



KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

Issue No. 3/ September 2025

Let's Make Lucky Summer Safer: What We Found and What We Can Do Together



Let's Make Lucky Summer Safer: What We Found and What We Can Do Together

Prepared by Ojoo Lena Ngesa,

MA year 2, 2024/2025, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Nairobi, under the tutelage of Planner Charles Osengo.

Key Messages

- Lucky Summer Ward faces disaster risks including floods, fires, and sanitation-related health outbreaks.
- Most residents are not adequately prepared for emergencies due to lack of information, coordination, and planning.
- Community cooperation, local leadership, and inclusive participation are key to building resilience.
- Action is needed across short, middle, and long-term timeframes to protect lives and property.

Why This Matters

Lucky Summer Ward is home to thousands of hardworking people families, students, traders, and workers trying to build a better life. But many parts of the ward face dangers that can destroy lives and property in a matter of minutes. During heavy rains, homes flood. Fires start from unsafe electricity connections. Diseases spread when sewage overflows or when garbage blocks drainage. This is not because people do not care but because planning, service delivery, and support are not reaching the grassroots.

This brief shares the findings of a detailed study done with residents in all five zones of Lucky Summer. It explains the dangers we face, why they happen, and what we can do, together, to make our neighbourhood safer and better prepared.

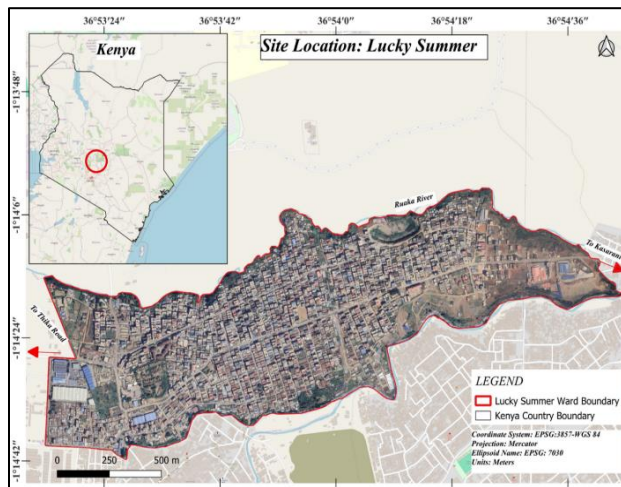
Introduction

Lucky Summer Ward, located in Nairobi County, has witnessed rapid population growth over the last two decades. This growth has often occurred without coordinated planning, resulting in the proliferation of informal housing, encroachment on environmentally sensitive areas, and overstretched public infrastructure. The ward is characterised by a mix of formal, semi-formal, and informal settlements, many of which are built close to riparian zones and lack adequate drainage systems.

As a result, residents are increasingly vulnerable to disasters such as flooding, fire outbreaks, and sanitation-related health crises. These risks are exacerbated by poor waste management, inadequate road access for emergency vehicles, and weak institutional coordination in disaster response. The lack of awareness, absence of community-based disaster structures, and limited inclusion of vulnerable groups such as renters, women, and youth further exacerbate the exposure.

This community brief aims to empower residents and local leaders with practical, action-oriented recommendations to strengthen disaster preparedness and create a safer living environment for all.

LUCKY SUMMER WARD DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY BRIEF



Lucky summer ward location map

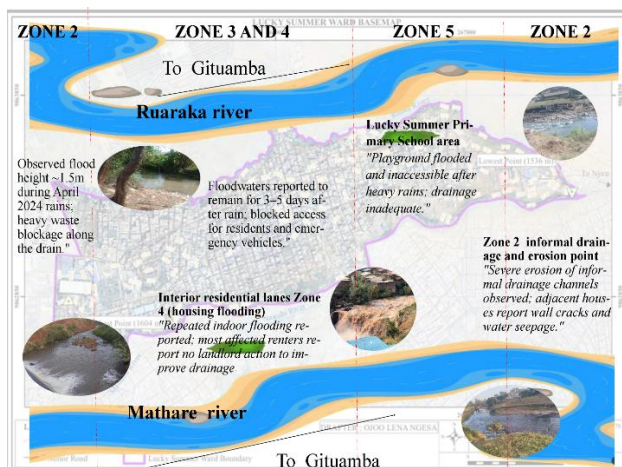
Methodology

The study gathered views from 150 households across five different zones of Lucky Summer Ward. It combined surveys with short interviews to understand residents' experiences with flooding, fire, health risks, and disaster awareness. In addition, group discussions were held with youth, women, renters, and community leaders. Local visits and observations were also used to confirm risk areas like blocked drains and flood-prone paths. These methods ensured the findings reflect real experiences and concerns of the community, of both the structural and social dimensions of disaster risk in Lucky Summer Ward.

