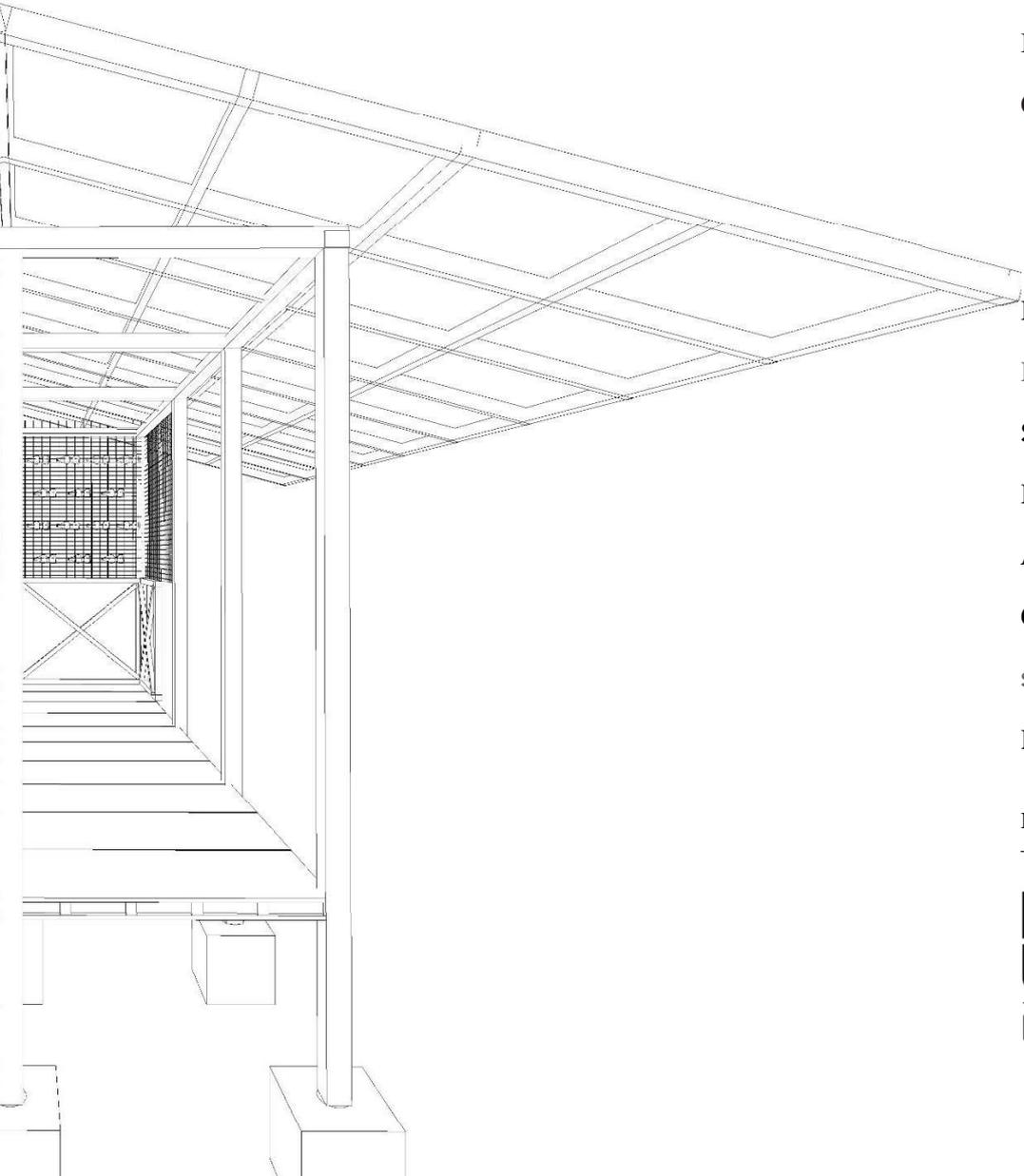


Dignity In Shelter

Dignity in shelter

Building safe, re-usable and scalable homes for marginalized women on waiting lands in Lagos





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Photo credits: Mujibah SALAAM, p. 6-7

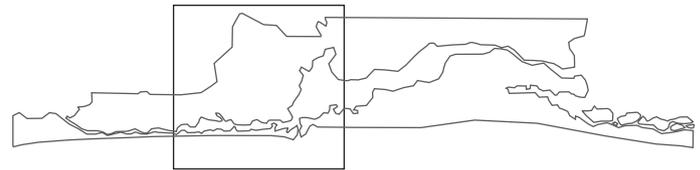
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Urban crisis.

Lagos: The urban crisis

Lagos, the ‘megacity of slums’, is in the grip of a deepening housing crisis. Estimates suggest there are over 380 slum settlements in the state ¹, with two out of three individuals of its population residing in urban slums.²

Despite its status as one of Africa’s fastest growing megacities—with millions arriving yearly and a high birthrate fueling rapid urban expansion—Lagos lacks a coherent policy for slum upgrading. Instead, neglect, eviction and demolition remain the predominant tools. Contestation over land is constant: many residents live without legal title, and the government can reclaim land and evict people at any time.³ This vague land-ownership system makes slums not just places of degraded infrastructure, but of permanent instability.



Lagos

Eradication and evictions

Areas such as Otodo-Gbame, Badia, and Maroko witnessed large-scale eviction and demolitions, often without adequate resettlement or compensation, displacing tens of thousands of residents. These cases exemplify the high human cost of ‘slum eradication’ policies. In reality, the problem is merely shifted. People just move to slums nearby for solace.

Contestation and resilience

In places like Makoko, Ilaje, and Iwaya, waterfront communities have resisted repeated threats of clearance, gaining global attention for their resilience and drawing in NGOs and legal advocates to contest evictions. This wheel of recycled poverty proves the inefficiency of ‘slum eradication’.

The crisis: Insufficient housing

Communities in Agege, Ebute-Metta, and Oworonshoki highlight how idle or government-acquired lands on the urban periphery attract slums because people desperately need homes. This unavoidably leads to mass-eviction when the settlement later collides with new infrastructure projects or redevelopment schemes.

