

Promoting inclusive approaches to address urbanisation challenges in Kigali

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Abstract

Kigali has embarked on a rapid urbanisation and modernisation process. A growing number of its inhabitants, mushrooming luxury residential and office buildings, infrastructural development and a clean city are some indicators of that dynamic. However, providing adequate land and affordable housing for the majority of urban residents remains a challenge which continues to impact on both the population's living conditions and sustainable urban planning. The article critically explores this issue with regard to current urban planning regulations. It reveals the urbanisation challenges facing Kigali and the current strategies for its modernisation, and proposes a viable framework for inclusive urban planning.

Keywords: housing, inclusive urbanisation, land, urban planning

1 Introduction

Connell and Lea (1996, p. 177) argue that 'a growing extent of social disorganization and crime is a function of substantial inequalities in access to land, housing and other services in the cities'. Urban inequalities are manifest in the sharp contradiction in residential standards in urban centres, where expensive housing and luxury flats co-exist with shantytowns and informal settlements. Such contradictions are the by-product of urban policies aimed primarily at generating economic growth, rather than addressing issues of urban service delivery in order to promote the wellbeing and living conditions of the population. Urban planning policies and strategies, in fact, are conceived within a global, competitive, political economy which requires the creation of modern cities, and which must be capable of connecting global actors and economies (Badcock, 2002; Peemans, 2008). Cities are increasingly seen as the centres of civilisation, employment creation and international financial exchange (Sachs, 1996). Their contribution to economic development is so important that they generate more than 80 per cent of global GDP (Richard *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, urban development policies tend to focus on the creation and improvement of infrastructures which facilitate business, with little emphasis being laid on social issues and housing problems, or the promotion of full access to the opportunities of urban life for different socio-economic categories of urban residents.

Since 2000, the Government of Rwanda has elaborated a series of urbanisation policies in an attempt to modernise the country's capital city, Kigali. In 2002, two

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Vincent Manirakiza

years after the publication of *Rwanda Vision 2020* – the roadmap to Rwanda’s future as a middle-income society by 2020 – the Kigali economic development strategy was elaborated on, focusing on building the foundations necessary to compete in the global economy in the future. *Rwanda Vision 2020* stresses the need to make Kigali ‘a place that is attractive to, and supportive of business and investments, both within the Central/East African region and within the world’s economy’ (City of Kigali, 2002, p. 9). The Rwanda Settlement Policy, and the Urban Infrastructure and City Management Program, completed in 2004, as well as the Rwanda National Urbanisation Policy, published in 2007, are mainly focused on developing Kigali city. The implementation of the Kigali Conceptual Master Plan (KCMP) has been in progress since 2008, and is projected to be accomplished in 2050. The KCMP was conceived in the context of the radical modernisation policies that the Rwandan government is implementing in order to fundamentally transform and develop Rwanda and its capital city (Government of Rwanda, 2000). Then, with regard to the policies and strategies set for implementation, some questions arise: To what extent do they contribute to the eradication of urbanisation issues in Kigali? Do they not cause substantial challenges to the contrary? If so, what are the sustainable approaches that can be used to address urbanisation challenges in Kigali?

In fact, despite the aforementioned policies focusing on creating a business-friendly environment, a growing body of evidence suggests that uncontrolled urban growth, land use and housing availability as well as affordability¹ remain topical issues impinging on Kigali’s sustainable development. A high demand and urban land use regulations affect the market for plots of land and housing, making them increasingly speculative. The residential plots being developed in line with urban plans are costly, insufficient in number, and create a scarcity of affordable land for the majority of urban dwellers.

As a consequence, while many efforts are being made to modernise the city according to the urban and district plans, spontaneous settlements by low-income households often represent the only strategy for the poor to settle in the city, and are likely to continue to develop within the city and in its peripheries. The high rate of spontaneous settlements in Kigali highlights the need to tailor urban planning policies and related implementation strategies according to urban households’ financial means, so as to transform Kigali into an inclusive city, i.e., one ‘that promotes access to the opportunities of urban life for all, a place where everyone, regardless of their economic means is enabled and empowered to fully participate in the social, economic and political opportunities that cities have to offer’ (UN-HABITAT, 2012).

¹ By availability I refer to access to urban land for housing while by affordability I refer to the ability of a household to own a house, either by repaying loans taken up for the construction or purchasing of a house, and to pay for the provision of services and infrastructure (Kok, Hall and Nieuwmeijer, 1992).

In this article, the emphasis is on ways of planning for neighbourhoods that are liveable for all categories of urban dwellers, in a bid to address current urbanisation challenges. Urbanisation is used here as a multidimensional concept that not only means the trend of increasing rates of population dwelling in urban centres (Waugh, 2009), but also transformations in socio-economic activities and in land use, brought about by processes of modernisation (Rimal, 2011). The data presented in this article are drawn from different sources: secondary sources, mainly official reports and policy documents; primary sources, such as participant observation and analysis of urban dynamics over a period of six years, as well as information collected from different urban actors including urban planners, local leaders, land brokers and the population during field research conducted in 2011 and 2012.

