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# LIVELIHOODS IN THE SLUMS OF KENYA: A CASE STUDY ON EXTREME POVERTY REDUCTION

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# ABSTRACT/BRIEF

- The population of Nairobi is approximately 4.4 million, of which 2.5 million live in slums.
- The United Nations set a goal to eradicate poverty by 2030.
- Development professionals were behind schedule before COVID-19, and further behind now.
- This pilot study analyzes development practices and programs against points of view from residents of the Mukuru informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya.



Q. HOW DO SLUMS FORM?

A. FAILED MODERNIZATION

- African states gained independence
- Push for economic growth per Western Ideology
- Migration from rural to urban areas anticipating work
- Informally settle on uninhabited land
- Economic growth fails
- Informal settlements become permanent settlements



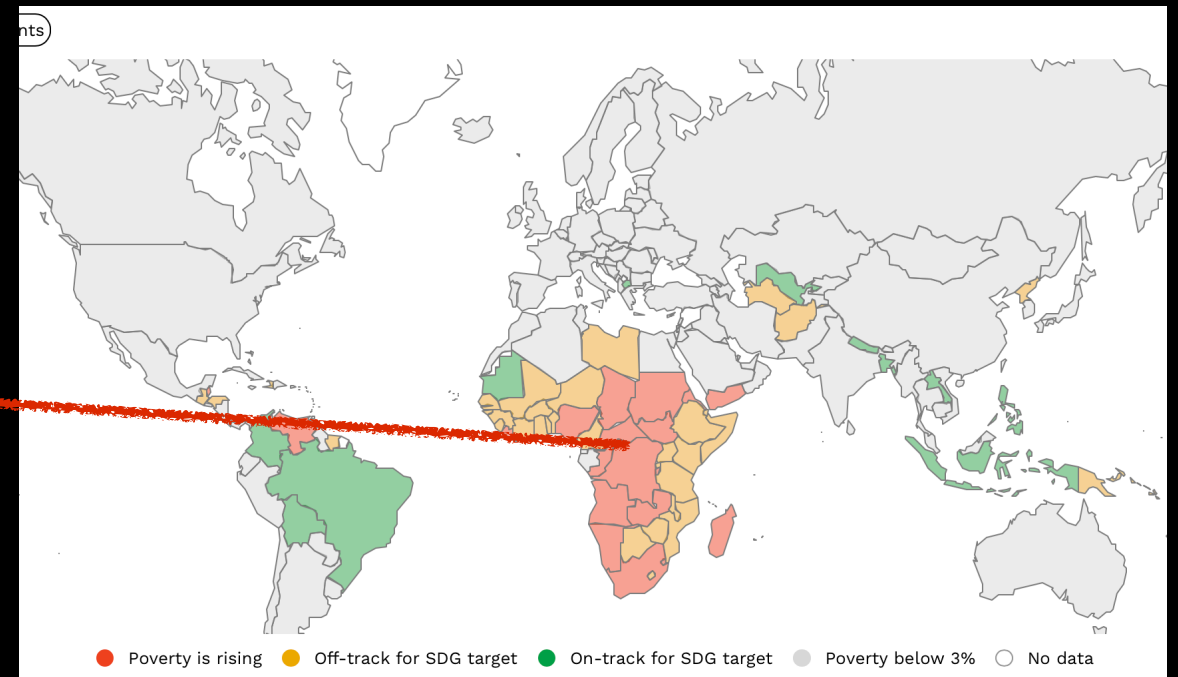


# WORLD POVERTY CLOCK

Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development  
Data from the UN, World Bank, IMF & Country Data  
UN 2030 Goals

