

# **Urban Poverty and Vulnerability In Kenya**

Background analysis for the preparation of an  
Oxfam GB Urban Programme focused on Nairobi

September 2009

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## Abbreviations

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| AWSB       | Athi Water Services Board                     |
| CCN        | City Council of Nairobi                       |
| CDF        | Constituency Development Fund                 |
| CLAN       | Children Legal Aid Network                    |
| CLEAR K    | Christian Legal Education Aid & Research      |
| COVAW      | Coalition on Violence Against Women           |
| CSO        | Civil Society Organisation                    |
| DC         | District Commissioner                         |
| DFID       | Department for International Development      |
| DO         | District Officer                              |
| GDP        | Gross Domestic Product                        |
| GOK        | Government of Kenya                           |
| ICT        | Information Communication Technology          |
| IGA        | Income Generating Activity                    |
| KANCO      | Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium                    |
| KDHS       | Kenya Demographic and Health Survey           |
| KENSUP     | Kenya Slums Upgrading Programme               |
| KENSUF     | Kenya Slums Upgrading Trust Fund              |
| KEPSA      | Kenya Private Sector Association              |
| KFSSG      | Kenya Food Security Sector Group              |
| KIHBS      | Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey      |
| LASDAP     | Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan  |
| LATF       | Local Authority Transfer Fund                 |
| MDG        | Millennium Development Goal                   |
| MOH        | Ministry of Housing                           |
| NACC       | National AIDS Control Council                 |
| NACHU      | National Cooperative Housing Union            |
| NCBDA      | Nairobi Central Business District Association |
| NCS        | National Change Strategy                      |
| NCWSC      | Nairobi City Water & Sewerage Company         |
| NEMA       | National Environmental Management Authority   |
| NGO        | Non Governmental Organisation                 |
| OGB        | Oxfam Great Britain                           |
| PC         | Provincial Commissioner                       |
| SCC UK     | Save the Children United Kingdom              |
| SIDA       | Swedish International Development Agency      |
| SJCC       | St. John Community Centre                     |
| UNAIDS     | United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS    |
| UNDP       | United Nations Development Programme          |
| UNFPA      | United Nations Population Fund                |
| UN-HABITAT | United Nations Human Settlement Programme     |
| UNICEF     | United Nations Children Education Fund        |
| VCT        | Voluntary Counselling and Testing             |
| WSP-A      | Water & Sanitation Programme-Africa           |
| WSUP       | Water & Sanitation for the Urban Poor         |

## **Executive summary**

This urban poverty analysis by Oxfam GB was informed by the fact that urban poverty emerged as a key challenge in the OGB Kenya 2007 National Change Strategy review. A range of international actors as well as the government of Kenya now acknowledge the urbanisation of poverty in the country and the scale of the challenges presented by rapid urbanisation. From an Oxfam perspective, this means recognising the need to invest further resources in urban work in a country where, until recently, the programme has focused principally on emergency response and the arid lands in the North in recent years.

### ***i) Urban poverty and inequality in Kenya***

This report brings together the growing evidence about the scale and nature of poverty in Kenya's urban areas. Between a third and half of the country's urban population live in poverty, and given the pace of urbanisation, urban poverty will represent almost half of the *total* poverty in Kenya by 2020. Moreover, while urban poverty has been decreasing according to some measures, statistics indicate that the proportion of the urban population that are poorest of all (the 'food poor' and 'hardcore poor') has been on the rise.

In Nairobi, the capital city, 60% of the population live in slums and levels of inequality are dangerously high, with negative implications for both human security and economic development. Feelings of insecurity in many of the city's informal settlements have heightened considerably since the violence following the contested election results of December 2007. Poverty in the city is worst amongst those with low levels of education, another cause for concern given that considerably fewer children attend the later stages of school in Nairobi than in Kenya's rural areas, and many slum areas have few or no public schools. Meanwhile gender inequalities remain severe, with female slum-dwellers being 5 times more likely to be unemployed than males.

### ***ii) Vulnerability among Nairobi's 2 million slum-dwellers***

Even if, in terms of income, there are still a higher number of poor people in the countryside than in Kenya's cities, poor urban-dwellers face an alarming (and growing) range of vulnerabilities. Residents of Nairobi are around twice as likely to have HIV as their rural counterparts, and in the slums infant, child and neonatal mortality rates are above the national average. Moreover children living in Nairobi's informal settlements are less likely than in rural areas to be immunised as well as being more prone to diarrhoea, fever and acute respiratory infection. The urban poor often pay around 8 times as much for water as the rich and being at risk from contaminated water, and the lack of waste management and disposal in the slums breeds disease and contributes to poor drainage, exacerbating the risk of urban floods, which is also being heightened by climate change.

Relative to rural areas, 'social capital' is thought to be weak in Nairobi and consequently people do not have the same kin and support networks. Most slum dwellers feel at risk from crime and violence in their settlements, and this sense of insecurity is exacerbated by insecurity of tenure and the threat of eviction under which many of the urban poor live. Another major aspect of vulnerability relates to the dramatically increased cost of food in recent years, which has led a majority of slum-dwellers to decrease the frequency and size of their meals as well as pushing people into high-risk livelihood activities in order to meet their basic needs. The urban poor

are also particularly vulnerable to poor governance, given the regularity of interactions between residents and state actors in cities and the consequent pressure to pay a range of bribes and fines just to get by.

### ***iii) The institutional and policy framework for urban development***

The challenge of urban poverty and vulnerability needs to be understood in relation to the framework in place both nationally and locally for governing Kenya's urban centres. Currently government remains highly centralised, and there has historically been reluctance at central government level to acknowledge the full scale of urbanisation and urban poverty in the country. While there is now a growing recognition on the part of government of the need to improve living conditions in the slums, there are further causes for concern in relation to whether its efforts to re-house people comply with international human rights standards. Efforts to bring funds to the local level for urban development also suffer from a lack of transparency, accountability and citizen participation.

At the level of Nairobi, the City Council is constrained by central government intervention, lack of funds and corruption. It is also working to a Master plan over 35 years old. Collaboration between civil society organisations and the City Council is sporadic and poorly coordinated, and relations between central and local government are similarly hampered by poor coordination and lack of clarity in the division of functions. Moreover on certain issues, such as disaster prevention and risk reduction, there is a knowledge gap evident at all levels of government.

### ***iv) Existing approaches to engaging with poverty reduction in Nairobi***

Despite there being a raft of programmes aimed at poverty reduction sponsored both by government and other stakeholders, limited achievements have been made. Factors contributing to this lack of progress include the uncoordinated manner in which the programmes are being implemented, the many players operating in the urban sector without a clear mandate, and the absence of an urban development policy for Nairobi and other urban centres across the country.

There are many projects relating to improved water supply, sanitation, food security and education in the slums, with varying degrees of success. Yet while some key issues, such as HIV/AIDS, are relatively well-supported by a large range of organisations, others such as access to justice for the poor and disaster prevention are rather lacking in support from development actors. Efforts to reform governance itself have made little progress, and poor governance remains a huge obstacle to effective poverty reduction in the city.

### ***v) Conclusion and recommendations***

Key options available to Oxfam GB in the urban sector include but are not limited to promoting good urban governance through an enhanced policy environment, building government and community capacity, working towards sustainable urban livelihoods, expanding access to critical urban services such as water and sanitation, improving access to information among the urban poor and involving youth in strategies of conflict mitigation.

Given Oxfam's strengths in relation to coordinating partnerships between diverse stakeholders, improving water supply and sanitation, food security, conflict transformation and emergency response, it should be well placed to make an important difference through an urban programme focused on Nairobi.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

In 2007, the Oxfam Great Britain (OGB) Kenya Programme underwent a National Change Strategy review (NCS), from which urban poverty emerged as one of the key challenges hampering the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals in Kenya and one that the programme should take up in the future.

Oxfam GB's desire to engage more comprehensively with the challenge of urban poverty in Kenya comes at a time when there is a growing acknowledgement, by government and development agencies alike, that poverty is a phenomenon affecting urban communities as much as rural ones, and that poverty in the country's urban areas requires far more attention in terms of policies and strategies than it is currently being given. Urban poverty is inextricably linked with the process of rapid urbanisation in the country, which means that it is likely to continue to increase as the country urbanises unless sufficient measures are put in place. Furthermore, Oxfam recognises the growing awareness and concern about climate change and how it can affect the lives of the poor in urban areas; this too requires a clear focus in policies aimed at improving the prospects for Kenya's cities.

its report, *Kenya: Accelerating and Sustaining Inclusive Growth, 2008*, the World Bank warned that it cannot be assumed recent growth has translated into poverty reduction: despite the growth, 17 million Kenyans – almost half the entire population – live below the poverty line and often sleep hungry. Unemployment is spiralling, particularly among the youth, around 2.5 million of whom are jobless.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the proportion classified as the 'urban food poor' – who are even poorer than the 'absolute poor' and can barely meet their nutritional requirements, let alone other basic needs – is on the increase. Economic growth has also concealed high and rising inequalities in urban areas: income disparities in Kenyan cities increased between 1997 and 2006, whereas those in rural areas have on average gone down. Rising inequalities can severely hamper both poverty reduction efforts and economic growth, as well as leading to increased conflict and violent crime.

Over the past few years, the Kenya Programme has focused principally on developing the capacities of partners directly implementing the pastoral programme in the Northern Kenya, and on responding to emergencies. It has also supported initiatives such as community peace-building processes, innovative humanitarian assistance (cash transfers, cash for work, food vouchers and other mitigation processes), livelihoods and other interventions among marginalised communities. While useful lessons can be drawn from such initiatives, Oxfam GB's experience of working in the urban areas of the country has been limited to date. This has to change if Oxfam and other donors are to keep pace with the changing reality of poverty in Kenya as a whole.

To inform the process of formulating an urban programme strategy for its engagement with the urban sector, an analysis and appraisal of urban poverty in Kenya, with a particular focus on Nairobi, has been undertaken. This report presents the findings of this work.

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<sup>1</sup> The Daily Nation, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009

## 1.2 Approach and methodology

The study focuses on the following parameters:

- a) The dimensions of urban poverty in Kenya generally and Nairobi specifically
- b) The key characteristics of vulnerability among the urban poor in Nairobi
- c) A map of the main elements of the institutional and policy framework governing the development of cities in Kenya and especially Nairobi
- d) Key approaches adopted by the current actors in addressing urban poverty in Nairobi and their level of success so far
- e) Gaps in addressing urban poverty that an Oxfam urban programme could fill and recommendations for the development of such a programme.

The study is largely based on secondary sources, with a literature review and internet search on secondary information relating to the urban sector in Kenya having been undertaken to establish and collate a wide range of baseline facts on poverty and vulnerability. In addition to a range of secondary sources, some primary data was collected through key informant interviews. There is now a considerable amount of evidence on the scale and nature of urban poverty in Kenya available from various sources, but it is rarely brought together in a single document; moreover, in discussions on Kenya's poverty levels, a thorough assessment of the various forms of *vulnerability* among the urban poor is rarely included. This report sets out to address these two omissions as well as highlighting the need for more targeted urban work by Oxfam in Kenya and pointing out some potential areas in which OGB could particularly add value.

It should be noted that the source of much of the basic demographic data quoted in the report is the 1999 Kenya Population and Housing Census, though some more recent demographic data has been obtained from the 2003 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS). Estimates of the current total population and of the urban/rural proportions provided in the report need, therefore, to be treated with caution.

While studies on urban poverty in selected informal settlements in the city abound, there is little consistency in the way in which data collection methodologies, such as the baseline surveys, are applied. This limits the reliability and the comparability of the information gathered in different studies on the same issue. The most recent and comprehensive demographic and socio-economic data available on Nairobi's informal settlements is that drawn from a household sample survey undertaken by the World Bank in 2006. This information has been used extensively in the report.

Data constraints also prevent systematic monitoring of the food security and nutritional status of the residents of informal settlements, particularly the urban 'food poor', and thereby limit the possibility of identifying any emerging food security crisis. This contrasts with the situation in rural, arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya where a comprehensive surveillance system exists, allowing for a timely and appropriate response.

Although the study is largely focused on Nairobi province, its scope is broader in order to provide contextual information on urban poverty in the country as a whole. This report comprises the study findings and analysis, which will subsequently guide the development of a comprehensive rights-based urban programme strategy.



## 2 Urban poverty and inequality in Kenya

*This chapter reveals that while according to some indicators urban poverty appears to be less severe than rural and even improving, many statistics mask the harsh reality of life for the very poorest urban-dwellers in Kenya. High levels of urban food poverty and soaring inequalities are all the more alarming given that Kenya is projected to be 50% urbanised by 2020. Key findings presented in this chapter include the following:*

- While the proportion of Kenya's urban population living in 'absolute poverty' has declined over the past decade, this conceals the fact that the percentage share of the very poorest urban groups – defined as the 'food poor' and 'hardcore poor' – has actually been *increasing*
- There are over 4 million urban food poor in Kenya, almost a third of whom are located in Nairobi
- 60% of Nairobi's population – around 2 million people – live in slums
- Inequality is declining in Kenya's rural areas, but in cities it is high and rising. While the rural Gini coefficient is now around 0.38 – indicating similar levels of inequality to Portugal and much lower levels than the US – in Nairobi it is a staggering 0.59, indicating levels of inequality similar to Johannesburg in the mid-1990s
- The poorest urban-dwellers spend up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their income on staple foods alone
- While primary school enrolment is marginally higher in urban areas, after the age of 15 far fewer boys and girls attend school in cities than rural areas. This has significant impacts as urban poverty has been shown to be inversely related to level of education of household head
- In a Nairobi slum area home to around 25,000 people there may be as few as two private schools and no public ones
- Women in the slums are almost 5 times as likely as men to be unemployed
- Even if *rates* of urban growth are slowing, the overall size of the annual increments in Kenyan cities is huge, with Nairobi's population projected to grow from around 3.4 million now to almost 6 million in 2025

### 2.1 Introduction

Urban poverty in Kenya is now so severe that donors, NGOs and the government of Kenya alike can simply not afford to ignore it. While statistics differ, over a third of Kenya's urban population is living in poverty by any measure. Recent World Bank/Cities Alliance figures indicated levels closer to a half, and also suggest that by 2020, urban poverty will represent almost half (48.9%) of the *total* poverty in the country.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Kessides 2006

This chapter opens with a section presenting an overview of basic definitions and measures of urban poverty followed by a number of sections that discuss indicators and characteristics of urban poverty in the Kenyan context. Each of these begins with an overview of urban Kenya generally before going on to discuss Nairobi specifically. The first of these sections reviews some basic indicators of urban poverty and inequality in Kenya, and is followed by a review of socio-economic characteristics of Kenya's urban population including an ethnic profile of Nairobi. The final section examines education and employment among the urban poor. A deeper analysis of the specific vulnerabilities of the urban poor in Nairobi is then elaborated in Chapter 3.

## 2.2 Concepts, definitions and measures of urban poverty

### **Poverty lines**

The Government of Kenya (GoK) applies a range of different *poverty lines* which are measured in different ways, all based on consumption/expenditure. The *food poverty line* is based on the cost of consuming 2,250 kilocalories per adult equivalent per day, while the *absolute* or *overall poverty line* relates to survival food needs and basic non-food needs. In addition there is the category of *hardcore poverty*, which refers to households that would not meet their minimum food requirements even if they allocated *all* their income on food.<sup>3</sup> Thus households are deemed to be *absolute poor* if they cannot meet their nutritional and other basic requirements, *food poor* if they cannot meet all their nutritional needs due to expenditure on other basic non-food essentials, and *hardcore poor* if they are unable to meet their basic food needs even by foregoing other essentials.<sup>4</sup>

The 2005/06 Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS)<sup>5</sup> estimated the *food poverty line* in monthly adult equivalent terms as being Ksh. 1,474 in urban areas (compared with Ksh. 998 in rural areas). The *absolute poverty line* in monthly adult equivalent terms was computed as Ksh. 2,913 for urban areas compared with Ksh. 1,562 for rural areas.

### **Non-expenditure/income measures**

It is appropriate to note other approaches to defining poverty, which go beyond the strictly expenditure/income measures. After noting four major approaches defining poverty – income poverty, the capability approach, relative poverty and social exclusion – Oxfam concludes that:

*'One approach is insufficient to define poverty in totality. In particular, there are four aspects: not having enough to live on, not having enough to build from, being excluded from wealth, and being excluded from the power to change things for the better. This not only sits comfortably with the analysis and Oxfam's beliefs, but also reflects the outlook of poor people themselves.'*

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<sup>3</sup> Mitullah, 2003

<sup>4</sup> There is a degree of ambiguity in how these different poverty lines are used; the definitions provided by GoK lack clarity and in different publications they are given different emphases. The assumption here, based on a review of numerous documents that use these measures, is that food poverty is a subcategory of absolute poverty; thus the number of absolute poor refers to the total number of poor *per se* and the food poor constitute a subcategory who are even more poor due to their inability to meet their nutritional needs. The absolute poor who are not food poor may therefore be able to meet their needs in terms of calorific intake but are not able to meet other needs.

<sup>5</sup> Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2007

*Further, it is only when looking at the four aspects together that Oxfam can gain insights into the causes of poverty and its solutions.<sup>6</sup>*

The UN's definition brings together two important and related themes in the contemporary understanding of poverty: the 'capability approach' and the 'human rights approach'. Thus poverty is conceived as:

*'A human condition characterized by the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.'<sup>7</sup>*

Poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon is perhaps best exemplified in urban areas. Not only is urban poverty characterised by inadequate income (and hence inadequate consumption of basic necessities) but also by inadequate asset base, shelter and provision of public infrastructure (for example, piped water, sanitation, drainage, and so forth), as well as inadequate access to services such as health care, schools, vocational training, and protection of poorer groups' rights. Compounding this are limited or non-existent social safety nets, voicelessness, and powerlessness within political systems, judicial institutions and bureaucratic structures.<sup>8</sup>

The sustainable livelihoods framework presents another approach towards capturing the multidimensionality of urban poverty. It is based on the notion of capital assets, with households possessing five forms of such assets: human capital, financial capital, physical capital, social capital, and natural capital. To secure their well-being and cope with the challenges of their economic, social, physical and political environments, households adopt livelihood strategies that draw upon these five forms of capital. A household's ability to evade or reduce vulnerability is dependent upon its initial asset base and its capacity to manage, access and transform these assets.