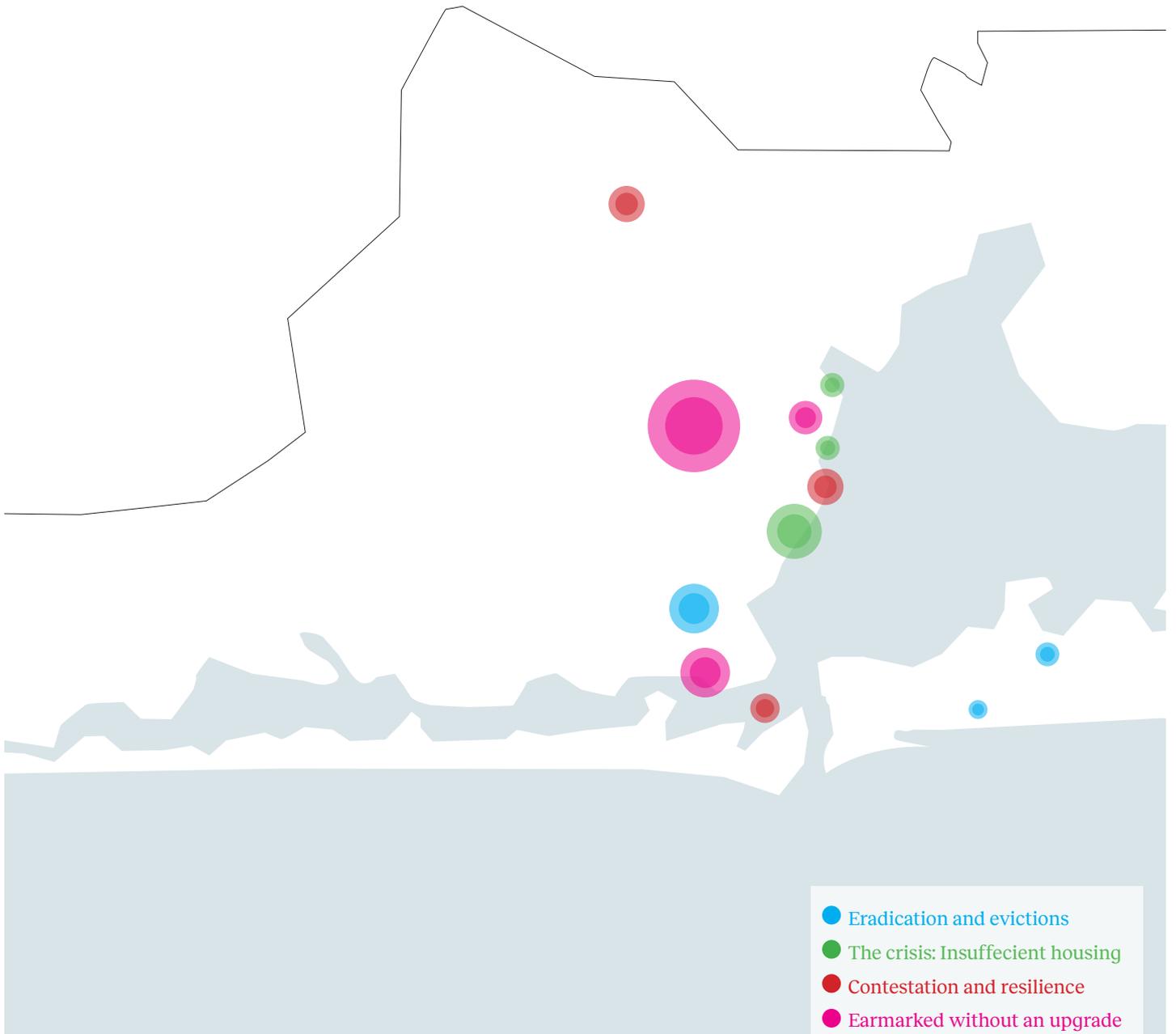
Earmarked without an upgrade

Settlements in Ajegunle, Amukoko, Mushin, Makoko and Bariga have been incorporated into pilot housing interventions and upgrading initiatives, e.g LMDGP’s cancelled upgrade. The result is an inconsistent, limited or non-existent follow-through.

1. Human rights watch. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/07/28/between-hunger-and-virus/impact-covid-19-pandemic-people-living-poverty-lagos>

2. Lall, S. V., Henderson, J. V., & Venables, A. J. (2017). Africa’s cities: Opening doors to the world. World Bank.

3. T. Agbola and E. M. Agunbiade, “Urbanization, Slum Development and Security of Tenure: The Challenges of Meeting Millennium Development Goal 7 in Metropolitan Lagos, Nigeria,” in *Urban Population-Environment Dynamics in the Developing World: Case Studies and Lessons Learned*, ed. Alex de Sherbinin et al. (Paris: CICRED, 2009), 192-211.



Some of the well known slums in central Lagos

Evicted women

Women, who are often the breadwinners, are most heavily affected by violence, eviction regardless of the household structure. Therefore, they are hit the hardest when their homes are abruptly destroyed.



mobile

9
mobile



THE HACK
by 9 mobile



blackUp









‘Waiting lands’

‘Waiting lands’

‘Waiting lands’ are parcels of land formally owned or controlled by the government but lying in a state of functional limbo characterized by;

- Under-utilized land, not actively developed, assigned, or serviced for their designated official purpose;
- Vacancy due to forced evictions.

In the absence of institutional use, management, or infrastructure, these lands often become subject to informal appropriation by home-seekers, migrants, and low-income households, who establish settlements that range from temporary shacks to more permanent slum communities.

In addition to this, the Omo-onile—which when translated means ‘children of the landowner’—are informal groups or individuals who claim ancestral rights to ownership of land and may engage in activities such as land grabbing or extorting money from settlers without consequence.

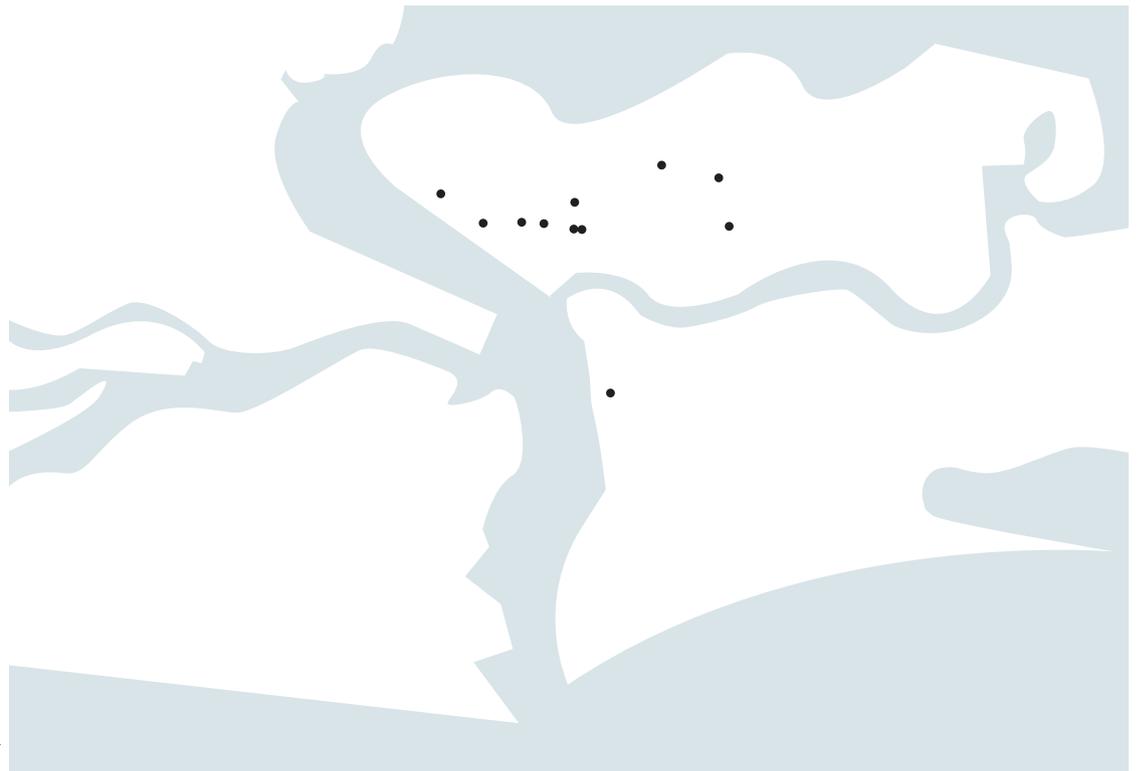
This brochure presents case studies that fit these criteria across Lagos and makes an advocacy case for gender-responsive policy reform and community-led planning, proposing low-cost, reusable temporary housing solutions as humane and practical alternatives to eradication.

