

# planning the unplanned

*does a sustainable future mean sustaining control?*





This report is part of the 2009 'Reality Studio' within the Master Program track 'Design for Sustainable Development' at Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg, Sweden.

During 5 weeks in the spring of 2009, we had the opportunity to conduct field studies in Kisumu, Kenya. Based on these experiences and the questions that the Reality Studio arises, we have formed the following work.

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May 2009

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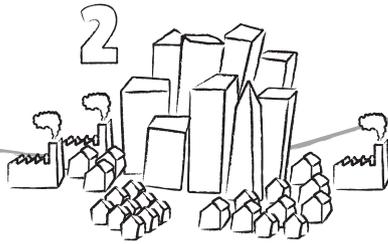
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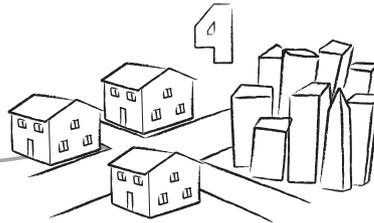
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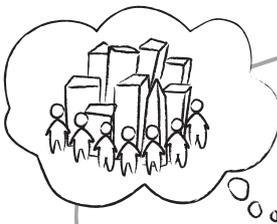
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"Peace wanted alive"

from a wall in Kibera

introduction



MUTISYA  
SHOP

THE  
PENTAGON  
KIBERA

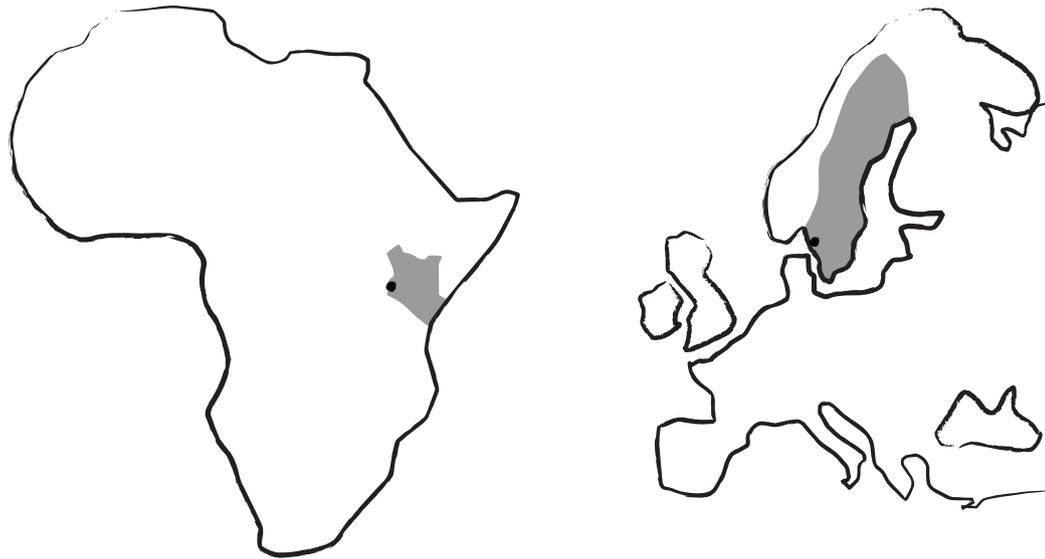
Kibera rooftops

Suddenly, we are emerged into an environment sizzling with life, sounds and colors, far from the image of crying children that media often depicts. We were immediately struck by the contrasts between Sweden and Kenya. The very structured and planned Sweden versus the very informal and seemingly unplanned “slums” of Kenya. We found it fascinating that the society is not necessary planned and that it grows continuously. From these initial impressions, we then identified three main visions for our project;

Firstly, we are intrigued by the idea of working with evolving strategies for urban development and see this as a more sustainable option to the conventional ideals of planning. We wish to learn more about how to plan for activities instead of the more common master plan ideals of designating specific areas to exploit. We see this vision as a step in our personal development to gain understanding of what in society controls the development of urban environments. When does urban planning strangle the opportunities for a flourishing urban life? How much should be planned, and how much should just be left to develop on its own? Is there such a thing as planning for the unplanned?

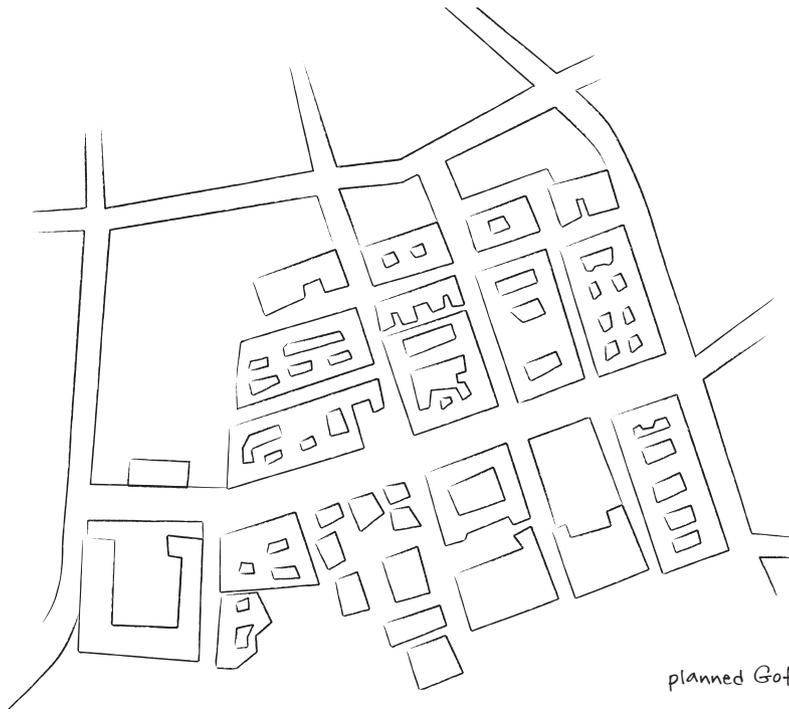
Secondly, when first arriving in Kenya, we discovered the dilemma of coming as an outsider in an unfamiliar context with so many underlying and sometimes not resolved historical issues. We will inevitably always compare everything to Sweden, but we believe that doing so and most of all, being aware of this constant comparison can help us in understanding and evaluating our own discussions or statements. As Swedish students in Kenya we often experienced being perceived as a link to funding. We noticed a lack of faith in local and national governance and instead saw a dependency on NGO’s and external financial aid. How does one carry out a project without from ones own perspective pointing out what is right and wrong? In addition, why do we feel it is so hard to speak about the downsides of Western cities? Are they really that sustainable? Perhaps we know now that the answer does not lie in a continued exploitation or “modernization”?

Who says that something is more developed than something else? When using terminology like “developed” and “developing” countries, it implies that one is more advanced than the other.



As Robert Neuwirth writes in his book *Shadow Cities*, using certain words only expands the distance: “A slum is the apotheosis of everything that people who do not live in a slum fear. To call a neighborhood a slum establishes a set of values – a morality that people outside the slum share – and implies that inside those areas, people don’t share the same principles.” Calling something informal implies a lack of order, but this order may not always be appropriate in the context. The informal might be worth just as much as the formally planned, but is often more tied to emotional aspects and not simply capital investments.

Thirdly, following the previous vision, we feel we should try and emphasize the positive things we find in Kenyan society rather than necessarily try and “improve”. Learning from each other and teaching each other to self-help (highlighting the mutual knowledge exchange) by the use of a common ground is of essence. Maybe of most importance to this specific project, we want to discuss how self-evolving processes can evolve in a Swedish context. Thus implementing the



planned Gothenburg



unplanned Manyatta A

things we learn from Kenya and Kisumu in particular, in “our own backyard”.

We see our project as an examination into for us new issues of a global character. This has given us an opportunity to learn more and build a richer knowledge base, as well as allowing us to explore how you can acquire new experiences. This has led to the outset of a strategy document or perhaps more of a scenario catalogue, that will continue to grow and will be used as a reference in our further academic and professional lives. The range started out as very general, working with the creation of a short film, in order to structure the broad questions. This also helped us to process all the information and impressions we gathered in Kenya, and initiated the comparison to Sweden.

The short-term influence of our project is that it strives to emphasize the potential in what is already there and what can evolve out of the existing by allowing people to be able to influence their surroundings. We believe that this is a more sustainable solution, since it will make people care more for their surrounding environments. In a long-term perspective, we can only hope to add to the discussion on what sustainable urban development will look like and try to highlight self-help processes and a new more social values-oriented ideal for “developed” as well as “developing” countries. We see our project as linking to a lot of different systems, and as such it is only a small part of urban progress.

We believe that the next step in any progress in society is looking at the wellbeing of people instead of relying on and emphasizing technical solutions and design improvements. As many others, we feel that there is a missing link between the social, economic and technical aspects of sustainability. The social solutions are not being stressed enough. Especially in Kenya, we noticed a belief in that technical solutions can solve social problems. When looking at the “developed” world, we can see that social problems are extremely complicated. Few see the big picture that lies behind the heaping injustices. Working with solutions to the symptoms is of course extremely important, but it should also be of high priority to acknowledge the root of the problems. We make no attempt at suggesting final solutions, but we want to accentuate and explore the ways in which we reach a sustainable urban future.



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"The growth of cities will be the single largest influence on development in the 21st century." UNFPA's 1996 State of World Population Report

urban future?



market in Manyatta A

## global urbanization

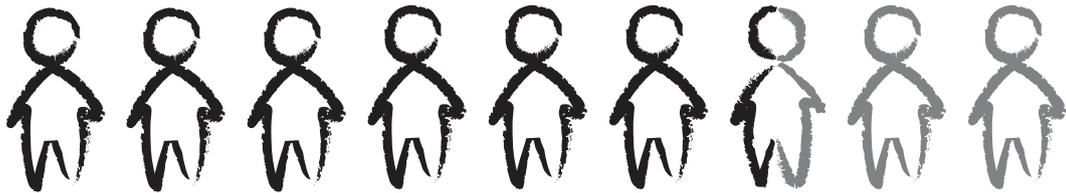
We constantly see the consequences, good or bad, of globalization in our daily life. When we buy food at the store, when we book flights to far away places and as we are faced with periods of financial crisis, we realize that everything is becoming more and more interconnected globally. What happens in one part of the world affects and is affected by what happens on the other side of the globe. As such, we can also observe global trends and see connections between regions or continents, showing signs of similar development. Today half of the world's population is living in cities, about 3.5 billion people. By 2050, UNFPA, the United Nations population fund, predicts that 70 % of the world's population will have their homes in the cities. This means a huge portion of the world's businesses, cultural activities and basically the majority of human life will take place in an urban setting. So with this increase of city inhabitants, what kind of living environments are we creating? Will our future cities grow within the informal or can we keep a control of urban planning that is already fading, or even non-existent, in large parts of the world?

During the last century, the world's population has grown to a size almost 13 times the population at the end of the 19th century. This has shaped not only our cities, but also society as a whole. The UN defines urbanization as “the process of transition from a rural to a more urban society.” Historically, the first big wave of urbanization came with industrialization as it spread through the “developed” world, roughly between mid 18th century and mid 20th century. During this period, the number of people living in cities rose from around 15 million to 423 million. Most of these new urban inhabitants were absorbed immediately into the growing economies the cities were becoming.

The second wave of urbanization we are facing now is taking place in another way and in another part of the world. As the “developed” world is likely to experience a slower rate of urbanization, we will over the next few decades encounter a previously unseen scale of urban growth, this time in countries with less economical power. These “developing” countries have weaker resources to handle such a huge mass migration. Providing sufficient employment and other needed public facilities associated with urban life will be of importance and issues of inequality will be increasingly significant. This urbanization will be especially evident in Africa



today, 3.5 billion people live in cities, 50% of the world's population



by 2050, 6.4 billion people will live in cities, 70% of the world's population



This illustration shows the financial flow in society. The light grey is the general city flow, which sometimes sidetracks into informal businesses. In Kenya, the money often goes back into the rural areas instead of being invested in the city.

and Asia, where according to UNFPA, the urban population will have doubled between 2000 and 2030. Trying to grasp the incomprehensible in this extreme escalation UNFPA continues to state, "... the accumulated urban growth of these two regions during the whole span of history will be duplicated in a single generation."

