

Informal settlements in Namibia: their nature and growth:

Exploring ways to make Namibian urban development more socially just and inclusive

Objectives of the study and book

To provide information about informal settlements, in particular their:

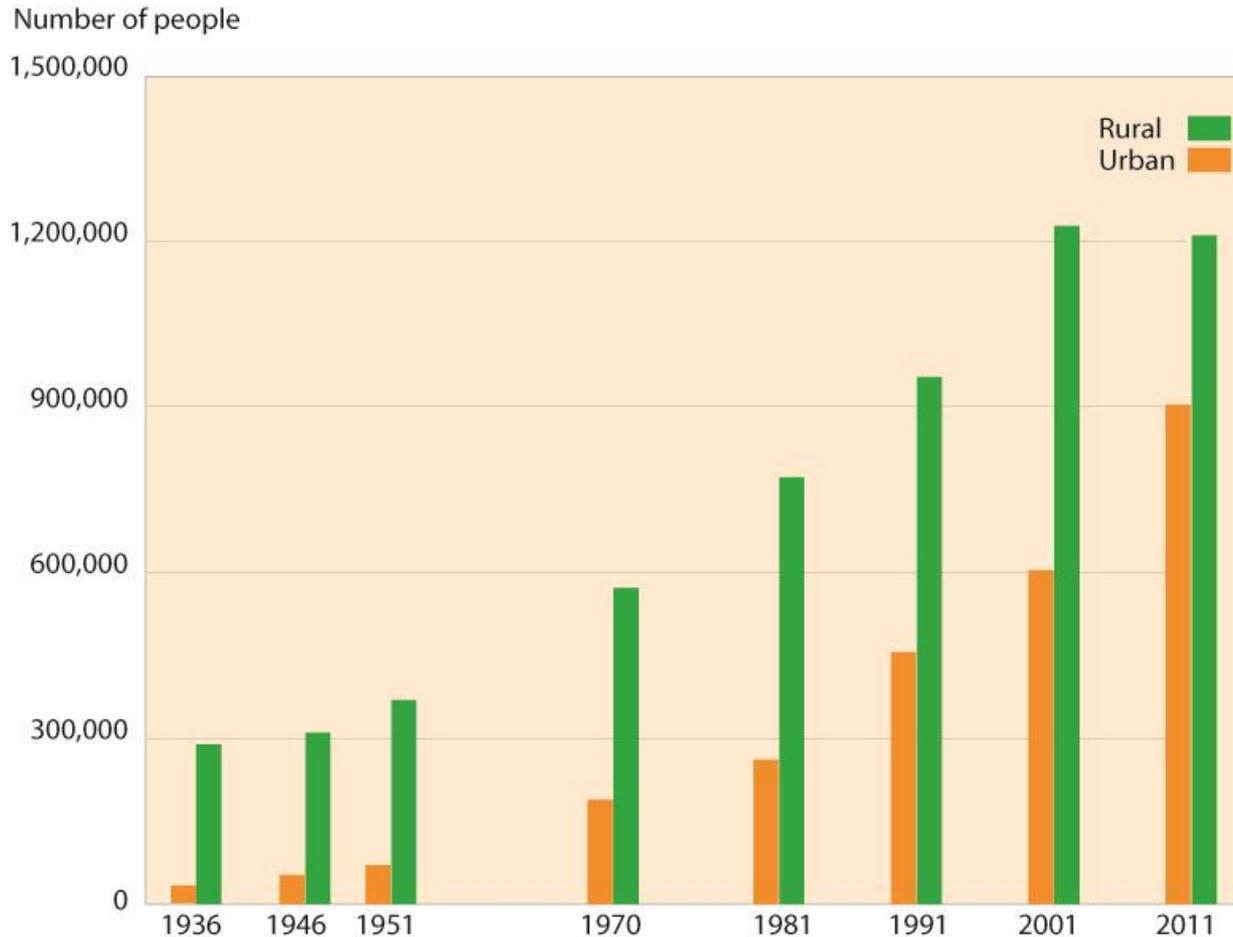
- Growth
- Physical conditions
- Social and economic dimensions

To describe approaches to urban planning used by local authorities to address informal growth and development.