Under-utilized land

Lagos hosts several under-utilized government-owned properties that could be repurposed for housing in order to relieve the victims of the housing crisis. Such as:

- Numerous federal government owned properties (building and land) in Lagos that remain underused or abandoned due to relocation of agencies to Abuja and lack of maintenance e.g NECOM House, Indepence House, etc;

- Several high-profile development projects in Lagos have been abandoned or remain incomplete;
- And fringe lands in Lagos owned by the governor as stipulated in the Land Use Act of 1978.



Some government-owned under-utilized land in central Lagos

Forced evictions

For example, in Oworonshoki, the July 2023 demolitions were justified as steps toward renewal. Yet two years later, the cleared sites remain idle, with no observed plans for redevelopment.

During this time, displaced residents could have lived safely in temporary housing. Instead, eviction has delivered neither progress nor protection, only prolonged vulnerability and loss.

2023

← Homes and small businesses therein were suddenly burned and demolished.



Demolitions in Oworonshoki, July 2023.

2024

The demolition was so thorough with slow recovery and no official development, a year after.

2025

More demolition as of September 2025



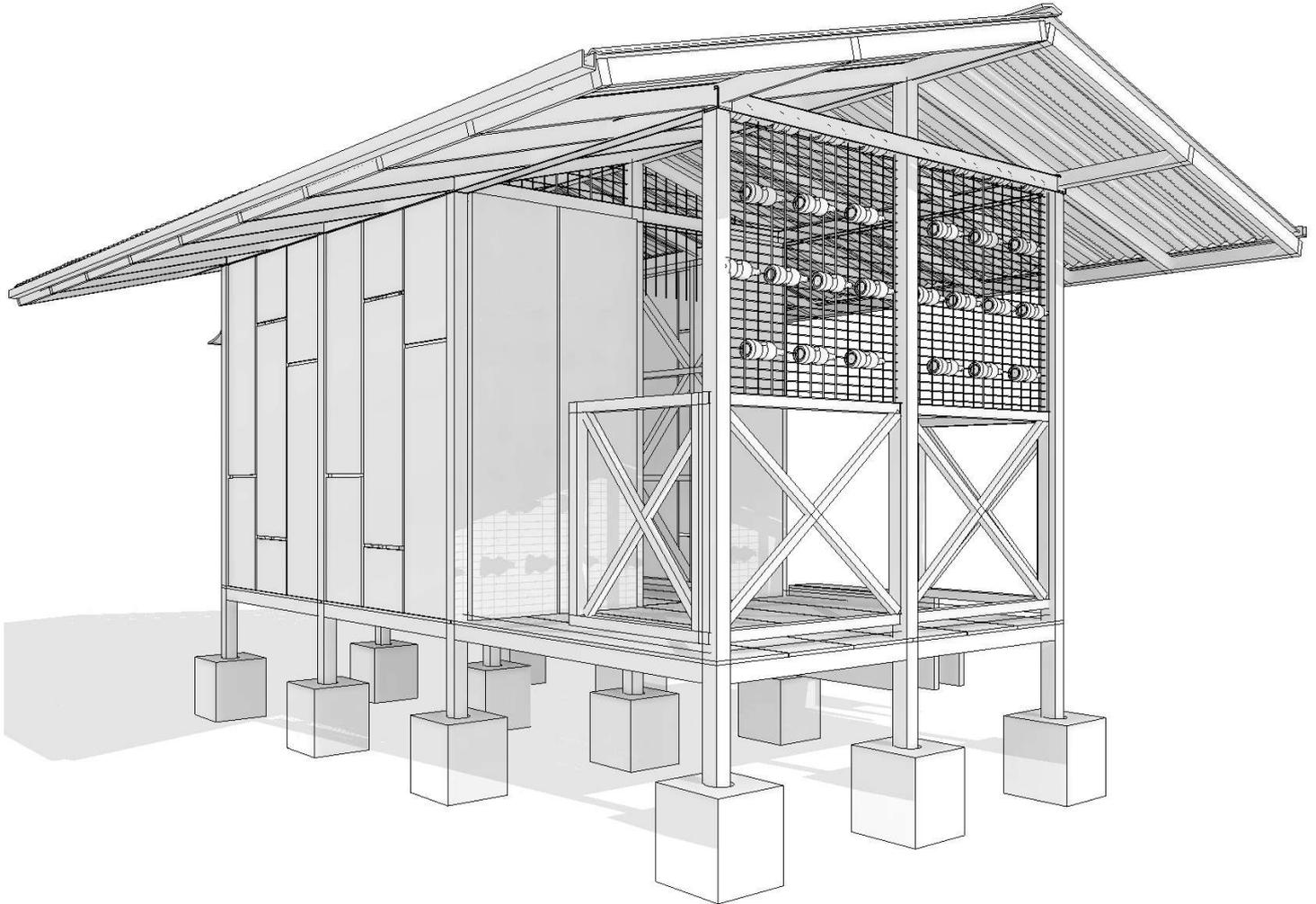
Aftermath: Demolitions in Oworonshoki, March 2024, September 2025.

The proposal.

Dignity in shelter

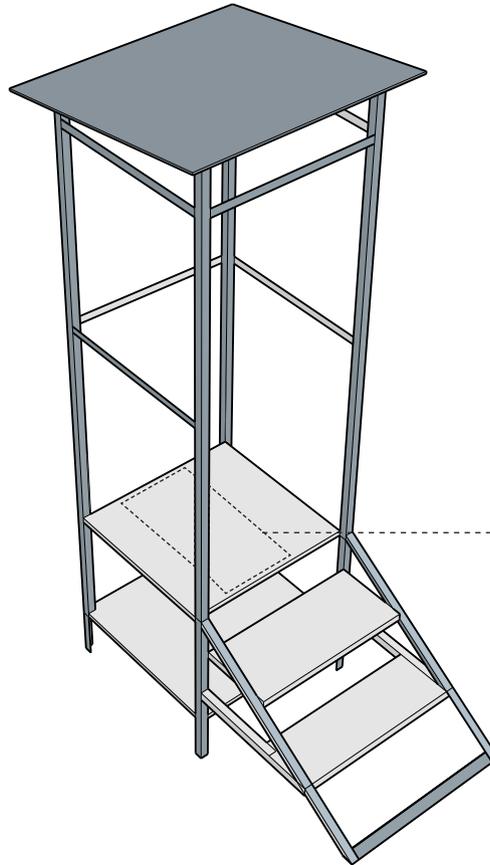
Housing unit

This prefabricated housing system delivers safe, lockable units that can be assembled quickly by local workers, are maintainable with low cost inputs, and are designed for coastal resilience (raised floors, salt-tolerant materials, communal drainage).

