



Urbanization and Informal Settlements in Lesotho: Implications for Social Welfare Systems

Mpho Matsepe^{1,2}, Nokuthula Khumalo¹, Thabo Molefahlo¹, Kgosiwe Letsoho^{1,3}

¹ Department of Advanced Studies, National University of Lesotho

² National University of Lesotho

³ Department of Research, National University of Lesotho

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Correspondence: mmatsepe@hotmail.com

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Author notes

Mpho Matsepe is affiliated with Department of Advanced Studies, National University of Lesotho and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Nokuthula Khumalo is affiliated with Department of Advanced Studies, National University of Lesotho and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Thabo Molefahlo is affiliated with Department of Advanced Studies, National University of Lesotho and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Kgosiwe Letsoho is affiliated with Department of Research, National University of Lesotho and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

Abstract

Urbanization in Lesotho has accelerated rapidly over recent decades, leading to significant changes in settlement patterns and social welfare systems. A qualitative research approach was employed, involving interviews with community leaders and service providers from selected informal settlement areas in Lesotho's capital city. The analysis revealed that approximately 60% of households living in informal settlements rely on social welfare benefits to meet their basic needs, highlighting the critical role these services play in addressing poverty and inequality. While social welfare systems have made some progress, they continue to face significant challenges due to inadequate funding, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and a lack of coordination between different service providers. Recommendations include increasing government investment in social welfare programmes, enhancing collaboration among stakeholders, and implementing more targeted interventions for informal settlement communities.

Keywords: *Lesotho, Urbanization, Settlement Patterns, Informal Areas, Social Services Systems, Community Development, Ethnography*

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