

EXPLORING THE LIVING CONDITIONS AT EZAKHELENI INFORMAL SETTLEMENT, DURBAN METROPOLIS OF KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA WITH AN UPSCALING MOTIVE

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Abstract

The living conditions of the residence of the informal settlements around the African continent remain one of the most expressed pervasive human right violation. It is therefore a fact and a respect of human rights that informal settlements be revitalized to meet basic standards of individuals and households' dignity. Recognizing this, and mobilizing all the principal actors within a shared human rights paradigm, can make the 2030 upgrading agenda achievable. The survey that translated into this study was carried out through the adoption of multi stage sampling procedure with a well-structured questionnaires in year 2018, from some selected households in the eZakheleni informal settlement, Durban metropolis of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. The utilized questionnaires were divided into different relevant sections to capture the households living condition, these sections were thus highlighted: respondent's demographic characteristics, households' level characteristics, dwelling level characteristics, settlement level characteristics, effect of some intervention efforts/programs in the community, coping strategies with hunger and current day erratic weather conditions and assessment of the living conditions. More so, the administered questionnaires were printed in English language and translated into the local language of the participants during the interview, this was done in order to ease the understanding of the subject matter by the selected participants. A sum of 255 complete questionnaires made up the dataset in the project, the sum of compiled data was quite representative of the residents of the informal settlement. The dataset is herewith made available as it is considered useful for showcasing the state of the informal settlement hence, possible way forward for urban upgrade policy implication and recommendations.

Keywords: Socio economics, basic amenities, urban upgrade, livelihood, interventions programme

Introduction

Few countries have developed their national-level policies and programme for informal settlements as informal settlement upgrading projects are global target (Marais & Ntema 2013). The upgrading of informal settlements in situ is now a recognized reality. Informal settlements are residential areas that do not comply with local authority requirements. They are unauthorized and are located upon land that has not been proclaimed for residential use (Durand-Lasserve 2006; Chikoto 2010; Zhang 2011). They exist because urbanization has grown faster than the ability of government to provide land, infrastructure and homes. (Abbott 2002; Watson 2009). Growing informality has become a prominent feature in many of South Africa's major urban centers.

Improving the living conditions of informal settlement dwellers is a pressing concern for international agencies like the World Bank, United Nations (UN) Habitat and national governments alike (Huchzermeyer 2011; Tacoli *et al.* 2015). In South Africa this concern was expressed in the goal to "eradicate" informal settlements by 2014. Furthermore, increasing levels of violence and violent crime have been linked to fast-paced urbanization and informality in developing regions (Muggah 2012). This report proposes interventions in the built form through the provision of physical infrastructure as a strategy to improve economic, social and health outcomes for informal settlement dwellers, and as a tool to address growing violence and insecurity, which have reached unprecedented levels in many cities of the South (Muggah *et al.* 2012).

In South Africa, a range of studies has reflected on informal settlements (Huchzermeyer 2006; Huchzermeyer & Karam 2006; Huchzermeyer 2009, 2010) and on post-apartheid housing policy and practice. Against the background of the identified need for monitoring and evaluation and for longer-term assessments of informal settlement upgrading programmes, it is on this basis that there is need for a study such as this, for a timely intervention on urban upgrade in South Africa. This paper describes the state of the eZakhele informal settlement of South Africa. This is aimed at bringing out some policy implications for upgrade and revitalization of the settlement. Two key aspects – namely demographic characteristics and livelihood and the general living conditions of the residents of the settlements were described with the aid of descriptive statistic in this study.

Experimental Design, Materials, and Methods

The dataset was generated from a survey that was conducted in the year 2018 in a major informal settlement of Durban, South Africa. The choice of the settlement was purposeful because it's a key informal settlement in South Africa and due to the interest in knowing the living condition of the residents of the settlement. With the assistance of the human settlement department and other stake holders, the enumerators were field workers who have professional experiences with human settlement. In addition, before the commencement of the survey, the enumerators were trained adequately the needful and a pre-testing of the questionnaires were undertaken in the informal

settlement. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in the selection of the participants with proportion to the estimated number of residents in the informal settlement. Data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire with a passed reliability test which includes the participants' security and crime rate, environment-related issues, climate change, food security, living condition, health, income, consumption expenditures and interventions among others. The questions were translated into the local dialect of the participants in order to enhance understanding hence, responses from the respondents during the interview. Based on the total household population figure provided by the municipality, a sum of two hundred and fifty five (255) households were then randomly selected. The dataset was large and representative of the selected households in eZakheleni informal settlement, Durban metropolis of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa.