### ***Informal settlements***

As will be shown later, a high proportion of the country's urban poor live in unplanned informal settlements located in the urban centres. The term *informal settlement* is often used in preference to that of *slum*, but in reality the terms are synonymous. The following definition of a slum applies:

*A slum is a contiguous settlement where the inhabitants are characterised as having inadequate housing and basic services. A slum is often not recognised and addressed by public authorities as an integral or equal part of the city.*

*A slum household is a group of individuals living under the same roof that lack **one or more** of the following: access to safe water; access to sanitation; secure tenure; durability of housing and sufficient living area.<sup>9</sup>*

For the purposes of this report, the urban poor are equated with informal settlement or slum residents. It should be noted that not all poor people live in informal settlements and not all people living in informal settlements are poor; but the overlap between the urban poor and slum-dwellers is so great that for this report it can be assumed that in the vast majority of cases they are one and the same.

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<sup>6</sup> Oxfam, FROSI

<sup>7</sup> UN, 2001 quoted in Oxfam, FROSI

<sup>8</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2003

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

## 2.3 Basic indicators of urban poverty and inequality in Kenya

### **Urban poverty incidence**

According to the 2005/2006 KIHBS, there were nearly 17 million people or approximately 50% of the total population living in absolute poverty. In terms of the *urban* population, there has been a reduction in the level of absolute/overall poverty since 1997; but in relation to the other two measures of poverty used – food poverty and hardcore poverty - there have actually been increases. Thus **urban food poverty** increased from just over 38% in 1997 to nearly 41% in 2006, while the percentage of **hardcore poor** rose slightly from under 8% to just over that percentage. This means that while some of the urban population have been lifted out of poverty by the recent growth boom, others sank into even deeper poverty with the effect that the proportion of Nairobi's residents who are very poor actually grew in the same period. Given growth in Nairobi's overall population size between 1997 and 2006, the absolute number of the very poorest will have actually grown by considerably more than the above percentage increases suggest. Moreover in some cities, such as Nakuru and Mombasa, a full half of the population is now food poor.<sup>10</sup>

As for Nairobi itself, Table 2.1 provides a disaggregation of the overall proportion (44%) of those living below the absolute poverty line by the administrative divisions of the city in 1999, as well as by the estimated number of poor individuals. It clearly indicates that in some areas overall poverty is considerably higher than others. The KIHBS calculated that Nairobi hosts nearly a third (29.5%) of the country's total urban food poor, the latter now being estimated as 4.1 million by the Kenya Food Security Sector Group.

**Table 2.1 Summary of urban poverty rates for Nairobi, 1999**

| Province/<br>District and Division | Estimated number<br>of individuals '000<br>(1999 Census) | Estimated<br>number of poor<br>individuals<br>'000 | Poverty<br>incidence:<br>% of individuals<br>below poverty line |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Nairobi (overall)</b>           | <b>1, 992</b>  | <b>826</b>   | <b>44</b>   |
| Central                            | 205  | 92   | 45  |
| Dagoretti                          | 230  | 106  | 46  |
| Embakasi                           | 409  | 170  | 42  |
| Kasarani                           | 321  | 153  | 48  |
| Lang'ata                           | 271  | 111  | 41  |
| Makadara                           | 185  | 108  | 59  |
| Pumwani                            | 183  | 85   | 46  |
| Westlands                          | 188  | 62   | 32  |

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2003

### **Urban inequalities**

The same survey further indicates that income disparities in the urban areas of Kenya have increased as measured by the urban Gini coefficient. A Gini coefficient of 0 would indicate perfect equality (that is, where everyone in the population has the same expenditure or income), whereas a value of 1 would correspond to perfect inequality (that is, when all expenditure or income is accounted for by a single person in the population).

<sup>10</sup> These figures on Nakuru and Mombasa come from a 2007 report by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), cited in the Kenyan Business Daily, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2007, available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200710231116.html>

In urban Kenya, the Gini coefficient rose from 0.426 in 1997 to 0.447 in 2006. By contrast, the rural Gini coefficient has fallen from 0.417 to 0.38 during the same period. Not only does this signify that the urban areas are becoming more unequal than rural Kenya in terms of income distribution but that, with a Gini coefficient value currently above 0.40, the country has exceeded the 'international alert line - inequality threshold', indicating 'conditions conducive to social unrest and conflict'.<sup>11</sup>

Recent studies show that levels of inequality in the Kenyan towns around Lake Victoria (0.56) are considerably higher than the mean urban Gini coefficient. In Nairobi itself, income disparities between the rich and poor groups in the city are even wider; the Gini coefficient for Nairobi (as measured in 1999) is 0.59, indicating levels of inequality similar to those in Johannesburg in the mid-1990s. It has been estimated that the richest 10% of the population of Nairobi accrues 45.2% of income, and the poorest 10% only 1.6%.<sup>12</sup> These high levels of inequality have not only contributed to conflict in the city but are also bad for development more generally:

*'Inequality has two effects on poverty levels: it slows economic growth, and it makes a given rate of economic growth less effective in reducing poverty. While equity and economic growth are mutually reinforcing, inequality is socially destabilising, bad for growth, and of its nature restricts the capabilities of marginalised groups. Conversely, equitable access to markets, political power, and social provision, on the basis of needs, is the fastest and most effective route to poverty reduction'*<sup>13</sup>

### **The location of the urban poor**

It is estimated that more than half the urban population of Kenya now live in the country's informal settlements: i.e. over 5.5 million people. In Nairobi it is estimated that an even higher percentage – over 60% – of the population live in slums.<sup>14</sup> On the basis of a specially constructed expenditure-based poverty line of Ksh. 3,174 per adult equivalent per month, excluding rent, the World Bank study of 2006 calculated that nearly three-quarters (73%) of slum households are poor.<sup>15</sup> According to this proportion, if Amnesty International's recent estimate of 2 million slum-dwellers in Nairobi<sup>16</sup> is correct then that implies there are around 1.5 people living in poverty in the capital's slums alone.

Even those who are not poor in income/expenditure terms but live in the slums can be considered qualitatively poor by virtue of living in poor quality housing lacking infrastructure.<sup>17</sup> Moreover the Amnesty report argues that the lack of tenure security among Nairobi's slum-dwellers, the majority of whom rent and have 'no form of security of tenure – perceived or legal', is a denial of the right to adequate housing. Mass forced evictions are a huge and growing problem in the city, and despite government pledges to develop guidelines on evictions there has been little progress and there are still no Kenyan laws prohibiting forced eviction. Such guidelines and laws are particularly urgent given the 'threatened eviction of more than 100,000 people living in informal settlements by the Nairobi River basin, whose homes and informal businesses...would be demolished to make way for a massive river clean-up project'. Concerns raised by organisations such as Amnesty about the potential

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<sup>11</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2008

<sup>12</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2006

<sup>13</sup> Watt, 2000

<sup>14</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2006

<sup>15</sup> The 2004 expenditure-based poverty line used in the World Bank study was based on the GOK 1999 poverty line adjusted for inflation

<sup>16</sup> Amnesty International, 2009

<sup>17</sup> World Bank, 2006

impacts of this 'socially and economically disastrous' Nairobi River clean-up process have so far been met with silence.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.4 The population of urban Kenya

### ***Characteristics of the urban population in aggregate***

According to the 2006 Human Development Report, the population of Kenya stood at 33.5 million in 2004, the current estimate being 34 million. The current urban population constitutes approximately a third of that total. By 2020, it is predicted that this proportion will have risen to more than half, reflecting the continued urban growth experienced by Kenya over the last three decades; it has been labelled one of the 25 fastest growing cities in the world.<sup>19</sup> Appendix 1 illustrates these trends, as well as providing some information from the 2003 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) on differences between urban and rural areas. Despite the various important differences, it is important not to present the rural-urban divide as being rigid, when in fact it is a continuum and many people continue to engage in livelihoods that straddle both rural and urban areas (Appendix 2 examines some of these linkages and the dynamics of rural-urban migration).

From a figure of 2.3 million at the time of the 1999 Census, it is currently estimated that the total population of Nairobi city is just over 3 million people, with estimates ranging up to 3.5 million.<sup>20</sup> The population of has grown more than ten-fold since 1960, experiencing some of the highest growth rates per annum in Africa. Growing at a rate of 4.4% in recent years,<sup>21</sup> the population is projected to rise to around 5 million by 2020 and 6 million by 2025.<sup>22</sup> There are significantly more men (54%) than women (46%) in the city while at the national level it is more or less a 50/50 split. Thus the city has a much smaller percentage (20%) of female-headed households compared with the national population (almost 32%). Moreover, Close to 40% of the Nairobi population are males aged 15-49 compared with approximately 25% nationally. The proportion of females in this age group is 29% in both cases.<sup>23</sup>

The ethnic composition of Nairobi is diverse and multi-racial. With regard to the indigenous population, the Kikuyu ethnic group makes up approximately 32% of the city's population, the Luo tribe 18%, Luhya 16% and the Kamba 13%. The Maasai, the original inhabitants of the region before the establishment of the city, constitute less than 1%.<sup>24</sup>

The average household size is 3.1 in Nairobi compared to a national figure of 4.4. However, this certainly does not imply that people have adequate space in the poor areas; far from it – in Kibera slum, while estimates of the population vary widely, it is said to be 30 times as dense as central New York City.<sup>25</sup> Hence we now move from a consideration of the socio-economic characteristics of urban populations generally to those of the urban poor.

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<sup>18</sup> Amnesty International, 2009: 19, 21.

<sup>19</sup> International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), cited in the Kenyan Business Daily, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2007, available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200710231116.html>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2003

<sup>22</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2008b

<sup>23</sup> These figures are taken from an analysis undertaken by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), which was based on data from 1998 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey.

<sup>24</sup> Practical Action, 2004

<sup>25</sup> Kibera Slum Foundation, <http://www.kslum.org/aboutkibera.htm>

### **Characteristics of the urban poor**

Disaggregating poverty in urban areas by various socio-economic characteristics, the 2005/2006 KIHBS shows that the prevalence of poverty (34% total) among male-headed households is significantly lower (30%) than female-headed households (46%). In turn, married-female headed households in urban areas have a lower incidence of poverty compared with female-other households ('female-other' signifying single, separated, divorced, or living together women). These latter households are among the most vulnerable in urban Kenya and suffer disproportionately from inadequate housing.

As with rural areas, the positive effects of education on poverty reduction are clear in cities and towns. The level of education of the household head is inversely related with the incidence of poverty: the latter drops from nearly 69% for those with no education to 48% for those with primary education and 22% for those with secondary education. The link between poverty and the size of the household is also very clear. With poverty levels of 47% exist among households with 7 or more members, but this declines to around 20% in the smallest size of household (1-3 persons). In relation to age, 48% of households with the head aged 56+ years are poor, as compared with just around 23% in cases where the age group of the household head is 15-29 years.

In Nairobi itself, comparative indicators on the population living in the city's informal settlements can be drawn from a World Bank study based on a household sample survey of 1,755 households from 88 informal settlement enumeration areas.<sup>26</sup> As shown in Table 2.2, there are more males than females, the ratio being 55:45, with a greater proportion of both school-age children (5-14) and adults (defined as 15 years or more) being male (51% and 58% respectively). Informal settlements have disproportionately few children, perhaps in part reflecting high infant and child mortality rates, with an average household size of 3.0.

**Table 2.2 Socio-economic characteristics of Nairobi Informal settlements**

|                                       | <b>N</b>    | <b>%</b>      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <b>Household size and composition</b> |             |               |
| Sample Households (N)                 | 1,755       |               |
| Household size (N)                    | 2.97        |               |
| Single-person households (N, %)       | 560         | 31.9          |
| Female-headed households (N, %)       | 310         | 17.7          |
| Mean age of household head (yrs)      | 34.8        |               |
| Median age of household head (yrs)    | 32.0        |               |
|                                       | <b>%</b>    | <b>%</b>      |
| <b>Gender profile</b>                 | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> |
| Age 0-4                               | 49.0        | 51.0          |
| Age 5-14 (school age children)        | 51.0        | 49.0          |
| Age 15+ (adults)                      | 58.0        | 42.0          |
| All individuals                       | 55.0        | 45.0          |

Source: World Bank, 2006, p.23

The ethnic composition of Nairobi's slum population can be quite diverse, though two or three tribes generally dominate in each settlement. Depending on a particular settlement's location within the city, the main tribes are Luo, Luhya, Kikuyu, and Kamba. Ethnic allegiances can provide a source of cohesion within the community amongst those of the same tribe. However, such diversity of traditions and cultures can lead to conflict, particularly in situations when people are competing for limited

<sup>26</sup> For census purposes, CBS has divided Nairobi into about 4,700 enumeration areas (EAs), of which 1,263 are categorised as 'informal settlements'. The 88 EAs in the World Bank sample were selected randomly from this subset.

resources or have to deal with contentious issues. The consequences can be dire, as the response to the contested presidential election results in December 2007 demonstrated: violence took on an ethnic character and led to large numbers of fatalities, as well as the displacement and destruction of property and livelihoods. Kibera, Mathare and Dandora informal settlements were the conflict 'hot spots' on this occasion.<sup>27</sup> Feelings of insecurity have considerably heightened since that time and, while there is not yet adequate research into the present situation, anecdotal evidence suggests that slums have become increasingly ethnically polarised.

With mobility being a facet of urban life, the tendency for ethnicity to denote one's identity or status appears to have increased. An informal settlement tends to be dominated by one or two ethnic groups, usually reflecting its historical development and the ethnicity of the original inhabitants. Ethnic allegiances can provide a source of cohesion within the community amongst those of the same group. However, as was evident in the post-election violence in urban areas, ethnic identity – while capable of providing valuable social networks and reinforcing solidarity – can be used destructively and divisively. Associations and ceremonial cults based on ethnic membership drawn from urban society as a whole and often, in turn, connected with competition for employment or trade, are particularly evident in urban Kenya. These cults are manifested as Mungiki (Kikuyu cult), Talibans (Luo cult), and Jeshi la Mzee (Kalenjin cult) among others.<sup>28</sup> It is groups such as these that wreaked havoc and destruction in a number of the informal settlements of Nairobi.

## **2.5 Education and employment in the slums**

### ***Education***

Figure 2.1 provides information on the highest educational level attained amongst the male and female residents of the Nairobi slums compared with Nairobi as a whole and Kenya overall. This indicates that around three-quarters of the slum population have completed primary school - with no significant difference between males and females in this respect. This compares quite favourably with the national level, where only 50% of the population attained primary school level. At secondary level the percentage of slum-dwellers attending drops to below a third, which is similar to the national level. Thus on the one hand, with many people in the slums having received basic education, literacy levels are likely to be relatively high; hence there is potential for capitalising on their human capital assets. On the other hand, the drop in students at the secondary level and particularly over the age of 15, after which a considerably smaller proportion of urban residents (35.5%) than rural residents (55.1%) attend school,<sup>29</sup> means that the urban population is likely to lack the more sophisticated skills conducive to economic development.

### **Figure 2.1 Education levels in Nairobi slums**

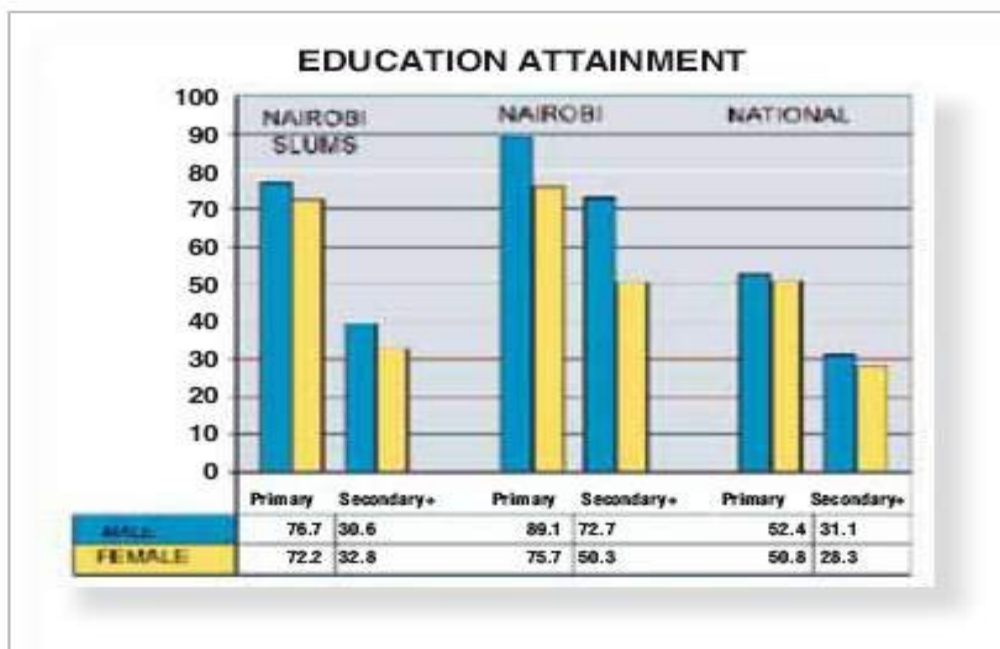
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<sup>27</sup> Peace and Development Network, 2009

<sup>28</sup> The name of this group literally means 'Army of the Old Man'. It was originally aligned to the former KANU regime.

