Community's Role in Slum Upgrading

-Empowerment through Participation?

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Master Thesis in Human Geography
Institute for Sociology and Human Geography
University of Oslo
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Acknowledgement

I am letting this thesis go with mixed feelings. It has followed me in my life, through absolute highs and absolute lows. It is probably the only thing that has remained a constant factor in my life over the past few years. I started working on this thesis at the University of Oslo, Harriet Holters Hus, surrounded by amazing and inspiring people which is the best base for any process. After that it has followed me around the world: from the OC, California to the slums of Africa. Throughout I have met many interesting people with interesting questions and interesting answers.

The topic of the thesis is very close to my heart every twist and turn that life has dealt has left a piece in this final product. Because of working with this research has opened many doors, and because the topic of empowerment is endless it is partly with a heavy heart that I am now putting the final touches. On the other hand, this is the time to start building on what I have learnt and put the issues on empowerment into practice as I start my new job working with the empowerment of women in Rwanda.

I would like to thank all the informants that have contributed to making this an interesting process. Especially Raakel from UN-Habitat who inspired me to turn my head away from the slum that everybody else was studying and instead find something unique. I also need to thank mamma and pappa who have kept reminding me that I have to finish what I started, and Julio who has been optimistic and always seen the thesis as “half full” and not “half empty”. I should also thank Luca for the world’s best distractions and for reminding me every day of what is really important in life. Last but not least: Thanks goes to Jan for precise and realistic feedback and for reminding me that I have to be the one to create the sentences. Now I have created many sentences and I am ready to move on.

Toril-Iren Pedersen
Nairobi 12.01.08
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**Abbreviation**

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MCM</td>
<td>Municipality Council of Mavoko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNP</td>
<td>Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOK</td>
<td>Government of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLF</td>
<td>Sustainable Livelihoods Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>Participatory Learning and Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPZ</td>
<td>Export Processing Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDAF</td>
<td>United Nations Development Assistance Framework</td>
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<td>DCO</td>
<td>District Co-operative Office</td>
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Scope of Research

Introduction

The Habitat agenda states that the provision of housing and basic services is a valuable and efficient entry point to poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth. In the global context of ever expanding population of urban poor, simply increasing the delivery of low income housing has not been sufficient; is no longer sustainable; and will not in itself lead to a reduction of poverty or social development. The latest response to the challenge of housing the urban poor is the integrated development approach through sustainable neighbourhood programmes. Within this context stakeholders’ participation in the project development and implementation as well as empowerment of the local communities are fundamental elements. Empowerment of the poor slum dwellers is sought through participation, in order to create ownership, and through capacity building. However, the links between participation and empowerment are not causal, instead it is determined by the quality of participation and a commitment to change.

The problem of housing the growing number of urban poor has been described as the world’s most unsolvable problem (UN-Habitat 2006). To tackle this challenge a vast variety of strategies have been applied over the past decades, but with meagre effects. After a number of failed strategies it became apparent that the time for a change had come. The leading developmental paradigm within the major international development agencies is putting increasing emphasis on primary stakeholders’ participation in the development process. This strategy has also become a fundamental element in urban housing provision for the poor. It can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the fact that development is not a theoretical task that can be pondered and thereafter implemented from the top down. It is a much more practical task that needs the engagement of an empowered, educated public. It is my belief that it is only through empowering the poor themselves that the urban bind can be untangled. A wave of unprecedented urbanisation is sweeping the developing world and the only substantial and sustainable force that can withstand it is skilled, empowered and united urban settlers. On paper the commitment to empowerment
through participation seems straightforward. The process of translating it into action has, however, faced considerable obstacles.

This thesis seeks to analyse the case of a slum upgrading project in Mavoko town 25 kilometres from the Kenyan capital Nairobi. The project uses an integrated livelihood framework approach to develop low income housing, infrastructure, build the capacity of the local community and provide opportunities for income generating activities. In spite of it being a slum upgrading project, the focus of analysis is not the development of houses, nor is it the improvement of infrastructure itself. Primary goals for the slum upgrading project are empowerment of the communities in the informal settlements through capacity building and participation at all levels of the project. The aim of this research is to analyse the link between the participation process and the empowerment of the community. This thesis will show that participation in community development can take many different forms and that the empowerment outcomes are determined by the mode of participation applied.

**Research Objectives**

Following the introduction to the subject of community participation in slum upgrading, the main goal of this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of the quality of the participation processes that take place in participatory low-income housing and slum upgrading programmes. This subject will be addressed though the analysis of a particular case, which in turn will shed light on other participatory slum upgrading programmes. The objectives of this research can therefore be listed as follows

1. To develop a better understanding of how the participatory processes in slum upgrading programmes take place, in order to see whether the participation in itself leads to empowerment of local communities.
2. To test the hypothesis that people with low tenure security, in particular the informal tenants, have no incentive to invest in their shelter or community. Through mapping out the tenure status of the participating community members and finding out their incentives for participation.
3. To develop an understanding for the complex situation under which the upgrading programmes and participation processes take place, in order to suggest modifications and
improvements of the programme.

4. To come up with realistic recommendations to enhance the empowerment of the community member participating in the slum upgrading programme.

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme (SNP) of Mavoko has been selected as the main focus of this thesis. The prime objective of this research is to develop a holistic perspective on participation and empowerment through slum upgrading programmes, and the research questions are formulated in order to achieve this goal in the context of the SNP. The main question to be answered is:

**Does the implementation of the SNP lead to sustainable changes in the community’s agency and opportunity structure and do the participants feel empowered?**

Sub questions:
1) How are the community-members involved in the project cycle?
2) What are the means applied by the SNP team in order to facilitate participation?
3) What is the tenure status of the participating community members?
4) Has the SNP contributed to the empowerment of the community?

**Layout of Thesis**

The logical sequencing of this thesis is built on the assumption that the process of comprehension is facilitated by first introducing the overarching conceptual framework before introducing the case and context. This First Chapter has aimed at presenting the goals and core research questions as well as justifying the research topic. Following this the Second Chapter introduces the conceptual framework of the thesis. This framework is built on three pillars: 1) The understanding of housing provision for the poor; 2) The role of primary stakeholders in development; and 3) The concept of empowerment. In Chapter 3 the research design will be presented including short introductions to the reasons for applying the qualitative case study method to research this particular topic. An overview of the fieldwork and interview process is included in relation to the discussions of reliability and validity. The next chapter, Chapter 4, gives an introduction to the context of the case. The case itself is the role of the community members in Mavoko's informal settlements in the Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme. However, in order to create a better understanding for the conditions
under which this programme operates and the people live and work, the country context will also be presented. The situation for the people in Mavoko is also an important part of this chapter: focusing especially on the level of empowerment and the conditions of the slums. The following two chapters encompass the analysis of this research. Chapter 5 includes the analysis of the participation process in the SNP. Here, the tools of analysing and evaluating participation, introduced in Chapter 2, will be used to identify modes and degree of community participation within the project. Chapter 6 presents the analysis of the possible links between the SNP and the empowerment of the community. The central point here is to identify links between the actual participation in the project and empowerment outcomes, but also to look for alternative links to empowerment. This is a pivotal exercise since it relates to the argument of whether or not participation is a legitimate goal for development in itself. Finally, chapter 7 gives the conclusion of the thesis and research process. The conclusion emphasises what can be learnt from this analysis in terms of what is needed to create empowerment through a participation process and furthermore if there are any generalities that can be applied to other similar cases.
2 Conceptual framework

This chapter introduces a conceptual framework of the thesis. Here, the cornerstones for the analysis will be presented. The theories and conflict issues will be discussed and from this the framework of analysis will be developed. This chapter has three main sections: Strategies for accommodating the urban poor; The history and theory of participation in development; and Empowerment.

First, the issue of accommodating the urban poor will be tackled; hereunder the conceptualisation of housing and the historical attempts to accommodate the urban poor will be presented. Following this, the current strategy of integrated development approach and sustainable neighbourhoods will be detailed. Under the new strategy community participation is a fundamental element; hence following the presentation of the current hegemonic approach a section is also devoted to explaining the inclusion participatory approaches in the broader context of development theories. In the last section the concept of empowerment will be introduced. This section largely debates various interpretations of the concept of empowerment; psychological empowerment; unit of empowerment; and purpose of empowerment. These considerations will feed into the practical model for measuring empowerment that will be applied in the analysis below. Lastly in this section the model of framework of analysis will be presented and explained.

Accommodating the poor

In this section the major trends in the strategies dealing with urban poor and provision of low income housing in urban areas will be introduced. First of all, the institutional foundation of housing within the international development framework will be reviewed, before the historical overview is presented through the core conflict between provide and support strategies. Historically, there have been many responses to the ever increasing housing deficit in the urban areas of developing countries. Today’s approaches have been built upon the experiences of a number of failed strategies as well as criticism from researchers and scholars around the world. The new strategy embraces the core principles of human rights and sustainability, but still needs to be evaluated and amended.
Since the new strategy has claimed hegemony within the international development community, it has to be said that it has its shortcomings and the search for the ideal model of housing provision for an ever increasing poor population in urban areas is still on.

**Understanding housing**

The framework, under which housing is generally interpreted today, is both seen as a human right and as a basic need. Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 the human right to adequate housing has been repeatedly reaffirmed (UN-Habitat 2000). Of late it has also been reaffirmed through the Millennium Development Goals where improving housing conditions is an integral part of the global development agenda. The international development community also recognises that housing cannot be addressed in isolation of a country’s social and economic development. Insecure and inadequate shelter will lead to social and political instability and will hamper economic development (Nair 2006). These are good reasons for improving the living conditions of the poor, and good reasons for involving them in the process.

Over time two paradigms have become obvious, Hamdi (1991) calls these two paradigms the *support* paradigm and the *provide* paradigm. The provide paradigm is the one where the state is seen as a provider of housing, taking charge of building and maintenance of housing for its people. He claims this is the strategy that has been most practised throughout history. The other paradigm, *support*, is the one that is most talked about and the one most encouraged by multilateral agencies today. According to the support paradigm the capital intensive state driven shelter strategy has not worked. Another approach is to be more realistic in assessing what is adequate housing, management of land, labour, skills and money, and for the state to create an environment that enables others (NGOs, private companies, communities) to contribute to housing provision (Hamdi 1991).

Interestingly enough the two paradigms both have strong support from the *left* and the *right* side of the political spectrum. If the provider is government, the left likes it because it is welfare. If the provider is private “the right” approves because it is profit motivated. The support paradigm is likely to find support from the left because it encourages participation and a “bottom-up” approach to development (Hamdi 1991). However, some might say that the way participation is incorporated into development policies today has been hi-jacked by the neo-liberal agenda as a tool to reduce state
involvement and reduce costs.

Strategies for housing the poor

The strategies for providing housing for the urban poor have varied a great deal over the decades but a central debate has always been the role of the various stakeholders; governments, private sector; NGOs; and local communities. The various phases reflect the dominating developmental paradigm at the time and the instruments have been chosen thereafter. Below is a table (Table 1) that shows the development of housing policies since the 1960s.

Table 1: The evolution of housing policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modernization and urban growth:</td>
<td>1960s- early 1970s</td>
<td>Physical planning and production of shelter by public agencies</td>
<td>Blueprint planning; direct construction (apartment blocks and core houses); eradication of informal settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistribution with growth/basic needs:</td>
<td>mid 1970s –mid 1980s</td>
<td>State support to self-help ownership on a project-by project basis</td>
<td>Recognition of informal sector; squatter upgrading and site-and-services; subsidies to land and housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The enabling approach/urban management</td>
<td>Late 1980-early 1990</td>
<td>Securing an enabling framework for action by people, private sector and markets</td>
<td>Public private partnership; community participation; land assembly and housing finance; capacity building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable urban development</td>
<td>Mid 1990s- onwards</td>
<td>Holistic planning to balance efficiency, equity and sustainability</td>
<td>As above with more emphasis on environmental management and poverty alleviation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from UN-Habitat 2006 “Enabling Shelter Strategies”

In the 1950s and 1960s the policy was to build housing directly to the poor. The state was the provider. This strategy was associated with high standards and high costs. Because of this, the housing originally intended for the poor had a tendency to fall into the hands of the middle-income population. By the mid-1970 many governments in the developing world had come to the conclusion that they were unable to meet the housing needs of the urban poor population through the conventional contractor-built houses. The urban population growth outnumbered the growth in the housing stock at an ever increasing rate. A new strategy had to be devised which had a multiplier effect (Skinner et al. 1987).
“Most [...] agree that old paradigms are unworkable, formal supply channels hopelessly inadequate and most conventional approaches largely irrelevant given the magnitude of demand. There is no such unanimity regarding solutions” (Hamdi 1991, 3).

Slum clearance and resettlement of slum populations were common strategies in the 1970s. The arguments used were that the slums illegally occupied land that was either private or public and secondly that the living conditions within the slums were inhabitable because of lack of infrastructure and basic services. The UN estimated that the governments were in fact demolishing more low-income housing than they were producing (in Werlin 1999). This cost the governments a lot of money and slum upgrading appeared as cheaper and more reasonable responses. The basic principle of slum upgrading was improving infrastructure, service provision and housing in the original site. Instead of building new expensive houses the substandard structures were improved through self help mechanisms. Churchill (in Werlin 1999) estimated the World Bank’s slum upgrading project to a cost of 38 USD per unit. This was measured against the former site and service strategy where a unit cost 1000-2000 USD and the price for traditional low-cost public housing provision was 10.000 USD per unit.

From the beginning slum upgrading targeted the segment of the urban population that were to poor to be able to afford conventional housing, but still had the resources and creativity to provide shelter for the household. Upgrading was built around the principle that “one dollar’s investment should no longer produce one dollar of house; it must also stimulate the use of other people’s dollars in the building process” (Skinner et al. 1987, 1). Since the introduction of this strategy it has been widely supported by donors and multilateral agencies. It was regarded as a means for public authorities to “restore formal control over land subdivision and land building processes, while seeking to mobilize the energies and resources of low-income groups for either the improvement or creation of shelter” (World Bank 1987, 174). This new role of the state in housing issues follows the overall shift in paradigms. The state was no longer to be a supplier of goods and services to its people but rather an enabler to unlock the potential of the individual and the private sector. In shelter provision it would first and foremost support and assist the involvements of the final user in the process of obtaining and maintaining housing. In an evaluation project of the World Bank’s slum
upgrading projects Werlin (1999) found that a lot of the problems of slums persisted in spite of the slum upgrading schemes. There was little change in environmental and health related problems and many upgrading schemes did not address the central issue of tenure security. The majority of slum dwellers were tenants, and in spite of improved infrastructure the investments in household remained low. He suggests that a more integrated approach to slum upgrading where tenure security and strengthening the communities are central. Furthermore, Werlin (1999) argues that giving tenure security to informal settlers within the urban context would both strengthen the informal settlers’ situation as well as give the local authorities bargaining power if the settlers did not comply with payment for services or other regulations.

The new strategy

A major challenge of the “government-as-provider” strategy has been the government’s constant lack of available resources. Lack of resources has, in turn, made it impossible to regulate and integrate a system of access to land, housing and basic services. As the governments failed to provide a central question in this debate arose: “Should the NGOs and CBOs fill the gaps of public authorities?” (Durand-Lasserve & Royson 2002). The new buzz words in the international development community were “community involvement” and “participation”. These were also key features in the United Nations policy papers prepared for the Habitat II conference (1996). Governments started taking the back seat in shelter provision which left it open to who was to take the lead; NGOs, CBOs or private sector? NGOs might give a valuable contribution to the present, but they are donor driven and short termed and hence can not sustain the communities over time. The debate on community participation and responsibility for the upgrading process sparked yet another colourful debate on rights and responsibilities. Gandelsonas (2002) claims that the growing governmental support for NGOs and voluntarism is not to be mistaken for a rising interest in popular democracy. Instead she describes it as a “deeply cynical abandonment of post-war concerns with social welfare and social justice” (Gandelsonas 2002, 144). She consequently dismisses the link between participation and an increased interest in primary stakeholders’ ownership in the development process.

“Peoples participation in housing” was the new slogan of the housing strategies in the 1970s. Some might say that this slogan was ignoring the fact that people have always been important in
creating and maintaining housing (Hamdi 1991). Although it had not been acknowledged as a policy up until this point the urban poor had, in the absence of adequate state provided shelter, been providing and maintaining shelter for themselves all along. Processes of informal, incremental and sometimes illegal development have traditionally been considered blight in urban planning. They are resourceful because they are fast, indigenous and highly productive and they inspire partnership when needed. Yet they are problematic because they are unpredictable and therefore cause strain in terms of services and government (Hamdi 1991).

Participatory upgrading projects have been applied with varying degree of success. Many of the failed projects have the common trait of treating “slum dwellers” as a homogeneous group. A need for strategies that stratify the population appeared: Structure owners; tenants and absentee landlords cannot be subject to one strategy. It is well established that participation processes in slum upgrading projects is not always easy. In some cases this is on account of a weak correlation between the project format and the tenure structure. Some case studies focusing on community participation claim that the emergence of participation reflects both a shift away from a centralized decision-making process to a decentralized one, and the emergence of civil society organizations in planning and development projects. A close link exists between the democratization process at national and local levels, and the recognition of low-income communities (Durand-Lasserve and Royson 2002, 250) The World Bank’s report on community participation for community service provision (Lall et al. 2002, World Bank Working Paper) list the four most common obstacles to participation in poor communities: Time restrictions, financial restrictions, lack of security and lack of faith in development projects. All of these restrictions are highly valid to any and all who seek to involve community members in local slum upgrading projects.

Through criticism, dialogue, trail and error the Slum Upgrading strategies of 2007 look slightly different than those in the 1970. Slum upgrading schemes are in short an enabling strategy that takes advantages of the community’s resources and aims at improving the livelihood for slum dwellers through a multi-sectoral approach. This new method gives higher priority to ensuring that all urban households are reached with basic infrastructure and services but also recognizes the “hidden” potential in low-income areas. Where limited external resources allocation are community directed and supplemented by peoples own resources. The new approach towards sustainable neighbourhoods is an integrated approach based on three guiding principles: Subsidiarity, Sustainable neighbourhoods and sustainable livelihoods (UN-Habitat 2002). Subsidiarity stipulates
that the decisions should be taken at the most local level of government possible. It suggests that previously the decisions have been taken far from the experiences on the ground and that this has led to the failure of many programmes. Urban neighbourhoods are the most local level government in most cities and it is therefore important to initiate action at this level in order to achieve sustainability of the neighbourhood development. The most important concepts of sustainable neighbourhood development are:

- Participatory planning of neighbourhood
- Using building materials that are environmentally friendly and locally produced from local materials
- Water harvesting from roofs and re-use of water
- Ecologically sustainable sanitation
- Integration of work with housing
- Home-based enterprises
- Secure tenure
- Special attention to need of vulnerable groups
- Innovative financial mechanisms and cost recovery
- Community self management through resident associations
- Services’ demand management

Furthermore, by applying the sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF) one can support the development of people’s livelihoods at the same time improving delivery of housing, services and infrastructure (UN-Habitat 2002). The SLF is builds on strengthening the five components which all people possess to a greater or lesser extent:

- Human capital: information, knowledge and skills
- Natural capital: raw materials, water, earth etc.
- Financial capital: income, savings and access to credit
- Social capital: building associations, savings co-operatives etc.
- Physical capital: tools, equipment, space etc.