Content

- **Informal settlement growth**
- **Characteristics of informal settlements**
- **Approaches of local authorities to informal settlement growth and development**
- **Recommendations**

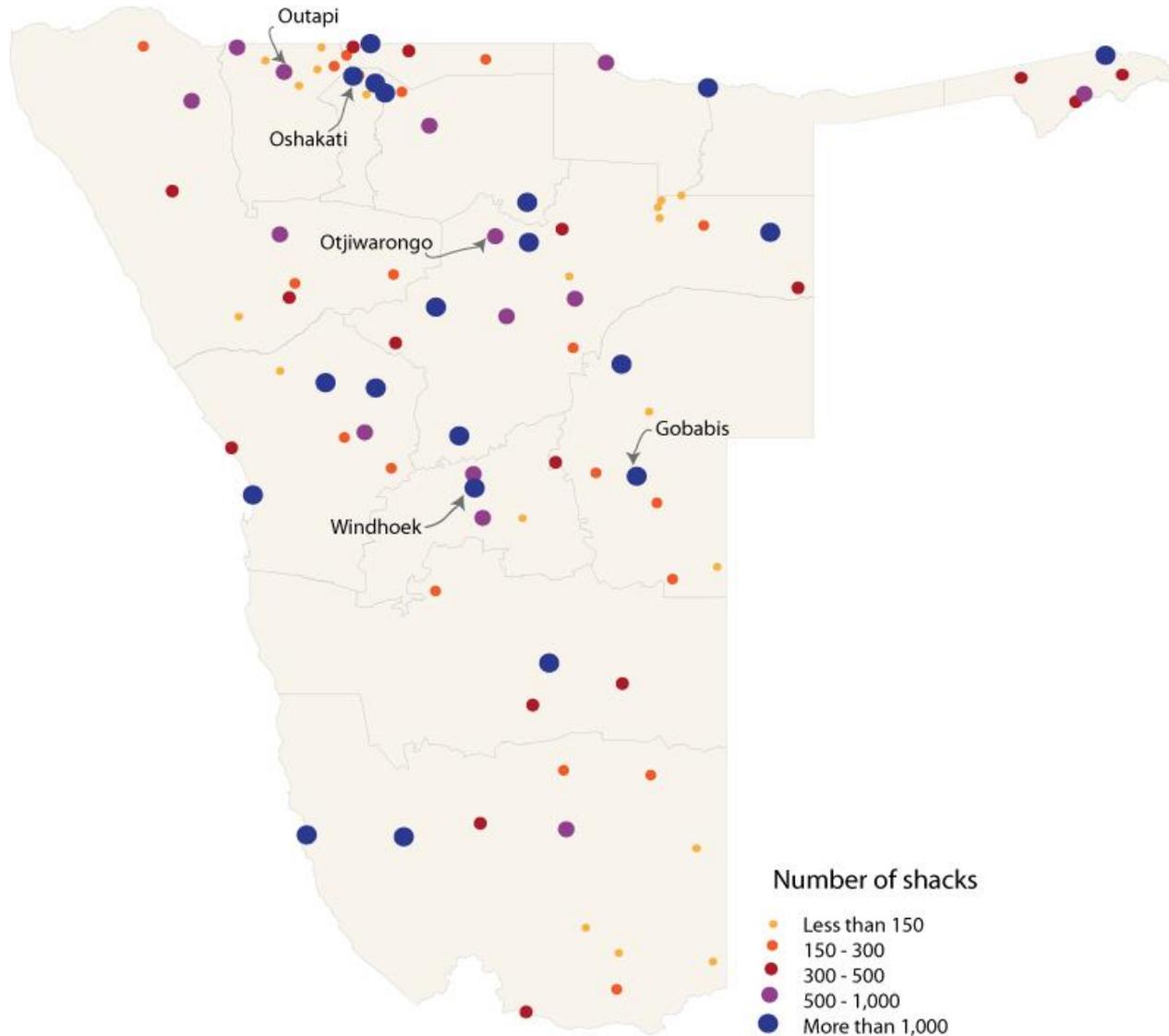
Namibia is changing rapidly from a rural to an urban society