<sup>29</sup> KDHS, 2003





Source: Nairobi Urban Sector Profile, 2006

The relatively high rates of primary enrolment in the slums probably reflect the introduction of free primary education in 2003 - with no significant difference between boys and girls in this respect. It is not clear where such enrolment is taking place since most schools in the slums are informal and are not registered or recognised by government, although the City Council has recently put into effect a system to 'formalise' community schools. Lack of recognition has meant that informal school-leavers have been unable to attain secondary education, as reflected in Figure 2.1. If primary enrolment rates really are this high it would be a marked improvement from the situation in the late 1990s: according to a UNICEF project, the gross enrolment rate in Nairobi was only 54.1 % in 1999, the second lowest in the country after the nomadic and disadvantaged arid North- Eastern province.<sup>30</sup>

It is, however, important to note that even if enrolment rates are high, this tells us little about the quality of the educational experience in the slums. For example, at Ayany School (a typical school in Kibera slum), in 2006 there were only 28 teachers for over 2000 students (500 of whom were orphans), with an average class size of 98. In the same school 1,055 girls share 10 toilets.<sup>31</sup> In all probability, the introduction of free education in 2003 – while highly commendable in itself – is stretching most of the schools in low-income areas beyond their ability to cope. Moreover, in certain slum areas the population is particularly deprived; the estimated 25,000 people living in Soweto East have no public primary schools and just two private ones, which means they have no access to the new free primary education programme anyway.<sup>32</sup>

### **Employment and income**

The informal sector continues to be the main source of employment generation in the country, growing apace while the formal sector remains relatively static. Informal employment rose from 5.5 million in 2003 up to 6.4 million in 2005, while in 2002, the

<sup>30</sup> UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Project: <http://www.childfriendlycities.org/pdf/kenya.pdf>

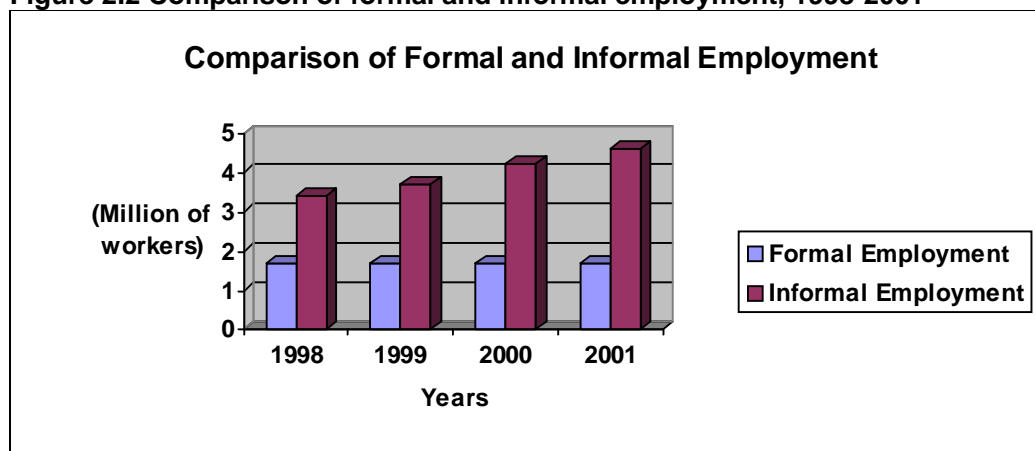
<sup>31</sup> <http://www.aegis.com/news/irin/2006/IR060438.html>

<sup>32</sup> Amnesty International, 2009, p. 11.

5.1 million people working in the informal sector accounted for nearly three-quarters of the total employed in Kenya at that time.<sup>33</sup>

These trends build on those experienced in the period 1998-2001, as illustrated in Figure 2.2, which shows a static situation in the formal sector by way of comparison.

**Figure 2.2 Comparison of formal and informal employment, 1998-2001**



Source: Government of Kenya, 2002

It is anticipated that the bulk of jobs to be created in the foreseeable future will continue to be in the informal sector. Informal sector activities, which dominate in urban areas, are classified into the following categories (which broadly reflect the categories used in the formal sector): wholesale trade, retail trade, hotels and restaurants; manufacturing, industry; community, social and personal services; transport and communication; and construction.

Nairobi itself is an international, regional, national and local hub for commerce, transport, regional cooperation and economic development. It connects eastern, central and southern African countries. As the capital of the country and the seat of national government, the city generates over 45% of the national gross domestic product and is thus a major contributor to the Kenya's economy. It provides employment for its residents and commuters from its hinterland, employing 25% of Kenyans overall and 43% of the country's urban workers, although the rate of unemployment remains high. In 2005, of the 6.4 million people working in the informal economy nationally, Nairobi Province accounted for nearly a quarter (24%) - 1.5 million people, up from 1.1 million in 2001.

According to the World Bank study of 2006, although over two-thirds (68%) of adult slum dwellers are economically active, the unemployment rate is high and stands at 26%. Disaggregating by gender, women were found to be almost five times more likely to be unemployed than men: the unemployment rate was 49% among women compared with 10% among males. Furthermore, 49% of young people aged 15-24 in poor households reported that they were unemployed. Unemployment amongst the youth, currently standing at around 2.5 million as noted previously, is held to be one of the key factors behind the increasing levels of insecurity and violence in the informal settlements, the post-election violence of early 2008 being one manifestation of the latter.

<sup>33</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006

It is likely that the majority of households rely on only one wage earner. Although female-headed households are significantly less likely to have a member with a wage-paying job than male-headed ones, a much higher proportion of them operate household micro-enterprises. The most common micro-enterprises found in the informal settlements fall into the following broad categories:

- (i) retailing and food services including trading/hawking/kiosks and food preparation and sales;
- (ii) small manufacturing/production, construction, and repair of goods (popularly known as *jua kali*);<sup>34</sup>
- (iii) general services such as hairdressers, laundry, transport, medicine, photo studios;
- (iv) entertainment services, including bars, brewing and pool tables.

The first two of these, informal trading and *jua kali* are of particular importance in Nairobi's informal economy. A study carried out in 2004 showed that the street vending sub-sector had a daily capital stock value of Ksh. 70 million.<sup>35</sup> However, there has been a steady attrition of street trading activities over the last few years, with kiosks being demolished by the City Council as a way of improving Nairobi's image. The *jua kali* sub-sector involves manufacturing, repair and provision of services across a number of trades - welding, metal work, vehicle mechanics, carpentry and construction work. It serves residents both in the informal settlements and formal housing areas, as well as the formal business sector.

The 2006 World Bank study showed that average per capita income among poor households<sup>36</sup> was Ksh. 2,776 with the median monthly amount being Ksh. 2,444. As found in a typical informal settlement, Mukuru kwa Reuben, the proportion of income spent on staple food can be as much as three-quarters for the very poor or poorest groups in the community. With little disposable income left for other items of expenditure, then families resorted to a range of coping strategies including keeping their children away from school; using 'flying toilets' rather than 'pay as you go' public toilets; walking rather than use public transport; and limiting the amount of water purchased to a bare minimum. The coping strategies of the urban poor are explored further in section 3.8 in the following chapter.

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<sup>34</sup> *Jua kali*, meaning hot sun in Kiswahili, is used here to refer to informal manufacturing, as opposed to a broader definition to include petty trading, sale of second-hand goods, and so forth.

<sup>35</sup> Nairobi Central Business District Association, 2004.

<sup>36</sup> As noted above, the World Bank differentiated between the poor and non-poor, defining the former as those who fell below an expenditure-based poverty line of Ksh. 3,174 per adult equivalent per month, excluding rent.

### **3 Vulnerability among Nairobi's 2 million slum-dwellers**

*There is now evidence to suggest that the quality of life for the poor in some urban areas of developing countries is even worse than in rural areas. While the realities of the informal economy mean that it is hard to establish reliable figures about exact income levels in cities, there can be little doubt that poor urban-dwellers are subject to a particularly wide range of vulnerabilities. Key findings presented in this chapter include the following:*

- Urban residents are almost *twice* as likely to be infected with HIV as their rural counterparts.
- Neonatal, infant and under-5 mortality rates in Nairobi's slums are all significantly higher than the national average. In some slums infant and under-5 mortality rates are double those in rural areas
- Children in Nairobi's slums are among the unhealthiest in the country. Over half are likely to suffer acute respiratory infection and almost half under 5 are stunted; moreover they are less likely to be immunized than children elsewhere in Kenya and more prone to diarrhoea and fever
- Population densities per hectare can be higher than 1,000 per hectare in the slums – as compared with as low as 4 per hectare in Nairobi's wealthy areas
- The poor commonly pay eight times as much as the rich for water, as they are forced to buy from private vendors in the slums, where almost 90% of the population have no piped water connection
- The combination of climate change and unplanned urban growth has led to ever greater numbers of urban houses being severely affected by flooding
- 'Social capital' is considered to be weaker in cities than in rural areas and the tendency for ethnicity to be mobilised for destructive ends is on the increase
- Nearly two thirds of slum residents interviewed said they did not feel safe inside their settlements
- Almost half of Nairobi's population admitted to actively participating in bribery and almost all thought corruption was endemic in the city. The necessity of paying bribes is likely to have a particularly devastating effect on the poor who can barely afford to meet their basic needs
- A study of the impact of food price rises in Nairobi's slums found that up to 90% of households had reduced the size or frequency of meals
- Dramatic price increases for basic necessities have led to negative coping strategies, including high-risk livelihoods such as sex work and crime as well as removing children from school for child labour

### **3.1 Introduction**

The manifold vulnerabilities of urban dwellers differ in significant ways from those of their rural counterparts. These distinct vulnerabilities are associated with the following factors, among others: their dependence on a monetised economy, the prohibitive cost of food and basic services for poor people in cities, the huge range of environmental and health hazards, the pervasiveness of substandard housing and tenure insecurity, and the exposure of poor communities to crime and violence. There are also numerous social problems associated with living in the slums including illicit brews resulting in drunkenness, casual sex leading to sexual exploitation of women and girls, insecurity, child abuse and a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Inhabitants also experience high rates of unemployment and of school dropouts.

To make matters worse, levels of vulnerability are likely to heighten with the effects of climate change, especially since the urban poor often live in marginalised areas such as riparian tracts that are subject to flooding. Moreover, as will be elaborated in Chapter 4, the vulnerabilities of the urban poor are further aggravated by an inadequate policy, institutional and legislative framework including the lack of an appropriate land-use policy, an inappropriate housing legislative framework, and poor land management and administration approaches that are insensitive to the informal settlements.<sup>37</sup>

This chapter highlights the main areas of urban vulnerability in Kenya, with a particular focus on Nairobi's informal settlements. It begins by looking at various aspects of vulnerability associated with the physical environment in Nairobi, outlining the provision of basic urban services such as water, sanitation, drainage, waste management and electricity, and taking into account the potential impacts of climate change on urban environmental vulnerability. The chapter then discusses the related issue of health and vulnerability to disease among the urban poor, focusing in particular on the critical issues of child health and HIV/AIDS. Human insecurity and vulnerability to crime is then highlighted before we move on to consider questions of housing and tenure security, food security and the particular vulnerabilities that poor urban-dwellers face with respect to poor governance. The chapter concludes with a section on coping strategies and the role of social capital.

### **3.2 Vulnerability and the urban environment**

This section begins by examining three basic urban services, the absence of which illustrates some of the most fundamental vulnerabilities faced by the urban poor: water, sanitation and electricity. The widespread lack of the latter, while not so directly connected with the urban environment as the former two, in fact has significant environmental and health impacts as people are forced to depend on burning fuels that contribute to both indoor and outdoor pollution. Meanwhile water and sanitation can be considered two of the most fundamental 'critical urban services' upon which the management of health and wellbeing in cities depend.<sup>38</sup> The section then goes on to examine some of the broader environmental issues impacting on the urban poor such as poor drainage and waste collection, and the fact that many of these urban environmental problems may be exacerbated by climate change.

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<sup>37</sup> GoK, 2004

<sup>38</sup> Beall and Fox, 2009

### **Access to water**

In the informal settlements where the majority live, only 22% of households have water connections serviced by the Nairobi City Water & Sewerage Company (NCW&SC) with the majority (75%) purchasing water from water kiosks or other water delivery services, as figure 3.1 clearly indicates. One survey found that only 12% of slum dwellers in Nairobi have piped water supplies, and 80% of households complained of water shortages and pipes often running dry.<sup>39</sup> Public taps serve a mere 3% of households. Private entrepreneurs, who often operate as cartels charging high prices for water, usually run water kiosks. In Kibera, the price of water in 2005 was Ksh. 2 per cubic metre, which was eight times the lowest block of the tariff for domestic connections via NCW&SC and four times higher the average tariff in Kenya at that time.<sup>40</sup> Illegal connections to the piped water supply are common, posing a major health challenge to the residents due to the compromised water safety.<sup>41</sup>

**Photo 3.1 Nature of water and water safety in the slums**



### **Access to sanitation**

Approximately half the city's total population have access to a flush toilet, and the vast majority of these are in the city's wealthy and middle-income areas. By contrast, in the slums the majority of the residents use pit latrines that are over-used and inadequately maintained. In most cases, the latrines are not 'on plot' facilities but communal ones that serve a large number of people from the surrounding area. Individual pit latrines commonly serve 150 people per day.<sup>42</sup> In some case usage is even heavier; a 2001 study of one low-income area in Nairobi found that on average, there were about 500 people to each toilet.<sup>43</sup> Where there is a high volume of users, the latrines become full very fast. Slum dwellers often have to resort to manual extraction of the effluent since exhaust services are limited, with the effluent then being emptied into the rivers passing through the settlements. Where cartels have taken over the management of latrines, user charges are high and unaffordable. As a result of such poor sanitation facilities, many slum-dwellers resort to the use of plastic

<sup>39</sup> UN Habitat, 2003a

<sup>40</sup> World Bank, 2005

<sup>41</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2006

<sup>42</sup> WSUP Scoping Study Report, Gatwekera, 2007

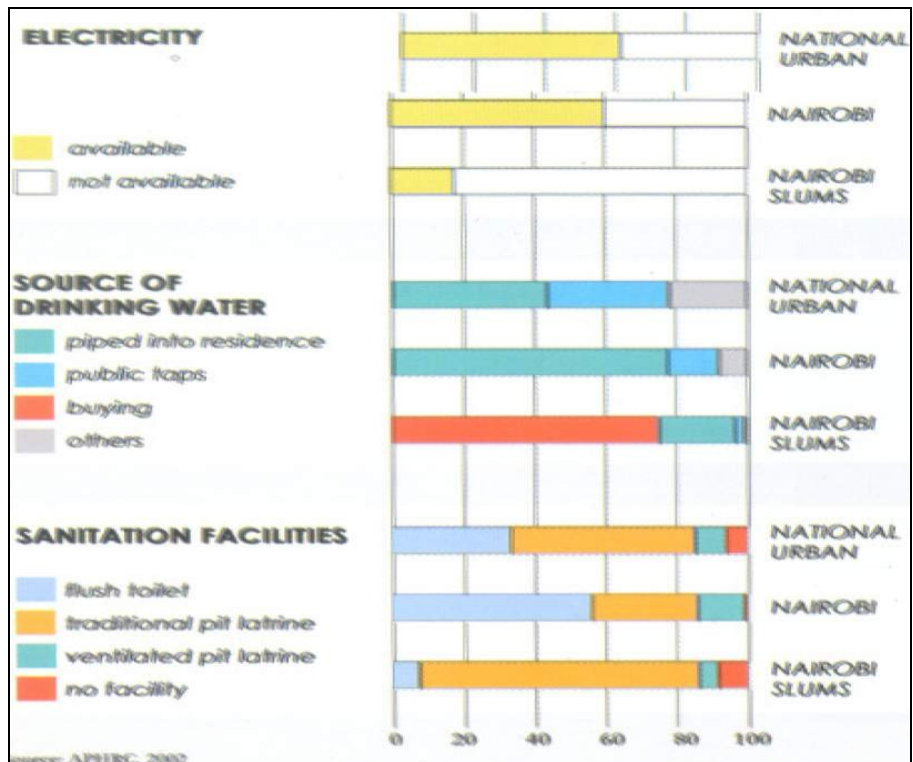
<sup>43</sup> UN-HABITAT 2003a.

carrier bags as toilets, which are then randomly discarded (usually referred to as 'flying toilets'). Respondents in one study of the low-income area of Mahira said that 80% of excreta is disposed of in this manner.<sup>44</sup>

**Access to electricity**

The same study also shows that only one in five slum households have access to an electricity supply, which is generally used for lighting purposes. Some of these households access electricity through illegal connections. Among those households lacking access to electricity (approximately 78%), kerosene is the primary source of lighting for the majority, as well as serving as the primary cooking fuel for most of the slum households overall. Charcoal is the next most commonly used fuel, with the attendant adverse impact on their health and the environment.

**Figure 3.1 Electricity, water and sanitation services: national urban, Nairobi and Nairobi slums**



Source: APHRC 2002

While based on comparative data from two earlier studies, Figure 3.1 clearly illustrates the large disparities between those living in the Nairobi slums and the Nairobi population as a whole with regard to access to the three basic services discussed above, as well as with the urban areas of the country overall.<sup>45</sup>

**Drainage, waste and climate vulnerability**

In Nairobi's slums, proper drainage systems are rare; instead inadequate, hand-dug channels carrying untreated wastewater often blocked with rubbish are commonplace. Moreover, with Nairobi generating some 2,000 tonnes of refuse daily, 68% of which is domestic, and only a small proportion of which is collected (mainly in

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> APHRC used data sourced from the 1998 KDHS for 'National Urban' and 'Nairobi' and its own Nairobi Cross-sectional Slums Survey 2000 for 'Nairobi Slums' in the construction of this figure.

the wealthy neighborhoods and the central business district), refuse disposal and management is a city-wide problem – but it is of particular concern in the informal settlements. In the slums, less than 3% of rubbish is regularly collected by the government and around half is either dumped in the street, buried or burned in the compound.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, with no apparent system of designated dumping sites, rubbish is dumped in open areas and along the riverbanks, attracting rodents and flies and creating serious health hazards. Groups in many informal settlements have introduced environmental clean-up days during which residents collect the rubbish and deposit it in designated places for pick-up by CCN, though the latter rarely happens.