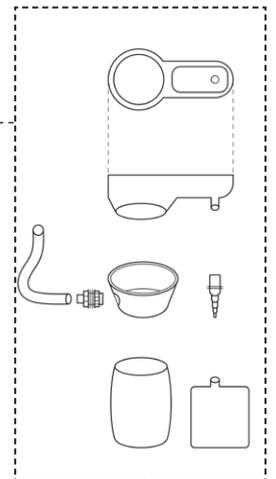


Mobile Dry Diversion Toilet (MDDT)

The Mobile Dry Diversion Toilet (MDDT) is a low-cost composting toilet for low-income families without household sanitation. Developed since 2017 with research and civil society partners, it uses a modular design with standardized barrels and cladding, focusing on an affordable “engine” costing under \$50. Easy to install, dismantle, and move, it offers a flexible, pro-poor sanitation solution that can endure displacement and forced eviction.



MDDT full cubicle structure



Dignity in shelter

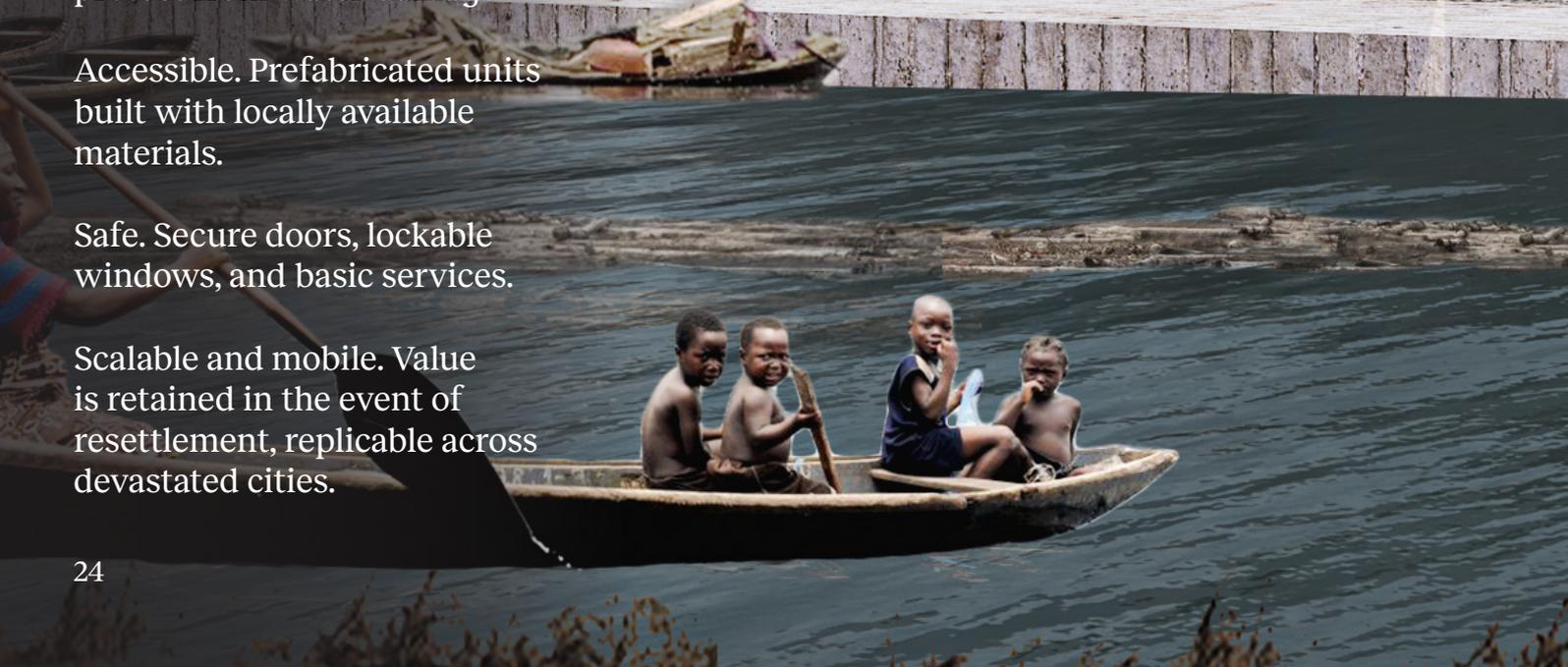


Flood-Proof. Elevated floors protect from water-damage.

Accessible. Prefabricated units built with locally available materials.

Safe. Secure doors, lockable windows, and basic services.

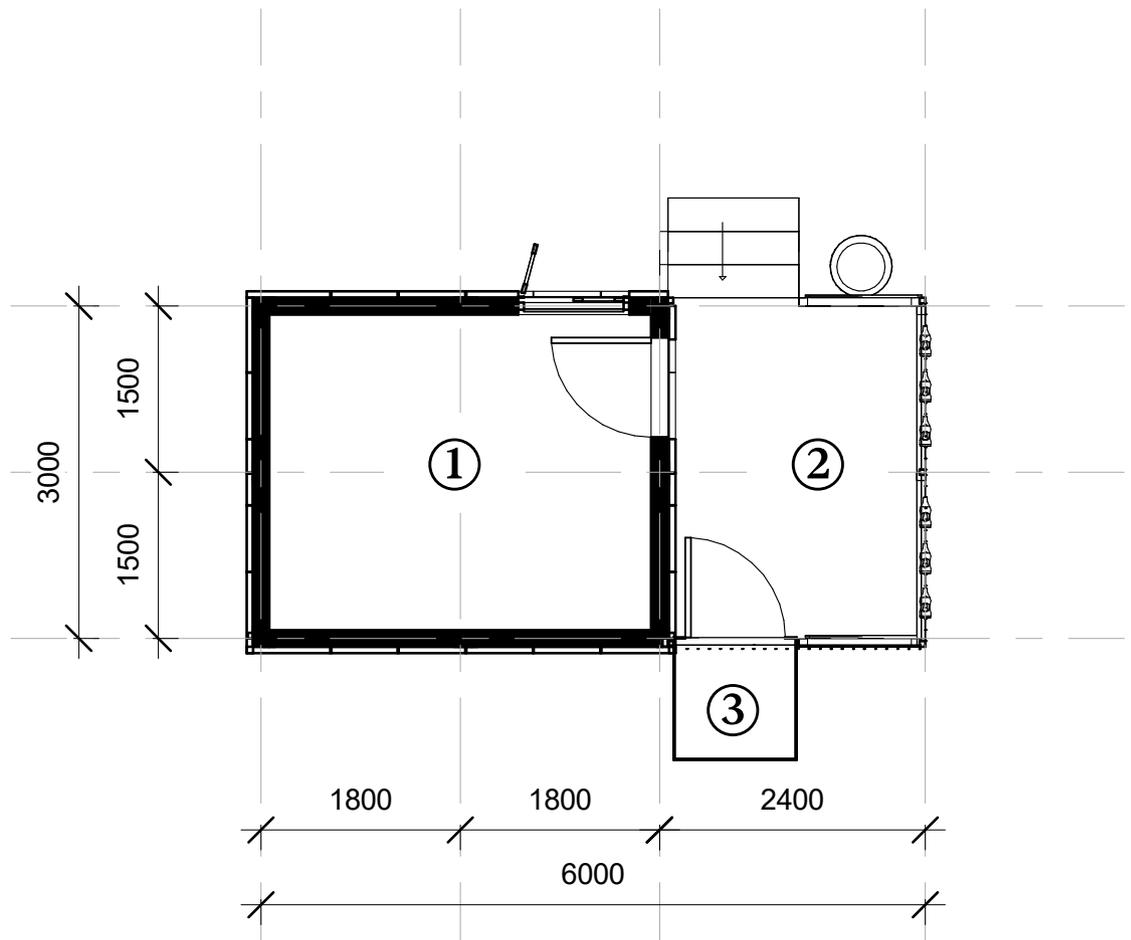
Scalable and mobile. Value is retained in the event of resettlement, replicable across devastated cities.