The article argues that low-income households face challenges in accessing land and housing. As a result, they live in spontaneous neighbourhoods and/or risk being excluded from the modern city. It suggests ways of integrating that specific category of urban residents in planning policies. In addition to the introduction and the conclusion, this article is made up of three sections: The first section briefly explores urbanisation trends in Africa; the second describes the process of urbanisation in Kigali and offers a critical analysis of the Kigali Conceptual Master Plan, and the third proposes a framework for inclusive urbanisation with regard to land and housing schemes.



Figure 1: Location of Kigali

Source: Kigali City (2013)

Kigali is located in the centre of Rwanda. It is one of the country's five administrative subdivisions, the others being the Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Provinces. Kigali is 730 km² in area and comprises three districts and a total of 35 sectors: Nyarugenge (10 sectors), Kicukiro (10) and Gasabo (15).

2 An overview of urbanisation in Africa

More than half of the world's population lives in cities. A natural increase in populations, along with migrations, contribute to rapid urbanisation. Every year, about 30 million people leave their land or small villages in the countryside for urban centres (Badcock, 2002). Although such a trend seems to have halted in developed countries, it shows no sign of abating worldwide. Since the 1970s, developing countries have witnessed remarkable population growth in urban areas, and the rate is projected to increase in the future (see Figure 2). While it is assumed that rural–urban migration contributes much to the increase in urban population figures (Moriconi-Ebrard, 2000), recent demographic surveys show a decrease of the net in-migration rates and attribute the majority of growth in many towns to natural increase. This is particularly the case for sub-Saharan African countries such as Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic and the DR Congo (Potts, 2009, p. 254).

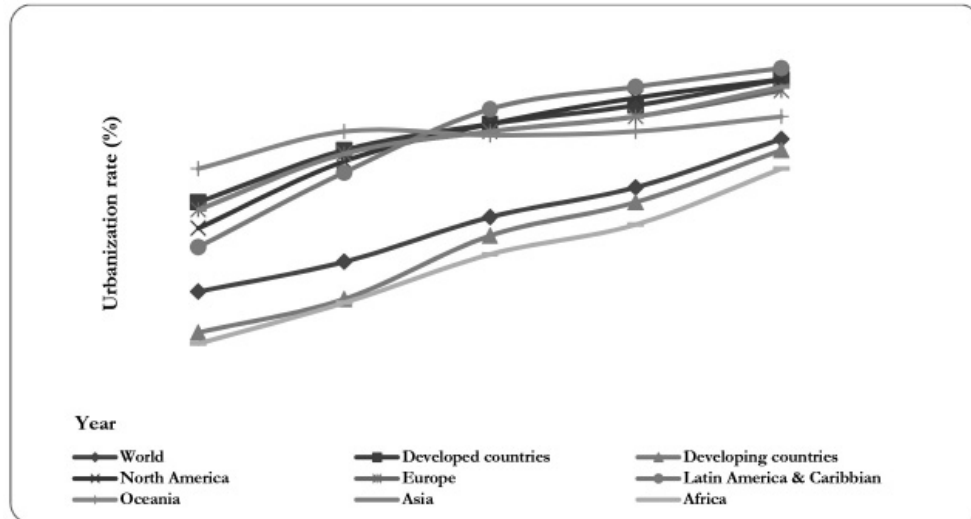


Figure 2: World urban population trend by geographical zones, 1950-2050

Source: UN-HABITAT (2009)

The urban population rate in Africa has more than doubled since 1950, up from 14.5 to 40 per cent in 2009 (UN-HABITAT, 2009), and different sources suggest that the continent remains the fastest urbanising region in the world. Nevertheless, this needs to be carefully considered, because statistics from different censuses in sub-Saharan Africa have shown that urbanisation rates over the past 15 years have been slower compared to earlier rates (i.e., during the first decades of independence) and that ‘many large towns, sometimes including the capital city, have been found to be growing only a little faster than the national population’ (Potts, 2013, p. 5). Counter-urbanisation (drops in urbanisation levels) was noted in the 1980s and is still taking place in various countries (Potts, 2009). Figure 3, which depicts changes in 19

countries over the last two decades, in respect of urbanisation, shows decreasing rates in almost all countries, with only two noticeable exceptions: Rwanda and Ghana.

It is important also to note that the urbanisation rate is not equally distributed across the continent. It differs across the major geographic regions. The southern region leads the continent with 59 per cent, followed by the northern region (51%), the western region (45%), the central region (43%) and, lastly, the eastern region (24%) (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2010 quoted in Obeng-Odoom 2011, p. 1).

