



Water, Life and Perspectives

Intergenerational dialogue in Mathare, Kenya

giz

BMZ



On behalf of
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and Development







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Foreword

The crisis in Kenya's low-income urban settlements is dramatic. The Greater Nairobi area alone currently has more than four million inhabitants. The number will almost double in the next 30 years. More than 50% of the inhabitants are without access to an acceptable drinking water supply and sanitation. This has negative impacts, especially on families, women and children.

The situation in Mathare, one of the biggest urban slum areas in Nairobi, is even worse. The vicious circle of extreme poverty, inadequate water supply and sanitation, disease, unemployment and poor prospects for young and old, poor infrastructure and lack of security is evident.

In order to cope with these devastating trends, the Kenyan Government has implemented water sector reforms for the last ten years, including among other things developing and strengthening comprehensive pro-poor policies and putting in place new legal and institutional frameworks. Based on these policies and strategies, the Water Sector Reform Programme (WRSP), funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by GIZ under a BMZ commission, focuses on sustainable development through institutional and human capacity development. In close collaboration between water utilities and

the Water Services Trust Fund (WSTF) and German financial cooperation (KfW), a number of water kiosks and public sanitation facilities have been built in low income areas since 2009. Mathare benefited from water kiosks and will benefit in future from public sanitation facilities financed through the WSTF.

This brochure highlights what life is like in Mathare for the younger and older generation expressed through the eyes of the young residents of Mathare. The intergenerational dialogue which took place in October 2013 aimed at strengthening mutual understanding, social integration and future planning, with a focus on water and sanitation for the different population groups in Mathare.

Boys and girls aged between 11-15 acted as 'community researchers', asking older inhabitants about their past and present life in Mathare, rural to urban migration, working conditions, family life, challenges of life and future prospects. There was a special focus on the issues of water and sanitation and the improvements brought by the construction of water kiosks in Mathare. At the heart of the surveys were questions on what has changed for people in this respect, and what politics, business, local authorities and the younger and older inhabitants themselves can do to make changes more effective and sustainable.

The intergenerational dialogue-project was carried out jointly by the GIZ-WSRP Kenya and the 'New Socio-political Perspectives' Group in Eschborn. The striking reports and biographies offer an authentic and reflective look at daily life situations in densely populated low income urban areas like Mathare. This gives the brochure its special quality and message.

Dirk Schaefer
Programme Manager
Water Sector Reform Programme

We would like to thank all those – particularly the young and old residents of Mathare – who contributed to the success of the intergenerational dialogue and to the production of the brochure.

Hendrik Linneweber
Country Director
Kenya

Acknowledgements

As participants in the intergenerational dialogue, we are delighted to present this brochure, and we invite you to read it, ask questions, discuss it further and campaign for improvements in the situation in Mathare with regard to water and everyday life.

We thank all those who contributed to the production of the brochure and the success of this forward-looking project. We also thank teachers and parents who supported the participation of the young reserchers in the project. In particular, we thank the GIZ Water Sector Reform Programme in Kenya for the opportunity to participate in this fascinating intergenerational project. Along with the older residents, we as 'young researchers' have learned much, gaining a new understanding of the problems in our city district and also the significant improvements, particularly in access to water and public toilets. The experience with this project is something that the residents of the city district and we ourselves will never forget. Thank you!

The young participants of the intergenerational dialogue

Background, objectives and methodology of the intergenerational dialogue in Mathare

The intergenerational dialogue in Mathare, Nairobi took place from 25 - 29 October 2013, within the framework of the GIZ Water Sector Reform Programme, Kenya.

The conceptual and organisational steps were prepared by Hans-Heiner Rudolph and his group 'New Socio-Political Perspectives', Doreen Mballo, Technical Advisor in the GIZ-WSRP and with help from the local appraiser, Grace Kwamboka. The following pages describe the background of the approach, goals and expected results, with a detailed look at the methodology, including the possibility of transferring the approach to other projects and regions.

1. The conceptual background

Intergenerational dialogues are strongly allied to participatory approaches in social science, reconstructing socio-cultural 'traces' and reality by means of 'oral history' and individual biographies in communities and families. The approach is also based on concepts of the sociology of knowledge (Berger, Luckmann) and lifeworld (Lebenswelt, see Habermas, Schütz), including family, peer group, school and work. These theories, which have also been applied in development cooperation, look at questions such as how people perceive and interpret their 'world', and how they can change it. An important element in this is bringing together theory, research and mutual understanding with concrete action to improve living conditions. In this process, young people act as community

'researchers', getting into conversation with older people about their personal, social and political life, problems, challenges and opportunities in the city district, interesting biographies from childhood and adolescence to old age, questions about extended families and family support, problems with water, work, school, things which are funny, sad or thought-provoking - in short, about life, the past and the future.

The concept was specifically applied to the scope and requirements of the water sector reform programme, focusing on water and sanitation activities in urban settlements of Nairobi.

2. Objectives, important elements and expected results of the planned project

- Intergenerational dialogues bring old and young together in the interests of social concern for the future
- The planned project in Mathare will strengthen social integration and social participation at the local level, focusing on water and sanitation
- The approach provides access to the community and an opportunity to raise awareness on specific issues in everyday life in their community
- Looking back and looking forward in their biographies and life in Mathare are a central issue of the intergenerational dialogue
- Young and old inhabitants get a different point of view on the environment where they grew up or live today, and develop a shared perspective



- The central question in this context is how can young and old together improve their living conditions, with special emphasis on water and sanitation in Mathare. Much has already been done - what are the most important recommendations?
- Intergenerational dialogue is a participatory approach which combines theory, research, action and mutual understanding
- For the children, acting as young 'researchers' increases their self-esteem and their ability to participate in society
- The youth promoters learn how to use the methodology for future occasions

The intergenerational dialogue is a pilot project in Kenya; and the experience gained here could be transferred to other TC programmes, countries and regions.

3. Methodology

a) Preparation

- Formulation of and agreement on the concept, methodology and expected results.
- Integration of the intergenerational approach into the concrete needs of the water sector programme in Nairobi, and specifically in Mathare.
- Collection of local material.

- Contacting students and teachers in the community to attract boys and girls between 11-14 as participants and 'young researchers'.
- Letters to parents to get their permission.
- Training older students as youth promoters
- Clarifying logistics on site. Locating a suitable editorial office in the city district; in this case, it was the Jowanga Hall in Mathare. The project started there on 25 October, together with the children and young people. We started by preparing the editorial office, where the introduction took place, then the dialogue started with the formation of groups to go through the questionnaire and the methodological steps. The interviews took place over the next four days.

b) Forming the groups

Preparing the young people is important, including both the young people from Mathare and the youth promoters helping to carry out the project. It is crucial here to get the approach across to the young people - the aim is not simply to repeat the standard history mechani-



cally, it has to be rediscovered and told 'from the bottom up'. In this sense, the intergenerational dialogue is also a non-formal educational project – it is fun, it arouses curiosity and it promotes learning between the generations, looking together towards the future.

The young people were given initial questions with photos of Mathare sites for the start of the interviews, divided between three groups with seven or eight participants each. This was the basis for the participants to develop further questions in greater depth. Two areas were common to all the groups – the issue of water and sanitation, and biographies showing life in the city district. These were supplemented by a specific area for each group:

- Group 1: Everyday life in Mathare (e.g. importance of traditions, daily challenges, dealing with sickness), work.
- Group 2: Funny and sad stories (e.g. special events in Mathare, good and bad experiences of the inhabitants), life in Mathare (e.g. special places in Mathare, life in former times).
- Group 3: Youth, growing up and family (e.g. important places and preferred games in

childhood, being young in former times compared to today), rural to urban migration, moving to Mathare (e.g. motives for migration, life in the city compared to life in rural areas)

The children learned how to carry out interviews and practised this in role play. What do they need to pay particular attention to? How do they record results, impressions, personal feelings from the interviews, and how do they ensure authenticity? Not least, how do they write a striking and credible article?

Group formation went beyond the primary topics (toilets, access to water at the water kiosks etc, recommendations for improving living conditions in Mathare): with the children (who came from different schools) talking about their own daily lives, which were frequently far from simple, with families of up to ten siblings, problems like poverty, unemployment (forcing them to help parents earn a living), helping around the house, fetching water, looking after younger siblings etc. There were also reports of fears of violence, rape etc. and the lack of security in Mathare.

c) Community dialogue

In the following two days, the participants in the three groups – some divided into subgroups – went out into parts of Mathare. Mathare is quite large with flooded pathways and no proper streets. The routes from the editorial office to the locations for the interviews were very long and not safe for the girls and boys. Therefore buses were used to transport them from one place to the other. The children were also accompanied by specially-trained youth promoters, and in some cases by Grace and Hans-Heiner.

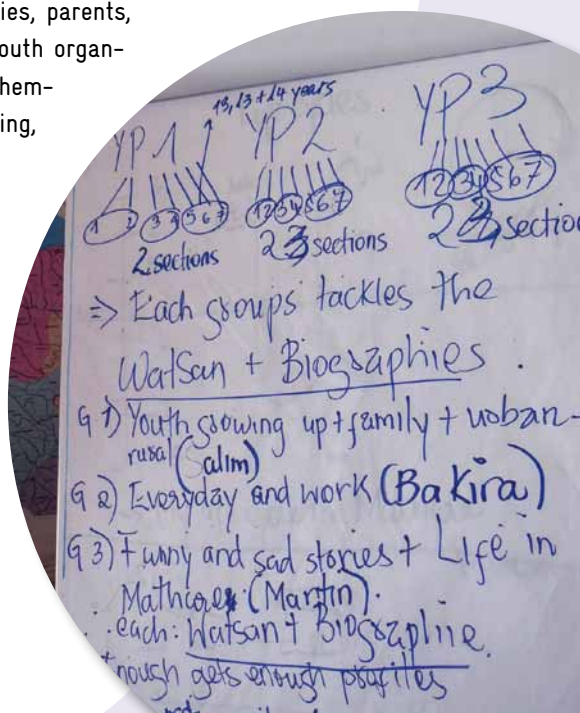
When carrying out the first interviews on the basis of the imaginatively formulated 'discovery questions' and learning about the perspective of the inhabitants of Mathare, the main thing was to stimulate curiosity in discovering 'unknown aspects of things which seem familiar'. This involved not merely quickly collecting facts, but also discovering the specific points of view and interpretations of the residents of Mathare. The support staff acted here as 'secretaries' to the young 'researchers'.