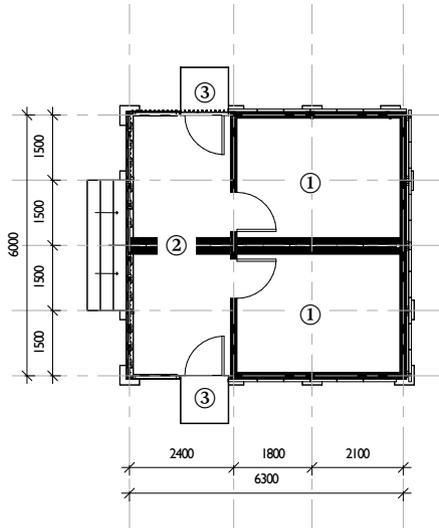


Housing scheme

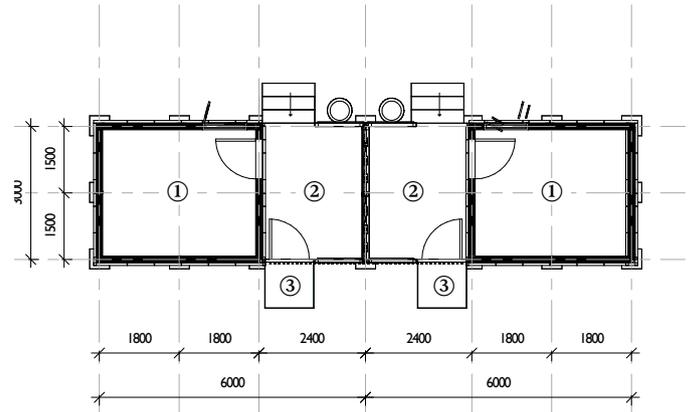
The housing scheme is very flexible, consisting of a standard living space along with a multipurpose shaded terrace and MDDT system attached.



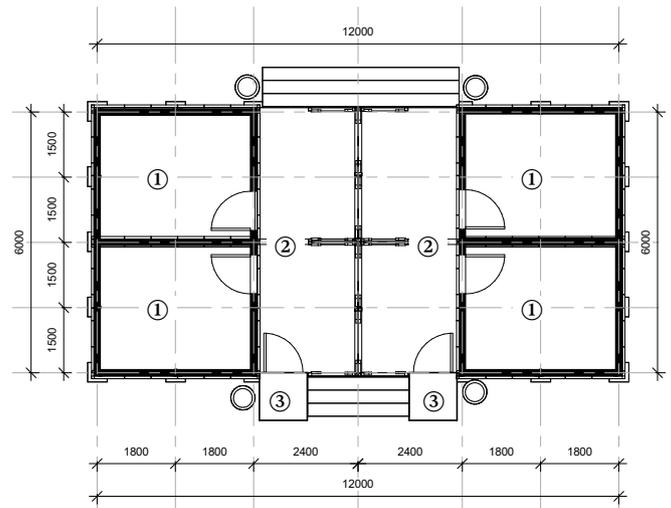
Modular arrangements



Stacked duplex arrangement



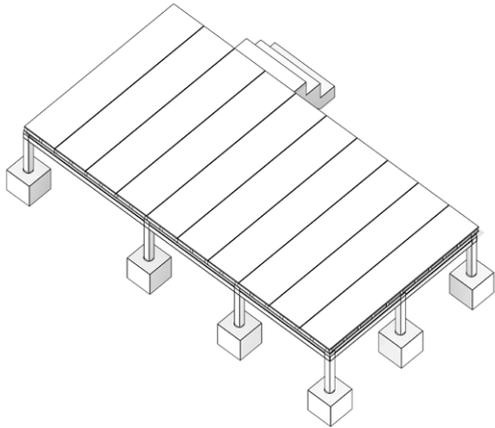
Linear duplex arrangement



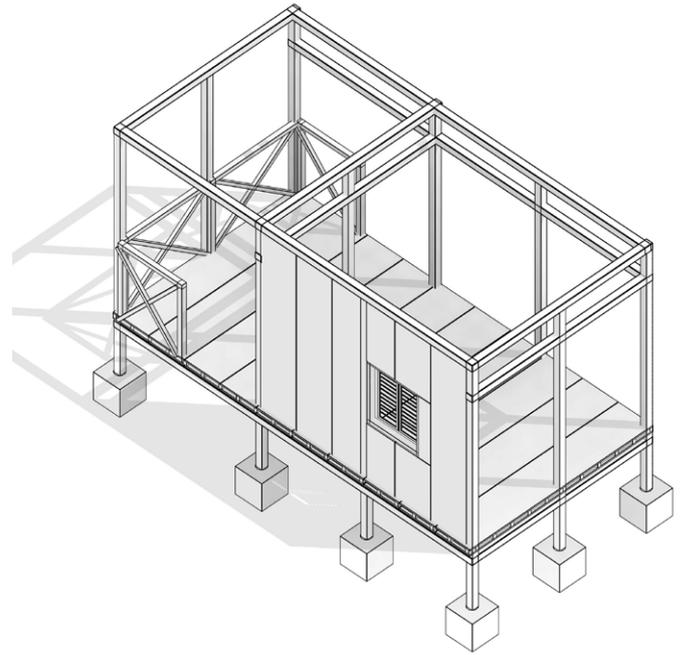
Cluster quad arrangement

- ① Living space
- ② Outdoor Kitchen/Terrace
- ③ MDDT

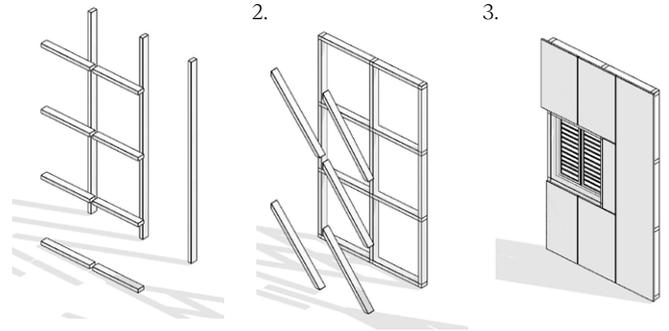
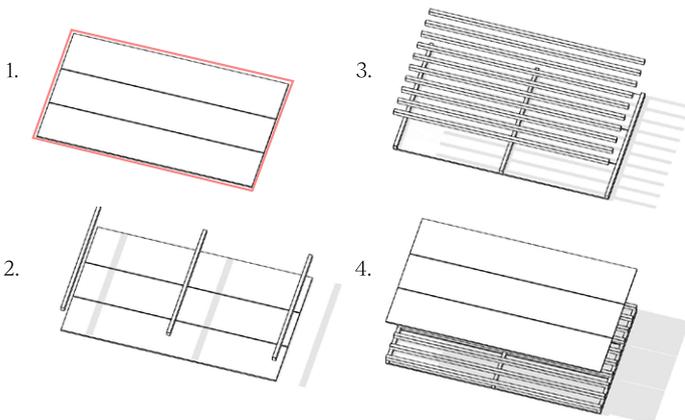
Scheme details

