



# SES Case Studies are getting ready

One of the main goals of the SES project is to develop local case studies on informality in housing, which are broadly missing for the Ethiopian context.

Such case studies form an essential basis for elaborating courses and related learning, teaching and training material in the remainder of the project. Furthermore, pooling such case studies from three different urban agglomerations provides Ethiopian project partner institutions with an enlarged basis from which to draw information for course development and implementation.

After prolonged data gathering and field work, these case studies are currently in the phase of finalization. In this issue of the project newsletter, we provide an overview of the five case studies, which have been elaborated by partner institution University of Mekelle.

## **Energy Management in Mekelle Condominium Housing, Ethiopia**

*By Sara Amare Gebremeskel*



In Ethiopia, Condominium housings were introduced by the Integrated Housing Development Program (IHDP) in 2005 as a housing solution for low- and middle-income households who are currently living in informal settlements. However, the

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household energy consumption with associated costs is becoming one of the challenging factors of affordability in such housing.

This study has assessed the energy management in condominium housing according to occupants' activities and behavior, which is the major determining factor of residential building energy consumption. Specifically, it has assessed the current households' fuel dependency, monthly average energy expenditure and perception on green energy. To do so, in addition to the review of secondary sources, the study has adopted an evidence-based case study approach and has conducted household surveys, focus group discussion with the occupants and in-depth interview with professionals. Accordingly, electricity has been found to be the primary source of energy for cooking, lighting and heating; and charcoal is the secondary source mainly used for making coffee. This contradicts the dependency share in Ethiopian energy context, that waste and biomass are the country's primary energy sources. That means, living in condominium does not allow the households to use other energy options even during scarcity. Also, the

average monthly expenditure in terms of their socio-economic status is 349 birr in 2018 currency, which takes up to 17.7% share of their income, and is costly when it is compared with energy expenses of the low income in Ethiopia, which is stated as 10%. Residents' acceptance and willingness to use green energy was found to have a direct relationship to their education level.

### **Urban Upgrading in Peri-urban Informal Settlement:** a case of Dingur neighborhood, Mekelle

*By Haile Gebre-egziabher*



Upgrading in place consists of retaining many or most of the existing structures of a slum (streets, houses, natural landscape etc.) but organizing resources or incentives for improvement of those structures; this upgrading of places also includes upgrading of infrastructure to improve health and quality of life in the neighborhood. In modernizing infrastructure, there may be

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buildings to be demolished to create necessary right-of way, for example, but this is minimized so that most residents can remain in place.

This is the lowest cost strategy for improved living conditions in slums and is most likely to enable poor families to afford to remain in situ. However, it has also limitations such as: the quality of housing improves only incrementally, in keeping with the resources of its occupants or retaining the structures of the neighborhood to be upgraded, and it is unlikely to increase the density of an area unless there is substantial vacant land.

This SES case study investigates an upgrading project, which is destined to be carried out at the outskirts of Mekelle city in a place or neighborhood called Dingur. Dingur is chosen because the community has frequently demanded to upgrade and sell their property as this was impossible without title deeds, but residents weren't able to do so without detailed urban plans such as local development plan (LDP). Besides, this approach was preferred due to low cost and limited displacement. This upgrading project study investigates socio-economic dynamics and characteristics, housing conditions, housing facilities,

existing land use, physical and social infrastructure problems and socio-economic and demographic needs of local communities.

This upgrading project is expected to integrate such opportunities in a way to empower community life, especially lives of the unemployed youth, widowed and divorced destitute mothers, and the elderly. Having identified the main problems and shortcomings, proposals and recommendations are forwarded, which could help support to improve the livelihood of the community and shortcomings based on opportunities available in the local context.



### **Overall assessment and mapping of informal settlement in Mekelle city**

*By Daniel Negese*

In the context of Ethiopia, like many sub-Saharan countries, informal settlement is

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the major contributor of housing provision. It can get as high as 40% of the housing provision in major Ethiopian cities. However, due to multiple technical and political reasons, there is lack of structured studies and up-to-date information regarding the existence and extent of informal settlement, and existant data is mostly doubtful.

Mekelle, the second largest city in Ethiopia and capital of Tigray region, regards itself 'informal settlement free' unlike most cities in Ethiopia. However, on the contrary, different socioeconomic studies show the extent of poverty and unemployment to be as high as 27% and 38% respectively. This sparked interesting questions in our research team: "Where and how do the urban poor live in the city?"

This case study has pursued investigations of ontology and extent of informal settlements in Mekelle city and its vicinity using visual interpretation of arial photograph through GIS application analysis, triangulated by interviews and discussions with stakeholder NGOs, local government offices, and community representatives about the topic.



### **Social inclusion and participatory planning in marginal Settlements of Mekelle City**

*By Biniam Tekle Biru*

The practice of participatory planning is in its early stages in Ethiopian cities. Despite the national policy recommendations, practices usually end up offering choices of a "take it or leave it" kind. This has been observed in recent publicly financed housing schemes. Urban planning projects have brought certain openness in its process incorporating public representatives in planning processes. The decentralization of the national planning institute into regions is one aspect of this development.

Yet, addressing issues of vulnerable groups through few representatives, which are selected on brief public forums and based on narrow national guidelines makes it short of inclusive planning. In Mekelle city, Members of Representative Forum/or

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public forum are elected at sub-city level by the volunteer attendees to boost this supposed participatory urban planning. Still, the representativeness of this elected members to most vulnerable groups are questionable. The members are usually the elite groups with better voices in the localities. Besides, the likelihood of the representative forum evolving as a form of localised clientelism (Lemanski, 2017) is high since many of them have previous relation working with the local administrative units. The 'local' scale which is the sub-city in this case, is by itself too big (population size ranging from 30,000-60,000 inhabitants) to be represented by 8 to 10 people to address issues of minority groups.

Informal settlers are possibly among the least empowered groups in communities, they are less likely to involve and get their voices heard in such aggregated calls for community forums. After all, in a system where many informal settlements are seen as illegal intruders, one would not expect such groups to actively get involved in local politics.

Thus, social inclusion in urban planning is one important area of discussion demanding research and education. There

is little concern and limited scholarly urban planning discourse about informal settlements and social inclusion in Ethiopia. If there were any, it would be among cross-cutting issues like gender, poverty, elderly, the youth, children etc. Thus, spatially concentrated vulnerabilities established in informal settlements still need thorough study and discussions in the arenas of research and policy environment in Ethiopia.

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