Another step in the discovery process was a 'journey back to childhood'. For this, children and young people were encouraged to develop an interest in the biography of older people. Conversely, the older people then developed an interest in the biography and lifestyles of young people. This also promoted fruitful dialogue between the generations. The following articles are examples of these authentic conversations at community level.

d) Expanding the questions

In the course of the community dialogue, key questions were treated in more depth and compared. Where is there too little information and where is more 'research' and inquiry needed? Do the points of view match, and where are there differences? There was special focus on the question of water and sanitation, and on residents' perception of improvements, especially with regard to the water kiosks.

The collected data was subsequently organised and reviewed again. The young participants then discussed individual aspects in more detail in smaller groups. This put the issue of water and its local history, along with the families and persons involved in the community of Mathare, in a broader social perspective. Questions such as what are the government and the local authorities doing, what are the communities, parents, women, youth organisations themselves doing,





what is different today (childhood, work, school, water, businesses in Mathare, family life, informal sector etc), enriched the research process.

e) Writing and summarising

After this, the notes, sketches, meetings and interviews were turned into personal reports and articles, written up, and supplemented with drawings and photos. This is the stage where the skills of children and young people were put to productive use. Here, for example, the 'life curves'¹ came into being, the mapping of Mathare as seen by children, and some 30-35 shorter and longer articles in these few days of working together.

It is important to record the individual impressions of young people in the community dialogue. This starts by describing the route and the thoughts when young people visited older people and asked them about water, work, life and hope. Very detailed and personal records were essential for producing interesting articles.

f) Publication

Then it was a matter of producing the brochure, with articles by the girls and boys, photos, drawings and an attractive design, all concerned with the issues of 'Water and sanitation, life, perspectives' in one of Africa's poorest urban slums. In all, the process of creating this brochure took some time to complete.

¹ A life curve is a graphic showing important events and experiences – positive or negative – as points along a lifeline, where the points are connected to show the curve.

Stories from Mathare

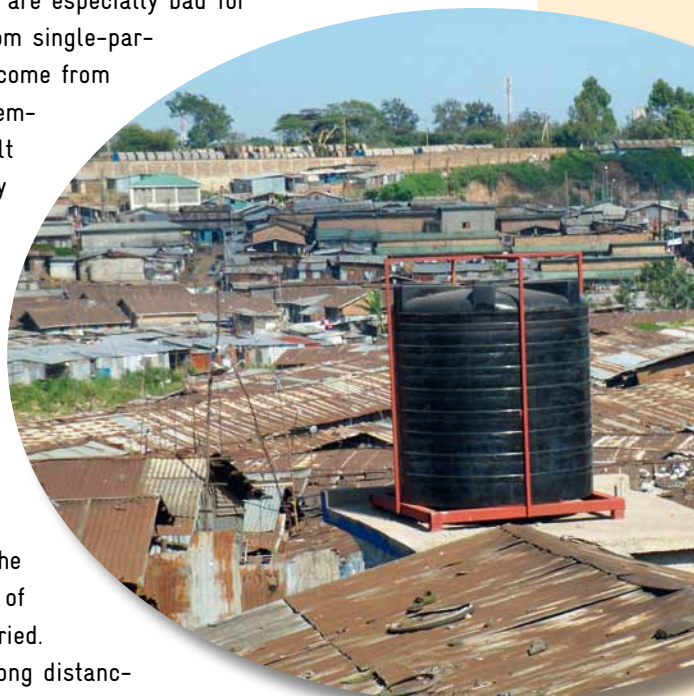
Background

The Mathare slum: overview

Mathare is a large settlement which has about 500,000 inhabitants crammed into tiny wattle shacks in a hilly area covering less than a square mile. It is reported to be the second biggest slum in Kenya after Kibera. Only five kilometers from the Nairobi Central Business District, it is located closely to the city centre.

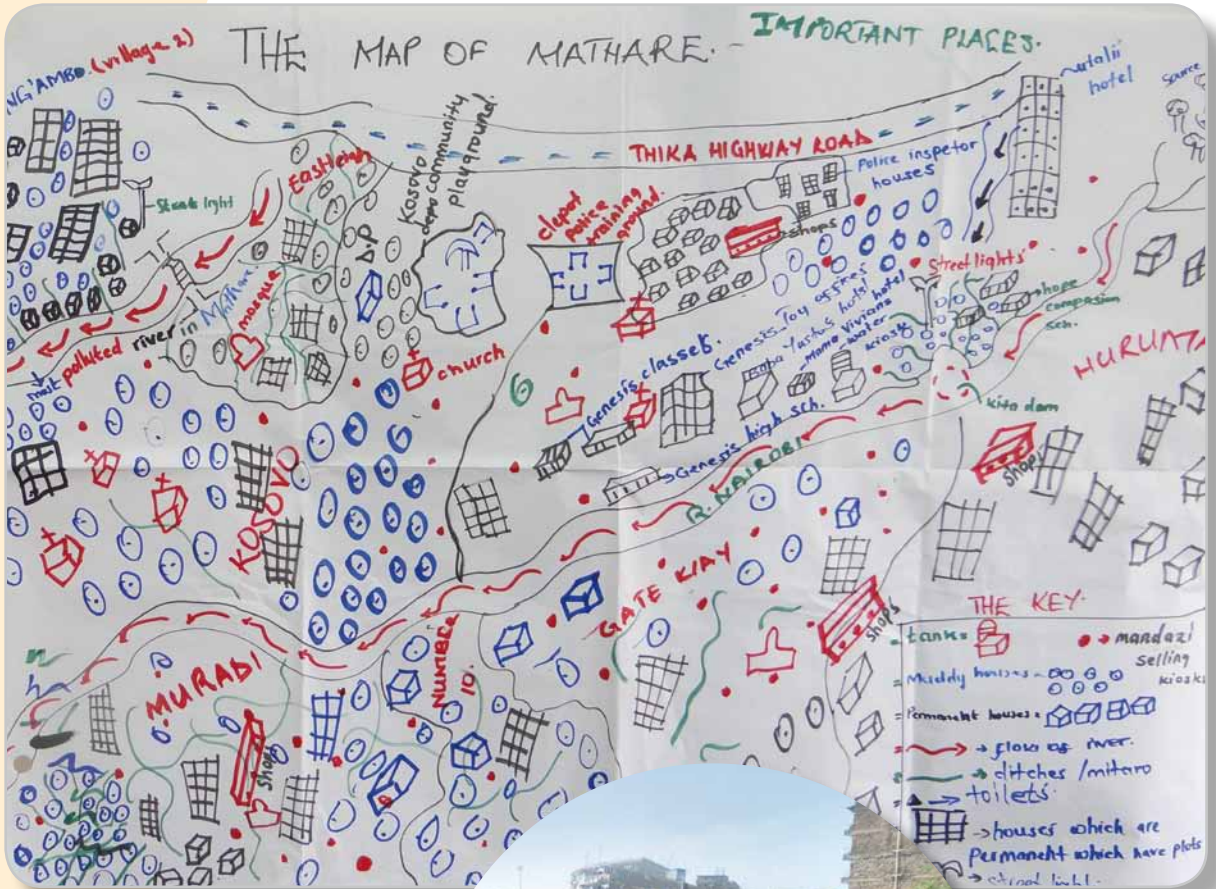
Mathare developed over many years on top of a garbage dump as more and more people settled there. It is densely populated. Most people live in shacks made of corrugated iron (mabati), placed very close together. The population in the slum is growing rapidly, with approximately six to eight children in each household. Living conditions are especially bad for children and young people. Many children come from single-parent homes, lost their parents due to HIV/AIDS, or come from very poor families with sick, underemployed or unemployed parents. It is estimated that 5% of the adult population in the slum are legally employed at any one time. For most it is easier to survive working in the informal economy than through regular employment due to lack of proper education.

Mathare dwellers are faced with many challenges in their daily lives. Mathare has a very high crime rate, with little government security. There are no proper roads which could serve as an escape route in case of fires or any other disasters. Poor sanitation and water scarcity are the major challenges in the Mathare slum. The effects of inadequate supply and sanitation are many and varied. Children and young people who have to walk for long distances to get water have problems getting to school and doing their homework. Women faced with the same need have difficulty keeping a paid job. There is often no guarantee of safety for those (particularly women and girls) fetching water or visiting public sanitation facilities with low standards. Inadequate water supply and sanitation also adversely affect the health of the residents, along with their capability and productivity.



