CONSULTING SERVICES ON SECURITY AND SAFETY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Internship Portfolio Report
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October – December, 2012

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Learning Goals Document

Skills goals:

1. Develop an understanding of the practice of urban planning in Kenya
   1. Learning strategy: Research influences on the design of Nairobi and review Kenyan regulatory framework for development
2. Develop critical thinking skills and learn to recognize areas in need of improvement within the Nairobi Metropolitan Region whether it is infrastructure, design policies, services, public transportation, etc.
   1. Learning strategy: Experience and observe what 'works and what doesn't work' and develop and understanding of various 'moving parts' to acknowledge how the city became what it is today and to analyze the best way forward to transform Nairobi into a competing global city
3. Enhance leadership and interpersonal communication skills
   1. Learning strategy: Express my ideas and opinions of urban design strategies from past experience in think tank situations

Knowledge goals:

1. Understand various urban planning policies and projects
   1. Learning strategy: Review past projects conducted by Pleng and learn from my coworkers and boss on how they think about and understand planning
2. Gain experience of how to conduct a thorough analysis and compose a detailed report
   1. Learning strategy: Review, edit, and provide further input for the Situational Analysis Report and Development Control Code for the project on Consulting Services for Security and Safety of the Built Environment, commissioned by the Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development
3. Gain experience in presenting a project to local authorities
   1. Learning strategy: Participate in PowerPoint presentations to the City Council, Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development, and other Local Authorities from surrounding counties

Values goals:

1. Learn about the cultural and political values and differences which shape the way that people build their environment around them
1. Learning strategy: Discuss matters with people on how they view their country and stay in tune with current events by reading local newspapers and watching the news.

2. Understand the role of Pleng and planners within the global context for reshaping cities by enhancing infrastructure and sparking global investment.
   1. Learning strategy: Discuss future goals and vision for Kenya and Nairobi with James, CEO of Pleng (Master planner and engineer).

3. Understand the African city and its people.
   1. Learning strategy: Observe similarities and differences between the North American, South American, European and Indian cities (first-hand experience) and communicate with as many people as I can to understand their values, morals, perspectives, etc.

4. Understand Kenya Vision 2030
   1. Read a copy of the document proposing changes for Kenya Vision 2030 to transform Nairobi Metropolitan Region into a global city.

Career/personal development goals:

1. Create professional contacts for a continued future relationship
   1. Learning strategy: Create a professional bond with James Kiambigi to establish ties between Kenya and the United States.

2. Gain experience and develop understanding of the structure of Pleng as a business and how projects are commissioned and carried out.
   1. Learning Strategy: Work closely with James Kiambigi to understand how I might start a company of my own.

3. Gain experience of how to transform a developing city into a global city that competes to attract investment and the global business class.
   1. Learning strategy: Be as thorough as possible with the Situational Analysis report and obtain copies for my records to show proof of involvement with the project.
Weekly Journal Assignments

Week 1 – October 15 through October 21, 2012

I came here in Kenya to work on a school in the slums of Kibera, the largest slum in Africa housing approximately 1.5 million people, and one of the largest in the world. My project was to assess the situation and apply design measurements to improve the existing quality of the structure of the school and to make any other improvements that stand. The name of the school is Anwa Junior Academy. It is home to 21 orphans and 249 students. The orphans were taken in by the school director Ann, and continue to live there everyday. This makes it a constant struggle for her to provide food for the kids on top of maintaining the school while providing a positive learning environment for enhancing their educational experience.

Before I arrived in Kenya, there were three other interns working at the school doing fundraising through AIESEC. The interns were able to raise $4000 mostly from their home countries and decided to allocate that money to cement, paint and backpacks. The government of Kenya is dedicated to providing free medicine for kids and adults infected with HIV AIDS, and therefore requires that schools in the slums to have cemented floors to help prevent the spread of disease. The interns also bought paint to make the space feel more like a school, painting desks and columns with reds, blues, and yellows. They also noticed that many of the students would be coming to school with torn plastic bags to carry their books and decided to donate 249 backpacks to the school and presented these gifts to them at an ice cream social event they organized in Central Park in Nairobi, the first time outside of the slum for many of the kids. Usually Ann hires security to retrieve the interns at the slum gates and stay within the school for the duration of their stay, but on their last day at Anwa Ann did not have enough money to hire any security, and three men entered the complex shooting a gun and took their backpacks and cameras that they were carrying.

I arrived after all of this happened, and met Ann in Nairobi for the first day and we talked about some issues that she was facing for about 4 hours. She wanted to meet me first outside of the school so she could let me know all of the things that were happening so I would have an understanding before I saw the school. She gave me a list of things that she needed including: food for the orphans, a sleeping quarters for the orphans, more desks and chairs for the students, a partition for the two classrooms that were in one space, and to buy a plot of land outside of Kibera to relocate and rebuild the school entirely. One of the major problems that I immediately began to assess was the lack of funding. The previous interns that were there and fundraising has used to the total of the funds and had left me with nothing. I came into this internship and
asked about the finances and materials that I would be able to use and was told that fundraising was taking place at the moment and when I would arrive there would be resources for me to use, but this was not the case.

**Week 2 – October 22 through October 28, 2012**

After meeting with the school director Ann a couple of times, learning some new information, and visiting Anwa (the school) in Kibera on multiple occasions, we came to a point where the only viable option of sustainability would be to find a new plot of land outside of Kibera to build a new school. The problem of course, is finances, which I am unable to provide (and seems that I am somewhat expected to provide) so the way forward is in question. The government has a program called Kenya Vision 2033 (or 2013-2017, or 2030). Either way, part of the vision includes slum upgrading, and the government has already started this process in Kibera, taking sections of the slum, demolishing it, and rebuilding apartment complexes that the original slum dwellers are unable to afford and are thus even further displaced and have no where to go. The location of Anwa Junior Academy is not far from the recent developments and is likely to be included in the next chunk of land that will be demolished, if not the next after that (so most likely within the next year and a half).

Therefore we had decided that it would be a waste of time and money to make any other renovations or improvements to the existing school and Ann became set on finding a plot of land outside of Kibera where she could take the 21 orphans with her and start fresh and rebuild the school. I love the idea and I think it would be a really good project for me to start my career, in the future. I tried to explain to her saying look, I would love to help and I think this is a great idea and I have a lot of different plans and would like to incorporate allocating some land and even putting a greenhouse on the roof to eliminate the constant food scarcity problem and even provide an additional source of income. But, the reality of the situation is that I do not have the means to create this project at this given point in time. It seems that we do have some time before the government will knock on your door and tell you that you have three months to leave the premises before they come through and knock everything down, and in the meantime when I go back home I can write a book and start a website and start fundraising to make this project a reality, because I did not come here to fundraise and I cannot be spending all of my time here doing that. What I did end up doing for Ann and her orphans is that I bought her 7000 ksh worth of food, about $100 because that was pretty much the only thing on the list that I could help her out with. I still felt bad though, and I knew that even buying her all of that food (25kg of rice, 25 kg of corn meal, 25 kg of flour, 2 tubs of cooking oil, 10 kg of various beans, 3 bags of sugar, 1 bag
of rice) that it would be unsustainable and within a month she and the orphans would be in the same situation, wondering where and how they would get their next meal.

