



**What is it?**  
 A settlement is a place where people live, including its facilities such as roads, parks, woods, moats, churches etc. And can range in size from a single dwelling to the largest of cities with surrounding urbanised areas.

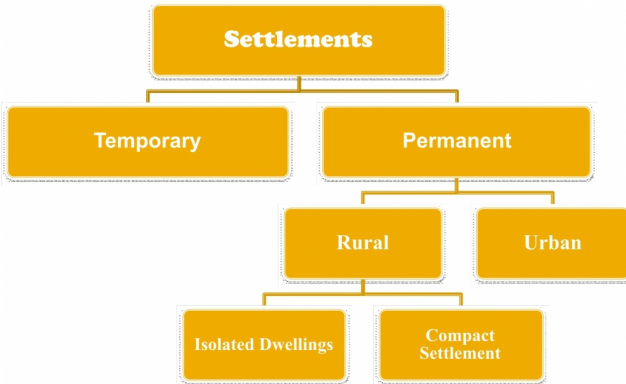
The earliest known *Homo sapiens* remains are considered to be a group of bones found at the Omo Kibish Formation, near the Ethiopian Kibish Mountains. Recent studies have dated them as far back as 195,000 years old. From this area, humans started to spread out over the rest of the world.

You can learn about the history and function of a settlement by studying its shape and size, its placement in the landscape, and an industrial town has lots of factories and businesses in it.



# Settlements

## Types of settlement



Types of settlement can fall into two main categories: temporary (e.g. nomadic camp, slum, refugee camps etc.) and permanent (e.g. towns and villages).

Temporary settlements may be planned (formal) or spontaneously develop (informal) and can (like a permanent settlement) vary in size from a single tent to a ghetto with over a million inhabitants.

A temporary settlement can become permanent over time.



**GLOSSARY**

**Agricultural:** Farming; both rural and urban.

**Brownfield site:** Land that has been built on previously but has been left abandoned and often become derelict.

**Capital city:** The main administrative centre within a country and the home of the national government.

**City:** A large town, in the UK generally has a cathedral.

**Commercial:** Commerce/business; mainly offices. The main commercial area will normally be in the CBD.

**Commuter belt:** Areas of residential land use where people travel from to their work place.

**Conurbation:** 2+ towns or cities that have joined together e.g. Birmingham, Walsall, Dudley and Wolverhampton in England.

**Derelict:** Land that has been abandoned.

**Greenfield site:** Land that has never been built on before.

**Hamlet:** A small group of houses, normally about 5 to 10, and generally no services.

**Industrial:** Industry; factories.

**Isolated building:** A single building, normally a farm.

**LEDC:** Less Economically Developed Country, e.g. Uganda.

**Marginal land:** Land that no one wants to build on, e.g. steep slopes, next to main roads or on floodplains.

**MEDC:** More Economically Developed Country, e.g. US.

**Megapolis:** (Megacity) A conurbation or a clustering of cities with a population of over 10 million people e.g. Tokyo.

**Primate city:** The largest and most important city within a country, not always a country's capital city.

**Site:** The actual location or place that a settlement is built.

**Recreational:** For recreation; activity people do in their spare time.

**Residential:** Housing; where people can live.

**Retail:** Shops.

**Rural:** The countryside; everywhere outside urban areas.

**Town:** A settlement of over 10,000 people that has not been designated a city.

**Urban:** The built up area, any city or town with a population of 10,000 people or more.

**Urban sprawl/growth:** The spread or growth of an urban area into the rural-urban fringe.

**Village:** A settlement of up to 10,000 people. Villages will have some services in them like small shops, a primary school, a doctor's surgery, bus routes.

## Kibera



## AFRICA CASE STUDY

Kibera is the largest informal settlement in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is home to over 1,000,000 residents and occupies a space just outside of the central business district (CBD) of Nairobi. Despite the roughly \$25 million spent by over 200 NGOs (non-governmental organisations) each year, Kibera has no trash collection system or formal dumping site and only 1 toilet per 250 people. Most families live on \$1 a day and unemployment is over 50%.

But Kibera residents are resourceful and highly entrepreneurial, capable of solving their own problems. What they lack are some of the financial and technical resources needed to realise their ideas. This is where initiatives like KDI are having a real impact.

Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) partners with residents of impoverished areas to develop and implement design solutions that improve physical, economic, and social quality of everyday life. They call the low-cost, high impact environments they create Productive Public Spaces.



KDI - [www.kounkuey.org](http://www.kounkuey.org)

Comic Relief: Russell Brand visits Africa's largest slum, in **Kibera**  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=msMRZZlw6gQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msMRZZlw6gQ)

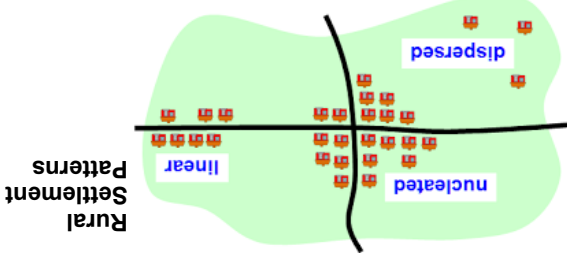
KDI - cleaning up Kibera  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IM3\\_YgbmWI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IM3_YgbmWI)



**A linear settlement pattern** is where the buildings are built in lines and is often found on steep hillsides.

**A nucleated settlement pattern** is where a lot of buildings are grouped together and is often found in lowland areas.

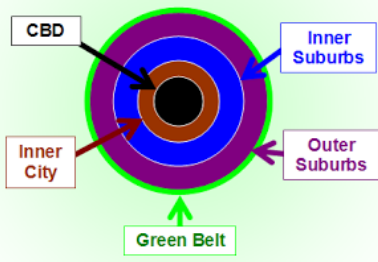
**A dispersed settlement pattern** is where the buildings are spread out and is often found in upland areas.