Demographic characteristics, livelihood and living conditions of the participants

In this paper, a dataset that was collected from 255 informal settlements households in the year 2018 was summarized. The aim of the survey was to measure the impact of certain intervention programmes; as well as proffer viable suggestions for the transformation of living conditions in eZakheleni informal settlements, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal of South Africa. This dataset provides stake holders, researchers and other organizations with some variables that can be used to explore informal settlements 'slums' and 'squatter settlements' and their upgrade. The dataset attempt to profile some socioeconomic characteristics of the participants(Omotayo *et al.* 2019; Omotayo 2020). Table 1 shows that majority of the participants were between the age of 33-55 years, females, attained education of grade 11-12, unemployed, separated and with household size which is in line with existing studies (Oyekale 2017; Adenegan *et al.* 2018; Willis & Hamon 2018; Omotayo *et al.* 2019). The utilized dataset contains other demographic variables that can be assist to understand the concept of food security, crime rate, health facilities, fire service accessibility, access to grant, previous interventions and the organizations involved. Fig. 1 shows that the participants have access to portable water, electricity, waste removal and toilet facilities but lack access to good health facilities(Ganiyu & Omotayo 2016; Omotayo 2016; Omotayo *et al.* 2016; Daud *et al.* 2018). The data (See Table 2) also contain information on the respondent's access to grant with majority benefiting from child support grant, R1000-R2500 montly income by the household, with a dissatisfied living condition, unsafe or insecure life and property and poor previous intervention which is largely by the Government, this is similar to the findings of(Omotayo 2018; Omotayo *et al.* 2018; Nkonki-M *et al.* 2019).

Table 1: Selected demographic characteristics of the participants

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Descriptive</i>	
	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
<18	6.00	2.40
18-35	75.00	29.40
36-55	148.00	58.00
56-75	22.00	8.60

>75	4.00	1.60
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	9.00	37.60
Female	159.00	62.40
Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
Non-formal education	18.00	7.10
Grade 1-6	20.00	7.80
Grade 7-10	74.00	29.00
Grade 11-12	126.00	49.40
Post-matric	17.00	6.34
Occupational status	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	56.00	22.00
Unemployed	157.00	61.60
Student	30.00	11.80
Pensioner	4.00	1.60
Business	5.00	2.00
Others	3.00	1.20
Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	1.00	0.40
Married	25.00	9.80
Divorced	3.00	1.20
Widowed	1.00	0.40
Seperated	225.00	88.20
Household size	Frequency	Percentage
3	70.00	27.50
4	62.00	24.30
5	26.00	10.20
6	25.00	9.80
7	25.00	9.80
8	47.00	18.40
Total	255.00	100.00