Findings

- Flooding is the most common risk. Over 60% of residents reported that their homes or neighbours' homes had flooded during rains. Most flooding happens in areas close to rivers or where the land is flat and drainage is poor.
- Fire is a growing danger. Almost 1 in 3 residents said they had seen or experienced a fire outbreak. Many fires come from illegal electrical connections or cooking in tight, overcrowded spaces.
- Diseases increase after floods. About 1 in 4 residents reported sickness, like diarrhoea and cholera, especially when toilets overflow or garbage piles up during the rainy season.
- People are not prepared. Most residents, around 85%, had never heard of a disaster plan or what to do if a fire or flood happened. Only a few had participated in a safety drill or Barraza to talk about emergencies.
- No disaster team or system exists in Lucky Summer. There is no group of people trained or assigned to handle disasters in the ward. Residents are left to deal with crises on their own.
- People rely on themselves and each other. In most cases, neighbours, churches, youth groups, or school staff are the ones who help when something bad happens. But they are not trained or supported by any formal institution.

LUCKY SUMMER WARD DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMUNITY BRIEF



Lucky summer ward disaster mapping

Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned findings, the study recommends the following activities that are be undertaken by the community to ensure the realization of disaster preparedness.

What Can We Do as a Community

- Raise our voices about risks. If you see blocked drains, open electric wires, or houses built near rivers, report it to the local chief, MCA, or housing committee. Let's not wait for a disaster.
- Clean our spaces together. Organise estate clean-ups, especially before the rainy season. This includes clearing garbage from water paths and fixing leaking pipes.
- Form local safety groups. Neighbourhood safety groups made up of elders, youth, women, church leaders, and landlords can plan how to support each other during emergencies.
- Teach each other what to do. Use barazas, estate meetings, school events, or WhatsApp groups to talk about where to go if there's a flood or fire. Talk to children, house helpers, and neighbours.

- Make our own local safety maps. Each estate or village can draw a simple map showing danger areas (like where it floods), where people can gather if displaced, and which routes to use for escape. This information should be shared widely.

What We Ask from Our Leaders

- Create a disaster team for Lucky Summer. We need a trained and supported disaster response committee in the ward that works with residents and leaders to respond quickly and plan ahead.
- Fix and protect our drainage and rivers. The county should clear blocked drains and stop buildings from being built too close to rivers. Emergency funding should be set aside for seasonal clean-up.
- Hold community drills and awareness days. We ask for regular barazas or safety days in every village where people can learn, practise, and ask questions about what to do in an emergency.
- Include renters and informal tenants. Most people in Lucky Summer rent homes. They also deserve to be heard in meetings, involved in planning, and protected in case of disaster.
- Support our schools, churches, and health centres. These are important safe spaces in times of disaster. Let's train teachers, pastors, and community health volunteers on what to do.
- Engage the youth and women. Many of the people who help others first during disasters are young people or women at

home. They need to be trained, supported, and included in leadership.

Let's Act Together

No one can stop floods or fires alone. But if we speak up, prepare, and support one another, we can reduce the damage they cause. Let's work as neighbours, groups, and leaders to make Lucky Summer a safer and stronger place. Together, we can protect lives, homes, and the future of our community.

Acknowledgement

This plan wouldn't be complete without the guidance of the University of Nairobi Department of Urban and Regional Planning'

Special thanks to the residents of Lucky Summer Ward who participated in the surveys, interviews, and discussions. Gratitude also goes to local leaders, schools, and churches who supported the research process. This work is part of the author's academic contribution to improving urban safety and planning in Nairobi.

References

- Ojoo Lena Ngesa (2025). *Evaluating Risk and Disaster Preparedness in Residential Neighbourhoods of Nairobi: A Case of Lucky Summer Ward*. University of Nairobi.
- UNDRR (2015). *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*.
- Republic of Kenya (2021). *National Disaster Risk Management Policy*.
- Nairobi City County (2015). *County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP)*.