Photo 3.2 below illustrates the housing conditions and physical environment in a typical slum in Nairobi.

**Photo 3.2 Housing and drainage in Kosovo Village, Mathare Slum**



The difficult physical conditions that exist in the informal settlements impact particularly upon the people with physical and visual disabilities, as a recent study carried out by Shelter Forum in 2006 shows. Lack of on-plot latrines or inaccessible public ones pose acute problems for the physically disabled. The narrow pathways and uneven terrain impede wheelchair and crutch users. Resorting to crawling in the unhygienic environment brings its own set of problems.

Given the marginalised locations on which many of the informal settlements are to be found and the poor quality of housing, the inhabitants are also vulnerable to environmental hazards and the impact of climate variability, and in particular urban floods, the effects of which can be devastating in poor planned and rapidly growing cities (See Box 3.1). Urban floods can destroy the dwellings of the urban poor, which are commonly built from semi-permanent materials, as well as destroying their assets and incomes. This further exposes them to food and income insecurity and to the erosion of their assets, as well as being a source of disease.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> UN-HABITAT 2008a

<sup>47</sup> Action Aid International Kenya, 2006



### **Box 3.1 Effects of climate change on the urban poor: case study of Nairobi slums**

Flooding is a major problem in the informal settlements in Nairobi. In Maili Saba slum, built next to the river, it is a common occurrence. Houses are built of weak, inadequate building materials, and in-migration has led to more houses being built close to the river, meaning greater disruptions when floods occur. Many local residents link increased flooding to both local activities and climate change. Long-term inhabitants of the slums like Mabatini and Mathare agree that floods now occur in places they did not two decades ago, as one resident observes: *'Flooding has become so unpredictable these days. The people in the radio say we'll have heavy rains and no rains come at all or they say there will be no rain and it rains heavily...'*. For the residents, floods are getting worse and climate change is contributing to this situation.

In the slums of Nairobi, responses to floods include: bailing water out of houses to prevent damage to belongings; placing children initially on tables and later removing them to nearby unaffected dwellings; digging trenches around houses before and during rain seasons, and securing structures with water proof recycled materials.

Source: Action Aid International Kenya, 2006

### **3.3 Vulnerability to disease**

The poor environmental factors highlighted above predispose slum inhabitants to particularly poor health, and consequently they suffer from a high incidence of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, diarrhoea, malaria and other water-borne diseases, as well as malnutrition. These factors in turn result in very high infant and child mortality rates. Such problems are exacerbated by the fact that the urban poor also find it difficult to access drugs from health clinics or chemists to treat preventable diseases, leading to high levels of inadequately treated morbidity, as Grace Awuor, a slum resident, confirms:

*'When you are sick, you buy medicine from the local shops. If you are lucky, you will recover because the medicine is not usually the right one...sometimes there is no medicine even in the hospitals, so they send you out with a prescription...then the chemists are expensive so often one has to make do without the medicine...'*<sup>48</sup>

In the following paragraphs we examine two of the areas of health in which poor urban-dwellers suffer worse indicators than even the rural poor: child health and HIV/AIDS.

#### **Child health in the slums**

Taking early childhood mortality rates as a key health indicator, the 2003 KDHS estimated the infant mortality rate for Nairobi Province to be slightly lower than the national figure: 67 deaths per 1,000 live births compared with 77 deaths nationally, as was the case with regard to the under-five mortality rate: 95 deaths per 1,000 live births compared with 115 nationally. However, these figures are severely misleading in relation to the urban poor, given that they are city-wide and therefore take into account Nairobi's rich and privileged as well as the deprived. The infant and under-five mortality rates for the city's poor are much higher: a longitudinal study conducted by APHRC between 2003 and 2005 in two informal settlements in Nairobi - Korogocho and Viwadani - revealed that the infant mortality rate here was 96.0 per 1,000 live births in 2003. The under-five mortality ratio, meanwhile, was 139.1.

<sup>48</sup> IRIN, 2008

These rates are not only much higher than those for Nairobi overall but significantly above the national average. These kinds of disparities are echoed in relation to neonatal mortality: in one slum, Embakasi, neonatal mortality rates are over five times higher than in Nairobi overall.<sup>49</sup>

Child health is perhaps one of the most poignant indicators of vulnerability amongst the urban poor. In general children are very unhealthy in the slums, with one survey finding that 64% of those under three years of age were ill with fever in the two weeks leading up to the survey. The same study found that less than half the children in slums had been fully vaccinated against diseases such as Polio, as compared with 80% in other parts of the city.<sup>50</sup> Another longitudinal study conducted over the period 2001-2003 by Save the Children UK in Mukuru kwa Reuben, a typical informal settlement in Nairobi, revealed that less than one-half of children under three years of age were fully immunised. Where we do have statistics of this kind disaggregated to slum level, it clearly indicates again the need for caution when dealing with indicators reflecting the city as a whole; the situation in the low-income areas is much more severe. In Kibera, for example, 47% of children under five are stunted, with 23% being severely stunted;<sup>51</sup> this would not be reflected in figures for Nairobi overall, in which stunting appears low relative to rural areas.

Figures from the African Population and Health Research Centre present evidence that dispels any lingering notion that the poor in urban areas might be healthier than the rural population, as Table 3.1 clearly demonstrates. While the figures presented here for infant and under-5 mortality for Nairobi as a whole are only around half those of the national average,<sup>52</sup> in some slums they are more than *double* the national average and double that in rural areas. In addition, prevalence of diarrhoea with blood in the slums is shown to be more than three times the national average.

**Table 3.1 Infant and under-five mortality rates and child diarrhoea prevalence in Kenya**

| Location                        | Infant Mortality (per thousand) | Under-five mortality (per thousand) | Prevalence of diarrhoea with blood in children under 3 in 2 weeks prior to interview % |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Kenya (rural & urban)           | 74                              | 112                                 | 3.0  |
| Rural                           | 76                              | 113                                 | 3.1  |
| Nairobi                         | 39                              | 62                                  | 3.4  |
| Other urban                     | 57                              | 84                                  | 1.7  |
| Informal Settlements in Nairobi | 91                              | 151                                 | 11.3   |
| Kibera                          | 106                             | 187                                 | 9.8  |
| Embakasi                        | 164                             | 254                                 | 9.1  |

Source: APHRC (2002)

The Nairobi Urban and Health Demographic Surveillance System 2004 showed that the poor health status of children could be explained by the continuous exposure to environmental hazards and lack of good hygiene practices as well as the absence of health services in the area. On yet other health indicators, child health is clearly worse than in rural areas. 56% of children in Nairobi recently experience acute respiratory infection and/or fever, considerably higher than the 44% in rural areas. 35% had recently experienced diarrhoea as compared with 30% in rural areas.<sup>53</sup> These figures are for Nairobi as a whole; again, if one could disaggregate the figures

<sup>49</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2003a

<sup>50</sup> Magadi, 2004

<sup>51</sup> CARE International in Kenya, Oxfam GB, and Concern Worldwide, 2009

<sup>52</sup> These figures for Nairobi differ significantly from the UN-HABITAT ones previously presented; such is the unreliability of statistics in urban settings.

<sup>53</sup> KDHS, 2003

and look at the slums alone, in all probability the figures would be even higher as the above table has demonstrated. Indeed there is research that now indicates children in the city's slums are the unhealthiest in the country, and are worse still when certain ethnic and educational factors come into play. A 2004 study concludes that:

*It is with respect to child health indicators that the slum residents in Nairobi show the greatest disadvantage, in comparison with the rest of the Kenyan population. Children in the slums are considerably less likely to be fully immunized and more likely to experience fever and diarrhea than their counterparts living elsewhere in Kenya. In general, lower educational attainment and belonging to the Luo ethnic group are consistently associated with poorer maternal and child health outcomes in the Nairobi slums.<sup>54</sup>*

**Photo 3.3 Nature of hygiene in Kosovo Village, Mathare Slum**



***A child from a neighbouring school relieves himself: no toilet facilities available so everyone has to use this open space, which also doubles up as the children's recreational area***

### **HIV/AIDS**

One of the most dramatic findings of the 2003 KDHS in terms of urban/rural differences is that urban residents have a significantly higher risk of HIV infection (10%) than rural residents (6%). The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate for urban women stood at 12% compared with less than 8% for their rural counterparts. For men, the risk associated with urban residence is even greater: urban men are twice as likely to be infected as rural men (8% and 4% respectively).

Nairobi has the second highest rate of HIV infection in the country at around 10%. If this is the statistic for Nairobi overall, then yet again it is likely to be the case that prevalence is much higher in the slums, making it likely that they are the worst affected areas in the whole country. The following boxes illustrate some of the aspects of coping with HIV/AIDS in Nairobi's informal settlements. In Box 3.2, it is seen that, while awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS appear high in the settlements, stigma and discrimination continue. The presence of children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS is known to be high. While it has not been possible to ascertain the scale of the problem for the purpose of this study, one estimate suggests that there are more than 50,000 AIDS orphans in Kibera.<sup>55</sup> Box 3.3

<sup>54</sup> Magadi, 2004

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.npr.org/news/specials/aids2002/index.html>

provides an example of how one person attempts to cope with looking after orphans, illustrating some of the knock-on impacts of HIV/AIDS. With the settlements being poorly served in terms of government health facilities, it is the private sector and/or small non-governmental clinics that often provide HIV/AIDS voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) services.

**Box 3.2 HIV/AIDS in Mukuru informal settlement, Embakasi**

On questioning residents about the current status of, and attitudes towards, HIV/AIDS in Mukuru, a recent survey revealed that a large majority (71%) of those interviewed preferred to 'keep it a secret if a member of their family got infected with the virus that causes AIDS'. This would seem to be a reflection of the high levels of stigma and discrimination against people living with AIDS existing in the community.

While a large majority (87%) reported willingness to take care of a family member with AIDS, the remainder - that is, those who said they would be unwilling (5%) and those who said 'it depends' (8%), should not be ignored for it is the category that frustrates the efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination.

83% of the respondents indicated that a teacher should be allowed to continue with teaching work even if he/she has the AIDS virus, with most of the remainder (15%) expressing their resistance. Nearly, half (48%) of the respondents expressed resistance to allowing children to be taught about use of condoms to avoid AIDS in addition to those who said they did not know (14%), an indication of how controversial the issue is.

Although approximately two-thirds expressed a positive opinion towards enabling children with HIV/AIDS to live a normal life, a significant number (34%) were against the proposition. However, more positively, almost all of those interviewed said they would live with a HIV+ child, the small number (9%) who said they would not again being a reminder of the deeply entrenched stigma towards the disease.

*Source: NACHU, 2007*

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rates also massively increase susceptibility in TB. In Nairobi, TB cases have increased sevenfold in the last decade and according to one report 'today, there are more TB cases in Nairobi, with a population of 3 million, than in the entire United States.'<sup>56</sup> Because of the Stigma attached to HIV/AIDS noted in Box 3.2, there is now also a stigma attached to TB due to its association with the former. Hence many TB sufferers do not even seek help.

**Box 3.3 Coping with the impact of HIV/AIDS**

Anne takes care of seven grandchildren, five of whom are HIV/AIDS orphans. Three of these are the children of her late son and two of her late daughter. After the death of her son, the daughter-in-law has had two children. In addition, she looks after the latter household member, the wife of her late son.

Various charitable organisations provide support to Anne. World Vision provided resources to enable the children to attend school within Mukuru kwa Njenga, for example, school uniforms. It has also helped Anne to set up a small business - cooking and selling chips (French fries) - by providing two gallons of oil, cooking utensils and other items, worth in total Ksh. 5,000. One of the reasons she chose this line of business was that it allowed the children and her to eat some of the chips produced. Other groups include the Highlands Community Assistance Programme. Local community leaders also help.

During school holidays, Anne sends her grandchildren together with her daughter-in-law to her brother who lives in the rural area. This gives her an opportunity to renew her energy and

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

make some savings. This year it also allowed her to recover from an accident when she was badly burned when cooking chips, which she previously had to do within the confines of the household dwelling, there being no other alternative space to undertake her business.

As a result of this accident, Anne's business collapsed and currently she has no income. She has also fallen behind with paying her rent. She is now looking for other income-generating activities (IGAs), which are less risky: her options include buying and selling charcoal, and selling potatoes. Anne says that if the children had the option of going to a boarding school, she would go back to her rural home, where she still has her land, and farm. She also says that if she owned the dwelling she lived in then life would be more bearable. In Anne's words, 'It is tough, but I'll take care of my grandchildren and educate them so that they can help me in future.'

*Source:* Taylor and Maithya, 2007

### **3.4 Vulnerability to crime and human insecurity**

Feelings of insecurity, fear of crime and violence are often especially high in large cities, with women experiencing these concerns more strongly than men due to their exposure to sex crimes. In Nairobi, the results of a survey on violence conducted in 2001 showed that one in every four women respondents had suffered at least one form of gender-based abuse: economic, physical or emotional. Such violence occurred in all constituencies and across all socio-economic groups in the city.<sup>57</sup>

According to UN-HABITAT (2007), over the last two decades violent crimes such as armed robbery, car jacking, murder, mugging, physical and sexual assault have been on the increase in the city. Firearms trafficking, largely a consequence of civil wars in neighbouring countries, is a major contributor to crime and violence. Criminal youth gangs are also a growing phenomenon. UN-HABITAT notes that 'While these groups are not necessarily criminal in all their interactions with the broader society, their association with crime, both real and perceived, is such that they warrant special attention.'<sup>58</sup> One such gang is the Mungiki movement, the majority of whom are drawn from the disaffected urban poor and a high proportion of whom live in Nairobi's informal settlements and are from the dominant Kikuyu ethnic group. The movement has effectively filled a vacuum in the informal settlements by providing a 'security service' to the inhabitants, who have little choice but to use and to pay for it. It is also alleged that Mungiki makes illegal connections to the electricity and water supplies, for which it charges a high price. In addition, it has strategies of violence specifically targeted against women.

According to the 2006 World Bank study, feelings of insecurity ranked high in the city's informal settlements. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the households concerned reported that they did not feel safe inside their settlements. Surprisingly, this perception did not vary by gender. Just over a quarter (27%) reported that a member of their household had actually experienced a criminal incident over the previous 12 months, with a higher proportion (31%) of male than females (23%) being affected.

The majority of these incidents took place within the settlements. The physical characteristics of the areas, such as uneven narrow pathways, open drainage channels and dark, unlit areas, provide fertile grounds for muggers. Marginalised groups, particularly the unemployed youth, are at risk of falling into crime, violence

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<sup>57</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2001

<sup>58</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2007

and political manipulation, as well as being 'fertile ground' for criminal youth gangs to recruit members.

### 3.5 Poor housing and vulnerability to eviction

The housing conditions of the urban poor are often deplorable. The informal settlements, of which it is estimated that there are now over 200 varying considerably in terms of their population size and area, occupy a mere 5% of the total residential land of the city despite housing over half of the population. In these a high percentage of the dwellings are constructed of semi-permanent materials, and many of them are severely dilapidated and over-crowded. While a high-income area of Nairobi such as Karen or a middle-income area such as Parklands can have population densities as low as 4 or 25 persons per hectare respectively, in Kibera population density has been recorded as 826 persons per hectare. When slums are disaggregated even further the figures can become even more shocking: in Huruma slum, one area (Kambi Moto) recorded densities of 1,347 people per hectare and another (Ghetto) a remarkable 2,309.<sup>59</sup> Proper accessibility, to allow for the free flow of goods and services into and out of the slums, is also lacking. When it rains in Kibera, residents are often forced to walk through mud and sewage for up to 3 kilometres before they can even get a bus to work. Meanwhile the lack of roads means the police are reluctant to enter, making the environment even more conducive to crime.<sup>60</sup>

As noted in the 2006 World Bank study, in contrast to many other cities of the world, an 'extraordinary' 92% of the slum dwellers in Nairobi are rent-paying tenants rather than squatters who own their units. Unit owners are mostly absentee landlords who provide extremely poor housing units, which are mostly illegal and sub-standard in quality, often being constructed of semi-permanent materials such as polythene bags and splinter wood. They are also over-crowded and lack on-site services such as toilets, water supply, or electricity supply, yet charge high rents. The study concludes that: 'In sharp contrast to the widely-held notion that slums provide low-quality, low-cost shelter to a population that cannot afford better standards...Nairobi's slums provide low-quality but high-cost shelter.' The average monthly rent is around Ksh. 790 and the median rent Ksh. 700, although the rental levels vary considerably according to location, reaching a maximum of Ksh. 3230 per month in the informal settlements in Dagoretti, for example.

Moreover, as tenants, households have no titles over the land on which the structures are built, and live under the threat of eviction either by the government or by private developers, as noted in Chapter 2. This limits them from enjoying their rights as urban citizens. This fear of eviction and/or demolition of their structures by authorities or by their landlords is pervasive in low-income areas. The recent Amnesty International Report on tenure insecurity in Nairobi recounts several recent incidents in which hundreds of families were forcibly evicted, their houses bulldozed at night with no prior warning and little or no explanation.<sup>61</sup> These are examples of 'covariate shocks' which can increase the levels of vulnerability in poor urban households, particularly those already suffering from the loss of a job by the breadwinner and hence no source of income.

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<sup>59</sup> Mitullah, 2003

<sup>60</sup> Amnesty International, 2009

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

### 3.6 Food security and the 2008 food crisis

When few capital assets are available, a household's ability to protect itself from external shocks is highly constrained and they can easily be tipped into acute emergency situations. Noting the caveats expressed previously about inconsistent and inadequate data, a consortium of agencies comprising CARE International in Kenya, Oxfam GB and Concern Worldwide has found compelling evidence that a food security crisis of emergency levels is unfolding, affecting an estimated half a million urban informal settlement dwellers in Nairobi, which requires immediate action.<sup>62</sup> The study finds that in the past year maize prices have risen by 133% while average household incomes have fallen by 21%. Currently, there are barely any contingency plans at community level that could help to prevent and/or respond to this crisis.

