

REPORT: Towards realizing the Mathare Special Planning Area Research Consortium (MSPARC) Agenda

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Introduction

Countries around the globe have adopted new unconventional approaches to urban planning that are bottom up and are leaned towards addressing existing gaps. To achieve improved thriving living environments, has called for well-defined inclusive strategies that put communities at the heart of planning processes. These strategies have included consolidating quality information and devising solutions that are oriented towards addressing exclusion and access to basic services. Increasingly, these strategies have demonstrated the effectiveness of meaningful participation especially of local residents who are involved in collecting their own information thereby increasing their participation in their own development.

Over time, SDI Alliance has leveraged on these unconventional approaches to urban planning in a bid to bridge the gap in information surrounding informal settlements. Its methodology for acquiring accurate data, through settlement/city wide data collection has foreseen the derivation of up-to date reliable information that form the basis for local dialogues among residents and city authorities. In its pursuit to achieve accurate data, SDI in cooperates its enumeration, settlement profiling and mapping processes that are led by slum dwellers making it possible for communities to better understand their locality through provision of information that can additionally support in designing effective community centered interventions.

Past experiences with the enumerations have rendered the practice an effective means in organizing communities through bringing residents together to participate in generating their own information. Further the practice, the has proved to be an effective tool in halting evictions in settlements such as Mukuru through the provision of evidence that counters justification for evictions. Other success stories are derived from Huruma settlement where the federation organized and rolled out enumerations which provided a basis for deriving and negotiating an agreement between tenants and structure owners so that all households are accommodated in an upgrading scheme.

The Mathare enumeration process

As part of ongoing efforts to consolidate comprehensive community data, a recent enumeration exercise was rolled out by the Kenya Slum Dweller movement; Muungano Wa Wanavijji in Mathare Kiamutisya Village. Kiamutisya is one among the 13 villages in Mathare slum and is located in Mlango Kubwa Ward near Juja Road and borders the Nairobi River. The one week-long community driven process involved community coresearchers who participated in collecting information per household. The data captured sought to provide basic information on all individuals and households, the tenure status of each resident or household, detailed information on the businesses, public and private institutions located in the area among other details.

Prior to the commencement of the community participatory enumerations process, stakeholder meetings were held at community level bringing together the federation, community residents and area administrators to inform them about the scheduled enumerations and its importance. The planning meetings provided a concrete basis for community to further understand the purpose of the process and collectively identify residents who would form the community enumerations team. As

community geared to begin the exercise, a date was set and the federation's team of urban planners joined the community enumerations team (coresearchers) on the material day to support in their training.

How to approach households and explaining to respondents' purpose of the exercise and seeking consent before embarking to filling out the questionnaire formed a crucial part of the coresearcher training. Additionally, the coresearchers had an opportunity to familiarize with the questionnaire, and how to systematically fill in the questions using the ODK digital data collection tool.

The tool comprised of various sections each probing on various areas including, access to water and sanitation, access to health and gaps grappling the health sector, understanding a given household's level of income, among others.

“Simon Maina an enumerator from Kiamutisya village joins a team of coresearchers at KAG church, before commencing the scheduled data collection activities. Normally, while undertaking data collection at community level, a coordinating base is identified to serve as a central meeting point and a hub where coresearchers can pick up the essentials they would need during the exercise. Upon ascertaining he has everything he would require; he proceeds to begin enumerating in his assigned village cluster.

“A narrow alleyway leads him to a vibrant area at the heart of Kiamutisya's cluster C settlement, arriving at a corrugated iron sheet storied building within the densely populated area. A narrowly constructed wooden staircase snakes up the building into a number of thin-walled and cramped single rooms where Simon begins enumerating a resident per household. The exercise lasts about 20-30 minutes averagely per respondent as Simon works to ensure the respondent's responses are meticulously filled into the tool. To accurately capture the response, he translates the questions giving ample time for response and engages in a brief feedback with respondents all in a bid to ensure he captures a true representation of the respondent's views...”