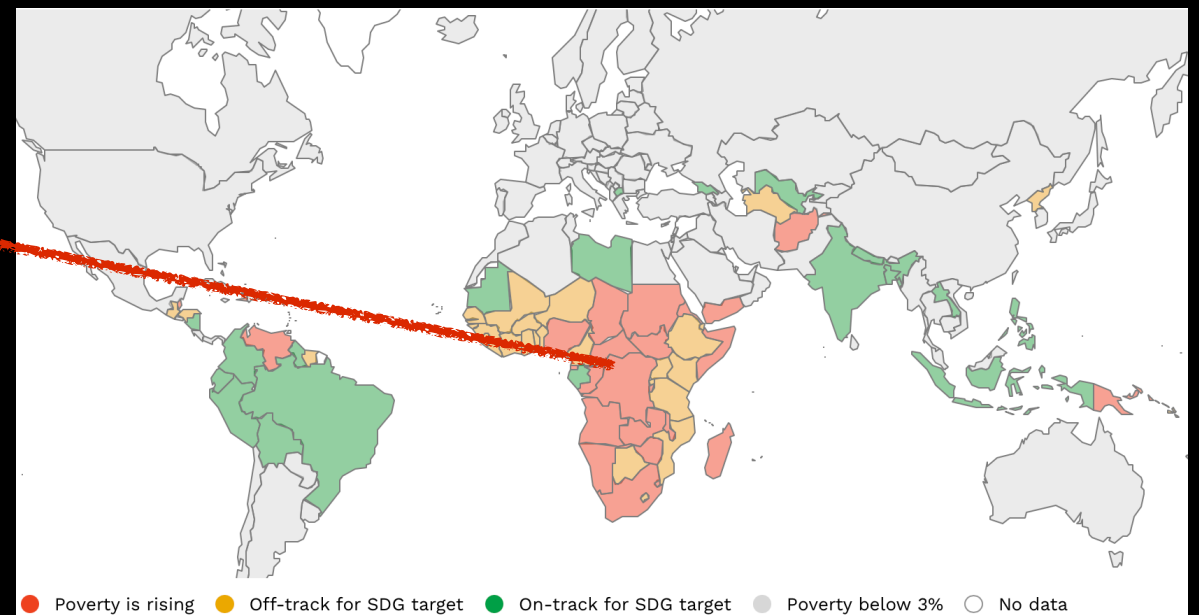
Pre COVID-19 (654m in extreme poverty)

Green = on track  
Yellow = off track  
Coral = poverty increasing



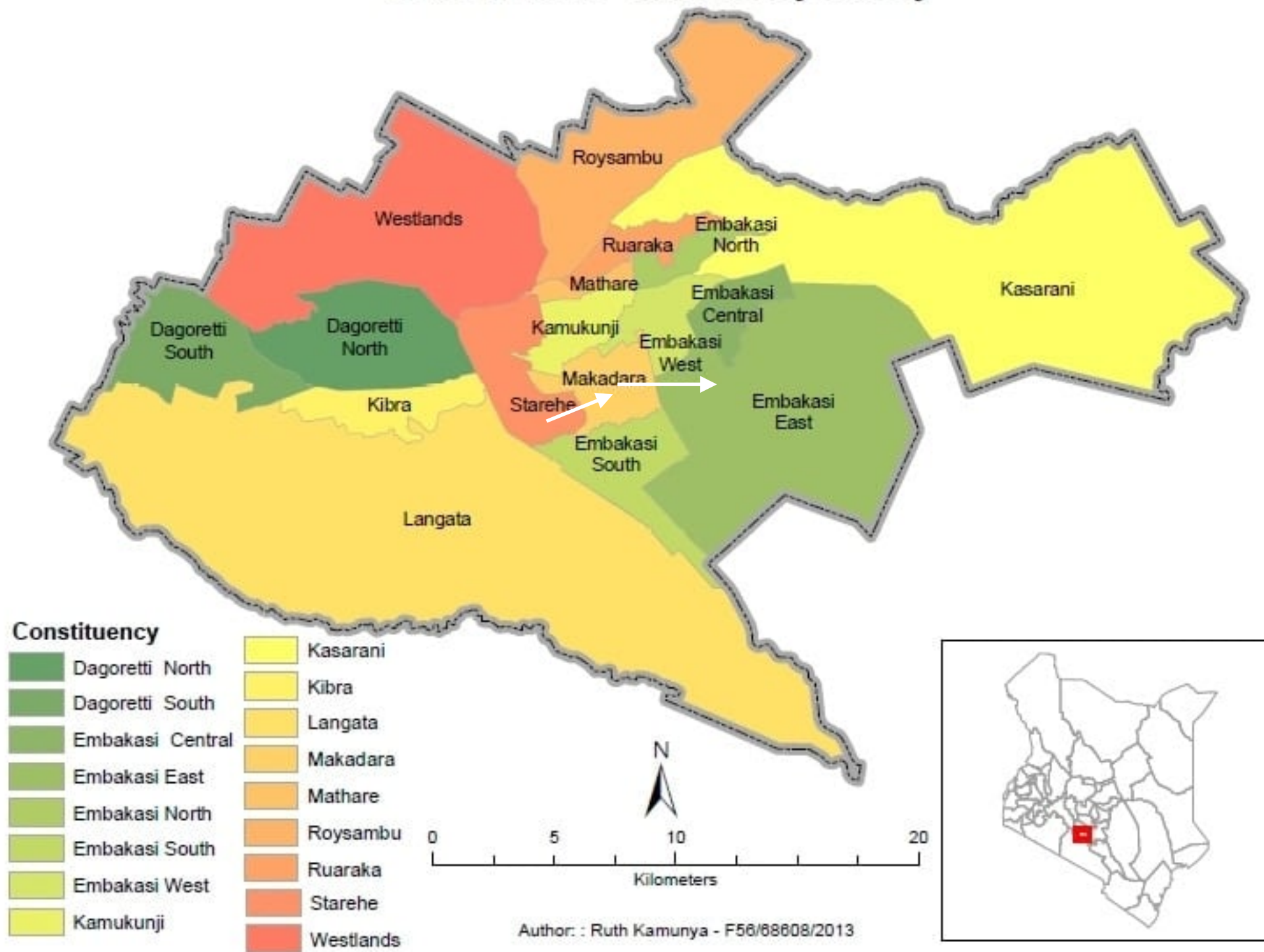
Extreme poverty is centralized on the continent of Africa