As pointed out in a food security study carried out by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) in 2008, the high inflation rates experienced since 2008 (See Appendix 3) placed a heavy economic burden on households and urban livelihoods, which are considered especially vulnerable to price, production and labour shocks given that virtually all urban food and non-food needs are purchased from the market. Looking at the impact of rising food prices upon food insecure urban households over the six-month period November 2007 to June 2008, during which income sources and wage rates remained static but food and non-food prices rose in aggregate by 50%, the study found that the population of the poor category had risen significantly. Consequent changes in diet could lead to a sharp rise in malnutrition and susceptibility to disease, especially since many of the most vulnerable households purchase water – which is often of questionable quality – as well. The study also anticipated that there could be a rise in the number of school dropouts, as well as increased crime and incidence of food riots.

One of the most common coping strategies for dealing with the increased cost of food is to reduce the frequency of meals. Table 3.2, which provides a comparison of the average meal frequency for different age-groups in the household in selected Nairobi slums between December 2007 and December 2008, clearly illustrates this point.<sup>63</sup> It has been found that 80-90% of households surveyed had reduced the size and/or frequency of their meals in the context.<sup>64</sup>

**Table 3.2 Comparison of Average Frequency of Meal Consumption, Selected Slums, December 2007/2008**

| Age Group/Meals  | 2007 | 2008 | Change |
|------------------|------|------|--------|
| Adult Meals      | 2.93 | 1.53 | 1.40   |
| School-age Meals | 3.00 | 2.05 | 1.40   |
| Under-5 Snacks   | 3.57 | 2.53 | 1.04   |

Source: KFSM, 2009

For the very poorest of the poor in particular, the food price rise has had a major and devastating impact on livelihoods. Table 3.3 below illustrates how the high food prices have impacted on the livelihood security of different wealth groups in urban areas, as well as highlighting the extent to which membership of the two poorest groups – the 'chronic poor' and 'very poor' – increased from 50% to 70% in a single year between 2007-8.

<sup>62</sup> CARE International in Kenya, Oxfam GB, and Concern Worldwide, 2009

<sup>63</sup> Kenya: Short Rains Food Security Assessment Findings, KFSM, 2009

<sup>64</sup> CARE International in Kenya, Oxfam GB, and Concern Worldwide, 2009

**Table 3.3 Impacts of food price rise on the urban wealth profile**

| Wealth Group (WG)                                | 1. Wealthy  | 2. Middle Poor  | 3. Chronic Poor   | 4. Very Poor  |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Average Income</b>                            | <b>Ksh.</b><br>200,000 - 300,000  | <b>Ksh.</b><br>100,000 - 200,000  | <b>Ksh.</b><br>40,000 - 100,000   | <b>Ksh.</b><br>20,000 - 40,000  |
| <b>Minimum food basket with rent Ksh. 60,000</b> |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Deficit</b>                                   | 0   | Ksh. 0  | Ksh. 0 - 20,000   | Ksh. 20,000 - 40,000  |
| <b>Population % in 2007</b>                      | 10  | 40  | 40  | 10  |
| <b>Population % in 2008</b>                      | 10  | 20  | 50  | 20  |
| <b>Livelihood Trends 2008</b>                    | In some cases, business has expanded. More generally, incomes and productivity have reduced <sup>65</sup> resulting in decreased unskilled labour opportunities for WG3 | Squeeze on formal employment (some factories have closed, while tribalism has fractured the job market, reducing flexibility)<br><br>Reduced profits on medium enterprise by up to 50%) | 'There is no casual labour anymore'<br><br>Many micro-businesses have closed (up to ¾) <sup>66</sup><br><br>'Women have become like slaves. They wash for 30/= or even 10/='<br>(Mukuru FGD)<br><br>Increased competition due to influx of IDPs into urban areas<br><br>Police harassment has reduced hawking options | Scavenging estimated to have risen to 40% of young boys<br><br>Markets for scavenged metals reduced due to squeeze on informal industries. This results in intense competition<br><br>Illegal brewing business increased because of stress but thieves come and steal profits<br><br>Prostitution estimated to have risen to 30% in Korogocho |
| <b>Safety Nets</b>                               | Decreased capacity to support poorer kin/neighbours   | Less capacity to support poorer neighbours/friends  | Less support from wealthier kin/friends   |   |

Source: Oxfam GB, 2008

<sup>65</sup> For example, many households reported lack of capacity to pay rent, affecting the incomes of property owners in WG1.

<sup>66</sup> Most affected businesses are micro-businesses with tiny profit margins, and businesses with no other income to support them (e.g. those of single parents). For micro-businesses, it is almost impossible to support increased demands for credit, as well as lower profits per transaction and lower transaction volumes. In order to stay in business, traders will change quantities but not prices where possible. 'We can't raise prices, people won't eat'. Some businesses for WG1 have even expanded, but profits are the same, due to reduced profits per transaction.



### 3.7 Vulnerability to poor urban governance and corruption

Governance has been defined as:

*The exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.*<sup>67</sup>

In Kenya, governance, whether in relation to the urban sector or the rural sector, has been marked by a lack of accountability for public resources, ineffective use of such resources, and corruption. Moreover, there are reasons to believe that poor urban dwellers are *particularly* susceptible to bad governance.<sup>68</sup> They often suffer from the dual affliction that local government is weak and ineffective at service delivery on the fringes of cities where they tend to settle, while at the same time they have far more frequent direct contact with government agents than their rural counterparts in the form of paying bribes and fines and being harassed by local officials. In addition, the risk of forced eviction or other government intervention to relocate the urban poor such as efforts to disperse market traders can have severely damaging effects on both assets and the social networks on which the poor depend.<sup>69</sup>

Corruption is the most prominent expression of poor governance and can act as a major constraint on the fight against urban poverty. The 2008 urban bribery survey identified bribery as the most prevalent manifestation of corruption in the country.<sup>70</sup> It revealed that 96% of all people in Nairobi perceive corruption in the society as endemic with 47% admitting to having actively participated in some form of behaviour that might be classified under the broad category of bribery.

The survey found out that bribery incidence is highest in law enforcement and regulatory functions (78%) implying that only two out of ten interactions do *not* require paying bribes. Employment-related matters follow with a bribery incidence of 63%, followed by the provision of services and business (59% and 55% respectively). The report confirmed that those who are likely to be poor, that is, low-income earners or the unemployed (71%), and those with low education (75%), are significantly more vulnerable to corruption than the better-off socio-economic groups.

Another study of corruption in Kenya, though not specifically urban-focused, shows that there is explicit correlation between corruption and poverty:

*...Corruption and corrupt leaders both deepen poverty and make it difficult for ordinary people to get ahead as a result of their own efforts. There is increasing evidence that the cost of corruption disproportionately affects the poor, who do not only suffer from lack of services and efficient governance, but who are also powerless to resist the demand of the corrupt officials.*<sup>71</sup>

According to the study's authors, corruption remains one of the major causes of poverty in Kenya. Furthermore, corruption as a poverty-engendering phenomenon

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<sup>67</sup> This is UNDP's definition of governance, 1997 quoted in UN-HABITAT, 2002.

<sup>68</sup> Satterthwaite and Tacoli, 2002

<sup>69</sup> Lyons and Snoxell, 2005

<sup>70</sup> Transparency International, Bribery Survey, 2008

<sup>71</sup> Kibwana et al, 2001

can have a devastating effect on citizens' psyche, self-perception and perception of those they interact with. It can also lead to growing cynicism and indifference about the activities of the government. Of those interviewed, over two-thirds (69%) believed that the government was not committed to the eradication of corruption.

Finally, the study concluded that the implications of corruption are clear: hungry citizens who also feel unprotected from those exploiting them can become bitter and their behaviour unpredictable. It further argued that Kenya's future stability depends on the manner in which corruption is handled. Whatever efforts, policies and strategies are put in place to eradicate poverty, these will remain severely constrained unless corruption has been addressed.

Aside from the pervasiveness of corruption, the urban poor are also vulnerable to the other aspects of poor urban governance discussed at length in Chapter 4.

### **3.8 Coping with urban vulnerability**

Social capital – that is, the social resources such as kin and fictive kin connections, networks, group membership, relationships of trust and reciprocity – is a significant asset on which poor households can draw in pursuit of their livelihoods. A number of studies<sup>72</sup> undertaken in Nairobi's informal settlements have shown that households have a weak social capital asset base reflected by, for instance, reduced connections with extended family members residing in the rural home, the limited presence of community based organisations or local non-governmental organisations in some settlements, lack of involvement in community activities, infrequent contact with village and community leaders, and limited access and sharing of information. This, in turn, limits the community's voice and its ability to engage with both government and non-governmental organisations to access resources or assert its rights. While many local and national NGOs, some of which are supported by international non-governmental bodies, operate in the informal settlements, their coverage is patchy with some areas having an over-abundance of such organisations and others having very few.

In urban low-income areas, moving between settlements and changing dwellings within a settlement is common, and this can lead to households becoming 'structurally isolated', with limited ties being formed with other households in the community.<sup>73</sup> However, despite the widespread perception that social capital is relatively weak in urban low-income areas, one study found that although social interaction did not generally take place very frequently, households' ties with their relatives and/or friends (kin and fictive kin connections) are nevertheless a vital coping resources since in densely-packed settlements friends do at least live in relatively close proximity and are accessible. Moreover, although many urban-dwellers perceived the link between their households and members of their extended families living in the rural home to be weaker than in the past, such links are often carefully maintained.<sup>74</sup> Just as rural relatives are often dependent on remittances from kin who move to urban areas for work, the urban relatives sometimes rely on food sent from the rural areas to survive.

In coping with the manifold vulnerabilities of life in Nairobi's informal settlements, with its diminished family ties and social networks, another study found that Nairobi's

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<sup>72</sup> WSUP Report, 2007; Taylor and Maithya, 2007

<sup>73</sup> Taylor and Maithya, 2007

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

market traders – who are often migrants – consciously go about ‘creating urban social capital’ by fostering relationships of trust and reciprocity with neighbouring traders. Apart from the exchange of favours, this might involve setting up informal savings associations such as ‘merry-go-rounds’, through which members deposit a mutually agreed amount with the group at regular intervals and the combined ‘pot’ goes to each member in turn.<sup>75</sup> The study found that although trust among traders over money is very low, the need for it is so strong that they consciously develop marketplace ties to ‘dramatically increase the number of people they feel they know well and can count as friends’, with many developing friendships for ‘instrumental reasons’.<sup>76</sup>

For many of the poorest in Nairobi, even coping mechanisms such as these are inadequate or unavailable and consequently they often resort to less constructive coping strategies. These may involve engagement in high risk livelihoods such as sex work, crime and illegal brewing as well as child labour and scavenging. In the context of the recent food crisis this has been an issue of great concern in Nairobi, as highlighted by the report from Care International in Kenya, Oxfam GB and Concern Worldwide. Coping under such circumstances, given that the costs of other non-food items have also risen such as basic health services (by up to 16%), fuel (up to 65%) and water (up to 114%),<sup>77</sup> also often involves reducing expenditure on items such as water, soap, sanitation and education.

Oxfam research has suggested that short-term coping strategies such as these would have long-term adverse effects on livelihood security, many of which would not be immediately obvious. Effects on nutritional status, for instance, could be gradual, as asset-erosion slowly begins to impact on the asset profile of the households. In response to this, the removal of children from school could lead over time to increased rates of illiteracy, crime and high-risk behaviour. In addition, increased levels of marital disharmony resulting from the inability of men to provide adequately for their households ultimately results in more single parents, which decreases household incomes.

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<sup>75</sup> Lyons and Snoxell, 2005.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 1093

<sup>77</sup> CARE International in Kenya, Oxfam GB, and Concern Worldwide, 2009

## **4 The institutional and policy framework for urban development**

*To understand the obstacles to ameliorating urban poverty, the issues highlighted in the previous chapters must be analysed in relation to Kenya's institutional, policy and legislative framework at both the national and city levels. The nature of the current institutional framework is central to both how urban poverty is being perceived and addressed in Kenya. Some of the main problems identified with the existing framework include the following:*

- Despite its decentralisation programme, government in Kenya remains highly centralised, with local government initiatives severely hampered by central intervention
- National development plans have consistently underplayed urban poverty and the scale of Kenya's urbanisation
- The City Council of Nairobi has been working to a master plan dating from 1973, when the city's population was less than a quarter of its current size
- There is evidence of a knowledge gap with regard to disaster risk reduction that urgently needs redressing
- The Kenya Slums Upgrading Programme represents a valuable move to prioritise urban poverty reduction, but it exists in a policy vacuum and does not appear to be complying with international human rights standards on forced eviction
- Despite efforts towards participatory urban governance, devolved funding mechanisms for urban development are generally lacking in transparency and citizen involvement
- In a typical year only 4% of the City Council of Nairobi's budget is allocated to service delivery, with the remainder being spent on wages and operational costs
- In the *Nairobi Metro 2030* strategy there is currently a lack of clarity on the role of central vs decentralised government institutions, which is likely to hamper its effective implementation
- There has been little coordination between NGOs working to reduce poverty in the city and the City Council itself. An enabling frame work to forge linkages between state, civil society and the private sector is still lacking

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter established that the vulnerabilities of the urban poor are inextricably linked to the failures of urban governance in terms of poor service delivery and deliberately destructive acts by the state against poor people and their

housing and livelihoods. In addition, poor coordination between governmental and non-governmental institutions serves to perpetuate and exacerbate these problems.

This chapter provides a rapid appraisal of the framework for urban governance and development, focusing on the institutional stakeholders of most relevance to the urban context with particular attention to Nairobi. It begins by outlining the institutional framework from national government down through provincial and district administrations to the local level, before exploring how different government bodies and institutions interact both vertically and horizontally. After this it highlights the framework in place at the city level, centred on the City Council of Nairobi (CCN), examining the links between CCN and the national government framework as well as links with other non-governmental stakeholders. The chapter concludes that poor urban governance is a feature of both the national and city level institutional frameworks and is deeply embedded in the dysfunctional relations between the two, and without addressing these problems the vulnerabilities of the urban poor discussed above are likely to worsen rather than improve.

## **4.2 National level**

### ***The national government***

There are three main organs of government: the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. The Executive constitutes the top tier of a two-tier system of government: national and local government. The current national government, a coalition government, was established in April 2008, following a negotiated settlement of the post-election political crisis. Headed by an Executive President and an Executive Prime Minister, it comprises 40 ministries. Amongst those ministries of relevance in the urban context are the following: Finance; Planning, National Development and Vision 2030; Housing; Lands; Public Health and Sanitation; Local Government; Nairobi Metropolitan; Youth and Sports; Provincial Administration and Internal Security; Special Programmes; and Environment and Mineral Resources.

There are also a number of other government agencies that are of relevance in the urban context, including the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), which has a vital role to play in terms of ensuring the upgrading of the environment including the rivers running through some of the informal settlements, and the National AIDS Control Council (NACC).

The national government is responsible for initiating and implementing national policy and national programmes: some of those of relevance to urban poverty reduction and urban development are discussed later below. Despite some financial decentralisation, the national government continues to be a very centralised structure.

### ***The provincial and district administrations***

The main tasks of the Provincial and District Administrations are to coordinate central government affairs and implement its decisions through an administrative system which operates at provincial, district, division, location and sub-location levels with a Provincial Commissioner (PC) and a District Commissioner heading the two upper levels respectively, a district officer at divisional level, and chief and assistant at the location and sub-location level. They are responsible for maintaining law and order, and settling minor disputes in their areas of operation, coordinating and supervising development activities, explaining to the public government policies, and identifying and mobilising use of public resources. Through the powers vested in the PC, the provincial administration can considerably influence the livelihoods of poor urban

communities. Essentially, the provincial administration constitutes a parallel system to that of representative local government.

### ***Local government***

Local government currently comprises 175 local authorities established by the Local Government Act, Cap 265, Laws of Kenya. In the urban areas, these are either municipal or town councils, with Nairobi being the only city council. Each council or local authority has two arms. The political arm consists of elected and nominated councillors, its core mandate being to formulate policies and by-laws. The executive arm comprises technical staff, headed by a town/municipal/city clerk to the council, with a core mandate of implementing policies and by-laws formulated by the political arm.

Local government is a critical institution for local service delivery but it has been severely hampered in its operations for many years by the strong central control placed upon it by the Local Government Act, which gives the Minister for Local Government considerable powers over local authorities. Commitment to a decentralisation of powers to the local government level has been limited, deterring local authorities from adopting innovative approaches to service delivery including public-private partnerships, and progress on local government reform via the Kenya Local Government Reform Programme has been slow. One significant development introduced through the latter, however, has been the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF), which was established in 1999 (see below).

Local government also has to operate in parallel with other systems, including provincial administration noted above, NACC, the Constituency Development Fund, the Youth Enterprise Fund, and the Women Enterprise Fund. These undertake or involve different aspects of central government activity from the national down to the local level. This has led to a diminution of and confusion about the role of the local authorities, as well as competition for scarce resources, duplication of effort in some cases and absence of activity in others at the local level.

### ***National development planning***

National planning over the recent past has been characterised by the production of a number of different planning and strategy documents with different type frames. The linkages between them are often not apparent. With the exception perhaps of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, previous development plans have not provided an effective or inclusive framework enabling the range of development actors to determine what their role should be in the development process and how they should relate to one another. When it comes to cities, national development plans and strategies in the past have underplayed the significance of urban poverty and the phenomenon of rapid urbanisation.

