



Microfinance and Financial Inclusion among Urban Youth in Nairobi Slums: A Policy Perspective

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Abstract

Microfinance interventions have been implemented in various urban slums across Africa to promote financial inclusion among youth. Nairobi's informal settlements offer a unique context for understanding how these programmes can affect young residents' economic participation and social mobility. The study employs qualitative research methods including participant observation and semi-structured interviews. Data collection was conducted through interactions with microfinance service providers and community leaders who work closely with youth recipients of financial assistance. Microfinance programmes have shown a promising trend in improving access to formal banking services among young participants, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. However, the extent of financial inclusion is influenced by factors such as programme design and recipient socio-economic status. While microfinance has demonstrated positive impacts on youth financial literacy and engagement with formal banking systems, there remains a need for tailored support to address specific challenges faced by young recipients in Nairobi's slums. Policymakers should consider implementing microfinance programmes that incorporate community-led initiatives and offer educational resources. Additionally, continuous monitoring and evaluation of these programmes are essential to ensure they meet the evolving needs of urban youth.

Keywords: *African geography, microfinance, financial inclusion, urban studies, youth empowerment, community development, participatory methods*

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