

## MAPPING THE SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE TERRAIN IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

# GOVERNANCE DIARIES IN KOROGOCHO AND VIWANDANI, NAIROBI



### INTRODUCTION

More than half of humanity currently lives in urban areas, and 90% of the global population is projected to be urban by 2050. Crucially, one in three urban residents now live in precarious areas, including informal settlements. Such settlements are prone to interconnected challenges in health and well-being, which are poorly understood globally and are often ignored as temporary aberrations by governments. The absence or inadequacy of local and national government institutions fosters the creation of multiple governance systems which challenge binary notions of public-private, state-society, and formal-informal, ultimately affecting service delivery in informal settlements.

### SALIENT MOTIVATING FEATURES:

- Formal services in informal settlements are almost non-existent;
- Routine government data rarely cover informal settlements and data are usually insufficiently disaggregated;
- Inequities are often concealed and poorly addressed in informal settlements;
- Persistence of weak urban governance (particularly in policy, planning, and urban management);
- Pronounced disconnection of informal settlements from mainstream opportunities;
- Combined burdens of informal settlements are harmful to residents of these settlements, the cities they are located in, and the overall population;
- Intractable health and well-being challenges in informal settlements.

The Accountability and Responsiveness in Informal Settlements for Equity (ARISE) project seeks to understand the role of accountability in improving health and wellbeing inequities of marginalised and vulnerable groups living and working in informal urban spaces in Bangladesh, India and, Kenya and Sierra Leone.

Mapping of the social and governance terrain was conducted in the first phase of the study (Mapping Phase), to understand how existing governance and accountability systems affect the health and well-being of residents living and working in the study sites, Korogocho and Viwandani. This brief presents methods, key findings and recommendations from the governance diaries activity undertaken in Korogocho and Viwandani settlements.

### METHODS

Completion of governance diaries was the last activity undertaken as part of mapping the social and governance terrain. This activity presented the project team with the opportunity to dig deeper into aspects of the governance of marginalised and vulnerable groups. The governance diaries incorporated community profiling, social mapping, and stakeholder profiling. We mapped the social governance terrain of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups (older persons, people living with disabilities, and child-headed households) identified in the social mapping exercise. A team of two researchers collected data by visiting purposively selected households on a bi-weekly basis over four months, for a total of six visits per household. At the end of each visit, we reviewed the: interview description (details of what the respondent said); interview setting; respondents' behaviour; respondents' interactions (if other people were present during the interview); researchers' reflections (what they learned, what was surprising);

### KEY LEARNINGS:

- People living with disabilities, child-headed households and older persons face intersecting challenges to their health and well-being in informal settlements. When their health and well-being needs are not met, the effects are seen in both the short and long term.
- COVID-19 and other outbreaks exacerbate challenges faced by the marginalised and vulnerable in accessing services as well as those faced by actors offering services within the community.
- The capacity of actors to respond to various health and well-being issues is limited by governance challenges including corruption and misuse of public resources by actors.
- Informal actors and social support networks for vulnerable populations are vital within informal settlements, irrespective of the availability of formal actors and networks. Informal actors devise various support networks given the near absence of critical formal structures in these settlements.

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and a summary of what to follow up on during the next visit. Twenty-four respondents participated in this section of the study.

Our findings showed that marginalised and vulnerable people have diverse unmet needs and resilience strategies. Notably, networks of formal and informal actors within the community could directly or indirectly support the marginalised and vulnerable. Actors have different levels of power and authority to influence equity in service provision.