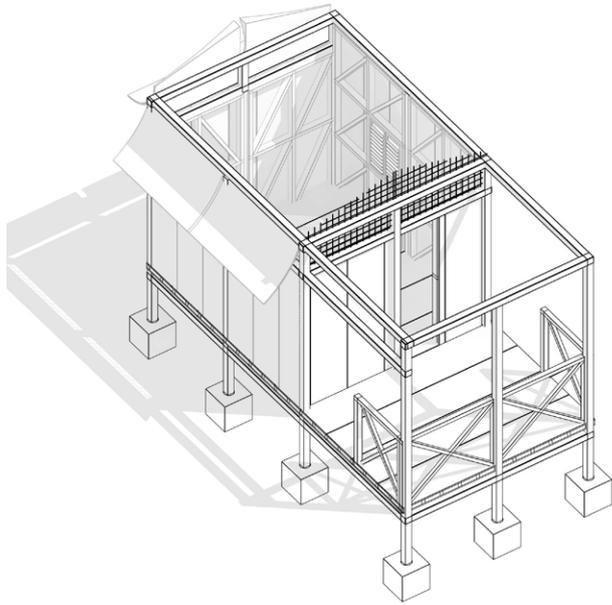


Floor and foundation

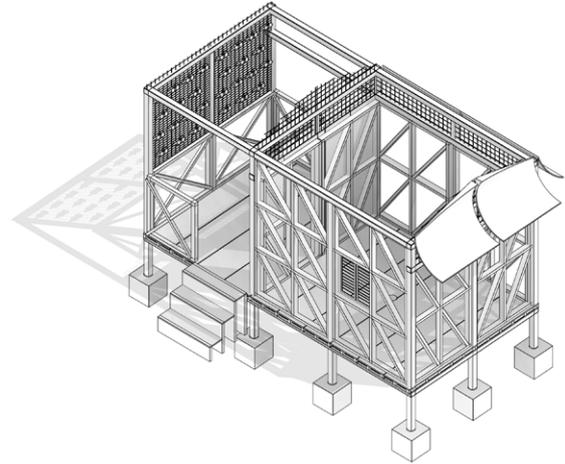


Wall structure

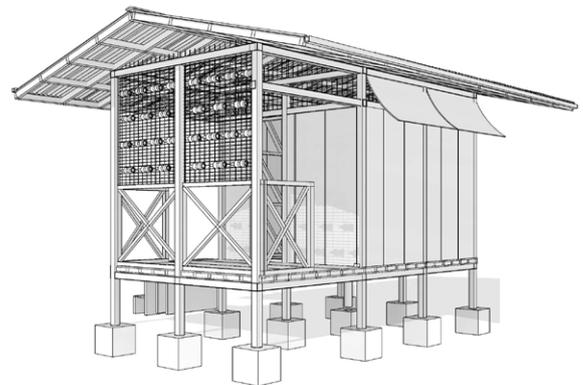
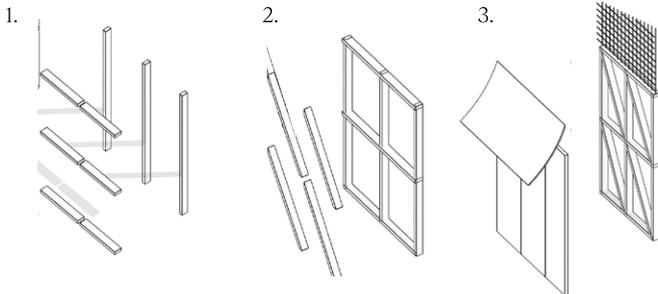




