



# Understanding shelter from a gender perspective : the case of Hawassa

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The city of Hawassa is growing fast, driven by construction of a flagship industrial park that is expected to attract up to 60,000 workers by 2021, mostly young women, arriving without families or dependents, and living off very low wages. Along with these young women, female-headed households ; divorced, separated and widowed women ; elderly women ; and women with disabilities all face severe/acute shelter vulnerabilities. These groups are most likely to struggle to access both formal and informal shelter, related to their below-average income levels but also to other forms of bias and discrimination. This paper draws out key findings on gender and housing from a collaborative study investigating shelter provision in Hawassa, part of a wider research study on inclusive cities in East Africa led by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). It aims to highlight specific constraints faced by women in accessing shelter, and around such issues as informality, safety and security, and infrastructure provision.

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