ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF RESILIENCE OF HOUSEHOLDS IN MUKURU KWA NJENGA INFORMAL SETTLEMENT, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Depending on their level of vulnerability, households in informal settlements in Kenya are prone to both idiosyncratic and covariate shocks. The response to the impact of these shocks varies from the ability of households to cope to emergency and/or development programming delivered either by the government or by non-governmental organisations. Such responses, most targeting the same households have been ongoing for many years leading to the question of whether in turn these households in the informal settlements are now resilient to future shocks. Although the resilience debate has been ongoing for a couple of years, and amidst all the external support targeting households in Mukuru Kwa Njenga, no research has been conducted to date to measure the level of resilience of these households. To fill the information gap in this area of study, this research was aimed at determining the level of resilience of households in Mukuru Kwa Njenga. It was a descriptive study involving statistical analysis and was twofold: based on both secondary and primary data and used a cross-sectional study design involving two phases in which quantitative data was collected. In the first phase of the survey, desk review of existing literature on household resilience in Mukuru Kwa Njenga was conducted. The second phase involved collection of primary data through key informant interviews, focus group discussions and household interviews (questionnaires). Based on the analysis of the findings of this research, and from the score given to the levels of achieved indicators, households in Mukuru Kwa Njenga are not resilient to any type of shocks. Each shock makes the households more vulnerable and the impact of the shocks is such that households survival threshold is further reduced. The methodology used to measure resilience in this research where indicators are assigned to characteristics of resilience, and where resilience is viewed as a process as opposed to an end product, lays the foundation for policies which help socioeconomic systems cope with, adapt to and even shape change. It also provides a platform for combining both short and long term actions to increase resilience. These include short term actions aimed at supporting households' own coping strategies during the acute phase of the crisis, and long term actions such as investment in provision of basic services like education, health and education which build resilience over time. By pinpointing the specific factors which make household resilient, the conceptual framework of measuring resilience gives decision makers clear indications of where to intervene.

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