In the meantime, I have been searching for other projects to work on, and ironically, found another school in a different slum around Nairobi that needs help (which also makes me feel bad that I was unable currently help Anwa). This is a project that is not associated with AIESEC or any other organization, but is a school that two other interns that I am living with found and took it upon themselves to help out and make a difference. They asked me to join saying that they could use someone of my expertise. The interns are Phillip from Ireland who is an international business major, and Nicholas from Brazil who is an engineering major, and with myself I think we make a pretty good team to improve this school that has a lot of space and the utmost potential than any other school that I have seen in any of the slums around Nairobi. We are starting a Facebook page with a PayPal account to accept donations, and between the three countries that we are home to and social media I think we can make something happen and maybe even create our own NGO out of it. We brought in some engineers to give us some quotes on the projects we want to start. This school has over 360 students and 110 orphans, 60 boys and 40 girls. The orphans do not have enough beds to sleep on and sleep on the floors most of the time. There is a huge field in the center of the complex, almost like a courtyard with primary classrooms on one side, with the secondary classrooms adjacent to it, with the kitchen in the corner in between the two, the bathrooms in the opposite corner from the kitchen, and the two dormitories across the field from the primary classrooms. Besides the lack of beds, the other major issue is the field, which is covered with large rocks, and metallic rocks that seems like it was once a dumping yard for a local factory. We plan to remove or smash the rocks and cover the field with topsoil and plant grass to give the kids a good environment to play. We also need to tackle the issue of drainage in front and behind the classrooms, which often results in nasty stagnant water that becomes infested with trash. We would also like to address the sanitation of the bathrooms and bring in a septic tank, as well as raising the foundation of the classrooms which often get flooded and rebuilding them. This is a very exciting project and as soon as we get the Facebook page published I will share it with you and I hope that you would also share it with everyone that you know to help our cause. The kids there are absolutely amazing and harbor so much potential if only we can provide them with a better learning environment they will have the opportunity to use education as their ticket out of the slums.

Week 3 – October 29 through November 4, 2012

This week I have been searching for better and more sustainable and suitable internship opportunities for myself. I had a couple of meetings and interviews but none of them really
worked out or fitted what I needed. I meet with another intern to help her design a school in a
different slum around Nairobi. She was working on fundraising for the project and when I went
there and was shown a plot of land that could be used to build the extra classrooms for the
school, but then we found out the next day that it would not be possible, again because of Kenya
Vision 2030. We then met with the school director and the head teacher to discuss pretty much
exactly the same thing that happened with Anwa, where what they wanted from us was to buy
them a plot of land outside of the slums to start fresh because the government was not allowing
and development within the slums.

I had another meeting with a Kenyan youth empowerment organization and they wanted me to
design them a community center with 4 different regional locations. The problem with this
opportunity was not the finances or the credibility but the location. It was based 6 hours away on
the border with Uganda. In light of gaining 160 hours I did not take this opportunity and continued
searching. That's when I got my meeting with James from Pleng Ltd.

Pleng stands for Professional planners and engineers. This is a very good company that got
commissioned by the Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development City Council for consulting
services to conduct a report on security and safety of the built environment. This project is
designed to be in accordance with the Kenya Vision 2030. It involves a three-part report, an
Inception report, a Situational Analysis report, and the Development Control Code. After our
interview, I immediately started working and began to read the progress on the reports. James
wants me to read and edit the document as well as provide further input and analysis with my
international experience and expertise in global cities, as this is what the project is essentially
gearred towards doing: transforming Nairobi into a global city which is part of the Kenya Vision
2030.

**Week 4 – November 5 through November 11, 2012**

We have a meeting with the City Council on Thursday November 22nd to give a PowerPoint
presentation of our report and to give them the completed document. With the deadline
approaching we have been working very hard and long hours with the three other planners and
with the CEO, James. We have been going through all of the slides and deciding what is good,
what needs to be adjusted, what can stay and what should go. There are many slides, and with
each of us discussing a slide for 5 minutes or so, it has turned into a very long process.

Another thing that we have been doing which has been very enjoyable to me, is the conceptual
framework of the project: analyzing the tasks and goals of the project, how we are structuring the
report, the recommendations that we are putting forth, and the development control code. We also work with an architect who is providing plans and models as examples of the proposed guidelines of the development control code that we would like the four surrounding counties to adopt.

The basis of the project is a regional comprehensive plan of Nairobi County, and three other surrounding counties. The idea is that Nairobi is experiencing rapid growth and urbanization and is naturally a hub for Eastern Africa. However, as is, Nairobi cannot support the expected growth that they will experience. The goals of Kenya Vision 2030 aims to turn Nairobi into an established global city, and the Ministry has recognized that they cannot get there without addressing issues of functionality, safety and security of the built environment, and that they must make their city an efficient and sustainable city to support growth and attract business investment and the new international division of labor.

**Week 5 – November 12 through November 18, 2012**

Our deadline is still approaching rather quickly and James has decided to rent us a house in Thika Greens for us to stay and work in. I live in South B (45 mins south of Nairobi) and work in Toll Station (45 mins north of Nairobi almost to Thika), which means I have to get up very early every morning for a long commute to work. Thika Greens is a new development of a gated community outside of Thika. Our boss rented a house for us there and we had a cook come and prepare meals for us everyday. We stayed there all week, from Monday to Saturday, and worked more than 12 hours a day! It got a little overwhelming, but it was also very different. Instead of being in the city, I was now trapped in a suburban-gated community with my fellow planners.

James would come to the house everyday and we would all continue to work together on the different sections that composed the Situational Analysis Report. The report includes (chapter 1) introduction, (ch.2) safety and security of the built environment, (ch.3) legal and institutional frameworks, (ch.4) selected case studies, (ch.5) the Nairobi metropolitan region: physical, socio-economic and administrative context, (ch.6) methodology, (ch.7) situational analysis, (ch.8) towards a safer metropolitan region for sustainable urbanization, (ch.9) fundamental tools to combat the safety and security challenge, and (ch.10) conclusions.

Our presentation will just cover the Situational Analysis section, which covers infrastructure, planning and regulatory framework, settlements and housing development, environmental safety and management, disaster management and emergency response, and urban design. We discovered that the urban design section was not very strong, so I was given the task of re-writing
this section and making the PowerPoint for urban design. I feel both honored and up for the challenge that I am trusted and respected as much as I am and James giving me authority and freedom to conduct a section of the report, as he considers me an expert in the area. He also wants me to talk first during our presentation, to catch them off guard and set the tone, if you will.

