

Cities Alliance Innovation Programme

The Secure Tenure in African Cities initiative:
Micro Funds for Community Innovation

Cities Alliance

Cities Without Slums



- Grant Recipient: Pamoja Trust
- Partners: County Government of Mombasa, County Government of Nairobi, Mathare 4B, Mashimoni and Kwa Bulu communities.
- Grant amount: USD 50,000
- Duration: 12 months
- Year: 2019-2020

UPSCALING THE SOCIAL TENURE DOMAIN MODEL (STDM) TO PROMOTE INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE

Create voice and space with the urban poor

Project overview

What is the problem?

Residents of informal settlements in Kenya have unequal access to infrastructure, basic services, public resources, land and land tenure security. The constant threat of eviction and demolitions has increased the vulnerability of urban poor people, especially women and other disadvantaged groups.

Where is it?

Settlements of Mashimoni and Mathare 4B in Nairobi County, and Kwa Bulu in Mombasa County

Who does it affect?

People in informal communities, especially women, youth, and other disadvantaged groups

What are the causes?

Kenya's cities have grown rapidly but unsustainably, without the necessary infrastructure and services. Conventional land planning systems, administration and management tools do not address complexities of informal urban settlements, making it difficult to recognize and record land rights, secure tenure, or guide and foster inclusive urban governance.

Approach

Leaders of informal settlements, officials and community members need innovative tools to advocate for tenure security. Pamoja Trust used the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) to develop tools for helping informal communities move towards tenure regularization and gain better access to economic and social services. This STDM approach uses three levels of engagement:

- Macro – extends conversations on responsive land policies among community members and government
- Meso – leverages experiences of Mombasa County with STDM to upscale its implementation to Nairobi County
- Micro – uses STDM as a dynamic tool for community advocacy in support of tenure regularization, gender-mainstreaming and response to the youth.

The collaboration with Cities Alliance sought to secure lessons, experiences and partnerships and use them to gain new ground through implementation of STDM in Mombasa and Nairobi counties. The project provided an opportunity to upscale these positive gains and use them for policy discussion and advocacy for recognition of STDM.



Achievements

- Prepared Mombasa Housing Bill to implement STDM in development of the county housing information system and land inventory.
- Developed advocacy strategies with the Mathare 4B community in response to eviction threats, including organizing residents, such as the cooperative, and spatial (social and technical) mapping of the settlement boundary.
- Integrated STDM model and process in the Women’s Movement, creating space for women in leadership, planning, and participation — a key tenet of STDM.
- Established STDM-trained youth teams from Mathare 4B, Mashimoni and Kwa Bulu Settlement to build capacity, advocate for STDM in pursuit of tenure for their settlements, and support leadership, especially with their technology skills.
- Trained leaders from Mathare 4B, Mashimoni and Kwa Bulu Settlements on STDM and adaptive planning, leadership, governance and engagement on land tenure issues; and established Mashimoni leaders taskforce on tenure security.
- Held 3 roundtables and a 1-day conference bringing together officials from the national government, Nairobi and Mombasa County; settlement leaders; civil organizations; academics and communities to discuss models for securing land tenure for the urban poor, policy, implementing and upscaling STDM and more.
- Jointly with the Kenya Institute of Planners, presented adaptive planning based on STDM as an innovative solution to the challenges of urban space planning.
- Shared lessons learned on process, methodology and uptake of STDM and adaptive planning methods using traditional and digital platforms.

Testimonies

“Most of us youths in Mathare 4B Settlement are computer literate; through the STDM intervention by Pamoja Trust and Cities Alliance, we were able to use these skills to help our community in the pursuit of security of tenure.... In the instance where our space is threatened, the STDM process will help us engage stakeholders on an evidence-based basis.” — *Jackline, STDM Team Mathare 4B*

“We agreed to form a cooperative of Mathare 4B ... so that we can fight for our land. In community land act, we are trying to see how to come together as one in order to claim the land as a community.” — *Grace, member of the Cooperative*

Lessons learned

- There are options for engagement with county governments. Nairobi County Government, in particular, readily welcomed the STDM approach not only in securing land rights for residents but also property rights. It is important to have more than one option for government engagement, however, due to the dynamic nature of governmental organizations.
- Adaptive urban space is important: uncertainties shape the urban space such as the COVID-19 crisis that made physical engagements a challenge as well as the unexpected threat of eviction to the Mathare 4B community.
- Opportunity and space exists for upscaling and mainstreaming STDM as a planning and inclusion model adopted at the county and national levels.