Robert Chambers (1995) has suggested that the sustainable livelihoods approach is one way over overlapping “their” knowledge with “our” power. The reason being that it steps aside from
Participation in Development

As seen above participation in housing and slum upgrading projects have gained considerable support over the last decade. The inclusion of primary stakeholders in housing and service provision in urban areas cannot be seen in isolation from the waves in the overarching development paradigms. In this section the trends of participation on the development arena will be presented and form a tie together to the previous section (participation in slum upgrading) with the following section on empowerment. The call for community participation has echoed in the walls of development agencies for decades. As this short review will show, the definitions and applications of the term participation are numerous. At the centre of the discussion of community participation lays a few highly politicized discussions. The first fundamental debate, which has been following the development paradigms over the decades, is the debate of rationality of the poor. The second one refers to the objective of participation: is participation a goal on its own? Or is it simply a tool to achieve a political agenda? The highlights of these fundamental debates will be presented in this chapter, with the purpose of establishing a theoretical backdrop for the analysis of the participation process in the case study. Subsequently, some practical tools to measure and view participation in development projects will be presented. These tools will, in turn, be applied in the analysis.

The early decades of development aid was shaped by an understanding that it was the development agencies mission to deliver development to the poor countries. And knowledge about development was for the first decades of development based solely on economic ideology and slowed down by international auditors and proof (Long 2001). “It was unthinkable that it [knowledge about development] could come from poor people” (Freeman 1998). As time passed an acknowledgement that the development process was more complex than practitioners first anticipated emerged. There is a general consensus that this early development cooperation was not ill-intended, after all there were some positive results especially in the area of basic need, health and education. Although the fulfilment of people’s basic needs are fundamental for the empowerment of people, the ideas of
democracy and empowerment was not incorporated in the program.

One of the failures of this development strategy was in the way development agencies were looking at the needs of the people. By using words such as “developed” and “underdeveloped” two billion people were being defined as “inferior”. After a while this hierarchy perception did not sit well with the intellectual socialist left movement in the south (Long 2001). In the early 1970s the first literature on participation of poor people in development processes appeared. One of the pioneers was Paulo Freire whose theory was that no matter how “ignorant” or submerged in a “culture of silence” any people are perceived to be, they are still able to look at the world critically. All people have this ability given the right opportunity and the right tools (Long 2001).

The first participatory tools were developed to create participation in the rural areas. Rural areas were at the time the major recipient of development aid and the major political focus of donor communities. This rural bias, although reduced, still exists today but participation methodologies and practices are now applied in urban and rural development processes alike. These approaches was in it’s infancy and only used by NGOs and CBOs, they were not adopted by bilateral or multilateral donor institutions (Long 2001). In the 1980s the multilateral organizations started to “catch on”, after the WB released a report from the Operations Evaluations Department (1983) that documented a link between grass roots participation and project sustainability. Some development practitioners trace the initial donor interest in participation back as far as to the World Conference on Agricultural and Rural Development in 1979 (Long 2001).

Real participation of the poor entails a mindset that entrusts the poor with a rational mind to solve their own problems provided the resources to do so. Whether or not poor people can be seen to be economically rational given the pressures and demands of their situation has been part of the development debate for decades and it is still very much alive today. In the 1960s a number of researchers (Abrams 1964, Turner 1969, Mangin 1967) stood up against the concept of “a culture of poverty” which was a common perception at the time. The “culture of poverty” describes how poor are poor because they are poor; they eat badly, get poor education and receive unproductive attitudes from their parents through cultural learning, encouraging them to accept their situation. The new school of thought demonstrated that poor peoples’ reaction to poverty was indeed rational and that households recognized the most sensible ways of improving their living conditions. In a recent article in The Economist the belief in the poor people’s rationality is described as a question of
faith for development theorist and development economics. However, the ideas behind the “culture of poverty” first presented by Oscar Lewis (1966), still exists among various groups of intellectuals and higher income groups. The myth keeps reproducing itself because it is a convenient explanatory model even though it has proved to have little basis in reality (Gilbert and Gugler 1992).

In the 1970s Turner (in Gilbert and Gugler 1992) proposed a series of trade-offs he held that households make to meet their basic needs and that these trade-offs vary according to different income groups. Trade-offs are made between 1) security, 2) identity and 3) opportunity. He claimed that the poor tend to value proximity to work (opportunity) more than either ownership (security) or higher standard of shelter (identity). This creates a mismatch between the ideas of the policy developer and the target group and can lead to inefficient upgrading schemes. Some analysts cast doubts on whether a poor household has enough control over their assets and situation to make real goal-oriented choices or rational trade-offs rather then acting opportunistically to however their surroundings change (Rakodi & Lloyd-Jones 2002). To use the term “strategy” to describe the choices made by a household restores the agency to poor people rather than reducing them to passive victims. Turner’s contribution had an important effect on policies. If people are rational then it is the job for the governments, not to provide everything for the people, but to give people the agency and opportunity to help themselves. In the World Bank publication “Measuring Empowerment” Narayan (2006) describes how the empowerment approach is grounded in the conviction that poor people themselves are invaluable partners for development since they are the most motivated to move out of poverty. The empowerment framework will be presented further below.

Chambers (1995) suggest that there is an inherent conflict between “our power” and “their knowledge”. We are powerful on the arenas that are large scale and distant from where poor people, because of how we are linked up to communication systems and science. In this way our systems of producing and reproducing knowledge can dominate over their locally specific knowledge. The knowledge of the local communities and the poor is based on observations and experiences and is constantly formed by what is important in their lives. “[...] our power in the past has overwhelmed their knowledge, hidden their analytical abilities and allowed us to assume that we know what they experience and want.” (Chambers 1995, 191) This description is a true call for deep participatory processes that go beyond consultations and take the knowledge and priorities of the poor seriously. “The problem is one of balance between the two realities – ours which is powerful and theirs which is weak” (Chambers 1995, 191)
This thesis will be based on an assumption that poor individuals are as rational as any other income group in society and that they are capable of making trade-offs with the goal of improving their welfare level. At the same time we have to acknowledge that their poverty and the conditions facing the urban poor in developing counties effectively limit their choices. The choices are limited by inadequate information and limited agency. One could argue that all choices in a sense are limited by something, however in the case of poverty the choices are so limited that it is in effect compulsion. Rationality is however not universal, it varies from culture to culture and between different social groups. Given that people are rational and that what is a rational choice in a given situation is not constant, participation and empowerment of the people is a fundamental element in poverty reduction.

**In practical terms**

The simple definition of the term “participation” as “to take or have a part” does not serve the purpose of this thesis. The applied usages of the term in participatory development processes vary somewhat between the development agencies and scholars who apply it. For some, increasing people’s participation is primarily about *power* and *empowerment* of people to become political actors in their own communities:

> “Participation is concerned with […] the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control”. (Pearse and Stifel, 1979 in FAO¹)

> “True participation is about power, and the exercise of power is politics. This kind of participation inevitably becomes a manifestation of a broader political process.” (Dudley 1993)

These interpretations are both geared toward participation as a tool for structural and political

¹ www.fao.org/participation
change. Pearse and Stifel\textsuperscript{2} were very influential in the development of the participation concept in the 1980s and still holds ground with some smaller development agencies. In Dudley’s definition 1993 it is clear to see that participation is seen as a goal in itself, it can not be separated from the larger political context. When participation is tied closely to politics it is easy to accuse development agencies to front their own political agenda, or claim that is an ethnocentric process. Any action, however, taken by development agencies or other outsiders will always be value laden and choices have to be made: to tolerate traditional modes of repression or to impose a democratic system?

More recent contributions focus more on participation in a development project. These definitions are more relevant for the practical purpose of this thesis. FAO’s definition of participation in development is of the more idealistic and extensive ones.

“[Participation is] a process of equitable and active involvement of all stakeholders in the formulation of development policies and strategies and in the analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development activities.”\textsuperscript{3}

Here the focus is on involving the stakeholders in the entire project cycle. It opens up for a more equitable development process, disadvantaged stakeholders need to be empowered to increase their level of knowledge, influence and control over their own livelihoods, including development initiatives affecting them. Dudley (1993) holds that what a participatory development process can hope to achieve is to get the views of the local community out in the open, and in the best case use the findings to determine all stages of a project cycle (Fig 1).

Fig 1: Participation in the project cycle

\textsuperscript{2} www.fao.org/participation
\textsuperscript{3} www.fao.org/participation
The model of participation in the project cycle is a valuable tool in order to analyse and evaluate the participation process of development projects. A participation process that involves the primary stakeholders at all levels of the project cycle is demanding and challenging for any development agency. Participation in the “Diagnosis stage” involves a participatory process where issues are identified and organised in a prioritised order. It is common to stratify the community at this stage in order to make sure that no social group’s inputs are ignored due to social status or traditional role of participation. The second stage is, participatory planning. The planning stage involves creating the project making sure that all logistics and local contextual aspects are taken into account. Involving people in the implementation of a project often requires training and sensitisation of the community at the initial stage of the implementation. Subsequently the core project is rolled out. Participation in monitoring and evaluation is fundamental to the ownership of the project. Continuous monitoring should be done throughout and can be assigned to community members. This form of monitoring and evaluation can also be done in an inclusive participatory manner.

The way the community participates in development projects determines the outcomes in terms of ownership and empowerment as well as the sustainability of the project. Arrossi et al. (1994) describes how involving the community in a participation process through a project can have different motives according to the project it is a part of. The motive can be to reduce the cost of the project by utilizing the resources of the community or it can be to encourage the community to become involved in the process of decision making in the project and to influence how resources are used. Real participation gives people the tools and mechanisms to have real influence over their own
lives. Participation is not an “either or” phenomenon, rather there are degrees of stakeholder involvement.

Fig 2: Participation typology

Source: Adapted from Lyons et al. and UNDP Empowering People

It is common to depict participation as a ladder, where the various steps refer to a degree or quality of participation. Fig.2 above shows one such example, where one moves from participation by information sharing, through consultation, joint planning, to involvement in decision making and finally the participation that effectively is empowerment. The first attempt at a similar classification was done by Arnstein in1969 (Lizzarralde and Massyn 2007). He proposed a model of evaluation of citizen participation in urban and anti-poverty initiatives in the United States based on an eight-level ladder. Today, the most well known adaptation of this ladder was proposed by Choguill (1996) as a classification tool for the evaluation of participation within underdeveloped countries (Lizzarralde and Massyn 2007). Choguill adapted the ladder proposed by Arnstein and proposed eight levels of community involvement: empowerment, partnership, conciliation, dissimulation, diplomacy, informing, conspiracy and self-management. Empowerment represents ‘the highest level of participation’ in which community members demonstrate actual control of the project and influence the process and outcomes of development. Conspiracy (the seventh level, at the bottom of the ladder) represents the cases in which “no participation in the formal decision-making process is allowed or even considered” (Choguill 1996, 439). Many development projects today, claim to be participatory. In order to assess the quality and sustainability of the participation process, I will apply the framework of analysis presented by Lyons et al. (2001). They ask three fundamental questions: Is the participation process deep? Is it formal? Is it stable? The first question is essentially a question about the extent and quality of influence over the process by the participants. On the one extreme you
have “co-option”, where communities are involved in the implementation of a top-down project and on the other hand one finds the empowerment strategy. The empowerment approach involves a decentralised decision making to civil society, action on grass root level and transformation of society that leads to negotiated power-sharing. Secondly, trying to establish the formality of the participation structures can unravel inclusive or exclusive structures. Informal settlements do not necessarily consist of homogeneous groups and participation structures can through formalisation exclude parts of society. Thirdly, stability of a project varies from long term institutionalised projects to \textit{ad hoc} projects.

Skinner et al. (1987) present some interesting dilemmas on this topic: Should we regard non-participation as a dismissal of the project? Or is a community with lively and energetic debates more participatory than a community that quietly takes care of their institutions day by day? These questions and more should be important to policy makers as they reflect the diversity among the communities in which their uniform policies are to be implemented. It should also be made clear by policy makers whether they want participation as a means of cost cutting or as if they want or need input from the people in order to shape their policies. In the framework of this thesis it is not possible to measure the quiet, un-organised participation. I will attempt to reflect the community members own perception of whether or not they have been participating and whether or not they have been invited to participate. Furthermore, I will use the goals of the project documents and the information from the implementing partner and compare it with the information from the community members.

\textbf{Empowerment}

In attempting to analyse the empowerment concept there are two main trails of thought that needs to be followed; the first one being the unit of empowerment and the second one being the purpose of empowerment. This chapter will start off with presenting the various approaches to understanding empowerment. Subsequently the discussion will be narrowed in on “the unit of empowerment” and “the purpose of empowerment”. The purpose of this is to show the reader the alternatives one can use in analysing the empowerment aspect of a project. Finally, the definition and model of empowerment that will be used throughout this paper will be presented. The definition and model
of empowerment that will be applied is one which is favourable in order to understand this particular case and context. This does not imply that this definition of empowerment is the “correct” one, as other definitions may be better at explaining a different case.

What is empowerment?

The logic of empowerment lies in the acceptance of equality and equity as basic human rights and values, with “power” being the central theme. It targets the legitimate sharing and distribution of power between social groups and essentially involves the “dynamics of authority” (SinghaRoy 2001,13). SinghaRoy, using the case of India, explains how the pre-existing power structures in a society are hierarchical by nature. The structure distributes power to the privileged few and marginalizes the masses of society. This inequality of power distribution is legitimized through “economic, normative, institutional, and ideological foundations and traditional values along with other rational, legal arrangements of society” (SinghaRoy 2001, 12). Narayan (2006) identifies four key elements that can change power relations and lead to empowerment of the poor: access to information, inclusion and participation, social accountability, and local organizational capacity. In order to achieve empowerment for the poor and the marginalized people of the world, people with power have to be willing to redistribute some of the power they possess. Rights and power have both been described as a zero-sum game where if someone’s rights are to be fulfilled, or if someone is to gain power it has to be on account of someone else’s power.

The benefits of empowerment are numerous and it is a necessity for sustainable development. “When citizens are engaged, exercise voice and demand accountability, government performance improves and corruption is harder to sustain. Citizen Participation can also build consensus in support for difficult reforms needed to create a positive investment climate and induce growth” (Narayan 2006, 3)
**Psychological empowerment**

Empowerment has many dimensions that do not move together at the same pace, and sometimes not even in the same direction (Narayan 2006). Therefore one might find that two researchers analysing the same case will come up with substantially different conclusions. Within a community’s agency we can identify individual assets and capabilities on the psychological level which in turn is important in generating action. In the model presented above Narayan (2006) claims that the individual psychological aspect such as self-esteem, self-confidence and the ability to imagine a better future have been largely ignored. However, they are important aspects when trying to understand the community’s action or in-action to create change.

In this thesis the opportunity structure and agency of the people is analysed and the focus is mainly on social and economical aspects. However, the psychological dimension to empowerment is also pivotal in the process of advancing empowerment. Psychological empowerment has gained the interest of the international development community since it is shown, repeatedly, that people with apparently the same resources demonstrate highly diverse ability to act on their own behalf. Narayan (2006) tie psychological empowerment to self-confidence; self-efficacy; and precursors to action. Furthermore this thesis seeks explore how taking action creates a positive cycle where the positive reward of taking action reinforces the before mentioned feelings and in turn leads to reflection and further action.

Psychological empowerment is linked to subjective well-being and occurs only when people have confidence in their own resources and the competences to take action in order to achieve changes for their own lives (Diener and Biswas-Diener in Narayan 2006). Collective and individual psychological empowerment is a prerequisite for creating change and advancing opportunity structures and agency. “Thus, empowerment includes the objective ability to control one’s environment and the subjective conviction that one can do so” (Diener and Biswas-Diener in Narayan 2006, 126) Subjective well-being is determined by a number of factors that vary between different cultural contexts. However, they also refer to their own finding in which income is a stronger determining factor among low income groups than among higher income groups.

Appadurai (2004) effectively ties psychological empowerment to characteristics of social groups. It is determined by the social group’s collective cultural experience. Less powerful groups, like poor people as a social group, are defined by more powerful groups in society and the social
norms keep them “in place” and certain behaviours are expected from various groups in society. He also introduces the phrase “capacity to aspire” which he defines as the capacity of individuals and groups to see better alternatives for the future. In order to have the power to take action one first has to have a vision of a better future to strive for. Strengthening people’s belief in themselves and their ability to envision a brighter future should, according to Appadurai, be important parts of any form or development intervention or solidarity movement. Narayan (2006) also refers to Nussbaum’s term “adaptive preference” on a similar note. This phrase captures the phenomenon where low income or low status groups internalise low expectations for their lives on the basis of life experiences.

It has been important to include a section on psychological empowerment in this thesis in order to better explain some findings from the field work. Capacity building can be aimed at achieving two levels of empowerment: 1) improve people’s knowledge and skills in order to make them capable of acting on their own behalf within the existing system or be able to influence the system though action; 2) reinstate self-confidence and feelings of worth in community members. Later on it will become clear that, although the project documents in the case of SNP Mavoko, focus on empowerment through skills training and other capacity building mechanisms, the unintended aspects of psychological empowerment might turn out to be equally or more prevalent.

**Unit of empowerment**

In the empowerment literature the unit of empowerment varies. The Dictionary of Social Work focuses on the community’s ability to negotiate their rights with external agents. It holds that the essential characteristics of empowerment are in “the process of helping a group or community to achieve political influence or relevant legal authority” (Barker in Lyons et al. 2001)

Friedman (1996) holds that the unit of empowerment should the individual. His approach is focused on a personal and individual level in which he defines psychological empowerment as the “consequence of participation in collective action and gaining greater control over the means to one’s livelihood” (Friedman 1996, 164). He believes this does not diminish the importance of organizations and social networks like communities, but he defines their importance in terms of contributing to individual and household empowerment. Increasing the individuals’ capacity for example by learning how to read and write is empowering for the individual. Lyons et al. (2001) interprets Friedman’s empowerment concept into the context of individuals’ social and organizational capital.
Others, like Somerville (1998), holds that empowerment needs not be tied to one unit, but rather that it can take place at distinct organizational levels ranging from individuals, through household to communities.

In 1999 the World Bank had a collective approach to empowerment. According to Lyons et al. (2001) they identified it as transfer of control over decisions and resources to communities or organizations. In later publications, however, the World Bank has applied an individual approach to empowerment (Narayan 2001, 2006).

**Purpose of empowerment**

The question of whether empowerment is fulfilling a right in itself or if it is a means to realization of other rights, is central to the empowerment debate as well as an issue in the overarching discussion in human right based approach to development.

The Dictionary of Social Work (Barker 1991, in Lyons et al. 2001) interprets the concept as a means to the realization of rights while the WB (1999) sees empowerment as the realization of the right to claim greater control over livelihood resources.

