

Press Release

Start Somewhere opens first hollow concrete block workshop in Kibera, Nairobi, and establishes non-profit organization "Start Somewhere Kenya"

- *Start Somewhere* has been developing a flexible, reusable, cost-effective and fireproof construction system for buildings in slums since 2015.
- The approach: Change from the inside, jobs in a local hollow concrete block workshop and added value in the slum.
- Foundation of the Kenyan Non-Profit Organisation (NGO) "*Start Somewhere Kenya*" to create the legal framework for the implementation of the project on site.
- Outlook: By the end of 2020, *Start Somewhere* aims to produce the blocks for the construction of a school in Kibera with the workers in the workshop and complete the building.

Project start Kibera, Nairobi:

In September 2019, the Munich-based social start-up Start Somewhere opened the first hollow concrete block workshop in Kibera, Nairobi. In 2018, a pilot project was launched, which includes the construction of this workshop and a school building in Kibera slum by the end of 2020. In the workshop, permanently employed local workers have already been trained to produce the hollow concrete blocks by hand and then use them to build the school.

The Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH (DEG), a subsidiary of the KfW Bank, is supporting the pilot project in partnership with PERI. The implementation is being co-financed within the framework of a develoPPP project by DEG with funds from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

After months of planning and preparation, including the foundation of a Kenyan NGO with two local founding members and the appointment of a Kenyan project manager, *Start Somewhere* was able to start construction of the hollow concrete block workshop in Kibera in August. "We are very happy about the good cooperation with our reliable and motivated team members from Kenya during the implementation of the project", says Oliver von Malm, architect and initiator of the project.

Under the guidance of the new project manager and civil engineer Lazarus Asewe, the workshop was built by local workers from Kibera as planned. The two new board members of *Start Somewhere Kenya*, Rina Wekesi and Dennis Andere, have

been a valuable support for *Start Somewhere* for quite some time and are mainly responsible for organisational issues on site.

The new workshop still built in the common way with bricks and corrugated iron. The building is located in the middle of Kibera and consists of a workshop with an adjacent warehouse and a water tank. Due to a room height of three meters and a large roof window, temperature and lighting in the workshop are very pleasant. A solar system was installed on the roof, which covers the complete power requirements of the workshop. The interior equipment includes large storage tanks for gravel and sand with adjacent delivery facilities, a concrete mixer and a vibratory plate as well as an area where the concrete blocks are stripped. The adjacent warehouse can store up to 4000 hollow concrete blocks (about half of the requirements for the new school building for 400 children).

Already during the construction phase of the workshop, numerous temporary jobs were given to local workers from Kibera. In a joint application process with all members of *Start Somewhere* and *Start Somewhere Kenya*, the first workers and a leader of the workshop from Kibera were permanently employed.

Together with this team, Oliver von Malm and two experts in statics and material science from the University of Innsbruck conducted a training course on the production of hollow concrete blocks. At the same time, it was necessary to determine the exact concrete mix ratio with the local raw materials.

In October the workers carried out a test production including daily reports in the workshop. Since November, the production of the concrete hollow blocks for the construction of the school building in spring 2020 has been running.

In November, a first test wall was already constructed in front of the workshop. Both local workers from the workshop and local craftsmen from Kibera had the opportunity to learn how to use the new construction method. The workshop now bears the logo "*Start Somewhere Kenya*" and the slogan "Change From Inside". Almost every day people from Kibera come to the workshop to learn more about *Start Somewhere* and the new construction method. The response from the local community has been very positive so far.

Until now, almost all building materials have been purchased from outside the slum. With the Start Somewhere hollow concrete blocks, an innovative product can be produced and sold directly in Kibera slum. This will not only create stable and safe buildings, but also jobs and the opportunity to develop a local construction industry.



About Start Somewhere

Start Somewhere gemeinnützige GmbH is a social start-up based in Munich with eight years of experience in development cooperation in one of the largest slums in Africa: Kibera, Nairobi (Kenya). The vision of Start Somewhere is the sustainable improvement of living conditions in the slums of this world. Concretely, *Start Somewhere* develops a flexible, reusable, cost-effective and fireproof construction system for buildings in slums. The resulting hollow concrete blocks can be assembled and disassembled by hand as a modular, mortarless plug-in system. For the first time, any angle can also be realised steplessly in the floor plan.

In this way, the first school building is to be constructed as a pilot project in Kibera by 2020. Start Somewhere wants to enable the slum dwellers to produce the hollow concrete blocks themselves in a workshop on site and thus erect better buildings in the slum. Jobs and a local construction industry are created so that the added value remains in the slum.

As a non-profit organization, *Start Somewhere* supports two schools in the Kibera slum with currently more than 800 children through donations. This includes two daily meals at school, medical care and school equipment.

The company PERI

With a turnover of € 1.56 bn in 2018, PERI is one of the largest manufacturers and suppliers of formwork and scaffolding systems. With around 9,500 employees, 70 subsidiaries and well over 160 warehouse locations, PERI serves its customers worldwide with innovative system equipment and comprehensive services for all aspects of formwork and scaffolding technology.

Note to the editors:

We are happy to provide you with pictures. Please contact our media contact.

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