

FOSTERING INCLUSIVITY AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL SERVICES THROUGH THE HOUSEHOLD ADDRESS INITIATIVE IN KIAMUTISYA SETTLEMENT, NAIROBI

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BACKGROUND

In informal settlements like Kiamutisya (Nairobi, Kenya), where fires, flooding, and disease outbreaks frequently occur, accurately identifying affected households is crucial for rapid and effective response efforts. Cholera outbreaks, for example, are best contained and controlled by swiftly locating affected areas. The absence of a reliable identification system poses significant challenges for Community Health Promoters (CHPs) tasked with maintaining records of affected households.¹ Consequently, during relief operations, there's a risk of aid being distributed inequitably, potentially overlooking those most in need. Routine community health promotion services also require accurate information to enable effective targeting and inclusive coverage.

THE CONTEXT

SDI and Muungano wa wanavijji have leveraged its mapping, profiling, and community-led enumeration processes to provide up-to-date, accurate data of the layout and conditions in the informal settlement to provide local governments with evidence to identify the needs of residents.

Prior to the household numbering and physical address installation, CHPs used temporary markings on doors to identify the number of households within the settlement. However, this method has proven to be unsustainable, as they must repeatedly renumber households each time they conduct an initiative and need to map out the households they serve. The introduction of household addresses in Kiamutisya represents a transformative step towards addressing this issue. By providing a structured method for identifying households, accountability is enhanced and assistance can be targeted precisely where it is needed most. This shift not only improves the efficiency of service delivery but also fosters greater inclusivity and responsiveness to the needs of the community, thereby advancing overall well-being within informal settlements.