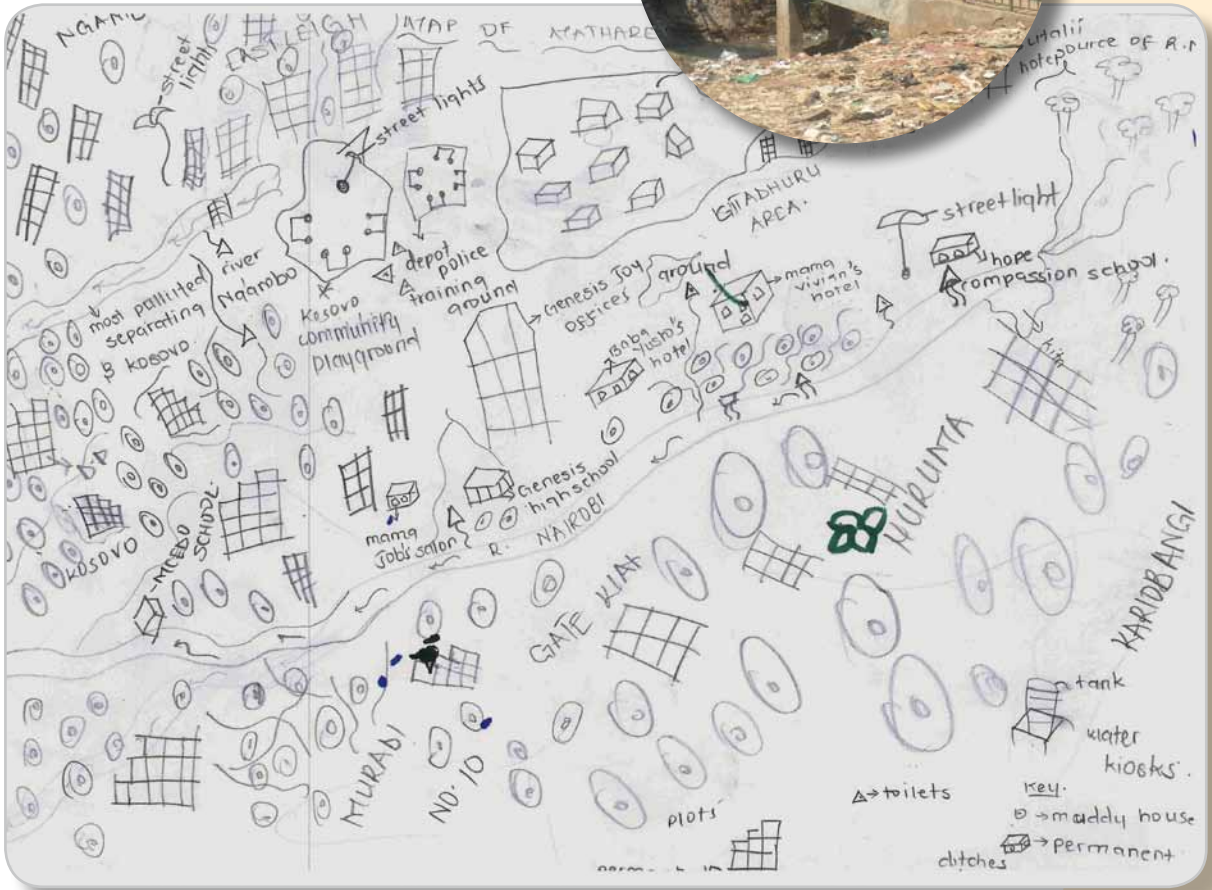
A view of Mathare

The map of Mathare - important places



Mathare River

The main bridge in Mathare which divides Mathare Kosovo and Mathare Village 2



Mathare – the name

THE HISTORY OF MATHARE

(Iam Muthanja, Isaiah Miheso, Maria Mutua)

We met a man whose name was Alfred Kamau. We asked him where the name Mathare came from. He said: 'I think the name Mathare comes from a hospital known as Mathare Mental Hospital which is located in Mathare.'

FINALLY PEACE

(Daniel Mutua, James Osuka)

We met a certain man called James Odanga who explained to us the origin of Mathare. The name comes from a hospital known as 'Mathare Mental Hospital'. He decided to stay in Mathare because there were cheap houses and he wanted to make good use of his little income.

Moving to Mathare, living in Mathare

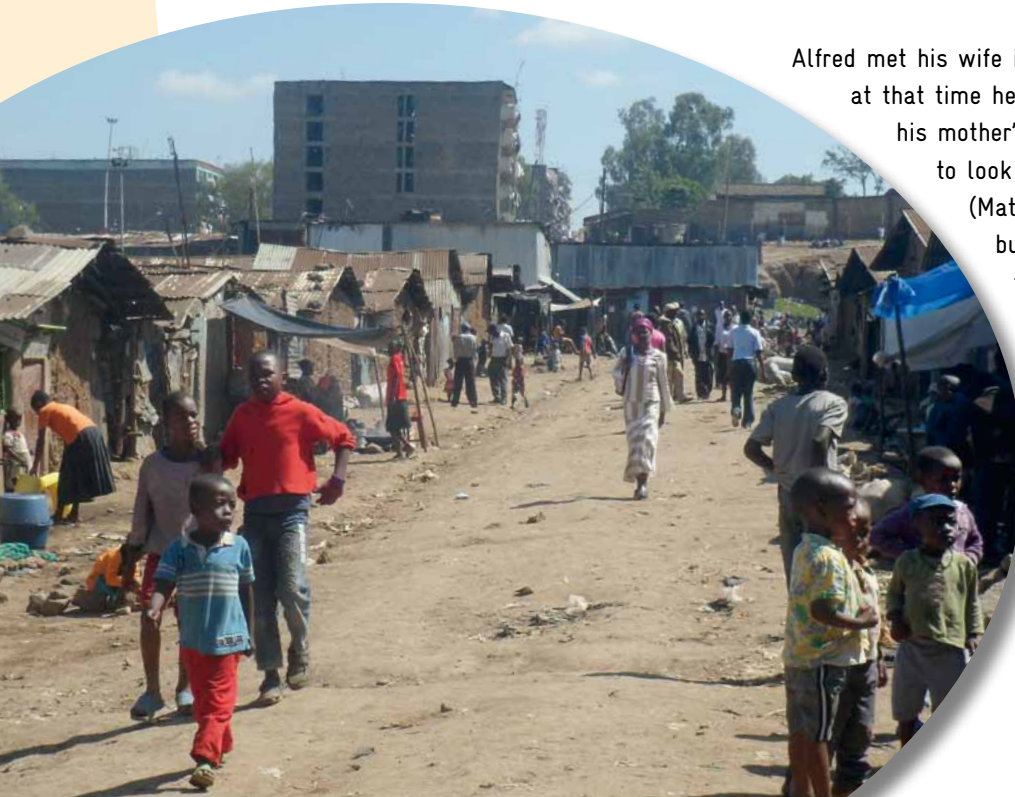
(Iam Muthanja, Maria Mutua)

We asked Alfred Kamau: 'Why do you stay in Mathare?' He told us 'it's because of many financial problems that I had and still have.' He said he has six children; the first one is 42, but is still dependent on him and cannot provide the basic needs for his family.

Alfred met his wife in a rural area, but at that time he was still living at his mother's house. He decided to look for work in Nairobi (Mathare). He opened a business as a carpenter at Mathare and he is still working.



Maria Mutua



Biashara Street:
One of the main
streets in Mathare

THE HISTORY OF MATHARE'S DEVELOPMENT

(Abdalla Mustapha, Joseph Odungu)

We met two people who gave us a brief description of how Mathare came to be. The first one was Abdalla who is 80 years old.

He said that Mathare was a quarry place where they mined stones. It was sparsely populated with many forested areas. The old man told us that the land was owned by the government. After some time, people migrated to Mathare and started building temporary huts. Then rich people saw that the area was good and stole the land. That is when land started being individually owned. Instead of constructing proper housing structures, they constructed small semi-permanent metal sheet rooms for rent to families. He told us the people fetched clean water from a nearby well. He said that Mathare has developed socially and economically and that life in the past was different from today.

COMMENT

Mathare is an old place with a rich history.



Joseph Odungu

FREEDOM IS THE BEST EXPERIENCE IN MATHARE

(Jesicah Mutindi, Miriam Njeri)

When interviewing in Mathare slums we met a lady: Her name was Janet Muia and she is 33 years old. Her rural home is Makueni County. She is married and has children.

She was a cheerful lady who gave us the names of her children. Jesica Mutindi is the first born, Erick Aluo the second and Moses Musyimi is the last. The lady told us that she came to Mathare to earn money, because in the rural areas there were no job opportunities. When she came here to Mathare she was at least able to make an income.

One of the things she told us was lacking in rural areas was water; the shortage of water was due to the lack of rain in Makueni. This is because Makueni County is quite a dry area and the rainy seasons are not long enough for the residents living there. She has opened a business selling shoes, buckets and basins, and this has improved her and her family's health. The woman also told us that one of the best things that has happened in Mathare is that she has freedom and well being. She has the freedom to express her views and be who she wants to be. The woman had a very kind heart and looked like a good and faithful woman. We were very happy to meet her.



Miriam Njeri



COMPARING RURAL WITH URBAN LIFE

(Stephen Asembo, Geoffrey Otunga, Lavenda Atieno)

We met a woman whose name was Mary Wanjiku. She was born in Ruaraka. There was an outbreak of fire which led to the destruction of their house in Ruaraka. She then moved to Mathare. We also find out that since she moved to Mathare she has never gone back to her rural area.

There was another old woman who was about 100. She stressed that there are some challenges that they have faced in Mathare. These are:

- Inadequate water
- Lack of good housing
- Outbreaks of disease
 - Fire outbreaks



Stephen Asembo

She also mentioned that due to outbreaks of disease, she falls sick frequently. She said 'We have nowhere to go; we just stay here in Mathare until we die. After we die we will be buried in Langata Cemetery.'

We also met another woman whose name was Wanjiru. She was 56 years old. She said that life in Nairobi is very expensive compared to that in the rural areas. 'In Nairobi,' she said, 'we spend a lot of money, while in rural areas you don't need to purchase many things because you have a farm where you can grow vegetables for your food.' This woman had a son of 12 who was in Standard 3 (Primary School). Wanjiru explained that she came to Mathare from a rural area because she wanted a better school and life for her son.

We also went on and found out that many people feel that the schools in the cities are better than the ones in rural ones.

COMMENTS

Stephen: I would like the government to recognize those without homes and provide them with assistance.

Geoffrey: It is good to help those orphans without food, water and provide training for them.

Water and sanitation – improvements in living conditions

Demography, statistics and water

Africa is the continent with the world's fastest rate of urbanisation. High fertility rates and rural-urban migration are leading to an average urban population growth of 5% per year.² Between 2011 and 2050, the total urban population is expected to triple from 400 million to 1.2 billion, and by 2035 it is expected that over 50% of the population will live in urban areas. In Kenya, some 250,000 people every year 'are moving to the cities and formerly rural areas are becoming increasingly urban'.

In addition to rapid urbanisation, the population density in low-income areas is growing. Many settlements, both informal low-income settlements and planned settlements, are now taking on the character of slums. In Kenya, the population in slum areas now exceeds 7.9 million and will almost double in the next 15 years.³

Physical proximity to social and infrastructure services in cities does not guarantee actual access or affordability for slum dwellers. Basic services with controlled minimum standards do not reach the majority of the urban poor. An estimated 60% of the population in greater Nairobi live in slums with limited or no access to basic infrastructure services (access to sanitation 24%, access to water 36%).

However Kenya's (urban) population growth also offers chances, because urban agglomeration is essential for achieving economic development. Under this premise, Kenya can benefit from a demographic dividend. As fertility declines and Kenyans live longer, there will be a dramatic improvement in the dependency ratio. Water supply and sanitation improvements contribute in two ways to the likelihood of a demographic dividend:



A water kiosk in Mathare

² Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (2013): The growing urban crisis in Africa. Water Supply, Sanitation and Demographic Challenges – the Kenyan Case.

³ See Maji Data, Kenyan online water and sanitation database on urban low income areas (www.majidata.go.ke)

1. Improved water and sanitation produce a healthier and therefore more productive population, which is the basis for economic growth.
2. Through improved water and sanitation, the population gains time for education and work, which contribute to demographic development in various ways.

Improved water supply and sanitation with a strong focus on the urban poor therefore contribute not only to health, but also to economic growth, poverty reduction and security.

Water and sanitation – challenges and positive changes

The importance of a good water supply and sanitation is made clear in the following vivid reports, which take us behind the scenes to look at aspects of daily life which are so rarely revealed in numbers, data and statistics.