Post COVID-19 (742m in extreme poverty)





## STUDY AREA – Nairobi City County



MUKURU SLUM (825K RESIDENTS)  
ACROSS 3 SUB COUNTIES

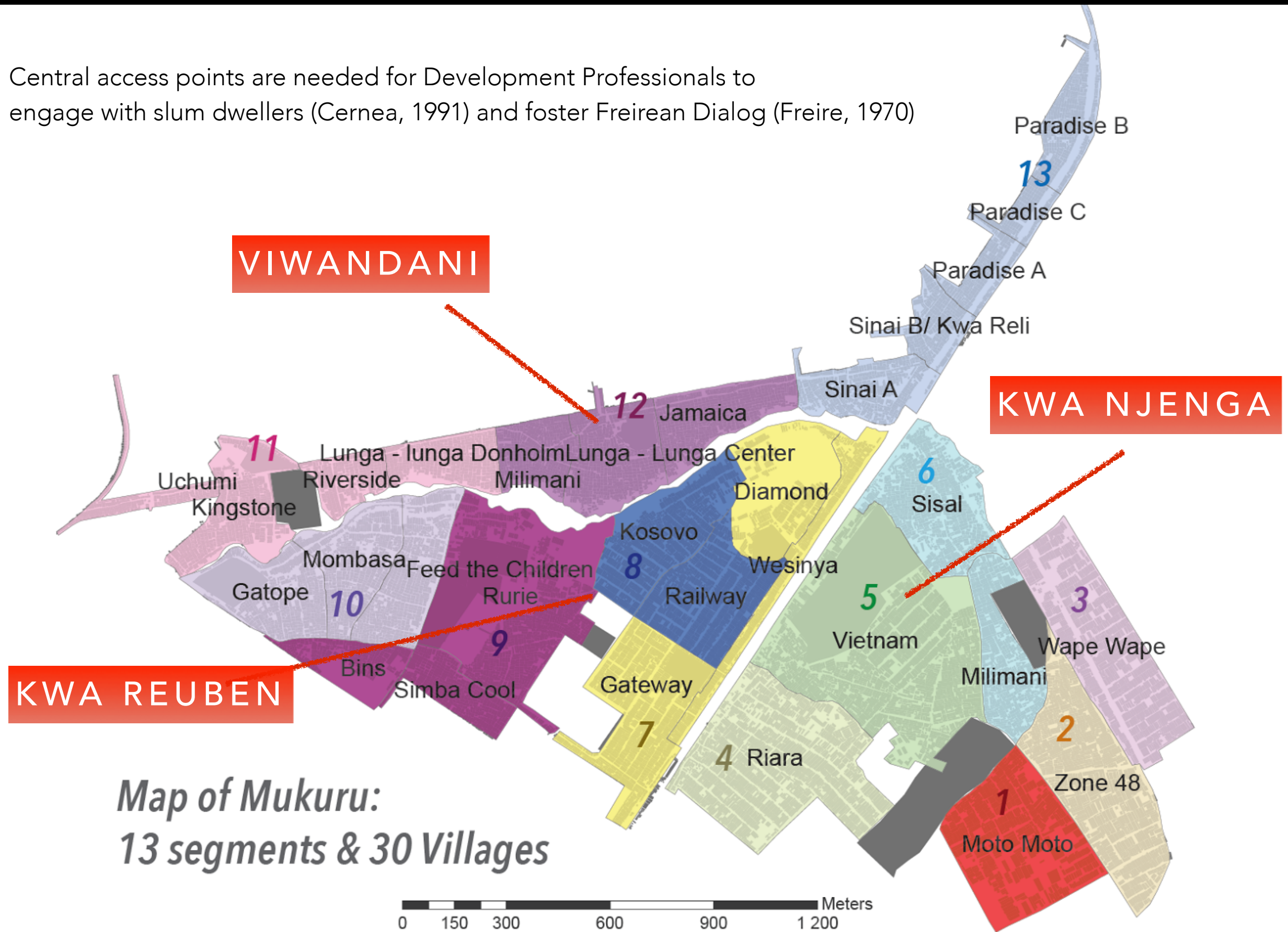




MUKURU VILLAGES; ACROSS STAREHE, MAKADARA & EMBAKASI



Central access points are needed for Development Professionals to engage with slum dwellers (Cernea, 1991) and foster Freirean Dialog (Freire, 1970)