Rather than selecting an external team of enumerators to undertake the process, the federation engages community enumerators who generate data providing opportunity for residents to gain greater level of awareness about their settlement and some of the possibilities that exists for transformation. It remains important that the process of data collection presents an opportunity for residents to not only build their identity within their locality but further access opportunity for collaboration in the implementation of their own prioritized development.

Summary of questionnaire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you wish to participate in the survey? • Date of data collection • Enumerator details • Settlement location details • Respondent details • Details of household members • Household profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of household How many rooms does the family occupy? Primary source of income for household Estimated average household monthly income How much of household's income is spend on basic services access monthly (water, sanitation, waste management)? • What is the main source of drinking water used by members of your household? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you pay for water? In the last month, has there been any time when your household did not have sufficient quantities of drinking water? What kind of toilet facility do members of your household usually use? Where is this toilet facility located? Do you pay to access sanitation facilities? • Which are the most common treated issues/illness for your household in the last 6 months? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which type of health facility is most frequently visited by members of your household for major illnesses? • Please explain challenges faced in ensuring access to learning among school going age within your household • What fuel do you use (mainly) for cooking in the house? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much of household's income is spend on lighting and cooking energy monthly?

Findings, in a nutshell

The organized community driven process aimed to contribute to the Mathare Special Planning Area Research Collective (MSPARC), a research consortium made up of different organizations both local and international. They include Muungano Wa Wanavijiji, Mathare Social Justice Center, Ghetto Foundation, Mathare Roots among others. These organizations perform different functions including research both qualitative and quantitative and community dialogues in a bid to sensitize on the ongoing MSPARC agenda.

An analysis was carried out of the data collected from 2369 households in Kiamutesya village. This included data from all the clusters in Kiamutisya (clusters A-F) comprising of about 49% of male respondents and 51% female respondents.

Rates of urbanization in Kenya have soared high with the young people majorly making up a large proportion of inhabitants living within the urban areas. In urban slums particularly, young people make a significant proportion of the population. Case example is derived from the enumerations findings which evidently depicted, about 52.5% of the population in Kiamutisya are youth between age group 19-35 years.

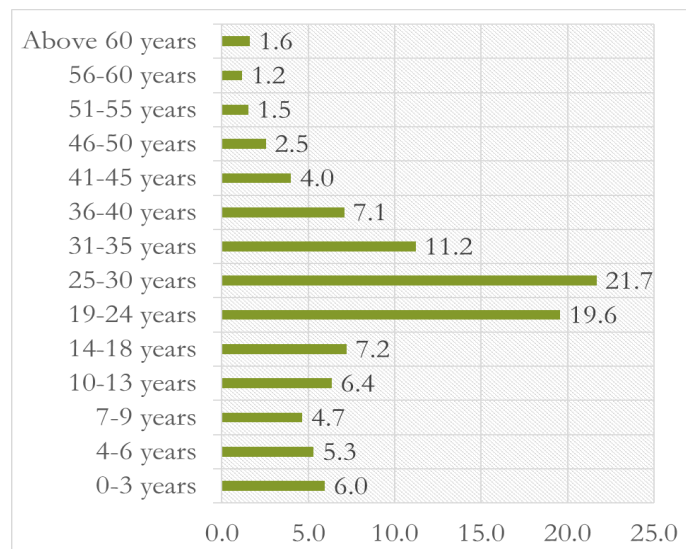


Figure 1. Age distribution of Kiamutisya population

The survey further revealed, Kiamutisya villages hosts about 5,535 residents comprising of 2,792 female residents and 2,738 male residents. Most residents, **(92.8%)** enumerated are tenants, and an estimated 5.6% are structure owners. Which implies that majority of structure owners live outside the village.

