

The Story of Kofi Tadesse

**A Graphic Anatomy of how the Living Conditions of a
Rural- to Urban Migrant have Changed**

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Msc 3 / 4 Graduation Studio Addis Ababa
Living Lab: New Standard for Contemporary
Ideals AR3AD105 |
Academic Year 2020 / 21

TU Delft
Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
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A Graphic Anatomy of how the Living Conditions of a Rural Migrant have Changed

Appendix B; The Story of Kofi Tadesse

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Delft, 7 July 2021

This graphic anatomy tells the story of Kofi Tadesse, a rural to urban migrant. In the graphic anatomy I have described the different living conditions Kofi has lived in and how my design for the revitalized riverbank settlement influences his current life.

This story about Kofi Tadesse is fully fictional. The story of the characters and events is based on research, documentaries and stories on the internet. All characters and events appearing in this story are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, or events is purely coincidental.

This is the story of *Kofi Tadesse*. A story about how his living conditions have changed over the years.

Kofi moved from his rural home in the *Hadiyya Region* to *Addis Ababa* 23 years ago. In the city he found dwelling in an informal settlement along the riverbank of the *Bulbula river*. Now, due to the new housing program his informal settlement have been redeveloped to a new neighbourhood.

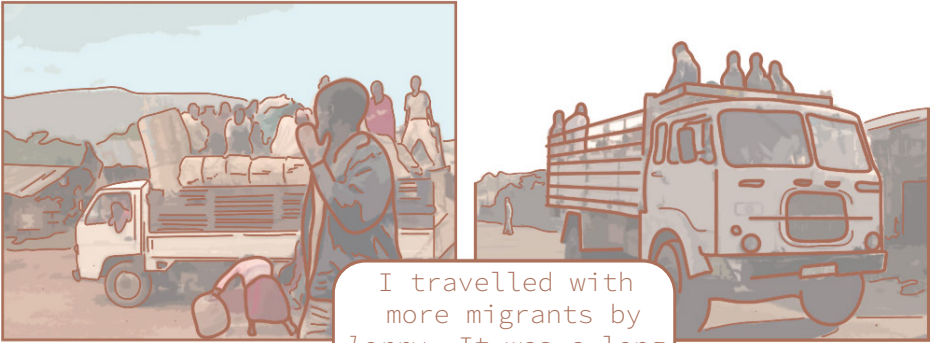


Hi, my name is **Kofi**
I am **42** years old.

15 YEARS AGO

In *Hadiyya* I lived in a traditional *Tukul* with my parents, my 3 brothers, 2 sisters and my grandmother.

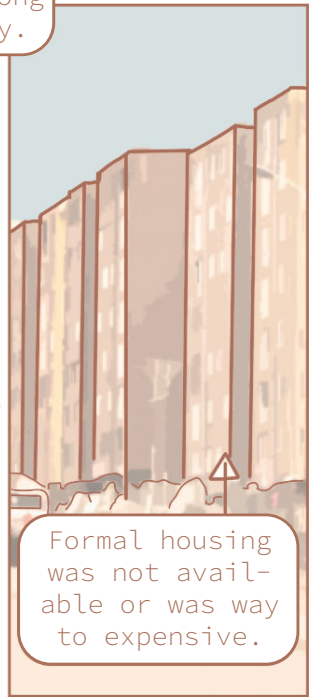
When I was 19 years old, I migrated to *Addis Ababa*, in search for better job opportunities.



I travelled with more migrants by lorry. It was a long and warm journey.



But after a few exhausting days of travelling I finally arrived in *Addis Ababa*.



Formal housing was not available or was way to expensive.



Luckily, I could find a left-over plot of land along the riverbank where I could built my shelter where others also already started to settle.

I built my shelter from materials I could find locally; mud, bamboo poles, eucalyptus, and so on.



Eshe

~ 13-08-2000

One of my neighbours in the compound was an older more wealthy woman, named *Eshe*. I helped her with a lot, in change for a little money.

Already soon, *Eshe* and I became friends, we drank a lot of coffee and she often made *injera* for me.