According to Mohanty (in SinghaRoy 2001) the use of the term empowerment as popularized through Global Summits operates under the cover of democracy but the real purpose is enhanced economic globalization. He criticizes the context and manner of presentation for being flawed in order to meet the popular public. The UN and other major institutions are not talking of restructuring the power structures, but rather working through these structures to give marginalized groups a voice. Mohanty (in SinghaRoy 2001) claims that real empowerment needs a restructuring of institutions and legal frameworks that the dominant powers of the world are not willing to accept.

Narayan (2006) holds that empowerment is truly universal. The framework of human rights on which it is based is universal, but its form must be local (Narayan 2006). This implies that empowerment has to be taken from the discourse of the World Summits, translated and contextualizes through the implementation of development projects.

In this paper empowerment is seen in context of development projects; how does the project facilitate enhanced empowerment of the target population and how can this participation be measured. The definition presented by Narayan (2006) will be used in this context.
“Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institution that affect their lives” (Narayan 2006, 5)

The model of opportunity structure and agency of the poor as presented by Narayan and others is a useful tool in organizing the various aspects of the empowerment process. It consists of two main elements: firstly, the opportunity structure that include the institutional, political and social context under which people operate in order to pursue their own interest; secondly, agency which is the capacities the people themselves possess that determine their ability to take action on their own behalf.

In order to identify the opportunity structure of a society one has to find the real or perceived structures of formal and informal institutions that prevent poor people form taking action to improve their own lives. The formal institutions are the laws, regulations and implementation mechanisms of society. This includes states, markets, development agencies and civil society. Furthermore the informal institutions can be just as determining as these include norms of social exclusion and solidarity corruption, to mention a few. All institutional changes must be context specific, but there are a few principles that should form the basis of such a change and that are universal:

 Participation: An empowerment process based on participation treats the participants as powerful entities able to determine the outcome of a development process. In order to create space for the participation there is often a need for institutional changes that can accommodate a participatory process. As discussed above, the quality of the participation process determines the empowerment outcome.

 Accountability: All groups of authority and influence (e.g. Government officials, politicians, local leaders) must be made to feel accountable for the outcomes of their politics or policies. To strive for a structure of political, administrative and social accountability should be at the base of any institutional change

 Local capacity: Refers to the communities’ ability to work together, organise themselves and mobilize in order to solve problems. (Narayan 2006)
In addition to the institutional structures, the social structure of a community also needs to be addressed. The social structures determine the degree of empowerment possible in a society, whether they are open to cooperation or conflictual, inclusive or exclusive. In societies with great institutional disparities the more powerful determine the extent of participation.

Rao and Walton (2004) hold that inequality of agency plays a central role in perpetuating poverty. Poor people need to be equipped with a range of assets and capabilities in order to address this inequality. Narayan (2006) has divided these assets and capabilities into collective and individual. Individual capabilities include good health, education and social capabilities like leadership and trust, and the capacity to organize. It is also important to identify psychological and political capabilities on the individual level as this extends into the ability to represent oneself, self-esteem and the ability to imagine a better future. In addition people’s collective capabilities are of fundamental importance in order to create change. The capability to organize, mobilize for change develop in symbiosis with the individual capabilities.

Framework of analysis

In figure 3 bellow the “framework of analysis” is presented. Conceptual framework is also integrated with the context of the case study. This model is presented in order to make it easier for the reader to conceptualise the theoretical issues presented with the presentation of the case following in the subsequent chapter.
The case in this study will be presented further below, however in order to tie the concepts just introduced, the model of framework of analysis will be presented. The Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme is initiated and operated by the Government of Kenya (GoK) and UN-Habitat. The localisation of the project is the informal settlements within Mavoko, Machakos. This model shows how the participation of community members in the project, and the programmes direct impact on the community can potentially have an empowering effect.

The arrows between the Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme (SNP) and the Community of Mavoko indicate participation and communication. At this point we do not know the extent of influence the Community of Mavoko has or have had on the SNP itself. What we do know, however, is that the agency and the opportunity structure of the people within the community will determine their ability to influence the programme and to make choices that shape their future. The opportunity structure that will be analysed is between the various stakeholders; community and local government; community and development agent; and within the community. The agency analysis will first and foremost focus on the collective capabilities. However, as seen above these are to a large extent intertwined with the individual capabilities.

The arrow pointing the other way, from the SNP to the Community of Mavoko, indicates the influence of the SNP on the agency and opportunity structure of the community. To what extent has the presence of SNP led to sustainable institutional changes and developed the collective and individual agency of the community members. The quality of participation and communication will
determine the outcomes measured in increased empowerment and other development outcomes. Although “other development outcomes” is mentioned here, and might still be mentioned in the analysis, it is the empowerment outcome that is at the centre of analysis.


3 The Research Design

Designing this study and choosing the methodological framework has by no means been straightforward. In order to show the rationale behind the choices made in developing this research design, this chapter will illuminate the pathway leading to the most important decisions. Furthermore, it is an objective of this chapter to thoroughly discuss the issues of reliability and validity. Through describing the research and obstacles encountered the process becomes more transparent and obstacles to achieving validity and reliability can be highlighted and finally the exit to the maze can be shown.

Qualitative research

What originally sparked my enthusiasm for the general topic of this thesis was an observation that I had made while working in slums in Africa that, to me, seemed to contradict some of the theories we studied in the Development Theory classes at university. Primarily it was triggered by De Soto’s theory of investments in informal settlement; in order to improve living conditions in informal settlements, there has to be created incentives for the settlers to invest. Incentives should be created through the provision of formal property rights to the slum dwellers. My highly informal observations was that this group of people, informal tenants and other groups with presumed low tenure security, who were not “supposed” to be willing to invest money or time in upgrading was in fact doing just that. With this as an exit point I started the journey through various research designs. First, I thought it was a research topic best solved by quantitative studies: I could analyse how people of various income groups, with various tenure situations were contributing to the project. Thereafter, I thought it could be better studied through a qualitative lens, but with a more general approach to tenure security and investment of time, skills and money in slum upgrading. As my studies progressed it became clear to me that what I wanted to study was the participation process itself, how it came about and what it would mean to the participants. Since most slum upgrading project that I have observed emphasise empowerment as an end result of people’s participation in
the project I thought it intriguing to combine the three elements: Slum Upgrading, Participation and Empowerment. The qualitative research methodology is characterized by the researcher trying to understand the reality through the informant’s perception of reality (Thagaard 2003). This is the methodology best suited to answer the research questions listed in the first chapter of this thesis. By using few entities and exhausting in-depth information from a single case I will be able to give a description of the relations between the various elements observed within the case.

The Case Study

In identifying which case should form the basis of my empirical analysis I encountered obstacles of various characters. Starting the research process while still at university in Norway, I chose the case of Kibera. It is not easy making this decision when you are immersed in a completely different reality, but information about Kibera was more accessible, being one of the largest slum settlements in Africa. This fact turned out, however, to be one of the obstacles when it came to undertaking the fieldwork. While trying to access information from UN organisations, NGOs and CBOs I encountered a mild hostility often hidden behind a smile and a referral to someone else. The case of Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP) in Kibera was clearly one of those areas that had been over studied by master students and other and the stakeholders were fatigued. In spite of this I persisted for a while and got some valuable input that made me change the focus of the case study to a different project also under KENSUP. I shifted the attention to Mavoko a smaller town with different pressing issues than Kibera, but just as relevant for the research question. It was a fulfilling choice as this is a population that has not been in the spotlight and they seem to appreciate the attention and hence are very forthcoming in the interviews and research process.

The case I chose to analyse is one of a slum upgrading project where the community members currently are involved in the programme, where the first phase of mobilising the community has come to an end, but people are still very much active. Hoggart (2002) warns against studying new topics he explain that it is a risky business because your studies might be in vain due to future unforeseen circumstances. Although, I do see that a very real pitfall if I was trying to evaluate or make predictions about the future. I do not feel it is a relevant concern in this context. Here, a representation of people’s perception of their reality is given, at a certain point in their lives, which is as real as their perception of that period in hindsight. This is not an evaluation of a project.
but rather a study of the relationship between people’s participation in a slum upgrading project and the empowerment of that group of people. This is an ongoing project with no immediate end in sight; however the project has been running strong for 4 years.

According to Gomm et al. (2002, 2) all research can on one level be seen as case studies: “There is always some unit, or sets of units, in relations to which data are collected and/or analyzed”. To some case studies represents a research paradigm and to others it is a methodology. However, it is generally accepted that a case study encompasses the collection of large amounts of data and several variables, largely collected through observations or interactions and finally subject to a qualitative analysis. This makes it possible to generate holistic descriptions with a number of variables (Stake 2000, Thagaard 2003). The case of KENSUP in Mavoko can clearly be defined as a “case” since all the informants interviewed and all the information exhausted is geared toward the one project that ties all the units together. Many variables are being explored and people’s perception of reality is being reflected.

The question of the value of case studies has been put to the table on several occasions. In an enlightening article on the importance of case studies in social sciences, Flyvberg (2004) addresses some common held biases against case studies in theory development and formation of knowledge. He claims that theoretical, context-independent knowledge is valued more than practical context-dependent knowledge. To counter this argument he claims that scientific approaches that are too theoretical can in fact lead to reproduction of false academic theories because they focus too much on the theory itself. Great distance to the object of study and lack of feedback easily lead to a learning process in which research can lead to ritual academic blind alleys, where the effect and usefulness of research becomes unclear and untested. Case studies on the other hand can in fact be useful tools to validate research findings. In human affairs there is no such thing as predictive theories:

“Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs.
Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is, therefore, more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals”. (Flyvberg 2004, 425)

Some claim that case studies should be limited to say something about the unique aspects of a particular case and therefore it is not advisable to generalise from it or to develop theories on its basis. Thagaard (2003) holds that single case studies can have transferability that extends the single
case: If the selection has been done systematically, and they have some sort of theoretical relevance. Flyvberg (2004) holds, in defence of case studies, that the formal generalisation is overvalued:

“One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas “the force of example” is underestimated.” (Flyvberg 2004)

This is somewhat similar to the distinction that Stake (2000) makes between natural generalisation and formal generalisation. This thesis does not claim to say something general about all participatory slum upgrading processes, however, it can be seen as a valuable contribution to the assumption of causality between participation and empowerment. It can also contribute to the development of the theory of participation in development. In line with Flyvberg’s assertions it contributes to the world of development merely by “the force of example”.

Another criticism that has been laden against qualitative research in general and case studies in particular is the question of objectivity. Because of it’s descriptive and unstructured nature some claim that scientific objectivity is at stake. In this connection, it is worth repeating the insight of Kuhn (1987): That a discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed case studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars, and that a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one. In social science, a greater number of good case studies could help remedy this situation (Khun in Flyvberg 2004).

The case study contains no greater bias toward verification of the researcher’s preconceived notions than other methods of inquiry. On the contrary, experience indicates that the case study contains a greater bias toward falsification of preconceived notions than toward verification. (Flyvberg 2004, 429)

This thesis does not in any way claim absolute objectivity and I do not believe it should be a primary aim for social science. It is a product in which my own biases have played a part, not least when it comes to formulating question and selecting themes and analysing the responses. The biases of the informants are also represented in the final product. The various groups of interviewees all have
their own vested interests and interpretation of their reality. The interview techniques can be used to limit the influence of my own biases on the research process. This will be discussed further in the next section.

The Interview Process

The manner in which interviews are conducted and the way the questions are developed has a significant impact on the validity of the research. Validity has two connotations; firstly the proximity of the findings to the reality studied (this will be discussed below), and secondly to which extent the interview questions are fitted to answer the research questions. What I have done to minimize the impact of my biases on the informants is to ask open ended questions, and to reflect the answers back to them in the way they were stated. This has made me better equipped to understand how they see their own reality, and given me a better chance to represent that reality. By using quotations in the text the reader is also free to interpret differently. Contradicting information from various sources has been left as contradicting information in the final product; since it is not the “truth” as such that is the target.

Interviews are conversations with a purpose. Questions are developed and informants chosen in order to highlight a specific topic. The role of the informant is to give a representation of their own reality, and the role of the interviewer is to make it possible for that to occur. I tried to create a conducive environment for the informants by visiting them in their own surroundings instead of taking them out of their familiar context. Other interest-groups were excluded from the scene when the interviews took place, and the interviewees could to some extent direct the flow of the conversations.

Interview guides (appendix 1-3) were developed in order to semi-systematise the interview processes. For the three categories of interviewees different questions were devised, although the core questions remained the same. Conscious selection entails that the informants chosen have certain qualities or access to certain knowledge that are strategically important to the research questions (Thagaard 2003) The selection of informants in this thesis is based on a triangulation of information. The interviews undertaken were as follows:
1) Representatives from UN-Habitat (one person)
2) Representative from GoK KENSUP section (one person)
3) Representatives of the local SNP coordinators in Mavoko (3 people one interview)
4) Focus group of co-operative members (1 group)

The first two interviews were conducted as one on one interviews in a fairly standardised settings. The local SNP coordinators in Mavoko were interviewed as a group and the communities were put together in a focus group discussions. The informants were chosen because they all represent different stakeholders in the project, and they have very different roles. I suspected that the information gathered from the various informants was going to vary a great deal; therefore I chose to not exclude anyone. This triangulation can also be seen to improve the validity of the study.

Unfortunately the circumstances under which some interviews were held were not conducive to recording as the background noise level was too high. The setting was however relaxed and not pressed for time, so it was unproblematic to take detailed notes. The interview technique also allowed for corrections: answers were reflected back to the informant for confirmation, followed by probing on new issues brought up.

In the focus group with the co-operative members' translation was needed as not all informants were comfortable with English, some knew Swahili, but the preferred language of the groups was Kamba. I find it is important to accommodate the wishes of the informants in this respect as it relaxes the group. There are, however, some downsides to using an interpreter. Sometimes there is important information in the informal chit-chat within the group, which is difficult to grasp through translation. However, the translator who sat in on the session was also aided by the group members who were versed in English to assure that the correct information was delivered, both ways.

The interview process is one important part of doing field, work the other is observation and immersing one-self in the topic of research. As writing a thesis can be isolating and a lonely endeavour, doing field studies can be invigorating yet testing. The reality is complex and writing about reality has a limit. I have therefore found that doing fieldwork is a balance between patience and impatience. One has to be tolerant and patient with informants who are giving of their time and lending their opinions. Patient when people don’t show up and understanding that this is not their product they have their own life. On the other hand impatience is a necessary virtue in this process.
as, at one point, one has to say: “Enough. Let’s work with this data”. A case is endless and a case study has to have an end.

**Internal validity and reliability**

The internal validity of research relates to the relative certainty that the outcomes observed are caused by the programme and not by other probable causes. In this case study I have probed the informant on what they perceive as the likely causes to the empowerment outcomes, and outcomes related to improvements in opportunity structures. This combined with my own observations is how one could assess the internal validity of this thesis. In the analysis I will comment on other possible causes that might have contributed to the outcome and thereafter argue for which ones I perceive to be most likely.

It is not realistic to exhaust all other alternative causes to the findings. What is important is to clearly document the reasons for why a particular cause is chosen as the most credible, and also list other causes that could have contributed even if they are not at the centre of the study. In this case I had to ask myself: “Could the advancement of the master plan be accredited to the SNP? Or would it have happened at that speed regardless”. Here it is not possible for me or anybody else to know for sure. It is in these cases that it is valuable to reflect upon the involved people’s opinion and standpoints.

At best reliability in qualitative studies is achieved through a transparent representation of the research process; well documented research process, in developing the design, collecting the data and analysing the data. I have taken measurement, with variable success, to assert the reliability of this data. The interview guides can be found in the appendix, the process of analysis of the data will be described below. I attempted to tape the interviews, but due to high noise pollution I chose to also take thorough notes. Some of the taped interviews were unfortunately unusable, but because of my proximity to the area and informants, I corrected this with clarifying questions over the phone or person-to-person.
Analysis and interpretation

For some, the analysis is the technical process of coding and sorting data. Others see data analysis as a creative process of interpretations. I find that in line with Coffey and Atkinson (1996), the process of analysis and the process of data collection cannot be separated from each other. Interpretations and analysis happen throughout the process, consciously or unconsciously. Analysis and interpretation may go hand in hand but they should not be confused with each other. The process of analysis is the coding and finding patterns in the collected data. Interpretation is how this data is read, understood and represented in the final product. Thagaard (2003) explains that it is important for the researcher to clarify the origin and refer to documentation of every single interpretation. This is not always easy to do in practice, but in this thesis I have tried to achieve this ideal by frequently referring to who gave what information, what is based on observations, and what is my own interpretations based on my the combination of theoretical knowledge and the information from informants.

The data collected in one phase of the research has been semi-analysed and directed the research process. The process of analysis is an integrated part of the entire research process, not as an isolated or final part as some might say. Huberman and Miles (in Coffey & Atkinson 1996) define data analysis by three intertwined processes: data reduction, display and conclusions. Although the interpretations happen throughout the research process it is important to systematically organize the data through coding or other techniques.

After the interviews I first of all transcribed the dialogue and found it pivotal to go through the transcribed material to look for key elements and common themes. Like Limb and Dwyer (1996) describes it: Data are useless until they have been transcribed, coded and analysed. I chose a combination of the theme-centred and the person-centred approach to analysis.

According to Thagaard (2003) there are two main approaches to analysis. The first one focuses on isolating the various themes in the data, theme-centred analysis, and the other the informant is at the centre of analysis. The person-centred approach is regarded as more holistic; it is also common to combine the two approaches. My approach was mostly based of the themes of the interviews. I tried to locate the various themes within each of the interviews, but not detach the information form the person and the context in which it was given.
Context of the Case Study

In this chapter the background and context of the case study will be described. This case study takes place in a global context of accelerating urban growth and an ever increasing concentration of poverty in urban areas. The chapter starts out by describing the urbanisation in the developing world and the challenges it poses for the urban poor themselves as well as for the development agencies involved in urban poverty reduction. Thereafter a brief introduction to Kenya and the urban situation will be given. Following the presentation of the national context, the case of Mavoko will be presented. Here, the emphasis will be on the situation of the poor: what are the social and economical constraints they are faced with including the issue of empowerment. Lastly, in this chapter the Mavoko Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme (The SNP) will be presented together with the Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP), hereunder the key principles and implementation strategy.

Urbanisation and poverty

By 2030 it is likely that 95% of the world’s population growth will take place in developing countries’ urban areas. 3.9 billion people will by this time be living in urban areas in less developed countries (UN-Habitat 2003). Although some are arguing that urbanisation rates in Africa are now declining, absolute urban population growth is still enormous. Still, the fastest growing economic stratum of the African cities is the poor. (UN-Habitat unpublished a). So far, the increased urbanisation has not been followed by economic growth, and unless drastic changes occur it is not fair to assume that it will. The predictions therefore expect rapid increase of size and number of slums in developing countries’ cities, deterioration of living conditions, increased social segregation and spatial fragmentation (Davis 2006). In Nairobi three quarters of the population is classified as “poor” (UN-Habitat unpublished a) which does not create a conducive environment for economic growth and investments. Thus the developing world’s urban problem is becoming one of the main challenges of the new millennium posed to squatter inhabitants, local communities, governments, NGOs and
international development agencies. How we deal with the challenges of urban poverty now is a critical determinant of how generations of global citizens will live in the future (UN-Habitat 2003).