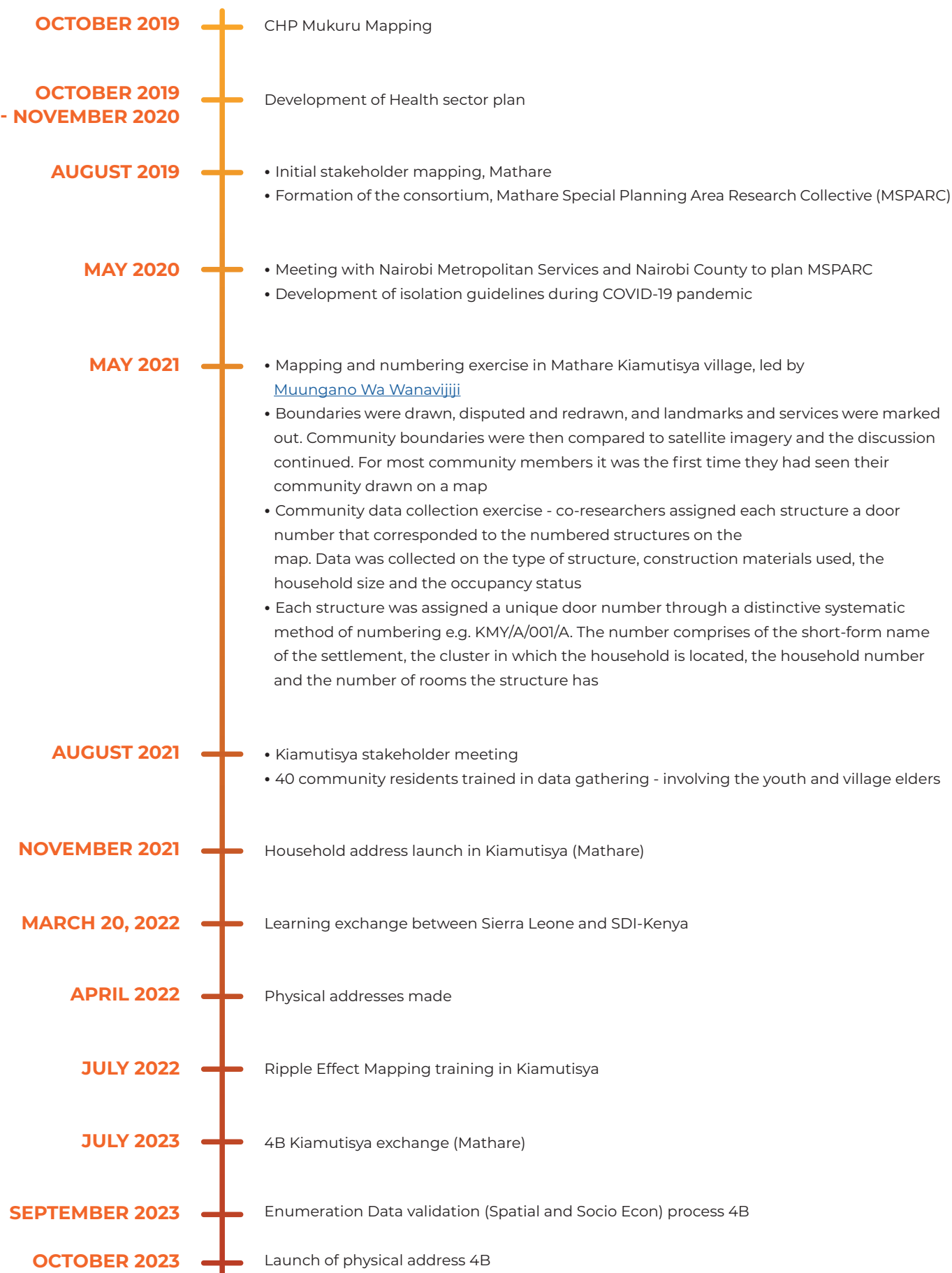


SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS:

- The introduction of household addresses in Kiamutisya village in the Mathare informal settlement near Mlango Kubwa Village, Nairobi has had far-reaching benefits for those living in these settlements.
- This community information is vital for planning and effectively mobilizing resources and services at the grassroots level. It makes the invisible visible, providing a basis for negotiations between the community and local authorities for city-wide initiatives to improve the current settlement conditions.
- Local leaders are using the numbering system to assist the community Chief and local organizations in identifying vulnerable people in the community, such as elderly people and people living with disabilities, to ensure assistance reaches them in terms of food aid and monetary support.
- The household address initiative is subsequently being upscaled to other settlements including the "4B" village, also in the Mathare informal settlement area.



THE STORY OF CHANGE



Extensive community and stakeholder engagement, facilitated with the invaluable assistance of Muungano Wa Wanajiji federation members together with SDI-Kenya, were integral in garnering support and ensuring the successful implementation of the initiative. The federation members, community leaders, residents, and other stakeholders were actively involved in the planning, decision-making, and execution stages. This collaborative effort brought together the various stakeholders in an inclusive way that involved community co-researchers, community members, village elders, and local stakeholders to create a system that accurately reflected the settlement's layout and addressed the needs of its residents. By engaging a diverse range of voices and expertise, the development process ensured that the physical address system was both comprehensive and culturally relevant, thus fostering a sense of ownership and acceptance within the community.

Through the utilization of the ARISE Responsive Fund (a competitive financing structure that provided up to £50000 for community-led development projects), SDI successfully initiated the production of household number plates in collaboration with BuildHer.² This partnership not only facilitated the fabrication and installation of the number plates but also empowered young women within the community with valuable skills in carpentry, joinery and construction.

“BuildHer has reached out to three hundred and ninety-four students who have already graduated, as the majority of them are working in different construction sectors. The partnership between Slum Dwellers International was of great impact not only to us but also to the young girls that we train, as it provided them with employment opportunities when making household physical address plates for Kiamutisya village.”

Esther Waikuru, Head of Women Empowerment & Agency, BuildHer



The Responsive Fund provided the necessary financial resources to kickstart the project, ensuring its timely implementation. By leveraging external partnerships and resources, SDI was able to address the community's need for household identification while simultaneously promoting economic empowerment and skills development among its members. Furthermore, ongoing engagement with focal persons and Community Health Assistants (CHP supervisors) was crucial to ensure the seamless integration of household addresses into the reporting activities of CHPs.

By maintaining continuous dialogue and support, SDI ensured that CHPs effectively incorporated the use of household addresses into their routine activities, thereby enhancing the accuracy and efficiency of healthcare provision within the community. In addition, the disaster response team is also incorporating the new system into their practices.