Over the years, continued growth of slums has risen exponentially as a result of constant exclusion and challenges in addressing security of tenure and access to essential services. Majority of slum residents are tenants paying rent to landlords or structure owners. Efforts towards attaining security of tenure and eventually realize right to decent and adequate housing remains a critical necessity.

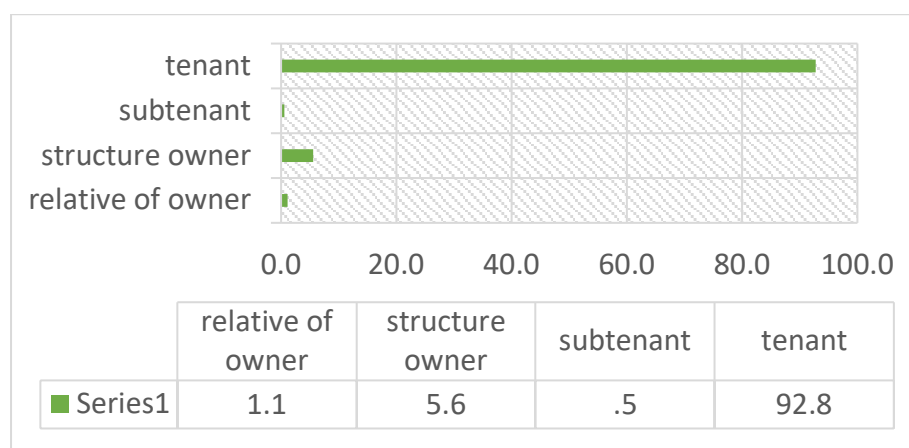


Figure 2. Status of occupants of the house

The data further revealed, about 41.3% of residents work outside the settlement but within the city, 2.7 work outside the city whereas 56% work within the settlement. Slum economies are critical sources of employment for majority of slum dwellers as well as important drivers of the general urban economic growth. In an urban slum setup, majority of residents are engaged in informal self-

employment ranging from one-person enterprises to businesses hiring labor. The current context however, fails to reflect the full extent to which the slum economies contribute to the growth of urban economies. As urban informal settlements grow, slum economies will continue to play a vital role in meeting the livelihood needs of its dwellers.

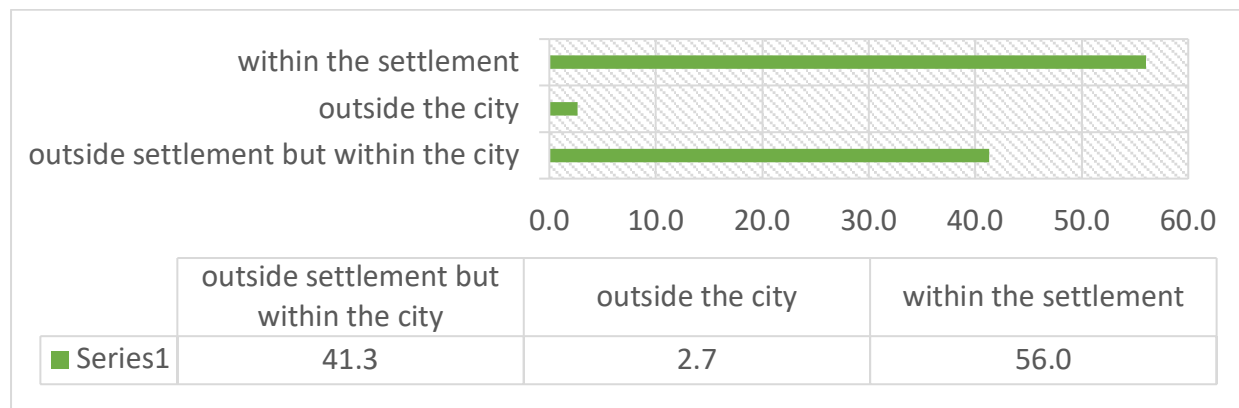


Figure 3. Location of residents' place of work

Additionally, the enumerations showed, an estimated **91.3%** of Kiamutisya population live in single-roomed houses, and **6.2%** live in two-roomed structures. Households within urban informal settlements are typically small, accommodating an entire family in one habitable room. As populations in urban informal settlements continue to grow, urgent need continues to be felt in regards to increasing the supply of decent and affordable housing for low-income communities.