***Kenya Vision 2030*** is the country's new long-term national planning strategy or 'development blueprint' covering the period 2008-2030. It falls within the mandate of the ***Ministry of Planning, National Development and Vision 2030***. A consultative approach was used in its formulation. The strategy aims at making Kenya a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life by 2030. The vision is based on three pillars: economic, social and political. The economic pillar aims at maintaining a sustained economic growth of 10% per annum over the next 25 years. The social pillar seeks to achieve a just and cohesive society enjoying equitable social development in a clean and secure environment, while the political pillar aims at more issue-based, people-centred, results-oriented, and accountable democratic political system.

Launched in 2007, Kenya Vision 2030 follows on from the implementation of 2002-2007 Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation, which was associated with a period of rapid growth for the country. It will be implemented in successive five-year medium-term plans: the current plan thus runs from 2008-2012 and contains the 'flagship' projects identified for this period in Vision 2030. Preceding the development of Vision 2030, the government's development plans had been engaging with the attainment of the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) in Kenya. Of particular relevance to the current study is Target 11 under Goal 7, Ensuring environmental sustainability, which sets the aim that 'By 2020, all states will work towards achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers'. However, the linkage between the MDGs and the implementation of the new strategy is not yet clear.

### **Urban planning and management**

As previously indicated, rapid urban growth has overstretched the capacity of government agencies charged with urban land planning and management. However, this capacity has also been weakened by the disjointed division of these functions across a number of agencies and by the lack of an urban development framework or policy. The **Ministry of Lands** has the mandate to plan, survey and adjudicate land in Kenya whereas local authorities are responsible for development control and enforcement of the building regulations. The physical development plans which have been prepared by the Ministry for urban centres are now either outdated or do not reflect the current land use arrangements existing in them. Nor do they recognise or regularise informal settlements.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Lands and NEMA, local authorities are also mandated with ensuring the compliance of buildings in urban areas with environmental safety standards. However, the local government's inability to ensure that building regulations are adhered to, coupled with outdated physical development plans, has led to the failure by the authorities concerned to prevent building in flood hazard zones. Indeed, it is likely that there is a 'knowledge gap' about disaster risk reduction as it relates to planning and service provision in urban areas. For instance, it was found that there was little knowledge among Nairobi City planning officials about the priorities of action under the Hyogo Framework for Action, which is concerned with building resilience amongst nations and communities to disaster.<sup>78</sup> In this respect, it is also worth noting that the endorsement of the national disaster management policy by Cabinet remains pending after a period of several years.

Responsibility for providing an urban development policy to guide local authorities to plan for, and manage, urban growth lies with the **Ministry of Local Government's Urban Development Department**. while in the making for a number of years, its production remains elusive. Renewed efforts to formulate such a policy are, however, currently under way.

The system of urban land allocation, administration and management is also likely to be significantly improved through the **National Land Policy**, which has recently been tabled before Cabinet for discussion and adoption. The policy seeks to achieve efficiency, sustainability and equity in the use of land by offering a framework of policies and laws that will provide all citizens including the poor the opportunity to access and occupy land, and will provide efficient and transparent land dispute resolution mechanisms. It identifies land use issues that require special intervention

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<sup>78</sup> Action Aid International Kenya, 2006. The Hyogo Framework for Action is the current (2005-2015) UN agreement for building resilience of nations and communities to disaster, which was adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005.

including the question of how to manage informal settlements. The policy also proposes that communities living in the informal settlements may access land under a community land ownership scheme.

### ***Upgrading of informal settlements***

The **Ministry of Housing** in partnership with **UN-HABITAT** is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the **Kenya Slums Upgrading Programme (KENSUP)**. The programme has been designed to have a more holistic approach to improving conditions in the country's informal settlements, including the upgrading of housing and related infrastructure such as water and sanitation, security, access roads, and lighting. Commencing in 2004, KENSUP marks a major shift in attitude by the Government of Kenya by recognising that informal settlements are a reality and are the home of a large proportion of the country's urban population. Furthermore, upgrading of the houses in which the urban poor live protects them from environmental hazards such as the floods as discussed earlier.

KENSUP involves a pledge by the Kenyan government to mobilize financial resources for an estimated total cost of around US \$11bn between 2005 and 2020, by which time it aims to 'improve the livelihoods of at least 5.3 million slum dwellers in Kenya'.<sup>79</sup> Yet despite the ambition and scope of the current programme, it currently operates in a policy vacuum since the proposed **slum upgrading policy** has not yet been formulated. Such a policy would need to relate to the government's policy on housing and to the **Housing Bill**, which remains to be passed into law after several years of inaction.

In addition there are fears that the design and implementation of KENSUP does not comply with requirements under international human rights law relating to forced eviction and adequate housing. While a pilot project under KENSUP is now in the implementation phase in Kibera's Soweto East, Amnesty International's recent report found that the government had not taken adequate measures to provide information to residents or guarantee the affordability and accessibility of the temporary and permanent housing units being created; 90% of those interviewed by Amnesty on the pilot site 'believed that the project was being implemented without effective and adequate consultation with them'.<sup>80</sup>

### ***Devolved funding mechanisms***

The **Constituency Development Fund (CDF)** is a form of devolved and parallel funding, which was introduced in 2003 to facilitate Members of Parliament bringing development closer to, and in line with the priorities of, their constituents. 75% of the fund is allocated equally amongst all 210 constituencies, whereas the remaining 25% is disbursed on the basis of constituency poverty index. The administration of the fund required the setting-up of a complex set of new organisational arrangements and procedures from national down to district and locational level. The system has been dogged by controversy, with many CDF projects either stalling or failing to take off. Lack of transparency, misappropriation of funds, inadequate funding levels, failure to establish viable ventures and shoddy performance by contractors have been cited as some of the reasons for this.<sup>81</sup>

The **Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF)** is a discretionary block grant from central government to local authorities to help them improve and extend service

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<sup>79</sup> Amnesty International, 2009, p. 22.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>81</sup> Report in Daily Nation, September 17, 2008 in connection with launch of a new handbook, *CDF Social Audit Guide*.



delivery to the public, improve financial management and debt resolution in local authority and also improve planning and accountability. Under LATF, each local authority is required to prepare a **Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP)**, which is intended to be an inclusive process of needs identification and prioritisation to improve service delivery at the community level.<sup>82</sup> The local authority is charged with ensuring that communities participate in this process so that their priority needs are considered. A particular focus is supposed to be placed on meeting the service needs of low-income groups.

The LASDAP process introduced new consultative and participatory approaches to a council's normal forms of engagement with local citizens. A recent appraisal of LATF and LASDAP indicates that such approaches have not yet been institutionalised by councils; participation by communities was found to be wanting, raising doubts about how effective the system is in meeting the priorities of local citizens particularly the poor.<sup>83</sup> On other counts including financial management, debt resolution and accountability, it appears that some progress has been made.

### **Conclusions about the national level framework**

The findings of the above rapid appraisal, together with conclusions drawn from previous chapters of the report, indicate the following:

- an institutional, policy and legislative framework that is not adequately oriented towards the urban sector; and, linked to this,
- the absence of a national development framework that fully recognises urban poverty, the process of urbanisation, and the role of urban centres as engines of development, and the impacts of climate change on the urban poor;
- an unclear division of functions between some of the key government ministries and agencies that have some urban focus, leading to likely duplication in activities on the one hand or 'gaps' on the other.
- the existence of a number of parallel structures and systems, which operate in the absence of an overall/national development framework, and which are generally neither well-managed nor effective in bringing development to the local level.

All such constraints can be considered as aspects of **poor governance**, which will also have an impact at city level.

## **4.3 City level**

### **City Council of Nairobi (CCN)**

The City Council is the key stakeholder institution at this level. It is the local government authority responsible for the management and administration of the city including the provision of services to its citizens. It consists of over 50 elected councilors representing their wards, and some 18 nominated councillors, including a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, who are elected from within. The full council involves a system of committees served by departments, through which CCN carries out its mandated responsibilities. For many years, however, the City Council's performance in fulfilling these responsibilities has been severely constrained.

As previously mentioned, the highly centralised decision-making at the national level affects the ability of local authorities to respond to the local development needs. CCN suffers, for instance, from the high turnover of experienced departmental managers,

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<sup>82</sup> Kituo Cha Sheria, 2008

<sup>83</sup> Kituo Cha Sheria, 2008

particularly at the top management level, as officers are moved at the behest of the Ministry of Local Government. At lower levels, the council has a surplus of unskilled employees who absorb a large percentage of council expenditure. In the 2003-2004 financial year budget, over three quarters of the Council budget was allocated to wages and approximately 21% to operations and maintenance, while a meagre 4% was allocated to service delivery.<sup>84</sup>

An inefficient bureaucracy and corruption continue to undermine the City Council's operations. Deficiencies in the overall structure of the Council and its management have hindered collaboration and coordination between departments and between the local authority and other bodies, as well as impeding the adoption of new approaches to running its affairs, such as partnership arrangements. The various parallel systems noted above also hamper efficient service delivery. With regard to corruption, in 2005 the City Council was ranked position 13 out of 33 organisations surveyed in the Kenya Bribery Index.<sup>85</sup>

It should be noted that the problems and shortcomings identified above are of long standing and have been the subject of a number of reports recommending remedial action. Actions intended to address these problems so far have included the establishment of an interim oversight board by GoK in 2000 to assist the Council to restore financial health and effective delivery of local services to the city. However, such initiatives have failed to fundamentally change the *modus operandi* of the City Council, and the council has not been able to plan for the rapid growth in the city's population as reflected in the large numbers of unplanned and un-serviced settlements.

#### ***Linkages between CCN and the national government***

The City Council has had to deal with the disjointed division of responsibilities for urban planning and development at the national level noted above, while working to an outdated master plan developed in 1973, at which time Nairobi's population was less than a quarter of its current size.<sup>86</sup> The creation of a specific ministry, the Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development, and subsequently of a separate authority, ***Nairobi Metro Authority***,<sup>87</sup> is perhaps recognition of the need for a more strategic approach to be taken towards the development of the City and its hinterland, and for appropriate capacity to undertake the task. A Bill to establish the new authority has been drafted and awaits assent. This will spell out the respective functions and responsibilities of the authority and CCN, and the relationship of each body with the Ministry of Local Government, the parent ministry of the City Council. It should also spell out the role of the council with regard to the implementation of the new metropolitan strategy, which was launched by the Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development at the end of 2008.

The ***Nairobi Metro 2030*** strategy aims at transforming Nairobi into a world-class metropolis. In its own terms this means providing a framework that will respond to the current and future challenges of the Nairobi metro over the next 22 years and will allow for focused private sector investment in pursuit of the vision not only for the city but for the wider region. As a flagship project included in Kenya Vision 2030, the future of Nairobi and its hinterland is now part and parcel of the overall national development agenda. One potentially serious flaw with the programme is that it initially involves planning for a 40km radius when Nairobi's functional outreach covers

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<sup>84</sup> UN Habitat, 2006

<sup>85</sup> The Kenya Bribery Index, 2007

<sup>86</sup> UN-HABITAT 2008a

<sup>87</sup> A Bill to establish the Metro Authority has been drafted and awaits assent.

100km or more.<sup>88</sup> The Nairobi metropolitan region also affects 12 adjacent local authorities as well as the Nairobi municipality, so there is a need to define in clear terms the authority hierarchy and regulatory arrangements for governing at the metropolitan level. The question of how much central control versus decentralisation will operate in moving towards the vision of a world-class metropolitan area still remains largely unanswered, given that Nairobi Metro 2030 seeks 'both integration of all metropolitan local authorities and a multi-nuclei decentralized structure.'<sup>89</sup>

It is evident that the institutional, policy, and legislative framework in place at the city level is complex. What is less clear is what exact channels exist to enable CCN, the key actor at this level, to liaise and collaborate with government ministries and national agencies with regard to the planning and implementation of projects and interventions under their respective national programmes that focus on Nairobi. Taking one example, the Ministry of Housing is responsible for overseeing the implementation of KENSUP in the urban centres of the country; yet the role of the City Council vis-à-vis that component of KENSUP focusing on Nairobi is still unclear.

### ***Civil society***

Over the past few years, there has been a proliferation of community-based activities, often assisted by **non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**, which have worked towards the empowerment of different groups in society, particularly the poor and vulnerable. Individually, however, **community-based organisations (CBOs)** often remain weak, lacking the skills and ability to have a strong voice vis-à-vis government at all levels and to engage with more powerful international NGOs. Moreover, a noticeable feature of NGOs in Nairobi has been the limited degree of coordination or collaboration among them and between them and the City Council. Such organisations do however have the scope to pilot innovative approaches for poverty reduction, often by working with the private sector. Increasingly, amongst the larger companies based in Nairobi, policies of corporate social responsibility are being adopted with various initiatives being supported or funded by them to address different dimensions of urban poverty.

Again, it is not clear what channels are available to CCN and to this range of civil society stakeholders through which to plan and implement strategies, programmes and activities aimed at reducing urban poverty on a coordinated basis (though a few individual examples of partnership are provided in Chapter 5). At the current time, it is evident that there is no effective enabling framework or forum available in Nairobi to forge linkages and partnerships between all the different stakeholder groups operating at national or city level and to foster a coordinated and informed approach to tackling poverty.

### ***Conclusions about the city level framework***

The City Council and other institutions for local governance are deeply constrained by the fact that decision-making in Kenya remains highly centralised and that central government intervenes in many aspects of the city's management. Lack of local autonomy and central government control of city level personnel contribute to low morale among staff and high staff turnovers, which impact negatively on the capacity of the City Council to follow through with its programmes. Corruption and the lack of coordination between departments and between lower and higher tiers of government remain huge impediments. In this context – which once again is characterised by **poor governance** – the Nairobi Metro 2030 vision of creating 'the best managed metropolis in Africa' seems a long way off.

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<sup>88</sup> UN-HABITAT 2008a

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

The impacts of this poor urban governance – the causes of which cannot be located purely at the national or city level, but are rooted in both and in the dysfunctional relations between the two – on urban poverty and vulnerability are all too clear in Nairobi. Aspects of the governance framework that on the surface appear to be working in the interests of the city as a whole – such as KENSUP or Nairobi Metro 2030 – on closer inspection could actually increase vulnerability by failing to comply with international norms on forced evictions or by failing to consult with local communities about new development proposals that may dramatically impact on their livelihoods. Pervasive corruption at both local and national level mean not only that city-dwellers spend substantial amounts of their income on bribes, but they are forced to perpetuate systems that sustain bad and unaccountable governance in the process. Meanwhile the lack of clarity about which state departments/tiers are responsible for which aspects of urban service delivery makes it even more difficult for the urban poor to use their voice effectively. It is therefore very clear that improving governance has to be central to any efforts to reduce poverty and vulnerability in the city.

## **5 Existing approaches to engaging with poverty reduction in Nairobi**

*Despite the serious problems identified above in relation to the institutional framework for governing Kenya's cities, there are a number of important initiatives by government and NGOs in place to address specific aspects of urban poverty. Focusing specifically on Nairobi, this chapter highlights some of the main approaches to poverty reduction and assesses some of the most important gaps. Key points raised about existing efforts include the following:*

- **Approaches to housing for the urban poor involve a multiplicity of efforts ranging from KENSUP activities implemented by the Ministry of Housing and UN-HABITAT to community/CCN partnership trusts and community savings and loan schemes**
- **The NGO sector has been central to attempts to address to severe lack of water and sanitation in Nairobi's slums. Often these attempts take the form of partnership projects such as Umande Trust aimed at providing safe water kiosks, bio centres and plot-based toilets**
- **HIV/AIDS activities are relatively well supported by the government and NGOs. By contrast, access to justice for the urban poor and mechanisms for local conflict mitigation are thought to be lacking**
- **The government's interest in youth affairs is growing, and a new UNDP-supported project aims to generate employment for youth in slum areas**
- **On issues such as education and food security in the informal settlements, many actors are involved in a wide range of projects, but these remain largely fragmentary and un-coordinated**
- **Various efforts towards urban governance reform have been slow to get off the ground and have now largely stalled**
- **There is very little existing activity with regard to disaster risk reduction and urban adaptation to climate change**

### **5.1 Introduction**

There are many programmes and projects directly or indirectly aimed at reducing poverty in Nairobi that are currently being supported by the GoK, CCN, the community, civil society and the private sector, together with international partners. Two general points can be made about the approaches adopted. First, although it is generally accepted that urban poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon, there is a tendency amongst the approaches used by the different stakeholders to focus on a single dimension. Secondly, as indicated previously, there seems to be limited coordination between the actors in the planning and implementation of their respective initiatives, which reduces the latter's overall impact and leads to uneven coverage of the city's informal settlements.

This chapter is concerned with describing and, to the extent possible, appraising some of the approaches adopted by the different stakeholders, which have been identified through the literature review and from the key informant interviews conducted as part of the study. A number of initiatives will be identified before making a preliminary assessment of where some of the most salient gaps are in the existing range of approaches to poverty reduction.

## **5.2 Specific approaches**

### ***Informal settlements upgrading and housing***

The Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) was designed to take a holistic approach to improving conditions in the country's informal settlements, involving the upgrading of housing and related infrastructure including water and sanitation, security, access roads, and lighting. In Nairobi, the programme has focused primarily on one informal settlement, Kibera, so far.

Progress to date shows some significant variation in how the two key actors responsible for overseeing the implementation of the programme, the Ministry of Housing (MOH) and the UN-HABITAT, have interpreted their mandate. MOH has concentrated on the provision of housing using the concept of a 'decanting site', to which residents in a certain area selected for improvement are to be temporarily relocated whilst construction work proceeds. Housing for the first group of residents to be relocated is nearing completion and is scheduled for occupation by July, 2009. About 1,500 residents will be housed in the new five-storey blocks. A top-down approach has been adopted with MOH rather than the local authority, CCN, taking on the implementing role, which has compounded some of the problems with KENSUP identified above.

In addition, the MOH is engaged in a Korogocho slum upgrading initiative, sponsored by the Italian Government, as well as youth training programme on basic building technologies, with the objective of achieving a pool of skilled youth who can participate in the construction of infrastructure under KENSUP.