Urbanisation has led to a steady increase in the demand for housing which has led to practical challenges for politicians, practitioners and urban dwellers. Central governments and local authorities are ill-equipped to handle or address the impacts of the massive current urbanisation process. In its utter consequence the failure of the urban governance there is the massive expansion of slums of the developing world today (UN-Habitat unpublished a). The impact of urban poverty on the poor undermines the security and efficiency of the whole city. On the other extreme a well functioning city can be view as the engines of growth beyond its borders:

“Well functioning towns and cities unconstrained by the human and economic costs of poverty and environmental degradation, not only benefit their inhabitants, they also have a significant impact on peri-urban and rural regions that surround them” (Wakely et al. 2001)

Kenya

Kenya is a former British colony in the Eastern Africa region. It is a country that in spite of some recent economic growth still struggles with major problems of poverty. Kenya has outperformed many other countries in the Sub-Sahara Africa region, but nonetheless there is a high ratio of poor people in the population. In 1999 Kenya was ranked as number 136 on the Human Development Index (HDI), and as number 49 on the Human Poverty Index (HPI). However, the disparities between rich and poor were only exceeded by six other developing countries (UNDP 1999).

In the latest Human Development Report from UNDP Kenya has moved from a “low income country” to a “middle income country”. The country now ranks number 148. The number of people living on less than one dollar a day has according to the latest house hold survey (2006) declined. Today, 46% of Kenyan are living in extreme poverty, down from in 55 % in 2001. Kenya has one of Africa’s worst performing economies despite a GDP growth rate upturn of more then 5 % since 2005. In 2006 Kenya’s GDP was about US$ 17.3 billion. Per capita GDP average somewhat more than US$ 450 annually. GDP composition by sector, according to 2004 estimates, was as follows: 25.7 % agriculture, 14% manufacturing, 13.8 trade, hotels and restaurants, 13.8 % transport and
communication, 15.6 government services and other 24.0%. In 2004 about 15 percent of the labour force was officially classified as unemployed. In 2006 Kenya’s labour force was estimated to include about 12 million workers, almost 75% in agriculture. Other estimates place Kenya’s unemployment much higher, even up to 40 percent (GoK 2007).

Kenya’s rapid urbanisation started after independence in 1963. The urban population grew from 5% at the time of the first census, 1948; to 21% in 1997 (Yahya et al. 2001). The consultative process for Habitat II revealed that the most pressing issues for the urban population was poverty, unemployment, poor access to land, energy, basic infrastructure and services. In addition the cost of building materials are so high that it is out of reach for low income groups, many of whom do not have access to housing finance and services (Yahya et al. 2001). In fact the majority of Kenyans do not have access to adequate shelter. In 1997 GoK estimated that in 2001 there would be an annual need for housing 127,000 units in urban areas and 303,000 units in rural areas. This estimate is made on the basis of adequate housing needs and not on economic demand. In many towns more than 50% of the population lives in overcrowded settlements. The overcrowding is especially notable on public land where there is an average of 250 units per hectare against 25 units in middle income countries and 13 in high income areas.

Support to informal settlements

On the national policy level the government launched the National Poverty Eradication Plan (NPEP) in 1996. Here the status of urban poverty and the strategies to combating poverty are addressed. This document has a strong focus on creating productive employment opportunities for the urban poor. NPEP states that urban poverty and livelihood problems should be solved through physical upgrading of informal settlements and not by investing in programmes such as increasing the value of land which typically benefits the non-poor in the end. The document does not propose a holistic approach to urban poverty, nor does it suggest a participatory approach. Officially, however, the government supports the enabling approach proposed by the Habitat agenda and Habitat II. In this enabling approach the governments’ role is restricted to providing a supportive framework to encourage a housing market system, housing finance, provision of infrastructure and a legal

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^Www.housing.go.ke/needs
framework, *not* to engage directly in housing provision. Alder and Muene (1999) claim that in practice the government’s strategy is not one of enabling and support, but rather one of withdrawal. Although there is a land market, it is affected by mismanagement and extensive land grabbing. When it comes to provision of infrastructure the government is largely absent within the informal settlement, even the infrastructure connecting the informal settlement to the rest of the city is in decline (Adler & Muene 1999). Lastly, the housing finance system in place caters mostly to the middle and higher income groups and are characterised by very high interest rates. Through the Physical Planning Act of 1996 the government states that civil society must play an important role in the planning and implementation process. NPEP focuses on three main actions that should be taken in order to combat urban poverty:

1) supporting *jua kali* activities (the informal sector)
2) government protection of lawful *jua kali*
3) improvement of the quality and quantity of employment provided by the corporate sector

After the Habitat II convention, a number of African countries have changed their attitude towards informal settlements (UN-Habitat 2006) Kenya’s official attitudes towards informal settlements have evolved from intolerance to acceptance. This change can be traced to the first national housing policy document and the subsequent national development plans. The previous strategy of the government of Kenya was regularly demolition of the informal settlements. Today, however, the Government of Kenya is, in cooperation with UN-Habitat, implementing the Kenya Slum Upgrading Scheme (KENSUP). A presentation of KENSUP will be given below, however it is useful to present the main objective of KENSUP in this context, as it shows a favourable attitude towards the improvement of slum dwellers livelihoods on the government policy level:

“To improve the overall livelihoods of people living and working within slums through targeted interventions to address shelter, infrastructure services, land tenure and employment issues as well as the impact of HIV/AIDS in slum settlements” (UN-Habitat 2006, 35)
Co-operatives

Members of housing co-operatives have traditionally been middle-income households. Lewin (1981) explains this by the fact that the founding and promotion of a housing co-operative requires a great deal of knowledge and a relatively high education level. Nevertheless, self-help housing co-operatives have repeatedly been advocated as a means of approaching the shelter problems of low-income households in developing countries (Alder & Muene 1999). To achieve a successful low-income housing co-operative the regulatory framework has to be favourable and assistance in organisation, training and regulation has to be supported by an external agency.

The housing co-operative movement in Kenya is not very strong compared to savings and credit co-operatives. The housing co-operative movement gained force first in the 1980s with the establishment of the National Co-operative Housing Union (NACHU). The initiative came from the Central Organisation of Trade Unions with support form co-operative movements and trade unions in many countries. Alder and Muene (1999) comment that the by-law of a primary housing co-operative is very similar to the Habitat agenda, here is one objective:

“To provide for it’s members decent living accommodation within it’s area of operation at a fair and reasonable price together with such ancillary services as roads, drainage, water and light and together with facilities for physical and cultural recreation and all other matters that are usual and customary for building estates, blocks of flats or single dwellings” (Alder and Muene 1999, )

There are three main forms of housing co-operatives:

1) Continuing co-operatives are the classic co-operatives that land and buildings are jointly owned by the co-operative members.

2) Multiple mortgage co-operatives where each member household holds individual loans with housing finance institutions.

3) Limited housing co-operatives are normally formed in order to jointly purchase land and sometimes build dwellings. When the object is achieved the units are transferred to individual ownership.
It is the third form of housing co-operative that is most common in the Kenyan context. Many co-operatives were started with the sole purpose for buying land, and when this was done there was no real purpose for continued existence. Other co-operatives were started with the aim of building houses, but due to high costs and difficult conditions in finance institutions they had to become a limited housing co-operative by circumstances, not by choice.

Alder and Muene (1999) list some advantages of housing co-operatives: they mobilise savings from the members, it can reduce costs by acquiring land on a block basis, mobilise self-help construction, negotiate loans with finance institutions and buy materials in bulk. Other advantages of housing co-operatives include that they provide an environment for organising social facilities and income generating facilities. With some outside support the co-operatives can also alleviate poverty for its members. The disadvantages mentioned within the Kenyan context are, first of all that the ultimate goal for most co-operative members is individual titles. This limits the purpose and the long term viability of co-operatives. Secondly, it is difficult for the co-operatives for the poor to succeed without some form of donor support. Lastly, co-operatives have not been able to facilitate better access to financing than other housing developers. The gap between housing cost in the formal market and salaries is often so great that it is impossible to overcome for most low income households without external assistance.

**Mavoko**

Mavoko, also known as Athi River, is situated in Machakos District 25km south-east of Nairobi and has an estimated population of 65,000. Mavoko’s population is increasing due to natural growth and rural-urban migration. Machakos District has a population of approximately 1 million. The town has a strategic location for several reasons: due to the proximity of two main highways (to the Mombasa port and to Tanzania); the likely expansion of the Greater Nairobi Metropolitan Region; and the proximity to Nairobi Industrial Area including the Export Processing Zone (EPZ). The town has benefited from the establishment of the EPZ and a growing number of industrial entities in the area, such as cement producers, mining and flower farming. This has changed the employment pattern considerably since the mainly cattle rearing days of the 1950s (UN-Habitat x2).
Mavoko’s Slums

Real and perceived employment opportunities have drawn people from all over the country. In the absence of a housing development scheme this has led to an explosive growth in slums around strategic location and close to industries and other places of employment. There are 25 rapidly expanding informal settlements around Mavoko, most of which are in deplorable conditions. The Socio-Economic Report from UN-Habitat (2005b) shows 7,778 households and 24,000 people within the 25 settlements in 2005.

A high proportion of Mavoko’s inhabitants live in slum conditions characterized by insecure tenure and lack of access to basic services. The tenure structure shows that a the vast majority (88%) of the community members are tenants while “structure owner on allocated land” and “structure owner on private land” comprise 4.4 % and 1.3 % respectively. Those that where purely landowners constituted 0.3%. Tenant’s in informal settlements generally have low tenure security and constantly feel the threat of evictions; this is also the case of the inhabitants of the informal settlement in Mavoko. Nevertheless the majority of the population 28% has lived in the settlement for more than five years, and 22% have lived there for more than ten years. There are, however, great disparities between the different villages (UN-Habitat 2005b).

The quality of the residential structures varies a great deal among and within the informal settlements. Two thirds of the structures within the informal settlements are made from old pieces of iron sheets. 18 % made of stone blocks, 8% of carton boxes, 3 % of pieces of wood, while 3% and 2% are made out of mud and plastic sheets respectively. The typical single room residential unit is 10x10 feet without windows and ventilation provisions. During the heavy rain of the rainy season many of the shelters literally fall apart (UN Habitat 2005b).
Fig 4: Construction materials for housing in Mavoko’s informal settlements

Source: Un-Habitat 2005b, Socio-Economic Mapping

Level of Empowerment

The agency and opportunity structure of the community refers to the range of assets and capabilities embodied in the structure of the society and the community members them self. These factors work together to determine the level and precondition of empowerment. As mentioned above there are four main change agents in advancing empowerment: access to information, inclusion and participation, social accountability, and local organizational capacity (Narayan 2006). On the other hand people’s individual and collective agency also determines the extent in which they can utilise these opportunity structures. This section seeks to give an introduction to the state of people’s livelihood and the preconditions for empowerment in the communities of Mavoko.

Poverty and individual capacities

Material assets that can enable people to withstand shocks and sudden changes in their environment are pivotal for people’s agency. These assets come in the form of land, housing, livestock, savings and jewellery (Narayan 2006). It is implicit that these poor people’s material assets are less than that of a rich person and in turn reproduces a culture of inequality and limits empowerment. Poverty levels in Mavoko are high, with a high degree of both absolute and abject poverty. A survey
conducted by UN-Habitat for the Sustainable Neighbourhood Program (SNP) (UN-Habitat 2005) reported that 76.8 percent of the households had monthly incomes falling below KSh. 5,000 while 23.2 percent had incomes over KSh 5,000. Average rent is between KSh 500-1,000 and about 60 % of the population fall under this bracket, while 19% pay under 500 and another 19% pay more than 1,000. The SNP coordinators described the majority of the population as poor. It affects everybody in the community either directly or indirectly.

Few people in the informal settlements own their land. Most land is either privately owned or government land. When it comes to ownership of the structures it varies from village to village. Generally the better-off areas are dominated by tenant landlord relations, where as the worse-off in the squatter villages, by and large, own their own structures. However, there is no real value in owning these houses as they are largely made from mud or paper (coordinator, pers. comm.)

The employment rate of the District is 16% and ten percent of the total population in Mavoko are employed in the EPZ (UN-Habitat unpublished b). In spite of the large presence of industries the unemployment rates are still high. Unskilled people are left out of the labour market while the jobs are given to people from out of town.

Narayan (2006) lists “Good health” is one of the prerequisites for empowerment. Disease and poverty go hand in hand. The health situation in Mavoko’s informal settlements is far from acceptable and conducive to advancing in life. 43% of the population is under the age of 18 years (UN-Habitat 2005b). Health services are not easily accessible form most: 30% of the population it takes more than one hour to reach the nearest dispensary and more than 50% of the population has no access to clean drinking water (UN-Habitat unpublished b). The health issues were mentioned, by co-operative members and coordinators, as major burdens on individuals and households and it drains peoples capacity to aspire and take action (coordinator pers.comm).

Access to information

Measuring people’s access to information is not always easy. However, the education level can be used as a good indicator as well as talking to the coordinators and community members about how they disseminate information. Education reflects both people’s individual capabilities and the opportunity structure of the community.
Education levels in Mavoko are generally lower than the national average. The Socio-Economic mapping (UN-Habitat 2005) showed that 81% of the respondents had formal education. 19% had no formal education. This percentage of people with out any formal education is about double that of the national average. Of the group that has formal education 35% had completed primary education and 24% had secondary or high school education, only 1.4% had received technical training. The relatively low education and formal training of the population poses a challenge to participation processes at the community level.

There are eight government-run primary schools and only one secondary school in Mavoko. On the other hand there are over 40 privately run schools. Great inequalities exist between the government and the private schools’ teaching standards and facilities. On the other hand the community shows a high degree of self learning as only 1.4% has technical skills training but in the survey 31% expressed that they had tailoring skills, 17% had material production skills, 12% electrical and masonry skills respectively, 9% hairdressing skills and 8% said they had carpentry skills. These figures indicate that the community’s ability to access formal education system is hindered by poverty. High transport costs, tuition and long distances in effect excludes them from higher education (UN-Habitat unpublished b).

The coordinators of the SNP describe the information situation in the villages as difficult to overcome. Information is disseminated mostly through community meeting and word of mouth (coordinator pers.comm). Because the communities largely are excluded from the formal information channels the problem of rumours are frequently mentioned as an obstacle. Rumours that contradict the official information can in fact reverse sensitisation. The coordinators describe how they have had to go to the villages on several occasions to “set the story straight” (coordinator pers.comm). The Mavoko Urban Sector profile (UN-Habitat unpublished b) also indicates that the access to information is weak in the community:

“Information on land allocation does not reach the poor communities on time and the majority are unaware of the legislation concerning their rights and have difficulties accessing legal advice” (UN-Habitat unpublished b, 15)
The sum of all the above mentioned obstacles to information paints a less uplifting picture of the ability of the poor community member to access information. It is not too presumptuous to say that judging from this aspect alone the empowerment level of the community members is weak.

**Inclusion and participation**

The majority of the population is from the Kamba community, which makes it a more homogeneous settlement than other informal settlements within Nairobi. According to the UN-Habitat informant the local population often gives this as the reason for relatively few conflicts among and within the various villages. It might also be a facilitating factor in the implementation of development projects as more homogeneous settlements are easier to organize. According to Lall et al. (2002) it is a common assumption that homogeneity within the community facilitates community mobilisation. However diverse the community is on other areas the homogeneity of the ethnic composition might be a factor that makes it easier to organise the communities in Mavoko. Despite government campaigns to the contrary, Kenyan society is still very focused on ethnic groups. Through informal communication with UN-Habitat representatives, and representatives from NGOs working in Kibera, a more tribally diverse slum, I have come to understand that competition and nepotism are very real obstacles to a transparent participation process. Lall et al. (2002) studies from Bangalore however, demonstrated that when the organisation focused on a common economic goal high diversity did not pose any hindrances to the mobilisation at all.

According to the Socio-economic mapping the slum residents are excluded from participation in social, political and economic life in the town (UN-Habitat 2005b). The co-operative members also focused on the fact that they did not feel respected by the authorities, and deemed that nothing in the community would change unless the officials started to treat everybody as equals (co-operative member, pers.comm)

Women generally have a low social status in the society. They have less access to land and are less aware of their rights. Many suffer exploitation through long working hours and dire working conditions. These disparities combined with a high household workload contribute to give women a low social status. The gender inequalities have not been addressed by the Municipality Council of Mavoko (UN-Habitat unpublished b). In spite, or maybe because, of the unequal workload on women the co-operative members claim that the women are the most active segment in the self-help
groups: “They feel the burden” (co-operative member, pers.comm) is given as an explanation to this
phenomenon.

On the institutional side of the local authorities the MCM have adopted and commenced the
implementation of the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Planning (LASDAP). The aim is to
increase participation from community representatives in municipality planning (UN-Habitat
unpublished b). The MCM is committed to this process and it is a step forward for the empowerment
of the community members. Participation in this process is, at present, only by invitation and the
process needs to become more inclusive and open if it is to succeed in the long run.

**Social accountability**

The UN-Habitat Urban Sector Profile paints a murky picture of the social accountability and ability
to include people in transparent decision making processes. The Municipality Council of Mavoko
(MCM) faces many socio-economical challenges and it does not have the financial or human capital
to respond to them. Due to the employment freeze imposed by the central government the MCM is
understaffed and many key positions remain unfilled. There are no comprehensive physical,
economic or environmental plan, nor does the MCM have a pro-poor policy to combat the rising
urban poverty levels (UN-Habitat unpublished b). In general the relationship between the council
and its resident causes a lot of difficulties. Lack of transparency makes it difficult for the commu-
nities to take part in shaping future plans. Lack of coordinating tools and plans has led to an urban
development that is mostly *ad hoc* and uncontrolled. Insufficient planning and control has in turn led
to residences being developed in areas associated with high health-risk close to industries with high
pollution levels (UN-Habitat 2005b and unpublished b). However, through interviews, it is seems
clear that there have been fundamental changes in the operations of the MCM.

The coordinators impression of the MCM is that they are very co-operative: “They are our
partners, they help us a lot” (coordinator, pers.comm). They also paint a different picture of the
relationship between community members and the MCM than what the UN-Habitat Urban Sector
Report does. They explain how whenever co-operative member come to see them they also drop by
to see the people at the MCM. “It is very open” (coordinator, pers.comm). Amongst the co-operative
members there were mixed views on this matter. Some said that they do not feel that they respect
people who live in the slums, others said the relationship was “okay”, without elaborating further (pers.comm).

On other institutional changes the MCM is the first municipality council to complete a Master Plan and publish it on the internet. This is viewed by some as an important step to increased transparency and accountability. The coordinators, who work closely with the MCM, say that they have not seen it yet. “It has not reached the ground yet, and I don’t expect to see anything in the next few years” (coordinator, pers.comm). As commonly know organisational and institutional changes do take time, but the measures being taken by the MCM does at least seem to be steps towards openness and accountability and not in the other direction.

