Author's response to reviews

Title: Descending the Sanitation Ladder in urban Uganda: Evidence from Kampala Slums

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

RE: Final Submission of manuscript titled- “Descending the Sanitation Ladder in Urban Uganda: Evidence from Kampala Slums”

Please receive the above named manuscript by the following authors; Japheth Kwiringira, Peter Atekyereza, Charles Niwagaba and Isabel Guenther.

The paper is based on a qualitative research carried out in the slums of Kampala City Uganda. Kampala city slums have experienced a problem of unsustainable sanitation facilities even after investment in sanitation facilities for the urban poor. The paper unravels various challenges associated with misuse, lack of cleaning and maintenance which renders the available facilities unusable. The study calls for more inclusive and sustainable sanitation interventions for the urban poor.

As the primary author, I am submitting the final revised manuscript as attached for your consideration and possible publication in the Journal of BMC-Public Health after a thorough peer review and revision process.

In the latest and final review by BMC –Public Health; two editorial requests were made;

1. Confirmation that the manuscript conforms to the RATS guidelines on qualitative research; and thereby to confirm that the manuscript adheres of this in the covering letter.

2. Not to upload responses to reviewers as additional files.

The manuscript has been revised to address the first comment by your editorial team (since the second comment is a procedure issue while uploading the revised manuscript).

In the abstract and background sections, the study justification is explicitly stated. The issue under study (the sanitation ladder presented in figure 1), has been linked to the existing knowledge base of empirical research, theory and policy that reviews urbanization and sanitation in slum areas.

The methodology section clearly shows the study design. Each step of the research is exhaustively explained and justified -see page 7. This section clearly describes the setting of the study (see table 1 and page 7 paragraph one). Anonymity and confidentiality are discussed in the methodology section with the process of informed consent reflexively detailed and discussed.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the research committee in the School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS) at Makerere University which considered all technical and ethical issues. Clearance was also obtained from the local leaders in the respective slum zones of Kampala City. Confidentiality, voluntary participation, anonymity and freedom to withdrawal from the study were clearly explained. Verbal consent to participate
in the study was obtained from all study participants. Participants were free to withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable. No persons lacking capacity to consent were enrolled or involved in the study. In addition, study participants’ identifiers were not recorded. From design to reporting, research ethics were upheld.

Study findings have been presented with reference to existing theoretical and empirical literature from similar settings in the developing World and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. The study findings particularly contribute to the understanding of the sanitation challenge in slums. The study strengths and limitations have been explicitly described and discussed; see page 22.

The study delivers new insights on sanitation and a framework for analysis -see figure 2. This framework is situated in complex sociological analysis of slum dynamics and variables such as gender, income and socialization.

We therefore affirm that, the BMC ‘RATS’ guidelines have been adhered to and assured through the numerous cycles of peer review and the revisions effected by the authors until this stage; pending final acceptance.

We look forward to hearing from you soon,

Japheth Kwiringira
Makerere University, Kampala