UN-HABITAT, on the other hand, has taken a broader approach, with its current and/or proposed KENSUP activities in Kibera focusing on water and sanitation, access roads, energy, transport and ICT-resource centres, as well as working with the community and local partners.

Other actors in the housing delivery for the urban poor are CSOs, which are working in various informal settlements and using a range of approaches and technologies. Pamoja Trust is one such NGO, whose approach is described in Box 5.1 below.

The National Cooperative Housing Union (NACHU) is a long-established NGO active in the field of housing for the urban poor. Its approach involves community mobilisation through which it encourages low-income communities to form housing cooperatives and to obtain registration thereof with the relevant government ministry. Through these cooperatives, NACHU is able to help communities to establish community savings schemes through which to access affordable loans, either for upgrading of existing semi-permanent dwellings on land that is owned by the cooperative members or for the purchase of land for resettlement purposes of those living under the threat of eviction. It provides capacity enhancement for effective management of the housing cooperatives and of the savings schemes. NACHU has also played an active role in a review of the regulatory guidelines for urban upgrading

and adoption of plot sizes more appropriate and affordable to low-income households.

**Box 5.1 Community-based housing project**

Pamoja Trust is particularly active in Huruma, working on a partnership basis with the community and the City Council of Nairobi (CCN) on a community-based housing project. The project has encouraged slum dwellers to invest in houses that have security of tenure. This has involved the residents signing an MOU with the CCN whereby the local authority donates a piece of land and then issues a communal title for it. Pamoja Trust is currently at the stage of negotiating with the City Council for communal titles. Since most informal settlements are not shown on any city plan, thus denying individuals the legitimacy of a title, the eventual issuance of the communal title will be a significant achievement.

The houses are being built at a unit cost of Ksh. 150,000. They are being built in stages and, once complete, occupiers are expected to repay in instalments of between Ksh. 1,500 and Ksh. 2,000 per month for nine years before they become owners of the dwellings.

*Source:* Daily Nation, 12 June 2008

Some specific constraints have been identified in respect of the NACHU's operations, however. Repayment of loans becomes a problem for poor communities in times of greater economic hardship and in periods of high inflation, NACHU has difficulty in servicing its loans. Moreover, there is often resistance by communities to resettlement in areas outside the city boundaries where income-generating activities are difficult to find or establish.

***Land and security of tenure***

The upgrading of the informal settlements in Nairobi will remain a challenge as long as land tenure - as it relates to dwellings - is not resolved. However, the support that the government is currently giving to KENSUP and the acceptance that it appears to be giving to the ongoing erection of schools, churches, water and sanitation facilities in informal areas are indications perhaps that some progress is being made towards a resolution. The government must ensure, however, that requirements relating to forced evictions and adequate housing are met in line with international standards. Whilst tenure insecurity remains, the work of bodies like Shelter Forum, Kituo Cha Sheria and Pamoja Trust, which have been active in the field of housing rights for the urban poor in Nairobi, will continue to be of importance.

***Water and sanitation***

For many years, it has been the non-governmental sector alone that has sought to address the inadequate and deplorable water and sanitation situation within the informal settlements. NGOs have worked with local communities to deliver water and sanitation services that are appropriate and affordable. The coverage and impact of their efforts has been limited, however, given the scale of the problem. Presently, two of the most active groups are Maji na Ufanisi and Umande Trust.

Umande Trust is currently hosting a collaborative urban water and sanitation initiative, Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor (WSUP), in Gatwekera – one of the most disadvantaged villages in the Kibera settlement. The partnership project – the key partners being the local community, local leaders, the Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company (NCWSC), the City Council of Nairobi, and some international agencies – will provide water kiosks with water chambers to provide safe drinking water; bio-centres that use human waste to generate domestic energy and produce fertiliser; plot-based toilets; hygiene promotion and trial safe effluent disposal for the bio-centres and toilets. The project commenced in May 2008 and is being implemented over a three-year period, serving approximately 74,000 residents in

Gatwekera. Photo 5.1 shows an example of an integrated bio-centre that was implemented by Umande Trust and the Gatwekera community through a previous initiative.

**Photo 5.1 Example of Pro-Poor WATSAN solution for the urban poor**



**Bio-Centre (integrated WATSAN/Bio gas & organic fertiliser) implemented by Umande Trust (photo dated 13<sup>th</sup> January 2009)**

More recently, through its reforms in the water sector including the enactment of the Water Act in 2002, the GOK has become a partner in service delivery in the sector via Regional Water Services Boards. The Athi Water Services Board (AWSB), which is mandated to oversee the management of water and sewerage services in Nairobi, is charged with identifying pro-poor alternative service options. To this end, it has identified groups with experience of working in informal settlements in Nairobi to help develop water kiosks, sanitation facilities and bio-centres to be managed by communities with its agent, NCWSC, being responsible for the supply of water to the facilities. The Board is currently working in partnership with Umande Trust to install 41 bio-centres in Nairobi's informal settlements, 20 of which are government-sponsored, through technology marketing involving the creation of domestic energy and fertiliser from human waste.

NCWSC's approach to engaging with the informal settlements is to provide affordable water and sanitation services in partnership with the community and with NGOs with appropriate expertise. The provision of water kiosks and water chambers, and the supply of water to these facilities and to the bio-centres currently under construction constitute examples of its approach. As previously indicated, water kiosk operators often operate as cartels to the detriment of their consumers. NCWSC has, therefore, been working with the water vendors to improve the role they play in the provision of water.



A major focus of the Water and Sanitation Programme-Africa (WSP-A) in Kenya – a World Bank project – has been to assist in the planning and implementation of reforms to the water and sanitation sector, which has led to the decentralisation of services to the regional level. It has also concentrated on service delivery to informal settlements. For instance, by recognising the water kiosk as the predominant type of small-scale water provider in many of the informal settlements, the WSP-A has engaged with water kiosk operators in Kibera and assisted in the formation of an umbrella organisation, Maji Bora Kibera, which has helped the operators to achieve credibility as affordable and efficient suppliers.

### ***Health and HIV/AIDS***

The GoK's support towards HIV/AIDS is through the National AIDS Control Council (NACC), which is the overall policy-making body on matters relating to HIV/AIDS in the country. It coordinates the implementation of HIV/AIDS programmes and activities in Nairobi through the Nairobi District Technical Committee and the eight Constituency AIDS Control Committees. An appraisal process with regard to proposals submitted by community groups for funding of activities to help reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS has ensured more accountability of funds that are provided through the current national programme, Total War Against AIDS. The latter is supported by a number of international organisations. Overall, the operations of the programme appear to function well.

Not unexpectedly, there are also numerous other organisations, both local and international, that focus on HIV/AIDS either in a direct way - for instance, training on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment – or indirectly through a mainstreaming approach, and which cover Nairobi. Amongst the international organisations are UNAIDS and UNICEF.

The Nairobi-based Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium constitutes a national network of NGOs, CBOs and religious organisations committed to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support. Its approach to engagement involves the provision of a secretariat to respond to its members' technical and HIV/AIDS information needs, national and district networks that provide regular forums for experience-sharing, and advocacy and technical capacity for members to respond more effectively to the HIV/AIDS issues.

### ***Youth training and employment***

Reflecting the concern about high levels of unemployment amongst the youth, there is considerable interest in youth affairs presently being shown by a number of different actors. The Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports with support from UNDP, has prepared a youth project to generate employment for disadvantaged youth in selected slum areas, through a youth public works and skills upgrading programme. The project will provide programme beneficiaries with hands-on business skills, inculcate entrepreneurship and impart technical skills where necessary to better prepare them for inclusion in the labour market. The Ministry is also engaged in a youth empowerment programme with support from the World Bank, with the construction of youth empowerment centres in over 25 constituencies being an initial part of the programme. There are also many smaller youth initiatives being supported at the local level by NGOs and CBOs.

### ***Access to justice***

Unlike some of the above issues, improving access to justice by the urban poor is not an area well supported by development actors. In the absence of sustained international support, the National Legal Aid (and Awareness) Programme that has

recently been launched by the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs is particularly important. The ministry will be working with the judiciary and the CSOs that have been involved in providing legal aid services to the marginalised communities/individuals, notably Kitua Cha Sheria; the Children's Legal Action Network (CLAN), which apart from having a national programme also focuses on programme activities in specific areas including Nairobi; Christian Legal Education Aid and Research (CLEAR-Kenya); and, the Coalition on Violence against Women (COVAW) Kenya. The main objective of the programme is to enhance access to justice for all but specifically to the socially excluded and the most marginalised. It will operate on a pilot basis in Nairobi, as well as the country's other major urban centres.

### ***Education***

The City Council of Nairobi through its City Education Unit has developed guidelines for the operation of non-formal schools in Nairobi's informal settlements and facilitates the registration of these facilities. Many individuals, CBOs and local NGOs, some with the support of donor funds, have joined in the provision of informal education for slum children. They include organisations such as the Undugu Society of Kenya in Dandora, Raila Education Centre in Kibera, St. John Community Centre in Pumwani and the St. Kizito Education Centres in Dagoretti.

### ***Security and conflict mitigation***

Supported by UN-HABITAT through the Safer Cities Programme and UNDP, the City Council has been engaged in the Safer Nairobi Initiative for a number of years. The programme has acted as the impetus for a number of council activities including the installation of street lighting; city beautification; provision for informal trading; the upgrading of playing fields in support of youth activities; and safer neighbourhood campaigns. Aspects of the safety initiative have also been integrated in the informal settlements via KENSUP. Recently, the initiative has been constrained by lack of funding.

The Nairobi District Peace Committee brings together stakeholders who have an interest in, and work on, peace and security issues. Reporting to the National Steering Committee on Peace-building and Conflict Management, it is responsible for facilitating the resolution of any intra-district conflicts, responding to security incidents, deploying rapid response teams, as well as addressing broader peace-building issues. It has helped to bring coherence to the way in which different peace-building and conflict interventions are initiated in Nairobi so as to avoid duplication of activities and to ensure their greater effectiveness. Currently, however, there are no structures at the community level that could be used to harness these efforts.

While community-based policing operates within the informal settlements, it generally appears not be held in great regard by the inhabitants.

### ***Food security***

At the policy level, a number of initiatives are currently being implemented to address the soaring food prices in Kenya. Those targeted towards the consumer include reduced taxes on food, cash transfers, food for work, and food ration vouchers. Producer/supplier-targeted policy initiatives range from increased supply using grain stocks to agricultural input subsidies and incentives such as credit for expanding agricultural production.

With regard to targeting the urban food poor in Nairobi, there are a number of health and nutrition interventions currently being implemented in the informal settlements. These range from the provision of primary health care, T/B and HIV services, the

management of moderate and severe malnutrition, provision of food for HIV affected and infected people, HIV/TB clinic provision of care, food and drugs to patients, and a school-feeding programme.

Overall, however, such responses to the increasing food insecurity problem in Nairobi are inadequate and largely uncoordinated.

### ***Urban governance***

Various programmes that the GoK has implemented over the past few years have sought to improve governance at both national and local levels. These include the Kenya Local Government Reform Programme (KLGRP), the Rural Poverty Reduction & Local Government Support Programme (RPRLGSP), and the Public Service Reform Initiative.

As mentioned earlier, the KLGRP has accorded some financial decentralisation to the level of local government through LATF, one condition of which was community participation in the local planning process, LASDAP, which is to focus particularly on the poor. Overall progress on the implementation of the KLGRP has been very slow, and the LASDAP process appears to have lost some momentum.

### ***Policy advocacy and influencing***

Actors in the urban sector have used policy advocacy and influencing as a strategic approach for putting pressure on policy makers for more pro-poor policies and service provision and to hold both the national and local governments more accountable for public resource utilisation.

The drafting of the National Land Policy is one example of the effective role that civil society can play in policy-making. In 2004, GOK initiated a process to formulate a national land policy, which was designed to be participatory and inclusive of all the key interests in land and natural resources. The civil society contribution was spearheaded by the Kenya Land Alliance (KLA), a network of organisations advocating for land rights in Kenya, which was supported by a number of development partners. During the formulation process, KLA sought to strike a balance between protecting existing legitimate property rights on the one hand, and providing directives that guarantee equitable land reforms on the other. Shelter Forum, another of the CSOs involved, mobilised communities across the country to discuss the draft policy document and to ensure that pro-poor dimensions of accessing land were included in the policy.

## **5.3 Gaps in current efforts to ameliorate urban poverty and vulnerability**

While there are a considerable number of activities under way, with numerous NGOs working alongside communities and government agencies on projects such as those outlined above, these activities are largely uncoordinated and there are significant gaps. Alongside the urgent issue of addressing the broader problem of coordinating poverty-reduction activities between the huge range of actors involved, several key issues are notable among these gaps in the poverty-reduction landscape.

Firstly, existing work to combat urban poverty and vulnerability is currently paying little attention to issues of disaster prevention and risk reduction, especially with regard to climate change. To date, there has been little documentation of the effects of climate change in the urban areas of Kenya, although there is a growing pool of expertise on the subject at both national and global levels, a resource which can and

should be tapped. Correspondingly, actors' engagement with climate change to mitigate and adapt to its effects is not yet evident.

A second major problem area is urban governance. As been noted several times in the foregoing analysis, poor governance is very much at the root of many problems of urban vulnerability and current efforts to improve governance have largely stalled. Governance is a difficult area for NGOs to engage in, but there is certainly more scope for technical capacity building at the level of the city council at the same time as building capacity among urban civil society actors to call for greater government transparency and accountability. Existing and previous efforts towards governance reform have largely stemmed from the government itself, but there may be more chance of success if civil society and the private sector are also supported to take central roles in reform.

A third area where current efforts are lacking relates to support for urban livelihoods taking into account the specific types of vulnerability faced by poor people in cities. Income security and food security are central here, and while there are various initiatives in relation to the latter, there is little evidence of approaches that explicitly link food security to other forms of vulnerability such as partaking in high-risk livelihood activities. A more holistic approach to the livelihood vulnerabilities of the urban poor that explicitly recognises the degree of dependence on a cash economy is needed, which would involve both supporting lower costs for basic services as well as efforts to provide credit and savings schemes for the poor.

## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusions

This section draws together the conclusions reached in the preceding analysis and summarises them in terms of a core problem, the main contributory cause problems, and the main effect problems.

#### **Core problem**

One over-riding conclusion has been reached: that **poor urban governance** in respect of planning and managing the affairs of the Nairobi city is a major driving factor of urban poverty and vulnerability. This therefore constitutes the **core problem** to be addressed.

#### **Cause problems**

As the key actor in planning and managing the affairs of Nairobi, the performance of the **City Council of Nairobi** has been severely constrained. The following have been identified as some of the *internal* factors that have contributed to this:

- an inefficient bureaucracy lacking appropriate capacity and skills;
- no strategic planning and development of the city: the 1973 Master Plan for Nairobi is still extant;
- the limited application of innovative approaches towards service delivery;
- the absence of a framework to enable engagement with, and the participation of, other stakeholders including the community, CSOs and the private sector in local planning and decision-making;
- mismanagement of public resources and corruption.

The Council's performance has also been constrained by *external* factors including:

- the lack of autonomy in respect of running its own affairs, local policy-making, and responding to local development needs as central government retains control over policy and key decision-making;
- a complex and inadequate institutional, policy and legislative framework in which the CCN operates, including the disjointed division of responsibilities for urban development compounded by the lack of a national urban development policy; parallel systems, such as the CDF, LASDAP/LATF, which operate separately in relation to bringing development or services to the local level with little coordination between them;
- the absence of national development framework which fully recognises urban poverty, the urbanisation process and the role of Nairobi and other urban centres in the country's economic development.

In summary, the main **cause problems** which have been identified as being associated with poor urban governance in Nairobi are:

- ***Under-performing City Council of Nairobi***
- ***Complex and inadequate institutional, policy and legislative framework at city level***
- ***Urban sector under-prioritised and under-resourced in national development agenda***

### ***Effect problems***

Amongst the key ***effect problems*** associated with the core problem, which have emerged from the analysis and appraisal, are the following:

- ***Deteriorating livelihoods*** of the urban poor
- ***Under-provision of basic services*** to urban citizens and especially the poor
- ***Limited impact of urban poverty interventions***
- ***A growing culture of violence and insecurity*** with the youth and women being particularly vulnerable groups in this respect
- ***Uncontrolled urban development*** placing additional demands on urban services and infrastructure including roads, water supply, and sewerage, which are already over-stretched, and increasing flood hazards through obstruction of natural water channels and rivers.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

The above main conclusions point to a number of opportunities that are available through which support to urban poverty reduction could be provided. These point to a number of recommendations that are presented below together with some of the avenues through which each opportunity could be pursued. They are presented here as a menu of areas of potential: determining which are feasible and appropriate for support by Oxfam GB will be undertaken as part of the formulation of its urban programme strategy.

### ***Promotion of good urban governance***

There is ample evidence globally to demonstrate that the practice of good urban governance can contribute towards reducing poverty. Given the inter-related dimensions of poor governance in Nairobi outlined above, the promotion of good urban governance in the city could be pursued through various avenues including the following.

#### **i) Local government reform and capacity building**

There are currently two main government programmes aimed at improving the operations of local government: the Kenya Local Government Reform Programme (KLGRP) and the Rural Poverty Reduction & Local Government Support Programme (RPRLGSP), an EU-supported initiative. A World Bank-supported programme to improve the management and infrastructure of the country's 175 local authorities is currently being designed. Further information would need to be sought on these programmes and their status in order to see what potential they might offer vis-à-vis targeted support to the City Council of Nairobi.

#### **ii) City planning**

An effective city planning system is another aspect of good governance that could help address the challenge of urban growth in Nairobi and its hinterland, as well as facilitating the exploitation of the capital's economic potential. This may be addressed through the government's new Nairobi metro initiative, but further examination of the latter is needed to assess its potential. Above all, the problem of coordinating different government roles in implementing the Nairobi Metro 2030 strategy needs to be overcome. In addition, efforts should be made to ensure that adequate provisions for disaster prevention and risk reduction are included in any new system of city planning.