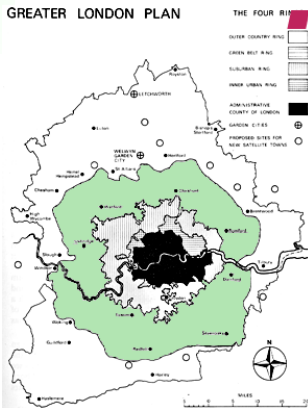
**Settlement Patterns**  
**A settlement pattern means the shape of a settlement.** The shape of early settlements was usually influenced by the surrounding landscape.

Originally, people built their homes together for companionship, safety and to share services. Over a long period of time, many villages grow as more people want to live in them. This creates a distinct shape or pattern of land use. Towns and cities also take on their own patterns.

**A model is a simplification of reality. This model of land usage in a town or city, in a MEDC, is called the Burgess Model.**



**The Central Business District (CBD)** - This is in the centre and contains the: shops, offices and public buildings (like museums and hospitals) because it is the most accessible point.



**The Inner-City** - Sometimes it is quite run down, while in other cities it has been redeveloped by converting empty warehouses into flats and waste land into parks.

**The Suburbs** - Has a very high concentration of residential land use, but also some recreational land use, possibly some retail and educational.

**The green belt** - Protected areas of land around large urban areas. They have been used by the UK government to try and protect green field sites and promote building on brown field sites.

**What is a shanty town?**  
 Also called **slums, ghettos, squatter settlements, camps and favelas, shanty towns** are settlements (usually illegal or at best unauthorized) of poor, who live in improvised dwellings made from scrap materials - often plywood, corrugated metal, and sheets of plastic. They start out as temporary settlements, usually built on marginal land and on the periphery (edge) of cities. They often have no infrastructure i.e. proper sanitation, electricity, or telephone services and have inadequate transport links, yet their population density is among the highest in the world. Over time they become permanent.

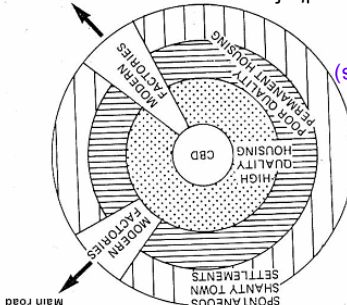
Currently 1 in 7 people worldwide live in a slum or refugee camp. With unprecedented levels of urban migration this is expected to double by 2030.

**Urbanisation**  
 is the increase in the proportion of people living in urban areas. Although this can be caused by natural increase (higher birth rates in urban areas than rural areas), it is more likely to happen because of rural-urban migration. **Rapid urbanisation** is when many people suddenly migrate from rural to urban areas, generally in search of work.

**Problems caused by rapid urbanisation:**  
 Electricity blackouts  
 Water shortages  
 Unemployment  
 Homelessness  
 Crime  
 Growth of informal settlements  
 Congestion (an increase traffic jams)  
 Destruction of green field sites  
 Pollutions (air, water, noise, visual)

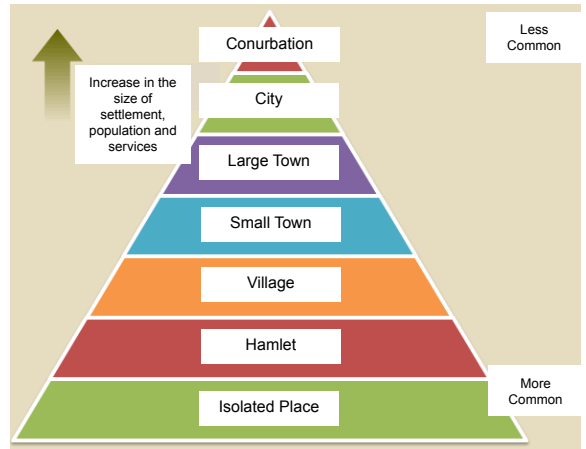
Most informal settlements are the result of urban sprawl in LEDCs, some shanty towns are over 30 miles away from CBDs.

**What is a shanty town?**



**A Settlement Hierarchy**

If you group and classify settlements according to their size and shape, the result is a settlement hierarchy.



**A conurbation** is a region comprising a number of cities, large towns, and other urban areas that, through population growth and physical expansion, have merged to form one continuous urban and industrially developed area, such as Greater London, Greater Manchester, and Birmingham

As you move up the hierarchy, the size of the settlement increases, as does the distance between similar sized settlements.

# Sources

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