



## Case Study - Zuhra Abdalah

*The Kenya Home Water Project with the National Cooperative Housing Union (NACHU) of Kenya will provide clean drinking water for 250 homes, including Zuhra's.*

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*"Peace of mind, comfort, clean environment and better security is what I am looking forward to. I am so happy that I am engaged in the process that will help me realize my dream. I am grateful to NACHU for giving me an opportunity to own a house and a better life."*

- Zuhra Abdalah

**Zuhra Abdalah** is a forty-two year old mother of four living in Kibera, one of the largest slums in Africa, located in the capital city of Nairobi. Three of her children are of school-going age: the youngest is 14 years of age and the eldest is a nursery school teacher in Kibera. Zuhra started a small hair dressing business and her husband works as a casual laborer. Their income goes towards food, household essentials, and for supporting their children's education. In 2012, she met a Nafisa Burhan (right), who encouraged the members of her group to form the Razak ("provision" in the Nubian language) Housing Co-operative Society.



The Kibera slum has a population estimated to be as high as 700,000 people, 20 percent of Nairobi's total population, but occupying only six percent of the land area of the city. Kibera has limited access to clean drinking water, poor sanitation, lack of proper sewerage systems, and uncertain security. In Zuhra's neighborhood, residents must pay five Kenyan schillings (ksh. 5) every time they use a toilet. Individuals who cannot afford to pay the user fee end up using "flying toilets" by relieving themselves

on plastic paper and throwing the plastic over a neighbour's house and into their yard. *"Nobody likes to engage in this dehumanizing and degrading manner,"* says Zuhra, and so together with members of her co-operative group, she has decided to restore her personal dignity by building her own home. The critical step in the process is to have a permanent source of clean water.



The Razak Housing Co-operative Society has now become affiliated with the National Co-operative Housing Union (NACHU) and will benefit from the Kenya Home Water Project as it develops. The Coops have been saving for the past three years to buy land and develop their new housing project. Before joining the Razak Co-op, Zuhra and her husband thought that they would never see any money saved from their limited income, but after receiving financial training from NACHU about how to improve their family's savings culture, this became a starting point for

change. The members of her co-operative have now been able to get microfinance housing loans from NACHU, land has been bought, and the foundations for their new homes are under way.

With the help of NACHU, the Razak Housing Co-operative Society has joined forces with two other co-ops, Royal and Progressive, and bought land in the Ruai-Kangundo road area in Nairobi. Their group will build a total of 61 new homes in one of the areas to be supported by the Kenya Home Water. Project fundraising will ensure that the capital funding needed to provide each home with clean drinking water will be available as part of Rooftops Canada's *Kenya: Building Homes, Building Lives* campaign. During phase one of the co-ops' construction, individual families have been able to afford one-room homes with a toilet and bathroom. However, the construction of each family's home is such that it will allow the addition of more rooms and increase the size of their homes in future as their financial position improves.



Clean water for drinking and cleaning purposes is essential for the three co-ops to maintain their improved living conditions on a day-to-day basis. The *Kenya: Building Homes, Building Lives* campaign is dedicated to funding home-building and capacity-building initiatives which encourage the development of sustainable housing communities.

Zuhra and the families of the combined co-ops are anxiously awaiting their new co-op community where they can raise their children in a healthier and safer environment. The Kenya Home Water Project will help them get there!

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