Daily life in Mathare



Access to water and sanitation is a factor in success, and a common element in the biographies of Mathare's inhabitants. However, their daily lives still involve major challenges.

GOOD AND BAD THINGS IN THE PAST AND TODAY

Life in the past: Water and toilets

(Daniel Mutua, James Osuka, Isaia Miheso)

We met with a woman whose name was Ruth Wanjiru. She explained to us how life in the past was like. She has lived in Mathare since 1983 because the houses are cheap. She has ten children. She met her husband in Mathare, who later died in a fire outbreak. She also said that there was no shortage of water in the past. City Council toilets were paid for by the government.

Sometimes houses in Mathare burn because of lack of water. She told us that sanitation in the past was good, not like today, because of the population. Now there are only two public toilets in their area in Kosovo, Mathare. She added that although there are water kiosks she doesn't get enough water for her daily needs because nowadays, buying water is expensive.

She said that important events in her life were the formation of C.H.C (Committee Health Community) and C.H.W (Committee Health Workers), which serve an important role in the provision of health, water and sanitation in Mathare.

One positive thing about Mathare now is that there are more schools which cater for the large population.



Solid waste problems faced by residents

COMMENTS

Diseases have increased because nowadays Mathare is dirty, unlike the past.

The government and the residents of Mathare should do everything possible to stop this hazardous situation.

Water is life; sanitation is dignity

(Abdalla Mustapha, Verian Manuni, Lavenda Atieno & Stephen Asembo)

A brief history of the struggle for water and sanitation through the eyes of Anna.



Dirty stream flowing behind the houses in Mathare

We met a woman in Mathare named Anna Muthoni. She told us that she was born in 1972 in Mathare. Major problems facing Mathare some years ago were water and sanitation. She said that for them, getting water was a struggle. They had to walk many kilometres from their homes to go and look for water.

She emphasised that although the Nairobi Water has provided them with some water kiosks, they still have to struggle to get water since the kiosks are few and can't serve everyone in Mathare.

This means when there is no water, you have to walk many kilometers and wait in long queues. Sometimes the sun is really hot and you have to wait a long time until you are able to get water. You have to wait until you get to the head of the queue.

To fetch water, one requires a jerrycan which of 20 litres which costs 200 Kenya Shillings (or EUR 2). Transport is a very difficult challenge because they have to carry the jerrycans on their back for that long distance. She told us that carrying jerrycans on their back makes women's backs bend when they are old.

She explained that due to inadequate water, most of the toilets are dirty leading to outbreaks of diseases. Clean water means life and sanitation means dignity.

COMMENTS

Stephen: I feel that if people would take a keen interest in sanitation in Mathare, it could be an orderly place. Remember, water is life, sanitation is dignity.

Abdalla: I thank God because he has protected Mathare although there is no water.

Verian: I feel that the government should build more toilets so that the people can go to toilets that are close by.

WORK AND THE IMPACT OF WATER KIOSKS

Saved by the birth of the water kiosk (Kevin Omondi, Solomon Garweya)

We met a man called Victor Otieno who is 23 years old, born in Mathare in 1990. He told us a story about water kiosks in Mathare. The water kiosks were constructed by the Nairobi Water Company last year, and he said the kiosks have helped the community in many ways. These include providing water for drinking, bathing, washing, and cooking.

His job is to work in one of the water kiosks. Normally an operator is not allowed to work in more than one water kiosk. These were only made to help and serve everybody in the whole community. He also explained the water kiosks have benefited him in many ways. For example, he mainly sells water to feed his family and for use at home.

We also met a woman called Anne Njeri who told us about water kiosks and the benefits she gets from them. She was born in Mathare in 1967 and is now 47. She told us that the water company constructed the water kiosks for them for free.

She explained that she is a widow and she was hired as a water operator because her husband died in a fire in 1986. She has three children; one of them was married in 1992.

She said that since the water kiosks were built, her life has changed, and now she is living a more financially stable life because the water kiosks have benefited her in many ways. These include selling water to earn an income.

She said that before the water was brought to the community, the journey to fetch it was tiresome and there was a lot of uncertainty regarding the quality of water being provided by some of the informal water providers. But today she can get water easily

COMMENTS

Kelvin Omondi: The water company should increase the number of water kiosks in Mathare since there are not enough water kiosks to serve everybody in the whole community, due to the high population density in Mathare.



Kelvin Omondi



Solomon Garweya

Water brings joy

(Daniel Mutua, James Osuka)

We met a man called Nicholas Kabucha who is a water operator. He has lived in Mathare for 15 years and has five children. He decided to stay in Mathare because there were cheap houses that he could afford. He had difficulties in the beginning operating a water kiosk but as days went by he managed to cope with the situation. The water kiosk has been there for approximately five years. It helps him and hundreds of people in meeting their daily water needs.

He explained that the job is good but has lots of challenges which are not easy. His children go to school, and besides selling water, he is also a mechanic. He sells water on Saturdays and Sundays and goes to work as a mechanic from Monday to Friday. He said that he does not wish to leave Mathare because it is his workplace and home.

Nowadays the water kiosk does not make him a lot of money because water kiosks have started increasing. He mostly relies on his job as a mechanic.

COMMENTS

Water is important in our lives.

Water brings joy.

Water is life.

Water kiosk operators

(Latifa Wangui, Fredrick Otieno)

As young researchers, we were interested in knowing more about places and the different people who earn their living in Mathare. On this particular day, our main purpose was to learn about the Mathare water kiosks. We met a friendly old man called Stephen Mbugua. He had been selling water for the past three years. He had not gone to school and for him selling water was a job that he was able to do without qualifications. Although he had many challenges working as an operator, he never wanted to leave the job, because it is difficult to get another job. The water kiosks are normally identified



Fredrick Otieno



with numbers and are run by groups. His group was not the only group, there were other registered community based organisations that worked in water kiosks. The group that was running the water kiosk is called the Mathare oversight committee.

Stephen Mbugua also said that the water kiosks were constructed in 2010 through funding from the Water Services Trust Fund. The challenges that Stephen and the group faced are that the water in the kiosks is rationed and is only available a couple of hours a day. Demand is high.

The benefit that Stephen sees is that the water kiosk enables him to pay bills and also save for the future. In addition, the water kiosks provide clean water for the Mathare residents, and they are sure of the quality of the water that is provided by the water kiosks.

Stephen also said that they not only sell water, the water kiosk also had a small shop where they sell sweets, bread and milk. Through the money that they earn from the water kiosks, they were also able to attend computer classes together with some youths from Mathare. This increased their skills and also kept them busy. We clearly saw that this was a good thing that the group was doing for the youth.

COMMENTS

The water kiosks are not only used by the community to provide water but also provide a platform to run a small business

The salaries they earn from selling water enable them to pay their bills and also save money

The group running the water kiosks also works together to help the youth in Mathare



Public sanitation facilities in Mathare



Young boy fetching water

IMPACTS OF BETTER WATER PROVISION FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES

“This makes me clean and keeps me healthy”

A woman: I thank the water company very much for putting up the water kiosks in our slum. Were it not for them, I could be suffering now. Before, I used to walk miles and miles to fetch water, and the water I used to fetch was very dirty, but then I had no other alternative because I needed water for different duties at home, for example washing clothes, cooking and also cleaning the compound.

The fetching points were very far away so I could not fetch a lot of water like I do now. The water kiosks have reduced the distance for me so I can get water easily. This makes me clean and keeps me healthy.

Water from the kiosks is clean, unlike the water I used to fetch, which was contaminated and always made my family sick from diarrhoea. Water-borne diseases have reduced because the water provided from the kiosk is clean.

“Now I have time to play and do my homework”

A girl: Water kiosks have made it easy for me because I can run in the morning and fetch water, and wash myself, and I am not late for school. Before, I never used to wash myself in the morning before I went to school because water was only fetched for food since it was a rare commodity and we used to go and fetch it from very far away. Now I have more time to play and do my homework.

I don't boil water for drinking in our home because the water is clean and safe for drinking and I have never had an upset stomach.

Everyday life & biographies

The presentations in the interviews make no claim to be exhaustive, but rather offer snapshots of the everyday lives of people in Mathare. The result is a fascinating montage depicting the experiences, impressions and feelings of younger and older inhabitants and family members, seniors, women and children, showing the challenges they face in their daily struggle to survive, their problems – and also their hopes and their achievements.

Community activities

THE FOUNDATION OF MATHARE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE (Solomon Garweya)

As young researchers we met a man at the community centre whose name was Peter Kamande. He told us that he is 40 years old. After talking with our promoter, he agreed to give us a brief history of the organisation. Peter told us the community centre was founded by Sammy Iregi in 2001.

Mathare Community
Resource Centre



Sammy Iregi was a very bright boy but could not afford school fees, so he had dropped out of school after class 8. He then got into bad company and criminal activities within Mathare. He ran away from home and became a street urchin.

IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMUNITY CENTRE:

- It unites young people
- It also creates awareness of drug abuse
- It is also a space for counselling

There was a time he was even caught and imprisoned for eight months. However, after prison, he realised that life is more than petty crime. He decided to start the Mathare Community Resource Centre to enable Mathare youth to meet, exchange ideas and encourage each other. The aims, objectives and mission of the centre were to impart organisational skills

to young people so that they could make their own fruitful and meaningful decisions in life.

Mathare Community Resource Centre now has over 100 youth members who meet on a regular basis.

Collecting water to
water plants



WOMEN'S HALL

(Jessica Mutindi)

While interviewing in Mathare, we came across a certain group of women who were busy fetching water for their plants. One of the women came to speak to us. Her name was Jecinta Wanjiku and she was 42 years old. The lady told us that in that area there was no women's hall and so women had no place to meet. The lack of the hall caused a lot of problems, e.g. quarrels etc.

However a hall was then donated to the women and now they are able to meet together, discuss parenthood, their children and life in general. There is now a feeling of community and a sense of belonging among the women. For example due to lack of space, the women learned to grow food crops such as kale in sacks to save space which is known as vertical gardening.



Growing kale in sacks



Watering the kale

Work and unemployment

SHORTAGE OF WORK

(Abdalla Mustafa and Kevin Omondi)

We had the opportunity to meet a lady called Emmaculate Wangare Musili. She was born in 1966 in Mathare County and she is 47 years old and works in a salon. She said that in the past, most people did not pay taxes. She told us that in Mathare many people are jobless due to the lack of opportunities. In Mathare, you even find people who beg for food. The few jobs that exist are menial and do not provide a good sustainable income.

