



Mazingira



HIC-HLRN
Women, Land and Homes Project
Mazingira Institute with Pamoja Trust, Kenya

**Incidents of infrastructure development in Kenya
that displace people from their habitats**

**Baseline Assessment of Women's Wealth, Wellbeing and Habitat, Including
Potential Losses**

This is a collaborative project of Mazingira Institute (MI), PamojaTrust (PT) and Habitat International Coalition (HIC) on the potential losses (wealth, wellbeing and habitat) occasioned to a sample of households potentially affected by evictions due to the development of the planned A 104 road construction. It is a gender-sensitive study, focusing specifically on women within the households selected. These were purposively selected and analysed in the categories of households of single, married, separated and widowed women. The study includes an assessment of impacts due to any previous instances of displacement for any reason.

The study applies HIC's framework, first tried in Kenya in the aftermath of post-election violence of the year 2008, to infrastructure development-related displacements. This framework examines human rights deprivation in relation to wealth, well-being and habitat. Deprivation, arising from such displacement. By assessing the impact, the model lays the ground for ascertaining redress mechanisms. It also lays the groundwork for further investigation of the impact of customary practices on women's housing and land rights

Key findings

Extensive infrastructural development has characterised Kenya's drive towards realisation of agenda 2030. Despite the good intentions of these projects, the social and economic effects arising from population displacement are less attended to. Such consequences, losses and damages, can be grave for inhabitants of informal settlements already experiencing the pain of economic marginalisation and insufficient livelihood sources, as well as poor living conditions. The disruptive forces of infrastructural displacement can also tear apart social capital significant for low-income populations in terms of their subsistence and resilience.

The study addresses a gap in knowledge, using a human rights framework to assess likely consequences to adult women and members of their households. These include children whose schooling and early childhood development may be affected. It is a baseline survey of potential loss and damage due to the particular planned construction of the A 104 road between the James Gichuru – Waiyaki Way junction to Kinoo in Nairobi.

Using the model developed for assessing impacts of the Post-Election Violence (PEV) in Kenya in 2008, the study provides baseline data on the potential impacts on wealth, welfare and habitat (land and housing) of the women concerned.

The main key finding is the impact of previous losses of access to land and housing in terms of women's well-being. The large majority (81%) of women surveyed had suffered distress as a result of previous moves, sometimes more than once. The incidence was highest for separated and widowed categories. Thus for women, the planned eviction is but one in a series of upheavals affecting their lives. The study will therefore be followed up by a more extensive enquiry into women's housing histories and the link to customary practices.

In terms of wealth, the planned relocation through eviction due to road construction will affect households' assets, income, means of livelihood and schooling. Assets measured include vehicles and valuable documents. A significant number of respondents (76% in the married women category) own vehicles, usually a bicycle or motor-cycle (*boda boda*) and fear loss or damage due to displacement. Most respondents own documents that have both sentimental and material value. These include land title deeds, school and birth certificates. Title deeds are signifiers of wealth and security as well as being used as credit collateral and

thus financial security. The majority of women value their location at the sites surveyed as places of earning a livelihood and view the planned road construction with trepidation. The majority (63%) are self-employed. Apart from threatening livelihoods, relocation may increase dependence on relatives or put strain on any relief services offered by the government or non-state actors. Such services are not found currently in the three settings.

Fear of losing income is rife among the inhabitants especially when the planned construction means relocating their business sites (food hawking, shop keeping, casual jobs, salons etc.). Women's ability to meet their practical needs (food, shelter, clothing) will be undercut by the estimated switching costs (new rents, new uniforms, transportation among others). Fifty-six percent cited a high switching cost of Ksh. 20, 000, three times the average monthly earnings. This excludes the cost of transportation to work or school.

The majority (72%) said they have school-going children within the current locality. Among these, only 39% are willing to incur the school switching costs after displacement. This economic impact is untenable given the low income of the women and the type of livelihood they are engaged in. Implicitly, more than a third of all households will be unable to register their children in school, disrupting valuable education and development for the children.

Wellbeing: The study's capture of women's housing histories, including previous displacement, revealed the shocking response that the large majority of respondents (81%) had experienced distress following previous relocations. Several women wept as they answered the question. The finding applied most to separated women (93%), followed by widows (83%) single women (80%) and somewhat less to married women at 70%. The finding has prompted further investigation of women's housing histories to understand the dynamics, in some cases reviewing the same subjects to get more detail on the circumstances. The link to women's experiences of involuntary relocation or even eviction as a result of customary practices is the major purpose of this follow-up study.

Well-being is also affected by ongoing and continuous disruption of local market stalls in anticipation of the upcoming eviction. It undercuts respondents' livelihoods and access to food. Artificial food shortages are forcing people to walk longer distances and cutting into women's time. Further social losses are incurred in terms of disruptions to associations built on good neighbourliness for in-kind exchange of household needs including borrowing.

Women who have enjoyed the financial and social prestige of being landladies are losing out due to the mass exodus of tenants from houses bordering the roads.

Children's schools, day care structures, play grounds and community recreational spaces are being, or planned to be, disrupted as new slip roads and access roads are done, undercutting the psychosocial wellbeing of the community. Thus switching costs are already being incurred between the school terms. The disruption to low-cost day-care centres affect wellbeing as well as wealth of parents who have to choose between going to work or staying at home to watch over their infants.

Children's leisure needs are difficult and expensive to meet as places are sought, often far away from home. Where physical displacement is already occurring, the women, especially those lacking vehicles, incur additional transportation cost or opt to walk long distances between their homes and workplaces. The physical drain on respondents matches the drain on resources and anxiety.

Such impacts due to the loss of access to land and housing are hardly considered by governments and their development partners when drawing up resettlement plans. This study makes a contribution to remedying this.

Habitat: Road construction means that houses within the road reserve are taken off whether inhabited or not. Those living close by also have to bear with noise from heavy machinery if they cannot move easily. Thus, whether physical displacement occurs or not, there will be some damage to the habitat.

The large majority of households studied were tenants (81%). The level of services they have access to is somewhat consistent with other informal settlements in Nairobi, namely while almost all have electric light (95%) other services are less available. Most (81%) cook with gas and 70 % have a latrine in the compound or house within which they most often live in in a rented room. A significant number (17%) use "flying toilets" as sanitation. This is a term used to describe defecation in wastepaper or plastic bag, then sometimes buried, but most often thrown on a garbage heap. (However, production of plastic bags is now banned in Kenya.)

The road infrastructure construction affects water supply routes accessed by residents. Pipes are either cut off or exposed to pollution by the ongoing works. Sewerage pipes going through the area are affected, even though most residents do not access them, instead using pit latrines. This means that not only does acquisition of water get more difficult, but infection from waterborne diseases may increase. People have to rely on available water sources traded from more distant neighbourhoods, and there are likely to be greater problems and cost seeking healthcare. Importantly, the costs of acquiring water fall on the women who also have to carry or transport it.

The destruction of facilities related to habitat extends to community worship centres, a majority of which are situated by the roadside. Congregations are already gathering in the open or walking long distance to get to their places of worship. Noteworthy are the socio-economic roles played by these worship centres, hence, their destruction undercuts both community cohesion and informal economic exchanges among the congregants.