Week 6 – November 19 through November 25, 2012

Meanwhile working at Pleng, on the weekends I try to go to the school in the slums where myself and the other interns have started the Maendeleo project. We have run into some problems with the project. We discovered that they actually didn’t own the land that the school/orphanage is located, that it was actually owned by co-operative bank and that a couple of months back they tried putting the land up for auction but there was a community protest which halted the efforts. The case then went to the high court because apparently the bank gave out a loan to the owner of the land but the payments we defaulted (which was more than 15 years ago), he left, and the school squatted and built their establishment, and the bank was trying to repossess the land.

We called a meeting with the school director, teachers, and title deed owners, and the village elder (yes, he has the title of village elder) to discuss this matter with them. They told us that they had documents that they were collective owners of the land and that they were in the meantime protected. I explicitly told them my previous encounters with projects going nowhere, especially with Kenya Vision 2030, and that we could not start accepting donations from people for a project that would not be sustainable. I told them we wanted to start a program to have people continue to come and help them out, and that if I came back 15 years from now, the school would still be there. Everything seemingly worked out, but another thing we haven’t been able to figure out yet is the PayPal account through Facebook so we can start accepting donations from people. We have created the page but we haven’t published it yet because we want the donations tab to be in operation.

Back to Pleng, it took me longer than expected to write up the report on urban design. The PowerPoint was fairly easy because you only need general points and can explain them as you discuss them. But I am very happy with the outcome and quality of my work, and the others were very happy as well. James expressed interest with me of wanted to develop a working relationship together in the future, whether it be coming back and working for him, or allowing him to send people my way and come work for me for when I start my own company. And he also wants to start an international school in the future called Spleng (School of planning and engineering) that is internationally based, and would like me to be involved as well. We were supposed to have the meeting with the City Council and Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan
Development this week, however we encountered an issue. Apparently they weren’t ready to meet with us, but that was probably a good thing because we weren’t exactly ready to present everything anyways. So our project is now extended and they also want us to travel around to the 15 different local authorities that will be affected by this project that fall within the four counties, and present the project to each of them. This could also be more beneficial for me as well, getting more experience and more repetition practicing presenting my ideas to people in power.

**Week 7 – November 26 through December 2, 2012**

This week we have still be revising and editing the final report of the situational analysis of the built environment. I have been assigned the tasks of the introduction chapter with global, regional and national perspectives, chapter 4 with selected case studies and the urban design section in chapter 7. There is still a lot of work to be done but at the same time we are also trying to prepare for our meeting that we have set up next week for the presentation of the situational analysis to 15 different local authorities dispersed throughout the four surrounding counties.

The workings of my goals are coming into fruition. My skills goals have been satisfied, as well as the knowledge goals. We haven’t had any presentations yet, as for the third knowledge goal, and for the first, I have been discussing a lot of urban planning practices with one of my co-workers Alex, who also teaches urban planning at the University of Jkuat. An area that could have been better thus far, but still has room for improvement, is working closely with James. We have had a lot of interaction, but he has more than one project on the table right now and cannot be at our office everyday, though in the beginning and the week we spent at Thika Greens, he was there everyday.

**Week 8 – December 3 through December 10, 2012**

This is the last week of my internship because I have to come home and graduate! I thought about extending my stay but instead I have decided to continue working with Pleng abroad and sending them my work via email. There is still some work to be done with finalizing the report and I also need to read/edit the whole report, especially since I am the only native English speaker. I have been given the freedom to add/change/edit information as I wish because I think I have proved myself to be a knowledgeable asset to the project.

We have had several meetings this week with various local authorities (county councils, city councils, etc.) and because of that we haven’t been able to work much on the report. The meetings were kind of chaotic, in that we have set up times and dates but for each one we went
to there seemed to be some kind of miscommunication and not all of the members were present. But this has been a very good learning experience for me. After the first meeting we got some very good critical feedback, which has helped us a lot, in our presentation and our thinking of the project. First off, it was important that we are not just giving a lecture, but that we have some sort of opportunity for feedback, not just at the end of the very long 2-hour presentation. Second, it was also important to incorporate a regionalism approach instead of just mainly focusing on the City of Nairobi. Especially in terms of smart, coordinated and generated growth, land use policies, etc. and also because 14 out of the 15 local authorities are not going to be representative of Nairobi directly. I could see how issues like this would also play out with the Milwaukee 7, from how Milwaukee County versus Waukesha County versus Racine County, etc. all view each other within the regional context surrounding the City of Milwaukee.

Most, if not all of my goals have been successful. I can provide further analysis in the portfolio report. Especially the career goals, I feel this internship has been very helpful for my future path, and this has been the perfect opportunity as I would like to continue working in consulting services for various metropolitan regions across the world, and this has provided a very good basis for me. Also, I will continue working with Pleng, even after I graduate, and there could be a future in that as well.
Internship Organization Information - Pleng, LTD

Pleng Limited is incorporated under the Companies Act (Cap. 486) laws of Kenya. We offer a one-stop shop on construction related services. The company whose existence runs over quarter a score boasts of making a name for itself not only in the local (private and government) but also in the international market, making it a force to be reckoned with.

Through highly qualified & innovative personnel with vast experience in various diverse fields, Pleng offers quality & timely services adhering to client’s specifications within the confines of the local and international standards.

The company is lead by a team of hardworking visionary directors who are registered and licensed to practice by the relevant regulatory and professional institutions like:

- Engineering Registration board (ERB)
- Institute of Engineers of Kenya (IEK)
- Physical planners Registration board (PPRB)
- National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
- Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors (BORAQ)

Our vision and mission springs from the need to offer globally acceptable and competitive services in the most effective, efficient and economical way using the most advanced and current technology.

Pleng Limited is a company on an upward move and a leader in quality Service delivery!

Company Vision

To be leader in provision of quality and timely services in the construction industry for meaningful and positive development that suits the needs of a dynamic world.

Our Mission Statement

Provide quality and timely services in Planning, engineering, Project/construction management, Environmental Impact Assessment and Audit, Training, Research, Geographical Information Systems and Quality Management System through innovative but effective and efficient techniques by credible and qualified team of professionals in total compliance, transparency &
accountability in line with global standards and without compromising on health, safety and environment for a sustainable future.

Objectives

1. To remain the best indigenous one stop shop service provider for the construction industry.
2. To provide quality and timely service through effective, efficient and economical solutions.
3. To continually improve the quality of our products and standards of service to our customers through collective lessons & knowledge acquired from past experiences coupled with use of advanced tools and equipment.
4. Provide a working mechanism that fosters team empowerment and personnel training without compromising on their health and safety or the environment for a sustainable future.
5. Promote a profitable and sustainable business activity that meets the customers’ requirements and expectations, remaining ahead of competitors and always recognizing and maximizing on available opportunities.

Inspiration

The work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives and the dreams shall never die.