The courtyard was used by both of us. We made a small kitchen where she could cook and I used the space to make products that I sold on street.





During the day, I was away from home a lot. Often, trying to sell my products.



From this little money, I could buy food and, piece by piece, upgrade my home.



And with me... the sefer around me grew as well.

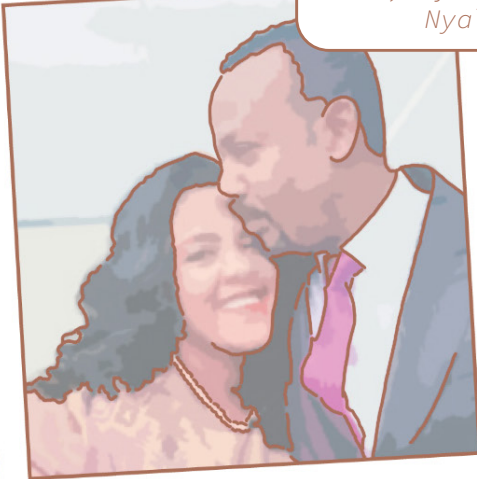
10 YEARS AGO

After 5 years, the neighbourhood community had grown. I decided to join the local *iddir*.

Every month I paid a little fee to the *iddir* in exchange for social insurance in case of bereavement. Luckily, till now, I didn't need it.



During one of the *iddir* meetings, I met, my now wife, *Nyala*.



Nyala & Me; at our one year anniversary

~ 21-03-2010 ~

Canon ©



Nyala worked as a house maid for a middle-income family close by.



Already soon, we started to live together. *Nyala* came to live in my house. The house was a bit too small, but we found our own solutions.


To create more space in the house, I expended the kitchen in the courtyard. Here, *Eshe* learned *Nyala* how to make the best *injera* that I could also sell on the streets.




After two years, our family further expended, *Nyala* was pregnant from our son *Yonas*. During the pregnancy, *Eshe* took perfect care of *Nyala*.




5 YEARS AGO




All the growth, however, also had its downsides. The river had disappeared behind the informal settlements.



People used the river as a waste dump and the cities sewage was connected to the river causing, an enormous smell.



The soil of the riverbank had deteriorated and more often, people's shelters were demolished by landslide.



And all of this also worked as a catalyst for floods that occurred more often each year.

2 YEARS AGO

The government notified us about the plans to redevelop our sefer. To everybody this came as a huge shock. We were afraid for forced evictions. *Eshe* was afraid she would lose her whole social network and would be placed somewhere at the periphery in a condominium flat where she wouldn't know anyone. *Nyala* and I were also afraid to be relocated to the periphery, since both our economical opportunities relied on our place in the city's centre.

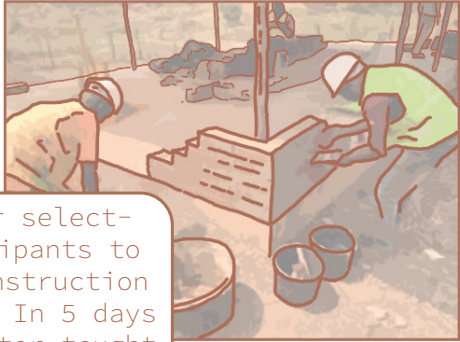
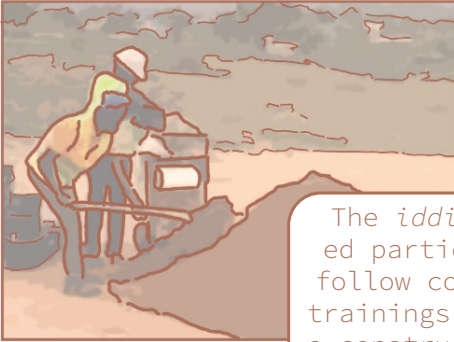
Luckily, the government tried a new approach, one in which the community participated.



