is true

Payam said that:

-And it is very sad that when they arrive they notice that it is very difficult to find a job- no matter the amount of payment. And as I have understood- majority of the widows who work are working in informal jobs. As a result they cannot prove to the bank that they have a solid income and thereby are not able to get a loan from the bank.

### Ownership of Land

Naimo said:

-Yes that is correct. In the same way as many of the widows cannot prove that they own a land or property, when the land or the property is titled in their husbands’ name.

Payam said:

-That is actually another thing that Ms Mogoria mentioned.

She said that:

“-I think the biggest problems are from the cultural aspect. Most of our property ownership is endowed on the men. Once they die it becomes difficult. Many relatives come in and have a claim on the property. Sometimes even the property that they had generated while they were married is taken away by the husbands’ brother or siblings- so in the end of the day they have nothing left. And the relative do not take the responsibility for the expenses in their brothers families life for example the children’s education fee.

<sup>13</sup> Lillian Omondi, Teacher at Maseno University

Land is a problem, because the land title deed is in the man's name, it happens sometimes that the husband sells the land without the wife having knowledge about it. And in case of widows the brother in law is the problem, because when the husband passes away it is the brother in law who own the land.

The second problem is when the man has used the land as collateral (security for a loan) meanwhile the woman does not have economic power to repay the loan once the husband passes away. Feminisation of poverty: which means that men, such as the husband or brother in laws, have the right of ownership of land, meanwhile the woman has to face the poverty. Poverty has become a feminised thing, a women thing”<sup>14</sup>

Naimo said:

-“Feminisation of poverty”- that is a sad word

Payam said:

-What is interesting is that if we look at the Kenyan laws we can see that “formal statute law potentially gives property right to married women, and the 1882 Married Women's Property Act gives women equal rights to own property. Furthermore the law of Succession Act gives women inheritance rights. However exempts from its non-discrimination provisions “member of a particular race or tribe” with respect to the application of their customary law. This exemption has a profound effect on the lives of many women in Kenya: for most of them the customary law is the only law to which they have recourse. For most women the legal position is irrelevant in practice. For them, justice is dispensed at the local level, without resource to the formal courts, and customary norms apply”.<sup>15</sup>

Naimo said:

-A problem is that the women most of the times do not take legal actions in order to claim their rights.

Payam said:

-What is interesting is that if we look at the Kenyan laws we can see that “formal statute law potentially gives property right to married women, and the 1882 Married Women's Property Act gives women equal rights to own property. Furthermore the law of Succession Act gives women inheritance rights. However exempts from its non-discrimination provisions “member of a particular race or tribe” with respect to the application of their customary law. This exemption has a profound effect on the lives of many women in Kenya: for most of them the customary law is the only law to which they have recourse. For most women the legal position is irrelevant in practice. For them, justice is dispensed at the local level, without resource to the formal courts, and customary norms apply”.

Naimo said:

-A problem is that the women most of the times do not take legal actions in order to claim their rights.

Payam asked:

-Why not?

Naimo said:

-Because it will be too expensive for them and also that it will take very long time. Many times the corruption stands in the way and the widows cannot claim their rights. Besides that the court process is very time-consuming and widows who work do not have time for constantly going to the court. It happens sometimes that you are called to the court and once you get there- you have to wait all day until it get your turn. Sometimes they even tell you to go home and come back another day.

<sup>14</sup> Naomi Mogoria, Teacher at Bondo University

<sup>15</sup> Gender and Economic Growth, Page xxv

Payam said:

-Wow! That must be annoying. Now when you say that I remember that I read in the book Gender and Economic Growth that “formal courts in Kenya are generally too costly, time-consuming, complex and geographically inaccessible for many Kenyans, particularly those in rural areas. Government-led reform efforts are under way,...., which aims to fundamentally reform justice delivery in Kenya.” 16

Naimo said:

-Yes- especially when you have to convince your employee to give you another day off from work and sometimes gets fired because of that.

Payam said:

-Yes indeed- and as I understood from my interview with Ms Mogoria- the inheritance and ownership of land is another major problem in Kibera. I remember she said that in Kenya there are 3 categories of land ownership:

- Land acquired by the government for public interest
- Land owned by authorities (Trust Land) ex Kisumu municipality etc. (Trust land)
- Land owned by Individuals Land

She explained that when the Nubians got the land from the colonizers- they had their own chiefs. From that time until now the chief is the one who gives permission to individuals to stay in a land (own it) in an informal way. Ms Mogoria said that you need to pay the chief for buying a land in Kibera. And also that you have to, in an informal way, give him 10 or 20% of the plots price. She also mentioned that according to government record, that is governments land and doesn't belong to anybody. Ms Mogoria said:

-Overtime you'll find Kibera has landlords. The landlords put up temporary structures and rent the residences to tenants- which is how Kibera has three kinds of owners:

- The government
- The landlord
- The tenant

16 Gender and Economic Growth, Page xxviii

17 Naomi Mogoria, Teacher at Bondo University

18 Lillian Omandi, Teacher at Maseno University

Some of the tenants have also rent the land to somebody else. That is how you might find that one land can belong to 10 bodies.<sup>17</sup>

Payam also said:

-I remember from my interview with Ms Lillian Omandi that she said:

“-The law with the ownership of land for women has been changed in the constitution, but there is always a gap between changing the immaterial culture and the actual ideas. Yes it is on paper that women can access property that if my father dies I'm entitled to get a piece of land and everything. But the men in the clan or in the family are going to site me to the end. So we still have to work on the culture catching up to the law. So yes in the constitution it is said that women are entitled to property, so either if it is your daughter or your wife, they are entitled to inherit whatever it is(remove) you have left behind. But in terms of culture the practises needs to catch up. In terms of culture catching up with the law- that is something that we have to work on.” 18

## Bank Loan

Naimo said:

-That is right- by the way I know someone who works in an organization called Kicoshep. They work with helping women in economic point of view. I believe she is in Kibera right now- do you want to see her before she goes home?

Payam said:

-I would love to.

Naimo called her friend and arranged a meeting at SAVO's meeting room. Payam and Naimo arrived later than Naimo's friend. Payam apologized and started asking questions once they had presented themselves.

Payam asked:

-What is the main concept in your organization?

She answered:

-We use a method of teaching the women SPM- which stands for:  
How they shall?? Select the income generating activity. How they shall Plan for the income generating activity and how they shall Manage the income generating activity.

Most people here wash cloths for survival, there is a place they sit and wait for costumers to come and give them cloths to wash. Kicoshep tries to move them out of that kind of life style. We at Kicoshep encourage them to start their own businesses and then teach them how to use the income.

Payam asked:

-Are you working with a special target group?

She answered:

-Kicoshep supports organizations consisting of women for a common project within the organization.

Payam asked:

-How do you start with helping them?

She answered:

-Before we start the project- we train the women in how to save money. We teach them to put aside certain amount of money each week or day. The same for the organization- if each member contributes with only 10 KSh per day then they will have a big amount of saving in the end of the month- a saving which they can use as investment in a long term.

Later on- we lend them some capital and in the end of a certain period, we follow up if the women in the organizations manage to earn and save money with their capital or not. We do this study through our monitoring team that will visit the group after few

weeks or months- depending on the activity and how ready the group is for starting the project. The monitoring team wants to find out how much money the group can generate as an income from their business. If the expenses outdo their incomes- then we teach them how to reduce their expenses. The team will also teach the women a way of saving money for future expansion.

Our main goal is to improve the women's living standard. We want them to start with a small project but change to other bigger projects in future. We want to show them how to do savings and collect capital through the small project in order to start bigger projects in future. They can make such an improvement that they can start new business outside of Kibera and move out of this area. Or at least be able to move out of Kibera while still working with their small project in Kibera.

We encourage women groups to collect certain amount of money from each member per week. Each week the collected money will be used as capital for one or two members in the organization who have a special ide and want to start their own business.

Payam asked:

-As you do in Merry-go-round?

She answered:

-With the difference that we do not lend the money in any particular order. In my opinion a negative point with the Merry-go-round method is that each member has to wait 10 or 15 weeks until it will be her turn to receive the support from the rest of the group. Meanwhile she has to contribute with money during the weeks that she is waiting for her turn. That is why we in Kicoshep encourage the women groups to use Kicoshep's method beside the Mary Go Round method.

Payam asked:

-Do you collaborate with other organizations?

She answered:

-We collaborate with the Equity Bank- which tells the women about how to manage cash. If the women show ability of dealing with the prices and of earning and saving- then we give them a loan and once they have paid their loan back we think of linking them with the equity bank or any other microfinance organization to issue them with big loans.

The equity bank does not give loan to individuals- they give the loan to the group of at least 15 members. The group can ask for any amount they want. The bank takes 25% interest when it is for a loan to a group.

Payam asked:

-Do you take any interest?

She answered:

-We take interest between 10% - 15%, based on amount of the loan. They work with groups, but they work in a way that each member will gain in the end of the day.

Payam asked:

-Do you have any advice regarding how I can help the widows in the Mashimoni Women Group?

She answered:

-You said that you are a student in architecture who is working in connection to the social and economic development amongst the widows. For this development there is a need of someone who is willing to help some people who are ready to start some projects within an area or two with some funding. So if there is a willing heart that is ready to see lives of people improving from one level to another level from his/her heart- then let that person do everything from that willing hearth. If the support that

is ready to see lives of people improving from one level to another level from his/her heart- then let that person do everything from that willing hearth. If the support that is given bears fruit- then let that support continue. At the end of the day he/she will smile, the people who have been implementing the project will smile.

The best thing that can be done for the women I Kibera is to give them a start-up kit in terms of loan. We give them for example a loan of 5000 KSh, which has to be repaid within three months. The chairlady, treasurer and the secretary in the organization have the role of grantors for the members. They will be responsible to solve the problem if a member does not repay the loan.

Payam asked:

-Have you seen a positive influence on the life condition of those you have helped?

She answered:

-Yes we have. There have been many women who have made a large progress in their income-generating activities. Some of them have moved out of Kibera with their children and started other businesses. Some others have decided to live outside of Kibera- but still keep on with their businesses in Kibera.

There are also others who are doing both- they move out of the area with their children- meanwhile they work with different projects both inside and outside of Kibera. If the economic life can be improved the social problems will reduce.

Payam said:

-It is very interesting to see how much some amount of capital, that for so many of us outside of Kibera would be seen as little, can change an entire family's life condition up to such an extent. As a result of lending the residents some amount of money as capital they are able and do start a new business which is giving them a new lifestyle.