**Organizational capacity**

The organisational capacity is an important part of the community’s opportunity structure. Most people in Mavoko’s informal settlements are members of at least one self-help group, merry-go-round or co-operative (not counting the SNP co-operatives). This shows that the community’s ability to organise themselves is relatively high. Most of the groups are fairly small and targets mostly social and health related issues pressing to the community. The overwhelming majority of these groups are registered with the appropriate ministry, which means that they have formal memberships and constitutions. One co-operative member explained why they saw it as important to be registered:

> “Registered, they are all registered with the ministry. Then people know who you are. If you do not have a certificate then you cannot meet well. You are always worried that somebody form the ministry will come and catch you”. (co-operative member, pers.comm)

Most respondents in the participatory mapping done by UN-Habitat and community representatives (UN-Habitat 2005b) reported that they were always eager to join groups that could assist them in meeting their personal needs such as children’s education, rent, illness and burial. Data collected showed that 71% of the community members were willing to engage in co-operatives and assist in self-construction. Some hesitance was found mostly due to past negative experiences that had led to financial losses (UN-Habitat 2005b).
The community’s organisational capacity is closely linked to individual capabilities such as identity, leadership, sense of belonging (Narayan 2006). Co-operative members say that this is a major obstacle to making the self-help groups more effective. They say there is a need for leadership training. Sense of belonging and identity tied to the community on the other hand seems to be two factors that facilitate the organisations in Mavoko.

**KENSUP and the SNP**

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Programme is a slum resettlement programme relocating slum dwellers to a piece of land in Mavoko made available by the Government of Kenya in a debt swap with the Government of Finland. The SNP is part of the larger Kenya Slum Upgrading Programme (KENSUP), a program that aims to improve the livelihoods of people working and living in Kenya’s slums through providing security of tenure, housing improvement, infrastructure upgrading and income generation. KENSUP was initiated by the Government of Kenya in 2001 and is complemented by UN-Habitat. In addition to Mavoko, KENSUP activities are found in Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa.

The SNP is a self-help housing project linked to capacity building and income generation for the informal settlements in Mavoko. The revised UN-Habitat project document (UN-Habitat unpublished a) list the two main goals of the programme as 1) improve local governance and 2) strengthen the capacity and the role of formal and informal community sectors in developing sustainable neighbourhoods. Empowerment of the communities is repeatedly mentioned as a desired outcome for the activities as well as an overall target.

**Key principles**

Both the UN-Habitat and the GoK hold that the SNP is based on the enabling approach to slum upgrading and housing provision. Two concepts are central in this approach to dealing with informal settlements: “self-help” and “community”. Integrating the *self-help* principle is recognition of slum dwellers as hard working and resourceful people, but they are in need of resources and empowerment. The *community* ties are often strong within the informal settlements. This makes it
possible to initiate well organised sustainable neighbourhood community self-help programmes instead of individual self-help programmes. The SNP presents the “integrated development approach” as their entry point to slum upgrading (UN-Habitat, unpublished a, 16):

- Development of an integrated infrastructure system as entry point to slum upgrading (for example through provision of water and sanitation) in order to reduce the cost of housing.
- Construction or upgrading of the existing housing stock.
- Link 1) and 2) to capacity build and introduce income generating activities to the slum dwellers in order to improve their livelihoods.
- Develop the capacities of the local authorities in participatory- and strategic planning.

Some of the strategic principles mentioned in the revised project document (UN-Habitat unpublished a) are subsidiarity, capacity building, sustainability, participation, partnership, good governance and gender awareness. All of these concepts are intertwined and all undeniably tied to empowerment. The SNP attempts to ensure that the project participants are in charge of all at stages of the project in particular groups that are often excluded from the participatory process. “The ultimate aim of participation is empowerment, capacity building and sustainability” (UN-Habitat unpublished a, 12). This approach to slum improvement acknowledges that the community can participate with their skills, time and willingness to work. However, there is a need for a broad based partnership between all stakeholders: community, local government, central government as well as the private sector. The project document states that the partnerships should allow the partners to alleviate their strengths and build on each others strengths. “SNP believes that broad-based partnerships promote community participation, capacity building, empowerment, and efficient resource mobilisation” (UN-Habitat unpublished a, 14)

In the UN-Habitat Foundation Project Document (2002) as well as in the revised document (2005a) “empowerment of the communities” is listed as the first issue under the heading “Main issues to be addressed”. Empowerment is not defined in these documents, but it can be read from the implementation plan that it involves providing training for community members in construction skills, strengthening the civic society through the establishment of community associations and finally building community-government partnership. The inclusion of women in construction activities is mentioned specifically. Interpreting the project document it seems clear that the main focus of the SNP is not the production on housing units in itself but rather training the community...
members in various skills and income generating activities. Through this they will be able to take charge of their own development and be more eligible for jobs as skilled workers once the programme has ended.

**Implementation**

The SNP was set to start August 1st 2002 with a completion date 30th of June 2005. However, due to a number of delays the programme is still ongoing and a new completion date is set to December 2007. Mavoko was chosen as a site for KENSUP mainly because a plot was made available through a debt swap between the GoK and the Finnish Government. The process was facilitated by UN-Habitat in order to be able to carry out a pilot project under the sustainable neighbourhood framework described above. This plot of land was, however, no longer available to the project as of December 2005. This, of course led to serious delays in the project implementation as new negotiations had to take place between UN-Habitat and the GoK. The GoK proposed a new plot of 3 hectares (ha) neighbouring the original 22ha plot. This proposal was not accepted by UN-Habitat and not until April 2007 was a new 22ha plot assigned to the project. This one and a half years delay has led to the reorganisation of the project and an estrangement between the two partners.

UN-Habitat and the GoK are still partners in the KENSUP, but in the SNP Mavoko they have parted ways in practical terms. Now there exists one SNP run by the Government, on the original 22ha site, and one SNP run by UN-Habitat on the newly assigned 22ha plot. The two projects are fundamentally different as the informant from UN-Habitat explained: “The Government’s part of the project [on the original site] is contractor built mixed housing. Their aim is to produce 400 units on the plot. In the first tender round the cheapest offer was for houses around 750,000 KSh, were as our studies showed that the original population would not be able to carry a cost above 300,000 to 400,000 KSh. I don’t know the result of the second tender round.”(UN-Habitat, pers.comm) The UN-Habitat project on the other hand is a pilot project of self help construction of houses with the aim of constructing 200 units in the first round. The community will be trained in a variety of skills in order to make them capable of providing quality services to the building process. The beneficiaries will be chosen after a review of their income, capacity to save and social status. Contributions from the community will also influence the final decision.
On the ground the two projects are not easily separated: Both projects will use the housing co-operatives in order to strengthen the capacity of the local community and to make them able to afford the new houses, both use the district co-operative office to facilitate training; both refer community members the UN-Habitat hired SNP coordinators on the ground; and both are based on resettlement. For this reason it is not easy to separate the two projects in the analysis. Instead I will make it clear where there are differences in the approach and responses between the two organisations.

**Capacity Building**

Capacity building commonly includes transfer of skills and assisting the local organisations to increase their opportunities for taking action in order to influence their lives and the livelihood of the community (UNDP\(^3\)). In the original project document and in the first revision considerably more activities are tied to capacity building than in the latest project document (UN-Habitat, unpublished b). The highlight of the activities listed in the revised project document of January 2005 are:

1) prepare the curriculum and training material, erect Technology Workshop, and commerce training activities
2) Organize building associations
3) Establish financial mechanisms
4) Train municipal staff in community participation and mobilization
5) Analyse bottlenecks for community-government partnership and formulate action plan to eliminate the constraints
6) Initiate planning of the Sustainable neighbourhood

This original plan of capacity building fell through on account of programme hold ups, and the fact that between December 2005 and April 2007 the site was unavailable. Only after securing a new site for the SNP the programme could move forward, but due to considerable delays the implementation agenda had to be modified. Through interviews very little emphasis has been put on capacity building of the MCM. The lack of capacity building of MCM might be attributed to the problematic relationship between local and central authorities in Kenya. The division of labour is not clear, and in

\(^3\)Http://capacity.undp.org/index
the later years more responsibility has been assigned to local authorities without being followed by the necessary financial support (UN-Habitat unpublished b). However, the last revised project document of 2007 still emphasised that capacity building has to have a dual nature in order to be sustainable: both local governments and communities have to benefit from it. “More importantly the SNP recognises that there is a need to address the relationship between the community and government sectors because this is the only way capacity–building efforts can be sustainable” (UN-Habitat unpublished a, 11). The capacity building components are at this stage built in as an integral part of the co-operatives, training in construction and service delivery is now channelled through the co-operatives alongside the emphasis on saving activities.

Co-operatives

In its project documents the SNP acknowledges that the poor are mainly excluded from traditional housing finance that would allow them to purchase houses. In Mavoko this is evident as the vast majority of poor either rent rooms or build shacks on unserviced land, as squatters (UN-Habitat 2005b). The co-operative model can be a way to amend this inequality and help poor people gain access to the housing market. The latest SNP project document of 2007 (unpublished b) list the following benefits associated with the co-operative saving scheme:

- Participatory management
- Entry point for non-shelter related community issues
- Entry point for partnership with local authorities in service provision
- Social integration

To elaborate on this it is implied in the co-operative model that the management approach is highly participatory. The officials are elected by the co-operative members. They meet monthly and whenever there are issues to be addressed. All co-operative members are entitled to bring up issues to the official, but there is only one annual members meeting. Non-shelter related community issues that can be addressed through the co-operative, like sanitation and waste management. Furthermore, because co-operatives will hopefully lead to land acquisition then the SNP assumes that this will lead to productive partnership with local authorities. Lastly, the formation of co-operatives is likely to lead to social integration as they work together towards a common goal. Co-operatives have also in
the past been successful in resettling poor people in Mavoko. In an unrelated event a housing co-operative in Bellevue area purchased a plot of land in Mavoko in 1994. Financed through their own saving and financial grants from an INGO and with the support of local government 139 households where resettled there by 1998. This is a success story that shows that through real cooperation and empowerment of primary stakeholders it is possible and viable to resettle urban poor populations (Alder and Muene 1999). Success stories like this one can keep up the motivation for co-operative members when the project implementation takes too long. However, Alder and Muene (1999) also emphasise that it is unrealistic that poor people’s co-operative can succeed without outside donor support.

At present there are six co-operatives formed through the SNP. These co-operatives are organized geographically and are fairly homogeneous in terms of tenure status. How far the co-operatives have gotten in the organisation process does, however, vary considerably. All co-operatives are registered as co-operatives with the ministry and have undergone pre-co-operative training with the District co-operative Office. This means that they all have certificates. However, three have held elections of officials and two have opened accounts. Through interviews with all stakeholders it has become clear that in spite of differences concerning how far along the bureaucratic process they have come, all groups have started savings. The amount saved varies a lot, but overall the results are above what the GoK and the UN-Habitat expected (pers.comm UN-Habitat representative, GoK and coordinators).

Resettlement

Resettlement is not commonly associated with slum upgrading projects. Slum upgrading projects have focused on improving living conditions and service provision within the localities of the existing slum. For the SNP the resettlement was the determining factor for project initiation. As will be discussed below, the only reason stakeholders give as justification for choosing Mavoko as a site for KENUP was the availability of land. From UN-Habitat’s side it is seen as a pilot for sustainable neighbourhoods programmes in general. This form of resettlement should not be confused with previous relocation strategies, usually accompanied by demolition or forced eviction by government officials. SNP is a resettlement process, where housing will be made available to people who are members of co-operatives, and who choose to buy for themselves. Davidson et al. (in Viratkapan and
Perera 2006) have identified five factors that influence relocation and resettlement; (1) policy, legal and institutional framework, (2) public participation in the relocation process, (3) good location of the new site, (4) good physical development, and (5) effective socio-economic development in the form of employment opportunities (in Viratkapan and Perera 2006).

The majority of the tenants did not initially buy into the idea of relocation as they felt that they would lose their source of income (UN-Habitat 2005b). Many settlements have been established in hazardous locations with high pollution and other environmental hazards due to the proximity of casual labour (UN-Habitat unpublished b). However, once presented with the security of tenure that it would entail and that “sustainable livelihood” was part of the program most tenants said they would move. The co-operative members all list employment opportunities as frequent as tenure security as their motivation for joining the co-operatives. 90% said they would build a house if they were allocated a plot, 7.1% said that they would sell it (UN-Habitat 2005b). The individuals, who have said they would sell their share in the new settlement, will not be included in the initial allocation rounds of the project.

The fact that there has been minimal resistance to the resettlement can be attributed to the fact that most of the factors mentioned above have been integral parts of the resettlement aspect. The authorities, local and central, have been supportive of the resettlement without being forceful. Although there is some scepticism among the community members due to past negative experiences, most are willing to put their trust in the institutional system. Public participation has been attempted and achieved through creation and training of co-operatives and keeping open communication with community members through the coordinator’s office at MCM. Many community members have commented that the site is not in a favourable location as it is far from employment opportunities, however they are willing to trade in proximity to existing employment opportunities with the promise of new employment opportunities and new tenure status. The motivations of the community members to participate will be discussed further below.
The Participation Process in SNP

It is not easy to decide where one should locate a particular development project on the participation ladder: from self-management to empowerment. In a slum upgrading project the various elements of the project cycle can often be assigned to different steps on the ladder; some parts of the project may be attributed qualities of information sharing without the possibility for input from primary stakeholders, while other parts may be closer to empowerment. Identifying the modes of participation, or in other words the participation mechanism, can help in the analysis. The sum of the various methods applied; where in the project cycle participatory methods are used; and who participates can aid the analysis process of assessing where on the participation ladder this particular project is and whether or not it can be defined as deep, formal and stable. Throughout the analysis of the participation process the key questions of purpose of participation should be kept in mind. The SNP documents inevitably link participation to capacity building and empowerment, in is an aim for this section to create a basis for discussing these links in the subsequent chapter.

Project justification of participation

Participation in development projects and in slum upgrading has gained significant force in the international development community over the past decades. Following this, there have been numerous interpretations and views about the justification and reasons why this has come about. Miltin and Thompson (1995) hold that on the one extreme end we find the very positive interpretation: it is argued that participation is a natural part of the increased focus on human rights and democracy. This forms part of the view that these are universal goods that should not be sacrificed in the name of growth. On the other end of the spectrum we find the ones who argue that it is a way for donors and governments to create structural changes and introduce the market economy. By involving the community in service delivery the government can reduce the costs and put greater responsibilities on communities and individuals. Referring to the above mentioned interpretation of the increased focus on participation in development it is useful to assert the SNP in the justification
continuum from *cost cutting* to *democratic change*. Judging from the argumentation of the stakeholders and the project documents signed by the two main partners in the KENSUP (UN-Habitat and GoK) the motivation for including participation does not seem to be “cost cutting”. Although there is emphasis on making the financing of houses and neighbourhoods sustainable, the element of involving the community does not appear to reduce cost significantly, or at all.

For UN-Habitat through the enabling approach and for GoK through the KENSUP agenda, community participation is fundamental to the sustainability of urban development. In the documents it is clearly stated that the participation of people in slum upgrading and capacity building activities will lead to the empowerment of people and a sustainable urban development. Community participation was a prerequisite for UN-Habitat’s involvement in the project as it is one of the pivotal pillars of the organisation. Taking this into consideration it was not a question of *if* the community should be involved but rather *how* the community should be involved. This, in turn, leads us away from the justification of participation to the question of quality of participation which will be discussed further below.

Dudley (1993) warns against participation as a goal in itself, stating that it has to be approached with care. After all, the demand for participation often comes from the outsiders that believe that everybody has an embedded desire to be actively involved in decision-making, which is not always the case. That is also the case for the SNP. Even though it is obvious to anyone who visits that the slums of Mavoko is in need of upgrading; it is documented that vast numbers of people live in absolute poverty; and the majority of the structures are in substandard conditions, the demand for participation did not come from the community itself. Some argue (Gandelosnas 2002) that it is the government’s responsibility to provide basic services and ensure security for it’s people, but the Habitat agenda clearly states that the role of the state should not be to provide but rather to create an enabling environment, and enable people to facilitate changes themselves. The SNP based it’s project on participation of community members as a way of including them in the process in order to create empowerment and improve livelihoods.

From UN-Habitat’s side the commitment to participation seem to have gone through the project adjustments unchanged. The activities that include the participation have however been reduced. This can be attributed to increasingly difficult circumstances for implementation and increased pressure on delivery in a project that has long since overstepped the time frame. The GoK have to some extent withdrawn from the participatory agenda of the SNP as they started a separate
project under the same name. This strategy is more geared towards the government as a provider, but not necessarily a provider to the poorest of the poor. It is more difficult for a government to embark on the road to deep community participation. Although the government states that they support participation and empowerment of the poor, it is more difficult for GoK than for an international development agency like UN-Habitat to internalise it: “True participation is about power, and the exercise of power is politics” (Dudley 1993). The co-operative members also mentioned this point: “the rich they need us to be poor because they need us to do what they want.” Hence, it is not unjustified to assert that the justification for participation in the project is not to lead to any significant structural changes in the power relations between the powerless and the powerful, but rather to include people on a smaller scale with the aim that it may increase employment opportunities and organisational capacities.

State involvement in community participation project is difficult. It requires a complete change in approach and policy from the officials involved, and a flexibility from the state structures. These are difficult tasks for any government to handle and none the less for an overstretched and understaffed developing country state:

“It is naïve to argue that state involvement in social development is superfluous and that local communities in the Third World can solve the serious problems of poverty and deprivation wholly through their own efforts. But it is equally naïve to assume that a cosy relationship between the centralized, bureaucratic state and the local community will emerge and that political elites, professionals and administrators will readily agree to the devolution of their authority to ordinary people” (Midgeley et al. 1986 vii)

There is a lack of clarity concerning the division of responsibility between the central authorities and the local authorities. The presence of the SNP has strengthened the local government:

“Before the SNP there was a lack of coordination documents and there was no strategy or planning document. Now, MCM is the first council in the country to have their own strategic plan, and their own website. There is also a physical planner. I’m not sure
In addition the coordinators felt that many politicians wanted to get involved and take over the project for selfish reasons: “The politicians create problems because they want their relatives to run the project and for them to get the land in the end. Now it’s better because they are all gone. [Because of campaigning]” (coordinator, pers.comm). The starting point of the SNP was a far more community participation oriented project than what is seen as present. The representatives from GoK, UN-Habitat and the SNP coordinators in Mavoko all seem to see the value the participation of the community members. However, due to a number of hold ups and disagreements between the GoK and it’s main supporter in the KENSUP, UN-Habitat, it has not been possible for the ideal in the project document to transcend into reality. GoK’s divergence from the original plan of inclusive self help housing project on the original plot, into a new government led building process, has put serious strains on the project. The difference in approach is also felt on the ground: “The government does not know the communities at all. They have never been there. Habitat, have been here, working, for year now” (coordinator, pers.comm)

The UN-Habitats approach is more inclusive and to a greater extent inclusive. However, the project was determined from the top down. And although the mapping exercises were inclusive there is doubt as to the extent of impact the community members had in the project formulation. Were they invited? If they came with input how was it incorporated into the project. The key role in this scenario is held by the governments. If they provide rules and regulations that prevent forceful evictions and guarantee the supply of basic infrastructure and services to the settlement, it is likely that this will lead to a de facto tenure security. Formal titles, on the other hand, does not always lead to a perception of security among the population. If the government continues to be unresponsive to the needs of the slum dwellers the feeling of insecurity will persist in spite of a formal deed.