Emmaculate told us that she faces many challenges at her salon. Sometimes there is no electricity, so customers do not come to the salon.

We also met an old woman called Irene Mutethia. She told us she has lived in Mathare for 65 years. She was born in 1948. She mentioned that she mainly sells porridge and rice to earn a living. She told us about with us some of the challenges she has faced since she started her business in 1992. Her main challenge is that sometimes when she cooks and there are no customers, her food goes bad and she has to throw it away.

Irene said most people do not have jobs and they try to look for jobs as housemaids and gardeners in the rich neighbourhoods of Nairobi. She talked about some of the things that used to happen in the past and are not present in our daily life. For example girls used to suffer from female genital mutilation, and now this has been abolished in Kenya.



Abdalla Mustafa



Cooking on the street in Mathare

LACK OF WORK IN MATHARE

Lydia Ndula is a woman we met who had one child and is still young.

She had always planned to be an air hostess, but due to lack of money and education she was not able to achieve this goal. Many other young people in Mathare have been unable to achieve their goals and dreams due to lack of money and opportunities. As a consequence, many people get into bad company, leading to abuse and misuse of drugs, e.g. smoking, drinking, chewing miraa (khat). People also steal to get money to buy drugs. Drug addiction is a huge problem among the youth in Mathare.

There are some youth groups that have been formed in Mathare that try to discourage the youth from getting into drugs. Many youths do not know the repercussions of drug use and that it can completely destroy their lives.

COMMENTS

KELVIN OMONDI: The government should at least help by creating jobs for those who are jobless and assist the widows in Mathare County.

ABDALLA MUSTAFA: I will try my best to work hard so that I can get away from the problems facing Mathare. Education is the key to a prosperous life.



Children of Mathare

Sickness and disability in Mathare

BEING SICK AND POOR

(Tracy Auma , Ruth Kerubo)

We met Julius Ojwang, a cobbler, who is 40 and was born in 1973. He has lived in Mathare for 20 years. However, his family still lives in the rural area. When people are sick they mostly go to cheap hospitals like the Blue House and Baraka Hospital. Blue House Hospital even treats its patients for free.

We also met Habidah who was 27, born in 1986. She lives alone in Mathare and has no husband or children. She mentioned that sometimes people in Mathare use traditional herbs instead of buying medicine from the chemist because it is too expensive. Traditional herbs are normally used in rural areas, but there are also traditional medicine men who live in Mathare and provide services to those living in Mathare. Other hospitals in Mathare are Kiambu Hospital and St. Teresa, although they are more expensive.



Ruth Kerubo

TRADITIONAL HEALING PRACTICES

(Tracy Auma, Ruth Kerubo)

As youth researchers, we met a man called Naftali Njoroge. He told us that when people are sick, they either go the traditional medicine men or buy over the counter painkillers at the chemist. It is very unfortunate that they are never diagnosed by the doctor. They only try to go to the doctor if they worsen. Sometimes however, it is too late.

COMMENT

It is really sad to hear that people rely on traditional medicine men instead of doctors who are able to diagnose and treat the disease. However, this can also be attributed to the fact that medicine and treatment in hospitals are too expensive for the people living in low income areas. Affordable health centres are required so that people have access to health care.

A disabled lady
in Mathare



INCLUSION – MUCH TO BE DONE

(Ruth Kerubo, Tracy Auma)

As we were out researching, we met a man known as Jason who was 22. He has lived in Mathare for twelve years. He talked to us about the physically and mentally handicapped. He said that a majority of the physically disabled have families, but they are still isolated.

Most have turned to activities like begging and shoe making. Those without families have to eat from dustbins or get help from good Samaritans. The government has tried to help the physically handicapped with special equipment, but other citizens rarely help them.

In addition, it is also very difficult for people with disabilities to access sanitation. Most of the toilets that are available are pit latrines which require the user to squat. However, for people confined to wheelchairs, squatting is impossible and they need to sit. This makes it very difficult for them to use pit latrines.

COMMENT

There is still much to be done with regard to inclusion. It is sad that people with disabilities are unable to access basic services such as sanitation. The infrastructure needs to be remodelled, and adapted to the needs of handicapped individuals.



Inaccessible pit latrines in Mathare

HIV/AIDS

PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN MATHARE

(Geofrey, Maria Mutua)

As young researchers, we met a man who was born in Suba County in 1973. He came to Mathare in 1986 to look for a job to cater for his family members.

He later told us that for a long time in the 80's, many people used to hear the words HIV/AIDS but did not know what it was. He told us that he first heard of HIV/AIDS in Mathare in 1986. He also explained to us the ways of contracting HIV

1. Through blood, from mother to child.
2. Through unprotected sexual intercourse
3. Through sharing sharp objects such as needles

He also mentioned to us the impact that HIV/AIDS has on a family.

1. If a father is a provider in a family and falls ill, he is unable to provide food for his children, which leads to school dropouts.
2. People with HIV/AIDS are normally weak and require a balanced diet, which is unaffordable for those living in Mathare
3. Sometimes you find if the father has got HIV/AIDS, his children will not get other children to play with them. The children will also be unhappy because people are talking about their father and mother. Children will not be able to play happily in society. People with HIV/AIDS suffer from the stigma and are discriminated against.
4. Medicine is expensive.

COMMENTS

Geofrey: People with HIV/AIDS should not be discriminated against.

It is not good for people living with HIV/AIDS to stay by themselves. They need the community to assist them with their day-to-day activities

It is not good to refuse to talk to people living with HIV/AIDS.

HOW PEOPLE WITH HIV IN MATHARE ARE TREATED

(Stephen Asembo, Lavenda Atieno)

We met a certain man called John, he was 35. He told us that in Mathare, people get HIV in different ways. Prostitution is a big problem in Mathare. Drug addiction also increases HIV infections because a lot of the youth share the needles.

These people with HIV/AIDS feel they are rejected by other people and this may even lead to suicide. There are also many people who don't like being tested because they are afraid of knowing their status. Others are tested and confirmed positive but they don't accept the results and try to continue living without seeking appropriate treatment.

There was also another man who said that there are people who treat HIV-infected people with love and care.

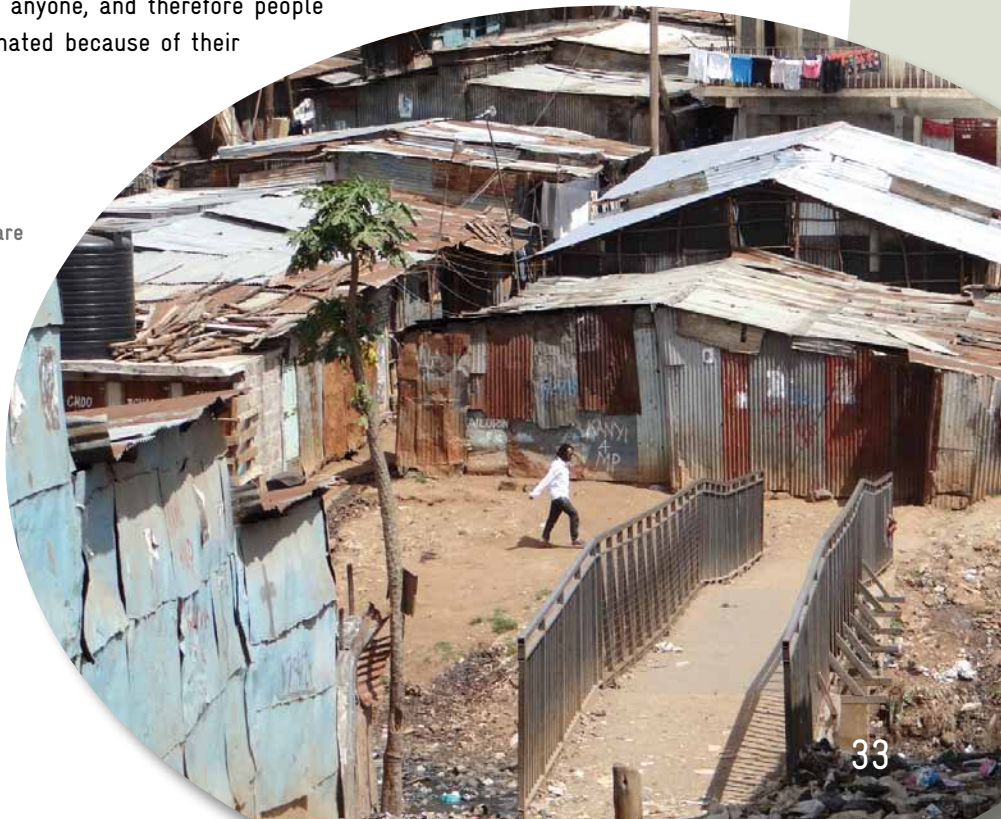
We met Alex Mwaura who said that he always shows care and love to those with HIV/AIDS because he knows very well that getting infected can happen to anyone, and therefore people should not be discriminated because of their status.

COMMENTS

Stephen: I feel that people with HIV/AIDS should not be rejected by the families they should be loved and taken care of.

Lavenda: It's good to know your HIV status so that you are able to take care of yourself and get the treatment that you need.