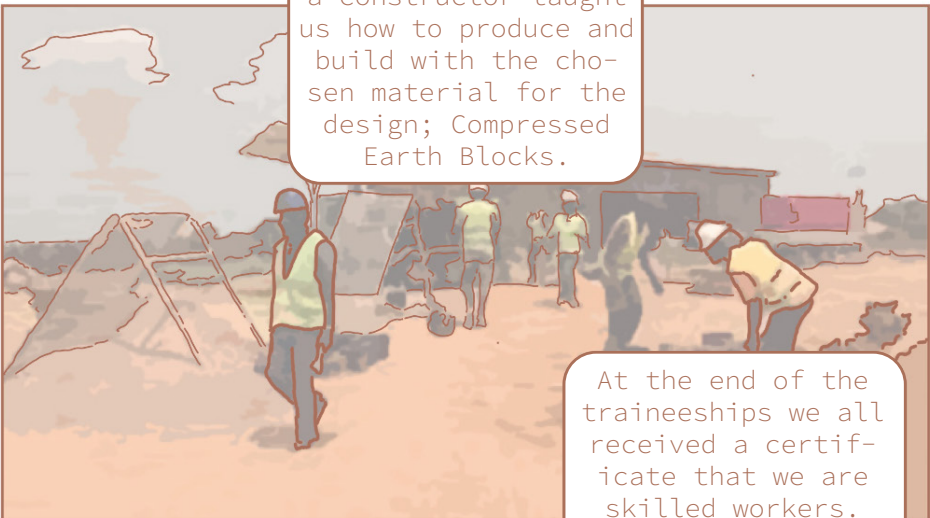
The community *iddir* was involved in the decision making and planning during the whole process...

... and the voice of the community was brought out by the *iddir*. Thus, our traditional way of life was integrated in the design of our new home.





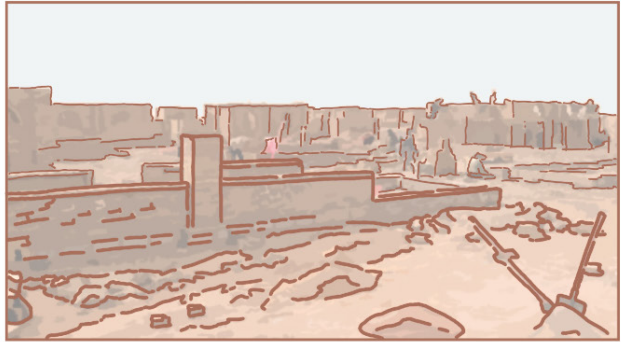
The iddir selected participants to follow construction trainings. In 5 days a constructor taught us how to produce and build with the chosen material for the design; Compressed Earth Blocks.



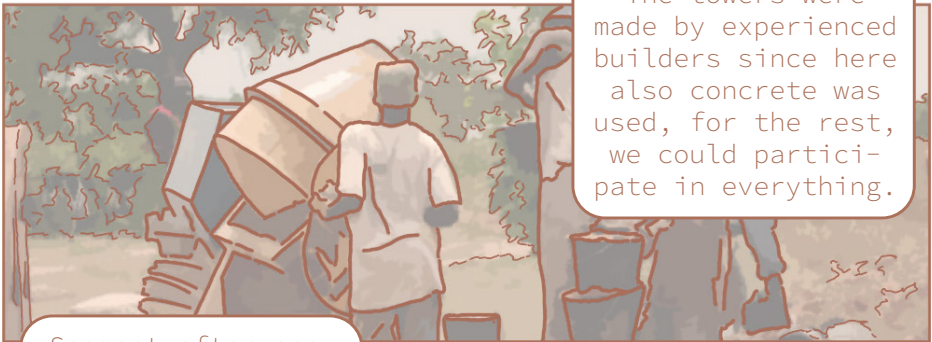
At the end of the traineeships we all received a certificate that we are skilled workers. This gives us job opportunities in construction.



Since the building technique relied on stacking and no additional materials or difficult techniques were needed, we were possible to deliver each week one building block structure. Already soon the new neighbourhood started to take its shape.



The towers were made by experienced builders since here also concrete was used, for the rest, we could participate in everything.

