



## **MUKURU COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT APPROVED FOR CONSTRUCTION**

### **Slum residents await opportunities from computer and technology training, health and education services, community theater and radio station**

NAIROBI, Kenya – Dec. 2, 2009 – Construction is cleared to begin on the SIDAREC-Mukuru Kwa Njenga Center here, giving the expectant African community a powerful tool to end the cycle of poverty. The community center, designed for Slums Information Development Resource Center (SIDAREC) and the needs of Nairobi youth, will give Mukuru residents access to the Internet, computer and technology training, health clinic services, early childhood development programs, and a community theater. A radio station and recording studio will top out the six-month construction project, beaming SIDAREC's radio station Ghetto 99.9 to more than 650,000 local residents and countless listeners around the world.

The community center is a cooperative effort by the 50x15 Foundation and Architecture for Humanity, in local partnership with SIDAREC. Leaders from the three organizations met at the building site Nov. 17 to launch the construction phase and campaign to garner additional support to help "Raise the Radio."

During the planning for the new community center, a fire destroyed SIDAREC's previous radio tower and studio. "Ghetto 99.9" is the energizing pulse and beat of this community, providing news and music to thousands in Nairobi. 50x15 and Architecture for Humanity modified the overall plan to include a completely new studio and have launched an incremental "Raise the Radio" fund-raising campaign to ensure the entire community center opens as scheduled. (<http://bit.ly/raisetheradio>)

"In Mukuru slums, all the ingredients that work in unison to perpetuate poverty are present. Unemployment amongst women and youth is predictably high, inaccessibility to quality education, drug abuse, high prevalence of disease, especially STIs and HIV/AIDS, are some of the challenges characterizing this community," said George Onyango, project administrator, SIDAREC. "This has created a state of hopelessness where the community lacks motivation to improve the standard of living. This upcoming project will address some of these challenges by providing a platform for information dissemination, access to technology and opportunities, thereby increasing employability for youth and women. It will open opportunities for young people to explore their talents and enhance skill for sustainable development."



SIDAREC, the project's community partner, is a Nairobi youth development organization whose mission is to help community members access greater economic and social opportunities. This new community center expands and strengthens the organization's current community service.

"Being here today at the site, the excitement and hope in Mukuru residents is palpable, and the opportunities the community center will provide have an added urgency," said Dan Shine, president of the 50x15 Foundation. "Internet and computer training provide skills for local residents to educate themselves and qualify for good jobs. Access to life services like healthcare information, education, financial services, job hunting and communication, empower Mukuru individuals, families, and the community at large to improve their lives and living conditions."

The 50x15 Foundation's mission is to accelerating worldwide digital inclusion rates to 50 percent by 2015. It focuses on six key areas of development to advance its mission through its partner program -- power, connectivity, devices, financing, content, expertise – as well as structural design. Pre-planning for technology in structural design is integral to the sustainability and efficiency of a project.

Architecture for Humanity has managed the design and construction process of the new SIDAREC community center and hosted the 2007 AMD Open Architecture Challenge where SIDAREC submitted the winning community project proposal and the Global Studio of Seattle, Wash., created the winning design.

"We're working with local architects and contractors to make the design a reality," said Cameron Sinclair, co-founder of Architecture for Humanity, a charitable organization that seeks architectural solutions to humanitarian crises and brings professional design services to communities in need. "Technology is at the heart of this community center and the visible beacon for the project will be the radio tower. The community radio station will enable residents and SIDAREC organizers to extend opportunities far beyond the center's walls."

### **About 50x15 Foundation**

The 50x15 Foundation's mission is to accelerate worldwide digital inclusion rates to 50 percent of the world's population by 2015, 15 years faster than the current growth rate. Enabling affordable, sustainable and accessible Internet connectivity and computing capability in high-growth markets provides communities with the means to participate in and benefit from the global network of commercial and educational opportunity. For more information, visit [www.50x15.org](http://www.50x15.org).

### **About Architecture for Humanity**

Architecture for Humanity is an organization that seeks architectural solutions to humanitarian crises and provides professional design services to communities in need. It hosts an annual global design challenge on the Open Architecture network to address a different systemic issue facing those living in underserved communities.



**About SIDAREC**

Slums Information Development Resource Center (SIDAREC) is a youth development organization based in Nairobi, Kenya, dedicated to improving living conditions in Nairobi slums.

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