**Mode of Participation**

In this section the mode and mechanisms of participation will be presented. This section is of importance in order to step away from the rhetoric and see what has actually been implemented and
what the various actors in the project perceive as participation. Firstly the project cycle presented above will be used to identify where within the stages of the project cycle participation has been welcomed and facilitated. Secondly, the methods of participation used in the various activities will be presented.

\textit{Project cycle}

Long’s (2001) review of donor experiences with participation of the poor in development initiatives shows that it is being implemented, to a large extent, in the preparatory and implementation stages. Participation is, however, much less in the program formulation stage and the later stages of monitoring and evaluation. In addition the quality of the participation process leaves something to be desired. In this sub-section the actual participation mechanisms that have taken place will be described. The quality and sustainability will be analysed in the following section.

\textit{Problem identification phase}

The initiation of the SNP in Mavoko seems very “accidental”. The coordinators, the UN-Habitat representative and the GoK representative all agree that Mavoko was chosen as a site for KENSUP because of the availability of the site. Other than that none of the informants have listed any other reason why the slums of Mavoko should be prioritised above other slums. The SNP is a pilot programme from the UN-Habitat and the results of the project will be used to form a normative framework on community-driven sustainable neighbourhood programmes. In the \textit{Justification} section in the project document there is no mention of Mavoko and the local context. According to UN-Habitat there was no pressure from below, not from the MCM and not from the communities. There were, however, plenty of community activities that targeted priority areas for the community members. No systematic attempt to include the already existing knowledge of the community organisations. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the SNP is a very welcome addition and much needed aid for the MCM and the slum dwellers of Mavoko. No measure was taken to include the people in this initial phase.

The second step in the identification phase was the socio-economic mapping undertaken by UN-Habitat in a broad participatory manner. Primary stakeholder involvement was ensured through
electing two representatives from each village and ten representatives from the larger communities (Chief, Assistant Chief and representatives from the municipality council and representatives from faith based organisations). This group of representatives makes out the Settlement Executive Committee (SEC). The SEC participated in an extensive training in participatory methodology (PLA) with a primary focus on data collection (UN-Habitat unpublished 2). This part of the participation process is can be called a participatory rapid appraisal. It has been the most common form of participatory research and information gathering since the 1980s (Mitlin & Thompson 1995)

**The Design Phase**

In this phase it does not seem possible to separate the design phase from the identification phase, as the design of the project seems to be the reason for the initiation and not the identifications of local issues as such. A pilot testing out the elements of sustainable neighbourhood approach and the principle of mixed housing seem to be the guiding elements both for identification and the design phase. After the site was chosen, and the overall framework agreed on, the communities were invited to come with proposals of housing. “They were asked to propose how a house they would live in would look like” (co-operative member, pers.comm). The government representatives and the UN-Habitat alike were involved in this process of asking the community members for input in the planning of the housing. Although at present the government is set to build contractor built houses on the original SNP site. The contractor was chosen through an official tender process but with no community involvement.

Due to the delays of the project mainly caused by the disappearing and reappearing plot the projects form seems to have changed considerably from the original project document, through the revised project document, and finally to the project as it is seen on the ground. The original project document does not mention the co-operatives, the revised project document has incorporated “empowering community members through co-operatives” as part of the implementation strategy. And through interviews with all the informants it seems to be the pillar of the project. Choosing a co-operative structure effectively limits the choices that can be made by the community. Co-operatives have to be approved by the National co-operative Authorities and abide by the rules and conventions of this organisation.
Implementation

The implementation of a project encompasses all action that is done on the ground and that refers to the rolling out of the project. In the SNP the implementation can be seen to have three main stages; the mobilisation and organisation of co-operatives; the construction activities; and the financing activities. Out of these three stages it has become clear that it is in the organisation of the co-operatives that the people themselves have the most influence. It cannot be ascribed to the highest stages of the participation ladder since no self-mobilisation has taken place, it was initiated from outside agents and the community was co-opted into a pre-determined plan. Nevertheless, the people are at present actively involved in the co-operatives, with their own elected representatives that the co-operative members are holding to account. The co-operatives are the fundamental components for the SNP and through the co-operatives there is potential for a number of participatory and inclusive activities. The financing model builds on this potential. Through a joint effort of co-operatives, government and external donor, namely UN-Habitat is truly inclusive of the community members. In order to benefit the poorest in the community it is essential that there is a partnership, as it is not possible for poor people's co-operatives to manage on their own (Adler and Muene).

The construction phase has a great potential for participation. Here the divide between the UN-Habitat managed site and the GoK managed site becomes obvious. In the original project document community participation in construction and development of construction materials is central. Now however, the government site is contractor built whereby the contractor succeeded in gaining access to the site through a public tender process (UN-Habitat representative, pers.comm). The contractor is now on site and thus far there has been no attempt to include the community. The co-operative members are still hopeful that they will be able to get some employment and training even (co-operative member, pers.comm). On the Habitat site the plan is to involve the communities through training in building skills. In the initial stages of construction the community members have been involved in a participatory manner. Training was conducted and construction was undertaken successfully.
Participation mechanisms

On the question of how they have been involved in the project the co-operative members emphasised that “We have been fully informed in the project, all the time.” (co-operative member, pers.comm) This corresponds with the information given by the UN-Habitat representative, stating that due to the extended delays of the project it has been difficult to keep the community active. When there is nothing to participate in, no decisions to be taken, we have at least tried to make sure we inform the community members about what is going on. Information between the project team (UN-Habitat, GoK) is largely disseminated though the coordinators. Sharing informing about the status of the project, although important enough, is on the lower end of the participation continuum.

Furthermore, consultation seems to be a favoured element in the implementation process. In the process of housing design, the community members were asked to come up with proposals. “We have also been given the privilege to design out own houses” (co-operative member, pers.comm). During a community meeting with representatives from the government, UN-Habitat and local authorities, the community members were asked to bring about proposals of housing that would suit them. What needed to be there in the neighbourhood and how the houses should be constructed (coordinators pers.comm). The design of the houses is at this point being done by the experts, and will subsequently be presented to the community for input and corrections. This element of consultation represents a slightly higher lever of participation towards empowerment.

The element that inspires deeper participation, and that is seen as a fundamental motivating factor to the co-operative members, is the training component. In the project proposals considerable emphasis is put on the training components. The government claims that considerable training of the communities has been done: “The trainings are still going on. In finance, leadership, management of resources.” (GoK representative pers.comm). According to the coordinators the only training that the community has been invited to is the pre co-operative training facilitated by the District co-operative Office (DCO). The UN-Habitat representative clarifies that the trainings referred to by the GoK representatives have only benefited some of the coordinators. None of the co-operative members have been invited, and it has also not been the intention. The co-operative members themselves mention some other “teachings and trainings” that they have been given. “[We participated] through teachings and trainings. In the co-operatives we are divided in different departments and thought about health, education and other things” (co-operative member, pers.comm). Neither the UN-
Habitat representative nor the coordinators mentioned anything about these trainings. Whether or not it officially was part of SNP or not is therefore not clear.

The interviews and focus groups show no evidence of the SNP having contributed to any significant self-mobilisation. The formation of the co-operatives and the savings on the side of the community members, seem to be where the active involvement of the community members end. However, as mentioned context introduction to Mavoko, the community appears to be well organised in self-help groups, other co-operatives and merry-go-rounds. Several examples of how other, pre-existing co-operatives have tried to improve the livelihood of the community members were presented to me:

“We have a smaller co-operatives, before we joined the big one. We still have them.[…]
For instance in our co-operative we bought a [water] kiosk. To get income. The income is divided between the members and the communities.” (co-operative member, pers.comm)

Table 2: Mode of participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mapping</th>
<th>Participatory socio-economic mapping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Pre-co-operative training for co-operative members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management and finance training of coordinators though KENSUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community meetings</td>
<td>Frequent <em>ad hoc</em> initiated by coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some organised meetings with external representation (housing proposals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination meetings</td>
<td>Weekly meetings between coordinators and UN-Habitat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No regular meetings between coordinators and GoK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financing</td>
<td>Cooperation between co-operatives and external funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

**Formal, Stable and Deep?**

This section will present the form of participation over three themes: Formal, Stable and Deep. According to the framework presented above (Lyons et al. 2001) these three sides of the
participation process have a direct effect on the empowerment a project can expect to achieve. Lastly in this section I will summarise these three aspects and tie it together with the empowerment aspect. The empowerment aspect will, however, be fully analysed in the following chapter.

Is it formal?

The formality of the relationship between the various actors in the participation process is of importance in regards to the predictability for the participants. Formally established means of participation makes it easier for everybody to know what is expected from them and what they can expect in return.

Table 3: Formal and informal participation in the SNP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Lack of formality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinators engaged on formal contract as community representatives</td>
<td><em>Ad hoc</em> and informal community meetings between coordinators and co-operative members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular feedback (reports) from co-operatives to coordinators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly meetings between UN-Habitat and coordinators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>co-operatives are formally registered and have elected officials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

Naturally the mode of participation depends on which stage in the project cycle the project is located. In the table above (Table 3) traits of the participation process that can be ascribed to formal or informal participation structures is presented. From this table it is easy to see that the formality of relations is well established. Hence, there is a predictability for all partners involved. The only actor where the participation does not seem to be formal is the GoK. As described by the coordinators the GoK representatives does not have a hands on approach with the participation process.

The participation of community members can be interpreted as a mix between formal and informal participation. The coordinators are engaged on contract as full time volunteers, although they are paid a monthly allowance. Since the coordinators are representatives of the community, and not external experts this is likely to facilitate the communication between the community members.
and the central levels of GoK and UN-Habitat. This represents a form of formal participation channel.

**Is it stable?**

Lyons et al. (2001) describe inclusive participation as a social partnership that conveys a collaborative action in which different organisations interact to achieve a common goal (Lyons et al. 2001). The question “is it stable” refers to the stability of the partnership between collaborating institutions, the collaboration of two otherwise unattached social bodies.

The relationship between UN-Habitat and GoK has been turbulent within the SNP. The main conflict being over the site that appeared, disappeared and reappeared in a different location. This has led to reorganisation of the partnership structure and a separation of responsibilities. The original collaboration model joined the two organisations in pursuit of the same goal; to create one sustainable neighbourhood program that could be used as a model for other slum upgrading project. GoK was the lead implementing agency and UN-Habitat was the supporting resource, that contributed with knowledge and funding. The primary idea was built on the concept of establishing ownership for the process within the government structure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stable</th>
<th>Unstable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The co-operatives are stable independent of SNP</td>
<td>The coordinators contracts are on a three month basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership between GoK and UN (overarching)</td>
<td>Partnership between GoK and UN-Habitat (within SNP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The participatory structures are not embedded in local or central government structures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

In time however differences in interest occurred between the two, which lead to a fundamental reorientation. The government site now applies certain principles for sustainable neighbourhoods and the UN-Habitat site applies a different set of principles. This reorientation in collaboration model shows a lack of stability in the partnership and participation process. However, the GoK and UN-Habitat’s partnership goes beyond the SNP. Only within the KENSUP GoK and UN-Habitat collaborate on a range of different projects. The partnership also extends beyond the KENSUP. This speaks in favour of stability between the two main partners. As part of the UN system in Kenya, UN-
Habitat is committed to a partnership with the government through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), among other documents. This speaks in favour of a long lived relationship rather than a short lived one.

The lack of stability between the two main partner organisations has had an impact on the community level of the SNP. Before the reorientation there was a moratorium in which the community’s patience was tested. The faith of the project seemed uncertain and the coordinators had their work cut out for them in trying to convince the community and co-operative members that the project would continue. The coordinators are hired and re-hired as “volunteers” on a three month basis. They have however been engaged for four years under these conditions so in spite of being de facto secure it is a sign of instability. On the other hand, the structures of the co-operatives seem stable. The election of officials and the feedback to the coordinators and the members is organised in a stable manner.

In spite of elements of instability on all levels of SNP it is my interpretation that to the people on the ground the project, at present, appears stable. As one of the coordinators said: “People trust Habitat”, and he went on saying it is because their commitment seems stable, “they have been here for a long time”. The damage the moratorium and the reorientation of the project base and partnership did is however still evident. It is evident, not so much within the co-operatives but in the reasons people give for not wanting to join the project.

Is it deep?

Whether or not the participation process is deep or shallow goes along side the continuum from co-option to empowerment. Co-option focuses on institutional initiatives with outsiders identifying needs and planning responses: This results in the failure of participatory involvement as a development approach. “Very little learning takes place and the ownership of development is never taken” (Lyons et al. 2001). On the other side of the spectrum is what Choguill (1996) calls empowerment. This involves allowing decentralized control and decision-making to civil society. It involves action from the grass-root level, creating self awareness and the transformation of society, leading to a negotiated power sharing in, for example urban management. Friedman (1996) refers to this form
of empowerment as the “self-organisation of the poor” in a co-operative manner as a means of surviving, preserving dignity and gaining control over livelihoods.

Table 4: Deep and shallow participation in the SNP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deep</th>
<th>Shallow</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formalisation of co-operatives, elected officials</td>
<td>Participation by information and consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-option into a predetermined pilot project</td>
<td>No self-mobilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little learning and low ownership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork

The overall impression of the participation process within the SNP is more shallow than deep. The mechanisms used to involve the community members in decision making on various issues bear witness of top down decision making and co-option into a predetermined pilot project. As described above the project was determined by totally external factors, and not by internal ranking of issues facing the community. Deeper participatory methods were used in the identification phase of the project when community members were trained in participatory data collection tools (Participatory Learning and Action- PLA). This resulted in a socio-economic profiling that was used to align the project with the reality of people’s situation in Mavoko.

The establishment of the co-operatives are the single most effective and full element in assuring deeper participation within the project. The co-operatives are likely to keep living even after the SNP is over. The election of official and training by the government through the District co-operative Office has ensured that the ownership for this part of the project is local. At this point the co-operatives still report to the coordinators who in turn report to the UN-Habitat and GoK. This is an important part of the learning process and will in time make the co-operatives stronger and enable them to sustain strong and sustainable structures. Other than this there has been now real handing over of power to communities. The responsibilities are still with the funding agencies. The community is for the most part left waiting for the next move from the top. They are called upon on isolated consultations on design of the housing and for construction processes.

Slum upgrading projects are in general good opportunities for self mobilisation and empowerment namely because of the vast number of activities conducive for participation, and on many different levels. This project has not taken advantages of this sufficiently and in turn the SNP
structure has left little room for self mobilisation of the community. Subsequently little learning and
low ownership are the results.

Summary of participation

As seen by this presentation there are some elements of the participation process that speak in favour of a direct link with empowerment and there are other aspects that do not. The formality and the long term commitment between UN-Habitat and GoK is vital for the project to succeed in building the trust of the community and in securing that the funding and support of the project is stable. The issues of the collaboration model between the two seems to have been resolved and although somewhat less participatory than the initial form, people seem to still be on-board and still have trust in the SNP. The project is lacking somewhat in stability. The severe moratorium of the project was a heavy blow to the l’air of stability. The short-term engagement of the coordinators does not ensure stability of the internal management and the participatory structures are not significantly embedded in the local authorities. Furthermore, the participation commitment is evidently not deep. Hence, in some stages of the project the participation bears witness of more co-option and information sharing, top-down, than empowerment.

Motivation for participation

People’s motivation seems to be consistent with the goals of the project. The main focus is on tenure security and ownership. Also basic facilities, like water, are mentioned. In this section a discussion surrounding the primary motivations will be presented and thereafter some of the issues that have kept community members from participating will be laid out.

Tenure Security and Ownership

Many of the slum dwellers of Mavoko have lived, as seen above, in their settlements for long periods of time and have what can be called a de facto tenure security. All of the informants have stayed within Mavoko’s informal settlements for minimum 12 years and two were even born there. It has
been shown by Payne (2003) and others that people who have lived within a settlement for a longer period of time without the threat of eviction do not put tenure security at the top of the agenda.

The Habitat Agenda clearly states that tenure security is a prerequisite for provision of adequate shelter for all and for the development of sustainable human settlements. It is also a way of breaking the vicious circle of poverty. There is however an ongoing debate on whether it is the \textit{de facto} or the \textit{de jure} tenure security that can contribute more to the improvement of livelihoods in slums. According to De Soto (among others) providing formal property rights to slum dwellers will unleash a hidden potential of investments. Others like Payne, Duran-Lasserve and Royston hold that formal property rights do not necessarily lead to improved livelihoods for slum dwellers nor does it necessarily lift people out of poverty.

“Legality is not particularly valuable to the poor; many of the outcomes of legality are desirable, but can be achieved in different ways” (Durand Lasserve and Royston in Bessenecker 2005)

A person that presumes to know the needs and wants of a poor person, without being one himself is treading on fragile ground (Chambers 1996). It is not uncommon for development programmes and slum upgrading schemes to be based on global policies and universal truths. Conventional literature promotes slum upgrading as the housing improvement strategy preferred by the beneficiaries. In Mavoko the motivation for participation in the SNP is clearly divided along current tenure lines. For people who currently are tenants, the motivation is largely ownership, and for people who are squatters it leans much more towards \textit{de facto} tenure security; primarily protection from evictions. In the case of Mumbai (Mukhija 2003) the demand for formal property rights from the slum dwellers themselves was far less than what the policy makers had expected. Although the basic principle of the programs was decentralization the request from the grassroot partners involved to centralize part of the program. This referred mainly to the monitoring and to operate as a single-window clearance basis for faster approval of projects. Also in other cases when the decentralized actors asked the central authority to intervene it was due to time constrains (Mukhija 2003).

The informants from the informal settlement where they pay rent explained that they are not threatened by evictions at all: “No, it’s normal. If you don’t pay rent you are chased. Otherwise: no.” On the other hand the squatters from “39” explained how they are constantly threatened. It is
generally believed that people who are informal tenants, like the informants from KMC and Sofia, have very low tenure security. In this case they compared themselves to their neighbouring communities of squatter, and since they do not feel threatened by evictions they assert that it is not the tenure security that is key: “Ownership”. Ownership is what drives them to participate and save within the SNP context.

The coordinators list “not to pay rent” as a primary motivation for the informal tenants. The hope of owning one’s own home is bright, and the burden of monthly expenses on rent weighs heavy on the poor informal tenants. The squatters, who per definition do not pay rent, can not be motivated by this factor. One coordinator says he thinks the element of ownership does not seem important to them. They are to a larger extent motivated by the promise of access to water (coordinator, pers.comm). The informants from “39” emphasised that the security was the main factor. That they could build, and stay in proper houses. Although two of the informants from “39” were born and raised in the settlement, their shacks have on several occasions been demolished. The constant threat of evictions leave the structures in deplorable conditions: “You cannot make permanent houses. We make from polythene paper, mud and grass”

The SNP coordinators unanimously agreed that there is a clear divide along tenure lines when it comes to participation. The villages where the majority of the population is tenants (informal) are much easier to mobilise and motivate. The squatter villagers are generally more hesitant to participate and it takes more effort to convince them of the benefits with saving and getting access to new and better facilities: “They don’t care about electricity. They never had it so they don’t know why they need it. Water is what gets them interested” (Peter SNP coordinator). It is the better off villages where the process of the co-operatives have come the furthest. UN-Habitat in (Bessenecker 2005) writes that while the importance of informal capital has been exaggerated, self-help has had the merit of producing innovative solutions to improve tenure conditions.

