



Urban Poor networks role in citywide information generation, use and dissemination Muungano Support Team (MUST)

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URBAN KNOWLEDGE
in
CITIES OF THE SOUTH

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Kenya is poised to make significant investments aimed at improving the lives of its urban poor. The Government of Kenya and the World Bank have formulated an informal settlements improvement program that is targeted at the improvement of urban poor settlements. Slum dwellers of Kenya have federated themselves to mobilize more citizens in their dilapidated neighbourhoods to participate in data collection at citywide levels in the view of strategically identifying and proposing how such resources will be effectively utilized to achieve the anticipated improvements. In three cities and several urban towns, the slums dwellers federation of Kenya, also known as Muungano wa Wanavijiji have collected slum data through mapping the locations of all slums in the cities and towns on a city map, undertaking 100% door to door data collection in each slum and subsequently digitizing all slum households on geo-referenced spatial base maps. With this information, these communities are able to approach local authorities and central government with sufficient information for planning. These tools of engagement create cohesion among the poor which is necessary for maximum participation in the development activities pertaining to their community. In addition to the data collection and spatial preparations, Muungano undertakes processes of “dreaming”, where residents of the slums, including children, youth and women, sketch the kind of houses and neighbourhoods they would like to live in. These “dreams” are further discussed and calculated against the population data collected, the infrastructure space required and the available space. These proposals are further presented to the local authorities as recommendations of how the community would like to improve their villages. The full paper seeks to look at the role of urban poor networks in city developments.