### **iii) Policy framework**

Renewed efforts are being made by the Urban Development Department of the Ministry of Local Government to prepare a national urban development policy for application by urban local authorities, which would plug a gap in the policy framework for the urban sector.

Another policy gap relates to informal settlement or slum upgrading. Although no policy or legal framework yet exists for slum upgrading, GoK's support to KENSUP marks a turning point in addressing the needs of slum dwellers in Nairobi and other urban centres in the country. Not only does the programme give *de facto* recognition to the informal settlements but also it involves planning, management and the allocation of resources for improving the living conditions of the residents thereof. In view of these factors and recognising some of the challenges associated with KENSUP, which the findings of the current study have highlighted, it has been concluded that aspects of the programme offer potential for possible support.

The Draft National Land Policy has been long in the making. Fast-tracking its approval by the government, through lobbying and advocacy, would speed up progress towards the implementation of two specific provisions contained in the policy of significance to the urban poor, that pertaining to vulnerable groups such as slum dwellers and that to the upgrading of the informal settlements themselves.

Revitalising and broadening the debate on the draft national disaster management policy to incorporate the effects of climate change on urban livelihoods is necessary, as is building knowledge about these areas amongst urban stakeholders to encourage participation in addressing them.

Another avenue by which to make the policy framework more responsive to citizens' needs is to achieve greater community participation in public policy-making. Lobbying for community participation in the process remains a valuable goal in this regard.

### ***Urban actors' coordination framework***

Establishing a framework for coordination between the various actors involved in urban development would serve:

- to provide coherence to the efforts of all the actors involved in addressing urban poverty in Nairobi, at whatever level they operate;
- to facilitate debate about relevant development agendas such as scaling-up of successful interventions, pro-poor policies and house financing, in order to encourage a multi-dimensional and multi-level approach towards urban poverty reduction;
- to ensure more effective resource mobilisation and allocation to the urban sector;
- to act as a city repository for information.

The former Nairobi Informal Settlements Coordination Committee, which had a strategy and action plan to address the needs of urban poor living in the city's informal settlements and which sought for recognition and regularisation of the latter, is a model that could be explored. Another structure that could be considered to fulfil this role is the Local Government Stakeholders' Forum currently being coordinated by the CCN. This brings together council officials and other stakeholders who deal with the urban sector and urban development.

### ***Sustainable urban livelihoods***

There is much scope for promoting alternative and innovative approaches towards building more sustainable livelihoods in terms of both increased food and income security, such as the following:

#### **i) Micro-enterprise development**

Possible approaches that could be pursued range from supporting the establishment of community savings and loans schemes for business start-up to transformation of solid waste as an income generating activity. The more marginalised in the community – women, youth and disabled people – could form the core target groups for implementing such approaches.

#### **ii) Water and sanitation enterprising and public health education**

Recent reforms in the water sector including the adoption of pro-poor approaches towards service provision have given impetus to the efforts of the NGOs, which have been at the forefront of working with the informal settlement communities in Nairobi to deliver appropriate and affordable water and sanitation services, as well as public health education. There is scope for these innovative approaches to be scaled-up and replicated as the scale of the problem remains vast.

Combining a community enterprising approach with WATSAN programming would enable improved access by the community to affordable water and sanitation services, **and** improved incomes - and hence livelihoods – of the target communities.

#### **iii) Skills upgrading for youth**

One project that is currently being drawn up may offer some scope for support in relation to sustainable urban livelihoods among the youth of Nairobi. As briefly outlined previously, the proposed project, which falls within the mandate of the Ministry of Youth Affairs with support from UNDP, seeks to generate employment for disadvantaged youth in selected slum areas through a youth public works and skill upgrading programme.

#### **iv) Access to information**

Knowledge and information form part of people's asset base. Communities can be empowered through the acquisition of knowledge and information. There are a variety of community media interventions in the informal settlements, which could be scaled-up to broaden information dissemination, as well as for community enterprising. Examples include community media stations, community magazines on topical development issues, community resource centres which serve as 'clearing houses' for relevant information on urban and other issues including urban development and slum upgrading, HIV/AIDS, climate change, peace and conflict mitigation, and so forth. Once again, disaster prevention and risk reduction including information about adaptation to climate change should feature in any such projects.

#### **v) Conflict mitigation**

Feelings of insecurity and fears about outbreaks of conflict and violence are growing amongst the population of Nairobi as a whole, but particularly amongst those living in the informal settlements. Finding a way to utilise the unemployed and vulnerable poor urban youth as a resource for building peaceful coexistence within their communities could be a central strategy here. In this respect, there is scope for supporting community-initiated peace activities that have the youth as both the target group and the implementers.



#### **vi) Policy support and coordination**

In addition to opportunities at the community level to promote improved food and income security, there is also scope at the policy level to do so by, for instance, supporting the government's policy initiatives on food supply, food trade and consumer support and other relevant macro policies for the stabilisation of markets, and aiding their enforcement. There is also scope for improving the coordination of the various food-related interventions, which are provided by a wide range of partners operating at different levels and often independently of one another.

### **6.3 Next steps**

The opportunities identified here and the avenues through which they could be pursued have emerged from the analysis of the urban poverty situation in Nairobi, based on the data collected at the initial stage of the study. Determining which of the above recommendations are feasible and appropriate for inclusion in Oxfam GB's urban programme strategy and their subsequent development into strategic options will require a second round of information collection through discussions and consultation with relevant stakeholders. This process is under way and the decisions about which of these opportunities are to be capitalised on will be presented in Oxfam GB Kenya's new Urban Programme Strategy.

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## Appendix 1: Additional basic characteristics of urban Kenya

**Table A1.1 Trends in Kenya's Urban Population Growth**

| Population Parameters | Years      |            |            |            |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                       | 1990       | 2000       | 2010       | 2020       |
| Total population      | 23,574,000 | 30,669,000 | 36,941,000 | 42,695,000 |
| Urban population      | -          | 10,234,000 | 15,857,000 | 21,710,000 |
| Level of urbanisation | -          | 33.4%      | 42.9%      | 50.8%      |

Source: UN-HABITAT, 2003

As indicated in the 2003 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS), there are some marked differences between urban and rural areas, and between urban and national figures, in respect of a number of demographic, household and housing characteristics. For example, as shown in Table A1.2, while Kenyan households consist of an average of 4.4 persons, those in urban areas are smaller than those in the rural areas. Female-headed households are less common in urban areas (26%) than in rural areas (34%), and when compared with the national level. In addition, women in urban areas tend to marry later (median age of 21.4 years) than those in rural areas.

**Table A1.2 Socio-economic Characteristics by Urban/Rural Areas, 2003**

| Socio-economic Variable  | Urban       |               | Rural       |               | Total       |               |
|--------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
|                          | Male        | Female        | Male        | Female        | Male        | Female        |
| Household Size           | 3.5         |               | 4.7         |               | 4.4         |               |
| Female-headed Household  | 26%         |               | 34%         |               | 31.7%       |               |
| <b>School Attendance</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> |
| Age 6-15                 | 90.6%       | 88.3%         | 89.7%       | 88.9%         | 89.4%       | 89.3%         |
| Age 16-20                | 35.5%       | 23.0%         | 55.1%       | 41.5%         | 28.6%       | 48.5%         |
| Age 21-24                | 13.6%       | 4.8%          | 9.4%        | 3.4%          | 8.7%        | 6.2%          |

Source: KDHS 2003

The table also shows the proportion of the urban household population who were attending school at the time of the survey, compared with that of the rural household population, disaggregated by gender. The noticeable drop in attendance amongst males aged 16-20 in urban areas and at the national level is likely to be associated with seeking employment or entering the job market.

Housing conditions also vary greatly according to areas of residence. Half of urban households have electricity, compared with only 5% of homes in rural areas. Urban households tend to have piped water into their compound or dwelling (49%) or get water from public taps (22%), whereas rural households rely primarily on 'alternative' sources for their drinking water - springs, rivers, and streams (48%). However, for those in urban areas who do not have access to an urban piped water supply and who have to purchase water from vendors, the cost is high.

Urban households also have a higher percentage of ownership of all consumer goods, such as radios, television sets, and mobile phones, with the exception of bicycles, which are owned by only 18% of urban households compared with 33% of rural households.

## Appendix 2: Rural-urban migration

The scale and pace of urbanisation in Kenya has already been covered in Chapter 2. However the qualitative dynamics of the urbanisation process and the significance of rural-urban linkages are also very important aspects of the transition taking place in Kenya. Currently it can be argued that a comprehensive understanding of the process of urbanisation and the importance of rural-urban linkages in Kenya appears to be lacking. One implication of this is that the urban sector continues to be under-prioritised and under-resourced, while rural programmes fail to take into account the importance of links between agriculture and urban areas.<sup>90</sup>

Migration of households from rural areas into the country's urban centres is one of the factors, which has contributed to rapid urban growth. Macharia (2003) explains the rural-urban paradigm from the direct role played by migration and its resultant impact on the two sides of the rural-urban continuum.<sup>91</sup> Using the pull-push factor model of urbanisation, he explains that there are both push factors (at the sending areas) and pull factors (at the receiving areas), both of which contribute to the concept of 'over-urbanisation', as illustrated in Figure A2.1 below. These processes impact on labour markets and both ends of the migratory process. Furthermore, people migrating into urban areas have continued to do so even when the hopes of getting "white collar jobs" were vanishing.

Certain aspects of rural-urban migration can be attributed to climate variability and change with 'environmental refugees' from climate-related disasters such as droughts and floods migrating to urban centres. In Kenya, this is evident from the changing pastoral and agro-pastoral lifestyles of the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) communities, as perennial drought and, occasionally, flash floods have resulted in the 'forced' migration of pastoral households to towns in search of alternative sources of livelihoods. As Oxfam's research amongst ASAL communities shows, pastoralists are extremely vulnerable to any changes in their external environments; with few assets and little or no skills for urban income generation, they are ill-equipped to adapt to an urban lifestyle.

Although the above analysis is useful in identifying the factors that encourage rural households to migrate to urban centres, it is important to note that the proportion of urban growth that can be attributed to rural-urban migration is only 25%; natural growth within the existing urban population is the largest share at 55%. The remainder is attributed primarily to the reclassification of rural areas to urban.<sup>92</sup>

It is also important to remember that the 'separation between rural and urban life is also not as absolute as is often thought. For generations, informal settlements carry much of the atmosphere of the rural communities from which they have stemmed.' Furthermore, 'Kenyan urban folk who have lived in downtown Nairobi all of their lives, if asked where they come from, will say from Nyeri or Kiambu or Eldoret, even if they have never been to these places. They will be taken there to be buried on ancestral land when they die.'<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2005

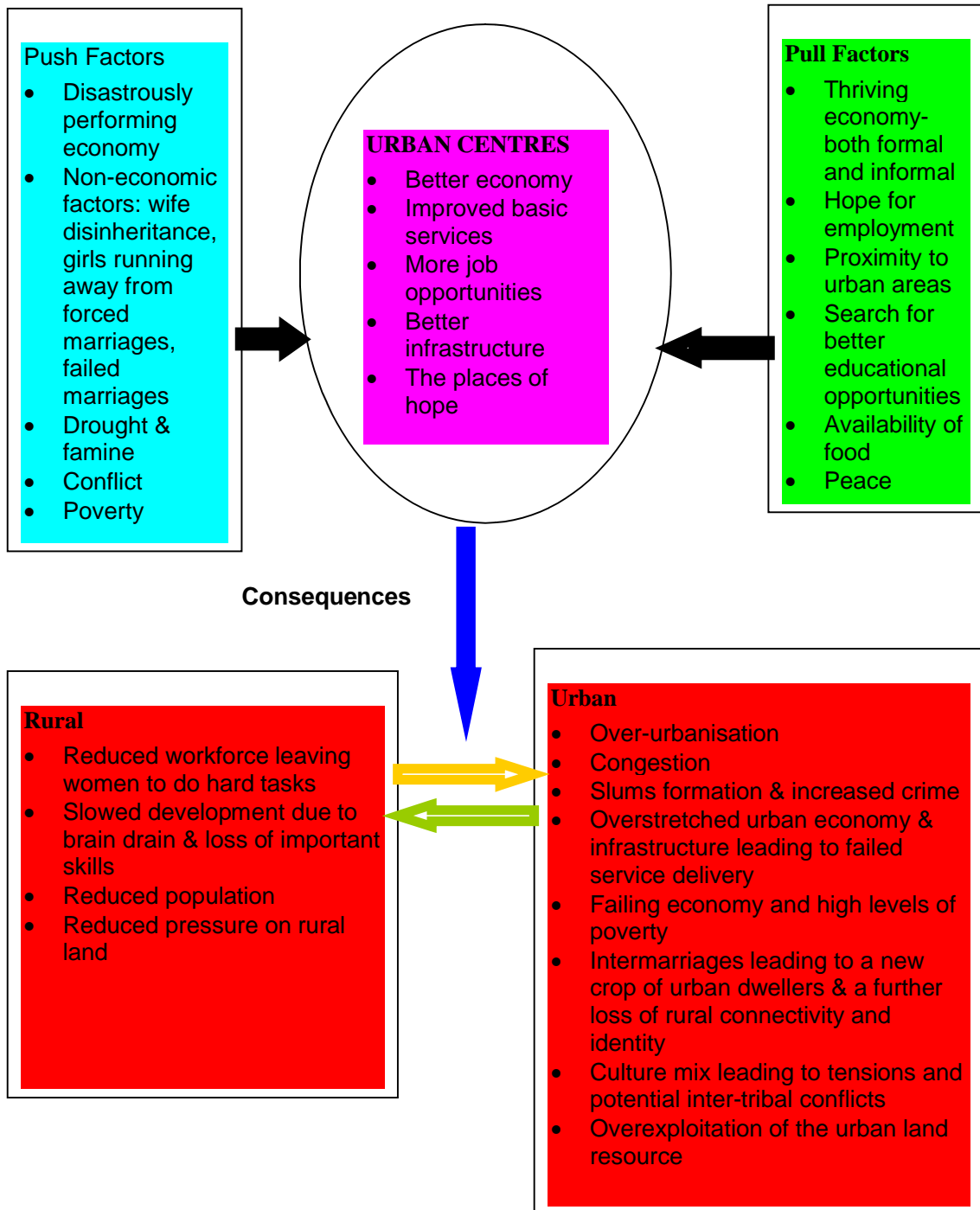
<sup>91</sup> Macharia, 2003

<sup>92</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2009 (informal discussion)

<sup>93</sup> UN-HABITAT, 2003



Figure A2.1 Rural-urban migration: push and pull factors



### Appendix 3: Growth and inflation in the 2007-8 downturn

According to the 2008 Human Development Report, in 2006, Kenya's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita had risen to US\$ 1,436 (compared with US\$ 1,140 as at 2004). The country experienced an upward trend in the (GDP) growth rate over the period 2003-2007 rising from 2.8% up to 7.0% in 2007.<sup>94</sup> However, there was a severe downturn in growth performance in 2008 owing to a combination of the post-election violence with the displacement of farmers and late planting, drought and the global financial crisis. According to the latest Economic Survey, the economic growth rate fell to 1.7% in 2008. Projections indicate a static growth rate in 2009, with a small recovery in 2010, when real GDP is forecast to grow by 2.7%.<sup>95</sup>

Inflation rates in Kenya, having fluctuated around 12% for the period 2003-7, soared in 2008 as a result of high food and energy prices and supply shortages occasioned by the post-election effects. For the greater part of the year, inflation was over 20%, reaching a peak of 29% in June of 2008. The forecasts of the Economic Intelligence Unit (April, 2009) are that, although inflation is likely to ease gradually during 2009, the inflation rate will remain high at 19.5%, a reflection of the rapid pace of price increases during the first three months of the year.<sup>96</sup>

Table A3.1 and Figure A3.1 illustrate how the increase in the national inflation rates during the course of 2007/2008 was reflected at the local, Nairobi level overall and for the two different wealth groups, as well the rest of the urban centres in the country. As can be seen, the inflation rate for the Nairobi lower income groups rose steeply from 12.9% in June 2007 to 29.8% in June 2008. By contrast, the Nairobi middle/upper income groups, experienced a less severe inflation rate of 16.0% for the latter month, up from 7.4% in June 2007.

**Table A3. Inflation rates for Nairobi, 2007 and 2008**

|                             | 2007  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                             | June  | July  | Aug   | Sep   | Oct   | Nov   | Dec   | Mar   | Apr   | May   | June  |
| Nairobi Lower               | 12.93 | 15.65 | 14.34 | 12.27 | 9.48  | 12.07 | 12.90 | 23.18 | 28.91 | 35.35 | 29.82 |
| Nairobi Middle/Upper        | 7.44  | 9.04  | 8.27  | 10.10 | 10.15 | 9.80  | 9.61  | 12.51 | 14.59 | 17.53 | 16.01 |
| Nairobi Income <sup>1</sup> | 12.04 | 14.56 | 13.34 | 11.92 | 9.60  | 11.71 | 12.38 | 21.56 | 26.67 | 32.54 | 27.65 |
| Rest of Urban Towns         | 10.50 | 12.90 | 11.72 | 11.59 | 11.18 | 11.96 | 11.80 | 22.02 | 26.60 | 30.87 | 30.33 |

<sup>1/</sup> The Nairobi income group combines Nairobi lower and Nairobi middle/upper income groups.  
Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and Central Bank of Kenya

<sup>94</sup> Economic Survey, 2007

<sup>95</sup> Government of Kenya, (2009), 2008 Economic Survey, Government Printers, Nairobi

<sup>96</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit, April 2009

Figure A3.1 Inflation rate trends for Nairobi, January 2007-June 2008

