

# Korogocho

## - Understanding the nature of a slum -

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Fig. 1-3: Impressions of the work on site.

### Expectation

2017 I spend three month in a slum called Korogocho, in the capitel of Kenya, in Nairobi doing community work. After that I was eager to get more involved in understanding structures and patterns in an informal settlement and the daily routines of people living in such an environment. Lectures about urban planning and solving problems of urban growth in the global south deal often with the omnipresent issue of rising informality. This lead me to an understanding: In order to sustainably improve the standard of living in such areas, the first step is to fully understand the local structures and conditions. Thus the present research project aims to understand and identify patterns of the informal

settlement Korogocho. The focus is set on infrastructure facilities which include technical and social ones. Furthermore, it aims to understand the interaction between inhabitants and local resources as well as the delivery service of facilities to the user. After identifying the local resources, the process of mapping infrastructure facilities will lead to an inventory of the existing resources on site.

### Fact

In order to get a picture as close as possible to the reality on site, a deep insight into everyday life and living space is needed. The basic requirement for this is a good network of information sources and trustworthy local contacts, leading to a strong involvement of the local community and a strong immersion into the specific living environment by the researcher. The following selection of methods are attributed to ethnographic field research and sets the focus on qualitative tools:

- participatory observation
- dialogues
- questionnaire survey, including the process of mapping the area.

The implementation of the meth-

ods manifested itself in exploration tours with locals through Korogocho, showing me aspects of the build environment, infrastructure facilities and patterns of daily life. On the other hand I was working with a group of children living in Korogocho on a regular basis. Within the group of children aged between 6-20 years we dealt with topics such as what resources are available, where are these resources, what role do they play and what effect do they have on my personal life. Leading to an inventory and a localisation of the resources, we found during the group-work (Fig. 5-8).

### Understanding

In order to fully understand the place with its structures and peculiarities, I spend as much time as possible with local people on site. The time of four weeks seems to be quite short. Nevertheless, I have the feeling that I was able to immerse to a certain extent in the living environment of Korogocho. In this process it was particularly important to me that the study reflects a real picture of the local conditions and that the community is strongly involved, giving the local perspective a

chance to be seen and heard. The documentation about experiences and the collected information is designed as a diary with fieldnotes (Fig. 4) giving the reader a neutral picture about the work on site. The evaluation of the results generated through the group work is done in simple, clear graphics (Fig. 5-8). Thanks to the children's knowledge and many conversations with local people, I can say, that

the basic structures that can be found in Korogocho have opened up to me. The interesting and revealing part of this research project is to show that there are efficient solution approaches and functioning structures, which largely arise from the own initiative of the slum dwellers or the community. This prior knowledge should serve in any case as the basis for further development projects in the area.

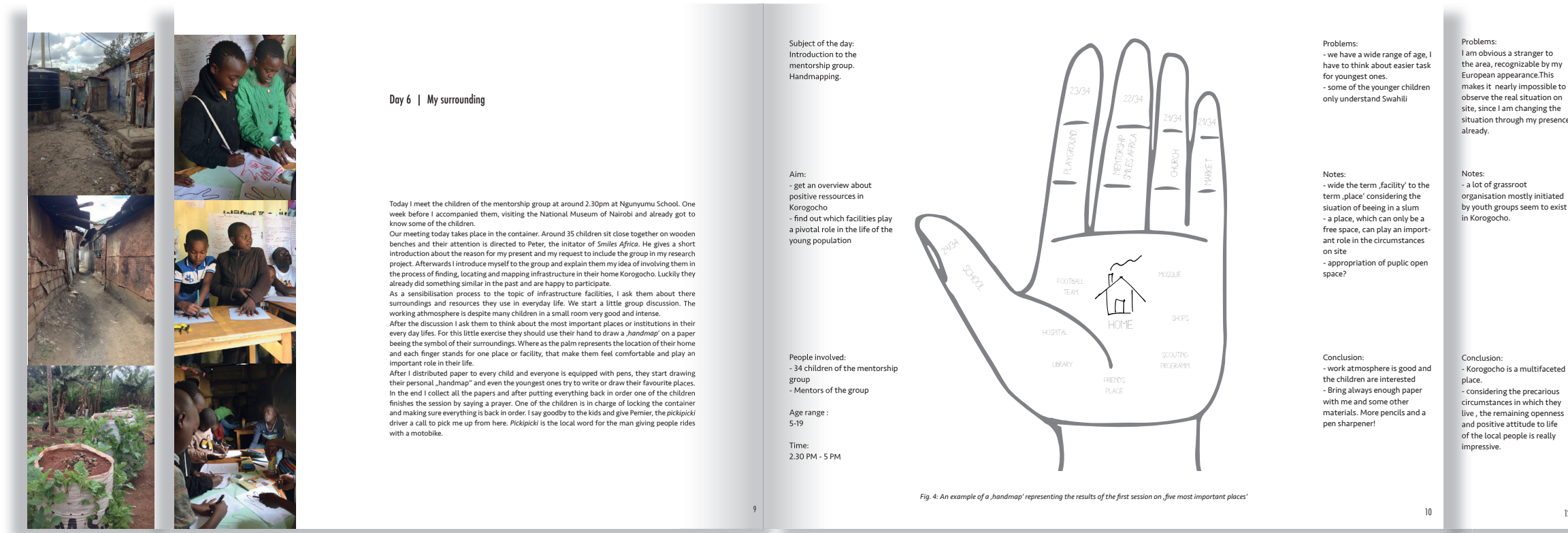


Fig. 4: Excerpts from the empirical part of the work which is designed as a diary including fieldnotes.



Fig. 5-8: Excerpts from the results of the mapping and questionnaire survey.