

# The place that wasn't there

By Michael Dumiak | 06 April 11



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Since Kibera was deemed illegal in 1963, the [Kenyan](#) state has tried to destroy it. One of the biggest [slums](#) in the world, Kibera is certainly troubled, says [map](#) and web developer Mikel Maron. "But people are very proud. It was built not only without the help of authorities, but with active hostility."

Kibera has no official status and, as such, little access to [sanitation](#). Maron, with activist Erica Hagen and a team of residents, are changing that with the MapKibera project. Maron and Hagen gave [Garmin GPS](#) units to locals to collect points and map tracks. Then, with OpenStreetMap tools, users apply [Wiki-like](#) ideas to mapping, using GPS devices, phones, [satellite](#) or [aerial photography](#) to create raw data.

Since the project began in 2009, the government has upgraded conditions in the 4,450m<sup>2</sup> site, and details of clinics, schools, and media outlets are now publicly available to residents. Maybe now Kibera won't be so easy to ignore. [mapkibera.org](#)