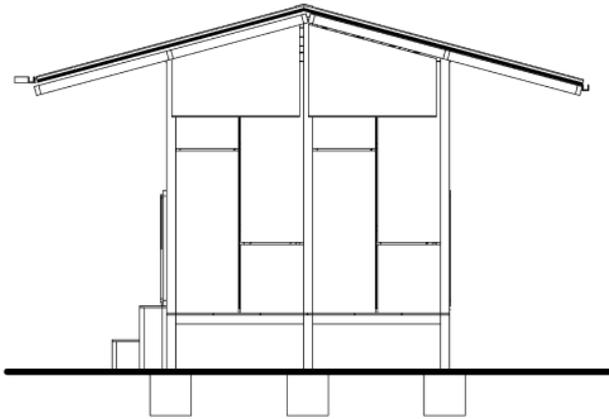
Wall structure



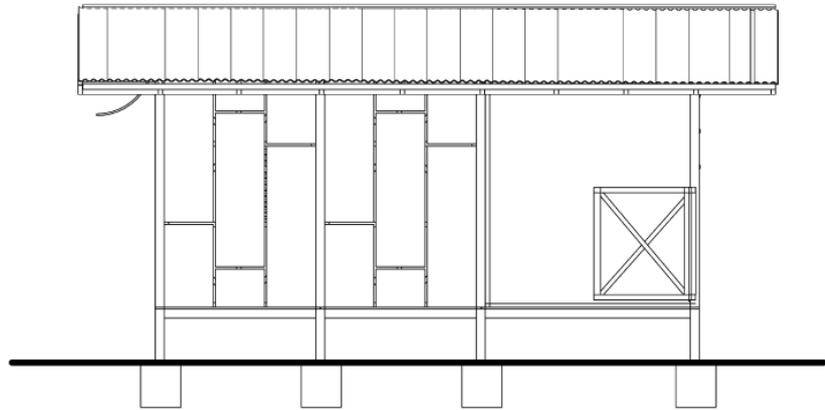
Full structure



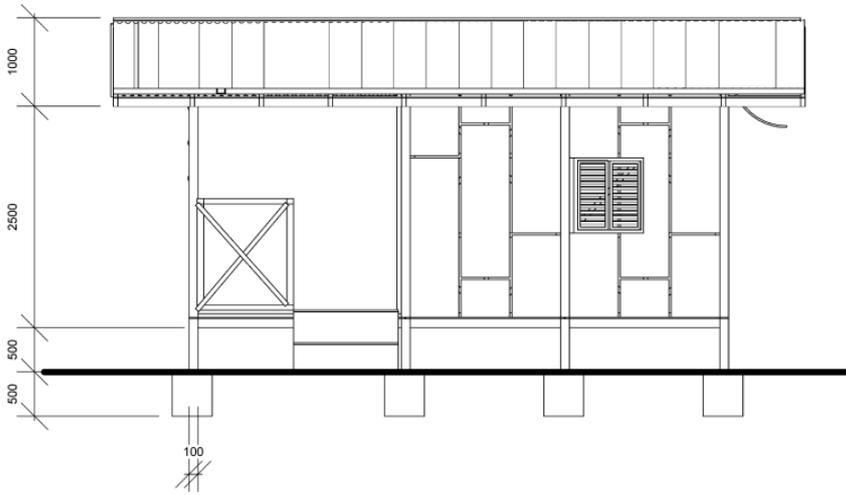
Scheme details



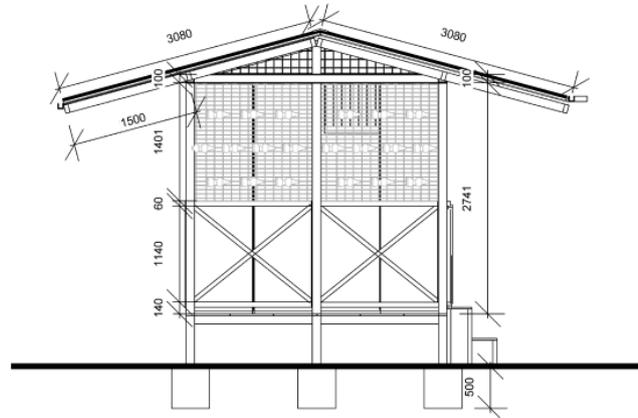
West elevation



South elevation

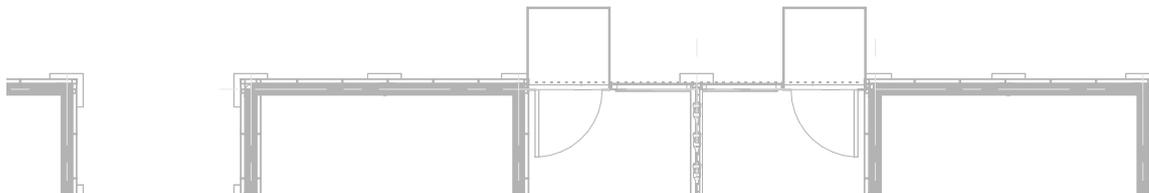
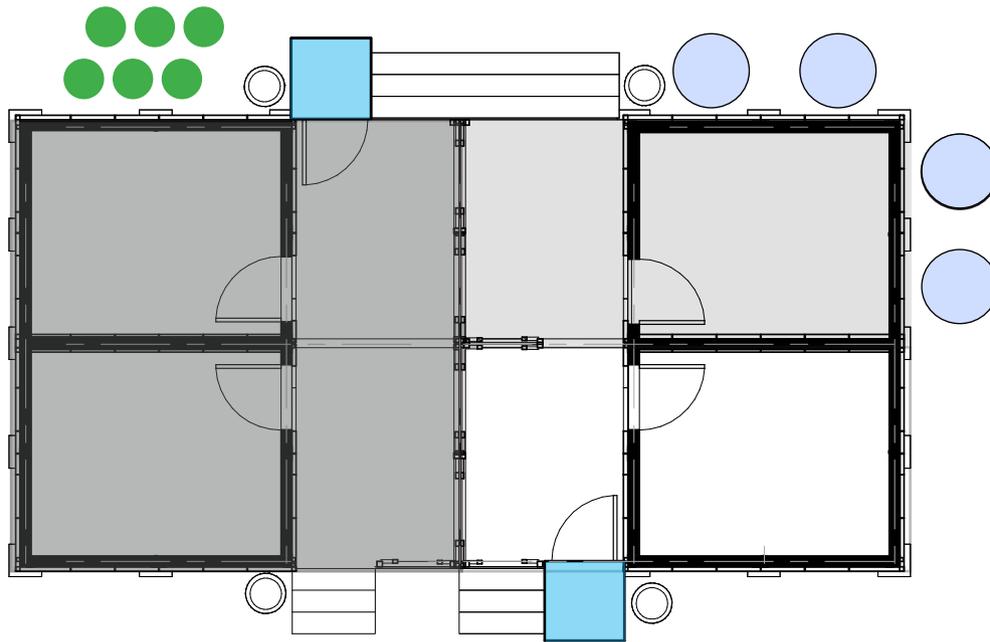
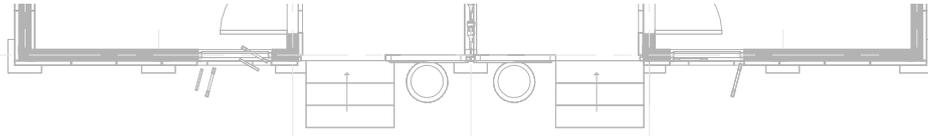


North elevation



East elevation

Business case



A homeowner uses her 4-unit home for multiple purposes. With one unit as a private residence, one unit for commercial, and two units for support center for women facing intimate partner violence (IPV)

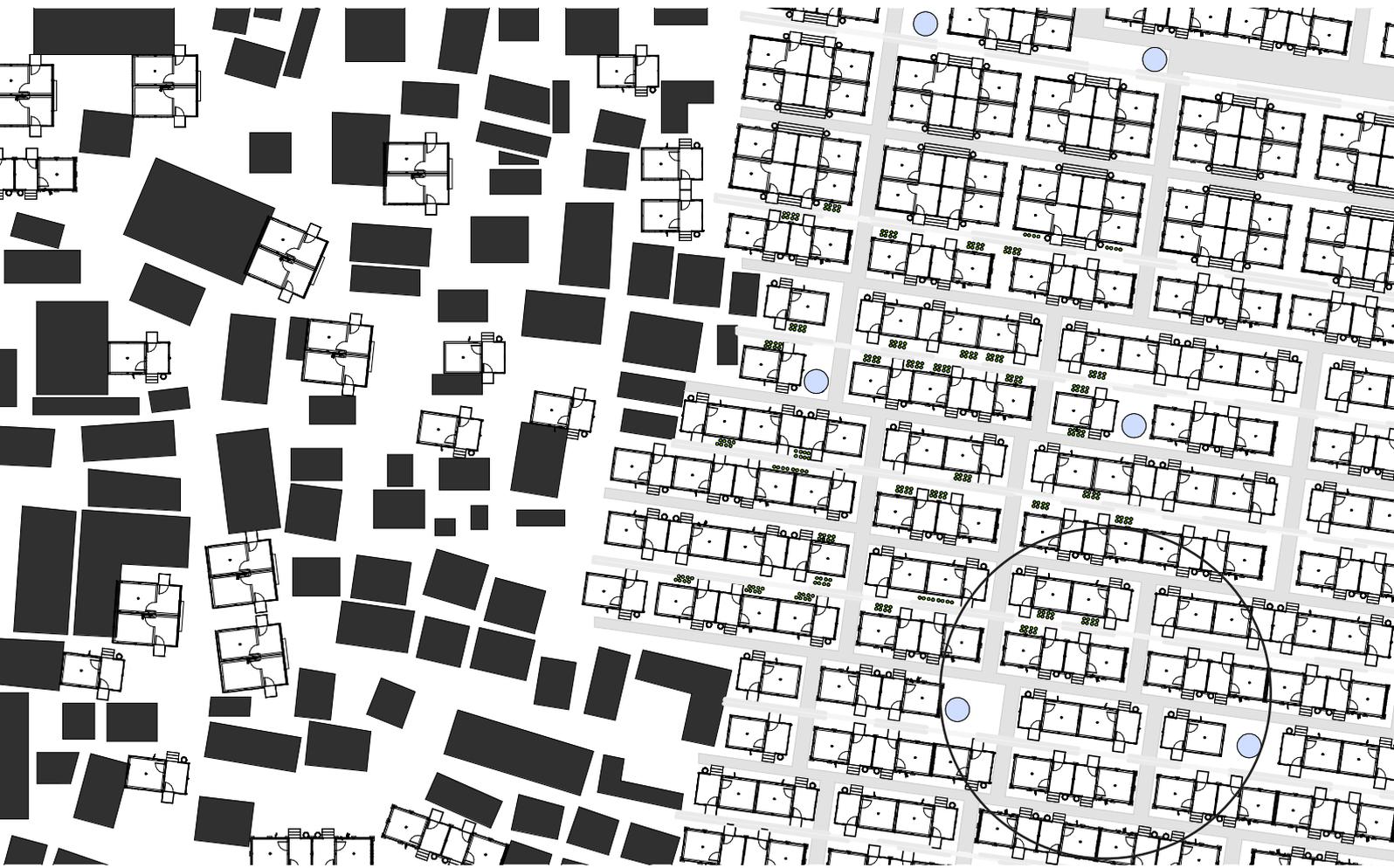
The modular housing units are designed for maximum versatility, allowing for flexible combinations to suit diverse needs. When multiple modules are combined, the resulting configuration can be adapted for mixed-use purposes, with certain modules dedicated to residential living and others allocated for commercial activities to create vibrant, multifunctional communities that respond to both housing and business demands.