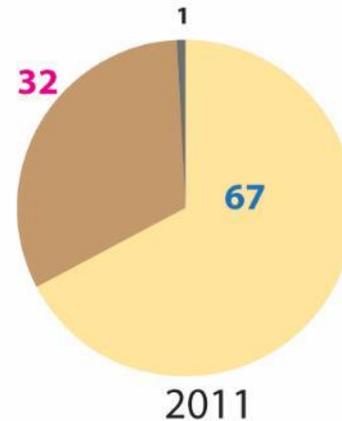
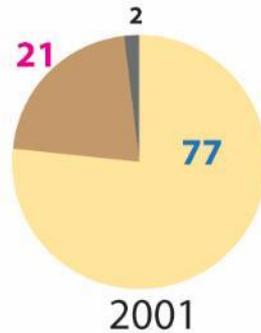
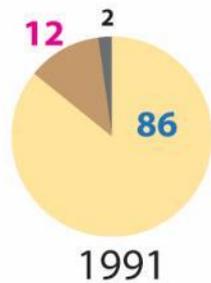
- 2001-2011: rural population dropped by 20,000 / urban population increased by 300,000 people

- This is a regional trend

Informal settlements are developing everywhere

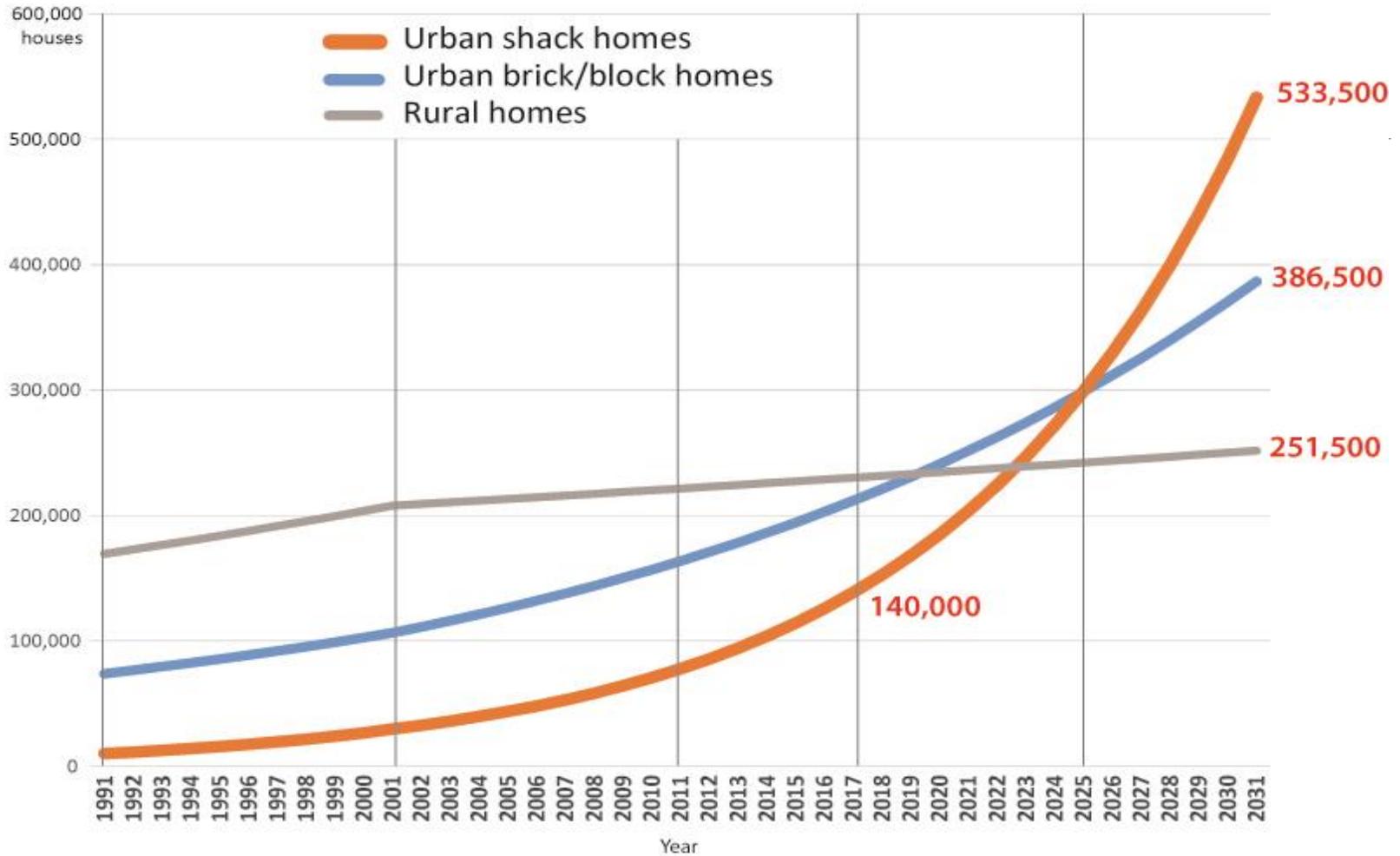


Informal settlements are the main driver of urban growth



Formal and informal housing increasing rapidly, but informal growth is much faster rate

