

**Solomon, FJ. Developing an asset estimation methodologies for fire-prone informal settlements: Case study: Masiphumelele. (BSc Honours thesis in Disaster Risk Science, 2006)**

Masiphumelele is an informal settlement located approximately forty kilometres south of Cape Town, characterized by high unemployment and underemployment, with many residents working in the informal sector. It has a high disaster risk profile, experiencing recurrent fire, flood and other weather related disasters. Vulnerability studies in informal settlements have increasingly focused on how the asset base of a household contributes to its vulnerability. Strengthening understanding of the actual losses sustained from recurrent events begins to provide an informed basis for reallocating resources from disaster response and humanitarian assistance, moving towards development efforts that increase the coping capacities of communities, households and individuals. This study focuses on developing an asset estimation methodology for informal settlements by determining whether differences exist in the physical asset portfolios kept by different income generating groups of different dwelling types. It investigates the economic factors contributing to different levels or components of vulnerability by examining different livelihood approaches that people choose or are forced to live with, and how they accumulate and mobilize their assets in order to cope with or adapt to a shock or stress. This study of Masiphumelele identifies the spatially different risks (between the different dwelling types), as well as the different risks faced by different livelihood portfolios.