- Private residence
- Retail of goods
- IPV support center
- MDDT
- Community water tank centres
- Pedestrian access roads
- Service lane and drainage
- Sack gardening with compost



Housing scheme. Mixed-use.

Urban scheme



Urban implementation prototype: Waterside settlement

The urban scheme is implemented in a rational grid for easy way finding, assembly, and disassembly. Flexible combinations suit diverse needs. Water tank stations allow for community resources to be shared and serviced by the recommended zoning use of the area (commercial).

- Residential use
- Commercial use
- MDDT
- Community water tank centres
- Pedestrian access roads
- Service lane and drainage
- Sack gardening with compost



Zoomed in urban scheme showing access and versatility of use with the modular housing scheme

Dignity
in shelter





We need you!

Lawmakers

Champion laws that recognize transitional housing, protect waiting lands from eviction, and empower women to live with dignity. Your voice in Assembly can turn policy into protection.

Quick facts

Legislative gap: No existing category for transitional or movable housing in current building codes.

Opportunity: Enact adaptive housing laws to protect informal settlers and guide redevelopment.

Economic impact: Low-cost, high-impact solution for post-disaster and urban renewal programs.

Make space for DIS in the law!

Policymakers

Support DIS by shaping inclusive housing policies for waiting lands in Lagos. Your decisions can help turn underused or contested areas into safe, resilient spaces where vulnerable women and families can rebuild their lives.

Quick facts

Tenancy type: Subsidised coproduction of housing between civil society & state.

Policy need: Establish a framework for temporary-to-permanent housing allocation on waiting lands.

Benefit: Reduces displacement pressure and prevent recycled of poverty. Supports climate resilience and safer housing in flood-prone zones in Lagos.

Regulate waiting lands, not eradicate!

Investors

DIS provides safe, resilient homes for women in vulnerable Lagos communities, empowering them, strengthening neighborhoods, and ensuring fair, transparent management.

Quick facts

Type: 1-room self-contained housing unit

Special Feature: Mobile Dry Toilet (MDDT)

Target Renters: Low-income residents in slum areas.

Cost per Project unit: \$2000 (NGN 3,000,000)

Duration until Profitable ROI: 50 years
'This is a charity case, not a profit case'

Duration of construction/ Unit: 3 days

Fund a 10-unit pilot today!

Influencers

Use your voice to raise awareness about the urgent need for safe housing in Lagos' waiting lands. you can inspire public support, attract partnerships, and help shift perceptions toward inclusive, civil society driven community-driven development.

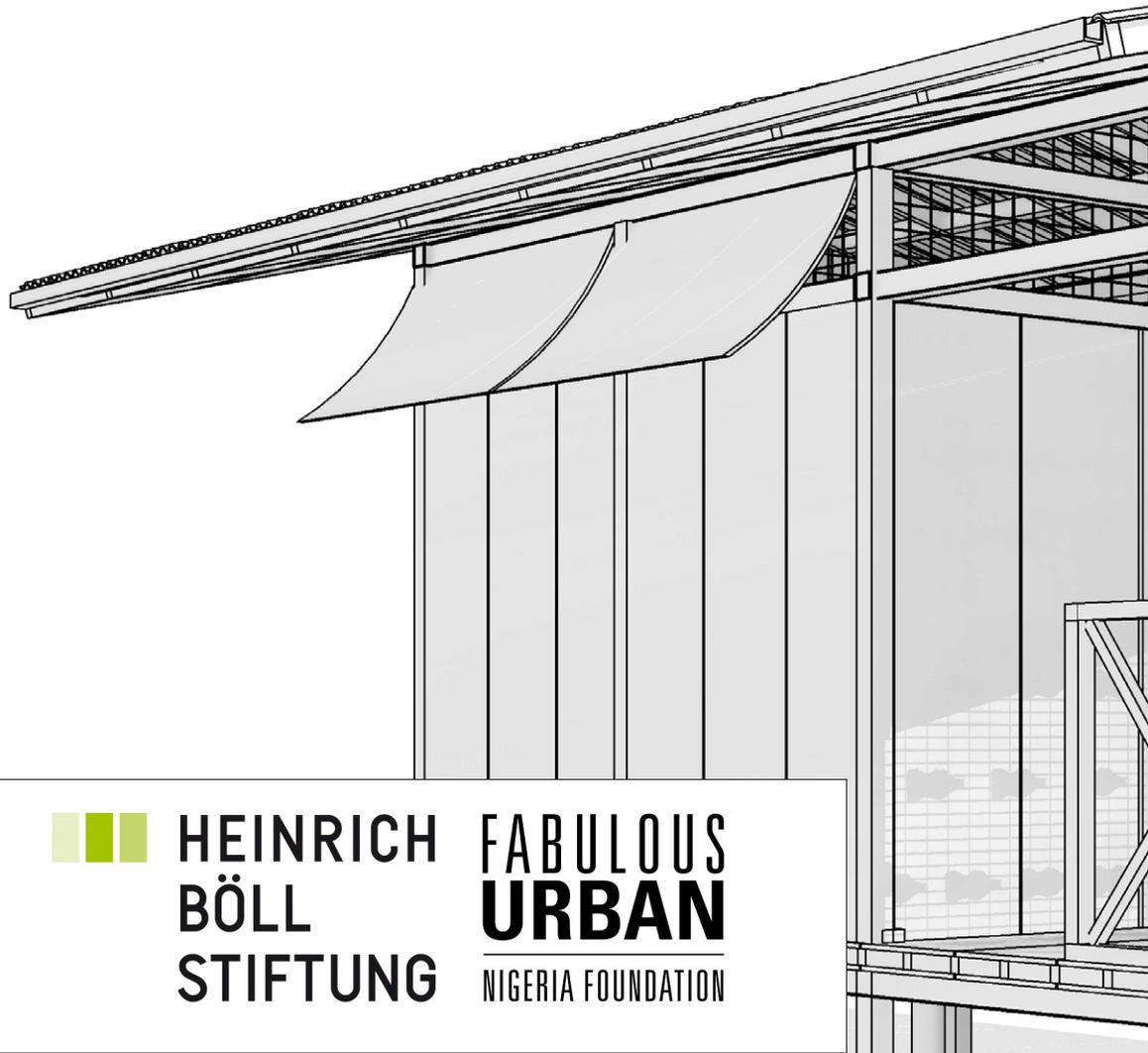
Quick facts

Role: Raise public awareness on the value of waiting lands as part of the urban ecosystem.

Reach: Encourage local and global audiences to support the project through storytelling.

Impact: Visibility drives partnerships, funding, and public empathy.

Use your voice, make waiting lands seen!



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