Informal settlements are expected to grow



About 12,000 new informal homes built each year

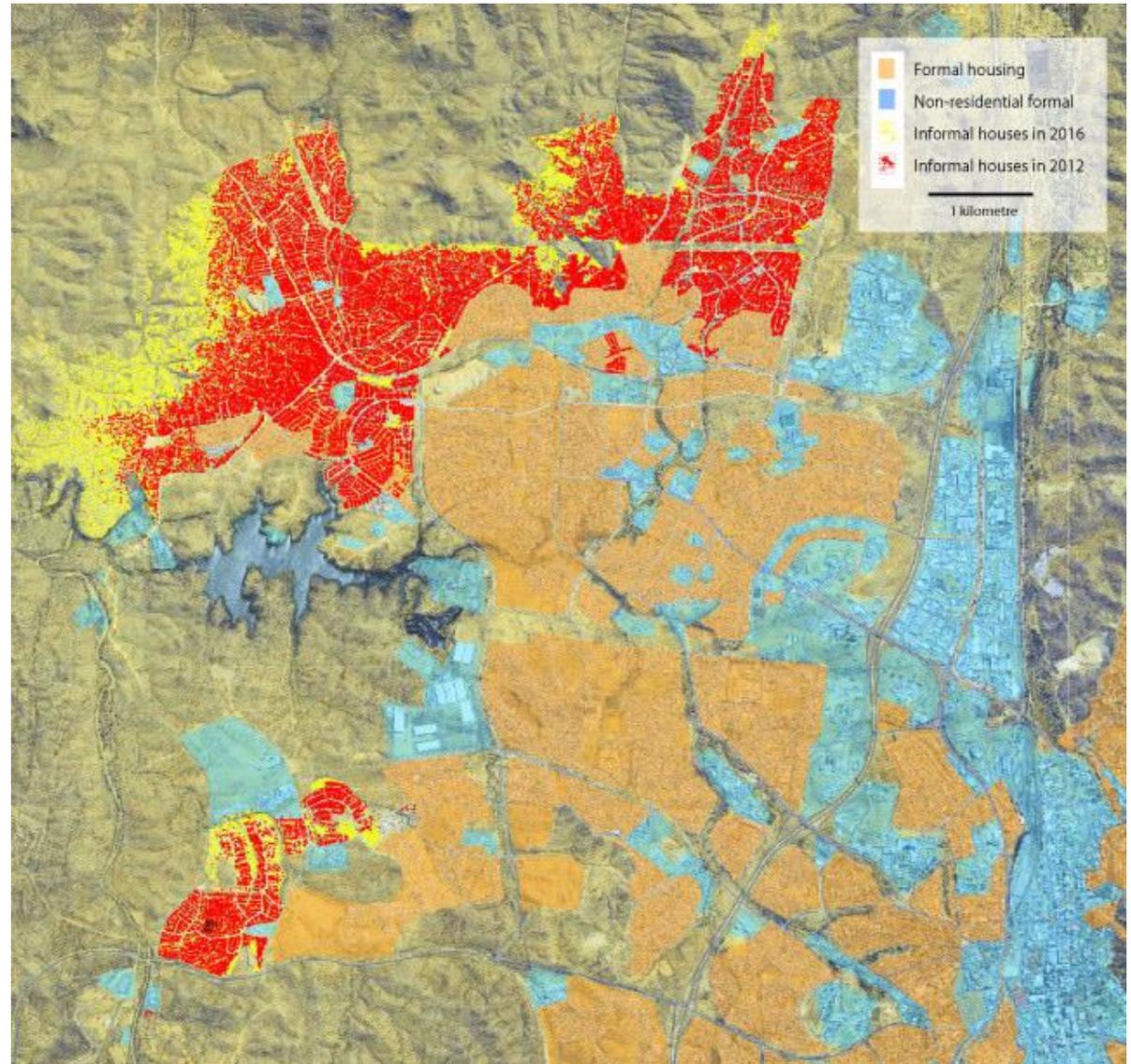
In 2025, there will be more shacks than brick houses

