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# CITIES, NOT CAMPS

THE CONTRIBUTION OF  
PLANNED CITIES TO DEVELOPMENT  
AND MIGRATION POLICIES

A Book with articles by  
Paul Romer, Joachim Rücker, Titus Gebel,  
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# New Baraka – From Slum to Vibrant Neighborhood

by Samih Sawiris

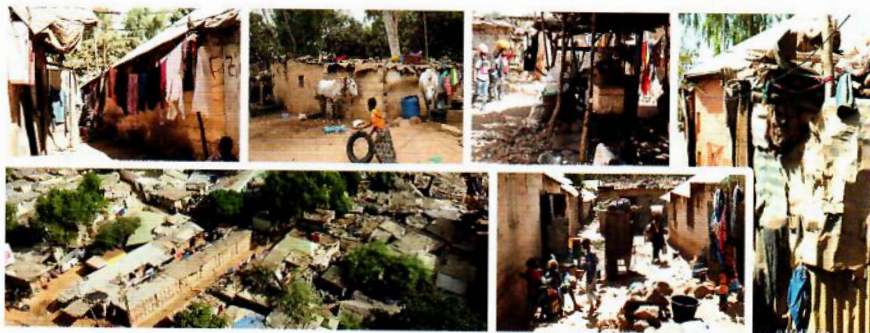
*We believe that every family should have a chance at the dream of owning their own home. We believe that lower and middle income families should get the opportunity to convert their hard work into a home with dignity and therefore into a real asset to pass on to their children, to give them a better 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.



We aim to prove that urban slums do not need to exist and that removing them can have a zero net cost. Baraka is a trial project and revolutionary approach in sustainable slum rehabilitation.

Since the 1970s, the 15,000 sqm Baraka slum in central Dakar has been home to refugees and migrants from across West Africa, as well as poor Senegalese families. Reconstructing Baraka for 1,600 residents involves an intense planning effort with the entire community, as we transform the slum into a modern, liveable neighbourhood. Two thirds of the slum land, 10,000 sqm, is used for Phases 1A and 1B to deliver free new housing (210 apartments), a school, a kindergarten, a community center, a health facility, retail areas providing employment, and vocational training facilities for the population.

This investment of €7 million, funded by Samih Sawiris, turns a destitute reality into a dignified neighbourhood, without uprooting the population. The new community is now integrating with the surrounding middle-income quarters. The remaining unused 5,000 sqm of the former slum land is now vacated and free, since all 1,600 slum dwellers have moved into the 210 new apartments of Phases 1A and 1B. No longer stigmatized and squalid, this free land rises immensely in value and is used by the consortium to develop middle- and higher-income apartments for sale in the open market (Phase 2). The profits from Phase 2 offset the sponsors' capital expense – effectively a financial bridge – of delivering the entire Phase 1. This provides true sustainability and a new model of rebuilding slums.



## HISTORY OF BARAKA

In the 1990s, UNESCO Special Ambassador Ute-Henriette Ohoven begins to champion the cause of the Baraka people, who have no access to infrastructure or utilities. The lack of sanitary facilities exacerbates an atrocious health situation, and overall life in Baraka is marked by extreme hardship. Ambassador Ohoven joins forces with the foundations ENDA and HOPE'87 to bring basic water supply and electricity to the slum, and to build a school, kindergarten, community center, basic public toilets and a small health post. Ambassador Ohoven also financed women's commercial activities and vocational training programs. While these activities didn't lift the population from poverty, they improved earning capacity and in particular the ability to purchase more and healthier food. Through the direct involvement of all subsequent Presidents of Senegal, Ambassador Ohoven was also able to protect the families from the continuous attacks of land speculators who attempted to expel the population.

In October 2015, the President of Senegal H.E. Macky Sall issued a decree declaring 9,200 square meters at Baraka of national interest, formally transferring ownership of the land to the State. In 2016, Samih Sawiris commits to fund and execute a comprehensive reconstruction of the entire slum in partnership with Ambassador Ohoven organizations and the Government of Senegal, in particular the Office of the President. In 2017, the non-profit project company SOREBA (Société de Reconstruction de Baraka) negotiated a further extension of land available for the Baraka project. A presidential decree in April 2017 unlocked the total land of 14,725 sqm, which was transferred to SOREBA in August 2017. Casa Orascom manages SOREBA. Works on 210 apartments in 11 buildings began in August 2018. 130 apartments for 900 people were delivered in May 2020 (Phase 1A), the remaining 80 apartments for 700 people are under construction and on track for delivery in Q3 2022 (Phase 1B).

## CHALLENGES, SUCCESSES, LESSONS & IMPACT

Among the main challenges was the extremely limited space in a dense urban setting, and the need to keep and manage 1,600 slum dwellers – including 300+ children – essentially on site during the works. The technical teams also had to utilize highly resistant materials and solutions for ease of execution and future maintenance, given the extreme wear and tear from a population only accustomed to living in slum conditions. All this within budgetary constraints.

Flexibility is crucial and the team also turned challenges into value. For instance, we faced significant difficulties with rock formations and complex soil conditions, which the geotechnical and topographic studies had not entirely captured in advance. Instead of filling two large resulting spaces below the buildings, Soreba adjusted the structures and built out 400 sqm of additional surface area for social, educatio-

### 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