Payam thanked Naimos' friend and kept on moving towards Mashimoni Women Group. After few minutes of walking in the muddy roads they finally arrived at the chairlady's house where all the members were waiting for them. After saying hi to all members and apologise for the delay- Payam started to ask about the progress within the Mashimoni Women Group.

He wanted to know what the members had done and if they had achieved any progress in reaching their goals.

## Revisiting Mashimoni Women Group

Payam asked:

-How has the development within the organization been?

Jemime answered:

-We have started to produce and sell soap. The only problem is that the income has not been as much as we expected.

Payam asked:

-That is both good and bad. Do you know the reason to why it has been like this?

Jemime said:

-The reason is that we want to produce soap with good quality. The problem is that the production is more expensive and we thereby have to sell our soap more expensive than others who have started to work with similar project in Kibera.

Payam asked:

-Have you explained to the costumers that your soap costs more because the quality is better?

Jemime said:

-Yes- but the problem is that people are so poor that they don't care about the quality of the product. The only thing that matters for them is the cost of the product.

Payam asked:

-So who have you sold your product to until now?

Jemime said:

-We have sold them outside of Kibera. Some of us work for families outside of Kibera and we sell the product to them.

Payam said:

-It is partly good that you have the possibility of expending your sales outside of Kibera. But maybe it would be better if you produce something different from what is at the market right now, but at the same time affordable for the residents in Kibera.

Jemime said:

-That is true, we will think about it.

Payam asked:

-How much has the income been so far?

Jemime asked the treasurer in the organization to present the income for Payam.

Payam noticed that the income has not been very large in comparison with the investment that they had done. He hoped more for a project with an income that would sustain each and every member's households cost. The only support that the members had received from the organization so far was through the Merry-go-round method.

Payam promised to think and try to help them as much as he could once he had reached a decision regarding the location and the kind of activities that would help them in social and economic point of view. He thanked them for the information and started walking towards home with Naimo.



## Background to concept

Payam and Naimo were walking when all the sudden Payam notices some several storeys high apartments allocated in Kibera. He felt that it was a bit unusual with apartment in this part of Kibera and asked:

-How come these apartments are here?

Naimo said:

-These apartments were built few years ago through a project created by a group of residents. We can go and ask someone who knows more about them if you want.

Payam felt very curious about the reason and possibility of having some apartments that were several storeys high in Kibera. Thereby he asked Naimo to take him to someone who has further information regarding this issue.

Naimo and Payam visited a friend of Naimo by the name Salma Rashid, who lives close to the apartments and had information about them. Payam asked:

-How come that some recently built apartments, made by concrete, are allocated in Kibera?

Selma said:

-This land in this area was owned by the government. It was empty field and people started using it as a dumping site. Eventually some people came with the idea that it could be used for building apartments on.

They went to the municipality and applied for permission for building apartments here. After paying some amount of money- they “bought the land” and received permission of building these apartments here. They built these apartments by receiving a loan from a bank- a loan that they are still paying back.

Now the government has planned to build a road here and most probably is going to

demolish the buildings. The residents have been informed and they have taken legal actions. The court has not made a decision yet- but it is a high possibility that they will be demolished.

Payam said:

-So this means that even if you get a building permission from the municipality there is still a risk that the building will be demolished in future?


Selma said:

-In some cases you have to have permission from both municipality and the government.

This project made Payam worried. He knew that it had been a lot of discussions regarding the ownership of the land in Kibera during decades between Nubians and the Government. The Nubians claim that they received the land from the colonizers and had the right of ownership of it.



Recently built apartments



But the government did not accept this- amongst others because the Nubians do not have a written agreement on the ownership of the land. This made it very difficult to receive building permission for building a building in Kibera. You had to receive permission from the local residents as well as the municipality.

But Payam could never imagine that the government would come and plan to demolish a building once you had received building permission from the municipality and the residents who both claim the right of ownership the land in Kibera.

This project made Payam more doubtful in deciding to spend money and labour on building a building in Kibera. At the same time as he knew that the widows would need a place to work in if they would work in Kibera. Payam thanked Salma and moved on towards home with Naimo.

## Conclusion Social and Economic problems

During this study visit Payam learned a lot about some of the social problems that the widows in Kibera have to face and live with. He realized that many widows in Kibera, together with their children, face problems with affording the most necessary things in a humans' life such as food, drinkable water and sanitation. They have to live in an insecure environment where they can be robbed or face violence in their daily life- a life situation where they have to live day to day.

The majority do not receive any support from the government, not even for education- something that could help them for a successful future. They have to live in a life situation where, in some cases, they have to accept to sell their own dignity and health by working as sex-workers- in order to afford the basic needs in a humans' life.

Payam realized that the widows in Kibera have to face these social problems mostly as a result of the economic problems that they face. He realized that the reason to why some of the widows sell their own and their children's body is because "they do not have any capital for doing anything else" . That is the only thing they can sell in order to afford to buy the most social needs a human has.

There are many organizations from different parts of world that are helping but "only 10% of the money reaches the local residents" . In many cases the donors work with a project during a short time and leave- "there is no continuity", as a result the projects collapse.

Payam could see a possibility of solving the social and economic problems amongst the widows and their children by creating a unity amongst them. He could see the enthusiasm and ability to learn and work with income generating activities in a group as well as individually. He got a feeling that they would manage to face and solve the social and economic problems by supporting each other. He was sure that the widows could create income generating activities together and thereby support each other in social and economic point of view.

But Payam felt that it was very strange that widows could accept living in these conditions instead of moving back to their origins and live with their own or their husbands' family. The question that remained in Payam's mind was whether these income generating activities should occur in Kibera or in their origin villages. That is why he decided to visit the origin village of some of the members in Mashimoni Women Group- in order to find the answer to this question.



# Widows in Rural areas

# Luhya



## Story:

Payam's study visit of the rural areas started with visiting the origin village, of Jemime Oanyanga, who is the chairlady of Mashimoni Women Group. She and Payam decided to meet at the city Momias and thereafter travel to Jemime's home village, Shanieni.

Jemime and Payam had met in Kibera earlier. He promised her to pay her travels cost from Kibera to her parents home and some more money for the food and his stay. Payam transferred the agreed amount of money and to meet her in a city close to her village.

He left Kisumu early in the morning with a Matato. The driver told Payam that he was heading towards the destination that Payam had planned to meet Jemime. The Matato left the station once it was fully packed with passengers. After one hour's travel all the sudden the car stopped and driver got off the car.

The driver came to Payam and said:

- You have to get off and get on the other car. I have moved your luggage and made a payment for the rest of your journey to the other driver.

Payam was a bit confused and surprised. He did as he was told to and hoped that the first driver really had put his luggage in the other car, it was just to wait and see when he would arrive. After a while Payam was told that they had reached the destination. He got off the car and got very happy when he saw his bag. Payam was going to pay for his trip but the driver told him that his colleague had already paid.

To Payam's surprise- Jemime was not there. He called her and asked where she was. She said that she is waiting for him at the station. After a while they realized that they are at different stations. She came and met Payam where he was standing and arguing with a beggar about the fact that he should go and try to find a job instead of standing there and asking people for money.

Jemime interrupted the discussion and welcomed Payam. They started heading towards a supermarket to buy some of the stuff that Jemime assumed Payam would need to have with him to the village.

But Jemime said that she wanted started by trying to get hold of the money that Payam had sent to her phone. She said that she has had problem with transforming the credit that Payam had sent to her by phone into cash. After couple of visits they found out that they had to take out the money from a phone company, because Payam had sent the money in a different way than the Kenyan residents.

The reason to the problem was that Payam did not have "MPESA" which is a way where you can transform money via phone in Kenya. Payam had transferred the money via his phone operator and thereby you could only take out the money from the shops that would deal with that phone operator.

Payam and Jemime got on a motorbike as soon as the money was received and the shopping had been done. There was a long journey. Payam was a bit worried- the motorcycle driver was driving fast on a bumpy road and Payam had to hold his heavy bag on his shoulders and the camera with his hands.

Jemime asked the driver to stop after a journey that felt as very long- Payam got off and started to look around. He could not see any buildings nearby.

Payam asked Jemime:

-Are we there?

Jemime replied:

- There are no roads leading to our home- so we have to walk through the plantation areas the rest of the way.

## Social and Economic

Payam who was surprised and started following Jemime. After a long walking distance they finally arrived at Jemime's families home. The children were running around in the garden and the ladies of the home were in the building that was being used as kitchen. They all gathered and welcomed Payam to their homes. Jemime told her sister to bring couple of chairs and a table for payam to have a seat under the shadow that was caused by the tree.

Payam felt a bit uncomfortable for causing the ladies the trouble, but he did not stop them. He was afraid that they might feel disappointed and feel as if Payam is not satisfied by their behaviour. Meanwhile they were moving out the table and chairs from the living room- Payam noticed that there was a grave beside the main building, where they were putting the table and the chairs.

He asked Jemime:

- Whose grave is that?

Jemime said:

- That is my dad's grave. There is a tradition amongst the Luhya people to bury our father on the right side of the main building, where his first wife lives.

Payam asked Jemime:

So your mother will also be buried here?

Jemime said:

No the women will be buried outside of the compound.

Payam was amazed and had mixed feelings about this tradition. In one way he liked it. He felt that in this way the father would always be remembered amongst the family. But at the same time he felt that the tradition might lead to the fact that



the sadness of losing a family member will remain in the family for a much longer time. He was also surprised and a bit angry about the differentiation between the male and the female family members.

He asked Jemime:

-How about the Luhya people who have migrated to Kibera? Do they also bury their father outside of his first wife's home?

Jemime smiled and said:

-No! There are graveyards there.

The answer was what Payam had expected. But he asked it in order to be sure and to point out one of the differences within Jemime's new lifestyle and her origins. He was looking at the grave when Jemime said:

-The table is ready, please have a seat. They will bring some tea and bread soon.

Payam started to interview Jemime as soon as they sat down. He started by asking:

- How come you moved to Kibera?

She said:

- My husband passed away here in Shanini. His family asked me to leave them soon as he passed away. I decided to move to Nairobi with my children in order to create a better future for them. I started by selling corn and save some money.

Payam seemed surprised by what he heard. He was surprised because in the Luhya tribe the tradition is that the widow and her children will stay in her husband's family home. This is especially important regarding the children. The husband's family see the children as a member of their own family, after all they have the genes from a male member of the family in their body.

Usually the husband's family do not allow the widow to move out of the family, especially with the children. It happens in some cases that a widow leaves her husband's family, because of the bad circumstances in her husband's family, but in most cases- a widow does not dare to take her children with her.

This is a big problem that some widows in Luhya tribe have to face once their husband has passed away. In most cases they face a pressure from the husband's brothers and parents. They want to inherit what ever that belonged to their brother or son. It is difficult for a man's family to see another woman taking care of the land that once belonged to their brother and make economical profit of it.

There is a tradition amongst majority of the different tribes in Kenya that a man can marry several wives. In these cases the conflict can also occur amongst the wives. Some wife's wants more than others or the same land as another wife wants.

As a result of the conflict between the husband's family or between the wives, many widows decide to move with their children to bigger cities in Kenya- cities where the husband's family can not find them. The widows have to make sure that they move to an area where there is no chance for the husband's family to take the children back to their village.

Something that was strange for Payam was the fact that only one wife can be legally married to a man. It partly depends on the fact that this tradition does not exist in the Christianity and amongst the Colonizers culture. The colonizers did not consider this issue when they made the legal constitution of Kenya. As a result- only the first wife can ask the legal authorities for support once her husband's family demands the right of the land, or official registration of the land once the husband passes away.



Payam asked Jemime:

- Why did you not ask a lawyer to help you for getting your legal rights?
- Was it because he had another wife, who he was legally married with?

Jemime said:

- First of all there are some new laws that will partly support also the other wives. But I could not argue and have a legal conflict with my husbands parents, brothers and their wives while we live beside each other. I felt that it would be better to leave with the legal documents of our marriage and his ID-card- meanwhile I still had the possibility.

These words reminded Payam about some of the widows that he had met in Kibera- especially one of them. She mentioned that she left because of her husbands family demanded to have her husbands ID-card from her when he passed away. She was so happy that she had managed to take it with her when she ran away to Kibera with her children. During the interview she asked Payam several times if he wanted to see the papers of their marriage and her husbands ID-card.

Payam could not understand the importance of these papers for her at that time so he answered no every time. That was something that he deeply regretted now when he knew the importance of these papers for the her. The widow in Kibera told Payam that she would go back the day her children were old enough to support her and argue against their fathers family for their right. She said that they would move back with the papers in their hand and take legal actions if her husbands family refused to give them their rights. With these thoughts in his mind Payam looked at Jemime and said:

-I understand. You are right. But it is still difficult for me to accept the fact that a women have to leave everything behind her self and run away.

Jemime smiled and looked at Payam. She was going to say something when her sister all the sudden came with some sandwiches and Kenyan tea. She put them on the table and went back to the kitchen.

Jemime said:

- Please have some!

Payam said:

-Thank you! But shell we not wait for the rest of your family.

Jemime said;

They have already had breakfast.

Payam started eating and asked:

-Jemime why did you not move back to your parents home once your husband passed away?

Jemime answered:

- oh no! That is not acceptable in our culture. You can not move back once you get married away and move to your husbands home. If you only knew how the neighbours would react. She had a deep breath and said:

- We had to face this problem once my sister moved back. Her husband is alcohol addicted. He was constantly beating her and their children. He did not work and they lived a very difficult life. There were so many days that my sister and her children did not have anything to eat. They were feeling very bad- both mentally and physical. My mother felt very bad and could not accept the situation. She went to the family and brought my sister and her children back to our family.

My mother had to face and deal with so many bad reactions from neighbours and relatives in our village. They were against her action- despite the fact that my sister and her children were suffering mentally and physically. But my sister and her children feel much better now and so does my mother.

Payam was surprised and shocked. He was a bit angry about the reaction from the Jemime's families neighbours and relatives. Once again he could have understanding for why some women decided to run away to urban areas.

Jemime said:

- Imagine now how people would react if I would move back to my parents only because of bad behaviours from my husbands family.

Payam was listening to Jemime while looking at her mother who was sitting and separating beans from the small stones that were mixed with them. She was sitting in the garden together with her grandchildren who were laughing and helping her. All children beside Jemime's youngest son. Payam said:

- It seems as if your son does not like to join his cuisines in helping their grandmother.

She said:

- Yes! You are right. My girls are happy when we come to visit my mother. But he prefers Kibera. He has many friends there and has a better time in Kibera.

Payam felt that this was a bit strange. How could some one prefer the small dirty and bad smelling streets of Kibera more that the wide green grass. This reminded him about Naima's youngest daughter. Once when Payam was going to Kibera with Naima She asked if it was ok to bring her daughter with her. Payam said that it is totally ok. The interesting issue was that Naima's daughter refused to follow them when they were leaving Kibera.



She was begging her mother to let her stay there with her friends and cuisines in Kibera. She was born in Kibera and had more friends in there than the new neighbourhood that they had moved to. Payam was thinking about what those who were born in Kibera would feel about leaving into a new environment, totally different from what they are used to. Would the orphans prefer living in Kibera or outside of there. Would they prefer a better life in Kibera or outside of Kibera.

Payam was thinking about this issue when Jemime said:

- He prefers being in Kibera with his friends- but my daughters are more happy here then in Kibera. They always want to come and visit their cuisines and stay here as long time as possible. That is why I am trying to move to a rural area around here.

Payam was a bit surprised. He asked:

- Really?

Jemime said:

-Yes. I have always been saving as much money as I can in order to be able to move out of Kibera. I feel more comfortable when we are here in the village. I want to move back because I know that here no one will come and demolish my home for building apartments, or increase your rent- like they do in Kibera.

Payam said:

-But the government lets you move into the new apartments when they demolish your home in Kibera.

Jemime smiled and said:

The new apartments are a way of chasing the poor people out of Kibera. The poor people will not afford to stay in the new apartments for long. They move out and new rich people move in. I would prefer if someone helps me with moving out of Kibera. Even if I would receive 2000 KSh per week as donation in Kibera. I know that me and my children will not have a successful future if we stay there. My oldest son always asks me:

-”when will we move to a village? When do we move back so that I will be able to have my own house in our garden?”

I want to move to a village where I can plant my own plants, buy two cows and live on those in future. So far I have been able to pay most part of the bill for 1 acre of land in a village called Bukya. It is close to here- we can go and see it if you want. I will move away from Kibera as soon as I have paid all the bill and built a house on the land in Bukya.

Payam said:

-Sure! I would love to go if we have time. But first I want to interview at least 5 widows in this village.

Jemime said:

-That’s good. I’m sure we will have time tomorrow.

Payam asked:

- What do you say about going and interviewing some widows now?

Jemime answered:

-Yes we can do that once my stepbrother has arrived. He is going to come with us.

Payam was not happy to hear that. He did not want to have a man around when he was going to interview the widows. Especially a man who lives in the same village as the interviewees. He felt that the widows might even have problem with being totally honest with himself around. At the same time as he knew that it was not ok for Jemime to accompany him alone. It was a chance that the local residents would having different assumptions about the situation. Payam told Jemime:

- It is ok for me that your brother comes with us. But only if your stepbrother will stay outside when we are going to interview the widows. Jemime said that it was ok for her.

After few minutes Jemime’s older stepbrother, from her father second wife arrived. They started by having some tea and talk about what Payam was doing. After a while they started to walk around and interview some of the widows in Shanieni.

The interviews were very interesting for Payam. It seemed as if it was boring for Jemime to constantly translate same questions for several women. There was nothing new in the answers for her. But the situation was totally different for Payam. He felt that he was learning something new about the social, cultural and economic lifestyle of the widows within the Luhya culture in each interview.

In many cases the answers were hard for him to accept. He could see how the widows life situation were getting more difficult because of the local traditions. Something that was unusual for him was the fact that the widows themselves were totally fine with the situation. One of these issues was the issue of remarriage.

Payam was really curious about the reason to the situation. He realized that it was because of the fact that they would have to be separated from their children when they were moving in to the new man's family. The previous husband's family would not accept that someone would take away the children from their son- no mother if it is their mother or someone else. Neither the new husband's family would accept children from another family to move in to their compound. It was difficult for the widows to.

One thing that was interesting for Payam was that the average income for the 5 interviewed widows in the village Shanini was 128 KSh/day. This was higher than the average income amongst the widows that Payam had interviewed in Kibera- so far. Something that was interesting here was that some of the homes also had cows or small plantations that they could use. Something that the widows in Kibera would have to pay for.

The worst economical condition could be seen amongst the families who were working with sugar plantations. Many of the families in the area had contracts with the company "Mumias Sugar Company". The Government started the activity of the company in this area in 1971 in order to improve the living conditions for the local

- > Provide a source of cash income for farmers
- > Create job opportunities since there was no major industrial undertaking in the area at the time
- > Curb rural-urban migration
- > Reduce overdependence on importation and aim for self-sufficiency in sugar production
- > The Company was also expected to operate on a commercial basis and make profits.



Payam asked Jemime to explain the function of the co-operation between local residents and the “Mumias Sugar Company”. Jemime said:

- The local residents start by signing a contract with the company. The company starts by assisting the local farmers with digging the land with tractors. Later on the company provides them with seeds. The farmers plant the seeds. After a while the company provides the farmers with fertilizers. The farmers have to fertilize the sugar canes several time during the process. The growth process will take around 18 months.

Once the sugar cans are ready the company will bring cutters and tractors for harvesting and transporting the cans to the factories. The sugar canes will be weighted and the farmer will receive around 20000 KSh/Kg . But the company will first reduce the cost of the assistance that the farmer has received. As result the farmer will make a very small profit of the plantation. It happens very often that the profit is less then the cost of the assistance- so the farmer has to pay the sugar company.

Payam got very sad when he heard this. He thought that sugar plantation was profitable for the farmers. But it seemed as if the farmers who planted for them self were making better profit.

He was sad and thinking about this issue when he all the sudden saw the girls in the house going to bring water. He asked Jemime if they could follow them so that he could see where the water was brought from. Jemime agreed and they started to follow the girls. Payam realized that the widows in Shanini were lucky regarding the drinking water. They had a spring water close to their homes- as a result they did not need to pay for the water. They were getting fresh and clean water, unlike the widows in Kibera who had to pay for a water which was not even clean enough to drink.



The insecurity in the village seemed to be much less then in Kibera. The children could walk long distances several times during a day- in order to bring water for the family. Payam even experienced a case where the widow had left the door to her home open when she had gone away. She trusted the neighbours and was not worried about rubbery in her house.

The major problem that some of the local residents had to deal with was the lack of electricity in their homes. The reason was that it was to expensive to install and to pay the bill. They preferred to keep on with the traditional lighting in the homes.