Collaborative efforts between governments, community stakeholders, and organizations were essential to tailor strategies that effectively integrated address systems into informal settlements. This approach involved comprehensive community engagement and capacity-building initiatives.

Community co-researchers took the lead in data collection, facilitating community discussions, and overseeing the installation of physical addresses. Their expertise and local knowledge were instrumental in ensuring the accuracy and relevance of the system. This built on their membership of Muungano wa wanajiji. The ARISE project provided an opportunity for co-researchers from Sierra Leone to participate in a learning exchange in Kenya. During this exchange, they learned about various processes, from settlement profiling and enumeration to the installation of physical addresses in the community. Specifically, they observed the installation process in Kiamutisya. Co-researchers from the 4B settlement also exchanged insights with those from Kiamutisya, gaining valuable knowledge on how the addresses have enhanced community visibility and tackled challenges, such as engaging reluctant community members. As a result of this learning experience, the system is being replicated and now being implemented in the 4B settlement, with co-researchers leading the process.

Through the **Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach** used in ARISE, significant strides have been made in enhancing the capacity of co-researchers in Kiamutisya. Specifically, co-researchers have undergone training and skills development in communication, including writing blogs and publications. This has not only enabled them to effectively communicate their experiences and insights but has also empowered them to prioritize and articulate their community's needs and concerns. With the co-researchers being at the forefront in engaging different stakeholders,

data collection, analysis, and implementation, they have formed new networks and are at the forefront of driving the Mathare Special Planning Area advocacy to see change on prioritised issues.

Village elders played a vital role in supporting the co-researchers during data collection, providing cultural guidance and mediating conflicts within the community. Their involvement helped to build trust and consensus, ensuring the successful adoption of the physical addresses in Kiamutisya. This collaborative approach highlights the importance of community engagement and local leadership in addressing the unique challenges faced by informal settlements.

Community engagement was crucial in raising awareness among residents, particularly because the household address system represented a new concept, especially within informal settlements like Kiamutisya. This process leveraged the community engagement skills of Muungano Wa Wanajiji and SDI Kenya and involved conducting discussions and informational sessions with community members to familiarize them with the new system and its benefits.

This process fostered a sense of ownership and cooperation among the key stakeholders where community members actively participated in the mapping and were able to tailor the numbering system to the settlement's layout and needs. The initiative faced initial resistance from some community members, but through the support of village elders and community co-researchers, the importance of having a physical address was effectively communicated. Collaborative efforts highlighted the benefits of the system, including improved access to services and greater community visibility. This engagement helped to alleviate hesitancy and increase acceptance within the community, emphasizing the role of local leadership in implementing impactful initiatives in informal settlements.

Several **stakeholder engagement** activities were conducted through ARISE, particularly with focal persons for community health and development, to explore collaboration opportunities and integrate the numbering system into the daily activities of CHPs. These discussions aimed to identify synergies between the numbering system and the work of CHPs, ensuring smooth integration into their reporting and routines. Stakeholders discussed how the numbering system could improve the accuracy and efficiency of CHPs' activities, such as identifying households during health assessments, tracking healthcare interventions, and maintaining records. These engagements helped align objectives and foster collaboration, enabling CHPs to effectively use the numbering system, ultimately improving healthcare delivery and community well-being in Kiamutisya.

“The mapping helped me identify all my households because we have 100 houses each, at times you do not remember the number of some households but because of this, you will find 37B here then you know 37C is nearer instead of going round without finding it. This eased the identification of houses,”

SA CHP from Kiamutisya.

Additionally, a stakeholder forum was held to engage government heads from the urban planning, health, and environmental departments. The forum presented plans for introducing the household address system and discussed how the departments could utilize the system. Through this forum, the health department expressed interest in the physical addresses for use in the informal settlement, showcasing successful buy-in from the government stakeholders.

Some of the far-reaching benefits of this system include:

- **Access to education** - Schools within the settlement have embraced the household numbering system to prioritize admissions for children residing locally, ensuring equitable access to education for all children within the community. This system allows schools to know where the children live, making it easier to follow up on school dropouts and check on vulnerabilities among the families of the students. By having accurate location information, schools can link families to necessary support services, enhancing the overall well-being, educational outcomes, and safety of school-going children in the community.