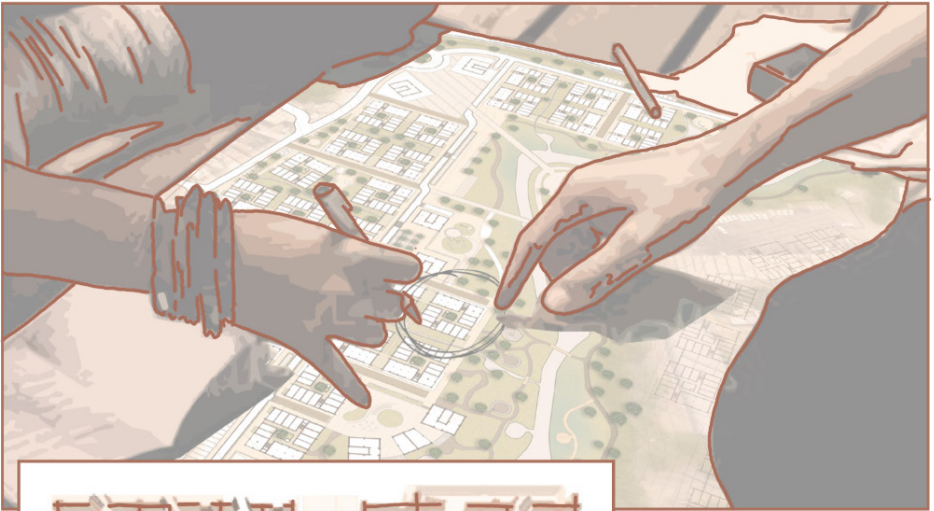


Segment after segment, the old sewer was redeveloped into our new neighbourhood.

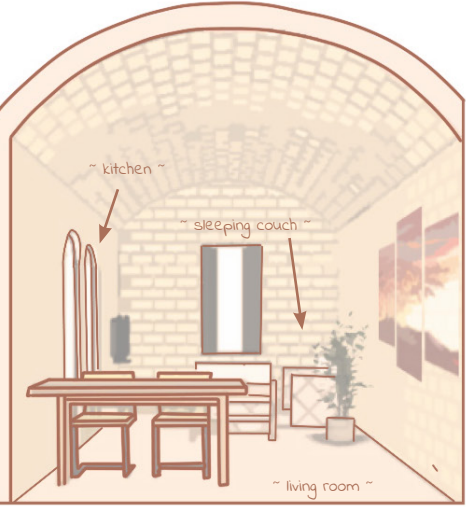


PRESENT

Now, we have lived for almost two years in our new neighbourhood. Our building block is located on the '4th Street' close to the river. Here, we live in an one-bedroom apartment which is way bigger than our previous home. We now have 35 m² of our own! When we moved to the building block, most of our neighbours in the sefer have moved with us in the same block. *Eshe* was one of them. She lives in one of the apartments on the ground floor since she is an elderly.



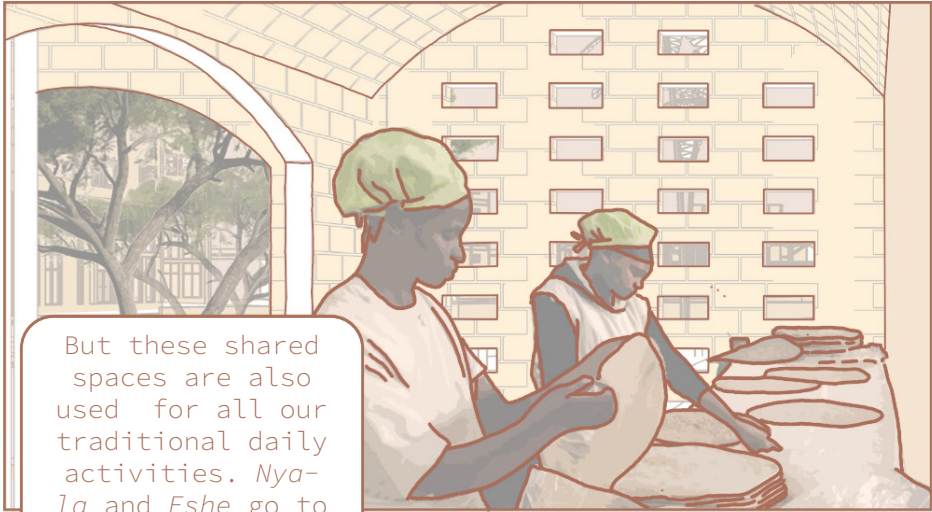
We share our building block with 12 other families. Our apartment is on the first floor. The apartment is located along the staircase that leads to the gallery, that leads to our front door.