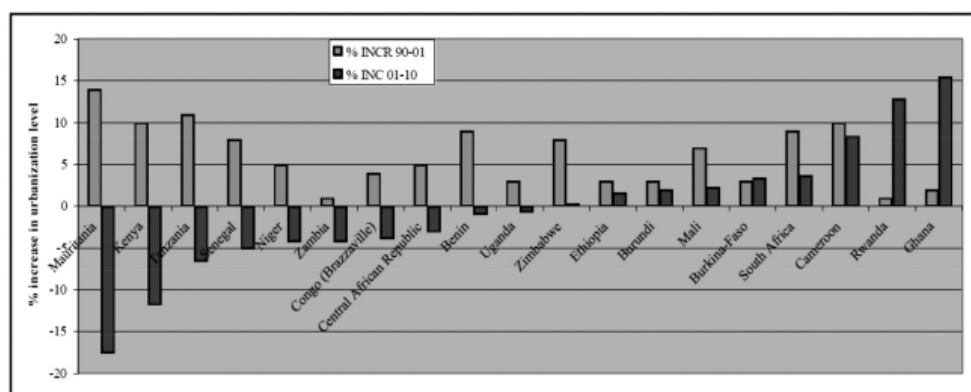


Figure 3: Changes in urbanisation levels in some sub-Saharan African countries

Source: Potts (2013)

Africa is improving in terms of urbanisation as well as urban development. The increasing nature of megacities (Cairo, Lagos and soon Kinshasa), city regions and urban development corridors that cut across several cities and contribute to the development and global integration of Africa, the increasingly use of technology and flight connectivity are some indicators of these developments (Obeng-Odoom, 2011). However, the challenge which calls for a focus, particularly, on sub-Saharan Africa, is that urbanisation is taking place in a chaotic fashion, and as Potts (2013, p. 6) puts it, ‘there is urbanization without improving of economies and the expansion of urban middle classes, and African urban livelihoods tend to remain insecure and highly informalised’.

Urban development tends to be accompanied by urban inequality. Resident communities do not enjoy the conditions and opportunities prevalent in cities, due to their social-economic status. African cities are currently the most unequal in the world. Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) cities which exhibited the highest inequalities have recently been lagging behind African cities (income-based coefficients, urban areas: 0.529 on average in Africa, compared with 0.505. in LAC and average of available city-specific coefficients: Africa: 0.581; LAC: 0.528) (UN-

Vincent Manirakiza

HABITAT, 2010). The Gini index shows alarming rates of inequality in different cities such as Johannesburg 0.75, Addis-Ababa 0.61, Nairobi 0.59, Abidjan 0.53 and Kigali 0.559 (UN-HABITAT, 2009).

Economic inequality is a factor in the informalisation of settlement structure. It pushes an important proportion of the poor urban population into informal/substandard settlements which are deprived of the basic needs (access to adequate shelter, safe drinking water and sanitation, health and education services). Around 62 per cent of African cities are composed of slums, with many of them arising on informal land arrangements (UN-HABITAT, 2012). Countries such as Ethiopia, Chad and Tanzania have demonstrated settlement rates in excess of 90 per cent (Delcourt, 2007, p. 11). In Dar es Salaam, for example, 'visible distinctions between formal and informal areas are hard to discern because of the preponderance of the latter' (Myers, 2011, p. 92).

Although the proportions of slums dwellers have been falling over the last two decades in several countries (see Table 1), they have remained constant in others such as Kenya and Namibia, at just under 55 and 33/34 per cent respectively, and increased by four to nine per cent in Malawi (to 69.6%), Mozambique (to 80.8%) and the Central African Republic (to 96.4%) (UN-HABITAT, 2010).

Table 1: Declining proportions of slum dwellers (%)

Year	1990	2005	2010
Country	Proportion of slum dwellers (%)		
Egypt	50.2	17.1	17.1
Mali	94.2	65.9	n/a
Senegal	70.6	38.1	n/a
Ghana	68.7	n/a	38.1
Madagascar	93.0	n/a	75.3
Republic of South Africa	46.2	n/a	28.7
Benin	79.3	n/a	69.3

Source: UN-HABITAT (2010)

Informal settlements and slums signify uncoordinated urbanisation. They mainly result from issues related to land, such as urban land governance and markets which, due to rising prices, various operations and rules, coupled with urban planning regulations focusing on restructuring and modernising cities, prevent the majority of city dwellers for being able to access land and push them into illegality. Examples drawn from UN-HABITAT (2010) for specific sub-regions show that average land prices have doubled every three years since 1970 in northern Africa (p. 63). In Western Africa only ten to 30 per cent of the urban population can access land through formal markets (p. 121). The majority prefer to follow customary channels

which provide between 60 and 80 per cent of the land for urban housing (p. 121). In the eastern sub-region policy instruments such as the allocation of publicly owned parcels, planning controls and taxation, deny low-income urban groups access to land. In Rwanda, for instance, the formal land market can be accessed only by ten to 30 per cent of the urban population (p. 149).

In their daily struggle to survive, low-income residents who have little (if any) access to formal land or housing markets, search for their own rationality and opt to put up shacks, especially in peri-urban areas. This progressively leads to informal, densely packed and overcrowded settlements. Owen Crankshaw and Sue Parnell (1998, quoted in Myers 2011, p. 93) describe such settlements as ‘built outside the law, vividly opposed to the order and regularity of state-built formal housing and, within the constraints of poverty, they reflect the individual aspirations and styles of the residents’.