## MAJOR PARTITIONS OF MUKURU



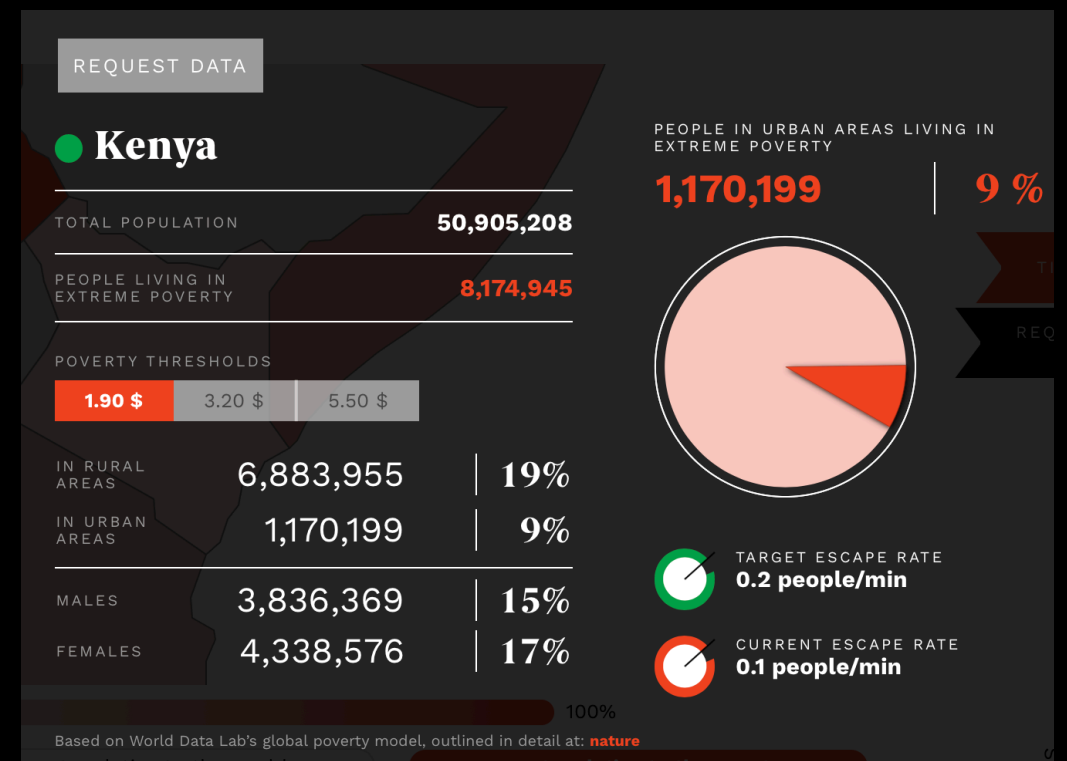
Extreme poverty count is off:

## World Poverty Clock

1.17 million in extreme poverty in Urban Kenya

## Kenyan Census 2019

- 4.4 million people = Nairobi population
- 2.5 million people live in slums, 1m in Mukuru Slum