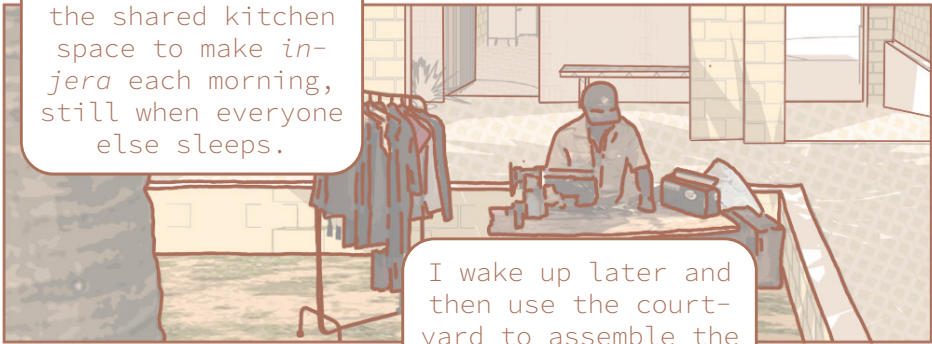
The apartment is big enough for the three of us. *Nyala* and I sleep in the master bedroom, *Yonas* sleeps in the living room on the couch which we always unfold in the evening, and at the gallery, we have even a small private outdoor space with a bench and flowers!



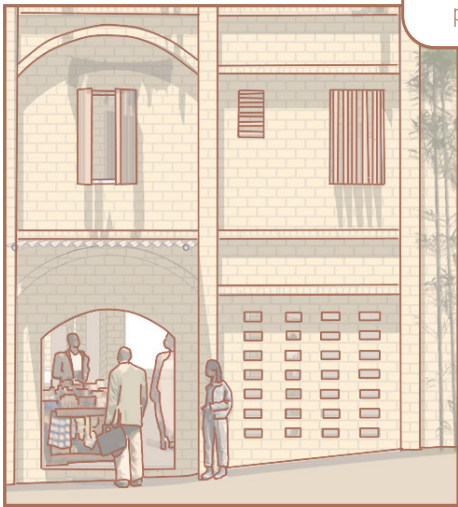
On the ground floor of our building block we have a communal courtyard and a shared communal space. Everyone makes use of it. Often we gather here to talk or play cards in the shade of the big palm tree.



But these shared spaces are also used for all our traditional daily activities. *Nyalla* and *Eshe* go to the shared kitchen space to make *injera* each morning, still when everyone else sleeps.



I wake up later and then use the courtyard to assemble the products I sell.



Nowadays, I don't sell on the streets anymore. The communal space in the building block is connected to the public street and thus I started selling my products from out this space. Many people who visit the riverbank come by. Sometimes, I go the public squares around the towers to sell from there.

Together with some of the neighbours we also started to sell potatoes, coffee and other vegetables. We use the green lane in between all the building blocks to grow these crops.



The green lanes are further used for every daily activity imaginable. Some people do their laundry here, others just sit and socialize, while some others even use the green lane to keep some goats. The green lanes really became a dynamic space that strengthens our neighbourly relations.