When speaking of cities and urban development, it is of essence to acknowledge the function cities play in our society. As we see not only in Europe, but also in almost every country where modern society is based on a capitalistic structure, one sometimes-primary goal of the city is to generate wealth. By the capitalistic interests of a city, we here mean that the productivity of a city is often measured in the amount of taxes it generates, and to achieve these taxes, also the number of workplaces. This is dependent on the fact that people produce and earn an income, so they can spend money not only on public facilities, but also on private consumption.

So if the city is supposed to be a node of production and consumption, then the inhabitant's role will inevitable be to uphold this system by doing the actual producing and consuming. French social philosopher and journalist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon discussed this in the 1860's, when he defined capitalism as: "Economic and social regime in which capital, the source of income, does not generally belong to those who make it work through their labor". In today's society money is one key measurement of wealth and status. Capital, in terms of monetary not human resources, is connected with power and in turn gives opportunities for development. The problem however, is who decides which development should be prioritized. To achieve the goal of the city, the means are often stretched and in order to finance wanted development, private investors are needed. This creates points where conflict of interest might occur and where too often, compromises have to be made in order to sustain the investors participation.

Decisions and political policies made now to prepare for this urbanization will determine not only the future of cities in the "developing" countries, one could argue, but also the future of the world. The question then is if it is possible to plan for this change. Can we predict what our future cities will look like? Is an absolute control over urban development feasible when dealing with actual people and not just numbers?

## rural-urban-suburban migration

Urbanization is not only creating cities we find increasingly hard to handle, but also leaving the rural environments little hope for development. Rural-urban migration is a major challenge facing both Sweden and Kenya. So why are people leaving their rural environment? Mostly out of financial issues, people come to the cities to get better opportunities at finding employment. Chances at receiving a better education or following family ties are other common reasons. In Kenya, especially young men leave for the cities since a lot of rural families can't afford the costly high school education and instead need the extra money. Some leave to find work in order to send whatever little is left at the end of the day back to their rural homes.

The rural areas in Kenya are seen as poor in living standards, or at least when compared to the vision of the city with infrastructure, water access and electricity. However, most of the rural-urban migrants end up in the peri-urban informal settlements, without the well-known rural community. These issues of social safety are the same anywhere in the world and as we often turn to the cities for excitement, entertainment and a broader selection of new potential relationships, a lot of people, not only in Kenya, keep ties to their rural homes.

Since many move into these informal settlements primarily out of financial reasons, not everyone invest spirit in their surroundings, particularly if the urban environment you meet is categorized as a "slum". The degree of belonging you feel for a place affects how much time and heart you are willing to put into improving it. There is a somewhat different atmosphere when visiting a rural home, where there are basically no empty cans or discarded plastic bags. At the same time, despite the non-existent municipal garbage collection, the informal settlements are cleaner than any Swedish city would be if the waste management system suddenly collapsed. People in the informal settlements show an amazing spirit, meaning that they find purpose in their new community. Still, a lot of inhabitants see their situation as temporary, at least in the beginning. Many view Kisumu as a stepping-stone, going from the rural area to a big city, continuing on to an even bigger urban area like Nairobi, where more jobs might be available.

One issue adding to the problems of people leaving their rural homes has been the tradition of land inheritance in Kenya, where the ancestral land is parceled off as the family grows. This

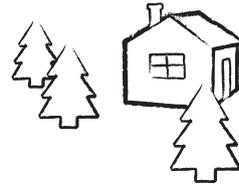




the city



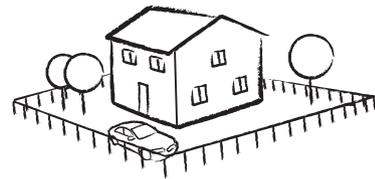
people in search of money



rural areas



people with money



suburbia

means that there is not enough land for efficient agriculture. Even in cases where the land is acquired, the human capital in form of young people able to work with agriculture regard it as a low status job, at the most giving food on the table for the day. This is a vicious circle, since the means needed for creating a sustainable efficient agriculture are not there. Therefore the agriculture in operation is not generating enough income, thus pushing people towards the image of the prosperous city. The knowledge of how to work the land is forgotten and instead the cities now face food shortage, creating a need to import from other regions (or other parts of the world). The rural nature is nonetheless still attractive for recreation, although these resources are fading as well.

Another interesting phenomena, not only in Kenya, is the “flight” to low-scale suburban areas, where people with money are moving to areas where the ultimate dream of property and one family housing allures. So basically, at the same time as people without money are moving into the cities, quite a few of those with money are escaping the hectic urban life in favor of suburbia. The fact that people are moving out of the city makes it as complicated to plan as when new are arriving. In Kisumu, it has become popular to start businesses in the high valued property areas that people are leaving, which means that the use is changing; an alteration the developer should apply permission for. However, many fail to do so, complicating the local plan. One can then question if the best option for development is to plan, and to what extent.

If you try to plan for a certain environment and some see it as just a short-term commitment, it is hard to make long-term initiatives. The dream of the city rarely comes true, but is it possible to plan for an environment that actually meets people’s needs? We construct these dreams where we imagine material things and capital can bring us fulfillment. Historically, this has always been a point of discussion. When we today talk a lot about an environmentally sustainable development, we have started acknowledging the potential and importance of natural resources. Planning for living environments should provide basic needs like food, shelter, water and sanitation. After this has been accomplished, we can start looking at which type of environments people like and if those desires can be realized, not only for those with financial power.



"The beginning of reform, is not so much to equalize property as to train the nobler [...] not to desire more, and to prevent the lower from getting more" Aristotle 350 B.C

who's ideas are the ideal?



## living environment questionnaire

In order to try to find out what kind of environment people like and to start a discussion, we made a questionnaire where we asked several questions about what makes a habitat enjoyable as well as on their views on different features that steer their visions. We used the questions together with an interactive model as a part of our exhibition in Kisumu, where we wanted people to actively reflect upon living environments. To compare the answers we got from Kisumu on a bigger scale, we asked the same questions in Sweden. We have chosen to present the results of the questionnaire in a discussion form, since it is difficult to gather the answers in an equitable form and some of the answers can be interpreted in different ways.

When going through the questions, people in Kenya sometimes had a hard time understanding what we were aiming at. In order to see how people would interpret the questions on their own, we handed out some questionnaires and let people answer the questions without us explaining them. This gave some interesting answers, where it was obvious that the respondents had not understood. Asking in person may also affect the answers, although it made it possible for us to get a broader perspective and background information. The demographic is another important aspect when analyzing the results. In Kenya, the majority answering the questionnaire were middle-aged men, along with a few male high school students. We experienced women having a harder time saying what they felt in the presence of men and showed less interest in wanting us to ask them questions. This was probably also connected to the fact that the majority of the exhibition visitors were men.

The response to the first question was for many, both in Kenya and Sweden, that contact with nature is very important. Nature in form of green space, clean air, light and water was the most common. Many people in Kenya also said that they wanted to live in a cool environment where they can escape the heat, a problem of course not as urgent in Sweden. Access to transport and communication was also important, while many in Sweden added that closeness to the city was of essence. Tranquility was a recurring epithet, although the Swedish respondents wanted places for interacting with other people and the Kenyans desired less people over all. Perhaps this shows the effects of the overcrowded environment in Kisumu and the less dense Gothenburg. Rural connotations came up in both Sweden and Kenya, with descriptions of a

1. Which kind of living environment do you like?
2. Why do you think you like that environment?
3. What do you associate with rural/urban home?
4. What in your living situation could change the way you would like to live?
5. Would it make any difference if your family situation changed?
6. How did you grow up?
7. How do you live now?
8. How do you think you would like to live in 10-40 years?
9. Age/Gender/Nationality/Occupation



nice environment as being spacious and without noise.

When asked why they think they like the environment they had just described, a big part of the Swedes responded that it was due to upbringing and background. They further elaborated this by listing peacefulness and nature as reasons why some environments are more agreeable than others. This was the case in Kenya as well, but there the focus lied more on health issues and the connection between nature and clean air. One can assume that this is because the living conditions in many parts of Kisumu is polluted and considered unhealthy, even by the inhabitants. One interesting answer, connected to the view on natural environments, was one respondent who wanted a lot of trees, since that attracts rainfall. Instead of seeing the correlation between an area getting a lot of rain and through that more vegetation, this person believe that if you plant a lot of trees, the rain will come.

The associations to rural home were mostly positive, especially in Kenya. The Swedish respondents attributed the rural setting with agriculture and animals, same as in Kenya. What differed between the countries was of course what nature means in that context. Open fields and forests were common answers in Sweden, while in Kenya, people answered “shambas” (a cultivated plot of ground; a farm or plantation). Some words that often came up when describing a rural home were; “clean environment”, “trees” and “community feeling”.

Urban home, on the other hand, was both in Sweden and Kenya quite evenly associated both positively and negatively. An interesting reflection was that both countries considered the urban setting to be highly populated. This could be seen both as a good thing and as a problem. Generally, Swedish respondents associated the city with social life and a possibility to interact with a diverse mix of people. In Kenya, the city was seen as a place for business, with opportunities for employment.

Almost everyone answered that their financial situation would change the way they want to live. Other common answers where family and changes in the natural environment. Some said change of habits or new experiences would alter ones attitude. Most people who answered the



exhibition model in Kisumu

questionnaire believe that it would make a difference if the family situation changed, but it was hard to get them to explain how it makes a difference and what it would lead to. Perhaps this question was a bit difficult to understand.

The last step was that we asked them where they grew up, how they live now and how they would like to be living in the future. The division between rural and urban background was similar in both countries, and about one-fourth came from areas considered to be a mix of the two or had grown up in both. Of the people we asked in Kisumu, most were now living in the urban areas, similar to the Swedish respondents. In Kenya, those who want to live in an urban setting in the future stated that it is under the condition that the urban environment changes towards being a cleaner and greener place. An equal amount of people wants to live in a purely rural home and some in a partly rural area or suburb. A majority of the Swedish respondents, stated that they want to live in a suburban environment, close to nature.

With an increasing urban population, the cities will either have to grow denser or sprawl. From a sustainable point of view, many advocate densification as the only solution, since urban sprawl has led to longer transports and unsustainable lifestyles. If everyone wants to live with access to both the social and cultural communication the cities offer, as well as close to the nature, this would in theory mean that the city would be drained of people. Instead, it would only be used for business and leisure time. The reality, however, is not black and white. There is a huge grey zone, where people are willing to have less of one in favor of having more of the other. This consideration also changes with age, as people tend to return to the environments they were brought up in, after having tested the unfamiliar for a while.

When concluding the results from the questionnaire, it is obvious that everyone sees nature and a clean environment as the top priority in what makes a good living environment. For many, this is connected with wellbeing, although the Swedish respondents are more concerned with problems like stress and the Kenyans with actual physical health and diseases caused by an unclean environment. We are trying to change our cities from greyer environments into greener, but we are still faced with difficulties like pollution.