If tenure security and participation (investment) are closely linked, then any developing program targeting the urban poor must address tenure security first and foremost. As slum dwellers generally are perceived as the segment of the urban population with the lowest form of tenure security, it is not unfair to assume that their participation in the SNP is determined by the fact that it aims at providing tenure security. Other slum upgrading schemes that focus on providing basic services and infrastructure, without providing tenure security might not be able to mobilise the community to the extent of the SNP. The mobilisation within Mavoko’s informal settlements into co-
operatives is broad and the co-operatives keep growing. In this case it is much more likely to get the community’s participation if it is a project that provides security first, and thereafter develops the infrastructure and basic services. This is the case of the SNP in Mavoko, and is likely to be one of the reasons why participation is so high in this project.

Skills and employment

Employment opportunities and skills training is a motivating factor for participation in the SNP. Unemployment is widespread in informal settlements in Machakos District. The employment rate is only at 16% (UN-Habitat 2005b). However, in spite of a high formal unemployment much fewer people go idle due to a large and creative informal sector. Majority of the community members capitalise on the informal sector. In the socio-economic profile the main sources of income listed among the inhabitants of the informal settlements were: running small kiosks, hawking, bicycle repair, carpentry, furniture making, roasting maize, herbalists, hairdressing and barbershops. Furthermore the survey revealed that 28% of the community members in Mavoko’s informal settlements are unemployed, 22% engaged in casual labour and 21% employed. The youth are mostly involved in casual labour in the surrounding industries, earning approximately KShs 100 per day.

Robert Chambers has contributed considerably to our understanding of poverty, and he explains how the rich’s interpretation of what poverty is often is far from what the poor themselves define as poverty. Chambers refers to Jodha’s research in Rajasthan where the poor listed 38 criteria for defining a poor person (Chambers 1995). It represents a more complex understanding of poverty because it is experienced, local and context specific. In this study time did not allow for that in-depth investigation, but in the focus group a discussion among the co-operative members was initiated on the topic of what characterises a poor person in Mavoko. The central issue, mentioned repeatedly, was that there are so many expressions of poverty: “We can have many examples: For instance an old illiterate woman who collects bones to sell. One that can not get any job. House helps, who washes for the ones who are better off” (co-operative member, pers.comm). Poverty status seems to a large extent tied to the kind of income generating activity one is involved in. The people who are forced to collect old bones from garbage dumps and sell for “recycling” is typically the worst off, not because of the actual income that it generates, but because of lack of dignity: “It is not good, not
good” (co-operative member, pers.comm). Furthermore, large numbers of people line up every morning outside the factories in the hope to get picked for a day’s casual labour. This lack of consistency of income is detrimental to escaping poverty. The poor people of Movoko impression of what characterises a better-off person is also largely tied to employment: “We just see them going to work in the morning, in their cars. We watch them.” (co-operative member, pers.comm) They typically work in offices or in the city (Nairobi), and they do not take *matatus* (public transport minibuses).

Hence, the promise of employment opportunities are mentioned as the second most important reason for joining the co-operatives and participating in the SNP. People are very willing to work. The coordinators illustrated this point by saying: “Do you need people to build a fence? I can get you 1000 people by tomorrow!” This can be interpreted as an expression of vast unemployment, but it can also be interpreted positively: As a willingness to participate and to be a part of the upgrading project.

Unfortunately the skills training component has not been as extensive as the intention of the initial project document. On the UN-Habitat site the training on construction has already begun as local community member, largely youth, have been trained and employed to fence the site. Training was provided by a NGO based in Kibera. This was a success in terms of mobilisation and training; in addition the fencing was executed satisfactory. On the government site, however, inclusion of community or co-operative members does not appear to be prioritised any more. The contractor for the site has *won* the right to design and build the mixed housing project through a public tender process in which there were no requirements of hiring locally.

**Obstacles to participation**

The obstacles to participation can roughly be grouped into two categories: Low education levels and disillusion. In order to create empowerment through participation, it is vital to recognise the reasons for non-attendance so that they can be addressed. The SNP does not require full-participation in order to succeed, but in order to understand the obstacles faced on the ground it is important to gain understanding of this aspect.
**Low Education Levels**

Low education level and low empowerment levels are in themselves obstacles to participation. They are interconnected in a manner which makes it difficult to break out from. The SNP coordinators assessed that low education levels have been a problem in the sensitisation process. The sensitisation process takes considerably less time within a population with higher education levels. The coordinators started by sensitising people on their rights, and their basic requirements for living a better life (coordinator, pers.comm). Additionally, they have focused on governance to teach people how they can use the system to forward their claims. Peter said it: “They don’t know anything, so it’s a lot of work to make them understand.” This blunt comment can be read into the context of the pre-requisites for empowerment listed by Narayan (2006): The ability to access information is related to level of education. Education does not have to be formal, but it has to develop the mind to differentiate between false and true and develop critical thinking. The co-operative members also viewed lack of education as an obstacle for participation. One of the co-operative members who was not educated himself, has made considerable efforts to turn his family tradition of illiteracy around. He was clearly proud when saying:

> “I’m not educated. I don’t know why. But my parents did not put me through school. I’m a class 4 drop out. I have put a lot of efforts so that my kids get good education. I have two children in class 8 know.” (co-operative member, pers.comm)

He had taken a conscious decision to turn his life around, by learning how to read, speak some English and some Swahili (*Kamba* being his mother tongue). This willingness to change the basic set-up of his life has enabled him to successfully access information in a more efficient way.

Another way that low education levels have impacted the participation in the project is that the people might be easily convinced to join, but they are equally easily swayed the other way. This constantly threatens the consistency of the project. “People who know nothing believe everything they hear. Lack of education makes them easily brainwashed” Peter clarified this statement by explaining that rumours are very easily spread within the communities and on several occasions there has been rumours that the plot is sold to someone, that there is only going to be built houses for the rich or that the project has closed down. In these instance it has been the coordinators job to go
to the rumour-affected villages to “set the story straight”. Before the situation is amended it has managed to damage peoples saving patterns and the trust has to be rebuilt again. It is likely to assume that educated people have more resistance to influence from various undocumented sources.

Illiteracy was the other core characteristic, given by the co-operative members, to define a poor person in Mavoko. They referred to a cycle of illiteracy: “When there is a case of an illiterate family who suffers, the father is not there. So the children can not go to school. Then they have many children early, and the cycle continues” (co-operative member, pers.comm). When asked what would be the one thing that, in their mind, could break the cycle of poverty the answers were education and skills training. They defined education as literacy and skills training as having a skill you can use for income generating activities (co-operative member, pers.comm).

**Disillusion**

The second obstacle to creating participation among community members was repeatedly said to be disillusion and discouragement. One co-operative member mentioned how there has been so many projects in the community, promising so many things, but still things remain the same (co-operative member, pers.comm): “They are not sure. Because they have been cheated in the past. Many organisations have been here and cheated them. They are, what is the word […] discouraged”. This reflects an important issue pointed out by Friedman (1992), Narayan (2006), Diener and Biswas-Diener (2006) among others, that psychological empowerment is a pre-requisite for effective participation. This form of disillusion reflects on one side discouragement of development projects that fail to deliver in accordance with expectations: When one project fails to deliver, or peoples’ expectations are not in accordance with the outcomes it can damage the people’s willingness to believe and to participate in future project. And on the other side the disillusion is what by some has been interpreted as lack of rationality among the poor. It is a common perception that the poor only live hand to mouth, and this is an image that reproduces itself at all levels of society. The co-operative members mentioned this as one of the causes for the unwillingness of their fellow community members to participate in the SNP:

“ […] Many don’t want to plan for the future. […] They say: “By the time these houses will be there we will be dead”. That is the reason. We Africans we don’t think ahead.
We don’t think that our children will still be around.” (co-operative member, pers.comm)

A similar quote is given in Narayan (2006): “Only the well-off can believe in tomorrow.” (Poor people, Azerbaijan in Narayan 2006, 3) Narayan describes this psychological phenomenon as being “trapped by poverty”. When you are trapped by poverty your opportunities are severely limited and it is hard to have expectations for the future beyond the reality you know of arduous work and an upward battle. It is believed that through an empowerment approach to development, poor people’s belief in the future can be reinstated and they can be the most valuable partners for development. Chambers (1996) however, claims that this is a misconception. That the poor do in fact even when faced with starvation, plan ahead.

If the notion of living day to day and the norm that “we Africans don’t think ahead” (co-operative member, pers.comm) is being reproduced within a society it severely damages the collective and individual empowerment level. In order to effectively and efficiently take part in changing the future prospects and taking action to improve one’s own lives an “ability to aspire” (Apudurai 2004) has to be instilled or reinforced in the community.

Who participates?

First in this section the focus will be on who is active in the process. The question put to the informants was if they could identify some social or economical group that was more or less active in the co-operatives and in the project in general. As the project has been going on for approximately five years, some tendencies may have become clear. This is an important dimension of the participation process as it states whether it includes equality of outcome or merely equality in opportunity.

In a study by Berg-Schlosser and Kersting (2003) a relatively high proportion of Kenyans living in slums are willing to engage in self-help. Nevertheless, one third of the population thinks the state should be responsible for solving their problems. In one of the older settlements of Nairobi as many as 44% demand state help. This reflects a client-mentality encountered by many development agencies operating in Kenya. In this case study it was described by the UN-Habitat representative through the problem of having to pay people for their participation. “At one point I said “no”, it’s wrong to pay
people for giving them an opportunity. People would still come but they were complaining throughout, so we reinstalled it” (UN-Habitat rep pers.comm). In the enabling approach it is fundamental that people take charge of changing their own future, but in the case of Kenya and Mavoko a lot still has to be done in changing the opportunity structures and the mentality of people.

In trying to assess which social and economic groups of the society were more active in the project and co-operatives. I posed the same question to all groups of informants: “In your opinion which groups in the community are the most active in the project/co-operatives?” The answers were contradictory to say the least. Some claimed the youth were the most active, while others hold they are the hardest to involve. “The youth are hard to involve. They don’t see the point, so it is mostly the elders and the aged. It is easier for them to see the benefits” (coordinator pers.comm). The GoK representative on the other hand claimed that: “The youth are the most active. It is their future” (pers.comm). Furthermore, she elaborated that the fact that they are idle due to unemployment means that they have the time as well as motivation to be active. UN-Habitat’s representative’s perception corresponds more with that of the coordinator, explaining that they now have had to add another youth specific component in order to get the youth involved. This is still in the planning stage.

Women’s participation has been incorporated as an aspect in all the stages of the programme. Gender balance has been achieved in the Settlement Executive Committees and in the board of the co-operatives. In the allocation of plots, housing, we will seek to have a gender balance and also other social inequalities will also be incorporated as criteria (UN-Habitat rep. pers. comm)

In the scope of this thesis it has not been possible to measure the active participation of various social groups in the co-operatives. However, the coordinators report that it is evenly distributed among gender, but that the youth are somewhat absent. The co-operative members all agreed that the women are the most active group, both when it comes to voicing their concerns and in terms of the amount they save.

“You can say that all the groups in the community are active. Women are particularly active because they feel the burden. Women are more reliable than men” (co-operative member, pers.comm)

“Yes, I’m not reliable” (co-operative member, man, “39”)
The recently gathered data from the co-operatives showed that 60% of the co-operative members are women, and that they also contribute more to the savings.

Concerning divisions along tenure lines was not easy to determine. The co-operatives are organised in a way that the constituency largely covers same tenure status: One co-operative has mainly squatter and another has mainly tenants. The coordinators commented that it was easier to involve the tenants. The reason given for this was that their motivation for joining, “not to pay rent” was very strong. Since the squatters don’t pay rent that motivation was not there and therefore harder to involve in the project (coordinators pers. comm.). La Ferra (in Lall et al. 2002) found that in rural community groups in Tanzania, inequalities among the population tend to reduce membership in organisations with economic objectives. The rich are the first to drop out of these kinds of organisations, and people tend to subdivide into homogeneous sub-groups which can lead to the demise of the organisation. Other studies claim that as long as the organisation is formed in order to achieve a common goal, a goal that benefits all the individual members, the issue of heterogeneity fades away. The coordinators and the co-operative members, alike, have commented that: The issues of the various settlements vary a great deal. It might be a valuable aspect of the SNP that they have sought to organise the co-operatives according to tenure status.

The SNP has taken considerable measurement in order to secure gender- and age balanced participation, and since no one social or economic group stand out as more dominant in the participation process, it seems to have succeeded. The urban sector profiling (UN-Habitat unpublished b) states that women are marginalised and suffer of an unequal, heavy workload. The fact that they are being vocal and actively taking part in this process in order to move their families and households into better conditions is a success for the SNP. As some claim that youth are failing to participate as actively as the project coordinators would have wanted, the UN-Habitat have taken measures to secure their inclusion by establishing a youth skills training centre. Although this is not yet completed it goes to show that the commitment to equality of outcome, not just equality of opportunity, is strong.
Empowerment Through Participation

Participation from primary stakeholders is generally regarded as a positive virtue of development projects, also in housing delivery. However, not everybody sees the connection between participation and empowerment as a positive correlation. Whether or not participation leads to empowerment depends largely on the mode of participation and on the commitment to change. These elements can be gathered from an analysis of the process as deep, stable and formal (Lyons et al. 2001). Dudley argues (1993) that participation can, if applied in a timely and appropriate manner, be a fundamental element in empowering people. Real participation gives people the tools and mechanisms to have real influence over their own lives (Dudley 1993). Others, like Emmet (2000) argue that the constraints on a participatory slum upgrading programme are many. He mainly argues that the heterogeneity and fragmentation of many poor communities, the lack of social and material resources and community members’ expectations of receiving a return from their involvement in development projects effectively limits the empowerment outcomes. Viratkapan and Perera (in Lizarralde and Massyn 2007) explain how Participation has become synonymous with empowerment in South Africa. Many participation advocates have proposed that participation is the means, the end and the indicator for development. In assessment of relocation participation is commonly used as an indicator to measure success.

As seen above in the analysis of the participation process it is clear that much more could be done to achieve a participation process that leans more toward empowerment. Lizarralde and Massyn (2007) explain how the advantages of community participation for low-cost housing projects have been largely studied in the last 50 years. In spite of the extended focus on participation in development they claim it has been difficult to determine what type of development is required in order to create empowerment or sustainable development. However, they do acknowledge that some valuable contributions have been made in this respect: The above mentioned contribution of Arnstein (1969) that was developed further by Choguill (1996) to propose a classification for the evaluation of participation within underdeveloped countries.
In this section the analysis of the participation process will be coupled with the interpretations of empowerment. Community members’ participation in the SNP can potentially be empowering in itself (participation as an end) or it can be used to create empowerment by expansion of the opportunity structure and agency of the informal settlements in Mavoko. The link between the SNP and empowerment can potentially be several:

1) The project development outcomes expand the opportunity structure and agency, as a result of participation, or independent of participation (means to an end, no effect).
2) The participation in the project leads to ownership and empowerment (end in itself)
3) Individual project outcomes is empowering
4) The project leads to a change of mentality in which the poor and rich start believing in the poor (end and means)

These four entry points to empowerment will be covered in the discussion below. The discussion will, however, be organised according to overarching themes: 1) will be discussed in the context of institutional change; 2) ownership; 3) Saving and tenure security and finally; 4) as shift of power and psychological empowerment

**Demand for participation**

The demand for participation did in this case as in most cases not come from the primary stakeholders themselves and the concepts of community participation is to a large extent created by social scientists within a political paradigm (Fox and Brown 1998). For a community to be able to demand to take part in decision making and take charge of changing their own lives a certain level of pre-existing empowerment is required. In other words this represents a “catch 22”. That the demand for participation therefore comes from outside actors is not unreasonable. What makes it difficult, however, is when the mode of participation applied is based on outside expert opinion; has to fit into external report formats, and comply with external organisational structures that are not conducive to participation.

The level of empowerment pre SNP was, as seen above, constrained by a number of factors such as high illiteracy, low education levels, high poverty levels and low accountability governments. This effectively limits the community’s agency and in actual terms made it difficult to
“demand” participation. On the other hand there were a high number of smaller self-help groups and other CBOs that could have been utilised further in the identification phase. These organisations represent irreplaceable knowledge, and strengthening their position in the community could have been an entry point to increased empowerment. For such a high number of organisations to exist and increasingly attract member, the institutional climate within the informal settlements has to be conducive. What the SNP did do, and what was valuable was to base the formation of the co-operatives on the pre-existing organisations. Effectively, demand for participation is self-mobilisation.

Hence, creating empowerment is a two way street, investing in people so they can demand more from their government and facilitate institutional changes that promote peoples participation. Participation and empowerment are potentially linked in a number of different ways. In this section these links will be explored in the context of the SNP. Furthermore, the effects the SNP has had on the opportunity structure and the agency and what the co-operatives perception of if empowerment of the community has in deed taken place.

**Institutional Climate**

The project documents largely link empowerment to capacity building. The activities related to capacity building are largely related to training of local governments and community members. However, the Global Development Research Center (GDRC)\(^6\) emphasises that capacity building extends beyond training. It should include a process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge that enables them to perform effectively within their communities. Furthermore it has emphasised an enhancement of organisational development within and between public, private and community organisations. Lastly, it should include legal and institutional framework that enables organisations at all levels and within all sectors to enhance their capacities.

This broad definition of capacity building highly resembles the institutional changes that Narayan (2006) describe as embedded elements in the empowerment process. Four elements that

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\(^6\) [http://www.gdrc.org/uem/capacity-define.html](http://www.gdrc.org/uem/capacity-define.html)
have to be underlying institutional change are listed: 1) access to information, 2) inclusion and participation, 3) accountability and 4) local organisational capacity. In the previous chapter a review of the institutional climate in Mavoko was given. In this section the effects the SNP had on the institutional climate will be discussed.

High illiteracy rates and low formal education levels effects peoples ability to access information. In addition, as described in the previous chapter, there is a tendency for rumour to circulate within the communities. Low education levels can create lower resistance to accept undocumented fact found in these rumours. Both the coordinators and the UN-Habitat representative paint a picture of community and coordinator members dropping by the coordinators office “at all times” (pers.comm). This impression is also confirmed by observations I made while visiting the office. During my visits community members came by to get enumerated, to ask for assistance in solving financial disputes and also just to see if there was any relevant news. The informant from GoK’s KENSUP office also implied that the localisation of the coordinators office within the localities of MCM has improved the communication between the community and the council. This was confirmed by the coordinators: “After they have been here, they usually go to see people at the council” (coordinator, pers.comm). However, the coordinators claimed that the communication between community members and the council never was estranged. Based on the description from the Urban Sector Profile there has been a problem of communication and inclusion as described above. Do to the lack of a communication strategy and problems with under staffing it has been difficult to repair this situation (UN-Habitat unpublished b) On a more general note the Government structures in Kenya, both local and central, have not fully embraced the principles of inclusion and participation and there is considerable difficulties with the cooperation between the levels of authorities. Many tasks have been decentralised due to government reforms without being accompanied by sufficient funds and manpower. However, many thing can and have been done on the local level to amend this situation. These initiatives include the creation of the Master Plan (UN-Habitat Representative pers.comm) and the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Planning (UN-Habitat unpublished b). From the original Urban Sector Profile there has been significant development in opening up the process. Most community organisations are not included in this process and this has not been addressed by SNP directly.