In 2030, 79% of Namibian homes will be in urban areas

In 2030, 46% of Namibian families will be in shacks

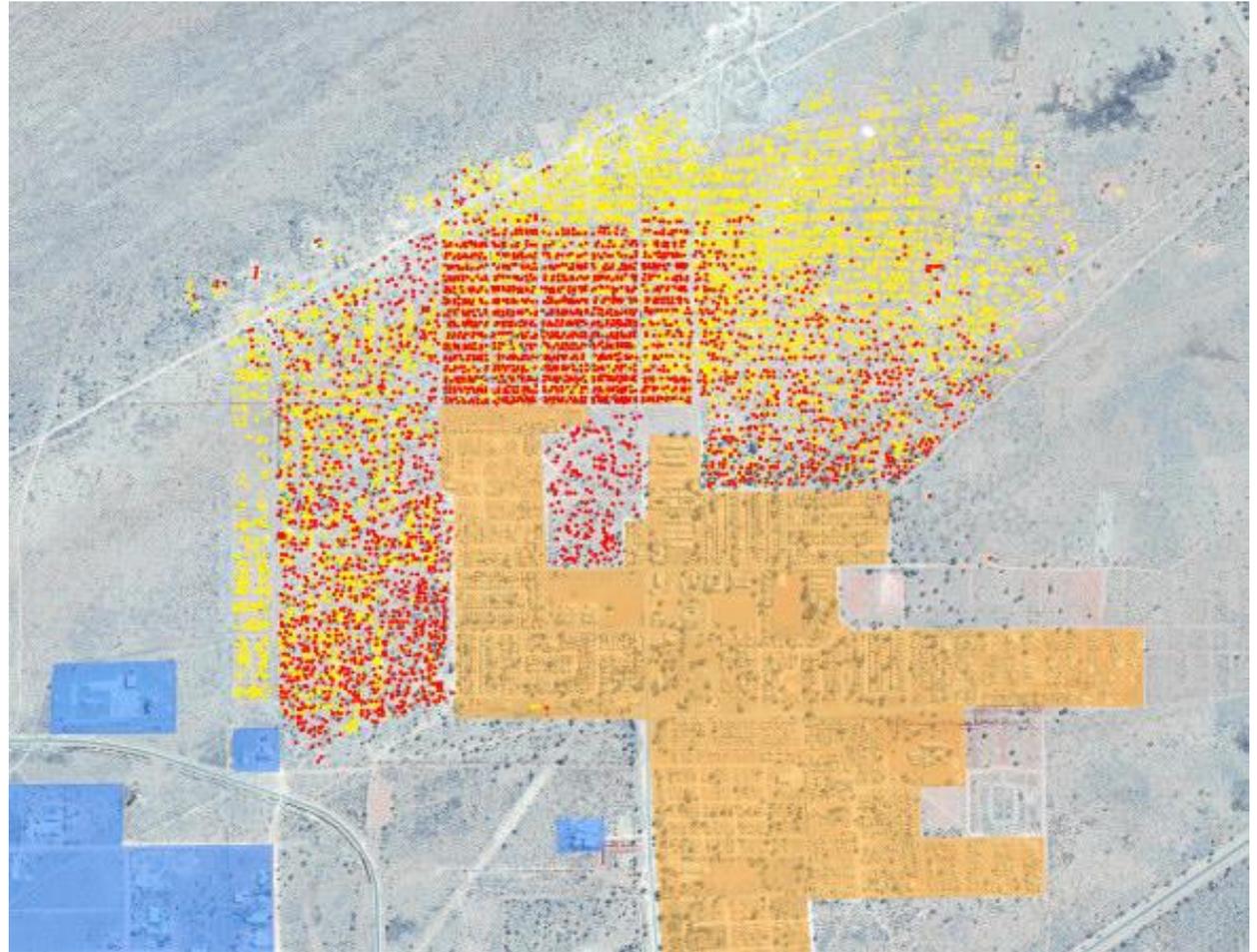
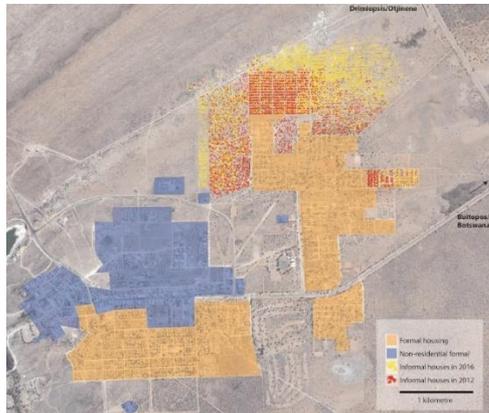
Expansion of informal settlements, e.g. Windhoek