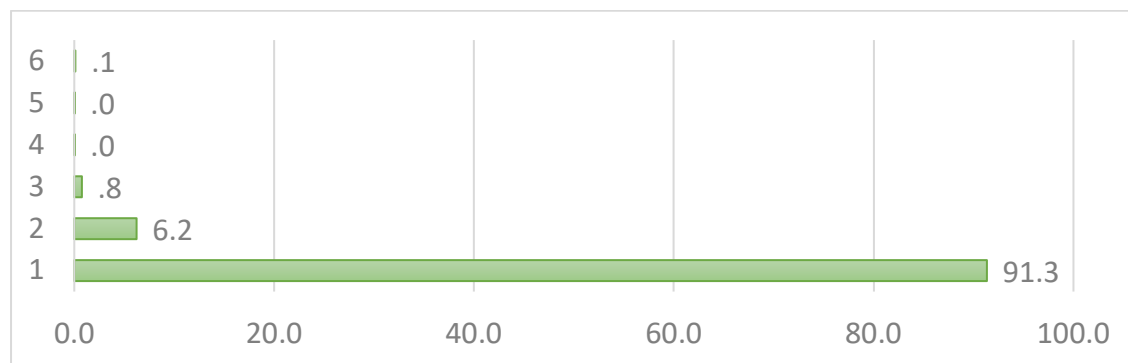


Figure 4. Number of rooms household members occupy

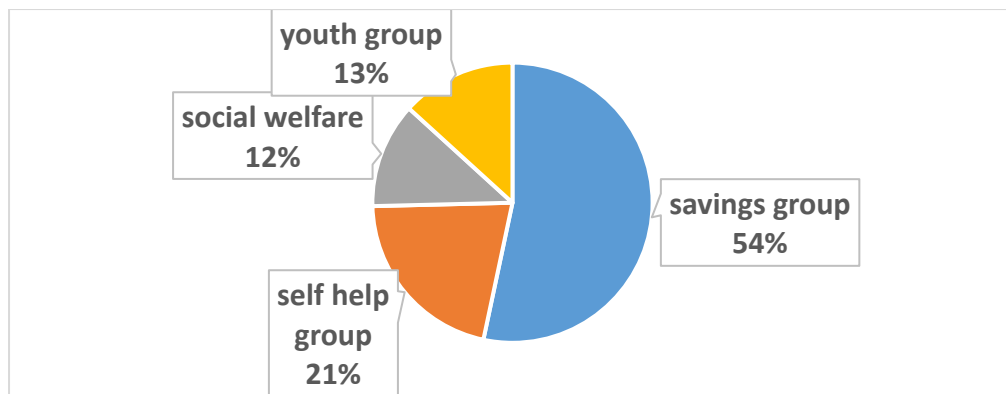


Figure 5. Community groups in Kiamutisya

Moreover, the enumerations data revealed, an estimated 26.3% of the total population are in community groups, particularly savings groups. Community savings schemes help to meet the needs of low-income residents and have the capacity to empower communities and provide community savers with more influence for action. At the federation level, the basic unit for organizing and bringing communities together within the movement is community savings scheme. Muungano saving schemes draw their membership from the settlements and provide opportunity for participation for women, youth and other people who would ordinarily often be excluded.

The enumerations process intended to provide information base for the Mathare Special Panning Area Research Collective (MSPARC) through consolidation of information that can serve to create a basis for local planning. Through community participation, residents are able to derive valuable data for planning purposes demonstrating the merits in giving power to residents within their informal settlements.