## does wealth mean wellbeing?

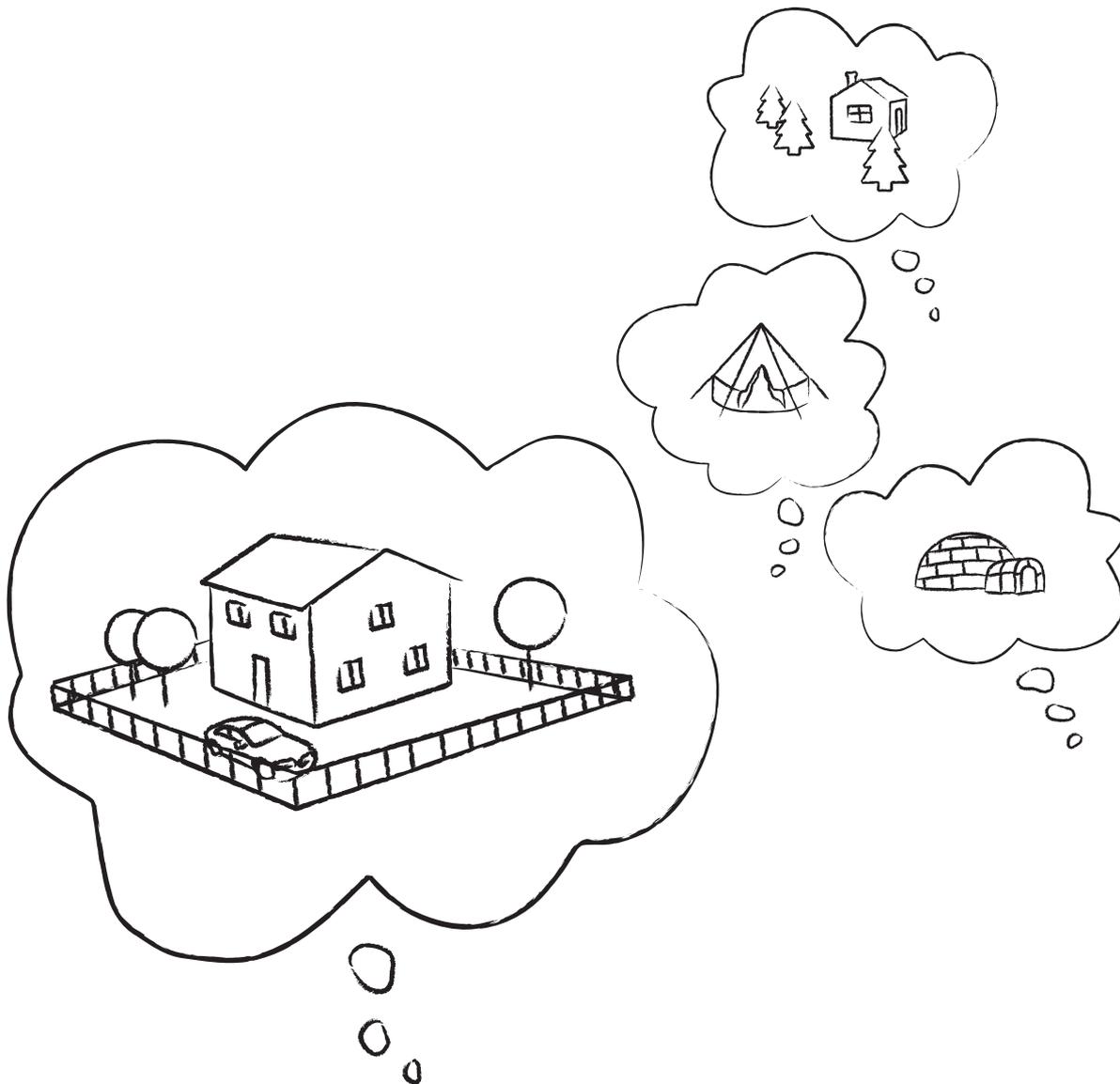
When listening to people describing their ideal house, the bigger questions of what kind of living environment they feel comfortable in are sometimes lost. What many, not only in Kenya, consider a “good” house could have come straight out of an American movie. Just when discussing what materials a house should be built in, to reflect status, many discard the traditional materials in favor of concrete and materials that require less maintenance in the short term. Thus, what is considered a high status house might not necessarily be an expensive one, just one that fits into the mould of what a “proper” house should be. These ideals were mainly enforced in Kenya by British colonial powers, according to what was considered “decent” housing standards at the time. These ideas of what a “real” house should be, and what materials are “permanent” still continue to flourish after independence. Through media and the global streams of popular culture, we are all constantly shown what a successful life should consist of.

To have your own house, or even better, your own property, is perceived as connected to power and is a sign of wealth. Especially in the “Western” world, property and most of all, speculation in property has a huge impact on how our cities develop. The idea of property has been particularly strong in the United States, where perhaps not too much has changed from the view on property rights expressed in the 18th century by legal expert William Blackstone: He described property as “that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe”. This sentiment might be extreme, but still hold some truth in the way planning is carried out in many parts of the world.

There are numerous laws concerning property, often securing private interests and the property owner. The Right of Public Access and accessibility to nature has always been upheld in Sweden. However, Sweden is no exception from growing global insecurity, making people more obsessed with private safety and with protecting what is “rightfully theirs”. The view on private property and ones home has always been sensitive. Many feel the building regulations are not strong enough if a neighbor’s remodeling plans will affect you in any way. When we ourselves want to rebuild, on the other hand, we suddenly complain over the system being too



example of mixture of "modern" housing solutions



the dream according to whom?

strict. In Kenya, the situation is a bit different, where the right amount of bribes can influence decisions and regulation. Still, the way we look at our home and the way we dislike anything that might indirectly affect us, is spreading as certain other development ideals reach new parts of the world.

In Africa and especially in Kenya, people are shown the material wealth in “developed” countries and we felt like people are aspiring to experience the same lifestyle. So does this lifestyle bring fulfillment? Everyone should have access to the basic of human needs: a secure shelter, food and water for survival and so on, but one could question weather additional material wealth exponentially adds to quality of life. As the “Western” world sees the consequences of a more psychologically stressful and by some seen as a socially deprived way of life, one can understand what Jean-Jacques Rosseau aimed at when he in 1795 stated: “I am not a great lord, nor a capitalist; I am poor and happy”. So are these complete opposites? Can you not be happy if you are wealthy or miserable when poor? The two are of course intertwined and it is as dangerous to glorify financial poverty as it is idolizing monetary wealth.

However, one can discuss the use of the word poverty. As Barack Obama writes in his book *“Dreams from my father”*, the people of less financial strong nations, or “developing” countries, did not see themselves as poor until the Europeans came and introduced the term. The colonial reasoning of the superiority of the white man created a society where people were seen as less valued than others, since the basis of saying that some have less is to say that others have more. The consequence of this in Kenya could explain why people have no faith in their elected leaders or why they have lost belief in their own power to change the country. “Western” countries have taken the lead, painted out as role models for development. By doing this, a certain lifestyle is inevitably being emphasized. Since these countries are present in most global power formations, their ideals are rarely contested. The problem with these ideals not being questioned is that they will continue to dominate until we ourselves realize the consequences. With this way of looking at living environments, certain planning ideals are also spread.

## claiming the globe

Many countries are today using more resources than the earth can reproduce, particularly “developed” countries. This implies a lifestyle where we travel by airplane, drive to work every day and live in buildings that demand a lot of energy. The things we buy have a short lifespan, for example clothes and electrical devices, and require a lot of energy for production. When we get tired of the things we buy, we throw them away, and in worse case scenario, we even dump things directly in nature.

It is a fact that we annually demand more resources than the planet can regenerate in the same amount of time. On a global level, what we are using in one year takes one year and four months for the Earth to regenerate. If the current trend continues, meaning that we consume more and more, we will by 2030 need two planets to provide sufficient resources. Of course this is not possible. This means that we need to drastically change not only the products in themselves, but also our behaviors and needs. This should be taken into consideration not only on a personal level, but also when planning the society, which serves as the backdrop or even better, the platform for change.

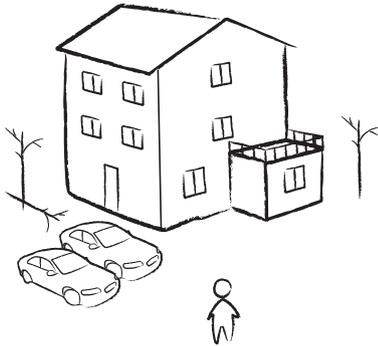
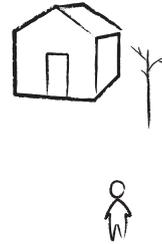
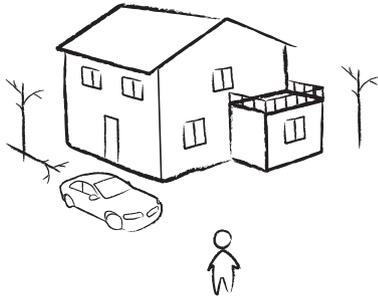
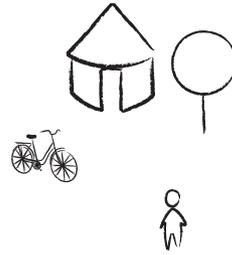
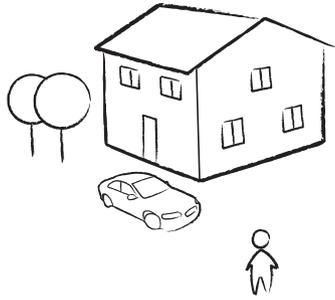
According to the Global Footprint Network; “sustainable human development will occur when all human beings can have fulfilling lives without degrading the planet”. The Global Footprint Network is an international organization that works with creating awareness about our over-use of the Earths resources. One tool they use is the ”Ecological footprint”. This is a measurement of how much biologically productive land and water we require to meet the demands of our lifestyle (the resources we consume and what it takes to absorb the waste we generate). Since trade is now very much an international concern, global land and sea assets are included when calculating an individual or country’s Ecological footprint.

One can wonder if it is possible to fulfill all human needs without destroying the planet. What does “fulfilled human needs” mean? Does it constitute that everyone is entitled to clean water and sanitation, a proper daily meal, clean clothes and a shelter? That feels like a given. Or does it imply that everyone should have access to the same possibilities? Most would agree. The way we live in the “developed” world, you would think the resources are never ending. No



matter how we twist and turn this question, all human beings on Earth will ever be completely “satisfied” with their needs, basic or not, if the change in lifestyle doesn’t start with those who already have everything and still want more.

According to the global Footprint model, if everyone had the same lifestyle as we have in Sweden, we would need 2.5 times the Earth’s resources. This can be compared to Kenya, which only uses the equivalence to 0.5 of the planet’s resources. We cannot deny Kenya the same improvements we have had, but one can surely question what development really is and what it brings with it. We are already “overshooting”, meaning that we are turning resources into waste faster than the waste can be turned back into resources again. If all the “developing” countries would go in the same direction as the “developed” world, our resources would clearly not be enough. This is a difficult and sensitive question. How can the “rich” countries stop the “poor” countries from wanting the same? Maybe more importantly, how can we change route without haltering a progress many would defend as the basis of everything “the free world” stands for – our right to possess and generate more wealth?



what one does affects the other

## what goes around comes around

What we see today is by all means global effects of local actions. Denying this connection would mean avoiding responsibility in search for a sustainable urban future. Especially with the current new “green trend”, present even in popular culture. The immediate connections between our actions and nature’s reactions are nonetheless not always evident. In most cases, it is the “developing” countries that suffer the consequences of what we are causing, countries where disaster management is hard to organize and the financial state is already strained.

What many people might not be thinking of when they buy a new car or expand their houses is that it in the long run will affect someone else. Not only environmentally, which at the moment is receiving much attention. When money started traveling across borders in form of international investments or multinational conglomerates, social issues were brought with the financial ones. Since our current resources does not allow everyone to live like the “developed” countries do, at least not without significant alternations in our way of life, we only have a certain amount of wiggle room. If we want an extra piece of the cake, another person may not even get the chance at ever achieving what we have now. In “*Cry, The Beloved Country*” from 1948, the South African author Alan Paton wrote: “Some say that the earth has bounty enough for all, and that more for one does not mean less for another, that the advance of one does not mean the decline of another. [...] Who knows how we shall fashion such a land?”