For Payam this was explaining one of the reasons to why the families in the villages were going to bed so early. All of the widows that he interviewed said that they go to bed at 8pm and wakes up at 6am. Something that Payam found as strange the first day. But he himself felt sleepy at 8pm when there was dark and silent in the room and woke up 6am when the rooster started crowing at the sunrise.



villages were going to bed so early. All of the widows that he interviewed said that they go to bed at 8pm and wakes up at 6am. Something that Payam found as strange the first day. But he himself felt sleepy at 8pm when it was dark and silent in the room and woke up 6am when the rooster started crowing at the sunrise.

## Architecture:

Something that was surprising for Payam was the architecture of the homes that he visited. Almost none of them had the traditional architecture that he had read about in books. Almost all families had kept the traditional arrangement within a Luhya family's compound. But very few had kept the shape and materiality within a traditional Luhya families home. The families were also using materials which were unlike the traditional materials within the Luhya culture.

## Materials:

These days- the majority of the local residents prefer using cement as their external walls material and corrugated iron as roofing material. Meanwhile the Luhya tribe traditionally used to use mud for the external walls and grass-thatched as the roof material.



What is interesting is that the traditional material is much more practical and useful in comparison with the materials that the majority prefer. Payam experienced when he visited the widows homes for the interviews. The homes that had used the corrugated iron as roofing material felt much warmer than the homes that had used grass-thatched as the roof material. He could clearly feel if the sun was shining outside or if the clouds had caused a shadow on the roof.

The traditional material was also more practical for resistance against the noise. Payam experienced problem with sleeping at night because of the noise caused by the rain drops. He experienced this problem also in one of the interviews where he could barely hear what Jemime was saying because of the noise from the raindrops. He wished that the room would have had the same material as the first home he visited.



The traditional houses were built by digging a number of posts into the ground, with a distance of 20 to 46 cm apart from another. There were also horizontal wooden sticks, with regular intervals from the ground to the roof, which hold these posts together.

This wooden construction is later on filled up with mud up to about 15 cm below the top. The gap increases the air circulation, and is more common in areas with a hot climate. This gap is also useful as an exit for the smoke from the fire in the rooms.

#### Disadvantages with corrugated Iron:

- > The sheets tend to rust easily- unless they are painted, which adds to the total cost.
- > They are less pleasant to the eye
- > The use of the corrugated Iron as roofing material has altered the shape of a traditional Luhya house from circular to triangular.
- > The material provides very poor insulation against the heat of the sun by the day and does not store the heat during the night.

#### Advantages with corrugated Iron:

- > It is time saving.
- > More durable than grass-thatch.
- > Easier to dismount.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Book: Kaj Blegvad Andersen. 1977. African Traditional Architecture, A Study of the Housing and Settlement Patterns of Rural Kenya Press: Oxford University Press

### Roof construction

The houses are comparatively large, which is why supporting posts are positioned freely inside the houses in order to support the roof structure. There are two different methods of thatching within a Luhya tribe- the flush method, which is the most common one, and the layered method, which gives the roof a terraced appearance. Residents who can find papyrus in nearby lakes use a combination of grass and papyrus reeds as thatching material, whereby the grass is used on the upper section. This combination makes the roof more durable.

One of the interesting points with the roofs within a Luhya homestead is that it is extending out from the walls in a larger extend than other Bantu houses. The reason behind this is to create a shaded area around the house. This area is partially enclosed on both sides of the entrance door and creates a small veranda. One side of this veranda is used for grinding flour and the grinding stone is embedded in the clay of the floor.  
20



### Interior

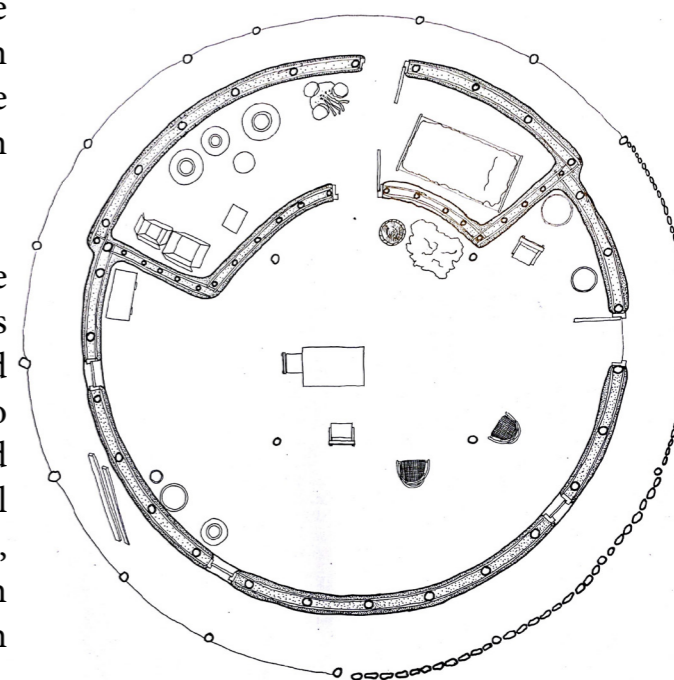
Payam read in the book by Mr Kaj Blegvad Andersen that the huts in a Luhya compound “in general” have two doors- a main one which is leading to the house from the front yard and a side door which is leading to the back or the side of the house, which is something that could only see in the husbands hut in the museum Bomas of Kenya.

According to Mr Kaj Blegvad there have been two house plans recorded in a Luhya homestead. In the first one, the hut consists of one large room which has been divided by a screen of reeds or partial walls, something that Payam could see in husbands hut in Bomas of Kenya.

The larger room is used for eating and normal daily activities meanwhile the second room is used for sleeping and other private activities. In former times the bed was an integral part of the floor, in form of an small clay platform raised about 20cm above

the floor, which can be seen on the picture in the boys hut in the Kalenjin homestead- meanwhile today more refined beds made by wood can be seen most clearly in the first wives’ hut.

The second type of house consists of one large room where social activities takes place and a smaller room partitioned off by a full height partition parallel to the outer wall. This creates a U-shaped room which is used for cooking as well as sleeping. This room has two rooms, one which is leading to the main room and another one which is leading to an area behind the house.



Picture of the wives hut, Book: Kaj Blegvad Andersen.

20 Book: Kaj Blegvad Andersen. 1977. African Traditional Architecture, A Study of the Housing and Settlement Patterns of Rural Kenya Press: Oxford University Press, Page 156

21 Book title: Traditional Villages of Kenya’s Communities. By. The Museum, Bomas of Kenya. Page 9



### Luhya compound

The houses are comparatively large, which is why supporting posts are positioned freely inside the houses in order to support the roof structure. There are two different methods of thatching within a Luhya tribe- the flush method, which is the most common one, and the layered method, which gives the roof a terraced appearance. Residents who can find papyrus in nearby lakes use a combination of grass and papyrus reeds as thatching material, whereby the grass is used on the upper section. This combination makes the roof more durable.

One of the interesting points with the roofs within a Luhya homestead is that it is extending out from the walls in a larger extend then other Bantu houses. The reason behind this is to create a shaded area around the house. This area is partially enclosed on both sides of the entrance door and creates a small veranda. One side of this veranda is used for grinding flour and the grinding stone is embedded in the clay of the floor.



## Kamba



## Story:

Payam met Eunice Mlihnda in Kibera the day before traveling to her village. They planed where and when to meet in town in order to go to her origin village by the name Gaamba. She explained that they have to meet at the Nairobi bus station in the morning and take a bus to the city Salama. Thereafter they have to take another bus or Matatu to her village. Payam and Eunice exchanged phone numbers and agreed to meet each other 8am outside of the Nairobi bus station.

The day after- Payam woke up by the sound of the heavy rain drops that were falling on the ground. The rain drops in Kenya seemed to be twice as big as the Swedish ones. The traffic jam in Nairobi increased as soon as the raindrops were falling on the ground. The bus drivers increased the price for the transport as soon as the weather changed. They increased the cost by 50% as soon as the clouds were covering the sky and 100% as soon as the rain drops hit the ground.

Payam left the house with his friend, who accompanied him to his shop in order to be guided by one of the employees to the bus station. Payam arrived in the bus station about 30 minutes later than he had planned. Once he arrived he noticed that there is a large amount of people waiting by the entrance to the bus station in order to avoid the heavy raindrops. He could not find Eunice and she was not answering her phone. Payam called Naima but neither her phone was working properly. It took Payam and Eunice one hour to find each other. With one hand she was holding her sons hand and with the other hand she was holding their bags, meanwhile se was carrying her daughter on her back.

They started walking very fast towards the street where the busses towards Salama were waiting for passengers. Majority of Kenyans would have holyday ahead, which is why they were going back to their origin villages in order to visit their relatives. The high demand for tickets made so that the price had increased by 100%. Eunice insisted that she would hold her son and daughter and her bags on her laps- n order to save the

cost of the travel. But Payam could not accept seeing her in such a difficult situation during several hours and thereby told her that he would pay for an extra seat for her children. Several passengers who were looking for a sit did not like the situation. They insisted that the children should sit on the lap so that more people could get on board. For Payam it seemed as if it was unusual for them to see a child sitting on a seat by himself.

Payam asked if there was a place where he could putt his luggage. He got the answer that the roof was the only option. That option was out of the question for Payam- especially considering the terrible weather. So he had to accept to carry his bag on his lap, as most other passengers were doing. The journey was longer than Payam had imagined. After several hours they arrived at Salama and got of the buss.

Payam asked:

-How long time will it take to get to your village from by car from here

Eunice answered:

-About 1 hour.

Not having a clue about what he would experience- Payam was happy that he would get there before sunset and have time to interview some widows right away. One they got off the bus Eunice said that she wanted to buy rice, hand washing soap and some other items that she knew Payam would want to have at the village. But she suggested that first of all they would check if there was a Matato or car that was going to go to her village right then.

She explained that sometimes people had to wait for a long time until they would find a transport to her village. Payam was a bit surprised. He followed her and looked at her when she was talking to a matatu driver.

Payam asked:

-What is he saying? When is he leaving?

Eunice smiled and said:

-He says that a Matato left about half an hour ago. Right now he has only three passengers. We have to wait until at least seven more will come.

Payam asked:

-Is it going to take a long time?

Eunice said:

-We don't know. We have to wait and see. Until then we can go and do the shopping.

