



**GROUP NAME: AFFORDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE
HOUSING IN EAST-AFRICA**



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OUR JOURNEY

Affordable and Sustainable Housing in East-Africa started out with the hope of pitching our idea -using shipping containers to increase access to affordable housing for lower middle income earners- to an organization to implement. In the past few months, we have been able to modify the project and learn more about sustainable housing as a whole. We have not only been able to learn more about ourselves but the community around us as well.

When we started the project, we saw that we not only had to research about the community but also about architecture and sustainable design. We chose to go big or go home! Many said our goal was too ambitious for students to achieve especially in the limited time we had. After speaking to Jakub of GSL, we were able to continue courageously as he told us that our project doesn't have to stop at GSL and the deadline shouldn't stop us from doing the project the way it was intended to be done. With more brainstorming we chose to modify our idea to benefit those in the slums as we realized that they are the target group for most NGOs and would need this shelter more than anyone else.

We then chose to exploit all the resources we had in school before going out in the real world. Our plan was to come up with a design of an estate model for a slum using shipping containers and pitch it to an organization. We therefore talked to the economics teachers, the maintenance manager, a social entrepreneur in school, the head of academy and the external affairs department in school for further guidance. In doing so, one of the main questions we encountered were how is our project unique, and why hasn't this been done yet? And throughout our journey we have been able to discover that we are unique because no one is attacking this issue with shipping containers in our home country of Uganda, where need is great. Next, through our primary research we learned the key components of "pitching" an idea to a business or organizational partner: business revenue model, budget, cost benefit ratio, competitive landscape, partners, earning potential.

We then moved on to contacting several organizations: UN Habitat, Habitat for Humanity, CRG Architects, KTG Architects, Mauru Containers, National Housing Cooperation, Wema Center, Act Together. Some had great advice, some did not respond. Coordinating with organizations challenged our group. Of the organizations we contacted, we only gathered information from two. Some organizations and businesses saw their work as confidential while others didn't respond. One lesson we learnt from this from a teacher we talked to is that in order for organizations to listen you have to continue to press on and you have to believe in your own idea or who else will?

OUR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities; "Extreme poverty is often concentrated in urban spaces, and national and city governments struggle to accommodate the rising population in these areas. Making cities safe and sustainable means ensuring access to safe and affordable housing, and upgrading slum settlements." (828 million people live in slums)



LESSONS LEARNT

Developing solutions isn't easy but it is worth it when you see the outcome. Our target area of East African "slums" or Informal Settlements are especially difficult places in which to operate as people are risk-averse when changing to a new or unknown idea, such as a new form of housing. Additionally, we found there may be higher priorities for the target audience such as access to food and other basic needs. When working with the National Housing Corporation (NHC) we learned that NHC had built homes for slum residents, but those houses were sold or rented out to other people for the residents to earn an income while they actually moved back into their original home. For this project to work out we need to ensure the houses are affordable but also support new forms of income earning. Another thing we learnt is that statistics are essential, so as we continue with our project we plan to verify a specific budget for the construction with the help of professionals and take it to a quantity surveyor to verify the costs and compare them to those of traditional homes as advised by NHC. Lastly, we learnt that you can make a difference no matter how big or small you are, in a journey we can learn from both critique and support.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE GAINED

- **Communication:** We learned to communicate with adults through professional writing formats and formal meetings via phone and in person.
- **Independence:** We learned to utilize support, but not be codependent. We learned to research and develop ideas independently.
- **Open mindedness:** It is good to learn from and improve what has already been done. Shipping container homes are being made everywhere, how can they be modified to suit slums in Uganda? A good example is the container skyscraper that is being constructed for the Dharavi slum inhabitants in Mumbai.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS:

-Our project addresses the global goal as it aims to improve the quality of housing in slums through the creation of affordable shipping container apartments. We not only aim on improving the quality of housing but also the sanitation and job opportunities in slums. Thus far we have raised awareness through presentations to parents, teachers, and students about the importance of sustainability, creativity, and equity when it comes to design. We look forward to continued hard work to shift this from an awareness project to proposing our idea for a model estate or home to an organizational partner.

-Community members involved and impacted: We reached out to 2 economics teachers, 2 architects, a social entrepreneur, maintenance manager and 3 organizations. (Mauru containers, NHC and port authority). We not only managed to gather information from these people but also taught them a thing or two from the research we had done. For example during our visit at NHC, one of the members mentioned that they had not known about green roof gardens and their benefits. Through our awareness, now NHC will consider implementing sustainable design elements such as roof top gardens (which are part of our container home model) in their upcoming projects and proposals.

-NUMBER OF HOURS SPENT WORKING ON PROJECT: 92

WAY FORWARD: We will continue working on the project for the next 6 months and plan to do thorough needs assessment on the slums in Uganda.

**THANK YOU SO
MUCH GSL
TEAM FOR
YOUR
SUPPORT! 😊 😊**