

silvio valpreda

impossible art project

YOU ARE HERE

Kibera - Nairobi (Kenya)

Statements

Slum

A slum, as defined by the United Nations agency UNHABITAT, is a run-down area of a city characterized by substandard housing and squalor and lacking in tenure security.

Although their characteristics vary between geographic regions, they are usually inhabited by the very poor or socially disadvantaged. Slum buildings vary from simple shacks to permanent and wellmaintained structures. Most slums lack clean water, electricity, sanitation and other basic services.

According to the United Nations, the percentage of urban dwellers living in slums was 37 percent in the developing world in 2005. Due to rising population, and the rise especially in urban populations, the number of slum dwellers is rising.

More than 1000.000.000 (one billion) people worldwide live in slums.

Kibera

Kibera (Nubian word for Forest) is a division of Nairobi Area, Kenya, and a province and neighborhood of the city of Nairobi Located 5 kilometers (3.1 mi) from the city centre. Kibera is the largest slum in Nairobi and the second largest urban slum in Africa.

Conditions in Kibera are extremely poor, and most of its residents lack access to basic services, including electricity and running water: no basic services, schools, clinics, running water or lavatories are publicly provided, and what services do exist are privately owned.

The estimated population density is 2000 residents per hectare, but the number of residents increase despite its unauthorized nature.

Kibera is heavily polluted by human refuse, garbage, soot, dust, and other wastes. The slum is contaminated with human and animal feces, thanks to the open sewage system and the frequent use of "flying toilets". The lack of sanitation combined with poor nutrition among residents accounts for many illnesses and diseases.

Google Maps

Google Maps (formerly Google Local) is a web mapping service application and technology provided by Google, free (for non-commercial use), that powers many map-based services. It offers satellite images and street maps.

Although Google uses the word satellite, most of the high-resolution imagery is aerial photography taken from aircraft flying at 800–1500 feet rather than from satellites.

Google Maps are not in real time; they are several months or years old.

World Wide Web

The Web is used for receiving information as well as providing information and interacting with society.

The number of Web users is over 2000.000.000 (two billion) in 2010.

Although the access to the Web is assumed to be for everyone regardless of disability including visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, or neurological, it needs a costly connection service.



Some considerations

One sixth of earth population lives in slums.

One third (two sixth) of earth population uses the world wide web (internet).

Very few people living in slums have access to the internet.

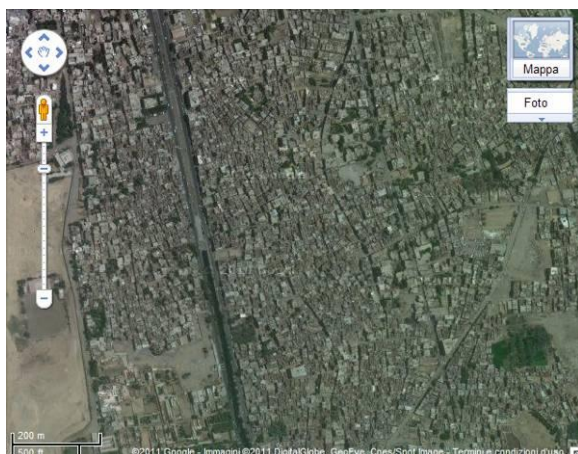
Using the web instrument of Google Maps every internet user may easy get a look over a slum. This view is mediated by the photographic representation and by the monitor screen.

The aerial image of a slum cannot transmit any real sensation of the daily life.

A conventional way of thinking of most of the non slum living populations is that slums are a sad, even if transitory, accident in the economical development of the cities and it affects only unlucky persons or people lacking of ambition.

There is no genetic, physical or racial difference between an average slum inhabitant and a standard internet user.

Any human being could even be a slum inhabitant or an internet user.



Unpredictable events may swap the status of a person.

Example 01

Slumdog Millionaire is a 2008 British romantic drama film directed by Danny Boyle. Set and filmed in India, the film tells the story of Jamal Malik, a young man from the Juhu slums of Mumbai who appears on the Indian version of Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? (Kaun Banega Crorepati in the Hindi version) and exceeds people's expectations, thereby arousing the suspicions of the game show host and of law enforcement officials.

However his eventful explanation about how he knows the right answer of each question is considered "bizarrely plausible" by the police officer, Jamal goes back to the show and wins the grand prize.

The film-makers traveled to Mumbai in September 2007 with a partial crew and began hiring local cast and crew for production. Some child living in the slum acted in many scenes, but some controversies raised up about their welfare and illegal housing conditions.