Payam and Eunice had to wait several hours for the remaining passengers to come. Payam was very angry. He could see the clouds with the rain coming towards them and knew that he would not have a chance to visit any widows for interview this day. Payam was constantly looking around to see if there was any other passenger coming- meanwhile the other passengers were walking around in the area or sitting relaxed in the car. The driver started the car after three hours.

After an hour Payam, Eunice and her children arrived in her village. Payam was amazed by the nature in the area. Everywhere was greenery, flowers of different colours and plantations of different kinds. He started wondering why Eunice had left all this and moved to Kibera.

## Reason to why moving to the urban area

Payam asked Eunice:

-How come you moved to Kibera?

Eunice smiled and

-It was because I did not find a job here at the rural. My husband was the one who was earning money. Once he passed away I could not find a job. I thought that the best way was to move to the city, where there is plenty of jobs available.

Payam asked:

-Well why did you decide to live in Kibera?

Eunice looked a bit sad and said:

- I did not afford to live anywhere else in Nairobi. The rent in the other neighbourhoods were so expensive, so I decided to start with Kibera and then move to another area as soon as I had enough money. But so far I have not been able to find a job where I can afford to pay the rent in a more expensive area.

Payam felt very sad and asked:

- So, is the life in Nairobi as you expected before you moved from your village?

Eunice said:

- No, I thought that I would be able to find a job as soon as I arrived. But finding a job in Nairobi is not easy at all. Especially for me who has to take care of my children at the same time. I can not leave them alone in the insecure area of Kibera and go for finding a job in other parts of Nairobi.

Payam asked:

- Well can't you go and look for job meanwhile they are in school?

Eunice answered:

- In the beginning were my children not signed in any school in Kibera. It was because I did not afford to pay their school fees.

## Childrens school

Payam asked:

- But why did you not sign them into a governmental school that is free of charge?

Eunice said:

- Well I tried, but it was impossible because they were full. There amount of children in Kibera is much higher than the amount of places in the governmental schools that are in Kibera.

Payam asked:

- Well how is the situation in the rural area? Are the governmental schools full here as well.

Eunice smiled and said:

- No, they are not.



Payam started to think about the situation and felt that he had to find a solution to the problem regarding the possibility for children's education in Kibera. The widows should have the possibility of signing in their children in schools as well as leaving them in a safe environment meanwhile they are looking for job in other parts of town. He was trying to find a solution when he noticed that there were some children who were happily running towards them. They started hugging Eunice and her children and welcomed them and Payam. Eunice said:

- These are the children of my relatives. We have almost reached my grandmothers home.

## Kamba funeral bobsequie

As soon as they arrived at the homestead Payam remembered the he saw a grave beside the first wife's hut at the Luhya homestead. He said:

-It's interesting that you don't bury the husband beside the first wife's hut

Eunice said:

- We actually do so and we also bury the wife beside the homestead. We have my grandfather and his second wife buried beside the homestead.

Payam felt that it was very interesting that there was not a cross and stones on the graves. The family had put only some branches on the graves. Another interesting point with this arrangement was that both the wife and the husband were berried beside the homestead.



Unlike the Luhya tribe where the wife was berried far away from the homestead. Payam's mind was thinking about this difference between the Luo and Kamba tribe when he noticed that a lady was walking towards them and welcoming them.

- This is my grandmother.

### Story:

In same way as previous rural area visits, the hosting family brought the special guest furnitures and tea for the guest. The children took Payams bags to the room that they had prepared for him. Once they moved to the living room Payam noticed that the hosting family was treating the children from Kibera in a different way in relationship to the children from rural. The children from Nairobi received more attention and respect. Their cloths were more clean and modern and Eunice had brought their old cloths for her ralitives.



## Marriage

Payam asked Eunice's grandmother:

-How come that there are two graves outside of your house? Did your husband marry another women as well?

She said:

-Yes, he had.

Payam asked:

- Did you get married when he had a wife or did he marry her after you?

She answered:

- He married her after me. It was actually I who said that he should bring another women to the household. There was a lot of work that had to be done in the house, I did not manage to take care of the plantation, cattle, household and the children by my self. So I told him to go and bring another wife who would help me.

- After this discussion Payam realized that the fact that some men, especially from Luo and Luhya tribes were telling him that their wife encourage them to marry a second wife might be true.

Payam asked:

- How come you and your family live separated from your husbands family?

She answered:

- In our culture the husbands family are not very strict about whether we are living in their compound or in a separated one. And after all we have to move out when the amount of family members are getting to many.

Payam sked:

-How about when your husband passes away, will you not become your brother in laws wife and thereby have to move close to him?

## Story:

She answered:

- No we do not have this tradition in our culture that you will become your brother in laws wife.

Payam was thinking about the differences that he could see amongst the widows life situation in different tribes when Eunice told him that the guest room is ready and that he can go and sleep if he wants. Payam followed Eunice to the guest room which was in another hut.

Payam slept well at night despite the fact that the bed was almost braking apart every time he was making a small movement and that he constantly heard a noise which seemed to be from a mouse in the room. He woke up in the morning with the sound from the birds and the family who was preparing the breakfast. Once he got out of the room Eunice asked him:

- Did you sleep well?

Payam said:

-Yes, the only thing that was bothering me at night was the noise from a mouse that I believe was under my bed.

Eunice smiled and said:

- No don't worry! That is not a mouse. It is just a bat.

Payam was a bit surprised and found it a bit strange that Eunice did not found a bat under the roof as a problem.

Once the breakfast was finished Payam and Eunice started to walk around the village with a friend of Eunice who would help them with showing them around the area.

## Moving back to the rural area

Payam was very amazed by the beauty of the nature in the area and while walking around was trying to understand how someone could leave such a peaceful and beautiful area and move to the insecure Kibera where you could not see any signs from nature. He asked Eunice:

- How come you do not move back to here? Is it because you are afraid of how your husbands family would take your children from you?

Eunice answered:

- No, my husbands family did not have any problems with me moving away. But I personally prefer living in Nairobi. I believe that my children will have a better possibility for a more successful future in the urban area.

Payam asked:

- So you mean that you do not mind living in Kibera?

Eunice said:

- No, I do not like living in Kibera. But my hope is to have a better income so that I can afford to pay my children's school-fees, the rent and food as well as saving some money so that I can move to a safe neighbourhood in Nairobi. Moving to a home that has a shower and toilet and is located an area where my children are in a safe environment when they play outside.

This answer was not what Payam expected to hear. He thought that also Eunice would say that she would like to return to the rural but can not do that because of the cultural problems in the rural area, in same way as Jemime did when they were visiting her origin rural area. Payam realized that the culture is not the only reason to why widows do not return to the rural area and that some widows still prefer living in the urban areas, but not in Kibera.

## Plantation:

Payam was walking and thinking about these issues when he all the sudden saw Eunice's grandmother who was working on a plantation-field. He said:

- Oh so you are working as farmers in this area, what do you plant?

Eunice smiled and answered:

- We are planting many things such as maize, millet, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, beans, pigeon peas, greens, arrowroot and cassava.

Payam asked:

- So do you plant this for your own family or for a bigger company?

Eunice answered:

- This is for our own family. The women in Kamba tribe is given a land when she joins her husband's household. She uses this field for plantation of vegtabales for the familj.

Payam was amazed by the fact that the families in the Kamba tribe were living so independent and selfsufficient. Their daily food did not rely on the profit that they would make by sugar or tee plantation as the Luo, Luhya and Kalenjin tribe families



that Payam visited earlier were doing.

He noticed action also regarding the water collection. The majority of the families that he visited in the previous villages were using water from a river or a lake that was around their residence . Water that could include allot of pollution and thereby result in medical problems. But the Kamba families that Payam visited where using the water that they had collected from the rain.



This situation was the same regarding the electricity in the homes. Payam remembered that the Luhya family that he visited did not have electricity because they did not afford the cost for connecting to the central cables. The family did not consider using solar-panels as the source of electricity for their homes. This was something that the Eunice family used. They used solar-panels as the source of energy for the lighting at night time and thereby had free electricity at night-time.



## Architecture

Payam was very amazed by the traditional architecture amongst the Kamba tribe. He felt that the Kamba settlement is presenting a good example of the development that has taken place in recent times. The earliest types of houses in the Kamba tribe were made by simple wood structures thatched to the ground, in same way as the Luo, Luhya and many other tribes around the area. This structure altered radically in the Kamba tribe. The mud and wattle houses as well as the mud-brick houses are a good example of change without the sacrifice of environmental, technical and aesthetic qualities. The old traditional houses in this tribe seemed to look like a beehive, with no distinction between the wall and the roof. They were built by planting bundles of saplings in a circle and joining at the top in order to form an apex.

Later on they applied thatched grass on top of this structure. The grass was cut in a way that it was still held in clumps by the roof. The grass was applied in layers and tied to the framework of the hut. The thick base of the clump of grass gave the whole structure a ribbed appearance. The thatch was kept in place by tying thin reeds or sticks on to it. The apex was made of an extra layer of grass bound round the final of the central pole. The apex in the former traditional Kamba tribes homestead was made of an extra thick layer of grass bound around the final of the central pole.

But Payam knew that the Kamba tribe's area was a good example of the changes that have taken place in African architecture. The Kamba tribe used similar shape but with a radically different construction and kinds of materials by time. The apiary structure in the two first types has given a way to the more common type of house-made of mud-packed circular walls and a thatched conical roof. The third type of house in the Kamba tribe is similar in shape to the previous mentioned types. But in the third type a much more sophisticated material, named clay-brick, has been used for the wall construction. Payam was very curious about this third type of wall construction, which is why he asked Eunice:

-Do you know anyone who is making bricks in your village?

Eunice smiled and said:

- You can ask any of the kids here to make bricks for you. But I can also take you to someone who is working with this every day.

Payam got very interested in seeing how the kids could do that as well as to see how a professional was working with this so he said:

- I would like to see both of them.

Eunice told her relatives about this and they got very happy. They started immediately digging on the ground and mixed the earth with water until it was smooth in texture and then put it in a form with a size of 300 x 150 x 90 mm in order to create a brick. After a short time they turned the form around and pulled it up. It took couple of minutes to create the shape.



Eunice told her relatives about this and they got very happy. They started immediately digging on the ground and mixed the earth with water until it was smooth in texture and then put it in a form with a size of 300 x 150 x 90 mm in order to create a brick. After a short time they turned the form around and pulled it up. It took couple of minutes to create the shape. But they said this was the first step. After this you have to leave the either in the sun for couple of days and then turn them over to dry the underside, or use a more complicated version which is stacking them on each-other around fire. Eunice noticed Payam's curiosity and told him that they can go and visit someone who is using the second method. They started walking towards a neighbour who was working with producing and selling bricks. After few minuts they arrived. Payam noticed the man who was digging the ground when they were on their way.



