

Climate Change, Social Stress and Violent Conflict

State of the Art and Research Needs

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Abstract

Enhancing resilience and security of low income communities to climate change in growing cities: an assessment of flood management and planning regimes in Kampala City, Uganda

Paul Isolo Mukwaya, Shuaib Lwasa, Hannington Sengendo, Nur Osman Hirabe

Makerere University, Uganda

The rapid expansion of settlements in cities and worsening economic inequality has shifted the balance of disaster risk from rural to urban areas. People have to survive in a money economy and have to contend everyday with many socio-economic and environmental hazards. Studies about flood hazard risks in Kampala are inconclusive and in the absence of reliable information, it becomes very difficult to evaluate the different impacts of integrated flood management and planning regimes on the livelihoods of low income households. This paper arises out of an ongoing study in the city of Kampala to spatially determine the magnitude and intensity of exposure to flood hazards and how these impact on the livelihoods of communities that occupy low income areas. It also assesses the influence of flood management and planning regimes in enhancing the resilience and security of these low income settlements. Here the actions of various stakeholders and their levels of participation in flood hazard reduction and governance systems are emphasized and the networks that exist amongst these actors explored further. Six low income settlements; Kisenyi, Kivulu, Bwaise, Katwe, Kinawataka and Katanga, were selected for further detailed study. Results indicate that people living in low income areas are exposed to multiple vulnerability stresses coming from a combination of heavy rainfall, severe marginalization together with poor planning systems especially housing, infrastructure and drainage management. Infrastructure systems have reached their full capacity and together with poor maintenance, inadequate income, few assets, inadequate shelters, absence of early warning systems and total absence of safety nets small downpours and low intensity rainfall events have large knock on effects and massive disruption of the lives of the poor and subsequently the whole urban economy. As local communities are not flexible enough to cope with frequent “closures” of their livelihoods, city authorities should not wait for the next disaster to happen. This paper argues that a better understanding of the urban system is needed to improve the design and implementation of urban housing projects. There is a need to recognize the multiple deprivations that contribute to increasing exposure of low income communities to stressful urban environments and integrate these into the general city development strategies.