To make it easier on one self, we often pretend or chose to believe that others do not aspire to the same things as we do. Of course we are all different, but the general goal for most people is somewhat similar. When asking people in Sweden about what type of living environments they preferred, one man assumed that what he had just explained as a nice surrounding was different from Kenyan ideals. He expressed quite casually that everyone in “developing” countries probably want to live in big cities. He did not say this out of ignorance, but perhaps out of genuine insight into what the world actually looks like today. Nonetheless, he used it as a sort of justification for the fact that he himself wanted to live in a suburb with a big garden. If we tell ourselves that others are happy in their situation, it makes it easier to handle our own desires. How then do we face this in a constructive way, to stop people from burying their heads in the sand?



4

"Between the plan and the reality on the ground,  
there is a big gap"

Mr George Wagah, Department of Urban Planning, Maseno University

urbanity under control?



## learning and comparing

Although the contrasts often overshadow the similarities, we found points where the resemblance between Kenya and Sweden was strong. This comparison can be seen in both positive and negative terms of course. Kenya is facing major health and sanitary problems, but you can still easily find qualities that we have effectively eliminated in our own society. Even though they too are beginning to fade, Kenya for example still has some knowledge on traditional building techniques, while the Swedish equivalence nowadays is hard to access, or even forgotten. Just as Kenya face the challenges of creating a “modern”, well esteemed society, we often fail to mention that just a century ago, Sweden was one of the financially poorest countries in Europe.

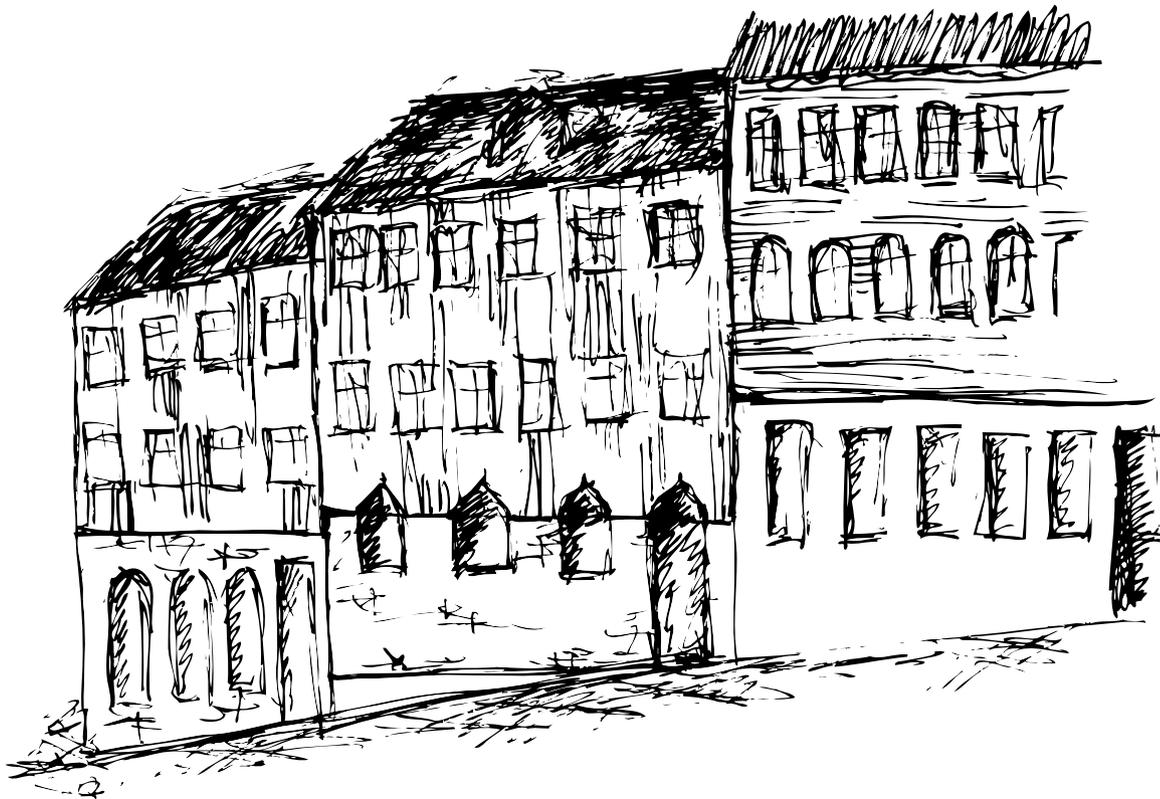
With a long history of city planning, the quaint continental European medieval cores are now being used as references of pleasant urban milieus. These urban environments have evolved over time, reshaped (in use or even in scale) by continuously changing planning paradigms. Sweden entered the urban context relatively late, but managed to settle among the top of “developed” countries in quite a short time. The old city “slums” have - unfortunately with accompanying problems of segregation and marginalization – been converted into vertical semi-urbanities, now conveniently located further from the upgraded city centers.

Controlling development has effectively created most of the surroundings we experience every day, mainly by erasing unwanted structures and making room both physically and politically for new investments. Should Kisumu follow our lead on how to control the planned environment or can we all learn from the “unplanned” settlements in order to create something new?

We find it essential to point out what is happening in a contemporary Swedish urban context, where the “modern” urban sustainability issues are paraded as international examples. The correlation between urban development, be it in Kenya or Sweden, is important to consider in order to gain understanding on how human society evolves through physical involvements. In Sweden, we find this involvement taking too much focus from the actual urban life. We therefore want to explore the possibility to learn from our time in Kenya and implement to us new and unfamiliar approaches on a local and familiar scale in Gothenburg.



CO



## exploring urban environments

When speaking about cities and urban life, how do you actually measure or evaluate the amount of human activity going on? Everyday evaluations of cities happen on a personal scale, where we often attribute them as “exciting”, “dangerous” or “beautiful”. These values differ from person to person and urban environments that some find agreeable might seem dreadful to others. To some extent, we have learnt how to read cities based on cultural and social background. Depending on political conviction, we often choose to see certain things and miss others, to support our societal constructions.

We might use the urban environment quite differently depending on culture and climate, but our urban environments reflect other things about our society as well. Traveling to remote places, foreign ways of life intrigues us, making us forget the normal routine of produce and consume. At home however, we view urban life in another way. While Gothenburg recently sharpened the regulations for street musicians to please local merchants complaining about noise nuisance, we often enjoy the lively cities of exotic southern countries and describe them as “colorful”. At the same time, we often associate this “colorfulness” as being a bit uncontrolled and sometimes even insecure.

Emotions play a big part in how we experience our surroundings, even though we try to hide a lot of it behind statistics or general opinions. To get to know an urban environment, you can only learn so much from other’s experiences. Using the research as a basis can either push us in the right direction or throw us off track. Going into an urban analysis, we therefore wanted to get to know more beyond what the numbers actually were saying. This we attempted by using multiple short exercises and exploring for ourselves in different ways, parallel to more conventional literary research.

To get diversity in our observations, a variety of tools were used. Filming and photographing was mixed with sketching to achieve different images of one place. The distinction between our sketching techniques also added to this, allowing us to further discuss what we saw. Using questionnaires and informal interviews helped us to approach people, but in Kisumu simply our presence made people show curiosity or suspicion. We also realized that being guided

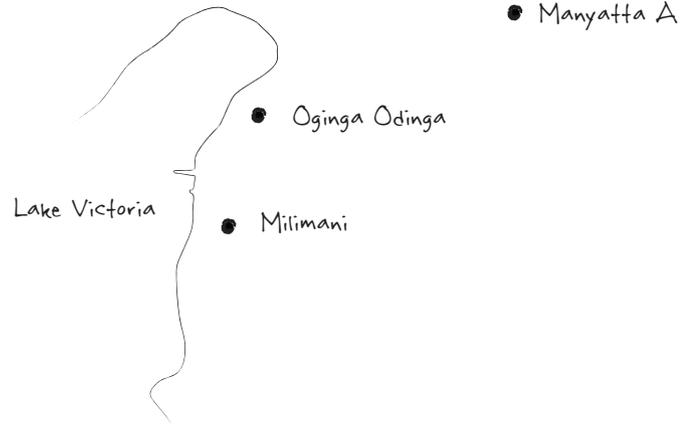
through an area creates a whole other experience, since our route and therefore impressions are inevitably being directed. This can then serve as a good reference for when you explore by yourself for the first time.

The areas we chose to study in Kisumu have very different characters and represent a very typical urban differentiation that can be found in most cities: high property valued residential land, inner city district and marginalized lower income areas. In Kisumu, we identified Milimani, Oginga Odinga Street and Manyatta A. In Gothenburg, our choice of study areas was a bit different. Firstly, we do not wish to say that the unplanned settlements of Kenya have equivalence in Swedish urban planning. Doing a comparison with Gothenburgs marginalized suburban areas would just seem inappropriate. Therefore we chose to study Långedrag as high-valued property and Vasastan as a central commercial area (although the latter is quite different from Oginga Odinga because of the higher mixture of residential and business). To add another level to the studies, we also chose Eriksberg, an area under development, where we wanted to observe what environments the current Swedish trends in urban renewal creates.

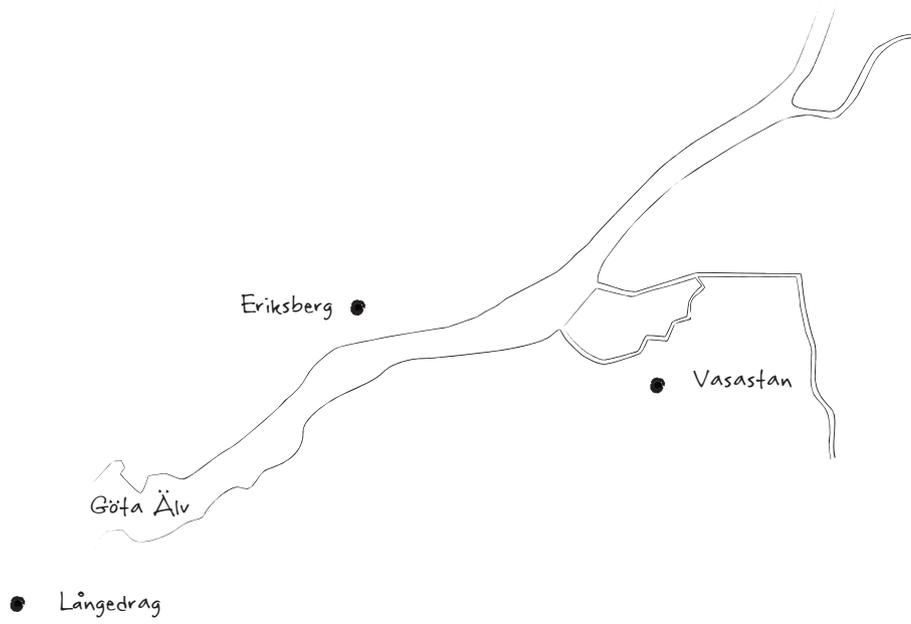
We explored the different locations in different hours of the day, and set up the same criteria for each study occasion: One sketch, a couple of photographs, a video recording and 10 words describing smells, sounds and general moods of the specific place at that specific time. In addition to this, we counted the traffic passing by during a 10-minute time span. This we did by categorizing the traffic into: “four-wheeled vehicles”, “three-wheeled vehicles” (only in Kisumu), “two-wheeled vehicles” (divided in motorized and non-motorized) and pedestrians. Just by conducting these simple traffic studies, we noticed more than the exact number of cars passing. We could for example observe changes in flow over time and identify key nodes.

