



Urbanization, Informal Settlements, and Social Welfare in Post-Equateur Republic of Congo Cities: An Action Research Study

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Abstract

Urbanization in post-Equateur Republic of Congo cities has accelerated due to rural-to-urban migration and industrial development, leading to a significant increase in informal settlements. These areas often lack basic infrastructure and social services, posing challenges for local authorities. The study employed a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews with community members and quantitative surveys of local authorities. Data were collected from three post-Equateur cities representing different urbanization stages. Informal settlements in these cities account for over 70% of the total population, yet only 40% of residents have access to formal healthcare services. This disparity highlights significant gaps in service provision and underscores the need for targeted interventions. The findings indicate that existing social welfare systems are insufficiently equipped to serve the growing informal settlement populations, necessitating a reevaluation of urban planning policies and resource allocation strategies. Recommendations include enhancing community engagement mechanisms, implementing universal healthcare coverage initiatives, and developing targeted infrastructure projects in informal settlements. Additionally, there is a need for more research on best practices in social welfare delivery within these contexts.

Keywords: *Geographic, Urbanization, Informal Settlements, Social Policy, Community Development, Participatory Research, Spatial Analysis*

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