In a nutshell, informal urbanisation – one of huge challenges Africa is facing – results from economic polarisation and a lack of access to affordable and adequate land and housing, by the predominantly poor urban populations. This is attributed to poor governance frameworks which lack the appropriate land management systems to deal with increasing shortages in serviced and well-located land, peri-urban sprawls, widespread informal land delivery, and highly centralised and corrupt land agencies (Africa Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development, 2011).

Rwanda experienced rapid and uncoordinated urbanisation during 1990–2000, and in particular in Kigali city, which accounts for a significant proportion of the urban population in Rwanda: 48.6 per cent, with 52.4 per cent being slum housing (UN-HABITAT, 2008). From three per cent in 1970 to 5.6 per cent in 1991, the urbanisation rate reached 16.9 per cent in 2002 (MINECOFIN, 2002) and 19.0 per cent² in 2012, while the slum incidence rate was around 71.6 per cent in 2008 (UN-HABITAT, 2008). With the urban population projected to increase to 22.61 per cent in 2020, and to 42.93 per cent in 2050 (UN-HABITAT, 2010), the government’s objective is to have urban master plans that are regularly updated, as well as specific land management plans, and to develop basic infrastructure in order to provide better living conditions for the growing urban population (Government of Rwanda, 2000). Kigali’s conceptual master plan has been greatly elaborated on as part of that trend.

3 Urbanisation in Kigali

3.1 *From the village to the city*

From the small hub that it was in 1907, Kigali has become a large city. Founded by Richard Kandt as a German administrative residence, the original location of the would-be Kigali city was in Gakinjoro, close to the current location of Kigali City Market. It remained a small colonial outpost with few links to the outside world until

² Statistiques mondiales, 2012, <http://www.statistiques-mondiales.com/rwanda.htm> (accessed 10 October 2012)

Vincent Manirakiza

World War I. In 1916, the Belgians defeated the Germans and occupied Rwanda until the country attained independence in 1962. During the colonial period, Kigali grew at a slow pace, as settlements were primarily contained at the top of Nyarugenge hill (Kigali City, 2007). Wauters (1982 quoted in Sirven, 1984, p. 506) argues that when Rwanda gained independence on 1 July 1962, Kigali was just a small village with primarily administrative functions. Around that time, Kigali was around 2.5 km² in size, but then expanded to 112 km² in 1990. The administrative reforms of 2000 and 2005 extended the city's boundaries respectively to 314 km² and 730 km² (Republic of Rwanda, 2005).

Similarly, the urban population increased rapidly from around 6 000 people in 1962 to nearly 235 664 in 1991 (SNR, 1991). Despite the war³ and the genocide that significantly reduced its population to around 50 000 in 1994 (Gazel, Harre and Moriconi-Ebrard, 2010), Kigali has continued to grow due to an influx of repatriated refugees – the majority of whom converged on Kigali after 1994. Internal migration,⁴ the natural population increase, and administrative reforms repeatedly extended the city limits to encompass the surrounding population. This spatial extension may impact the accuracy of demographic statistics. For instance, the 2002 general census set the population of Kigali at 608 141 inhabitants; i.e., an average annual growth rate of nine per cent since 1991 (MINECOFIN, 2002). But the 2012 population census (preliminary results) raised that figure to 765 325 inhabitants, by including residents of the former peri-urban zones which were integrated into the city during the 2005 administrative reforms. According to that figure, Kigali's population would have seen an annual increase of 11.3 per cent between 1991 and 2002. The annual growth rate declined to four per cent between 2002 and 2012 to reach 1 135 428 inhabitants in 2012 (MINECOFIN, 2012).

Kigali's urbanisation followed a concentric urban land use model, from the Central Business District (CBD) to low- and medium-class residential areas, to modern, high-class housing in the suburbs. After independence, and particularly since the 1990s, the city began growing rapidly in a spontaneous, uncontrolled and haphazard way. Urban extension occurred into wetland areas, as well as onto steep slopes. Around 19 per cent of Kigali's built environment is on land that is not ideal for development (Kigali City, 2007). The urban mosaic is characterised by modern businesses, luxury dwellings and neighbourhoods which co-exist with low-income squatter houses and settlements that spring up virtually overnight.

3 The civil war started in October 1990, sadly culminating in the 1994 genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi during which about one million people were killed, and millions of refugees fled to neighbouring countries (Kinzer, 2008).

4 The 2002 census revealed a net immigration of 230 257 inhabitants (MINECOFIN, 2002).



Figure 4: Stipp Estate, Gisozi (left) and Kibiraro Slum, Remera (right)

Source: Author (2011)

Urbanisation in Kigali has not kept pace with an improvement in service delivery and infrastructure provision, because housing, sewage and sanitation infrastructure remain serious problems. Over 70 per cent of Kigali city consists of informal settlements, most of which are found in poor neighbourhoods. Although changes have taken place,⁵ the 2002 general census revealed that around 58 per cent of urban dwellers lived in spontaneous settlements and 22.8 per cent in isolated ones. While 43.1 per cent owned the homes in which they lived, 47.6 per cent were tenants. Only 20 per cent of urban residents had water in their homes, 45 per cent bought water from vendors, while 28.4 per cent fetched water from boreholes and natural springs. The rate of access to energy/power was at 37.2 per cent. Traditional pit latrines were the dominant excreta management systems: 51 per cent of people used private latrines, 44.4 per cent used public facilities, and only 3.4 per cent of households had flushing toilets, while the remaining 1.1 per cent did not have toilets at all (MINECOFIN, 2002). Only 30 per cent of Kigali is covered by paved runoff water infrastructure, which is located along main roads and in the city centre (Sano, 2007).