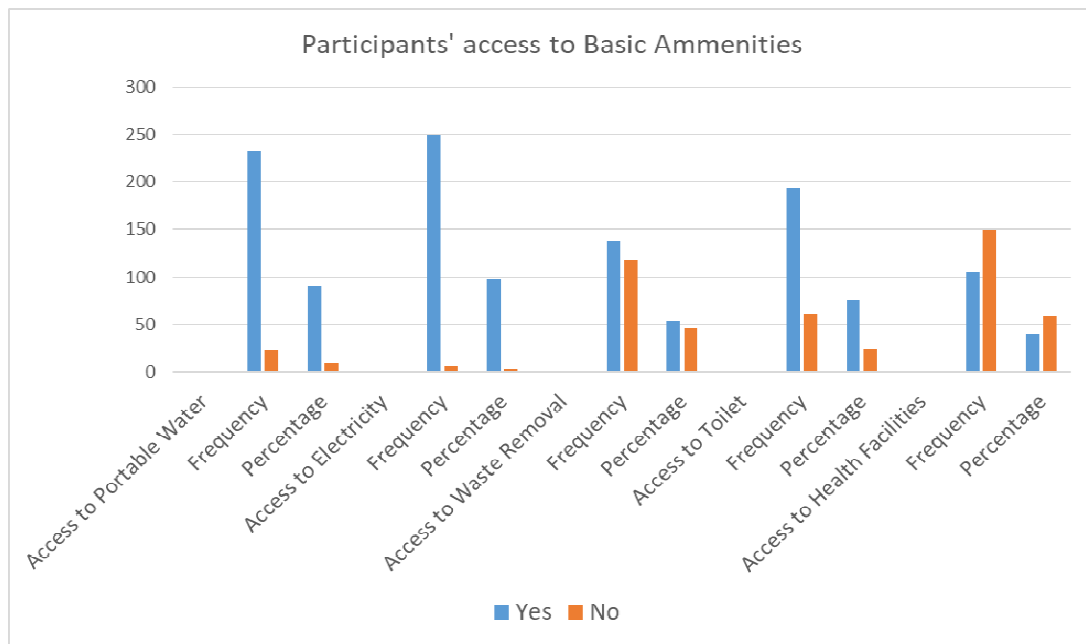


Fig. 1. Participants' access to basic amenities in eZakheleni informal settlement

Table 2: Participants Livelihood and General living Condition Perspectives

Type of grant benefited	Frequency	Percentage
Old age	33.00	12.90
Disability	4.00	1.60
Foster care	2.00	0.80
Care dependent	4.00	1.60
Child support	140.00	54.90
Social relief of stress	1.00	0.40
Others	71.00	27.80
Monthly income of respondents (Rands)	Frequency	Percentage
<1000	74.00	29.00
1000-2500	115.00	45.10
2501-5000	50.00	19.60
5001-10000	16.00	6.30
Level of satisfaction with the general living condition	Frequency	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	105.00	41.20
Dissatisfied	106.00	41.60
Undecided	9.00	3.50
Satisfied	33.00	12.90
Very satisfied	2.00	0.80
Safety of lives and properties	Frequency	Percentage

Very unsafe	35.00	13.70
Unsafe	101.00	39.60
Undecided	32.00	12.60
Safe	78.00	30.60
Very safe	9.00	3.50
Body responsible for intervention project	Frequency	Percentage
Government	55.00	21.60
Private body	11.00	4.30
NGO	5.00	2.00
Community	48.00	18.80
Individual	2.00	0.80
Others	48.00	18.80
Total	255.00	100.00

Conclusion and recommendation

The key problem of weather it is possible to take a proactive approach and improve the current living conditions of the ezakheleni informal settlement, Durban metropolis of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa's residents while awaiting the construction of a low cost housing facility that call accommodate the residence. Although, it is possible to upgrade informal settlements whilst informal settlers wait for the construction of low cost housing. In order to be able to undertake integrated development interventions, it is important to have reliable and up to date information about the community such as affordability levels. Informal settlements, especially in their formative periods, depend heavily on existing neighboring townships for access to potable-water; refuse collection, maybe even food and some transport. Vacant, unprotected spaces adjoining the poorest parts of the formal city are thus the most susceptible to new shack erection. Healthy communities require open space for recreation. However, such space is often at a premium particularly during short term emergencies and so they tend to be occupied. Informal settlement upgrading is not simply the responsibility of housing departments, but rather the multi-sectoral responsibility of a range of stakeholders or partners who should work collectively to address the community's development priorities through a range of complementary social and physical development initiatives that address urban livelihoods, land tenure, cooperative governance, social inclusion and environmental security. The upgrading of informal settlements is invariably a phased process, the ultimate objective of which is to provide everyone with acceptable housing. Water is a basic need to any individual and it lacks in many informal settlements residents of informal settlements depend on the nearest townships for water. The improvement of informal settlements will ensure that water is available.

Alternative sanitation will be provided within informal settlements of which it is very essential to improve the health levels and to protect the natural environment. The objectives of electrifying informal settlements would be met when improvements are done, these include the elimination of

illegal wiring crossing public roads surrounding settlements and also to provide electricity supplies to as many dwellings as possible in order to raise living standards. The situation may arise where it is essential that one or more dwellings be moved for future roads or railway. Informal settlers are sensitive about moving their homes, due to proper strategy and planning care will always be taken to explain the reasons for moving and the proposed process and to provide the opportunity for discussion of any realistic alternatives. Improvements of informal settlements it's definitely possible with proper planning.

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Competing Interests

We hereby declare that there is no competing financial interests or any personal relationship that can in anyway affect the work reported in this paper.

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