He realized that the man was using the same method as Eunice's relatives. He was a bit surprised by the fact that a man who was working with profession was using same simple tools and material as the kids in a family. Just with his bare hands and without any special machines. The man seemed very glad that someone showed interest in his work and demonstrated how he it was done. Payam was impressed and left after some conversation and encouragement of the man for his work of producing traditional building-material made from natural and local materials.

Payam thanked Eunice's for helping him with gathering all the information and her family for being so kind. He told her that he felt very welcomed amongst the families that he visited within the Kamba tribe and that he was so chocked by receiving gifts from each of the families that they visited. The biggest shock came when the widow from the first family gave him a chicken soon after she had told him about all the economic problems that she had to deal with in her daily life. Eunice smiled and said that this is normal within the Kamba tribe. Payam started to pack his bag as soon as they returned home. He noticed that Eunice wanted to stay for a longer time in the village, so he said that he can travel back to Nairobi by himself. He said good by to Eunice's family and traveld back to Nairobi with the buss.



## Kamba Homestead



## Final Conclusion

Through his research Payam learned that in order to be able to create a sustainable city- we need to solve the problems within slum areas by having successful slum-upgrading projects. In order to achieve the goal of a successful slum-upgrading project we need to start with helping a special target group- which should be those who are facing the largest social and economic problems in the slum. He learned that the most important point is to use a well-planned and correct method for solving the problems amongst the target group.

Payam realized that we cannot solve all the problems amongst everyone in a slum through one single project. He noticed that some of the residents who live in the slum upgrading apartment project are sadder now than when they lived in 9 square meter rooms, despite the fact that they now live in a larger residence with toilet and shower in a more safe area. The problem is that the architects who designed the buildings, as well as those who created the project, did not consider the social and economic problems, needs and demands amongst the local residents. In Payam's opinion, the first thing that they should have done was to study these issues amongst the local residents and based on the result, proposed a building that would help them with solving these problems.

That is why Payam decided to sit and think about the social and economic problems that he read about, heard about, and observed during his stay in Kenya before he would propose a solution. He wanted to reach his goal of examining how income generating design activities can mitigate social and economic problems amongst widows in Kibera. After all, they are the ones who face social, economic and in many cases the cultural problems more than other residents. They are the ones who face these problems despite the fact that they are the caretakers of the orphans who are part of the future society in the area.


Payam noticed that there are so many young orphans in Kibera who cannot find a job because they do not have any education or training for any kind of profession. As a

result they have to use criminal actions or sell their body in order to afford to buy the most necessary things in a human life. The orphans are the future society- which is why we have to help them now in order to have a sustainable society in future. He realized that the best way of preventing the problems amongst the orphans is to support the widows in social and economic point of view so that they can lead their children in to a better future.

He also realized that the first thing that the widows in Kibera need to do is to support and cooperate with each other, so that they can manage to solve their social and economic problems by themselves. After his research, Payam made the conclusion that the best way to do that is to create an organization that creates a unity amongst them. They can manage to reach a successful future through cooperation with other widows. Those who face the problems know more than anyone what the problems are and in most cases they are the ones who know how to solve the problem. The only problem is that some of the organizations commit some mistakes which will result in a failure.

Payam realized that the best way of helping them is to write guidance with advices regarding how they should start and lead an organization. He decided to gather and combine all the good functions, for an organization for widows, from the organizations that he interviewed. He decided to also consider the advices that he received from his interviews with professionals in different fields within different organizations. In this way they would be able to create an organization by themselves and not be depended on organizations from outside of Kibera. Organizations that in most cases expect an economical profit for themselves as a return whereby the final result will be that the residents in Kibera will face a failure.

Payam believed that by helping the widows with creating an organization- he would create a corporation amongst the widows which will help them in supporting each other in social and economic point of view. By starting an organization by themselves for



them self- the widows will learn a new way of earning money and as a result they can start their own businesses. With the help from the organization and their own income generating activities they will afford to pay the education fee and living cost of their children.

Payam felt that by designing this organization he will create a way of reaching his aim, which was to find a way of reaching four goals amongst the eight goals amongst the Millennium Development Goals.

The only question remaining in Payams mind was whether the income generating design activities shall occur in Kibera or in the widow's origin villages. He started by thinking about the social, economic and cultural problems that he had witnessed in the rural area as well as Kibera. After looking through his notes and remembering what he saw and heard during his time in Kenya, Payam realized that the widows have to deal with problems of different kind no matter if they live in rural or urban areas.

He realized that some widows felt that they face bigger problems in rural meanwhile others felt that the problems are bigger in urban areas. A lot was depending on their culture and traditions but also the nature and activities in different rural areas. Some widows had left because of cultural problems that made it more difficult for them to return no matter what economic condition they had. Some other widows had moved because of economic problems and would love to move back to rural area, as long as they would afford to buy a land for plantation and a house to live in. There was also a group of widows in Kibera who liked to move to the new buildt Slum Upgrading Apartments.

But something that Payam noticed was the fact that no matter if the widows in Kibera wanted to stay in rural or move to urban, the common goal amongst all widows in Kibera was to deal with the social and economic problems that they face right now.

They needed to to solve these problems first in order to have the possibility to achieve their goal of moving to rural or urban area. That is why Payam decided to propose income generating design activities which would go on in Kibera. Design activities that in some cases needed materials that could be found only in rural areas, something that the widows from Kibera could contribute with once they would afford to move back.

Payam could remember that one of the widows wanted to move back to her origin village and there was a bamboo plantation in a lake nearby her village. He thought that she could move back and take that responsibility of the plantation of the bamboo; meanwhile the widows in Kibera would receive the order and produce the demountable building made by the bamboo.

Payam started immediately to write how the organization should start and in a later stage to build a place where they can produce the products.



# Proposals

## Proposal for design of organization

### 1. Gathering around 20 members:

In Payam's opinion the best way of starting the organization is to do it in the same way as the widows in the Mashimoni Women Group have done, whereby few local residents will start the organization in collaboration with each other. It is best if the group starts with around 20 members, because as Professor Anyamba said, it is always a group of members who will back off from the group after a while and the remaining amount of members will be around 12 to 15 members.

### 2. Selecting Chairlady, Secretary, Treasurer

It is important for the organization to have a chairlady who is taking responsibility for leading the organization in the right way. She has to make sure that the members are following the organization's policy and promises. She will be selected at the annual meeting once in two years and cannot be selected more than two times.

The organization will have a Secretary that will take responsibility for notes at meetings and annual reports regarding the organization's economy. She will also take responsibility for chairladies' role at occasions where she is not available. Payam felt that this is necessary because in one occasion he had to wait for a very long time for meeting the organization because the chairlady had gone back to her origin village. The members did not have anyone else who would arrange a meeting and the organization did not perform any activities during this time.

The organization needs a treasurer who will take responsibility for observing and presenting the economic situation within the organization for all members once in a week or month. She has responsibility for collecting and dividing the money amongst the members once in a week, when there is a Merry-Go-Round. The treasurer has the responsibility of, together with the chairlady and the secretary, dividing the income within the organization into the organization's different saving accounts and investment accounts.

The chairlady, secretary and treasurer within the organization will open a bank account for the organization together. The bank account will be a common account that can be accessed only if all three members are present. In this way there is a very low risk that someone will take all the organization's money and disappear, something that happens often in Kibera. Based on what Payam found out during his interview with Naimos' friend from the organization Kicoshep this kind of group account is something usual and practical amongst widows' organizations in Kibera. The organization will in this way also have a possibility for receiving a bank loan from Equity bank. But in Payam's opinion the bank loan should be taken out only if it is very necessary for the organization, considering the high interest rate of 25% which the Equity bank has. The problem is that the Equity bank is the only bank that would accept giving loans to groups in Kibera.

### 3. Official registration process

The official registration process will take long time in Kenya, which is why the organization has to send an application of an organization as soon as the right amount of members are gathered. A problem that the widows in Kibera might face is that there is a demand for a copy of an ID card or a Passport from the applicant, which is something that many widows in Kibera do not have.

### 4. Starting with Merry-Go-Round and saving:

The members will start with the Merry-go-round and a saving for the organization's capital as soon as they have elected the president, secretary and the treasurer within the organization.

a: 50KSh/member/week for Merry-Go-Round, which means that every week one member will receive 1250KSh.

b: 50KSh/member/week for investment, an amount that will be put into bank account once in a month. This is something that the members within the organization Maji Na Ufanisi, which is working with the public toilets sponsored by Sida, do.

Once the group has been created- they will start with supporting each other via Merry-go-round. The reason to why Payam choose this method at the start was that he read in a phd work by Jacinta Ndambuki that, based on her research, this method is the most basic and the first activity that the women engage in. “To contribute money for one another will create a connection between discourse and action.”

She also indicates that “Studies have shown that normally the MGR is the first line of activity for most of the women’s groups because it provides economic support for the women particularly to enable members to get firmly grounded financially. In other words, financial support forms the basis for collective action in women’s groups.”

In her opinion the MGR “might be said to function as a collective form of resistance to patriarchy so that people do not stop us from being in women’s groups’. The MGR therefore, represents women’s collective voice and response to patriarchy. Study of the MGR and by implication the women’s self-help movement in Kenya confirms the idea that a movement implies a social and/or political phenomenon of some significance and the numerical strength capacity to effect change in some way whether this is expressed in legal, cultural, social and political terms.“

Payam remembered very well that Naimos’ friend who works at Kicoshep said that there is also a negative point with MGR. In her opinion I was bad that a member in the organization had wait several weeks before it her turn to receive the money from MGR- and until then she had to pay. In her opinion it was better if the organization also had a budget where any member who had a business idea could get a loan at any time.

The problem is that the organization needs a capital in order to be able to support the members via an investment loan. Which is why, in Payams’ opinion, the organization should also have a saving account. The money in the saving account will come from the members in same way as for the MGR- a method which is used in Mashimoni

Women Group. The members in the organization are contributing with certain amount of money for MGR as well as for the organizations savings every Saturday.

This saving will be used as a capital for a mutual project within the organization at the beginning. It can be used for a project such as the soap production, an activity which may not need any special building and can be done at one of the members’ home.

This income will be saved in the organizations account in order to afford the cost of building a place for future activities within the organization, which in Mashimoni Women Group will be a childcare centre for widows’ children.