Our Motto

Beyond innovative construction

Our Core Values

1. Effective, efficient and economical solutions
2. Quality & timely service
3. Teamwork and professionalism
4. Innovativeness, creativity & adaptability
5. Credibility and integrity
6. Compliance, Transparency and accountability
7. Environmental, Health & Safety consciousness
8. Global network and international standards
9. Social Responsibility
Quality Policy

Pleng (K) Limited is committed to timely delivery of effective, efficient, economical and quality services that meets customers needs while observing global standards, laws and regulations that govern the construction industry.

Quality Objectives

1. Continuous review of the company's undertakings to ensure that the company does not become obsolete in the industry.
2. Improve staff competence by training and encouraging innovativeness.
3. Efficient and effective undertaking of environmental friendly projects.
4. Teamwork and team building so as meet the customer needs.
5. Delivery of quality services within the set time frame.

Occupation, Health and safety policy

Pleng (K) Limited is committed to continual improvement in health and safety performance leading to standards beyond legal minimum requirements. It is our policy to adopt all reasonably practical measures to:

1. Strive to create a safe working environment and to uphold environmental friendly practices so as to have positive impacts in all our endeavors.
2. Train the employees on health and safety risks and precautionary measures.
3. Ensure that health and safety at work place is the responsibility of all to monitor through regular inspection and audits.

Planning Division

This division offers services in the field of Urban and Regional Planning in line with the Physical planning Act of 1996 and other related laws and regulations. To ensure quality we employ GIS as main planning tool. Some of the planning assignments that are frequently done include Change of user, Extension of User, extension of lease, strategic planning among others. We further undertake comprehensive and integrated planning of large housing projects including the provision of architectural services using our experienced team of in-house architects and when need arises we hire services of the same.
To mention some of the services offered in this division are

- Preparation of Master plans
- Local Physical development plans
- Strategic Plans
- Action plans
- Socio-economic studies
- Feasibility studies
- Projects evaluation and monitoring
- Change of user, Extension of User & Extension of leases
- Subdivision schemes and other planning issues

These are some of the Planning Projects Undertaken by Pleng Ltd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>SCOPE</th>
<th>CLIENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction of Residential Properties</td>
<td>Extension of User</td>
<td>Industrial &amp; Commercial Development</td>
<td>Mombasa, Kenya</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corporation (ICDC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steel Tower Audits</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Jarso Telecommunications Co. Ltd</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction of a mall</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Suraya Properties Ltd</td>
<td>Kiambu, Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction of 630 capacity, worship place and administration offices and basement conference hall.</td>
<td>Extension Of user</td>
<td>St. Veronica Church</td>
<td>South C, Nairobi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single to Residential Multi-dwelling Apartments</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Feba Radio</td>
<td>Kileleshwa-Nairobi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single to Residential Multi-dwelling Apartments</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Scion Real</td>
<td>Parkland-Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change of density to include 24 housing units</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Riakina Ltd</td>
<td>Inara Daima-Nairobi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution to Residential</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Kuguru Food Complex</td>
<td>Inara Daima-Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subdivision into 17 plots</td>
<td>Subdivision</td>
<td>Kuguru Food Complex</td>
<td>Inara Daima-Nairobi</td>
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<td>Project Description</td>
<td>User Type</td>
<td>Applicant</td>
<td>Location</td>
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<td>Imara Daima-Nairobi</td>
<td>Extension of User</td>
<td>Kuguru Food Complex</td>
<td>Nyari-Nairobi</td>
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<td>Residential to Offices</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Sadiqueh Gulelhussein</td>
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<td>Residential to an Institution</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>East African Wildlife Society</td>
<td>Thompson/Kilimani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural to School</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Brookhouse Schools</td>
<td>Karen/Langata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single dwelling to multi-dwelling</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Shatish-Shah</td>
<td>Westlands-Nairobi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning approval briefs for various GSM base transmitter stations (80 Sites)</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Safaricom Ltd.</td>
<td>Nakuru, Nairobi, Thika, Kitui, Kikuyu, Kiambu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Apartments</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Grey stone Developers</td>
<td>Kilimani-Nairobi</td>
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<td>Executive Apartments</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
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<td>Residential to Offices</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Shatish-Shah</td>
<td>Spring Valley-Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Apartments</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Thogoto, Kikuyu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kitui municipality redevelopment plan</td>
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<td>Kitui Municipality</td>
<td>Kitui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangemi land development</td>
<td>Preparation of Subdivision plan for a 5 Private acre farm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Change of user from residential to offices</td>
<td>Care Kenya</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Beige Investments Ltd</td>
<td>Kileleshwa-Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Preparation of a subdivision plan</td>
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<td>Juja</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property Type</td>
<td>Change of Use</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Change of user</td>
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<td>Parklands-Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nyumbani Childrens Home</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Children of God Relief Institute</td>
<td>Kitui</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thompson Estate Apartment</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Thompson Estate-Nairobi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hundred/Kunde Road Apartments</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Home Plus Ltd</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Glory Group Companies</td>
<td>Ngara- Nairobi</td>
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<td>Westlands- Nairobi</td>
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<td>State House-Nairobi</td>
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<td>Extension of User</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Spring Valley-Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offices</td>
<td>Extension of User</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Westlands Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>School to residential</td>
<td>Change of user</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Karen – Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Car Parking</td>
<td>Extension of User</td>
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<td>Lavington – Nairobi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single dwelling to multi-dwelling</td>
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Sample of Internship Work

Urban Design

7.7.1 Background

The ability to enhance the identity of the city to generate a promotional image that can be broadcasted internationally is one of the most important aspects of urban design within the context of the new global economy. With the rise of globalization and rapid urbanization during the past few decades, the success of cities is dependent on creating efficient, functional, safe and secure urban environments. The global city is characterized as being competitive in the field of informational capitalism and the ability to attract transnational corporations and the new international division of labour. Urban design is critical to the success of these areas in reshaping the urban environment, thereby creating an enhanced global image to ensure the world that the NMR is competitive in the global economy.

The aim of urban design is to make urban areas functional, attractive and sustainable. This can be achieved by employing various urban design practices. One of the most important aspects is providing efficient and effective linkages between people and the urban form/fabric often achieved by an expansive public transportation system such as the metro or subway, high speed rail, light rail, and/or the electric streetcar. The sustainable city is the current demand, and those cities that supply that demand will receive higher global capital than its rivals, most importantly in global tourism and the international division of labor. Sustainability is achieved through urban design practices such as human scale urbanism, mixed-use services, variety of housing options, open green space, and extensive train systems thereby creating compact, walkable places, providing the ability to walk or bicycle and designing away the dependence on the automobile. Global warming is directly related to greenhouse gases (GHGs) emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, mainly the increased worldwide usage of the automobile. The crises of increased GHGs, dwindling resources, overcrowding urbanization and the inability of mobility within the city calls for a sustainable measure of designing away the car. The implications would lower energy usage and save money, reduce global warming emissions, and raise quality of life in cities by increasing mobility and convenience.