3.2 Kigali Conceptual Master Plan: A key tool for urban development

The Kigali Conceptual Master Plan (KCMP) is considered a useful tool for addressing the urbanisation challenges Kigali faces. Its aim is to bring about the renewal and modernisation of Kigali. Achieving this objective requires infrastructure improvement which will make urban settlements sustainable, notably by prioritising the retrofitting of infrastructure in informal settlements and incorporating cutting-edge, appropriate and affordable technologies (Kigali City, 2007).

It is important here to describe some features of the KCMP, whose overarching goal is 'to ensure sustainable urban development by using Rwanda's natural and human resources through the balancing of ecology, equity, and economy'. This goal aims

⁵ The final and updated results of the 2012 census have not yet been published.

Vincent Manirakiza

to protect the natural environment, exercising best practices to minimize environmental degradation, pollution and waste; to promote equitable solutions that protect the interests of all people including marginal populations; to support economic development opportunities for all with appropriate urban development and infrastructure; and to ensure urban economic growth that will play a dynamic role in facilitating national economic growth. (Kigali City, 2007, p. 7)

The KCMP covers general land use, transportation, and plans for natural features. Such plans are conceived in the modern global economy, taking into account factors that are specific to Rwanda and its historical context. They are the tools needed to ‘build neighbourhoods for all citizens, promote public health and child development, help protect the environment and mitigate climate change, support social cohesion, and foster economic growth’ (Rubinoff, 2011, p. 9). In this regard, policy and institutional reforms have been implemented, different goals have been achieved and other activities are currently underway, as Rubinoff (2011, pp. 2–3) highlights:

Concerning *urban planning*, the Nyarugenge District Plan, the Kigali Central Business District and 6 Sub Area Plans, which include detailed land use, planning and zoning, as well as infrastructure design (transportation, drainage, sanitary, water systems and power system design) have been completed. The plans comprise Kinjinya Township (80,000 population and 387 Ha) and Kinjinya Town Center (30,000 population and 200 Ha), a 90 Ha Resort and Conference Center at Rebero, a 90 Ha Urban Center at Kimihurura, the Niboye Sub Area (900 Ha) and the Masaka Sector, (4500 Ha) which has been planned to accommodate almost 300,000 residents. The two other District Plans for Gasabo and Kicukiro are expected to be completed very soon.

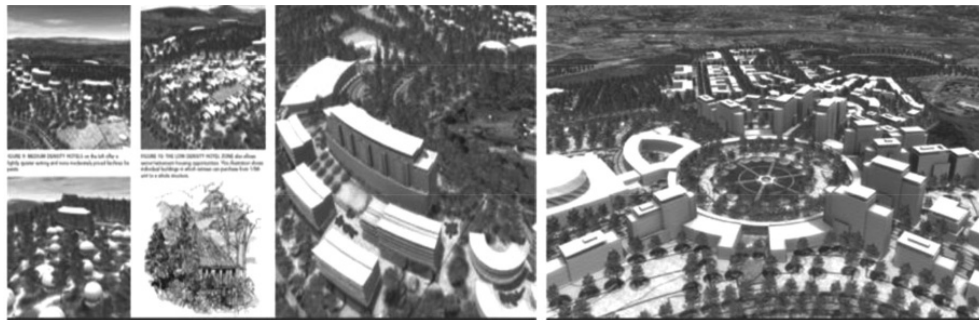


Figure 5: Plans for Rebero and Kimihurura

Source: Rubinoff (2011)

The Construction Permit Reform has also been completed, thanks to which obtaining a construction permit has now become a much quicker process. Since October 2010, the Kigali One Stop Centre has been addressing all major property development issues, while the district land bureaus handle single-family residential construction permits. ‘The construction proposal project is analysed within 10 days and the whole

detailed project within 30 days,' as the Kigali One Stop Centre authority indicated during our interview. Thus, construction permits are now obtained within a one-month period, while in the past the waiting time could easily go beyond a year, resulting in applicants ignoring permit regulations and, therefore, building their houses illegally. In the *housing sector*, the Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA) has been working with different institutions, international architects and the World Bank to refine architectural solutions and the mechanisms to finance them. As regards *infrastructure development*, efforts have been concentrated on activities related to road paving, traffic lighting, pedestrian overpasses, and the distribution of power and water services as well as the construction of new offices.

These developments contribute to the modernisation and promotion of *Kigali's image and reputation* worldwide as a clean and green city, a good place to do business, and a safe and secure city in Africa (Rubinoff, 2011). Ansoms (2009) assumes that the modernisation exercise is most evident in the skyscrapers and massive buildings which are arising with great rapidity, although she also highlights the flaws of such a modernisation endeavour. In fact, Ansoms (2009) regards Kigali's urbanisation policies as part of a social engineering project by which laws and mechanisms are manipulated by policy-makers as instruments for the elite and the upper middle class to benefit from. In the same context, Zoomers (2010) notes that urban policies are 'instrumentalised' by better-off and better-informed actors to defend their own interests in the land arena.