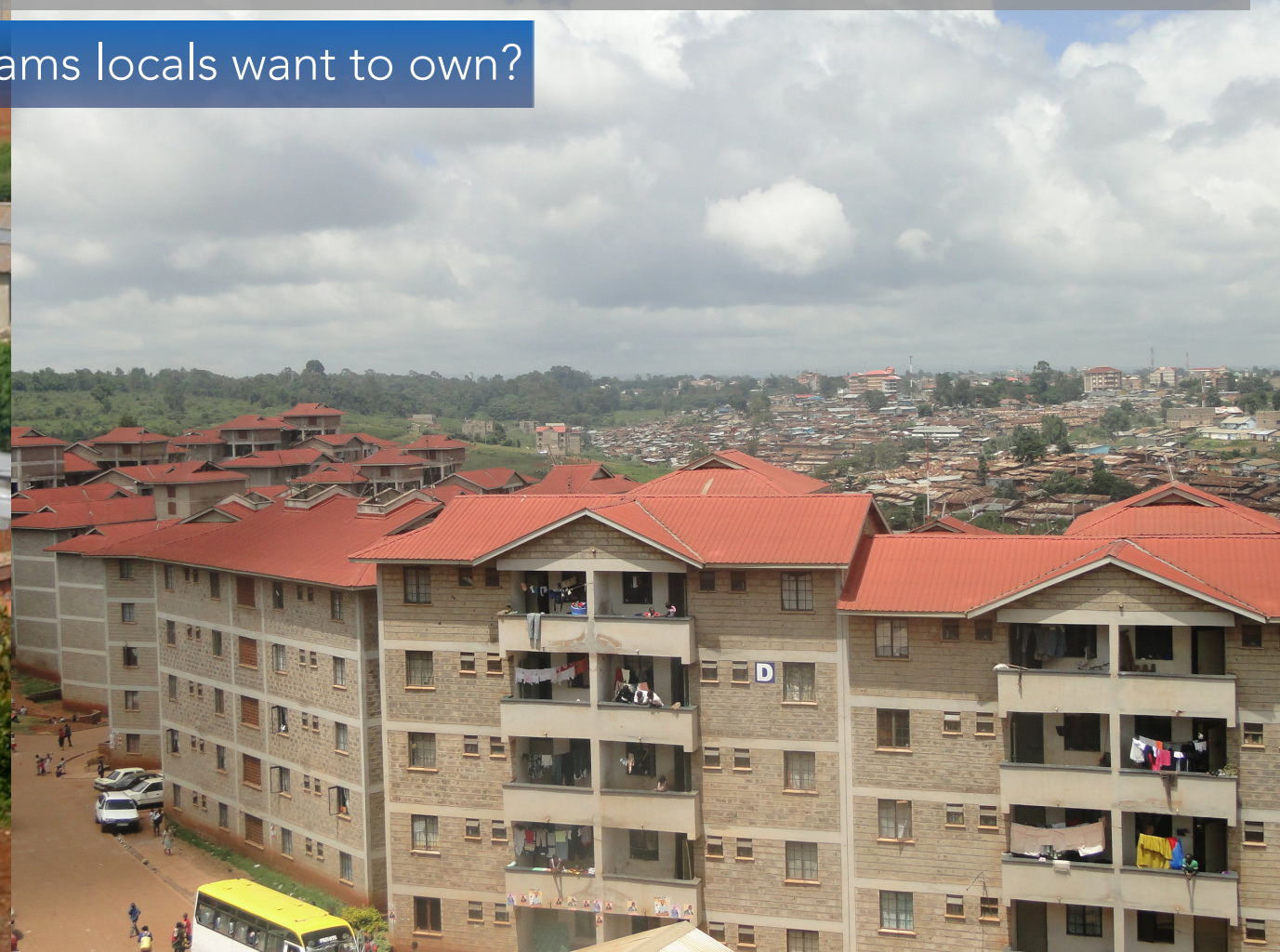
charts from [worldpoverty.io](#)





The goal of foreign aid is to “equip people and nations to deliver services and take ownership of programs over the long term,” Department of State and USAID, 2010.

Are we developing programs locals want to own?





# KEY LITERATURE

## ➔ Development Literature

Cernea, Michael. 1991. *Putting People First: Sociological variables in rural development*. (revised edition) New York: Oxford University Press,

## ➔ Ethnographic /Cultural Literature

Freire, Paulo. *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing Inc, 1970. ISBN: 9780826412768



MICHAEL CERNEA (FOR DEV. PROFESSIONALS):  
DEVELOPMENT IS SUCCESSFUL WITH  
DIRECT INPUT FROM COMMUNITIES  
(HUMAN-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT)

PAULO FREIRE (FOR SLUM DWELLERS):  
CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS PLAYS A ROLE  
IN CLARIFYING NEEDS  
(UNDERSTANDING YOUR PREDICAMENT)