#### 5. Soap production

After 2 weeks they can start with soap production, which requires 1,500 as capital, something that Mashimoni Women group has done so far. Since the soap production has started the income has been about 2,000KSh/week (a profit of 500KSh/week). The widows will save this income Currently the widows in Mashimoni Women Group are working with the soap production as well as the weekly saving for investment. They have a saved 8500KSh after the soap production started, whereby they now have a total of 12,500KSh in their saving account.

The soap that is produced in the Mashimoni Women Group has a high quality and costs a lot to produce. As a result the widows have to sell the soap with a price which is not affordable for majority of the residents in Kibera. The residents prefer soaps that have a lower quality but cost less. Thereby the widows will now start producing liquid soap with lower quality for local residents. They will also start producing hard soap in a soon future. No other organization is doing that in Kibera and the hard soap seems to be more useful and popular, which is why the widows in Mashimoni Women Group expect a high income from the sale. The income will be saved for coming project. The expected income is a profit of 2000Ksh/week



- 500KSh/week from liquid soap with a better quality for residents outside of Kibera
- 500Ksh/week from liquid soap with a lower quality for local residents
- 1,000Ksh/week from hard soap.

The 50KSh/member/week for investment will be added to the Merry-Go-Round. As a result the Merry-Go-Round will become 100KSh/member/week. The difference now will be that each week two members will receive 1250KSh. in this way the members do not need to wait 25 weeks until it is their turn to receive money.

#### 6. The building will cost about x

- a: Bamboo, including transportation cost
  - b: Recycled plastic
  - c: Payment to the owner of the site for permission of building there
  - d: Education of how to building the building with
  - e: Payment of the assistance for building the building
  - f: Delivery of bamboo from the village
  - g: Tools for building the building
- Total: XXX

#### 7. The building process will start after x months and will take x weeks to accomplish

#### 8. The widows will start taking care of other widows children for the cost of 20KSh/day. In this stage

a: The Merry-Go-Round will continue as before whereby two members will receive 1250KSh/per week each.

b: The income from the childcare and the soap productions will be divided in four parts.

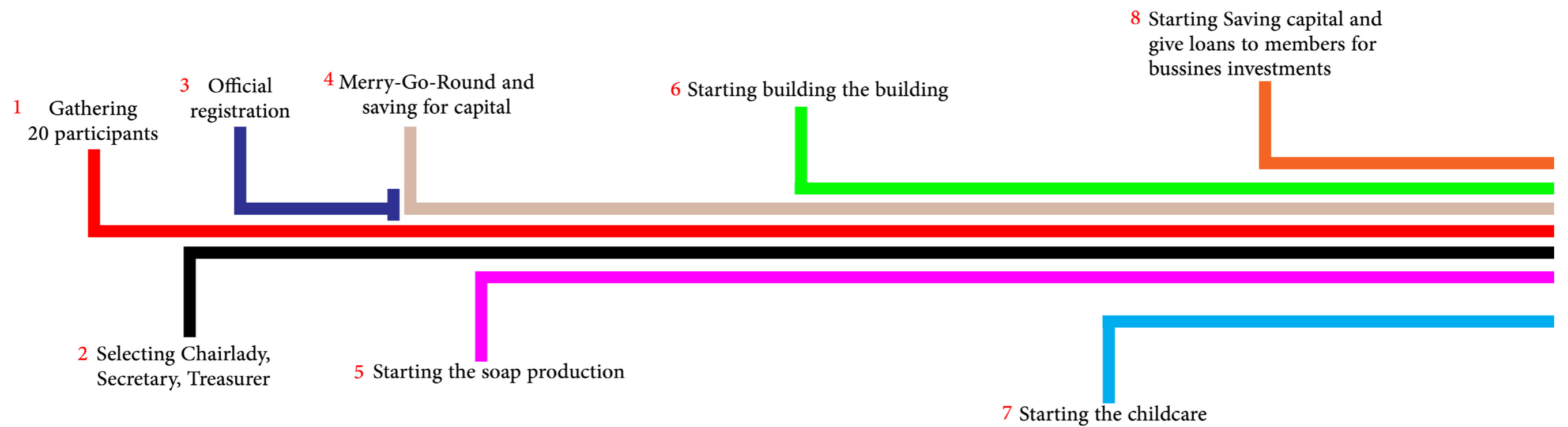
b1. Salary of the widows who will take care of the children in the childcare. A job which will be divided any of the members in the organization, if she wants.

b2. Saving for a capital that can be used for investment within new activities in future or in case there will be a failure in one of the current on-going projects, and in case there will be an order of the building from other costumers.

b3. Saving for a capital which will be given as a loan to a member who has an idea for private investment. The member has to repay the loan with a minimum of 100 KSh/week with 5% interest.

b4. The forth part of the saving will be divided amongst the members in the end of each year, in same way as in the previously mentioned organization Maji Na Ufanisi, which is working with the public toilets. The members can use this income either as a further investment in their individual businesses or other major costs such as their children's school fees.