Sustainable or “green” public transportation systems can be found in all of the cities that have obtained the alpha global city status, including New York, London, Singapore, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Paris (consistently ranked top 6 global cities). One method of analysis is the Global Cities Competitive Index, which rates the competitiveness of global cities according to their demonstrative ability to attract capital, business, talent and visitors. Of the 120 cities analyzed, Nairobi achieved rank of 115 (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012). However, it is important to note
that the NMR region is expected a 5.2% cumulative average growth over the next decade, and is expected to be among the world's 40 fastest growing cities during this period. Thus, it is imperative that the NMR strives for implementing urban design practices that will result in a higher competitive environment to take full advantage and maximize the potential for growth during this period to compete within the global economy.

The best way to establish or enhance the identity of a city/region is by place making. Place making is achieved by establishing identifiable neighborhoods, unique architecture, aesthetically pleasing public places and vistas, identifiable landmarks and focal points, lively commercial centers, mixed-use development with ground level commercial activity, and safe and attractive public areas. Creating open public spaces, functional streets, and a variety of plots shapes and sizes is essential to providing urban typologies and spatial distribution with a view to creating character, oneness, complementarities, legibility and order. Establishing the order of the city can be broken down into five elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks.

Paths are defined as the channels along which movement flows where the observer customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves. They may be streets, walkways, transit lines, canals, or railroads for example. Paths are the element which predominately composes the city image for the individual, as people observe the city while moving through it. Edges are the element that differentiates one part of the urban fabric from another. They can be defined as the boundaries between two phases, linear elements that break the continuity such as shores, railroad cuts, edges of development, or walls. Such edges may be barriers, more or less penetrable, which close one region off from another; or they can act as joining elements, as seams between two regions. Though not as dominant as paths, edges are important organizing features, particularly in the role of holding together generalized areas such as the outline of a city or districts. Districts can be defined as the medium to large sections of the city, which the observer mentally enters inside of, and which are recognizable as having a common, identifying character. They are also used as external references as to which part or section of the city one referring to and most people structure their city in this manner, with paths and districts the respective dominant elements. Nodes are the strategic points within the city that are the intensive foci points of travel. They may be primary junctions, places of a break in transportation, a crossing or convergence of paths, moments of shift from one structure to another, or the nodes may be simple concentrations characterizing hangout spaces on the street corner or enclosed square. Some of these concentration nodes are the focus of a district and become symbolic, and may also be called cores. Many nodes take on both the qualities of a junction and a concentration, and they can also be related to the concept of the path since junctions are typically the convergence of the path.
Nodes are also related to the concept of the district, since cores are typically the focal point of a district. Lastly, landmarks are another type of point reference, but in this case the observer does not enter within them, they are external reference points. They are usually a rather simply defined physical object such as a building, sign, store, or mountain. Some landmarks are distant ones that can be seen from many angles and distances, used as radial references. Others landmarks are within the city and only are visible in restricted localities and from certain approaches. They are frequently used clues to provide a basis of orientation within the city.

7.7.2  Best practice

Paris, France has exemplified best practice of urban design. Paris establishes the concepts of the five elements, paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. Paths are clearly defined by penetrating boulevards throughout the city, which cut through the urban fabric. The edges are clearly defined by the continuous frontage of the urban fabric, characterized as a single design language, known as the Haussmann Boulevard. The grand vistas of Paris are created by boulevards that are lined by buildings of continuous frontage, which gives the look and feel as one continuous solid object. All of the buildings are connected by incorporating the same design techniques and regulatory standards of heights and distances between floors, while windowsills and ornamentation is in alignment with one another. Districts have clear signage and a distinct feel from the difference in character between adjacent districts. Within all areas of the city, every building has clear visible and legible signage denoting which arrondissement or district it resides in. Paris is divided into twenty arrondissements, each containing its respective nodes and landmarks. The nodes serve as junction points and activity centres, which characterize its district, and often contain open public spaces and transportation hubs, which gain access to the underground metro system. Each arrondissement also has its own landmark which permeates through the urban fabric of the seven storey regulated building height. All one has to do is look to the sky to see which landmark is in their vision to gain clarity and orientation for where they are within the city.
Paris has been able to keep its urban fabric within a manageable human-scale that is not overwhelming, while still creating a liveable yet dense urban environment that is able to house a population of over 2 million people within its city limits. Paris achieved this by employing a mixed-use development and building height regulation, with frequent open public spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy the city without the threat of safety or security. All buildings have a mandated height regulation of seven stories with the first floor and sometimes second dedicated to commercial or retail developments, while the remainder of the upper floors are denoted for urban residential apartments. The only exceptions to this rule are the landmarks, which are able to exceed the building height regulation due to becoming identifiable focal points, not just for the city dwellers, but also for the city's identity within the international context (Eiffel Tower). Yet, perhaps the most important factor, which has led to the success of Paris as a global city, is its sustainable public transportation system, their subway system known as the Metro. The Metro is an incredibly complex, yet extremely efficient, functional, safe, and secure system. Nodal points for the Metro are within walking distance from anywhere within the city limits, and is connected to all parts of the system with a simple transfer between lines. It is very efficient and convenient as to there is signage within the subway which indicates which line you are on, where transfer points are, and how long the wait is until the first and second trains will arrive, and the wait is never longer than 4 minutes.
The effectiveness of Paris’ Metro system relieves incredible pressure from the dependence of the automobile and the stresses they impose on the urban fabric. This is important because it allows city dwellers to be independent from the automobile with complete mobility and walkability anywhere within the city limits. It reduces the city’s greenhouse gases emissions and makes the city a cleaner and more attractive place to live.

7.7.3 Current Situation
Being an important aspect of planning, urban design has often been neglected in the NMR. Most of the designs cover more than one site and involve many owners, users and government agencies. While carefully designed and executed urban design creates appealing community structures and spaces, leading to a positive human experience and fostering a high quality of life, an observation throughout the NMR exemplified a different experience. Some neighbourhoods and LA’s have a defining urban form while others like Limuru and Kikuyu are poorly designed. Conversely, a critical analysis of all the local authorities revealed that only the City Council of Nairobi had a functional department in charge of urban design. For regions where urban design policies and land use goals are working together, they affect the establishment and maintenance of the neighbourhoods, transport corridors, centres, and open spaces that are integral to a region’s vitality and image.