“I realized that the government through Competency-Based Curriculum is using mapping to enrol children in school by asking for their household addresses. This can be used in our area to support education,”

Kiamutisya, Co-researcher

- **Social Protection** - The Inua Jamii program provides cash transfers to the most vulnerable members of society within the settlements who have not been able to attend school. The household address initiative has enabled the easy identification of vulnerable school-going children. By leveraging the address system, Inua Jamii can more efficiently locate and support these children, ensuring they receive the necessary financial assistance to attend school and improve their educational prospects.
- **Disaster management and response** - The maps produced by the settlement profiling are being used by state and non-state actors, such as the Red Cross, to distribute services in the settlement in an instance of a disaster. Household addresses can now be used in disasters and have been invaluable for both local organizations and community leaders, such as the Chief, where households at risk or

those most affected by disasters can be accounted for and targeted with any response. For example, after the Kiamutisya fire outbreak, which affected 200 households, those needing assistance were easily identified through the physical household addresses and GIS maps produced by the community during the enumeration process. This initiative therefore ensures that relief efforts are directed toward the most vulnerable households, enabling them to recover and rebuild in the aftermath of disasters.

- **Health service delivery** - The physical addresses are used by CHPs to identify households requiring support and enhance accountability in healthcare provision. The system ensures a more targeted and improved service by providing the service providers, such as CHPs, with previously lacking location data. For example, CHPs have used the mapping and household address data to allocate PPE kits, distribute food and essential items, and facilitate reporting and referral to health facilities. This system has significantly improved the efficiency and effectiveness of responses to health needs within the community.
- **Waste collection** - The numbering system has facilitated the empowerment of youth to enhance waste management within the settlement. By using household addresses, various youth groups have been able to efficiently organize and coordinate waste collection operations by identifying and responding to issues of garbage collection, thus improving the health and well-being of the household and reducing pollution of the rivers and the settlement at large.

The initiative has also delivered tangible shifts in levels of community engagement, both with duty bearers and service providers and in terms of the communities' ability to mobilise and advocate for their best interests:

- **Stronger cohesion between local administration, Nairobi City County Government departments of environment, climate change, Department of Health, and the community** - The introduction of the household addresses has significantly enhanced cohesion between the local administration, Nairobi City County Government departments, and the community. The local administration, including CHAs and village elders, actively participates in various community activities facilitated by this system. Communities can now use their household addresses to lobby Nairobi City County Government departments effectively. CHPs use the numbering system in their reporting and refer individuals to hospitals, ensuring streamlined communication with CHAs. Additionally, village elders leverage the numbering system to provide accurate details to the local administration regarding cases of vulnerabilities. This engagement indicates a strengthened relationship between the local administration and communities and a lasting commitment from both



parties to collaborate and address community needs beyond the immediate project objectives, which lays the foundation for a continued relationship beyond ARISE. Maps that were produced during the enumeration process were shared with Kenya Power and Lighting Company who are in charge of electricity distribution and connection, to inform conversations on the possibility of using the household addresses to connect households to electricity. This is yet to be implemented but the commitment and goodwill are still evident. The city authorities' push for the provision of services at the community level has been substantially strengthened by the development of the addresses, which provide the foundation of an efficient system for billing individual households for services provided at a standardized rate.

- **Mobilization and organising within the community** - The community mapping and numbering processes brought community residents together into larger federations to participate, thereby serving as an effective community mobilization and organizing tool. In addition, the initiative created a space for the community to take centre stage in a large-scale community development project, forming a basis to drive forward similar projects in the future. Community engagement throughout served to build trust within the community while addressing concerns and ensuring widespread understanding of the address system, to strengthen support for the initiative within Kiamutisya.