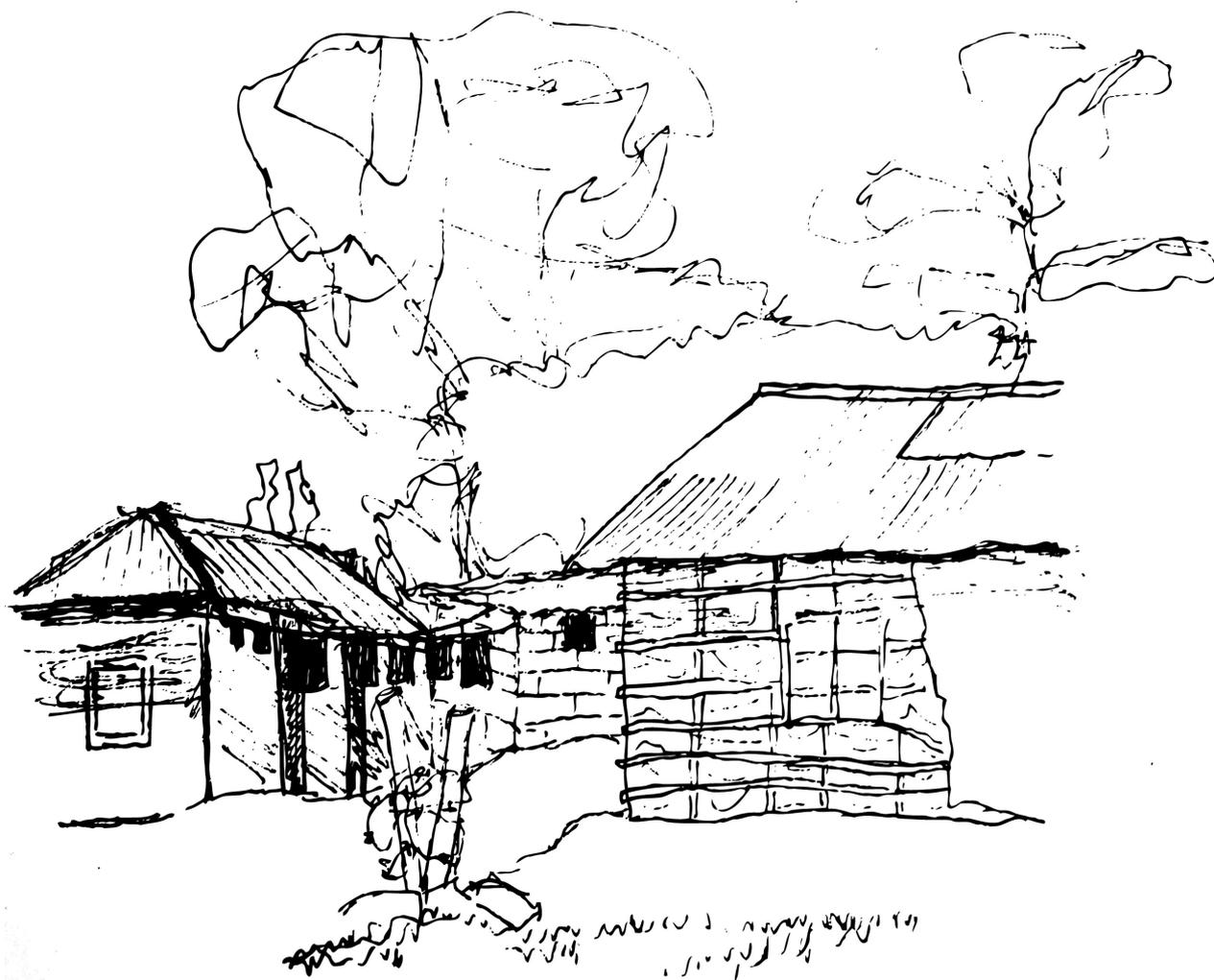
Our impressions of the chosen study sites differed a lot, which was also why we chose them in the first place. One registered impression was that of noise. In Oginga Odinga Street, the noise level was very high, due to the high amount of traffic. Even when there were no passing motor vehicles, there was a constant presence of mechanical sounds. The opposite scenario was found in Milimani, Långedrag and Eriksberg, where it was very quiet and empty. There was less traffic

Kisumu



Gothenburg





and if people were speaking, it was with lowered voices. In Manyatta A and to some extent in Vasastan, there was a mixture of the two previous scenarios, where the peacefulness would be interrupted by aggressive traffic. The noise in general is one of the main differences in the experience of urban environments in Gothenburg and Kisumu and affects the way you act. A more aggressive volume of traffic makes it necessary to be more alert and be equally aggressive. A complete silence might sometimes invite you to relax, but other times signal something unsafe, depending on the overall sense of a situation. This was also noticeable among the respondents from the living environment questionnaire.

When we were in Manyatta A, a lot of question arose. The contrast between the urban life we found here and our usual experiences of urban environments made it an interesting example of an “unplanned” development. Manyatta has a variety of residential and business areas, as well as rural elements, such as animals and a feeling of small-scale community. The amount of small informal businesses and the connections between them were functioning surprisingly well. We made continuous visits to the area, using different means of transportation and soon found things we had not seen before. Besides the main street running through the area, we also discovered smaller paths, unreachable by most motorized vehicles. The further from the “main street” and the aggressively honking matatus (local public transport), the more personal and inviting these small semi-public spaces became. There was a sense of social safety here as well as a clear connection to rural environment rather than a dense “slum” settlement.

Daring our cultural or personal comfort zones, we tried to investigate where we felt welcome, unwanted, relaxed or nervous. Forcing ourselves to sit just a little bit longer than what felt comfortable made us overcome issues of for example uneasiness due to safety concerns and left us with completely different impressions than what we initially experienced. The sense of community we found in Manyatta was not at all present in Milimani or the center of Kisumu. Neither was it strong in the corresponding areas in Gothenburg, but can be found in other places, for example smaller rural environments or enclaves within the city. The question then is if it's possible, and if so how, to “develop” areas like Manyatta A, without losing the spirit of community?

## urban history Kisumu - Gothenburg

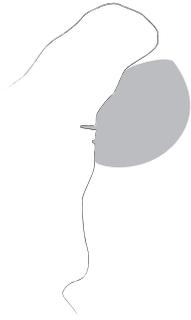
When looking at Kisumu from a historic perspective, it is easy to see the track marks from colonial oppression. The planning structure is based on a division, originally between the British and the African population, differentiating between color of skin. Today, the same division is present, in the form of financial status. The strong financial groups however, are not necessarily of African descent, thus keeping the old segregation very much alive.

The division between those who have and those in need can be found throughout history, in most parts of the world. It might not purely be a financial separation, but utterly almost always about power. Often, power has been appointed to some to give an even greater power to the ones at the top. This has been done within societies and nations, as well as between regions. Regularly, this power structure has been kept hidden and can only be speculated about, since the ultimate way to get power has been convincing the masses. In Europe, the power struggle between cultures has resulted in certain principles being spread and others oppressed. When Sweden went from being an “undeveloped” country of agriculture to an industrialized nation, the old traditions of building in wood were abandoned for new European influences of stone craftsmanship. The same has happened through colonization, when one nation has enforced a structure out of context on a very different culture.

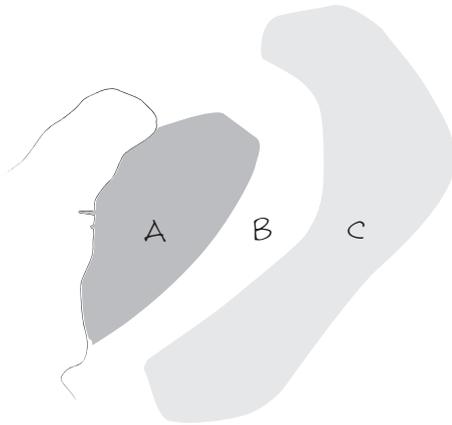
Kisumu was first acknowledged as a town at the turn of the century when the British completed the Uganda railway, bringing people to this railway terminus previously named Port Florence, by the shore of Lake Victoria. Before colonization, the area was used as a tribal barter trading place for tools, food and livestock. When the colonizers arrived, they tried to mirror European society and build a city to support it. This way of looking at human settlements has also been visible in the construction of Swedish society. The city was viewed as an element to civilize the population already during Christianization.

Adapting a predefined template has often been the basis for urban development, but has time and again been contested by afflicting progresses. This has been the case in Gothenburg as well as Kisumu. Gothenburg was established as a trading port and fortification due to its strategic location. As the city evolved, its position continued to be of essence, leading to an

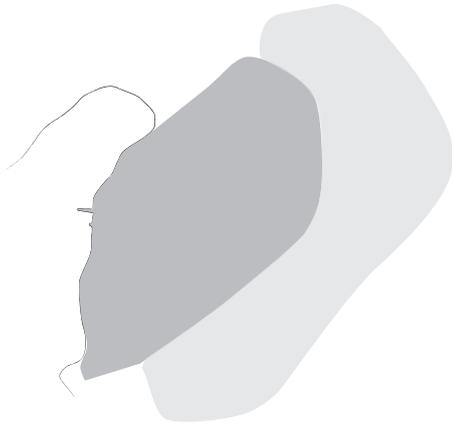
Kisumu



at the turn of the century

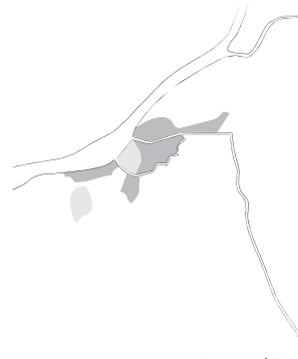


after the plague, in 1908

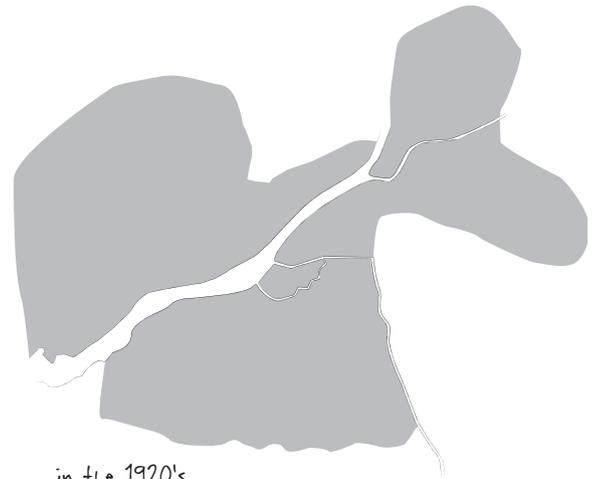


1930 until today

Gothenburg



at the middle of the 19th century



in the 1920's



"formal areas"



"informal areas"

astonishing growth during the industrialization. This rapid urbanization demanded a structure for expansion, which then evolved into new holistic theories of city planning, where social and economical programs were combined with physical planning. In Gothenburg, the grid model was adapted along with European ways of regularization of the old city centers. At the beginning of the 19th century, about 20% of the city's population were living in simple low-rise wooden structures. Along with the industrialization, the city centre grew, continuously creating new peripheral working class districts.

When the colonizers started building Kisumu, they did so according to the European garden city model, creating low dense areas for white settlers by the lake. When a plague broke out in 1908, the town was divided into three zones: Block A for Europeans and Indians (brought in by the British to construct the railway), block B as a buffer zone and block C as the official African residential area. The Europeans tried to diminish not only what they associated as bad medical conditions, but also used the argument of poor sanitation as a means to get rid of the traditional ways of building. The same scenario took place in Gothenburg, where the old wooden buildings in the fire hazardous and unsanitary worker's quarters after continuous fires were banned. The old wood building traditions that were connected to an "undeveloped" farming society were abandoned for the promise of a new modern urbanity. Instead of taking care of, maintaining or developing these buildings, they decided to leave the old and incorporate new ideals that lead to preferably stone houses, or for the lower classes, a mixture of stone and wood.