Filming locations included shooting in Mumbai's megaslum and in shantytown parts of Juhu, so film-makers controlled the crowds by befriending onlookers.

The main character (Jamal) actor, Dev Patel, as the protagonist, is a Muslim boy born and raised in the poverty of Mumbai, but this is not his first actor role as he has been pointed by Boyle's daughter out from his part in the British television ensemble drama Skins.

Example 02

The dire state of the USA economy and a record number of home foreclosures have spurred the growth of tent camps for the homeless, in cities such as Nashville and Seattle, by rivers and freeway underpasses.

In a series of CNN interviews, several of the tent camp's citizens recall the all-too familiar cycle of job loss, inability to pay rent, and ultimately, homelessness.

It is estimated that in 2010 three and half million of USA citizens are homeless.

An example is the story of Anjanette Collazo, age 23, who lives (survives) in a tent camp just outside of downtown Fort Worth (Texas).

She, showed to CNN team something she's hidden from friends, classmates and even family members: the tent that she calls home.

"I hide it very well in the wood along the highway" said Anjanette, who is training to be a pharmacy technician. She craves a job and a real home.

Collazo is desperate. She's pregnant.

"This is real life, and this does happen," she said. "Everybody's not bad; everybody's not out here because it's their fault. Some of us are kind of forced in this situation and others aren't."

Collazo's boyfriend can't find a job.

Their tent is one of nearly 60 outside in this unauthorized camp. Some have been here a year or more, through heat waves and snowstorms. How do they cope?

"Just get up under your blankets and get as warm as you can".

When leaves got out in the fall season, Fort Worth Code Compliance officers spotted tents from the road.

The city has given the property owner, a private company, 10 days to dismantle the camp, saying it's a health and safety threat.

The Presbyterian Night Shelter is ready to take the tent-dwellers in, but the illegal campers said they'll find another location to pitch their tents before going to a shelter.

"Those places are much worse than out here," Collazo said.

The homeless camp residents are trespassing on the land they're using. The property owner has the right to call in the police at any time for help in moving them.

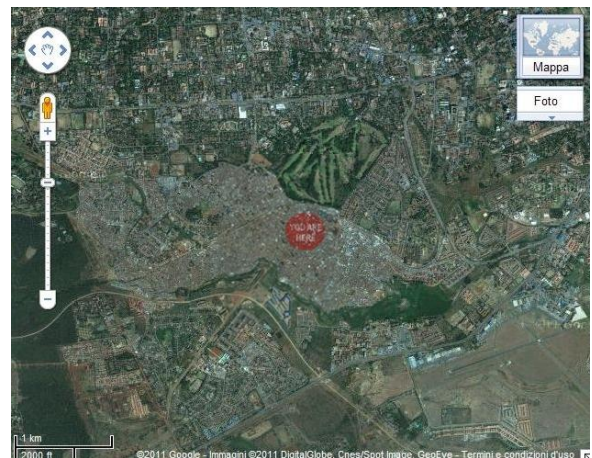
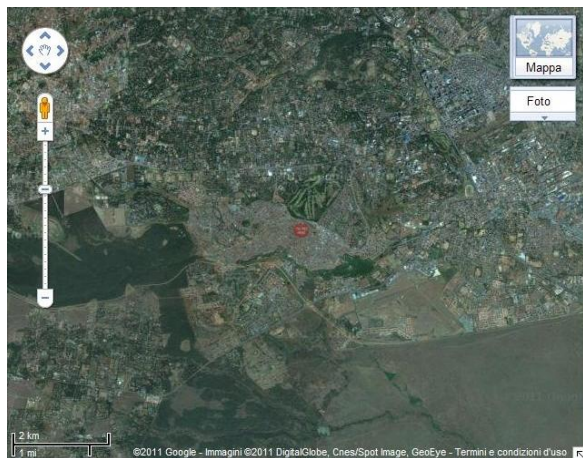
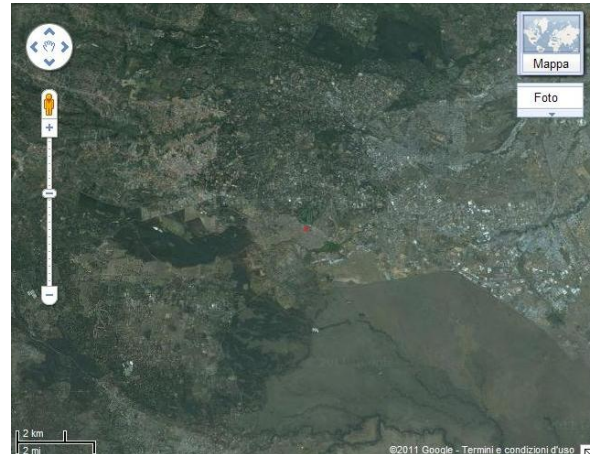
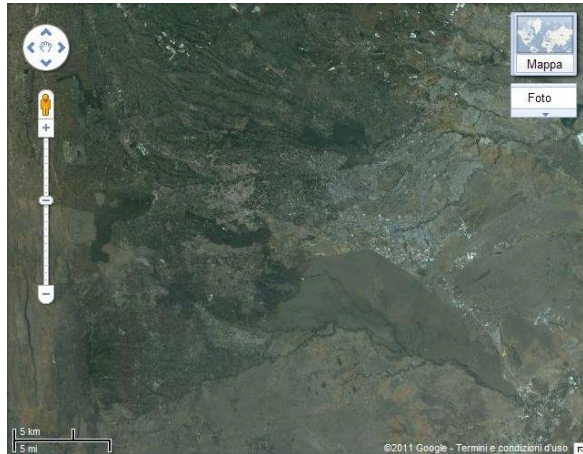
So far, that has not happened.