A bridge connecting Mathare



Family life

EFFECTS OF EXTENDED FAMILY IN MATHARE IN THE PAST AND NOW (Verian Manumi)

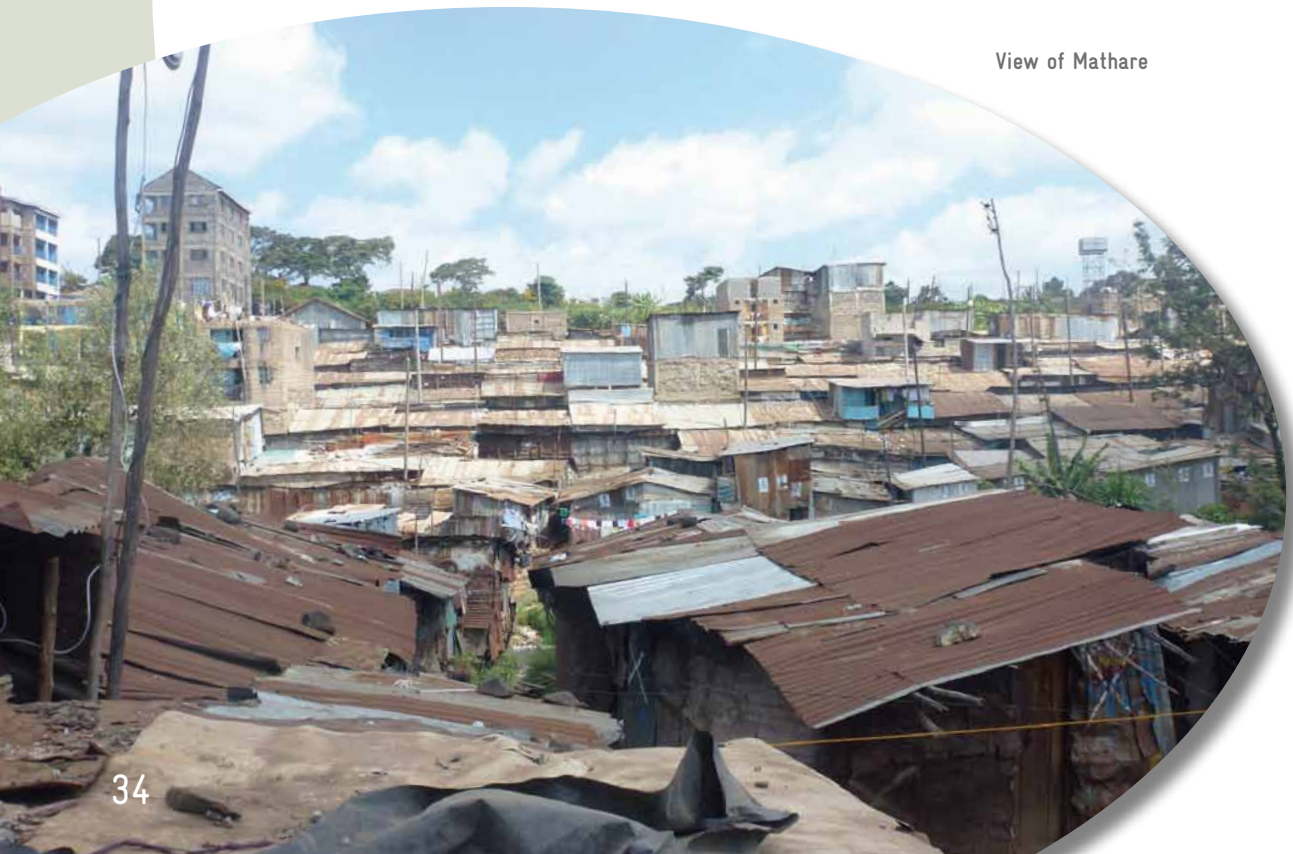
We met a woman, Lucy Wamboi Karioki, who was born in 1964 in Kosovo, Mathare. She had seven brothers and four sisters. She said that six brothers and two sisters died and she was left only with one brother and two sisters. The two sisters did well in high school, but they were unable to enter university because they could not afford the fees.

The challenges which they face in the extended family are:

- Lack of water
- Lack of food.
- No good sanitation.

Also, there are conflicts in extended families because of farms in rural areas. Everyone wanted their parents to allocate for them a piece of land in the rural areas so that they are able to sell it and earn an income. Land is a huge problem in Kenya, and families always seem to fight over land.

View of Mathare



MAISHA YANGU

Jina langu ni Daniel Mutua Kitone. Niko na umri wa miaka kumi na mitano. Nilianza masomo yangu katika shule ya msingi ya Mathare nikiwa na miaka mitano.

Kifamilia, tulizaliwa watoto tisa kwa jumla na baba na mama wangali hai. Mimi ni kijana wa nane kwenye orodha ya kuzaliwa. Wazazi wangu hawakufaulu kutusomesha sisi sote kwa sababu ya kukosa karo. Aidha, ni mimi pekee, niliyebahatika kutokana na juhudi zao za kuhakikisha ya kwamba nimeingia shuleni. Ninayo matumaini ya kuwa, nikitia bidii na niwe mwenye imani, nitafaulu mwishowe.

Shida kadha wa kadha zina tukumba kijamii. Miongoni ni kama; Maji.

Shida hii imekuwa tisho kubwa sana sio kwa jamii yetu pekee bali kwenye kijiji nzima cha Mathare ambapo, inatulazimu kutembea safari ya kilomita kadha ndipo tuyapate haya maji.

Fedha.

Wapangaji wa Mathare wanaishi maisha ya upweke sana, kwa hiyo, fedha ni changamoto kubwa sana pale ambapo huwa inambidii shemeji wangu ambae ninakaa naye kung'ang'ana ili apate hela kidogo aghalabu atununulie maji ya matumizi kutoka kwa wale wenye hutembeza kwenye mikokoteni. Kupata chakula pia huwa ni nadra sana haswa wakati shemeji hajafanikiwa kupata kibarua cha siku.

Mipango yangu ni kusoma sana niwasaidie walembao hawajiwezi kama familia yangu na wakenya wote kwa jumla.



Daniel Kitone

LIVING TOGETHER IN FOUR GENERATIONS

Histories of an extended family

As we were doing our normal research, we came across one of the oldest women in Mathare. Her name was Margaret Wangoi Kariuki, and she was born in Mathare Kiboro. Before she came to Mathare, she was a squatter in Karura Forest. She was born in 1923 and is now 90 years old. She was one of the people who were brought to Mathare by the late President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, who was the first president of the Republic of Kenya. This was in 1930.

She got married at a very tender age of 12 years to a man who was known as Kariuki Ngotho. She was the second child in a family of six children. Being the second child in the family, she had to take care of her siblings. She gave birth to 11 children, five girls and six boys. Later, two girls and four boys died. She was left with three girls and two boys.

She really felt bad losing her children. She always feels bad when she remembers them. Later on, her five children had 12 grandchildren, and those 12 grandchildren had great-grandchildren.



She always loved to see her great-grandchildren and the grandchildren running and playing. She also said that life in the past in Mathare was not that hard because they had their own land and everything was very cheap, but now everything has changed. The price of food is more expensive. The positive thing she sees about Mathare is the increase in the number of toilets. Before, there were no toilets at all in Mathare, but now there are more public toilets and less use of flying toilets.



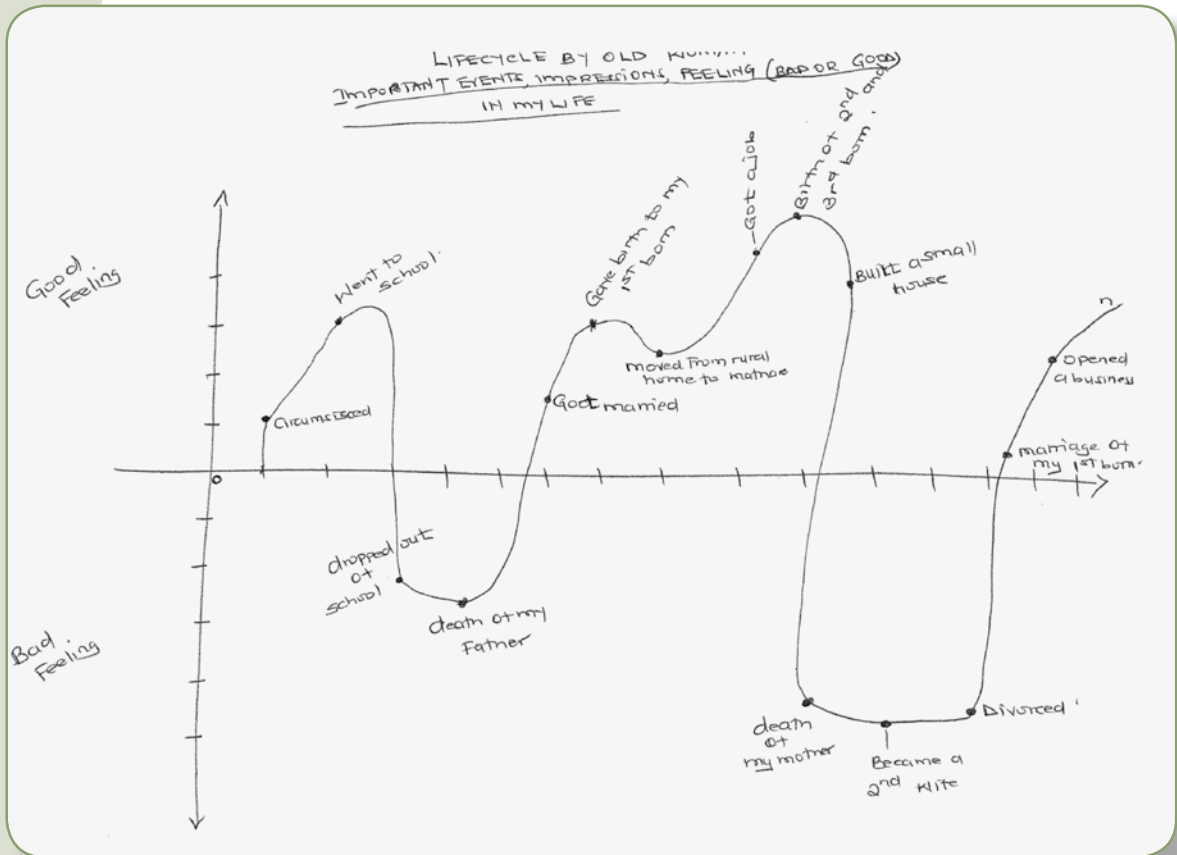


Latifah Wang'ui

Older people in Mathare

LEFT ALONE AS AN OLD WOMAN BUT SHE NEVER GAVE UP (Latifah Wangui, Geoffrey Ottunga, Cojeck Hagwira)

As young researchers, we went one day to find out the history of Mathare. We came across a certain woman who told us her story, which was surprising. She was born in Nyeri in the year 1943. She stayed with her family in their rural area. She went to school but had so many difficulties that it made her drop out of class six at Muthungura primary school. She decided to help her mother with home chores. One day she decided to come to Mathare to look for a job which would help her to pay for her school fees.



When she came to Mathare she met this young handsome man known as Peter Ndungu, and they got married in a traditional wedding in 1978. They lived together until they had a child, who was known as Beatrice Wanjiru. With their hard work they were able to take good care of their family. They lived happily until Beatrice was in class eight, when unfortunately the father died. The mother was left alone with the responsibility of being both father and mother to her child. Soon after, her mother and father died. Mary, the mother of Beatrice, was left alone, but she never gave up. She was always courageous and strong, she continued working as a shopkeeper. Her daughter continued with her studies until she finished and got a good job.