- Rapid informal settlement growth most visible by rapid geographic expansion
- **Shacks in 2012**
- **Shacks in 2016**
- > 3 500 shacks-like homes per year



Expansion of informal settlements, e.g. **Gobabis**

- **Shacks in 2012**
- **Shacks in 2016**
- >350 shack-like homes per year



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Access to infrastructure and services, e.g. **sanitation**

| Year | 1991 | 2011 |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| No toilet | 11,000 | 57,000 |
| Pit or bucket | 6,600 | 22,000 |
| Shared Flush | 13,000 | 53,500 |
| Private Flush | 54,000 | 109,600 |

In 2011, almost 380,000 urban residents had no access to toilet facilities

And the same for:

- Fuel for cooking, lighting and heating
- Water
- Waste removal
- Sewage treatment
- Roads
- Social services

Informal settlement structures

Most informal settlements are unstructured with no or limited planning

Densification hampers upgrading and service provision

Cannot be proclaimed without physically rearranging the whole settlement



Informal settlement structures

Upgrading is expensive, socially costly and lengthy

Provision of infrastructure and services is difficult

Create huge headache and legacy for future governments and society



Tenure security

Informal settlements are not proclaimed (legalised) and so residents cannot have secure land tenure

Permanent structures often prohibited on properties without formal tenure

Non-permanent housing materials often not suitable for Namibia's climate.

Implications of a lack of **structure** and **tenure**

No planned structure

1. Limited options to legalise settlement
2. No secure tenure
3. Limited provision of services and infrastructure
4. Limited overall development options for the settlement
5. Development requires shifting of people, which incurs significant financial, social and political costs

No tenure

1. Access to credit limited
2. Risks of eviction
3. **No investment or wealth generation options**

Who are the informal settlers?



1. Most are immigrants from rural areas or other towns
2. Most are young
3. Most are looking for a better life:
 - Jobs and incomes
 - Enterprises and income
 - Education and other services
4. Most are energetic, ambitious and eager to build:
 - homes
 - enterprises and
 - a decent future

What does Namibia want to do with this energy, ambition and eagerness to build a future?

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Scope and objectives

- **Objective:** how do local authorities deal with rapid informal settlement growth?
- **Towns:** Gobabis, Outapi, Oshakati, Windhoek and Otjiwarongo

Major challenges

1. Long waiting list: residents that need land for housing
2. Budget cuts: reduced funding available for servicing land
3. Township establishment: slows down the provision of urban land
4. Lack of technical and human resources for implementation of land development projects

Interventions of local authorities

All towns: considerable resources invested in servicing, upgrading, provision of land