In the 1930's, Sweden was in the process of creating a new modern welfare society, where general living conditions were being improved and national standards developed. There was a consensus of cleaning up the "dirty" and poor Sweden, where everyone should be entitled to a better life, both socially and from a living environment perspective. Meanwhile, the town boundaries of Kisumu were reduced in 1930 to make the urban area "more manageable". This meant excluding the "rural environments" outside of block B and led to the lack of development of these peripheral areas, which instead evolved as unplanned settlements without access to basic infrastructure.

As Kisumu continued to grow after independence in 1963, the city centre expanded into block B. The peripheral “slum belt” expanded outwards, meeting the remaining peri-urban traditional rural settlements. The benefits of living in these informal unplanned settlements on the border between urban and rural was the closeness to job opportunities, but still making it possible keeping the entire family with their rural lifestyle close. In Gothenburg, an increasing population and industrial boom after the war led to new suburban areas being built for the massive labor migration. At the same time, older parts of the city centre were torn down, under much protest.

Today, the former worker’s areas in central Gothenburg are seen as high-valued property and many 60’s/70’s suburban developments have become stigmatized low-income areas. In Kisumu, the number of people living in areas considered as “slums” is increasing, around 60%. The American journalist and author Robert Neuwirth compares the informal areas of the world to medieval cities. The situation in the “slum” is similar to what used to be common in the Middle Ages, in terms of for example fire fighting and the creation of informal businesses. You also find the same composition of small, narrow alleys and dense housing of a comparable standard. Neuwirth continues to say that these types of environments have always existed and that this has always been the way the poor built homes. This can be seen as form of urban development, just as valid as any planning scheme. Can these unplanned developments give pointers on how urban life looks like, when left to self-evolve? Or are they also the result of certain factors pushing in one direction and leaving another?

Kisumu and Gothenburg are two examples of urbanization and what effects it has had on developing living environments. The population of Gothenburg exploded during the 19th century, increasing from 13 000 to 130 000. During the 20th century, the population rose, hitting 500 000 in 2008. This can be compared to Kisumu, which in the middle of the 20th century had roughly 13 000 inhabitants and reached about 500 000 in 2004. Despite these two extremely different rates of urban development, both show how planning has affected not only the physical structures, but also shaped human patterns. This has however created two different sets of challenges, both with potential to change the direction of urban development.

## planning development

The latest general planning act constructed in Kenya was done in 1953. The act, which was made on a national level in Nairobi, was never implemented locally in Kisumu. None of the cities in Kenya have an updated planning act, which basically means that they all work according to the old planning system introduced by their colonial oppressors. Now using a physical planning act from 1996, Kisumu is still pretty much working according to an outdated British way of planning. It is hard to imagine this system, which even Great Britain has restructured, working in such a different context as Kenya.

Connections to British (and other once prevailing European) planning ideals can be found in contemporary Swedish planning as well, although nowadays not all too visible. Sweden is using a building code from 1987, which has been updated. The building code is a collection of regulations for planning of land, water and buildings. The purpose of the code is to “promote a positive social change with equal and good social living conditions and a good and long-term sustainable living environment for people in our society today and for the next generations to be”. Are the results we see today really fulfilling this purpose? Many of the old ways of looking at property and not people, as well as planning for land use and not activities can be questioned.

After the somewhat failed public planning of the 60's and 70's, Swedish planners, along with the planning carried out in many other countries, lost a lot of esteem. One of the extensive critiques is that the big over-planned projects lack a sense of human spirit and scale. There is no room for private initiatives, which sometimes might serve a purpose of controlling private spheres, but often keeps areas from evolving. One of the mistakes made in the massive public housing programs was that the support of the private industry was lacking, thus creating huge purely residential sleeping cities. The few small-scale businesses that try to start up in these areas have a tough time surviving and often meet resistance in the current local plan.

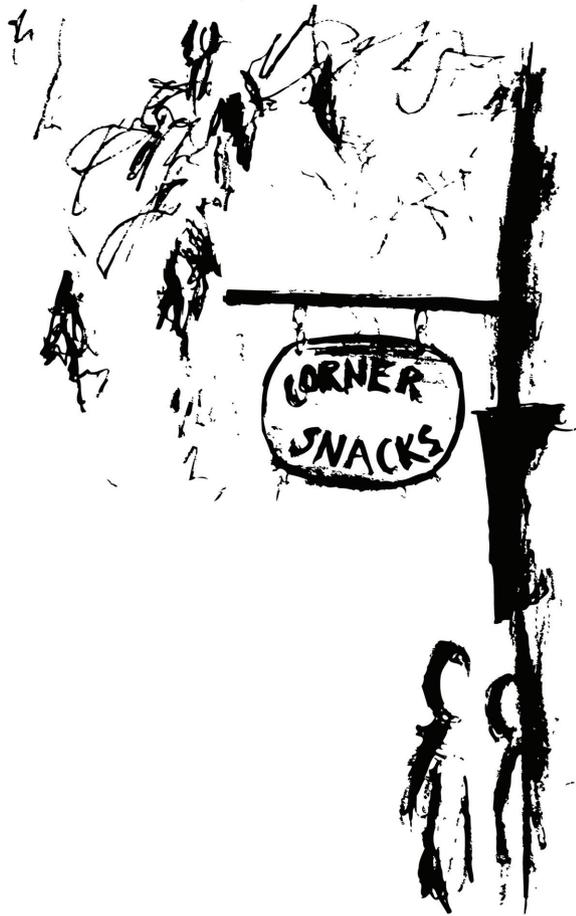
Be it in Kenya or Sweden, one important thing is to involve people early in the building process. Today, planners are consulting people too late in the planning phase. Creating a vision is very important, which means that people should be let in early and get the opportunity to

express their opinions. It is important to discuss the goals and how people want to live, to reach a common plan on how to achieve those visions.

The Municipal Planning Office in Kisumu is now working on a new structure plan for Kisumu, where they are trying to meet with various stakeholders. The whole idea of a master plan originally comes from the British system and they now want to create a new type of plan, on their own. The Planning Office wish to work with long-term plans, guiding growth and development. Working on the new structure plan, they are trying the “grassroots” approach by addressing people out on the streets to get general opinions of the inhabitants. All kinds of different stakeholders are involved in the work, as for example boda-boda bicycle taxi drivers, tuk-tuk drivers (local three wheeled taxis) and hawkers (street traders). The ones leading the work are representatives from the Kisumu Municipal Planning Office, the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning and Maseno University.

A general opinion seems to be that the politicians have very little knowledge about what is really going on. If you invite people with different interests, you will have to explain in a way that everyone understand. Especially to make sure that everyone will support the plan by giving their opinions and ideas during the process and thus making it harder to criticize or refuse it afterwards.

The government in Kenya has set up regulations to try to control development, an example of this is the “2020 demolish plan”, which states that everything not built from “conventional” materials will be demolished by 2020. The staff at the planning office believes that this is an attempt from the government in order to try to get the earth and grass buildings to disappear. By announcing this rule, they hope citizens will refrain from building their homes in materials labeled as “non-permanent”, based on old British restrictions against earth buildings. “Conventional” materials as for example brick and cement are considered permanent. Still, this does not intimidate people from building their homes freely. People believe that if their home needs to be torn down in 2020, they will deal with it at that time. Perhaps this is also connected to the fact that people only see their stay in the informal settlements as temporary, thus not

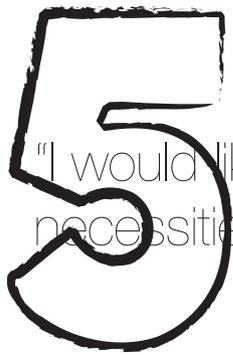


needing a “permanent” home.

Another regulation trying to push development is the 30-day rule. This rule says that if a person hands in a minor building request, the planning office must reply within 30 days. If the developer does not hear back, he or she can go ahead and start building after two months. The politicians introduced this regulation in order to please the public and boost their reputation. It is a regulation that works in favor of the politicians, but does not really make it easier for the people working at the planning office, who has to handle the requests and often has little say if a politician is already on board with a certain project.

This power struggle exists on all levels. To plan development does not only mean designing the actual physical features, but also taking the entire system into account. To get the best result, planners of different backgrounds should be combined. In Sweden, there is a notion of transparency in any public matter, meaning that the decision makers have to let people in on discussions concerning development. The problem however, is that people generally don't get involved in the discussions, unless it is something that really affects them personally. In Kenya, the situation is pretty much the opposite. People are engaged in community-based initiatives, created as a response to the lack of commitment from public officials.

Finding expertise within physical space, human activity, and open space is often not a problem. Combining this with planners with knowledge on planning processes and participatory methods is harder. Adding inspired politicians, developers and inhabitants is very complex. If we add a common ground or goal and get all kinds of ideas on board, all aspects possible to achieve that goal can then be taken into consideration and natural meetings between people can hopefully be created instead of forced involvement. If decisions are made through mutual and equal discussions, perhaps we could also start trusting people to create self-evolving communities?



5

"I would like to live a better life, meaning that all the necessities are within reach"

22 year old female Kenyan Social Worker

planning with people





## can you plan the unplanned?

If you look at planning processes, you realize that a lot of times, urban development has been about control. Controlling who owns land, who gets to develop the land and to some extent, what the development should look like. Evicting squatters residing on land they do not own is often done in the name of development. Several different stakeholders lobby the decision-makers into making decisions concerning urban growth (or stagnation for that matter). Quite often, the ones making their voices heard are the ones in power to influence either by monetary means or by being in a position to make things uncomfortable for those in charge.

The long-term goal is the same for most people; nearly everyone wants free time to spend with their families and friends, doing activities that they enjoy. We all want a sustainable future, but we cannot agree on how to reach it. To initiate discussions not simply on short-term goals or temporary solutions, but on the main visions, we can begin to agree (or disagree) in order to start trying suggestions against this vision.

As the Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy stated in the 1970's, in the book *“Architecture for the poor”*, it is sometimes very easy to come from the outside and judge what is functioning and what is not. What may appear chaotic, dirty and overpopulated may just be an expression of the complex social organization within that society. Even though the buildings are on the verge of collapsing, there might be purpose and pattern in the structures, adjusted to social relationships between the inhabitants. An attempt to “clean up” and find a clear structure might not always be best for that particular society. Quite the opposite, there is much to be learnt from observing these intricate developments, that perhaps have just as much planning behind them as any conventional master plan created by a planner with a deadline.

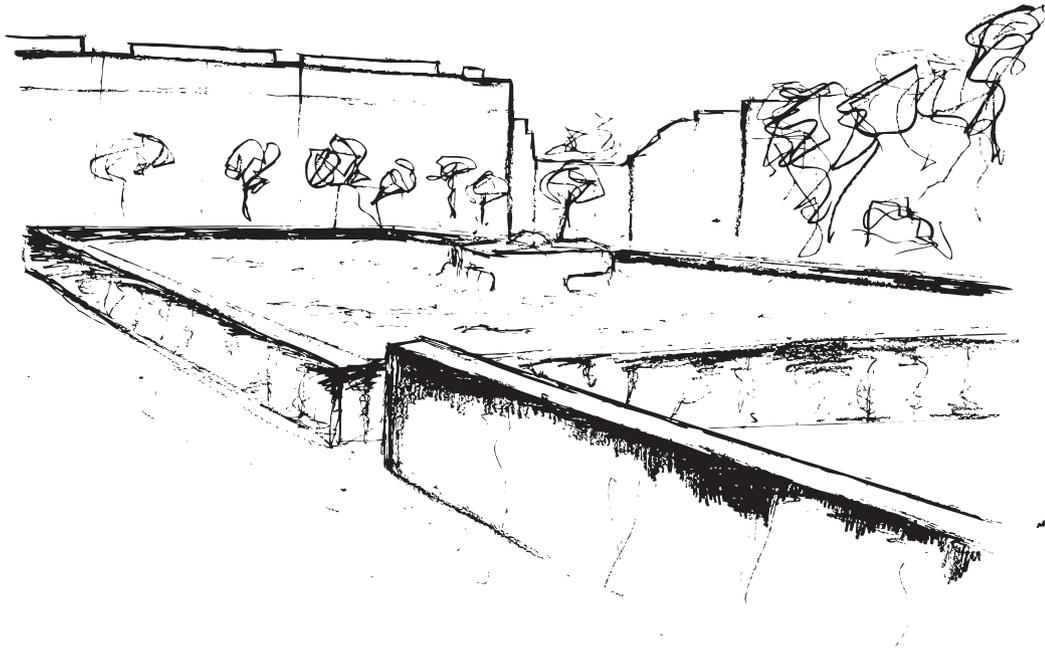
Is there a possibility to plan for mechanisms that trigger self-evolving patterns, and make sure that this will lead to opportunities for the people involved? How is this done, is it by implementing a certain function or through listening to peoples opinions? How do we keep a flourishing life that is inviting and pleasant? Especially when put in contrast to a typical “Western” society with elements such as a lot of cars, stressfulness both personally and professionally and with few possibilities for self-evolving activities.