7.7.3.1 Public Transportation
There exists a lack of an efficient and sustainable public transportation system within the NMR, which causes serious concern. The Nairobi Metropolitan Region is expected to experience a 5.2% growth over the next decade, which will result in even further immobility and congestion, an already major concern. Traffic conditions currently in Nairobi are characterised by congested and unsafe roadways with unreliable performance. The NMR is in need of a sustainable public transportation system that would provide an aid to the lack of linkages between urban centres and reduce fossil fuel dependence and high-energy consumption. The dependence on automobile transportation also adds a threat to the safety and security for pedestrian travellers, and highly discourages the ability for the city being walkable. Sustainable transportation systems can manifest in the forms of subways, light rails, high-speed rails, or electric streetcars.
7.7.3.2 Paths - Transportation corridors and Street layout

For a city with roughly four million inhabitants, Nairobi has few streets to serve traffic demand relative to cities of a smaller size in countries with more motorised traffic. The city’s physical street infrastructure consists primarily of paved roads emanating radial from the centre of the city to surrounding neighbourhoods and communities beyond. There are only a handful of roads linking the radial arteries outside of the central business district. Major intersections are typically managed with roundabouts and there are no signalised intersections outside of the CBD. Since there are few streets, and most arterials are radial, vehicular trips between different neighbourhoods must share limited paved street space, concentrating traffic onto the sparse network of major roads. This is particularly problematic in and around the CBD. The connections between the major arterials are few and far between, so there are usually no more than one or two reasonable routes for any trip. This means that traffic cannot be redistributed to use street infrastructure more efficiently. Due to the lack of ring roads, many peripheral trips must pass through the CBD, which compounds traffic congestion in the centre.
The road network in core Nairobi consists of a main highway, stretching from Northwest to Southeast, and another group of other roads. These main roads represent one of the important factors forming the mental image of the city. Two International Trunk roads criss-cross the city: the Mombasa-Busia road and Nairobi-Thika-Garissa road. It is the character and design features of each transport element that shapes the city's image and vitality. Some roads in the city are characterized by certain commercial activities. Some have magnificent buildings and billboards by side, while others have public means of transportation: bus stops and parking. Normally, the visual element has been strongly affected by the size of the road and presence of road furniture along the road as shown below.

The street layout, which is an important component of the Metro's urban design, is diverse in the region. They range from a variety of avenues of the CBD districts with street sections of three-lane carriageway to one lane carriageway containing parking on both sides of the street. Most roads especially within Nairobi City have intersection each with roundabouts that have aesthetically landscaped. Others have planted trees along the roadsides that improve the quality of the environment besides creating an aesthetic appeal.
Mostly, in Nairobi, it can be noted that the CBD areas are almost always designed by adopting the rectangular grid pattern. Some smaller activity centres like Westlands areas, the grid pattern has expanded grid further out from the centre but maps also show that, for Nairobi in general, as the distance from the CBD increases a variety of patterns emerge in no particular discernible grid order e.g. Upper Hill area and Community areas.
For Nairobi, pedestrian footbridges, which are considered elements of non-motorised traffic, are important components of urban design of the city due to their distinctiveness in design in some ways. We have several of these at Machakos country bus station, and along Haille Selassie Avenue connecting the area around Times Tower and Kenya Poly Technique University College.

7.7.3.3 Open public spaces

The most remarkable open spaces in the NMR are Uhuru Park and Uhuru Gardens located along Uhuru Highway near the city centre and along Langa'ta road respectively. Uhuru Park and Uhuru Gardens are large urban green spaces in the Metro. The Nairobi Arboretum, also located near the University of Nairobi, provides a restful setting for a walk, located two miles north of the city centre, which is a well-preserved landmark of the woodlands that covered the area before the housing boom. These open spaces, due to their scale and national importance, symbolize one of the most outstanding landmarks in the Metro. Besides, several neighbourhood green gardens exist between various residential blocks in the Metro as seen in the photos below.
While Uhuru Park, Uhuru and Jeevanjee gardens are well maintained and orderly, others gardens in the metro are left in bad physical condition without any means of regular maintenance e.g. Machakos and Christina Wangari Gardens.

![Christina Wangari Gardens in Thika Town](image1)

Other open spaces especially in residential areas are used for aesthetic functions in which, the public are not allowed to enter. They are surrounded by fences, which have a negative impact on the unity between inhabitants and their surrounding urban environments.

![Private Gardens are accessible to the public only](image2)

### 7.7.3.4 Edges - defining features

Edge-defining feature are the linear elements which differentiate one part of the urban fabric from another. Typically, they are the clear boundaries between two kinds of areas, which act as lateral references between features. Most importantly, edges are considered to be important organizing features for many people, particularly in the role of holding together generalized areas. Some examples of strong edge defining features within the Nairobi Metro include: Karen forest in the
west and the Nairobi National Park on the southern edge, both with distinguishing clear edges. However, there is a lack of man-made edge defining features within the urban fabric, which differentiate one district from another.

7.7.3.5 Districts - Skyline-CBD and Upper hill

Nairobi has an impressive skyline, which has seen some dynamism in the last decade. From the CBD, which is home to one of the tallest buildings in East and Central Africa, to the Westlands region, the skyline has been changing. In the recent past, we have witnessed a burgeoning development of skyscrapers in Upper hill area and the skyline is blending well with the CBD. However, within the context of urban design, it is difficult for individual buildings competing for their right within the skyline to be read as a single continuous architectural language, which clearly defines the character of a district. A lack of symmetry and continuity with an addition of conflicting design languages creates a disharmony between the city and its identity.
Activity centres are a mixed-use urban area where there is a concentration of commercial and other land uses and includes central business districts of cities and other commercial centres. They can often be described as the core of a district or foci points with strategic locations. Nodes are often the located at junctions or breaks in the flow of transportation which has a strategic value. For one, higher activity takes place, and another is that it is a point in which people must make decisions and heighten their attention at such places and perceive nearby elements with greater clarity. Activity centres in the Metro vary greatly in size from the central business districts of Nairobi city, Thika and Machakos towns, to regional commercial areas, to neighbourhood shopping centres and strips in smaller towns like Kiambu, Limuru and Mavoko. Due to the nature of specialized agglomerations of activities, University of Nairobi's campuses and other research institutions in the City have become important activity centres for the Metro. Activity centres in the Metro have been important in seeking to intensify land uses around public transport nodes to facilitate greater sustainability in the way people and goods move around cities and increase liveliness and growth from a design perspective.
Nairobi and other major towns in the metro consist of a group of activity centres linked by streets and public transportation. The design concepts of these centres were based on an integrative system of public transportation and the automobile. The network aims directly at serving all activity centres, where cars are able to reach the front door of each building. However, there are no proper linkages between the activity centres and the residential districts. Linkages are designed mainly for the automobile with little regard to public transportation and pedestrian safety and walkability in the Metro. The initial planning of the city did not take into consideration the provision of any opportunities for separating motorised and non-motorised traffic in centres, which would have ensured safe areas for pedestrians to move throughout the city freely. Due to the lack of a clear urban design policy and the inadequate implementation of the building laws and the building code, most areas are characterised by unclear visual images, lack of clear sightlines and have poorly defined urban form.