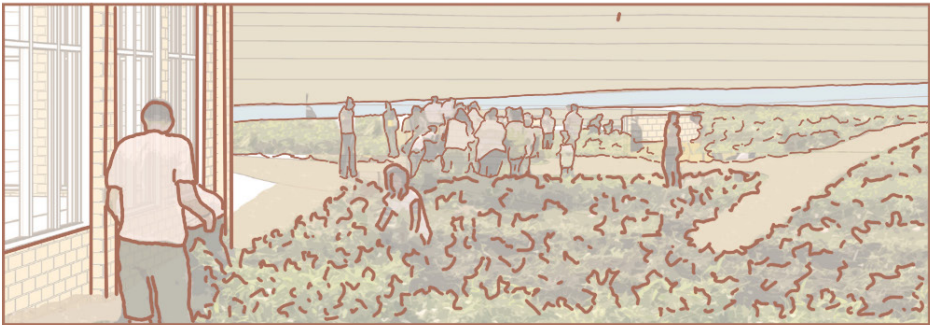
Yonas is now almost 10 years old. He made a lot of friends in the neighbourhood.

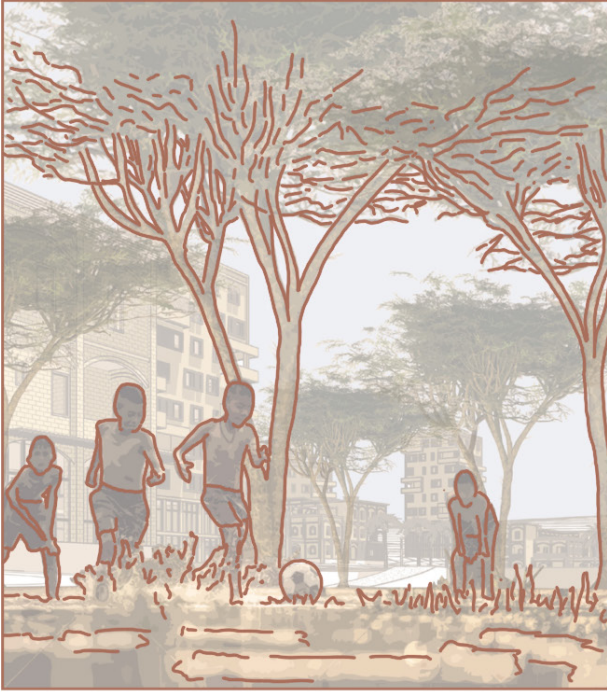


After the redevelopment of the neighbourhood we were able to send him to a school close by. The school is located in one of the towers along the river-bank.



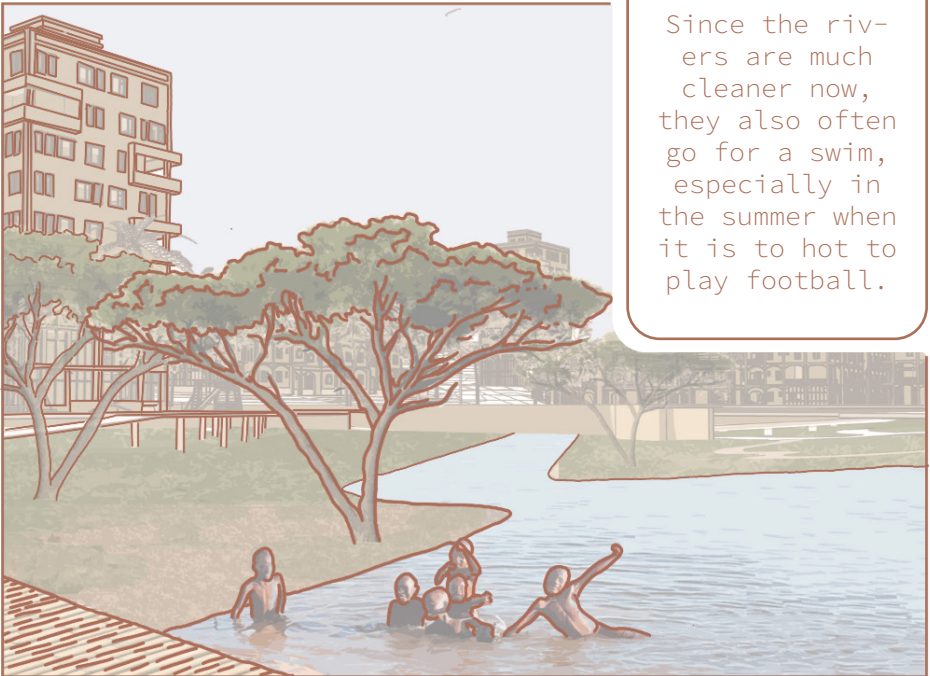
At the river-bank, they have a lot of interactive lessons on agriculture, wetlands, biodiversity and so on.