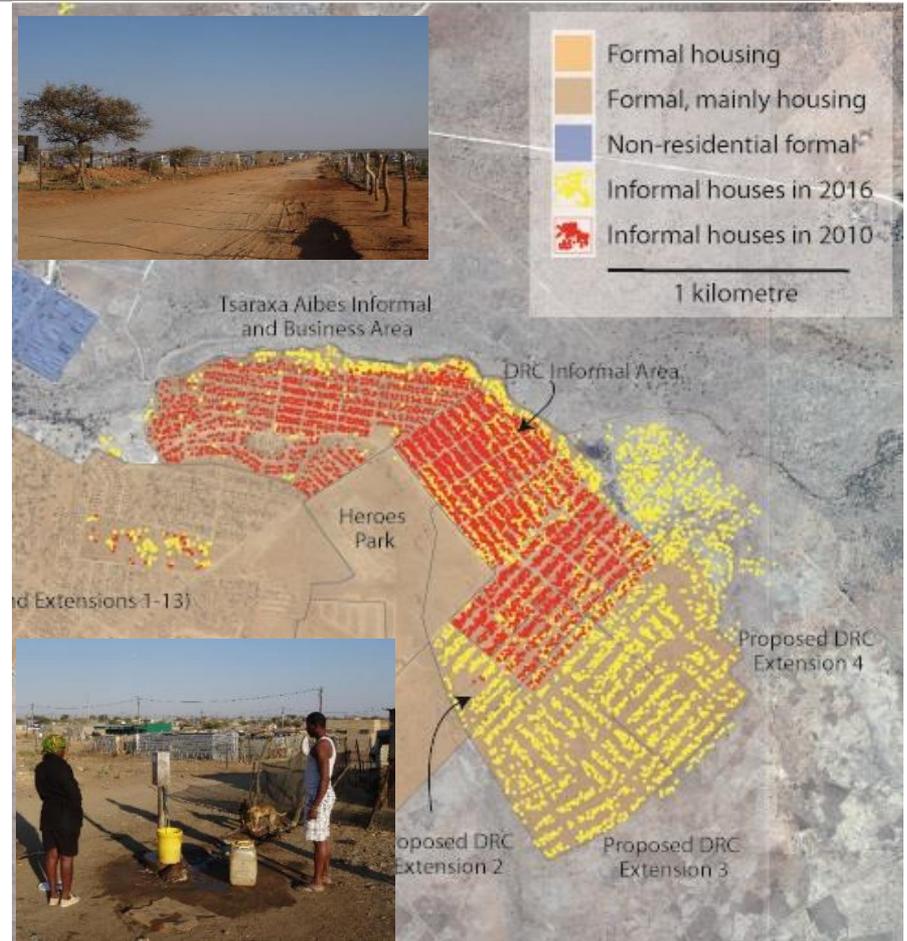
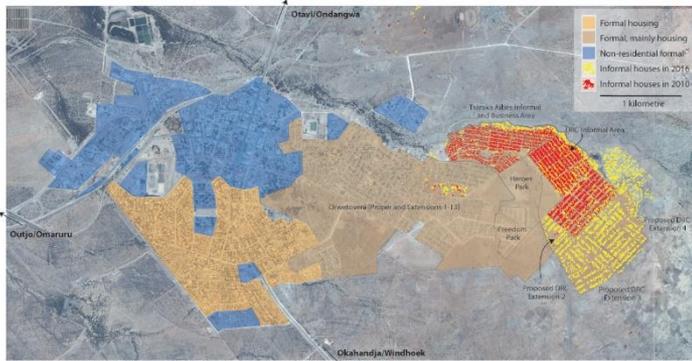
For example:

- Gobabis: Successful upgrading of Freedom Square informal settlement; provision of low cost land on large scale in Kaanan;
- Windhoek: upgrading of many existing informal settlements;
- Oshakati: formalizing informal settlements and provision of serviced erven at large scale;
- Outapi & Otjiwarongo: Provision of minimally and non serviced erven on large scale;
- Provision of minimally serviced erven at large scale identified as especially effective to control informal settlement growth

Example: Otjiwarongo

Structured informal settlements with different levels of services;

- Large percentage of housing with permanent building materials
- Similar approaches observed in Outapi, Gobabis, Oshakati



Key components of the approach

- Informal settlements planned and surveyed BEFORE people begin settling – pre-emptive measure to avoid disorganized growth;
- Settlement proclaimed in parallel or later;
- Services provided incrementally;
- Residents build homes at their own pace;
- Transforms informal growth into formal growth of settlements
- Effective approach with considerable potential for other towns in Namibia;

Financial sustainability

Required for an organized settlement: Town planning & land surveying

- only **3-5%** of the costs of a fully serviced erf; N\$3,000 – N\$5,000 for fully serviced erf of **N\$ 100,000**

Minimal services:

- Water reticulation system and communal water points: approx. **N\$ 3,500/erf**
- Levelling of roads: approx. **N\$ 3,000/erf**
- Use of pit latrines as a temporary sanitary solution
- Total approx. **N\$10,000/erf**
- **This is affordable for a large majority of low income residents**
- **Costs can be recovered by sale of erven**
- **Makes approach financially sustainable; can be scaled up through investments by private sector**

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Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Focus on the provision of land not housing

Recommendation 2: Gain control over informal settlement expansion

Recommendation 3: Support innovative, proactive and pragmatic approaches of local authorities

Recommendation 4: Accelerate the provision of tenure in structured or upgraded informal settlements

Recommendations

Recommendation 5: Attract private sector investment for the provision of low cost land

Recommendation 6: Attract international donor funding and CSR support for settlement upgrading projects

Recommendation 7: Turn rapid urbanisation and the creation of new townships into an economic opportunity for Namibia