7.7.3.7 Landmarks

Urban solids and landmarks are defined by external points of reference that provide orientation in a familiar or unfamiliar environment, and include anything that is easily recognizable, such as a monument, building, or even a natural landform. We wanted to clarify the order of urban spaces in the Metro by looking at the figure-ground approach and spatial design in an attempt to examine the solid-void relationships by adding to, subtracting from, or changing the physical geometry of the pattern.
In the NMR, the landmarks were observed to be physical elements, different in scale. Most landmarks were favoured due to their particular aspects, which were considered memorable and unique (i.e. distinctiveness, intelligibility, significance clarity, distinctive location and contrast to the background). Different buildings act as landmarks through the urban fabric of Nairobi. Businessmen and residents have cited these elements as guiding features, which have defined the design of the city. They include the Parliament and the KICC building, along with other important buildings in the CBD such as Nyayo House and Lonrho house, the Bazaar, Anniversary Towers, and the Kencom building as major landmarks to Nairobi. The Tele-Posta Towers, the Times tower and the KICC Building was one of the most remarkable landmark buildings in the Metro.
Nairobi is also home to several sites of public monuments. The Tom Mboya Monument along Tomboya Street, the Freedom fighter Dedan Kimathi Monument along Kimathi Street, Uhuru gardens, and Uhuru Park with several other monuments all mark their significance on the urban landscape. KICC is home to the nation's founding father, the Jomo Kenyatta monument.
7.7.4 Recommendations
Of the urban design recommendations, the most important in providing a functional, safe and secure urban environment is to establish a sustainable public transportation system, such as a high-speed rail, light rail, electric streetcar, or subway system. We also give much emphasis for the creation of pedestrian-friendly zones with a traffic free CBD and allow limited access to delivery vehicles and public transport, thereby also reducing congestion and traffic pollution for shoppers and city workers. One step beyond, we also need development of pedestrian-friendly commercial centers. Strategies include built cantilevers (shoppers to be protected from weather and shorter distances to travel between shops), increase of leisure amenities and more relaxing atmosphere within cities, providing sitting areas, planting flower beds and shrubs, and providing cafes with outside tables, small restaurants and theme bars. There is also a heavy theme of urban regeneration, or urban renewal and vitality by improving the existing old inner city areas by creating efficient and effective linkages between people and urban fabric with the incorporation of employing the urban design strategies of the paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. The five design elements would assist in creating functional streets, open public spaces, and various plots shapes and sizes. It is also important to build on the existing economic strengths in the NMR by investing in downtown revitalization, focusing on the cities' and metros' competitive niches/nodes, and by enhancing connectivity between regions with functional linkages. We have also recognized the need of creating neighborhoods of choice with the support of mixed-use and mixed-income housing, investment of historic preservation, rehabilitation of vacant properties, and to encourage inner city markets to maximize the spending power of residents. There should also be a focus on transforming the physical landscape, especially by upgrading aging infrastructure, and by investing in catalytic development projects. With all of the urban design recommendations, we have highlighted the necessity for participatory urban design, to involve the public in the design process from conception to completion to harmonize the relationship between the people and their built environment.
Internship Placement

My initial internship placement was through the international student organization AIESEC, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to connecting students across the world with internship opportunities. I joined AIESEC in the spring of 2012 with the intentions of securing an international internship through them. It was not until after I returned from my study abroad program in Peru that I was able to get matched with an internship in Kenya. The internship was an architectural project that would be working with a school in one of the largest slums in the world, Kibera. It seemed like a very good opportunity for me because one of my future ambitions is to help redesign the slums of the world to provide better living conditions for the extreme poor. However, as it turned out, once I arrived in Kenya, the reality of the project was different than the perceived opportunity.

Hence, while I was already in Kenya I had to find my own internship. My placement with AIESEC fell through, and I had to use all of the resources that were available to me to find a good opportunity for myself. I was lucky to have been living in the intern house, because our host, Gladys, had several contacts that worked in my field that she put into contact with me. I set up a few interviews, and the one that came through was with an engineer that built roads (is what I was told). I was not feeling too confident with that opportunity but figured, as a global city major, every city has to design efficient road networks to be successful, so maybe it would be some good exposure for me. As it turned out, it could not have turned out better than I had imagined. During my interview with James, the owner and CEO of Pleng Ltd, we discovered that my area of expertise would fit perfectly with a current project that he was working on for the Republic of Kenya Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development, a situational analysis on the safety and security of the built environment. I had been hired on the spot and immediately began working by catching up on what they had already done for the project.

I am very lucky to say the least to had found this opportunity. It turned out to align more with my educational background than the project in Kibera would have. The skills that I had developed during this process of having to find an internship while I was abroad were persistence, networking, and patience. With patience came trust and faith, with persistence came perseverance, and with networking came expanding my database of professional contacts. It was also difficult and a stressful process, but I was lucky to find the opportunity that I did. I am thankful for this experience, because I feel that already having gone through that process under those conditions will help my job search in the future.
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EDUCATION
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
Major Concentration in Global Studies with a focus of Cities and Urbanism
Minor Concentration in Architectural Studies
Certificate Program in Urban Planning Studies
Language Studies in Spanish and Italian
Graduation Date: December 2012

OBJECTIVES & PERSONAL STATEMENT

• To understand the global dimensions and local variations of urbanism and architecture.
• Issues such as the history and economy of cities, the causes and implications of urban growth and international architectural design.
• The growth of cities in a historical context and the causes and consequences of urban growth.
• What “makes” a city (demographics, design, economy, language, cultural life, government and public policies)
• Environmental, social and economic problems of cities
• Challenges to urban design, planning, governance and sustainability Raises funds via special events and community outreach
• Experienced philosophical and new thinker with a bright approach to future.
• Focused on solving worldly problems by helping people and areas in need.
• Envisions and intentions of using green resources and tools.

INVOVLEMENT

English as a Second Language Tutoring - Conversation Partner • Feb 2012 – Present

• Helped international students adjust to American culture and practice speaking English
• Conversation Partner with international student from Saudi Arabia
• Valuable experience learning and bridging other cultures

AIESEC Milwaukee O'G X Team – Member • Feb 2012 – Present

• Recruiting Exchange Participants to go abroad
• EP preparation for exchange experience
• Providing a platform to develop the Global Mindset
Wisconsin High School Model United Nations (WHSMUN)
Subcommittee Leader
Jan 2011 – May 2011
• Hosted and Facilitated Model UN conference for local High Schools at UWM
• Hands on experience for students of UN proceedings for “real- life” scenarios
• Working with students to develop Subcommittee Resolutions

EXPERIENCE
Whole Trees Architecture & Structures - Internship
June 2008 – Aug 2008
• Assisted in the design and construction of projects at the Drifless Farm
• Helped select and prepare trees to be used for construction
• Home Website < http://www.wholetreesarchitecture.com/index.html >

Paris, Rome and Venice - Study Abroad Program
May 2010 – July 2010
• Studied Architecture and Urban Planning under Professor Gil Snyder
• Topics: “The Sustainable City”

Delhi, Ahmadabad, Agra, Chandigarh - Study Abroad Program
Jan 2011 – Feb 2011
• Studied Architecture and Urban Planning under Professor Manu Sobti
• Topics: “Making and Unmaking the Indian City”

Lima, Cuzco, Madre de Dios - Study Abroad Program
May 2012 – June 2012
• Studied Architecture, Art and Culture under Professor Karen Gunderman
• Topics: “Peru Art and Culture: Past and Present”