After School, Yonas and his friends often play outside. Sometimes they play at one of the playgrounds in the neighbourhood.

More often, they play at the riverbank. Here they have a lot of open space to play football. The trees function as the goals of their field.

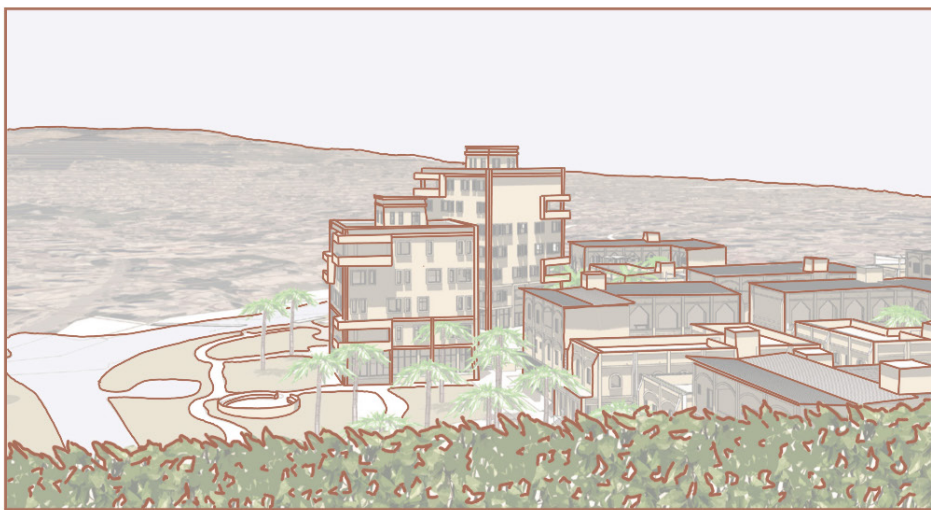


Since the rivers are much cleaner now, they also often go for a swim, especially in the summer when it is too hot to play football.

Nyala still works as a house maid for the middle-income family. When they heard about the re-development of our neighbourhood and how the towers could cater for nicer dwellings, they were immediately interested; living in a park in the middle of the city was like a dream!



Nyala told me their house is big and has a very nice view over the green riverbank and the city. The terraces even offer nice seating places where you could enjoy this view in silence.