The project of the art piece.

Outline

To force peoples who are sitting in a quiet housing context browsing the web to face to the slums condition is used a Google maps visible sign.

The material part of the art piece consists in a large scale painted mark in, or better to say "over", the Nairobi (Kenia) slum of Kibera.



The project of the art piece.

Dimensions and location

The dimensions of the painted area (circular) is two hundred meters radius, that means around 125000 square meters of surface.

This dimension allow the mark to be visible in Google representation in a quite wide range of zoom factor.

The exact earth coordinates of the center are 1,31S 36,78E.

The area is a typical slum environment formed by unauthorized shelters in rusty metal sheet separated by narrow unpaved muddy paths.

Technical issues

Basically the sign is realized painting the existing roof surfaces (repaired or made new if it needs) and realizing a colored soil covering.

It is important that the production of the art piece achieves the parallel result of an improvement of the day life conditions of the area inhabitants.

For this reason the colored cover of the path shall be done using concrete modules that improves rain and used water drain.

The permanence of dirty waters is cause of important health problems for the slum inhabitants: malaria, typhus, cholera and dysenteries.

Negotiation work

A lot of negotiation work and cultural mediation is need.

To realize the art piece it is necessary to involve all the area inhabitants and to obtain their participation.

Local authorities needs to be contacted in order to have legal permissions.

Google has to be involved too in order to have the area images refreshed after the set up.

The project of the art piece.

Costs

A detailed budget is attached below.

It is very important to note that the pricing of the working hour has been set at 15 €/h for all people involved in the realization of the project: the artist, mediators, field engineers, painters, and manual workers.

This salary amount is already quite high in relation to the Kenyan average wages however it is assumed to be the correct one to assure an adequate living standard to the workers.

The usual labor cost in Africa is less than one euro pro hour but this remuneration level allow workers just to pay for a small daily amount of food and nothing else.

The cost of living in Nairobi is mostly the same, or even higher, as in any European big city. The large number of desperate people who agree to work in change of the mere survival allow people with low sense of humanity to pay low salaries.

The life of these workers with few euro daily and of their family is really poor.

For this reason the work remuneration for the construction of this art piece is set at 15 €/h according to the life cost instead to an amount of around 0,30 €/h according to the supply/demand market law.

An extra amount of 30.000€ is in the budget to supply public services in order to friendly facilitate the mediation.

A standard 5% of excess and various is in the budget.

No public officers corruption costs are in the budget although, it is well known, the use of bribes could facilitate the work.

	work hours		material		travel costs
cultural mediation	3.000	€	3.000,00	€	2.500,00
public services for mediation		€	30.000,00		
political mediation	250	€	500,00	€	2.500,00
Google mediation	50	€	100,00		
roads pavementation	200.000	€	360.000,00		
roofs reparation	50.000	€	80.000,00		
red and white painting	130.000	€	376.800,00		
work field coordination	35.000			€	2.500,00
artist concept	300	€	200,00	€	6.000,00
various and excess	10.000	€	42.380,00	€	2.000,00
insurance		€	4.000,00		
total hours	428.600				
hours pricing @ 15€/h	€ 6.429.000,00				
TOTAL	€ 6.429.000,00	€	896.980,00	€	15.500,00
Gran TOTAL	€		7.341.480,00		
taxes (20%)	€		1.468.296,00		