Indeed, the city is increasingly modernising, but a number of urban dwellers are being confronted with difficult living conditions and regulations being applied in line with the implementation of urban plans. Durant-Lasserve (2006) argues that the stipulations for constructing a legally acceptable house in Kigali are so demanding that between 75 and 80 per cent of all households risk being excluded from the urban space. Thus, the process of implementing the Kigali urbanisation policies may have a controversial impact on the lower socio-economic strata of the population.

For example, the centrality of private sector actors in the city's development means that estate developers are given expropriation capacity, since expropriation is made legal and in the public interest as long as it takes place in the context of urban plans being implemented.⁶ However, there is little chance of expropriated households being able to reclaim their former standards of living. This is because, as declared by some expropriated households during field interviews, compensation is often too low, not fairly calculated, and only paid after lengthy delays. Compensation is generally monetary and aimed at reconstructing a new house in a new area which is deemed suitable for development. Given the high costs of plots in such areas, only a small number of relocated households manage to eventually build improved homesteads. In fact, the interviews conducted in 2012 revealed that only 20 per cent manage to do so, while 65 per cent of the interviewed households bought homes in spontaneous

⁶ Law n° 18/2007 of 19/04/2007 relating to expropriation in the public interest, article 5.

Vincent Manirakiza

neighbourhoods. In addition, 12.5 per cent of the interviewed households moved to remote areas, in order to benefit from the less expensive plots available there, but they are likely to lose out on job opportunities which can only be found in central urban areas. A remaining 2.5 per cent of households were not able to buy or build new houses. Also, no compensation was provided for tenants, who now struggle to find new accommodation to rent.

Such dynamics are evident in the ongoing development of the Central Business District and the related clearance of the surrounding slums such as 'Poor-Kiyovu' and Kimicanga. Other slums located in hazard-prone environmental areas (for example, Kibiraro and Gatsata) are set to be evacuated. The bulldozing of informal neighbourhoods, coupled with a lack of alternative housing opportunities for low-income households, has resulted in a dramatic lack of affordable plots and housing technologies available to the poor. In fact, the legal obligation to construct 'acceptable' houses, with sustainable materials (bricks or cement blocks and roofing of industrial tiles or metal sheets) in particular areas, along with the prohibition against dwelling in informal settlements, is making housing an increasingly expensive commodity.

The average cost of a decent middle-income family home is over 40 million RWF, which is about eight times the average yearly salary of a university lecturer, and 16 times the salary of a public sector employee. Houses in private developers' estates are estimated at over 70 million, with prices continuing to rise.⁷ Besides construction costs, the first obstacle to decent housing, as far as low-income households are concerned, is the price of land. Land is not only a prerequisite for housing, but it also represents the main portion of the final cost of any housing. Plots in 'planned areas' are extremely expensive and it can take very long for formal housing to be permitted in zones which are not yet considered suitable for development. Moreover, the urban land market is speculative, and the urban poor find it difficult to access. An improved plot in a medium-standing developed zone that was valued at 102,000 RWF in 2000, is currently worth between 10 and 15 million RWF.⁸

Certain features of the land and housing market (see Table 2) prevent a large number of urban dwellers in Kigali from legally building their own homes. Housing inaccessibility leads to a buoyant informal sector where low-income households find affordable housing solutions and access to land. They are increasingly deploying a set of illicit and often risky strategies to build in the suburbs. One example is the building of small single-room homes during the weekend, so as to progressively enlarge the dwelling; others demand a rehabilitation permit and take advantage of this opportunity to build a new home instead of merely renovating the old one.

7 In 2003, a family bloc in the Gacuriro Estate 2020 houses which was sold at 26 million RWF is currently estimated at 100 million. For information, 1 USD equals 661 RWF, available at <http://www.bnr.rw/index.php?id=204> (accessed 10 October 2013).

8 For more on the land and housing market issue in Kigali, see Jean de la Croix Tabaro, 'Land prices soar as demand shoots up', *The NewTimes Rwanda*, 15 January 2013, Available at <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/> (accessed 17 January 2013) and Manirakiza (2009).

Promoting inclusive approaches to address urbanisation challenges in Kigali

There is no doubt that this is done with the complicity of some local leaders. As one interviewee put it, ‘it is impossible to start any project without the guarantee of a local authority who is willing to calm down his (*law-abiding*) colleague’. Some people move to peri-urban zones such as Muyumbu, Runda, Nyagasambu, where they hope to find accommodation sitting within their financial means.