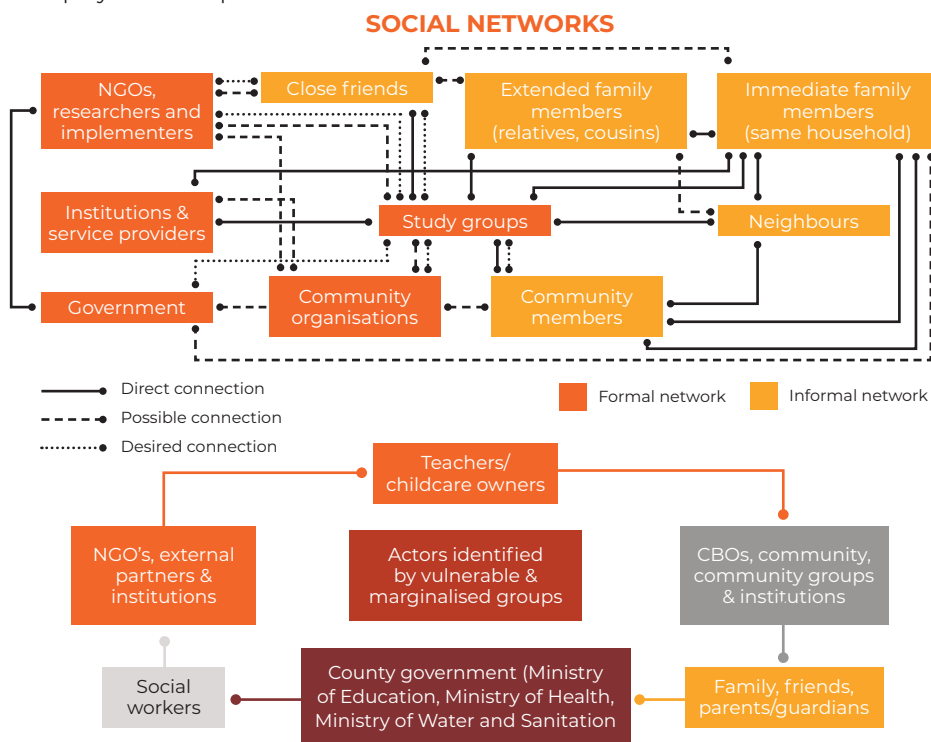


Figure 1: Actors and networks for marginalised and vulnerable groups

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH:

Key actors including the government should consider the following for effective governance:

- Recognise the roles played by formal and informal actors in support of MVGs and consider how to integrate them for effective service delivery.
- Undertake capacity building on the roles of existing structures and actors that support MVGs.
- Provision of safe spaces where MVGs can access support within the community.
- Engage and incorporate the wealth of information among MVGs. This knowledge is often ignored and generally not documented, harnessed, or incorporated into policy and action.
- Shift the focus of collaborations between formal and informal actors and networks away from control to autonomy and collaboration. This would be a significant step in empowering vulnerable groups to make decisions about where to seek support.
- Conduct comprehensive education and skills development to enable MVGs and their caregivers to determine where, how, when and why to seek support. Strengthening informed decision-making is an effective way to support MVGs. Misinformation and low awareness levels perpetuate poor service delivery, therefore efforts to raise awareness are essential and should be enhanced.
- Establish, support, or maintain relationships with other actors and related networks through goodwill and proactive engagement for consistent support of MVGs.

### SUGGESTED CITATION:

<sup>1</sup>Ivy Chumo, <sup>1</sup>Blessing Mberu and <sup>1</sup>Caroline Kabaria (2023) Mapping the social and governance terrain in informal settlements – Governance diaries in Korogocho and Viwandani, Nairobi; ARISE Consortium.

**Author Affiliation:** <sup>1</sup> African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)

### KEY LEARNINGS CONTD:

- Low involvement of marginalised and vulnerable groups (MVGs) affects the success of various actors within the community. For example, youth groups that were identified as a community support mechanism were not meeting during the COVID-19 outbreak, and a vital aspect of the community voice was said to be lost.
- The MVGs preferred informal actors, describing them as being available and dedicated to their work compared to formal actors.
- Complementary mechanisms involving formal and informal actors and their related networks are essential to support vulnerable persons. Informal structures have solid knowledge about the communities and their activities, while formal structures and networks have expert knowledge.
- Formal actors can develop a better understanding of communities by working closely with community members. Structures that were perceived as distant from the community such as the police were feared.

#### The ARISE Hub – Accountability and Responsiveness in Informal Settlements for Equity

– is a research consortium, instituted to enhance accountability and improve the health and wellbeing of marginalised populations living in informal urban settlements in low-and middle-income countries.

The ARISE vision is to catalyse change in approaches to enhancing accountability and improving the health and wellbeing of poor, marginalised people living in informal urban settlements.

ARISE is guided by a process of data collection, building capacity, and supporting people to exercise their right to health. ARISE works closely with the communities themselves; with a particular focus on vulnerable people living in the informal settlements; often overlooked in many projects and initiatives.

ARISE was launched in 2019 and is a 5-year project. It is implemented in four countries: Bangladesh, Kenya, India and Sierra Leone.