Cojeck Hagwira

After some years her daughter got married, and she used to visit her mother once in a while. It went on like that until the daughter stopped visiting her. Nobody knew whether she was dead or had gone to another place. Mary was left alone as an old woman. She had nobody to help her with her house work, but she never forgot that God was there, and she kept praying. 'Tears fell down on my cheeks but I was able to control myself'. She talked in a way that anyone would be touched by her story. Although she faced many challenges she never gave up. It was a very long story but this was all we could get. What a life!

COMMENTS

As researchers, we think that Mary never deserved what her daughter did to her.

We as youths in the society we should try and help our elders because they are like parents to us.

OLD AND STILL GROWING STRONG (Jessica Mutindi, Miriam Njeri)

When we were interviewing, we came across a certain old man whose name was John Njoroge. The man was 72 years old. He told us that he was born in Mathare and lived there all his life.

He had twelve children, six boys and six girls. The man told us that life was easy in the past and better than today's life. Before the toilets were constructed, people used flying toilets, and these led to many diseases, e.g. cholera and bilharzia. After the toilets were constructed, people stopped using flying toilets and hygiene improved a lot.

However, he feels that the public toilets are still too expensive, as he has to provide ten shillings to each of his family member who needs to use a toilet. This is expensive for him. He hopes that more toilets will be constructed in Mathare.

OLDER PEOPLE IN MATHARE – OLD IS GOLD

(Lalpa & Damaris Mawia)

We always do our best as young researchers in searching for the oldest people in Mathare. As we were doing our normal research, we came across one of the oldest women in Mathare. Her name was Margaret Wangoi Kariuki, born in Mathare Kiboro. Before she came to Mathare she was a squatter at Karura Forest. She was born in 1923, and is 90. She was one of the people who were brought to Mathare in 1930.

She was married at the tender age of 12 to a man named Kariuki Ngotho. Her father was called Kariuki, and her mother's name was Wanjiku. She was the second of six children. As the second child she had to take care of her siblings. After some years she gave birth to 11 children, five girls and six boys. Of these, two girls and four boys died, leaving her with three girls and two boys. She really felt bad about losing her children, and she always feels sad when she remembers them. Later, her children gave her 12 grandchildren, who in turn gave her great-grandchildren.

This meant a very big family in her home, and she always loved to see her grandchildren and great-grandchildren running around enjoying their marvelous life. She also said that life in the past in Mathare was not that hard, because they had their own land and everything was very cheap, but now everything has changed. The prices of everything are much more expensive than before, but one positive change was the toilets. Now, there are many public toilets in Mathare, also easy access to water, and she is very thankful to the government.



Education

SCHOOLS IN MATHARE

Naftali told us that in the past, there were few schools so they had to walk many kilometres in order to reach school. Naftali also explained that lack of facilities in the schools in Mathare has a bad effect on pupils' performance.



Many pupils unfortunately drop out of school for various reasons, including:

- drug addiction
- high cost of living in Mathare that parents cannot afford
- sexual abuse that leads to pregnancy
- bad health due to the environment
- single parents who were divorced
- crimes like rape
- imprisonment of parents
- age

Personal biographies

We met a man whose name was Naftary Njoroge. He told us that he is 52 and was born in 1961. His wife's name was Margaret Wangui. They had six children, but three were killed in a fire. Their names are:

1st - Lewinsky Njeri, who is married.

2nd - Ryan Njori, who was killed in the fire.

3rd - Joy Wambui, who also died in the fire.

4th - Caroline Wairimu, who also died in the tragedy.

5th - Mecy Muthoni, now in pre-school.

6th - Melysa Karemi, also in pre-school.

Naftary was a teacher. In our conversation, he said that his wife was one of the pupils he taught in Kijabe. After getting to know each other they got married in 1982. The marriage took place in a church at Kahuhia. After getting married he started driving in 1983.

He said that Thomas was the oldest person he knew, approximately 95, followed by Mutuku who was born in the 1930's.

He told us that they did not have enough education because of harassment by the British, who declared Kenya a British protectorate in 1905 and wanted to colonise it.



COMMENTS

Joseph Ndungu: The government should build more schools and provide social facilities and amenities in Mathare.

Tracy Auma: The government should build more toilets to help the Mathare people avoid making the environment dirty.

Kelvin Omondi: The government should focus on how to help the needy.

Solomon Garweya: The government should create more facilities in Mathare to help the people.

HAPPY DIVORCE IN MATHARE

(Iam Muthanja, Miriam Njeri, Jesicah Mutindi)

We met a lady, her name is Irene Wangare. She is 32 years old and lives in Mathare (Kosovo). She is a mother of five and was married to a certain man. The lady didn't want to tell us the man's name because she didn't want the bad memories to come back to her. I felt sorry for her.

They lived with the man for around 15 years. They started fighting when her husband started drinking. Three weeks later, he became an alcoholic. We were very sad for her because it was not easy for her living with a drunkard.

Her life was miserable because her spouse did not provide the daily basic needs and did not pay the school fees at the right time. She decided to sign divorce papers and left her husband because of the miserable life she lived for all those years.

When telling this story to us, she had a strong feeling of happiness because of the divorce. We were very shocked and amazed to hear that she was happy to get divorced from her husband. She sees a bright future ahead of her.



Jesicah Mutindi

A large, circular image showing a close-up of a blue corrugated metal surface, possibly a water tank. The text "Upholding Human Dignity Development" is written on the surface in a bold, black, hand-painted font. The surface shows signs of wear and rust.

FACING CHALLENGES IN MATHARE

(Fredrick, Sharon Ameyo, Ruth Kerubo, Damaris Mawia)

I was in a meeting with three friendly people from Mathare: Mama Shiro, Madam Nancy and Baba Esther when I realised the challenges people in slums face.

Mama Shiro is 40 and Baba Esther is 70. Madam Nancy was not ready to disclose her age. Mmm! Too secretive.

INADEQUATE SECURITY

Mama Shiro: Security is a problem in most slums since most youths are jobless and turn to crime as a source of money. They have turned to stealing, mugging, killing, raping, kidnapping, drug abuse and prostitution.

Madam Nancy: Sometimes policemen do not help, since they also drink alcohol and engage in activities with these youths who have turned to crime, promoting insecurity.

FIRE OUTBREAKS

Baba Esther: Fire outbreaks are a common challenge facing people in slums since slum dwellers lack the basic information and the equipment needed to extinguish fires.

Mama Shiro: Do you remember that fire that occurred in Ng'ambo? Its source was flaming gas which caused a fire. It caused the electric wires to be burned to ashes. The firefighters came right after the house was in ashes.

Madam Nancy: They are too arrogant.

Baba Esther: They are late due to unavoidable circumstance like traffic jams and lack of access.



Sharon Ameyo



INADEQUATE FACILITIES

Baba Esther: Lack of accessible roads is a problem to us.

Mama Shiro: Toilets are scarce and expensive, if you want to use a toilet, it's KES 5, KES 10 for a bathroom. Many have turned to flying toilets.

Madam Nancy: Water is a limited resource and water kiosks charge money. Water is not always clean and we may be without it for a long time, forcing us to go long distances, which is a waste of time and energy. This water is sold at a price which is terribly expensive.

LACK OF PROPER HOUSING

Mama Shiro: The houses are cheap but poorly constructed. They may fall down at any time.

Madam Nancy: During rainstorms, rain may get into the house, causing flooding.

WATER POLLUTION

Baba Esther: The water in the Nairobi river was very clean, but after dumping waste in water it became very dirty.

Mama Shiro: Some also defecate and urinate in that water, leading to water-borne diseases, e.g. cholera, typhoid, bilharzia and dysentery.

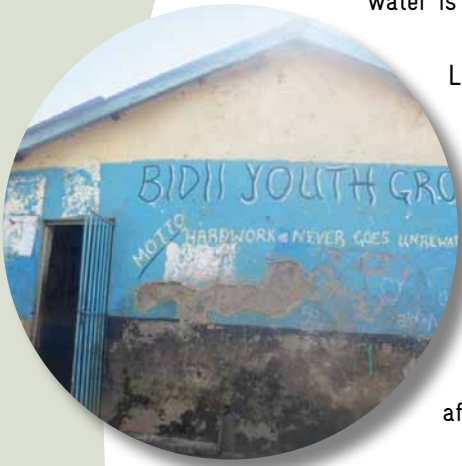
DAMARIS COMMENTS

We were very astonished to hear about these challenges that they face compared to those living in estates. It hurts to hear that.

IMPORTANT PLACES IN MY CHILDHOOD AND MEMORABLE DAYS

(Sharon Ameyo, Cojeck Hagwira)

As youth researchers, my colleague and I visited a certain place in Mathare. We met a kind grandmother who shared her story with us. 'My name is Ziliba Keregerizo. I am 65 years old. I have three children and these are their names: Elizabeth Wanzala, Lucy Andeso and Collins Andeso. All of them completed their studies. Elizabeth and Andeso are twins they are 35, and Collins is 47.



In Mathare I live with my two grandchildren, they are three and four. All of them usually go to school at Mathare family hope centre. I have been living with them since their mothers left and look after them as a guardian. I have been living in Mathare since 1978, so I have been in Mathare for 35 years. When I came to Mathare from Ugina I expected to have a good job. But when I came there was no job.

My first job, I was a housemaid, earning KES 2,000 per month. After 12 years my employee sacked me. After sitting home for one week I decided to open a small business which I ran for 10 years.

Since I came to Mathare the problems that I have been facing are water and toilets. Water is a very big problem because in this area water is sold at KES 5 per jerrycan. The second problem is the inadequate toilets.

When I was still a young girl I liked playing games like football, volleyball and hide and seek. And my special places were going to game parks looking at animals like monkeys, lions and snakes. That was the only place that I liked during my childhood.



Part of Mathare River

Conclusion and perspectives

Proposals for improving living conditions as seen by children and young people

WHAT CAN BE DONE
we must add water tanks in Mathare in order to improve water in Mathare.
2. Have many programs like this one in order to improve sanitation
3. Add toilets because the people say they don't have enough toilets here in Mathare.
4. Tell people to make their community clean.
5. Teach people or educate people about water, life & sanitation
6. Tell people that what other challenge they come across in life they should not give up.

1. Additional water kiosks and toilets in the interior parts of Mathare.
2. Construction of more public toilets to reduce the use of flying toilets in Mathare.
3. Solid waste management to avoid littering in all the open spaces.
4. Construction of more health facilities to improve the health of the residents and educate them on the importance of good nutrition and hygiene.
5. Ensure river conservation by not dumping untreated waste into the river.
6. Formation of youth programmes and community-based organisations in the slum.
7. Construction of more affordable schools.
8. Educating and sensitising on the importance of good hygiene.
9. Banning all illegal water connections in the area.
10. Improvement of the sewerage and drainage systems to avoid water contamination leading to water-borne diseases.