Table 2 : Average price⁹ for a residential medium-standing plot (600 m²) in selected zones

Zones	Prices in millions RWF	District	Comments
Kimironko	≥ 10	Gasabo	Plots are also expensive in other structured settlement zones developed since 1996, e.g., Niboye, Kagarama and Rugarama.
Zindiro	4–8	Gasabo	Plots are becoming more expensive in newly developed low- and medium- standing sites such as Kabizoza and Amakawa.
Rusororo	3–6	Gasabo	Plots developed by the district and sold to the staff of public institutions under the condition of building a standard one-storey residential home. This condition makes the plots relatively less costly than others.
Rubirizi	5–8	Kicukiro	This, like Samuduha, Kanombe and Gisozi, was a less urbanised area before becoming densely populated.
Nyanza	4–6	Kicukiro	As in Ndera and Busanza, no physical plan has yet been designed for these areas. People buy plots in advance and others manage to build illegally.
Mageragere	1–3	Nyarugenge	This is a rural fringe of Nyarugenge inserted within the urban boundaries post-2005. Plots exist in planned low-standing settlements.
Runda	3–4	Kamonyi	Peri-urban areas under intensive urbanisation since 2005. From one million at the beginning, no plot now sells for under three million.
Muyumbu	1–3	Rwamagana	Peri-urban zone in the process of urbanisation, e.g., Nyagasambu and Karumuna. Plots are less costly for being far from the city (± 30 km).

Source: Data collected from land brokers, 2012.

⁹ There is no fixed price for a plot in Kigali. The price is negotiated between the owner and client.

Vincent Manirakiza

Such a situation calls for important adjustments to urban plans. The objectives are clearly defined as sustainable, but the devices applied, their implementation and outcome, to date, require a more pro-poor-centred economic growth approach. Social issues should be included in the planning process, which appears to be biased towards capital owners and economic growth. Sustainable urban planning should be conceived of within the framework of sustainable development,¹⁰ which involves the interconnectedness of economic, social and environment aspects. It should give guidelines on how to improve people's standard of living and quality of life, without wasting resources (Waugh, 2009). It should bring the economic development of the cities into harmony with the natural environment and the overall system of settlements, in a sustainable way (Allen, 2001). As Allen (2001) argues, sustainability has to be based on the resources put to productive use for the long-term benefit of the community, without increasing the city's ecological footprint; it should be understood in terms of the fairness, inclusiveness and cultural adequacy of an intervention aimed at promoting equal rights, as well as improving the livelihoods and lives of local communities, with a particular emphasis on the poor and marginalised groups.

4 Planning for inclusive urbanisation in Kigali

Urban planning is a task which should include various urban actors. Urban authorities, the private sector and the population should work hand in hand to increase ownership of development processes and programmes, by promoting inclusiveness. As part of sustainable urbanisation, inclusive planning promotes the dimensions of equity and equality. It provides all residents with adequate housing and decent basic services, and facilitates equal access to social amenities, opportunities and other public goods that are essential to the general and environmental wellbeing of urban dwellers. It also promotes participative approaches for the sake of better-informed and more democratic decision-making, fosters economic development, and promotes pro-poor economic policies and social integration (UN-HABITAT, 2012).

Kigali's modernisation policies must acknowledge the abovementioned dimensions and must focus on components that can be integrated into formal urban norms and practices, such as informal economic practices and informal institutional arrangements, including affordable land delivery and housing systems. Master plans and urban development schemes should not be rigid tools of urban planning, but should be guiding instruments aimed at sustainable and inclusive urban development. It is necessary to promote a formal housing scheme, to regulate land use strategies but also to explore other instruments that may help to make housing financing available in order to boost housing supply – this could eventually lead to cheaper housing prices, while halting the mushrooming of slums.

¹⁰ The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987, p. 15) defines sustainable development as 'a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Promoting inclusive approaches to address urbanisation challenges in Kigali

As substantiated above, modern housing is too costly and so are plots which are legally destined for development. Therefore, low-income households should be provided with homes that they can pay for over relatively longer periods. Such homes can also be reserved for the resettlement of expropriated families. There are different schemes through which this can be applied: Entrepreneurs and real estate developers should be encouraged to invest in low-cost housing projects.¹¹ The government can also set up programmes to provide low-standing family housing loans and grants for low- and middle-income urban dwellers, thus acting as guarantors for those categories of the population. It should be noted that the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB) used to build semi-detached houses for sale, but they were too costly. For instance, in 2011 the cost of one bloc of a semi-detached house in Umucyo Estate at Kagugu was 69 million RWF. The RSSB should, for instance, build homes of different standings – high, medium and low – for different categories of urban dwellers. Monthly payback schemes, combined with existing social security measures, would counter the negative effects on urban low-income dwellers battling to make do in an expensive housing market.

Similarly, affordable plots should be made available for people who are willing to build their own homes. Achieving this objective would require the deployment of effective anti-speculation measures. Speculation is now so rife that a 600m² developed plot costs 6 million RWF on average at Zindiro site, while it was priced at around 2 million barely two years ago. Law enforcement might help to limit land market speculation: expropriation rates are fixed by law, and so should land prices be. For instance, when land is sold at prices higher than the ones set by law, the state should be able to intervene with taxation mechanisms to de-incentivise speculative behaviour. To solve the problem of a shortage of plots in developed areas, which naturally contributes to high prices, district authorities could draw up physical plans of the non-urbanised zones to define appropriate land use schemes and propose low-cost types of standard housing. Through participative approaches, local population cooperatives may develop their own estates and be assisted to obtain construction permits.