## urban renewal, for whom?

To serve as a reference when discussing sustainable urban development, we wanted to look more into areas like Eriksberg. The two other examples we chose also show “city upgrading” schemes, where old industrial land in prime waterfront location has been reconstructed into new urban areas, with an “ecological” image. These are examples of contemporary ideals of eco-friendly urban communities, and similar projects can be seen not only in the bigger urban areas, but also in smaller cities in need of a new attractive image. Eriksberg in Gothenburg, Hammarby Sjöstad in Stockholm and Västra Hamnen in Malmö were all supposed to be prestige projects where a lot of effort was put in to making these new urban areas good international examples of sustainable city development.

In the case of Eriksberg, one main vision was to achieve different forms of housing, mixed with open green spaces for recreation. This was supposed to create joyful living environments with small squares, casual meeting places and varied architecture. The vision for Hammarby Sjöstad as well as for Bo01 in Västra Hamnen, was that the energy consumption should be lower than for normal newly constructed housing areas, a goal that has not been reached. Instead, the energy usage in some of the buildings in both areas is higher than contemporary building norms. A focus with all three developments has been how to solve the technical systems on both a larger and a more detailed scale. Promoting information and residential participation in learning how to live more eco-friendly has been emphasized, although it has had little actual effect on making the areas actively working towards a sustainable urban development.

The social aspects of sustainability have been somewhat forgotten and pushed aside in favor for technical solutions. In the cases where social issues are highlighted, it is in connection with the technical systems and not on a bigger urban scale. When working with such large urban projects, it involves not only the immediate surroundings, but also the whole city. Especially when the municipality invests money and time. The areas described here are exclusive and the housing stock is not available to the grand majority of the city inhabitants. Apart from the sustainability in the buildings themselves, which one could discuss as successful or not, the areas has little value from an urban perspective in making the city accessible for all. In cities faced with segregation, the least you could expect of such new high profile projects is that



they provide new public space, available to anyone. Although there are no fences surrounding the areas and many probably would say that they are open for external visitors, the sheer atmosphere makes it inviting for some and excluding for others.

In the case of Bo01 however, this new urban district has become a magnet for people from all over Malmö. This has happened perhaps not as intended by the planners, but by the sheer tenaciousness of the people. Even though the urban design might not always be the most inviting, given the harsh climate by the open sea, people have taken it and created a vibrant place. How can we plan this vibrant urban life? Is it only the location and attractiveness of the public space that decides its success rate, or can we use certain factors to trigger activities even in “unattractive” places?



## planning scenarios

The seemingly uncontrollable trigger points that makes urbanity evolve has intrigued us and we want to see how this can be connected to the creation of sustainable urban environments. Urbanities where human life is emphasized, in relation to what we have identified as environments people like. We started by investigating different systems that connect the individual home, the neighborhood and the society as a whole.

The problem with planning the unplanned is to not control too much, since that would be counterproductive. Instead, it should be about creating a framework for the “unplanned” to work within. This implies planning to a certain extent, so that life and activities can evolve on its own, which is contradictive too say the least. There is a fine line between letting people control their own environment and trying to steer their activities in the “right” direction. Decisions made to push this direction are as important as the actual activities. The outcome might be the same, but the motives behind influence what happens next time a similar situation appears or when people are left to take care of the environment that has been created.

It is hard to give suggestions without making it look like you have one true solution. We want to try and see if we can plan for living environments by creating conditions for small interventions, supported by local systems and in turn supporting a bigger structure. The more participation and local involvement, the bigger the effect and possibility to advance will be, without the need for external control. To get an overview of the different actors present in a city, and attempting to map who controls what in the environment, we divide the urban sectors into three simplified groups: [the people/inhabitants], [the built environment/anyone active in the built environment] and [the politicians/legislators/business world].

We needed a physical example where we could research and relate to reality, to test this model on. We chose to go further with the example of Eriksberg, as it represents an urban trend trying to create a “divers city”. Doing it in a local Gothenburg context also helps us see any connections to the local scale we explored in Kisumu. To get a sense of where it would be efficient to intervene in order to trigger a specific cause, we look at strengths and weaknesses of the area and arrange the causes under the appropriate scale.

## strengths

	security	nature	public transport	healthy environm.
	community feeling	recreation, access, show respect	usage, access,	littering, agreements
	lighting	high quality, inviting, diversity	multiple bus lines, ferry connection	pedestrian and bicycle paths, litter bins
	laws, law enforcement	usage, maintenance	frequency of traffic, fare cost, road maintenance	garbage collection, access to clean water

The strengths we find are for example: security, closeness to nature, closeness to the city through public transport, a bit calmer suburban feeling, clean and healthy environment as well as easy maintenance. By security, we mean that the area feels reasonably safe and we do not feel threatened. The area is located close to both the waterfront and green spaces, yet connected to the city centre through several bus lines and ferry. The area is notably calm, despite the geographically central location. Everything is clean and tidy, no trash or out of place. The simplicity of the buildings and the outdoor space makes the maintenance easy.

## weaknessness

	exclusive	too many cars	monotone	impersonal
	personal opinions, income	habits, work place, conveniency	trends, status	commitment
	far from low-income areas	road access, lack of services	division of zones	lack of specific identity
	welfare system, landlords	taxes, regulations	building regulations, developers	financial interests, efficiency

The weaknesses we find are among others; exclusiveness, lack of interaction, too many cars, monotone and impersonal. The area is mainly a high-income housing area, segregated geographically from low income-areas. It is also segregated socially, since the public spaces within the area do not invite a diversity of visitors. In regard of the proximity to the city (and public transport), there are more cars than what you would think necessary. The typology is somewhat repetitive and the lack of variation makes the area seem impersonal within and is missing an external identity.

If we look at one weakness, we can follow it through the different scales. The weakness that is of particular interest for us in our specific discourse on living environments and unplannable processes is that the area is impersonal. We consider this as an important step in improving living environments. Showing identity has time and again been proven important, both by searching the comfort in being part of something or by standing out from the crowd. If people get the opportunity to control more of their own environments, be it your backyard or a public square, the sense of responsibility and connection to the surroundings increases. If something goes wrong however, people lose faith. What we want to know is if we can outline the basis of interventions and if we can secure a certain outcome. Or if it might lead to unwanted results or consequences, what the connections to other systems are.

Shown to the right is a simplified example of how actions are connected. This is of course something that would need to be looked at in further detail and adjusted to the real situation in order to be elaborated. One important point is of course that this process might not succeed. By admitting it's flaws and working on different levels, with different chains of interventions, one can trace it back through the system and find the right point where new ideas can be tested. Different scenarios make the analysis of the area more interesting and relevant. We set the criteria and then look at the responses to certain actions. The criteria we choose are based on the bigger aspects of a sustainable urban future we have accumulated during our experiences in Kisumu as well as underlying discussions.

We set up different extreme workshop scenarios. What happens if we for example take away the water supply? Would this be taken care of locally or through higher instances? Would the reactions be bottom-up self-initiated or controlled? Another example would be electricity. If the electricity disappeared on a cold winter day, would people start sharing heat sources or even body heat? Or would they start reconsidering how much heat we actually need? When doing these extreme scenarios, we see that some might trigger more positive things than others. With an example like garbage collection, would it increase awareness on our way of life if you could actually see the amount of waste? What if the disposal was not as convenient as it is today?

impersonal

many new urban areas show no sign of the people living there, or what is shown is often very homogenous and undistinguished

if conflicts arise...

regulations and guidelines can be created by for example juridical institutions or community based networks, such as tenants associations or neighborhood groups

creating commitment

if people become involved in shaping their own living environments, they assume responsibility and commit to the physical surroundings



in the long run...

this will lead to people feeling comfortable in a more diverse environment, OR might lead to conflicts of interests



this can be done by:

- creating a forum for discussion
- letting people take part e.g. in painting, planting and maintenance
- allowing the inhabitants to express their personal preferences

in the end...

this strengthens both the living environment and the community, based of course on a consensus and mutual trust - lacking in many systems



With these far-fetched ideas, we wanted to make quick sketches of how this could work in an area like Eriksberg, emphasizing the living environment and what people want, or at least what we think people want based on our studies. By doing this, we can show examples that might serve as inspiration for what can be done within the framework that is set up. People have opinions, but perhaps not always concrete examples. We see it as a possibility to create something that can be discussed, if only just for the sake of discussion.

As people express an appreciation of access to nature at the same time as more people are moving into the cities, what would be prioritized if the number of inhabitants in one neighborhood of Eriksberg had to double? This would mean either using the open green space for more housing, or trying to make extensions to the existing buildings. Perhaps an alternative solution would be asking everyone to rent out one of their rooms, thus decreasing the needed amount of new dwellings. This would of course mean that the residents would have to adapt to a denser lifestyle, and most would probably refuse. On the other hand, if the only other opportunity would be losing their proximity to nature, some would at least consider compromising a little on living space in order to gain outdoor space. In this scenario, the quality of the green space would also be more important than the quantity.