11. Setting a community day each month for cleaning up the slum which involves all residents of Mathare.

→ Life, water situation improvement

- Those people with more than 20 hectares of land should donate to the government & this will create land to settle slum dwellers.
- Rural to urban migration should be banned.
- More water kiosks should be dug and water should be free of charge.
- People should be advised against breaking & stealing water pipes.
- More schools should be built in slum.
- Good sanitation behaviours should be adopted in slums.
- A country wide march should be done to clean

1. More water tanks should be constructed.
2. People from the community should co-operate in order to make their community safe so that more water tanks to be constructed.
3. The government should be co-operating with the community people.
4. People should construct more hygiene.
5. People should use water for the right purpose.

JESSICA MUTINDI

What did the young people learn from the dialogue between the generations?

I have learnt that the water company together with the support from German Development Cooperation and the Water Services Trust Fund has improved the water situation in Mathare.

I have learnt that we need water and good sanitation for survival.

I have learnt about the history of Mathare.

Learnt about the challenges encountered in Mathare such as:

- lack of social amenities;
- lack of enough toilets;
- poor hygiene leading to high risk of water-borne diseases;
- presence of many illegal water connections leading to water scarcity;
- high rate of drug usage by the youths in the area due to unemployment and lack of prospects;
- security is poor due to unemployment.

I have learnt that the main reason for rural-urban migration is to look for opportunities for jobs.

I have learnt that while schools in urban centers are better than those in the rural areas, some can be overcrowded and lack enough teachers.

I have learnt that the intergenerational dialogue was trying to know more about the living standards of the Mathare dwellers and to understand their needs and wants.

I have learnt about the life in Mathare in the past and life today and how older people lived.

I have learnt that many people are jobless leading to a high rate of crime.

I have learnt that good sanitation, clean water and proper use of toilets leads to good health.

Interview with youth promoters – perspectives for Mathare

During the dialogue, what was the most astonishing thing that you learnt?

1. I learnt how Mathare evolved – before it was unoccupied land and in 1988, the land was given to people by the government. It has developed very fast. In fact it is now overpopulated.
2. People do not have enough toilets. Many residents are forced to defecate in the open bushes and in ditches or in paper bags and throw them outside (flying toilets) into the surrounding area at night.
3. People who have already settled in Mathare do not like to move out from Mathare despite the harsh conditions (congestion, poor sanitation and lack of security) because there is greater unity or a feeling of togetherness than in the rural area. People also do not want to move back to their rural areas because they are ashamed that their relatives will criticise them and tell them that they have failed. In addition, there are no jobs in rural areas. Most of the jobs can be found in urban areas like Mombasa and Nairobi.
4. There is a lot of volunteer work going on in Mathare. I was astonished by the the feeling of togetherness when one enters Mathare. People are there for each other.

What should be done to improve the water situation in Mathare?

1. Reduce the illegal connections so that water can be sufficient for the water kiosks
2. Increase the number of water kiosks, particularly in the interior of the slums.
3. Reduce vandalism of water pipes by protecting them and increasing security
4. Educate people on how to use and recycle water wisely
5. Build the water kiosks in accessible areas, particularly in the interior of the slums
6. The government should cooperate with people in the community to understand their needs and wants

What are some of the views and recommendations that you can give?

If the youth in Mathare do not find possibilities for enhancing their skills and getting jobs, in 20 years' time people in Mathare will be poorer and the population will have grown. This will lead to more crime and insecurity, drug abuse, conflict and social injustices will increase. Therefore the government should ensure that once young people finish high school, there are enough opportunities for them to go to colleges and universities so that they are able to have a better chance of finding a job.

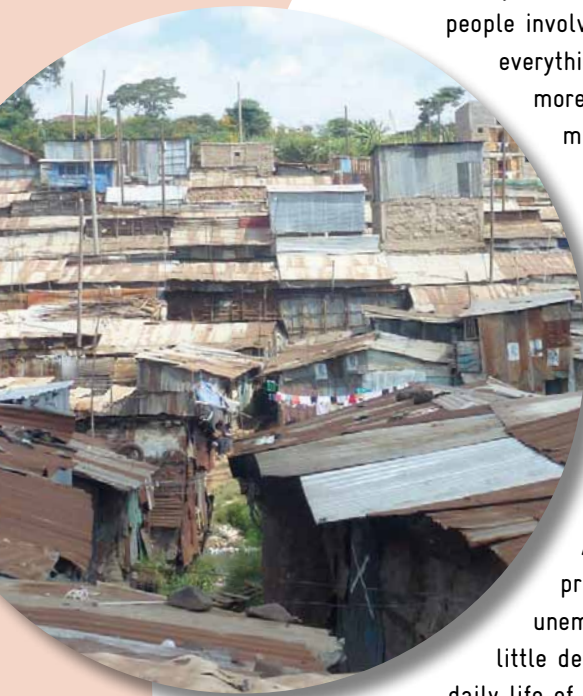
In terms of water, further water kiosks are required to ensure constant supply of water and to ensure that the provision of water in low income areas is not taken over by illegal cartels. These gangs or groups normally sell to us water at a very high cost and most of the time, we are unsure of their source and it is polluted. The government should regulate that the water company provides enough water for us, particularly in the low income areas.

We also recommend that the government should improve living conditions, e.g. drainage systems, more public toilets, create awareness of the factors affecting the community, provide educational facilities, increase the number of hospitals, improve housing infrastructure and increase family planning clinics.



Epilogue: looking back, looking forward

An epilogue is often about what people wanted to do – but didn't. This is different. The intergenerational project within the framework of the GIZ water sector programme in Kenya did more and initiated more than was originally thought possible. Within just a few days, children aged between 11 – 15 (one girl was just nine years old) took on the role of researchers, learned to use sociological techniques, carried out interviews with city dwellers between 18 – 90 on a range of topics, analysed the results and impressions in small groups, wrote reports and made drawings. This started a process of learning which brings hope for the future. This project isn't just about making a brochure, although the publication of the brochure is naturally important. Beyond this, the project aims to start a dialogue between young and old about personal and social experience in the past,



about everyday life now (with its extreme poverty and the special importance of water), and about possible future scenarios for the residents in their city district. The enormous potential shown by the children and young people involved surprised even the GIZ staff members. And on top of everything, the whole project was fun – how could you ask for more! And yet, the young people and the city dwellers do want more.

As the brochure shows, they want the state, private sector and local authorities and donors to build more water kiosks, and provide public toilets. The residents know that access to water is ultimately the crucial resource, not only for survival but for the future – for work, the family and the community. This is why you find expressions of gratitude for internal and external assistance in the water sector recurring throughout the interviews.

A particular feature of the methodology is that the big problems – lack of access to water and sanitation, poverty, unemployment, sickness, social exclusion – are reflected in the little details of everyday life. For example, the description of the daily life of a woman with a family of ten; the reports of water kiosk operators who face major economic challenges; the stories of youth promoters tackling an important task (e.g. cleaning the district), but doing so as volunteers – sadly, not as a source of income. Seen in this light, the brochure presents an unsparing picture of life in an urban slum, as seen by different generations.

At the same time – and this is the motivating and hopeful message of the project – there are signs of improvements and changes. These are closely connected with the installation of water kiosks at community level and sanitation facilities in the district, and are presented from the perspective of children, women and older people. For example, with a nearby water kiosk, it's easier for women to manage a fruit and vegetable stand at the market; children can now wash before they go to school; young people no longer have to spend hours helping their parents with fetching water, giving them more free time; the older people in particular appreciate these improvements.

Besides its goal of presenting daily life in the Mathare district with the focus on water, and using a very special, creative 'lens', the project tries to show that people can make a difference. Change and progress for all is possible, even if it takes a lot of time and effort. The article makes no attempt to soften reality or the dramatic relationships in the Mathare city district, which are thought-provoking and even saddening, as the young people describe in an interview with an older woman. At the same time, the work of young people in Mathare, the commitment of women at the community facilities, the daily struggle of men and women in large families to keep them together, all show how people are refusing to give up. And this is why they are able to express their demands. This includes increasing the number of water kiosks, improving streets, and constructing simple, low-cost sanitary facilities. As everybody knows, these innovations need to be looked after and maintained.

Who is responsible for the sustainability of the improvements – the government, local authorities, private sector or NGOs? This will continue to be a matter for discussion. The project has started an ongoing learning process. The look to the past, on growing up in Mathare, on the organisation of the community, on the comparison between rural and urban poverty, on the feeling of pride about these changes – a look back is combined with the look forward. What will Mathare look like in 20 years? And how will the attitudes and (political) participation of the people have changed? Might there be unrest and protests? Can the mixture of poverty, a sense of hopelessness, a lack of social security lead to more violence? Will Mathare have an even bigger population?

Roland Werchota, the WRSP programme manager at the time, Doreen Mballo, Grace Kwamboka, the three youth promoters and Hans-Heiner Rudolph talked about the current and future state of development in Mathare. 'It's very clear that water is an issue which transcends ethnic and political conflicts. Water and sanitation bring people together.' Water is essential for everyone, and everybody can and must do something about this. This is why we need a continuing process of public consciousness-raising to drive the changes and make the improvements sustainable. This is also needed to counter illegal water connections! Water theft and water vandalisms is high in Mathare. Residents need to be educated on how to use water wisely

and safely. Hygiene awareness is the key to decreasing water-borne diseases in Mathare. The government needs to cooperate with the community to ensure that water and sanitation issues are solved. Other aspects, such as unemployment, lack of education, drugs, and alcoholism, also need to be tackled in low income areas like Mathare. Unemployment is the biggest problem, and is the reason why many young people in Mathare turn to crime. A failure to take demographic projections into account in urban planning will mean that more people will be living in low income areas, there will be more violence and crime, people will begin to turn their makeshift dwellings into permanent structures, and slums will become permanent settlements. The government needs to improve housing as a way of reaching the urban population. Summing up, Roland says: 'The intergenerational dialogue project makes evident what people perceive and describe as important improvements and effects in their daily lives due to the access to water offered with the up-scaling concept in the urban projects cycle of the Water Services Trust Fund.'

These are issues which will continue to concern us. The end of this project may well be the start of a new one...

Roland Werchota, Doreen Mbalo, Hans-Heiner Rudolph



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