However, inclusive urbanisation must take into account sustainable land use. In fact, it is difficult to determine a suitable and sustainable housing development model in circumstances where land is scarce and where the majority of urban residents are poor. Using Bulawayo in Zimbabwe as a case in point, Magwaro-Ndiweni (2011) agrees that although in monetary terms they are too costly to construct, high-rise flats are recommended for tackling both the housing problem and ensuring sustainable land use, because they accommodate many families while requiring smaller pieces of land compared to single-family homes. In Kigali, the construction of single houses on individual plots of 300m² or 600m² could be a medium-term solution

¹¹ See the example of 'Low Cost Housing Project in Zambia' at <https://www.merar.com/investors/investment-projects/real-estate/zambia/low-cost-housing-project-in-zambia/> (accessed 5 June 2007).

Vincent Manirakiza

to the pressing housing problem, but it is no longer appropriate for sustainable urban land use and housing, as it propels urban sprawl and is costly for individuals. The rapid rate of modernisation requires densification through appropriate legal tenure systems, and the separation of access to shelter and access to land through condominium or high-rise residential blocks. Building contractors, international or local private sector organisations and real estate developers such as the RSSB, Real Contractors and others which are already investing in the housing sector, should be encouraged to invest in those types of housing and also to produce affordable apartments.

Modernisation based on urban redevelopment after bulldozing informal settlements and expropriating the population is not a recommended strategy in a city like Kigali, which became highly urbanised in a spontaneous way. Spontaneous neighbourhoods should not be demolished but rather upgraded, in a bid to improve the livelihoods of their residents. As highlighted above, expropriations do not result in expropriated families resettling in more suitable areas. On the contrary, these families usually relocate to substandard settlements or idle wetlands. Upgrading informal settlements could provide much-needed housing services to the city's residents, if it were coupled with affordable services and homes. People must also be encouraged to upgrade their neighbourhoods and discouraged from constructing on unsuitable and vulnerable land. In that regard, access to rehabilitation permits should be made easier.

Kigali is rapidly urbanising. It is attracting migrants from different rural areas which are poorer than urban centres, as the poverty rate in rural and urban areas respectively is set at 48.7 and 22.1 per cent (MINECOFIN, 2011). The majority of migrants are from poor backgrounds, migrating mainly for economic reasons such as job-seeking. For instance, from 2000 to 2005, 28.5 per cent of internal migrants over 15 years of age headed to Kigali city (MINECOFIN, 2007). In informal settlements where the majority of them live, people tend to build their own homes – somehow replicating housing patterns in rural areas. However, this is not compatible with the high rate of urbanisation in the city, and may pose further challenges to sustainable urban planning and modernisation. It should be understood that it is impossible for every urban dweller to own a home in the city. Likewise, the government should develop strategies to find proper accommodation for the growing number of rural–urban migrants, or should implement measures to curb urban migration, notably by accommodating people in their native villages. Since economic reasons are the main motives behind migrations to the city, large-scale poverty reduction programmes which contribute to job creation in rural areas and to the development of intermediate urban centres can be very effective strategies.

5 Conclusion

As has been stressed in this article, urban development should not only be about raising buildings and skyscrapers after bulldozing shanty towns to drive economic growth. This modernist view of urban development is highly problematic, as is

evident in the case of Kigali. Inclusive urban development is more desirable, and that should be pursued as a way to enhance social resilience and improve the living conditions of the urban population. It is a process which must entail equitable, sustainable and inclusive urban planning, and development aimed at alleviating poverty and inequality, and countering the formation of slums.

The Kigali experience shows that while it faces substantial urbanisation challenges, the modernisation of the city according to the requirements of global capitalism and competition generates additional structural and systemic urbanisation problems. The more urbanised and modernised Kigali becomes, the more the competitive land market and unaffordable housing present obstacles to those wanting to settle in the city safely, and in decent living conditions. This is a huge challenge because the urbanisation process is becoming difficult to control, not only in Kigali or in Rwanda, but worldwide. Apart from the natural population growth, people continue to migrate to the cities because they are no longer able to earn a sustainable living from agriculture. Therefore, equitable urban planning is required in order to coordinate infrastructure development, to assess the need for land, homes and other urban facilities, and to respond more effectively to the needs of the growing population.

Kigali's modernisation may be regarded as necessary to cope with the current globalisation dynamic and the world capitalism dominating the 'global south'. There is, however, a need to promote pro-poor approaches by making available affordable houses to buy or to rent, by regulating the land market, upgrading informal settlements and implementing urban planning in a conducive way. Urban policies and planning guidelines have to reflect the changing political, economic, social and environmental patterns around the city, and must help to deliver quality residential development and produce quality neighbourhoods for all urban citizens. That, it is argued, is what sustainable and inclusive planning is all about.

Biographical note

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Vincent Manirakiza

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Promoting inclusive approaches to address urbanisation challenges in Kigali

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Vincent Manirakiza

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