## Graph for design of organization





# Building Proposal

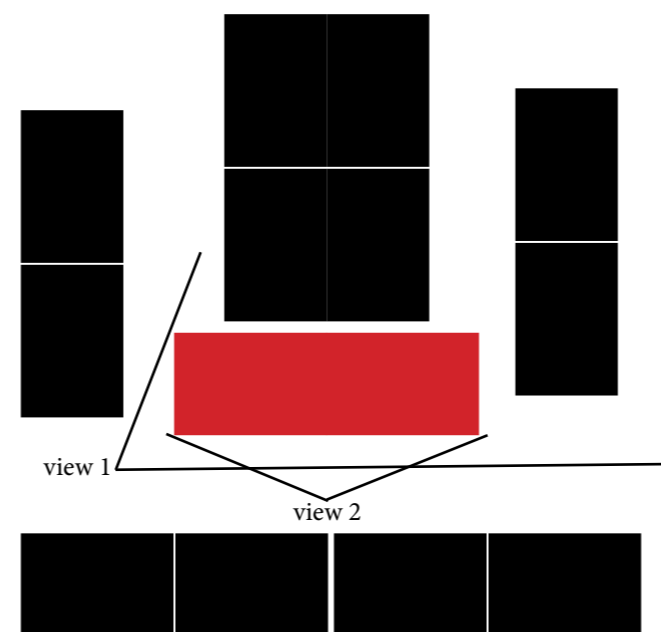
# Current Site



current site view 1



current site view 2



## Current Site



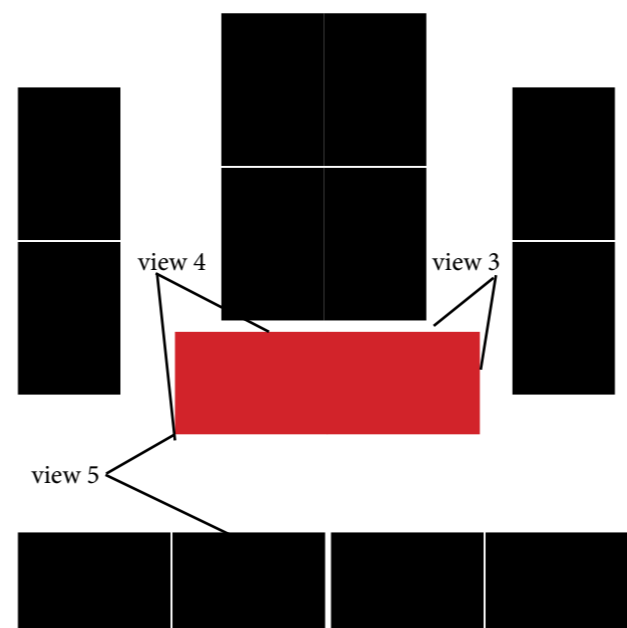
Current site view 3



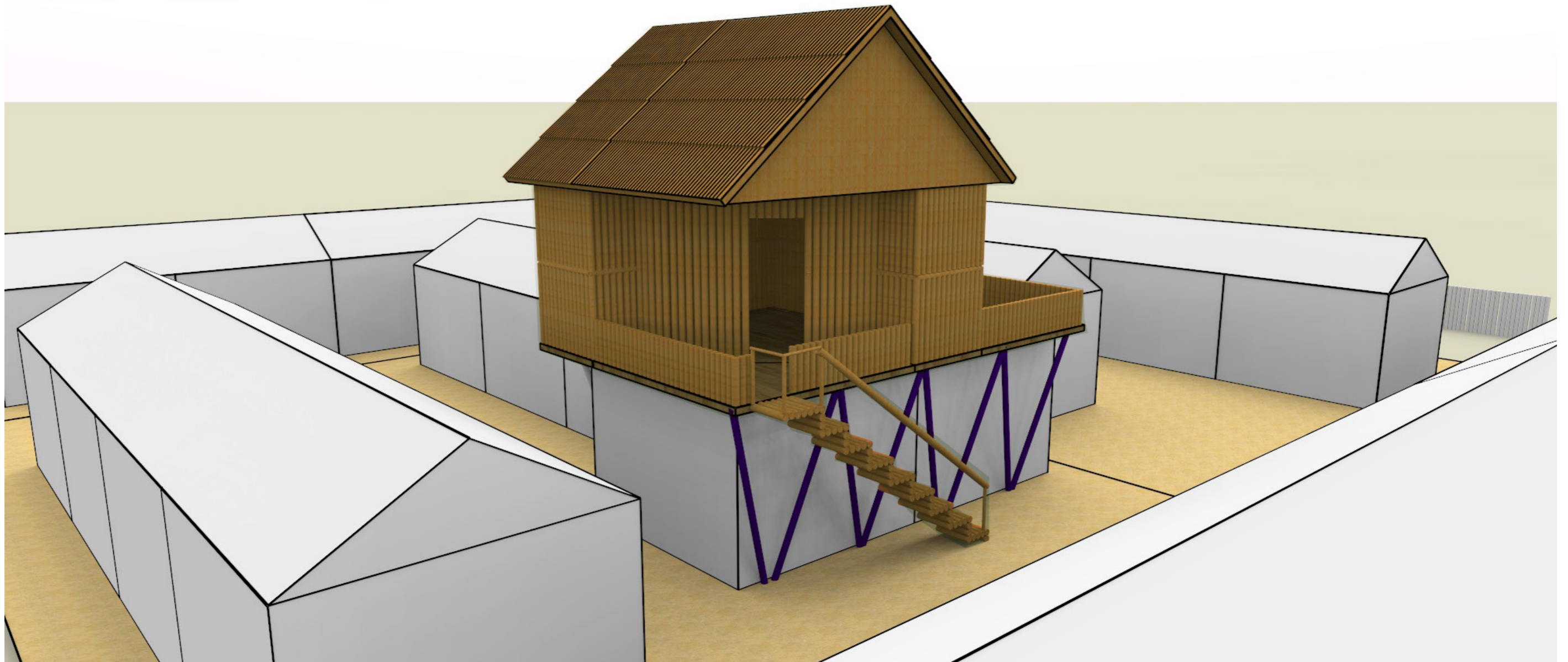
Current site view 4



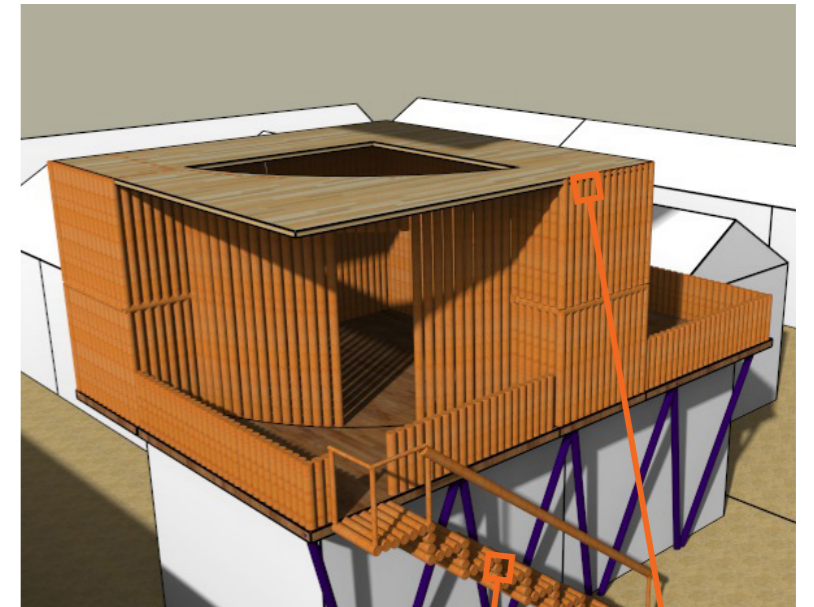
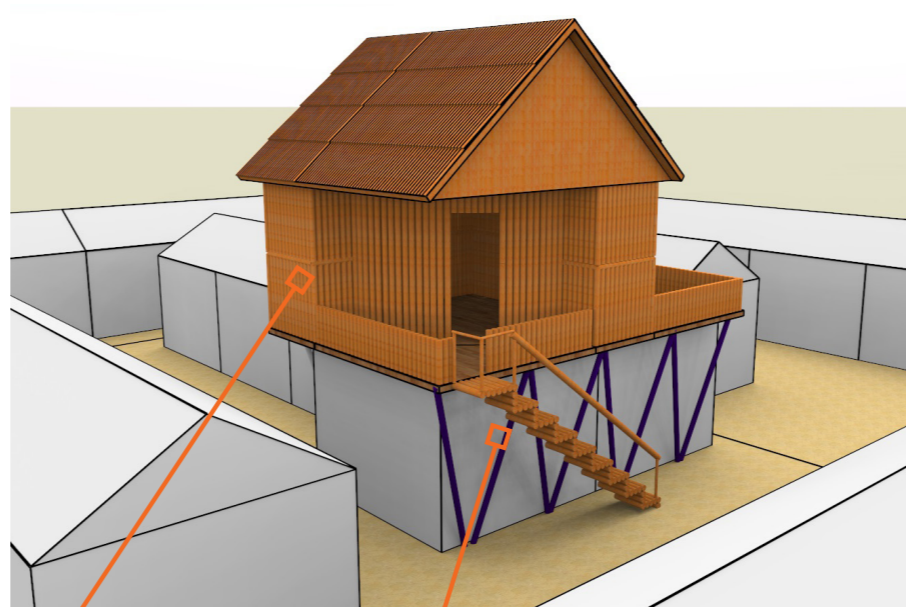
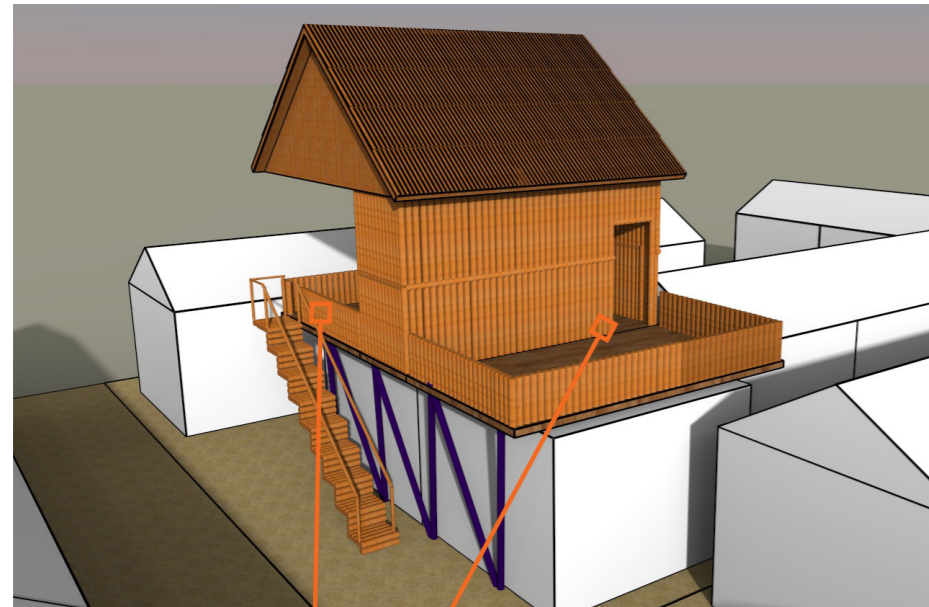
Current site view 5



# Proposal



# Proposal



**Luhya Tribe**



1st Wife's Hut

**Luo Tribe**



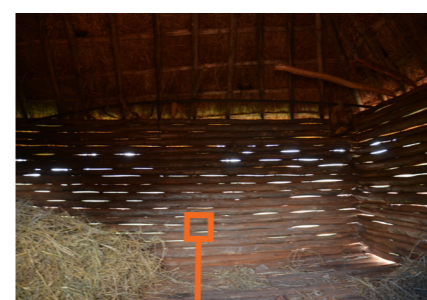
1st wife's Hut

**Kamba Tribe**



Kamba storage

**Kamba Tribe**



Kamba storage

**Kikuyu Tribe**



Interior 2nd wife's Hut

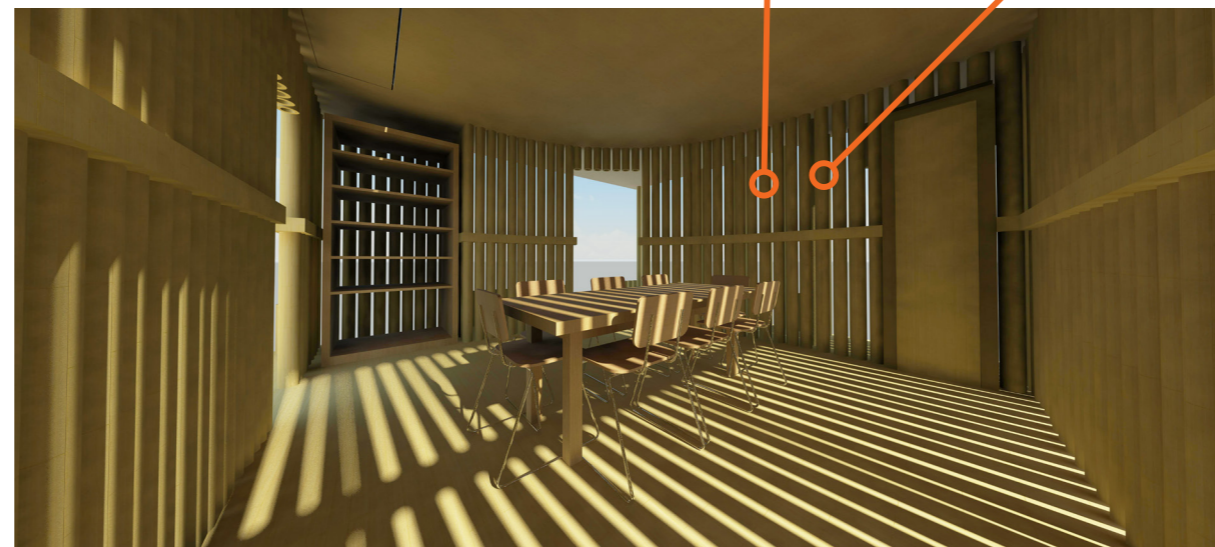
**Kalenjin Tribe**



Kitchen and guest bedroom



Interior first wife's Hut



## Self Reflection

What I have learned during this thesis is the fact that Architecture is not only about designing a building in an office. I experienced and learned that it is very important for an architect to do a lot of research regarding the social and economic problems amongst the target group, on the site, before coming up with a proposal. An architect has to spend time with the costumers and ask them what they need and want. Later on he/she has to spend time on thinking and asking around before coming up with a solution. By doing so, the architect can create a better future for a group of people who are in need of help in a society via a building.

Another thing that I learned is the fact that it is important for an architect to be present at the site and follow the project often meanwhile it is going on, especially when it is starting. If not, the result can very easily end up very different than expected. This is something that happened with the soap production within the Mashimoni Women Group where the produced soap was in liquid form instead of hard soap.



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### Interviews:

Miss Naimo Abdullah, Board member in Sustainable and Viable Organization, SAVO

Prof Anyamba Tom, Dean, School of The Built Environment, University of Nairobi

Mr Erastes Abonyo, School of The Built Environment, University of Nairobi

Miss Lillian Omandi, Teacher at Maseno University

Miss Naomi Mogoria, Teacher at Bondo University

Miss Margaret Auma, Director of The Spring Ministry Board of Trust

Miss Jemime Qanyanga, Chairlady of Mashimoni Women Group

Miss Betty Nafula, Chairlady of Maji Na Ufanisi

Miss Salma Rashid, Board member in Sustainable and Viable Organization, SAVO

Mr Amman Salim, Chairman Pollicising Community of Kibera

Miss Amman Beatrice Iravonga, Chairman Vlinja Ukimoi

Miss X X, Employee at Kicoshep

### Museums:

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