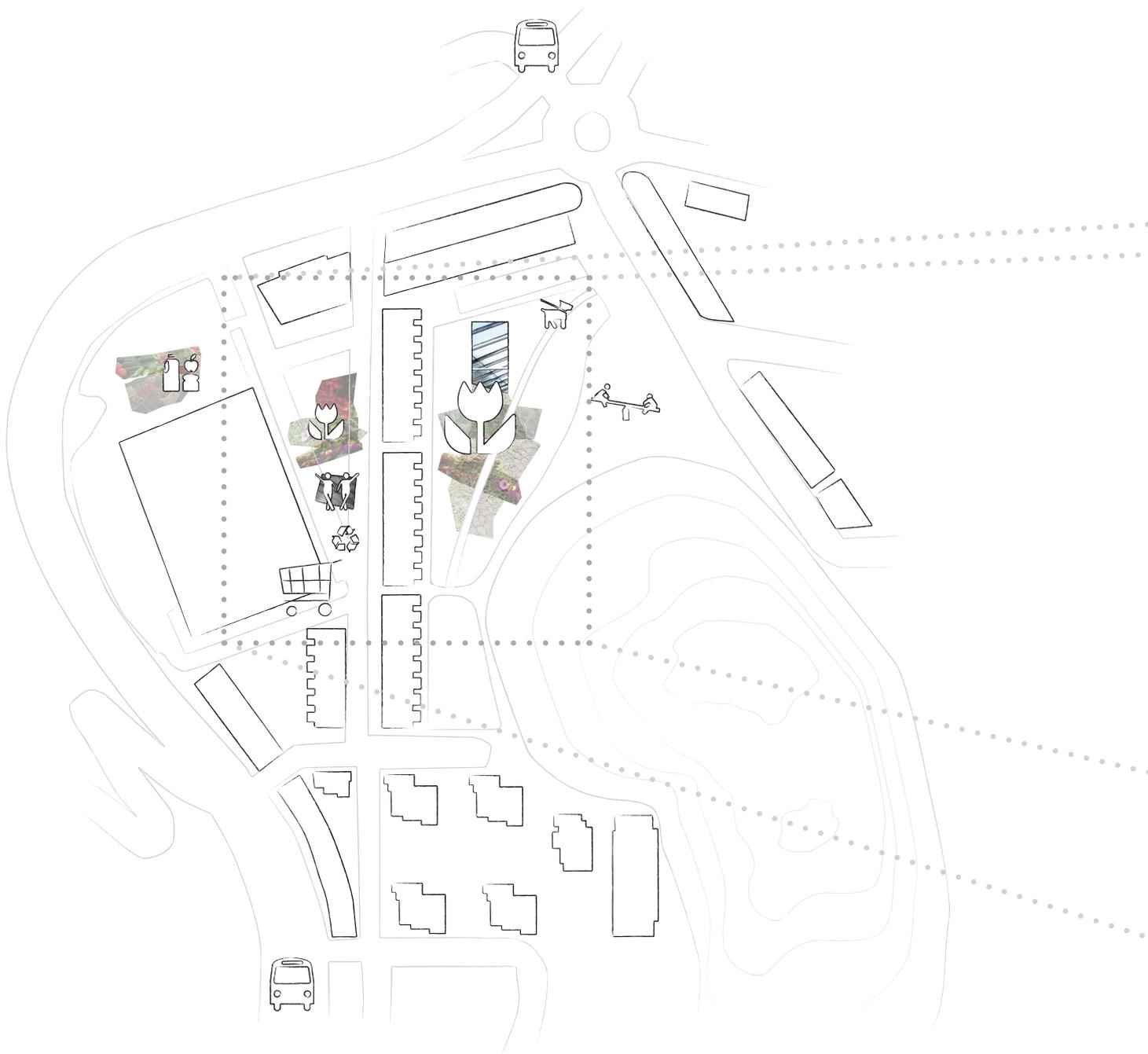
From a sustainable point of view, adding on factors such as extreme lack of resources, we then pose a situation where the neighborhood in order to be more self-contained needs to grow at least a part of the food locally. This might also be used as an opportunity to strengthen the community feeling, to help cope with the lack of resources. If a part of the open grassy areas were transformed into allotments, would the inhabitants have to interact and cooperate to get by?

Even if this was not an extreme situation, this could be used from a planning perspective to get people more involved in their community, using the green space in different ways. The more the inhabitants care for it, the more enjoyable and less impersonal the common space would grow. The starting point would perhaps be to plan and arrange the allotments from a municipal level, and then let the inhabitants maintain the plots on their own. Ideally, the planning would

be based on suggestions from the inhabitants, incorporated into a physical site. After a while, perhaps the people using the allotments would have to reorganize the different vegetables or some might want to start planting flowers. They would have to plan these alterations themselves, but within for example set limits or a budget. A common greenhouse could serve as a social point not only concerning gardening, but also be used for other activities, association meetings or smaller rentable workshop space.

Another example of a local intervention to promote the sustainability of the living environment in the neighborhood would be to secure the existence of small-scaled industries. Today, the survival of small businesses relies on a stable clientele. For example, people want supermarkets close to their homes, yet they also want low prices and a varied assortment. Recently, locally produced goods are also becoming important. If everyone living in the area regularly supports the local corner shop, the shop could keep the prices down and afford to have a wide selection of products. To achieve this, different schemes could be introduced. For example, a bonus system connected to recycling would not only benefit the store with customers, but also invite people to more sustainable habits. Another idea would be to give every inhabitant a card valid to purchase with in the store, with a favorable interest. If the allotments gave a steady supply of vegetables, these could also be sold, further highlighting the local atmosphere and self-sufficiency. By the engagement of the inhabitants, this could become an active feature within the neighborhood, connecting the residents and bringing a sense of common responsibility.

These are just very rough and rather basic proposals for what could be done to support a self-evolving urban life. Of course, this needs to be elaborated before it could function properly, but is a way of trying out different planning schemes that could be upheld by participatory processes and allow continuous evolvement amongst the inhabitants themselves. By changing the common mindset on what can be done to improve and develop living environments, could this also change the way our cities will appear in the future? What if the people would serve as the planners of their own habitats, or at least be given a more prominent role in urban development? As planners, we should then take on the role of helping to find the trigger points for change in various settings and with a multidisciplinary exchange.



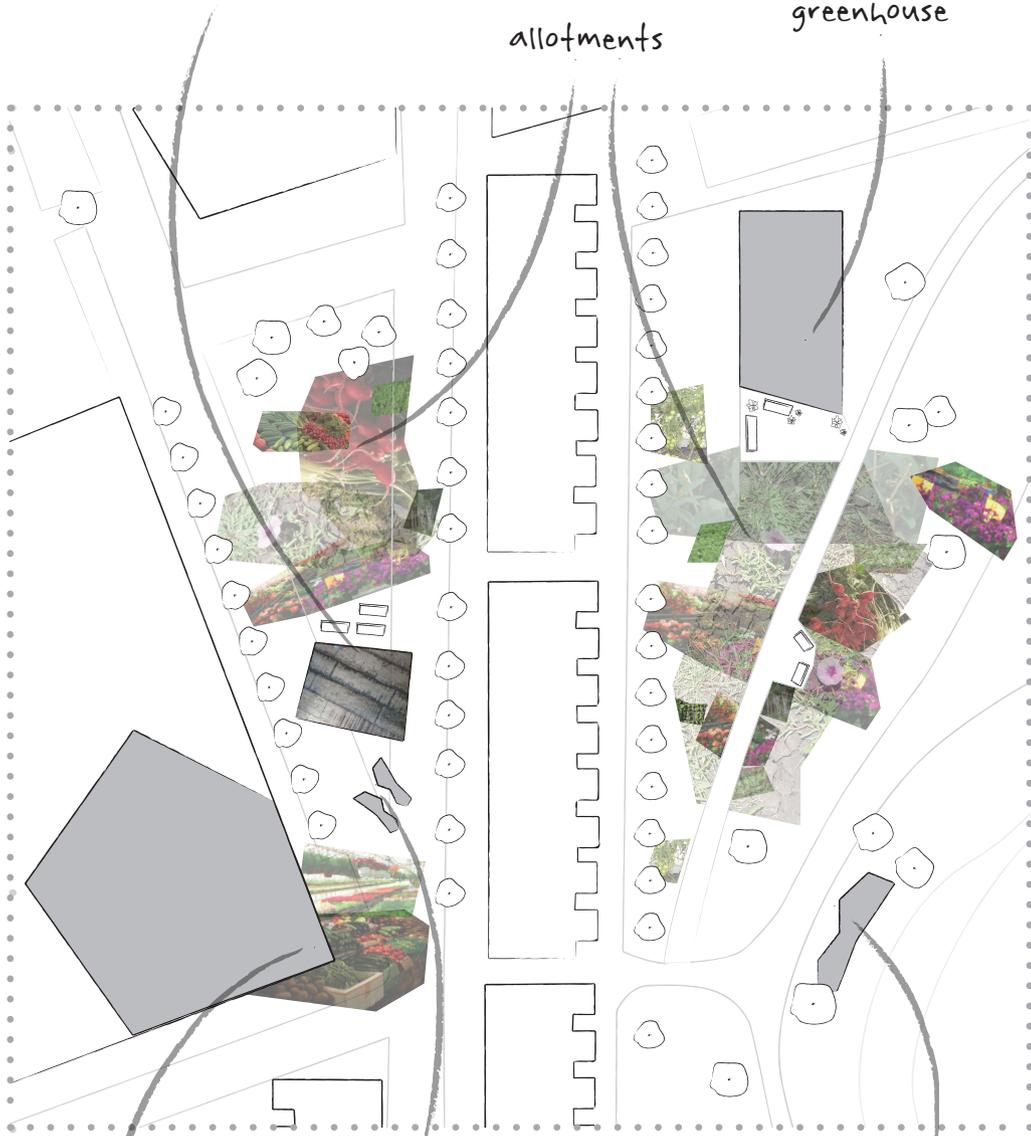
Barken, Eriksberg

100m

open air market/stage

allotments

greenhouse



recycling

compost

corner shop







6

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek" Barack Obama

where does change begin?



idyllic villas, Gothenburg

Where then does change begin? When we do not see the connections between problem and cause, it is hard to feel obligated to do something. Perhaps it is time for us to take some responsibility and start to consider our actions and what we do, will in the long run affect our “neighbors” in other parts of the world. What if we all started to think about what kind of world we want to live in and what we can do to steer our lifestyles in a sustainable direction. The relation between our lifestyle in “developed” countries and how inhabitants in “developing” countries are acting is sometimes painfully evident. The common goals we share are often overshadowed by the differences.

We are social creatures and want to have people around us, but on our own terms and according to our own individual preferences. Many of the questionnaire respondents said that their living environment preferences are dependent on the people they have around them. Some said that they would like to live in a rural setting, but only if surrounded by family. Additionally, some respondents said that you do not feel as lonely in the city, even if you live on your own. Another interesting aspect with the questionnaire was that many answers were more similar than we expected. We are more alike than we thought. Although culture plays a big part, this shows that some values and preferences are perhaps universal and basic for humanity.

When something is too intense, we long for relaxation and when it is too uneventful, we want activities. We enjoy the city with all the features it offers, but during holidays, you often hear people complaining over being stuck in the city. Is this because we associate leisure with anything non-urban? Or do we all simply crave for a change of environment? Could it even be possible to create a living environment composing of all the things we desire? We would surely just get tired of this environment as well. Or can we make our surrounding versatile enough to constantly find new angles and qualities to initiate progress?

The importance of feeling personally connected to ones surroundings is essential in any setting. We explore different environments by feeling, which is very personal and makes it very hard to decide for others what to feel. At the same time, certain ideals are spread and color our values. The influences might not always be obvious, but an important step towards changing what we

identify as potential for development, is to acknowledge the way we spread visions and discuss ideals in society and especially in planning processes.

The proposal we have made is easily compared with other planning proposals done today that focus on the environment, but the difference in our case is how we have reached this point. Experiencing Kenya and the informality in many of their developments made us reconsider the formal way of planning in Sweden. One of the most important things we have discussed is who sets the framework for planning the unplanned. The planners or the actual people? Although the result of different processes might end up the same, the processes in themselves might have reached that specific goal in different ways. We have looked at what we believe is a long-term way of planning. Well aware that our ideas need to be developed further, we have tried to give inspirational sketches to illustrate possibilities. Hopefully the development of these ideas is something that in an actual situation would happen in cooperation with the inhabitants and as an open, ongoing discussion.

Controlling development works to some extent, but even better when people feel they are let in on the control. If people can steer where and when activities should take place, perhaps it would be acceptable if not everything turns out as planned? Maybe something unexpected would come out of it, leading to people daring to participate in more unforeseen involvements. As we saw in Manyatta, people were not steered by the officials, and instead they had to structure their own societal configurations. This scenario does not always work and is far from ideal. Of course, a necessity for creating a sustainable society is to establish a mutual respect between the ones in public office or in the role as planner and the people entitled to this livable place.

We should not neglect the knowledge of those we consider unstructured or “developing”, nor can we proclaim ourselves to possess the “right solutions”. Learning how to create communities, organizing public space and daring to let go of functional planning, in favor of focusing on how the evolving process can go beyond the final outcome, and set off new ideas. The middle road between the unplanned and the planned is something to steer towards, something that will keep us discussing how far we can control sustainability.

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Otieno, Evelyn. Kisumu Municipal Planning Office

Wagah, George. Professor at the Department of Urban Planning, Maseno University

## Questionnaire:

About 35 respondents from Kisumu and 25 from Gothenburg

Katarina Bäcklund / Emma Engleson / Pernilla Hagbert



PEOPLE WANTED

ACTIVE

DISCLOSURE