

A Study on Quality of Life in Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya

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ABSTRACT Sub-Saharan Africa hosts the highest number of urban slum households in the world with an estimated 60 to 70% of urban residents living in slums. Kenya belongs to this region and has large informal settlements with dire socio-economic conditions. This study on the quality of life, in a typical East African slum, is based on fieldwork carried out in Mathare, Nairobi. The research revealed that Mathare residents prioritise sanitation, waste management and access to water, electricity, education and healthcare as the most essential services for adding quality to their lives. However, one of the main conclusions of this research is that although improved service delivery is necessary, it may not be sufficient in satisfying the quality of life requirements of Mathare residents. Other aspects of economics, such as regular employment as well as socio-cultural issues, like freedom from fear and access to communal security, are equally important and policy objectives should pay holistic attention to both the objective living conditions and the subjective life satisfaction indicators of slum dwellers.