NO HYPOTHESIS:  
EXPLORATORY RESEARCH



# METHODOLOGY

## Surveys - for Development Professionals

Questions on poverty reduction program types, successes and failures

## Focus Groups - for Residents of Mukuru

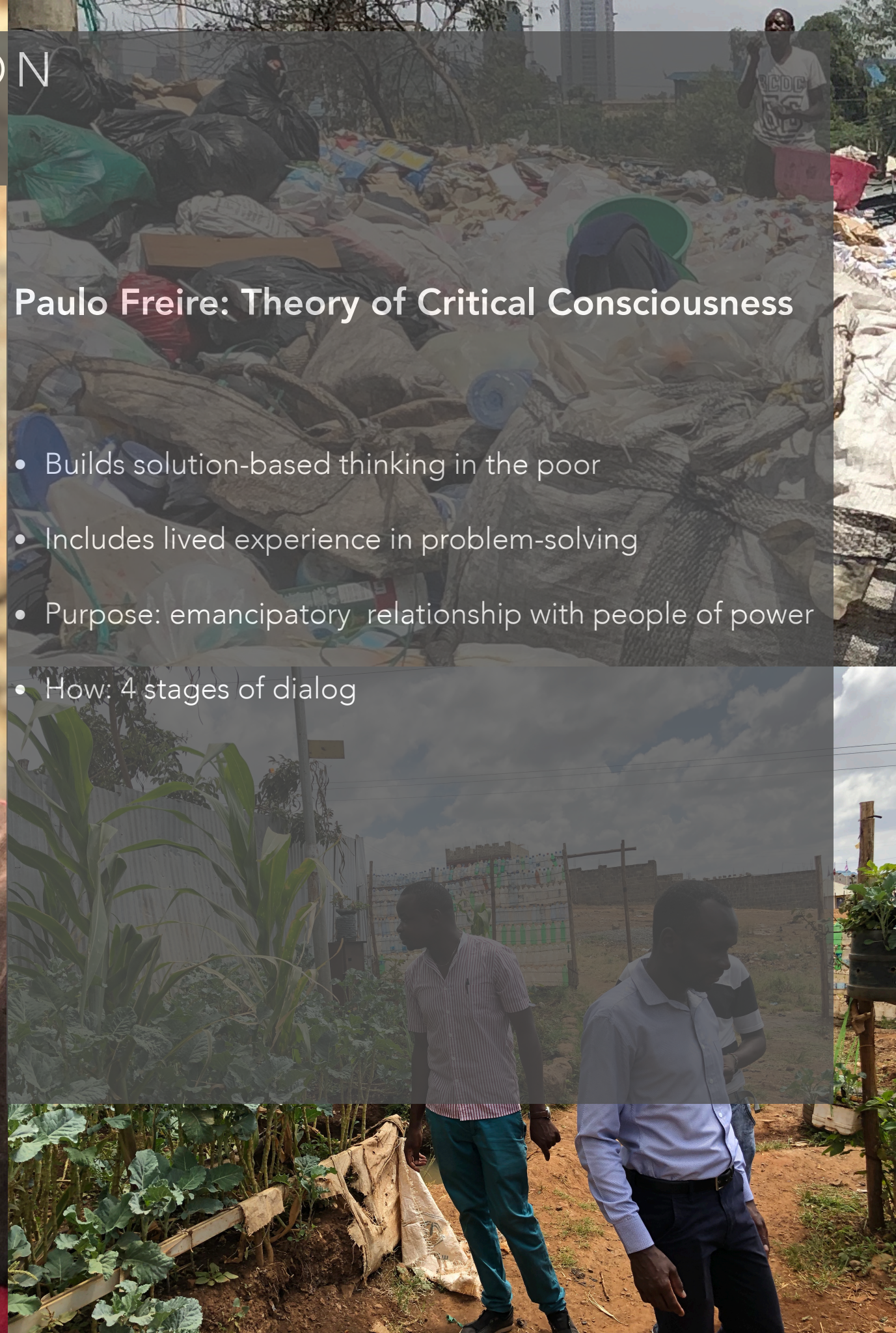
Questions on poverty reduction programs, daily income, immediate and long-term needs



# THEORETICAL APPLICATION

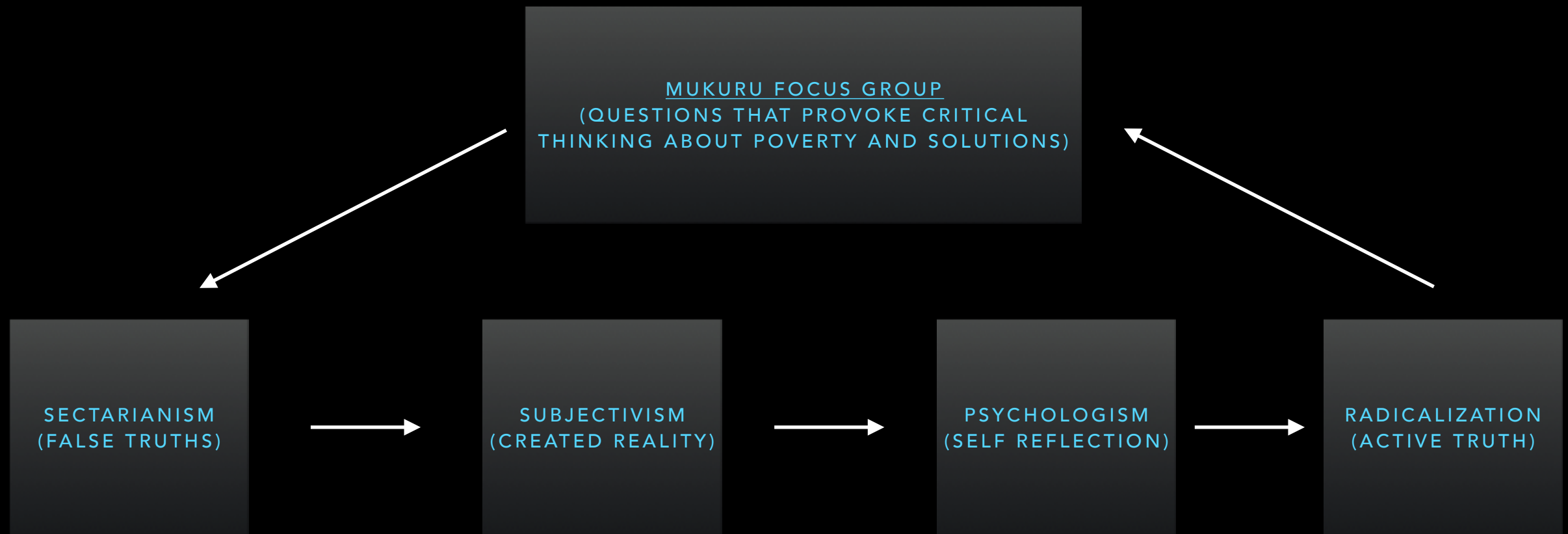
## Paulo Freire: Theory of Critical Consciousness

