

New Baraka – From Slum to Vibrant Neighborhood

by Samih Sawiris

We believe that every family should have a chance at the dream of owning their own home. We believe that lower and middle income families should get the opportunity to convert their hard work into a home with dignity and therefore into a real asset to pass on to their children, to give them a better future. We believe that cities are more than just engines of growth, they are systems that should improve human wellbeing and create happiness. So we strive for a powerful combination: to shape the living standards of many thousands of families while running a successful enterprise. This is the WHY behind Casa Orascom.

Casa Orascom is a leading developer of integrated affordable housing communities in emerging markets. The firm is controlled by global real estate entrepreneur Samih Sawiris, and along with its subsidiaries has built over 35,000 homes worldwide as part of town developments, government housing programs, as well as disaster relief initiatives.

Casa Orascom's business builds on an immense and rapidly growing need. Between today and 2050, every single week 1 million people will move to the cities of the so-called emerging economies. By 2030, 3 billion people or 40% of the world's population will need access to housing. This means a demand for 96,000 new affordable units every single day. The vast majority of urban populations is priced out of the market of dignified housing, and conventional building methods are not sufficiently scalable to address the need.

We believe these megatrends, as well as the tragic global refugee crisis, require a radical shift and a new approach. We relentlessly innovate along every single step of town development, leveraging the best solutions and technologies available today. The goal is sustainable urban growth.

One path of leveraging and applying Casa Orascom's extensive development track record is in the challenge of slums.

Finished Phase 1A – 130 apartments



nal and commercial activities benefitting the population. The community administration and security offices are now also housed there.

The project employed and trained as many Baraka residents as possible during the works. The slum population furthermore constructed all temporary housing units needed because of the relocations during the first phases.

We learned that purely gifting new homes will not create the necessary sense of ownership. Thus we oblige all beneficiary families to pay a monthly community fee between €14–€40 per month, depending on the size of the apartment, for a period of 15 years. Only then full title is transferred to them. Without forcing a disciplined approach, supervised by the partner foundations, the homes would simply be sold or rented for immediate gain. The goal is to create an asset for the generations to come.

To protect the state of those assets, the families also signed a code of conduct and community rules, monitored on a daily basis by Ambassador Ohoven's teams. They have a constant presence at Baraka and run numerous programs to help families adapt to their new life, including intensive hygiene education.

The homes between 29 and 57 sqm were allocated according to family sizes following a census conducted by the Government. An equitable and fair process is key.

Over 50 retail outlets will be housed in several commercial areas. To prepare the population and provide structure as they launch their small businesses, a whole spectrum of training programs are under way.

Further initiatives at Baraka:

- A dental clinic in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, serving the wider district
- A group of residents were trained to handle facility management and cleaning of common areas.
- Educational programs on women's rights, family planning and hygiene.
- A non-armed police service was established and is already serving New Baraka 24/7.

Baraka is proof that with the right consortium and a financial bridge, urban slums can be eradicated and rebuilt in a sustainable way.

HARAM CITY – AN INTEGRATED AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMUNITY