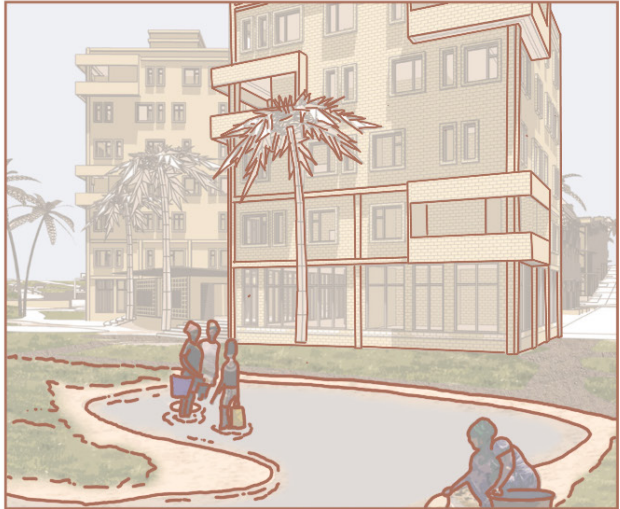


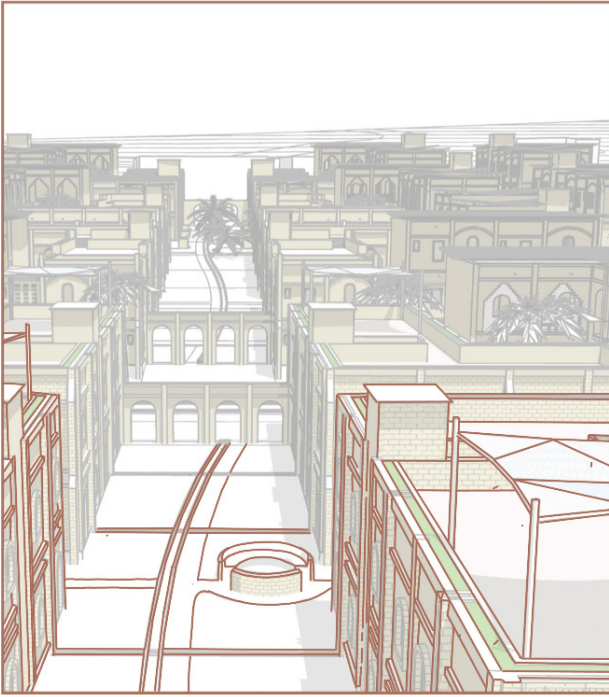


After work, *Myala* often goes to the urban wetlands. She earns a little extra money by cleaning out the pollution from the urban wetlands, thus cleaning the rivers.

A lot of people in the neighbourhood still use the water of the river to cultivate their gardens or get water to do the laundry. Small water-buffer ponds along the river serve as a protection for floods, but also create great places to collect water.

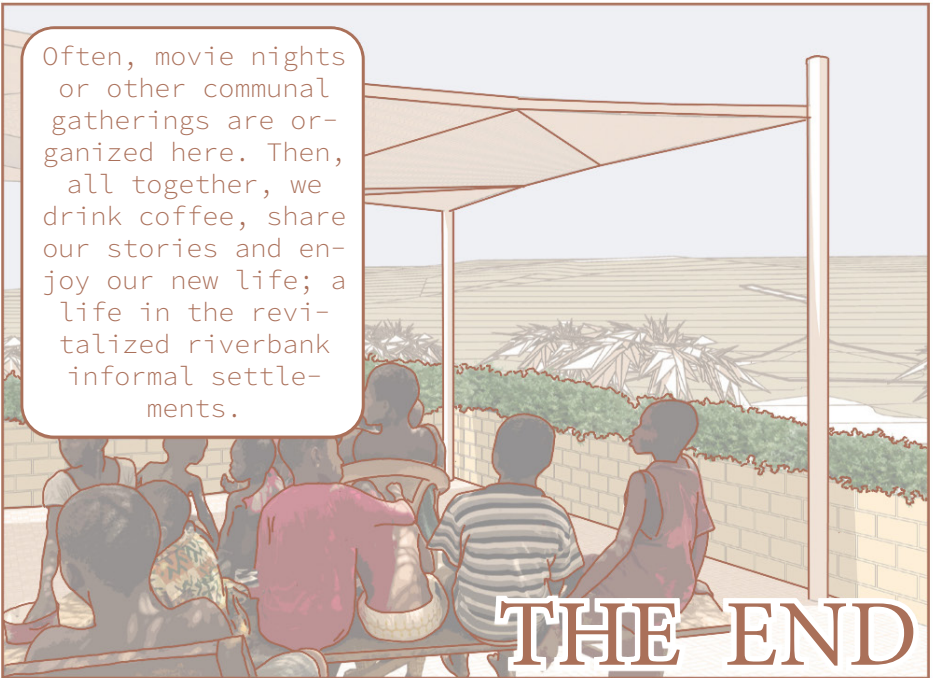
Also, the river attracts a lot more tourists now. We even organized a ‘Riverbank Festival’ to stimulate this. The tourism has huge benefits for all our informal businesses.





In the evening, we often go to the shared roof terrace. Each building block has its own terrace which overlooks the green lanes. Together with our neighbours we decided to make a small flower garden and shaded space here. In the evening a cold breeze cools this place and makes it enormously comfortable.

Often, movie nights or other communal gatherings are organized here. Then, all together, we drink coffee, share our stories and enjoy our new life; a life in the revitalized riverbank informal settlements.



THE END