- Builds solution-based thinking in the poor
- Includes lived experience in problem-solving
- Purpose: emancipatory relationship with people of power
- How: 4 stages of dialog





# HOW I WILL USE FREIRE'S THEORY





# CODING - DEV. PROFESSIONALS

## 5 independent variables

- staff size
- organization focus
- years of experience
- years at current job
- time spent in office vs. field

## 8 dependent variables

- success at their org
- their org active in slums
- effective programs
- ineffective programs
- familiar with slums
- benefit of traditional programs
- using human-centered design
- create a program; multi or single focus

40 cross tabulations - 4 significant

# FINDINGS: DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONALS

- 90% of organizations think finance programs are the most successful to help slum dwellers (0.001)
- 46% of smaller orgs are familiar with the informal settlements, 71% of larger orgs are NOT familiar (0.048)
- 85% of smaller orgs believe PPPs are not effective in helping slum dwellers, 67% of large orgs feel PPP's are effective (0.052)
- 50% of those with 20+ years of development experience feel that education is not effective in reducing poverty for slum dwellers (0.085)



# FINDINGS: FOCUS GROUP

WOMEN & MEN ages 21-42

- Single mothers w/3 children /Men 25% married
- Some children not in school (inability to pay school fees)
- “Gig work” within the slums
- Unfavorable about Job Training - there are no jobs. Men trained in electrical engineering.
- Cash = short-term need / long-term needs = no critical thoughts beyond the needs of the day

## Freirean Theory applied

Dialog process that moves from subjective false realities to self analysis and critical thinking (critical consciousness) regarding solutions to poverty

- (1) avoid corruption and bribes needed to obtain jobs
- (2) to take control of their lives and not be dependent on aid
- (3) prefer to have their own business with set-up and support of the Development Community

# ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

1.) FREIREAN DIALOGICS CAN BE USED AS A TOOL TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF SLUM-DWELLERS FOR BETTER PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO END EXTREME POVERTY.

2.) SLUM-DWELLERS WANT SUPPORT TO START MICRO-BUSINESSES

- 90% of organizations think finance programs are the most successful to help slum dwellers (0.001)  
Slum dwellers want to start their own businesses = Match
- 46% of small orgs are familiar with the slums, 71% of larger orgs are NOT (0.048)  
Renew the vision in Michael Cernea's human-centered development model
- 85% of smaller orgs believe PPPs are not effective in helping slum dwellers, 67% of large orgs feel PPP's are effective (0.052)  
Larger orgs that build private sector relationships can serve as a bridge to smaller orgs who work in the informal settlements.
- 50% of dev. professionals with 20+ years of experience feel that education is not effective in reducing poverty for slum dwellers (0.085).  
Slum dwellers go deeper into poverty trying to pay school fees = Match





Full Dissertation in Progress

N500 - Focus Groups

N100 - Interviews

# METHODOLOGY: FOCUS GROUPS, INTERVIEWS

## Mukuru Focus Groups - 4 days

- 4 Women's groups + 4 Men's groups (10 people/group ) per day
- 4 researchers, 2 groups each /day x 4 days
- Total Men (N160) + Total Women (N160) = Total (N320)\*  
\*(N384) calculated as best sample size = 1.5 extra group per researcher
- Due to COVID-19, affiliate team in Nairobi ([www.mawazoinstitute.org](http://www.mawazoinstitute.org))
- Intercept method at Community Center, Renumeration \$2
- Videotaped, Sessions held in Swahili/English
- Data coded by Freirean themes (1-4):
  1. sectarianism/false truth,
  2. subjectivism/created reality,
  3. psychologism/self reflection,
  4. radicalization/active truth

## Sample questions

- Do you think there is a way out of poverty for slum dwellers? (sectarianism)
- Do you think poverty is an issue for you alone? (subjectivism)
- What do you think causes poverty? (psychologism)
- If you could develop a poverty reduction program, what would it include? (radicalization)



# METHODOLOGY: INTERVIEWS, FOCUS GROUPS

## Interviews with Dev. Professionals

- Telephone or Zoom
- NGOs, govt. workers, academics, non-profits, etc. = wide variety for external validity
- independent variables (ex: organization size, org history)
- dependent variables (ex: successful programs, program approach)
- Quantitative data (SPSS/significance) + Qualitative data

## Sample questions

- How familiar are you with poverty in the slums of Nairobi?
- Do you think traditional development programs have reduced extreme poverty in the informal settlements?
- If you could develop a poverty reduction program however you wish, what would it include?