International Internship in Kenya, Africa with Pleng LTD
October 2012 – December 2012
• Conducted a Situational Analysis Report on the Safety and Security of the Built Environment for Nairobi and four surrounding counties, commissioned by the Republic of Kenya Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development

• Contributed to the project conception and wrote various elements of the document and PowerPoint presentation (Introduction, Case Studies, Situational Analysis of Urban Design)

• Presented our findings and recommendations to various local authorities such as City Councils and County Councils

• Gained international experience of Urban Planning policies in Kenya, providing insight of the way forward to developing Third World Countries into competing Global City centers

• Website: http://www.pleng.net/
Post-Internship Reflection Paper

Overall, my internship experience was successful in meeting the goals that I had set for myself. The project that I was working on while at Pleng Ltd, a situational analysis report on the safety and security of the built environment for the Republic of Kenya Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development, was very closely aligned with my area of study at UWM. The internship helped me refine my skills and gain real life experience of urban design issues that were affecting the Nairobi Metropolitan Region. I learned how to practically analyze these issues and compile them into a single working document, which not only addressed the prominent issues, but also informed the ministry of the importance of adhering to global standards of sustainability and smart design to enhance the global identity of Kenya for future generations. From the perspective of globalization and myself being a Global Cities major, I was able to exemplify the global standards through my experience of studying architecture and urban planning efforts across the world in France, Italy, India and Peru. From the situational analysis report, we also created a simplified PowerPoint presentation, which was presented to city and county board officials that was aimed to address the current urban planning issues and offer our recommendations to meet the guidelines of “Kenya Vision 2030”. Kenya Vision 2030 is a governmental initiative launched in 2008 by President Kibaki with the objective to help transform Kenya into a middle-income country providing high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030. We have also recognized in our reports, that to achieve this high quality of life, Kenya has to be globally competitive and attract international investment by transforming the Nairobi Metropolitan Region into a sustainable global city.
The first skills goals that I had set for myself was to develop an understanding of the practice of urban planning in Kenya. I feel that I have successfully met this goal and for this reason, we had created a third part of the document to directly address the issue of the current practice of urban planning within the Nairobi Metropolitan Region. Our three-part report included an inception report, the situational analysis on the safety and security of the built environment, and a development control code. The development control code document was addressing the need of creating a harmonized development control code for the entire region because a major issue was that about 60% of all the built structures were either illegal and safe, illegal and unsafe, or legal and unsafe buildings. This means that in many cases, contractors were able to start development without being pre-approved by the local authority, or having a professional team of engineers and architects that were able to produce safe buildings. There existed a lack of coordinated process and harmonized development between adjacent buildings, which created chaotic urban spaces and unsafe environments. The second skills goal was to develop critical thinking skills and to learn to recognize areas in need of improvement within the Nairobi Metropolitan Region whether it is infrastructure, design policies, services, or public transportation. This goal was met through a large part of our situational analysis, which addressed infrastructure, planning and regulatory framework, settlements and housing development, environmental safety and management, disaster management and emergency response, and urban design. The last of my skills goals was to enhance my leadership and interpersonal communication skills. We have had many round table, think tank discussions where I was able to express my opinions and point of views very clearly, and I felt that I had truly made a positive impact on the project and many of my perspectives were used, especially on globalization and urban design.
My knowledge goals were to understand various urban planning policies and projects, gain experience of how to conduct a thorough analysis and compose a detailed report, and to gain experience in presenting a project to local authorities. My learning strategy for my first goal was to review past projects conducted by Pleng, and to learn from my coworkers and boss on how they think about and understand planning. I did not have very much time to review past projects by Pleng in depth, however I did gain an understanding of the Kenyan perspective of urban planning. The planning division at Pleng was very well educated, and they had a cutting edge perspective and understanding of sustainable and global practices, which they aimed to introduce to Kenya. I met the other two goals and was given the task of reviewing and editing the entire document of the situational analysis, as well as writing the introduction chapter on globalization and global cities, and the chapter on urban design. I was also able to attend and present our project in meetings with the local authorities that were within the scope of our project.

The first of my values goals was to learn about the cultural and political values and difference, which shape the way that people build their environment around them. This goal goes hand and hand with my goal of understanding the African city and its people. I had discovered that there are 42 different native tribes in Kenya, and for a Kenyan, it was second nature to recognize which tribe any given individual was native to, and immediately placed them on a social pecking order. The tribes that were on the top of the social hierarchy were the Kikuyu and Massai. It acted much like a caste system and limited opportunities to certain peoples based on their heritage. For example, many people come to the city and settle in the urban slums, but you won't find any Kikuyus or Massai there. Yet, the slums offer a sense of freedom for many people
because they are outside of the system and can live a simple life, but on the other hand, they are very limited with their access to services and the means to create an income for themselves. My next goal was to understand the role of Pleng and planners alike within the global context for reshaping cities by enhancing infrastructure and sparking global investment. This goal was also closely aligned with my other value goal, understanding Kenya Vision 2030, which addressed many of these concerns. My learning strategy was to discuss future goals and vision for Kenya and Nairobi with the CEO of Pleng. A major part of redefining the urban scene of Nairobi was to create a social cohesiveness and interactive urban spaces of inclusion rather than exclusion.

My final set of goals was my career and personal development goals. The first goal was to create professional contacts for a continued future relationship. I have a very good relationship with the CEO of Pleng, James Kiambigi, and he wants to continue to establish a link between Kenya and the United States with myself. He had expressed interest with me of being able to send engineers and planners to and from Kenya and the United States to help gain international experience and global perspectives. James had also discussed with me his intentions of starting an international school of professional planners and engineers called Spleng, that he would like me to be involved with. My second goal was to gain experience and develop an understanding of the structure of Pleng as a business and how projects are commissioned and carried out, because I myself would one day like to start a similar company with an international vision. One day, James sat down with me and he laid out the procedure from project inception to completion, along with expected expenses and taxes, to ensure the ability to see a project through, while still being able to make a profit. There was also an emphasis on which he gave me that instead of looking
forward to the next 16 months of a company's tenure, to lay out goals and projects over the next 3-5 years to help keep the company alive and thriving. My last career and personal development goal was to gain experience of how to transform a developing city into a global city that has the ability to attract international investment and the global business class. I feel that I have a very good understanding and concrete experience of how to obtain the global city status through urban planning practices and through our situational analysis report.

The experience that I had gained with my internship at Pleng Ltd in Kenya has provided a solid foundation for the future of my career in this field of urban planning consultant services. The only area that I wish I could have improved on with my internship experience was the length of time. Had I gone to Kenya and had gotten my opportunity with Pleng immediately, I would have had a full 8 weeks with them. However, in my time with Pleng, I was still able to complete over 160 hours of work experience with them, and we are still working together. They have been sending me final documents for me to review for them and add my input. The good thing about urban planning projects is that they have a long shelf life, and I can continue to be a part of the project and the team, even while being stationed abroad in the United States.