

A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY OF TEMA, GHANA: THE FIRM FOUNDATION SCHEME IN COMMUNITY NINE

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According to the Ministry of Works and Housing, Ghana needs 85,000 housing units annually and the current housing deficit in Ghana is 1.7 million. The demand for housing (especially affordable housing) seems to be the conundrum facing every government regime in Ghana. I lived in Tema for over 20 years and was intrigued about how the city of Tema planned to accommodate those of us living in the low-cost/affordable housing area. Unfortunately, the quest to solve the housing deficit in Ghana, and in Tema particularly, seems far-fetched. During my trip to Tema in summer 2017, I immediately noticed the vast difference between the Tema I knew 20 years ago and the present day. My preliminary research was to study the history of low cost housing by going to the TDC Company Limited (formerly known as the Tema Development Corporation) archives and compare them with the actual low-cost housing in 2017 to ascertain if the Firm Foundation Scheme happened. The scope of research was primarily in the Community Nine area of Tema.

The TDC Company Limited started construction in the 1950s. The main goal was to develop the Tema Township. However, they had to award contracts to companies and firms to handle every aspect of the construction process with the supervisory role given to Doxiadis Associates from Greece who were also the urban planners. Aside from Doxiadis designing the master plan for Tema, they also designed the masterplan for the Akosombo-Tema-Accra Metropolitan Area. Low cost housing construction represented 74% of the total housing units to be built.

During my time in Tema, I went to the TDC head office in Community One where I was given access to their archives. It was there that I was able to properly analyze the documents and compare what they did, intended to do and will do and then compare to what was on the ground as at 2017.

I also had a meeting with TDC's Head of Procurement to discuss the TDC's plans on redevelopment.

While researching the TDC's archives, I came across the Firm Foundation Scheme in Community Nine of Tema. This scheme was developed to speed up the provision and delivery of low-cost housing in Tema. With the scheme, TDC was to develop and service lands, the serviced lands will be sold to individuals and private developers. These private developers will use TDC's drawings and construction will be supervised by TDC.

During my time in Tema, I conducted some interviews, went through archives and conducted some field work to have a visual

inspection of the buildings in that area. Most of the homes were semi-detached and I was expecting a schism at the connections where these two houses met, but in contrast, there was not schism, it was continuous and consistent. Based on my findings, I concluded that the Firm Foundation Scheme did not happen in the 1970s. The "Firm Foundation Scheme" area was built by the TDC and not by individuals or private entities.

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