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ENHANCING ADAPTIVE CAPACITY OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENT OF MUKURU KWA RUBEN TO FLOODING IN NAIROBI COUNTY

Mukuru Kwa Ruben's informal settlement is located within the Industrial area of Nairobi County. It is characterized by poor dilapidated housing exacerbated by poor drainage conditions and flooding in the area. This study aimed at developing a framework to enhance the adaptive capacity of communities at the Mukuru Kwa Ruben informal settlement to flooding. The study started by reviewing relevant literature on flood vulnerability in urban areas and, most specifically, in informal settlements of Nairobi. Household questionnaires, and key informant interviews guides were used to collect data from the community. The methods of analyses used for this study entailed: content analysis, graphical displays, trend analysis, and desktop reviews. The study findings show that heavy down pour of rainfall in Mukuru Kwa Ruben does not necessarily bring about flooding. However, ineffective structural and non-structural measures that, if addressed, can enhance the adaptive capacity of the community to flood risks. The study also established that the community was vulnerable to floods primarily because their shelters are infiltrated with storm water, which destroys their household items and, in some instances, render them homeless. Limited access to health facilities during floods also gets to impact on their health adversely. It was also evident that residents of Mukuru Kwa Ruben have put more premium on structural adaptation measures that are externally facilitated to soft adaptation measures that can easily be conducted by community members. Shortcomings in the legislation, policies, and strategies on urban settlement flooding were highlighted and appropriate means to tighten the loose ends proposed. The study, recommends a more participatory approach, especially in the establishment of committees and task-force that address flood disasters in the slum, behavioral change amongst community members in terms of waste disposal and, adherence to the law in maintaining buffer zones around rivers.

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