# A NEW THEORETICAL MODEL

THEORY OF EXTREME  
POVERTY REDUCTION

5 CONDITIONS  
FOR SUCCESS

Start here

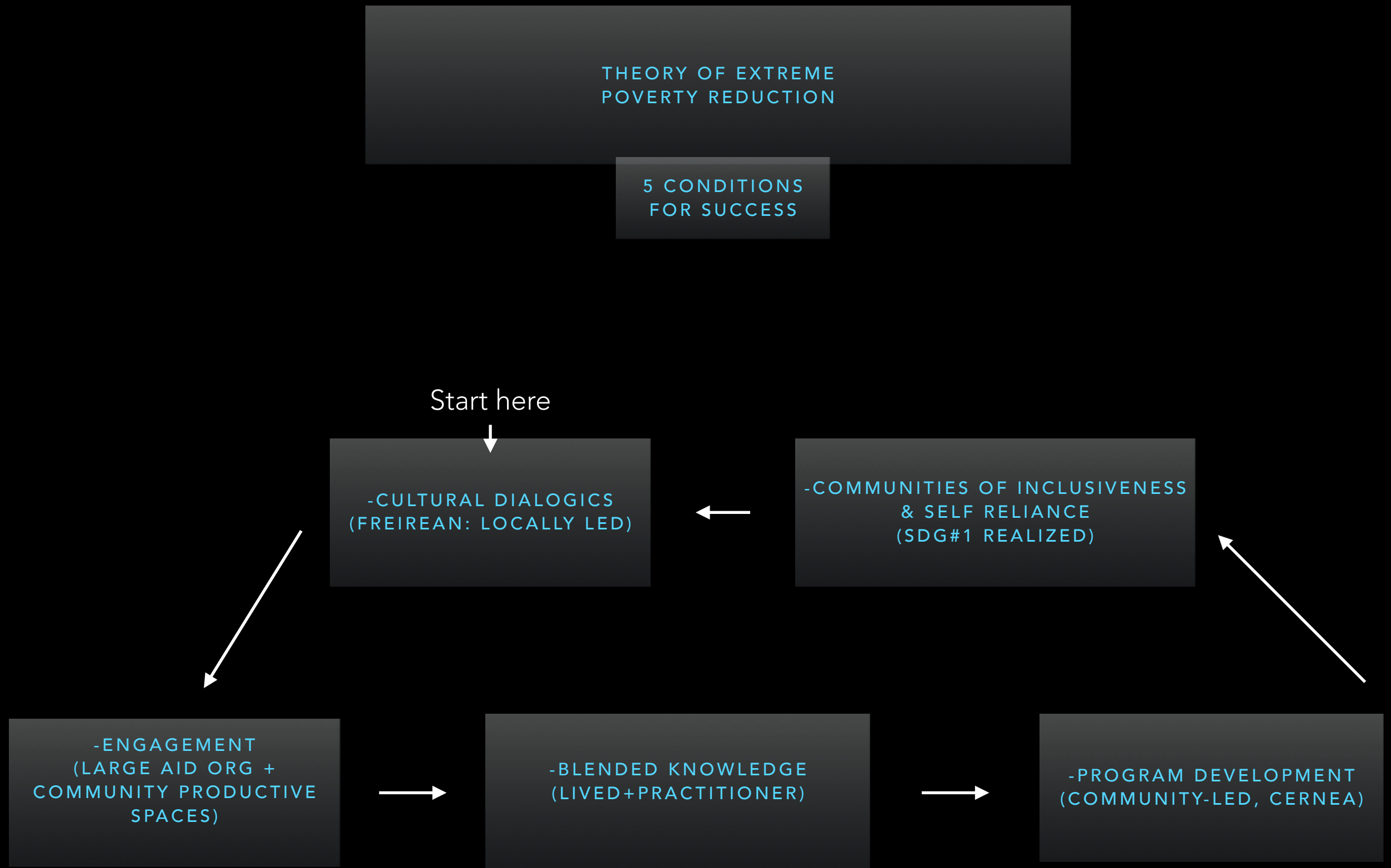
-CULTURAL DIALOGICS  
(FREIREAN: LOCALLY LED)

-COMMUNITIES OF INCLUSIVENESS  
& SELF RELIANCE  
(SDG#1 REALIZED)

-ENGAGEMENT  
(LARGE AID ORG +  
COMMUNITY PRODUCTIVE  
SPACES)

-BLENDED KNOWLEDGE  
(LIVED+PRACTITIONER)

-PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT  
(COMMUNITY-LED, CERNEA)





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