

Worksheet 8 – Urban slums

Urban slums are settlements, neighbourhoods or city regions that cannot provide the basic living conditions necessary for its inhabitants to live in a safe and healthy environment. They are a common feature in cities in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) where migration from rural areas is adding to rapid urbanisation. There is a huge variety in the quality of slums around the world.

A **slum household** is defined as lacking the following five things: (1) sufficient living area, (2) durable housing, (3) access to sufficient and clean water, (4) access to sanitation, e.g. toilets and showers, and (5) secure tenure and protection against eviction.

Facts and figures:

- Current estimates are that there are around 900 million slum dwellers, which is roughly one third of the global urban population
- Favela, barrio, shanty town and bustee are some of the different names used for 'slum' around the world
- 94% of the world's slum dwellers live in countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as these regions have the most rapid urban growth
- Around 560 million urban inhabitants globally do not have access to basic toilet facilities
- Some of the world's most populated slums are Dharavi in Mumbai, India (approx. 1 million); Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya (approx. 2.5 million) and Neza-Chalco-Itza, Mexico City, Mexico (approx. 4 million)

Rocinha, Rio de Janeiro

Rocinha is the biggest favela in Brazil and has between 60,000 and 150,000 inhabitants. It is built on a steep hillside overlooking Rio de Janeiro. Many people migrate to Rio from rural areas in search of work and due to housing shortages many end up living in one of Rio's favelas. Rocinha overlooks the richest neighbourhoods of Rio, because many people in Rocinha earn a living working for the rich as domestic servants, drivers, shop keepers or in factories. They thus benefit from the shorter commutes.

As you will have seen in Rosemary's story, violence by fighting between drug cartels and the police caused many problems. Over the course of Rosemary's life, Rocinha has seen a lot of development, with police cracking down on violence on the one hand and on the other hand schools and health care facilities and even a swimming pool have been built. Rocinha is now one of the most developed slums with brick houses, sewage, satellite tv and heavy police presence. Businesses such as banks, shops and restaurants have set up in Rocinha as well.