“Mapping brought our community closer together fostering relationships among the residents”

Kiamutisya, Co-researcher

- **Wider impacts** - The community-driven data collection process aims to contribute to the Know Your City global campaign by gathering and consolidating data to support inclusive planning initiatives. This effort is particularly focused on contributing to the Mathare Special Planning Area Research Collective (MSPARC), a research consortium formed in 2019 to facilitate community-centred planning and upgrading in Mathare. The mapping and numbering process demonstrates how the collective power of a community-driven data collection process can enhance slum dweller participation in their development, which will support advocacy by MSPARC. The collected data has been

instrumental in advocating for the Special Planning Area (SPA) agenda, including identifying households at risk of eviction along the riparian zone and informing the social housing agenda.³

REFLECTIONS

The initiative of introducing household addresses in Kiamutisya village, Nairobi, has significantly enhanced the lives of residents by improving health service delivery, disaster management, waste collection and access to education. Schools can now verify student addresses more efficiently, facilitating smoother registrations and reducing record-keeping issues. In emergencies, precise addresses enable faster disaster response, potentially saving lives. Health services benefit as CHPs can track and reach households more effectively, ensuring better, more inclusive healthcare delivery. Waste collection is more systematic, leading to cleaner environments and improved public health. The mapping process for these addresses has strengthened community networks and fostered greater cohesion between residents and service providers, including local administration and Nairobi City County Government departments. This system also supports broader efforts for inclusive urban planning, such as those by the MSPARC, by providing accurate data and enhancing community visibility, ensuring that the needs of informal settlement residents are integrated into urban development initiatives.

ENDNOTES

1. CHPs are trained members of the community who work as a link between the community and formal health facilities. They are selected in a public baraza by the community members to serve them. They visit households to deliver key health messages, identify symptoms of diseases, manage minor ailments like diarrhoea and refer those outside their scope to the health facility.
2. BuildHer is the first and only technical training facility for construction artisans in Kenya that exclusively trains women and actively promotes gender equality in the industry <https://www.buildher.org/>
3. <https://sdinet.org/explore-our-data/>

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FURTHER RESOURCES

Blogs written by the co-researchers:

- ARISE cross-post: Is housing still a major issue in slums (2023) <https://www.ariseconsortium.org/is-housing-still-a-major-issue-in-slums/>
- ARISE cross-post: Dry times in the slums: the struggle for water in informal settlements (2023) <https://www.ariseconsortium.org/dry-times-in-the-slums-the-struggle-for-water-in-informal-settlements/>
- Frontline Heroes: Community Health Volunteers as First Responders in Community Health Care (2023) <https://www.muungano.net/browseblogs/2023/3/10/frontline-heroes-community-health-volunteers-as-first-responders-in-community-health-care-3?rq=ARISE>
- Prioritizing Healthcare Access in Informal Settlements: Celebrating Community Health Volunteers on World Health Day (2023) <https://www.muungano.net/browseblogs/2023/4/16/prioritizing-healthcare-access-in-informal-settlements-celebrating-community-health-volunteers-on-world-health-day?rq=ARISE>
- Empowering Communities through Physical Addressing: A Learning Exchange Success Story in Kenya <https://www.muungano.net/browseblogs/2023/11/16/empowering-communities-through-physical-addressing-a-learning-exchange-success-story-in-kenya>
- Empowering Women Through the Physical Addressing System in Mathare (2023) <https://www.muungano.net/browseblogs/2023/11/22/empowering-women-through-the-physical-addressing-system-in-mathare>
- Empowering Community Health Promoters: A Focus on Mental Health (2023) <https://www.muungano.net/browseblogs/2023/11/23/empowering-community-health-promoters-a-focus-on-mental-health>

Videos:

- Muungano's Profiling Process. Reflections from Mathare's Community Health Promoters: <https://youtu.be/3KOYLqvOibA>
- Co-researchers' perspectives; Korogocho ALIV[H]E Study. (ARISE) | KYC TV: <https://youtu.be/8pxisKLuLjl>
- Mathare 4B and Kiamutisya Exchange: https://youtu.be/FPYXVs_Ncy8
- Mathare 4B Physical address Installation: <https://youtu.be/8pDVOBzQ0A>

The UKRI GCRF Accountability for Informal Urban Equity Hub is a multi-country hub with partners in the UK, Sierra Leone, India, Bangladesh and Kenya which we call ARISE. The Hub works with communities in slums and informal settlements to support processes of accountability related to health. It is funded through the UKRI Collective Fund.

