

C No. 28



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
HOUSING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

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LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING IN KENYA

Report on a survey carried out by the Ministry of Housing and Social Services (with the co-operation of the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Lands and Settlement, the National Housing Corporation, and the Housing Research and Development Unit) on housing owned, and administered by Local Authorities.

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date : March 1978

second

reprint: December 1979

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of the meaning of certain questions were given, and some questions were answered in the presence of the officers. It took a whole year before the Ministry had received a completed questionnaire from all the 17 Local Authorities.

discrepancies
and omissions

After this first phase of data collection the Housing Research and Development Unit was asked to check the questionnaires on completeness and internal consistency of the answers provided. The results of this exercise induced the Ministry and the National Housing Corporation to take up further contact with the Local Authorities in order to clarify discrepancies and deal with omissions.

When the Ministry was satisfied that all information obtained was as accurate as possible, a master copy of each Local Authority questionnaire was filled in by the Ministry. Each Local Authority was sent a copy of its own final completed questionnaire and was asked to confirm it as a true record. The permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and the Director of the Physical Planning Department each received a complete set of completed questionnaires.

HRDU asked to
process data

The Housing Research and Development Unit was approached by the Ministry in February 1977 with the request to tabulate and analyse the data and to comment on the findings. The present report is in response to this request.

1.3. M E T H O D S

1.3.1. Source of questions; choice of Local Authorities

The questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. The visits by officers of the Ministry of Housing and Social Services were mainly intended to assist Council officers in completing the questionnaire, but did not rule out discussions on other aspects of housing development and management.

Many questions included in the questionnaire are based on Acts, Regulations and Circulars. In other words, certain tasks and procedures related to housing are carried out by the Local Authorities within a framework provided by central government. One of the ideas behind this research project was to find out the extent to which Local Authorities in fact fullfil the requirements laid down by this framework.

legal
framework

The questionnaire refers to the following legal instruments:

- Housing Act CAP.117 (loans and repayments; maintenance);
- Public Health Act CAP.242 (nuisance);
- Rating Act CAP.267 (valuation role);
- Local Government Regulation, 1963 (L.N.256 of 1963) (procedures and vested powers);
- Building By-Laws (building approvals and occupation certificates);
- Circulars of the Ministry of Local Government (allocation procedure; housing account; building code; calculation of monthly payments);
- Circulars of the Ministry of Housing and Social Services (tenant-purchase standard agreement; tenant-purchase deposits).

The Circulars are attached in the appendix to this report.

1.3.2.

Arrangement of the report

The report is arranged in five chapters (2 to 6) which follow to a large extent the grouping of questions used in the questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is attached to the report.

The five main chapters deal with the following subjects:

2. Local Authority staff and task composition concerning housing;
3. Legal and administrative framework for housing;
4. Housing stock;
5. Planning information;
6. Finance.

A final chapter gives recommendations for the improvement of housing operations by Local Authorities.

order of
Local
Authorities

All tables present the Local Authorities in the same order. A first distinction is made according to administrative status (Municipality or Town Council), with a further distinction according to size.

The following order is the result:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Nairobi | 10. Meru |
| 2. Mombasa | 11. Embu |
| 3. Kisumu | 12. Kericho |
| 4. Nakuru | 13. Machakos |
| 5. Thika | 14. Kisii |
| 6. Eldoret | 15. Murang'a |
| 7. Kitale | 16. Bungoma |
| 8. Nyeri | 17. Karatina |
| 9. Kakamega | |

2. LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING
TASK COMPOSITION, WORK LOAD, AND STAFF

2.1. INTRODUCTION

development

Local Authorities play an important role in the provision of public housing since they handle a large proportion (85%) of the public funds set aside for urban low-cost housing. Although there is a considerable amount of control over local public housing development, the initiative for planning and developing new housing often comes from the Local Authorities. Especially the larger Local Authorities initiate discussions about future housing, both within their own Councils and with the central authorities. They also see to it that the whole procedure of planning, requesting approvals, and construction of housing schemes are finalized within the shortest possible period.

management

Local Authorities' tasks in housing cover both development of new housing and management of existing housing stock. Estate management is an important task for several reasons. First it is necessary to maintain existing buildings in good state because of the great demand for older (i.e. cheaper) houses, and the insufficiency of development funds to keep up with the ever-growing need for houses. Further, Local Authorities are responsible for collection of rent and other repayments on housing as well as for the repayment of loans to lending agencies. Although some central guidance for public housing management is given in the form of Directives and Circulars, the quality of estate management depends to a large extent on the capabilities of Local Authorities. Because of these considerations it is imperative to know the capacity of Local Authorities in terms of number and qualifications of staff in charge of housing, composition of housing tasks assigned to each of them, and the work load with which they have to cope in terms of numbers of units and schemes.

2.2. ARRANGEMENT OF THE TABLE

2.2.1 The flap

tasks

On the flap of the main table in this chapter all housing tasks are listed and grouped according to different fields:

- a. Estate management (existing Council housing)
- b. Estate development (future Council housing as planned)
- c. Building control (dealing mainly, but not exclusively, with private housing)