The local and central authorities have through KENSUP and UN-Habitat participated in trainings on participatory methods. The training was primarily to enable them to promote these tools
while collecting data and information from the communities in the socio-economic profiling. Another outcome targeted through the training was creating changes in the way poor people’s resources are perceived in the community. The SNP recognises the skills and assets inherit in the slum dwellers. Skills developed formally or informally are equally important sustain ones livelihood in the informal settlements, and should be recognised as valuable assets to the society at large. By training local leaders and authorities in identifying theses assets the potential in developing the capabilities of the local people can be realised. Participation and inclusion has been targeted through the SNP, but the spill over to the local and central government structures are yet to be seen. However, like one of the coordinators said: “We know there is a Master Plan, but we have never seen it. It can take years for it to become visible on the ground”.

For accountability to have a real value someone has to hold the responsible agencies responsible. The act of holding someone responsible is an act of exercising power. As repeated throughout this thesis poverty dis-empowers people and makes it difficult to stand up against an abusive power. The power structures in Mavoko are not necessarily ill-intending, but they make it difficult for people to access information and hold responsible people and agencies accountable. Lack of transparency on central issues, such as land allocations and land ownership for example, in actual terms limits. An informant from the group of co-operative members:

“In 39 nobody will tell us. It is not government, but the council does not want to tell us. We have even tried to go to the commission of land. When we don’t know they chase us away” (co-operative member, pers.comm)

This represents both a problem of gaining access to information and a problem of accountability. Through the SNP the responsibilities for various sectors like water, sanitation, and other infrastructure has been made clearer to the community members. This is likely to have a positive long term effect after the SNP and KENSUP have withdrawn from Mavoko. Knowing for certain who is responsible for providing various basic services is pivotal in order to demand or create changes for one self.

Although the MCM and the GoK clearly are partners in both projects, it is UN-Habitat that is visible on the ground: “People know and trust Habitat” (coordinator, pers.comm) This undermines
the institutional change of creating accountability with local and central authorities who in the end are the duty-bearers in the provision of housing and basic services. As an NGO or development organisation one has to tread carefully when entering a community so that the responsibility is taken away from the responsible institution.

The agency of the local community in terms of organisational capacity was quite high in Mavoko pre-SNP. In spite of a high number or organisations and self-help groups, and in spite of the majority of community members was members of at least one organisation, the impact of these organisations were marginal. Marginality can largely be attributed to the size of the organisations and the aims. Most organisations had few, poor, members and the aims were specific. When SNP entered the arena the already existing organisations were merged into larger co-operatives in order to make them into more powerful entities within the community and beyond. Through this the organisational capacity was strengthened and the people who are members of the larger SNP-co-operatives are more likely to be able to improve their livelihood. This is a positive outcome of the SNP in terms of empowering the community.

Ownership

In order to create true ownership of a development project the participation and decision making has to be moved downwards. In the World Bank working paper on participation (Lall et al. 2002) it is stated that in order to foster partnership and participation all levels of ownership has to be shifted downwards, from Washington to national capitals, from national capitals to regional and local groups and authorities. Chambers (1996) refers to this same report while explaining that democratisation, decentralisation and diversity are three central elements in order to establish ownership among primary stakeholders. Furthermore he emphasises the organisational challenge to install true ownership for a development project: “Ownership by them means non-ownership by us. Empowerment for them means disempowerment for us” (Chambers 1996, 197). Hence, ownership means a shift in power to the lowest, most decentralised, level possible. In this section an analysis of which participatory mechanisms applied by the SNP can be said to hand over ownership of the project to the community and co-operative members.
Ownership is mentioned in the project documents, and by all informants but the co-operative members are expected outputs of the participation process within the SNP. From the very beginning, the SNP was invented by outsiders for the purpose of testing various principles (piloting), and because land had been made available. There have been several attempts to include the community in identification of issues, however, since the focus of the project was pre-determined this served only as input into an already existing project. The other stages of the project has taken form as consultative and information sharing (top down.) Every decision is still initiated from the top, and handed downwards for consultation. In the stalemate of the project the community and co-operative member are left waiting for the next move from above.

The single most important measure taken under the SNP in order to create ownership of the project and the process in using community members from the informal settlement as local coordinators for the project. The establishment of a coordinators office, with representatives from the community acting as the coordinators has increased the access to information for community members. Alternatively, one could envision an organisational structure where the coordinators were located far from the community and with coordinators recruited externally. The latter alternative is clearly least favourable to empowerment. The proximity of the coordinating office and the close ties of the coordinators to the community make it easy for community and co-operative members to access information directly by visiting the office or through informal communication with the coordinators. However, the coordinators potential is not fully utilised. Their role in the current structure of SNP is somehow reduced to that of messengers. They deliver messages from KENSUP and UN-Habitat to the co-operatives and communities, and not a much lesser degree feedback from communities to the top of the ladder. Through training the coordinators could assume a more vital role in terms of decision making.

Inclusion in the construction phase is an important mechanism in order to ensure ownership over the end product, namely the housing and the new community. Ownership over the end product is an important aspect that is incorporated in the SNP site, but to a much lesser degree in the GoK site. The SNP does not make any provisions for this ownership to have a multiplier effect in the community. Hence, ownership in the SNP context is limited to ownership over final product, not to the project process and not to creating shifts in power (discussed below). Participation in development projects can create empowerment by re-orientations of power relations that in turn generates further material and political gains from greater inclusion and strengthening of political
shift of power

Successfully handing over ownership to decentralised and diverse levels in the project can create empowerment through ownership of the project and the development outcomes. More importantly, in terms of empowerment, it can lead to a shift in power relations in the larger community. As described above the power accredited to the poor people of Mavoko is very low. In order to create deep rooted empowerment of the poor people within Mavoko’s informal settlements this issue has to be addressed. The rationalisation of empowerment through participation within the SNP does not emphasise any structural changes in power relation between the powerful and the powerless actors in Mavoko. The fundamental change is a pre-requisite for sustainable reorientation of power relations is a mentality shift within the organisations of the powerful. In the context of Mavoko the powerful are perceived as the MCM, some larger organisations and the central authorities (co-operative members, pers.comm).

“The slum dwellers they are not respected. They ignore me at the county offices. They have to see people as people and respect everybody as equal. Being part of a co-operative does not help. They still do not respect the poor.” (co-operative member, pers.comm)

This particular co-operative member specified that being part of a co-operative has not helped him gain the respect he wanted when he brought issues to the table with authorities. Still it is a sign of empowerment that he felt the right to demand respect, and that he himself sees what valuable contribution he and his community members can bring to the table. The group talked together in Kamba, agreed and came with a statement in English that:
“Even the rich are also poor. They depend on us. I’ll ask for a job, and they will give it to me. Then they need me. If they are rich they need also others to be poor. They can order us to come, order us to do things for them” (co-operative member, pers.comm).

In the context I interpreted this as poverty associated with being dependent; hence, the rich are poor because they depend on the poor. It is the experience of the poor in Mavoko that they only get something from the rich when they have something to “sell”. Being in the middle of campaigns for council and parliament the example of elections was used. As poor people they are unable to register for a seat in parliament or to run for council: “I have to vote for someone who is rich. But I will not vote for them unless they give us something. When they give us something then we do what they say. They have more power.”

In the identification phase of the SNP community representatives, representatives from local and central government and other stakeholders were brought together in an extensive training in participatory methodology, and participatory data collection tools. A desired outcome of such a training is the establishment of mutual trust and respect. The coordinators commented that the MCM consider them as partners and that they are very helpful. The MCM have initiated processes that can imply an opening up to more community participation in the governance process. The UN-Habitat representative acknowledged these measures as positive steps in the right direction of inclusive governance, but adds that there is still long way to go (UN-Habitat representative, pers.comm). The government representative credits the rapid development of planning and transparency tools to the presence of the SNP. The UN-Habitat representative acknowledges that it might have had an impact but is careful in assessing to what extent the SNP has had a direct influence.

Nevertheless, there are clear differences in the way the government officials are perceived between the co-operative members and the coordinators. The coordinators are also community members from the informal settlement, but through the SNP their role in the community have changed. The differences in experiences in the encounter with government officials can stem from personal differences or from the fact that the coordinators are in fact more powerful and hence demand more respect in the relation to other powerful groups or individuals. However, power relations have not changed significantly if the co-operative members do not identify any shift in relations. And if they do not see that being a part of a co-operative has brought about shifts in change
power relations, then for the purpose of this thesis the SNP has not contributed to empowerment by shifting power from the powerful to the powerless.

In order to create development and empowerment based on sustainability and participation, fundamental organizational changes are needed. In this case it would require the GoK and UN-Habitat to change the way they undertake development projects. According to Fox and Brown (1998) there is an inability or unwillingness in the organizations involved to change the fundamental principles of their organization thus participation is seen as something to be applied rather than something to internalize. In complex bureaucracies such as the UN and a government structure such as GoK, internalizing learning and incorporating participation is not easily done.

Taking empowerment seriously requires organisations and governments to be willing to internalise the concept of participation to an extent that effectively change their own organisation to accommodate the inputs from the community.

**Saving and tenure security**

Of the development outcomes of the SNP two have been mentioned to have empowering abilities for the community. The first is the savings component and the other is having permanent secure housing. Empowerment is at the centre of a people centred and sustainable development, “sustainable human development”. Development in itself empowers people. It gives them a sense of personal security, a protection from sudden and destructive disruptions in our daily lives (Septh in UNDP 1996). Increased tenure security can be seen as an empowering element in itself. It increases the stability in peoples, protects them from sudden disruptions such as evictions and releases them from the burden of paying rent. This, in turn, potentially unravels human and financial capital that can be directed towards self mobilisation and expands the agency of the people. However, increased tenure security is not determined on community participation *per se*. It can equally easily be granted through a top down measure where the government intervenes and provides this security. Narayan (2006) reflects a debate of the origins of empowerment. Some hold that it is the process of learning and participation that is central in the empowerment process and not the final product as such. Others argue that it is the change in itself that is empowering; that there is a change from the previous state of tenure insecurity to the current state of tenure security.
In the case of SNP the tenure security is not yet a reality, however, it can easily be read from the co-operative members that the they perceive the state of tenure security to be a very important elevation of their livelihoods. Hence, in terms of the empowering effect of tenure security it is the end result, the change in itself, which is perceived as the key to empowerment. It is seen as an entry point to gaining the respect, and improving livelihood for their household: “Once we have the houses we can do so many things” (co-operative member, pers.comm). Having secure tenure means not having to worry about if you will be evicted or if your home will be demolished in the near future. In terms of empowering a community granting secure tenure can have a direct impact.

Private ownership versus collective ownership is also a topic of discussion among the co-operative members. Some would prefer private ownership while others see an added security with collective ownership. De Soto (2000) holds that with private property rights the poor would be able to tap into finance and credit schemes in order to invest in their structures and neighbourhoods and in turn work their way out of destitution. It is by no means certain that the credit and finance institutions would give loans to the poor on account of a deed paper. According to UN-Habitat (in Bessenecker 2005) there is no doubt that formal titling increase the value of properties, but there are many cases where formal markets do not appear to be following regulations. In these cases it is difficult for the owner to realise the improved value. In many areas in Sub-Saharan Africa it is common that houses are not routinely marketed. Even where there are markets regularisation of the property might just raise the price of housing and in the end reduce affordability. In Kenya the process of formalising slums has not yet started. Instead the government has entered partnerships with international development organisations in order to improve the living conditions and de facto security in the informal settlements. Taken into account the situation of tenure in Kenya and the difficulties for poor people to access the credit and finance system; collective ownership and a continued co-operative action seems favourable. The best option for the poor people to access credit systems through co-operatives. However, Fruet (2003) points out that researchers over the past decades have concluded that collective self-managed low income housing initiatives have faced considerable difficulties. The local organisations are often inexperienced and the members lack the skills and education level needed to take on such a challenging task.

Tenure security in Mavoko seems to be regarded as an empowering element regardless of the process and learning. However, some emphasise the issue of the process of learning and the origin of
change as the important element of empowerment. Saving has been mentioned as an example of an empowering process. On the question of what kind of empowerment they saw realised through the SNP one coordinator said: “Saving of course. Saving is empowering in itself” (coordinator, pers.comm).

“If a woman saves enough to buy a cow, she feels more competent and has more assets; she is empowered. If she inherits a cow or receives a gift of a cow because of her social relationships, she might be wealthier, but is she empowered” (Narayan 2006, 22)

The co-operative members also emphasised how they feel proud of being able to save. UN-Habitat representative and coordinators all express amazement over the amounts people are able to save through the co-operatives in spite of their limited income, which reflects back to the sense of achievement for the co-operative members. The saving factor is clearly a driving force in the empowerment, both psychological and in terms of expanded agency. From the SNP project documents it is evident that saving is an important factor in holding the community responsible for the progress of the project. However, the community was dedicated savings also pre-SNP but through smaller co-operatives and self help groups. The important contribution that the SNP has made in terms of empowerment is to train and sensitise the community on co-operative issues: “We can do more, now that we are bigger” (co-operative member, pers.comm)

Psychological empowerment

Peoples capacity to aspire, introduced by Appadurai, can be strengthened by development programmes entering a community with a promise of a better future. Hence, “being seen” can contribute to creating hope that the future will be brighter than the present. This is the most important input that a development programme can give to the poor communities (Appadurai 2004) However, when many development agencies and organisations come with promises and do not deliver. This can be interpreted as a form of disempowerment on the psychological level. In other words when promises repeatedly are broken, so is the capacity to aspire. This bears witness of the disillusionment that is evident in some parts of the informal settlements in Mavoko and it keeps many from participating. The SNP has not broken any promises as such, but the programme has changed and has not turned
out as first described by the UN-Habitat and GoK to the community members. This can fuel the
dissillusionment created by some other development projects.

From the coordinators one can gather that an empowering aspect of the SNP is “Being seen”
(coordinator, pers.comm). He explains how it is highly valued by the community members that
somebody from the outside takes an interest in their issues and sees the potential for improvement.
This speaks for a form of psychological empowerment as a side effect of the mere presence of the
SNP.

Training contributes to psychological empowerment by advancing skills that can improve the
self-confidence of the individuals involved. As mentioned before leadership training is an element
where the co-operative members feel they are lagging behind. Hence, it is an area that should be
further emphasised in order to strengthen the psychological, individual capabilities. The co-
operative members see their own potential and are clearly willing to contribute. However, they
emphasise that they lack training: “We can do many things, but we need training to know how to
do” (co-operative member, pers.comm). In other words the slum dwellers need change and they
acknowledge this fact themselves. However, because they lack the objective ability to control their
environment (opportunity structure) as well as lacking the subjective conviction that they can do so
(psychological empowerment). (Diener and Biswas-Diener in Narayan 2006) The poorest people of
the informal settlement are a social group that is kept in place by social and cultural norms. The co-
operative members feel that they are not respected by the officials when they come to enquire about
matters at hand. This can be illustrated by the example given earlier; where the community members
had organised themselves in order to find out who owns the land that «39» is built on». They were
overlooked and were not given any answers. In turn this leaves the sentiments in the community
that they are not respected and have no impact on the system.

Thus far in the SNP the participation of the community members has not spurred more self-
mobilisation. However, according to UN-Habitat representatives and the GoK representative there is
a marked difference in vocalisation of their issues during community meetings. Emphasising the
potential for valuable contribution from the community members that has contributed to
strengthening the community members belief in their abilities. It is still a way to go in terms of
psychological empowerment as further strengthening of this belief can help the community members
initiate action to change their own lives.

The fact that the SNP was initiated by external agents based on external factors is one
element of the programme that does not speak in favour of empowering the community. Robert Chambers has repeatedly emphasised the value of letting poor people themselves define poverty and use that framework to assess development. Creating action based on the needs identified by community members, and building on already existing action measures is a valuable contribution to psychological empowerment.
Throughout this thesis the link between community participation in a slum upgrading project and empowerment has been analysed and tested. Two elements have become apparent: Firstly, there is great potential for participatory activities, capacity building and empowerment linked to slum upgrading and sustainable neighbourhood strategies. Secondly, it has become apparent that there are many different levels of empowerment that do not necessarily move together and not even in the same direction (Narayan 2006). Four possible links between participation and empowerment have been presented:

- The project development outcomes expand the opportunity structure and agency, as a result of participation, or independent of participation (means to an end or no effect).
- The participation in the project leads to ownership and empowerment (end in itself)
- Individual project outcomes is empowering
- The project leads to a change of mentality in which the poor and rich start believing in the poor (end and means)

Although participation of community members seems to be a goal in itself judging from the project document it does not seem to be the case in the implementation phase. In terms of using the potential of community participation as an entry point to empowerment, through ownership and decision making, the SNP has failed. The decision making processes have not been shifted to the lowest level possible. Decisions are still being made at the top levels and then taken to the grass roots for consultation or by sharing information. The modes of participation in the project cycle has not been sufficient to create ownership over the project within the communities. It is a conclusion of this thesis that creating empowerment effectively requires organisational willingness to dis-empower the powerful and to let initiatives come from the bottom-up. It is common for development programmes to be based on assumptions of what the poor need and want without a deep participatory process.
SNP falls into this category and hence does not utilise the full potential for empowerment that is in a slum upgrading project.

The individual development outcomes of the SNP specifically the savings, land tenure and the organisation into larger co-operatives seem to have contributed to the empowerment of the community members. Encouraging people to save has in this context been more empowering than any other single factor. The long term effect of the co-operatives are still pending, but if they are kept up and not misused it can also have an significantly empowering effect. This element was however not mentioned by any of the co-operative members themselves. The provision of land tenure can have an empowering effect even if it is not achieved through a participation process as it expands the opportunity structure of the individual. However, directly contributing through the saving scheme is likely to strengthen the empowerment. Another positive contribution to the community through the SNP is tied to psychological empowerment. The mere fact of outsiders taking an interest and sowing hope for the future has strengthened the collective capacity to aspire and to believe in the future.

Within the SNP there is a weak correlation between the expected outcomes of empowerment, the activities, and the actual outcomes. Emphasis is put on the training and capacity building of the community and local authorities in order to expand the people's opportunity to effectively create changes in their own lives. As the programme has been rolled out there is little evidence to support that the SNP has significantly expanded the opportunity structures of the poor. The central government has by and large failed the participation process by abandoning the initially agreed self-help and community inclusive project. The people in Mavoko do not see this as a problem since it increases the number of houses being built in the area, but for the goal of creating empowerment through participation it has a detrimental effect. The community participation on the government’s site has been reduced to the inclusion and capacity building for the of the three community representatives who act as coordinators.

The participation process is formal through a formally established relationship between donor and implementing- and lead agencies. The channels of participation are described and documented in the project documents, meaning that there are little informal participatory channels. Formal participation channels, although important, do not outweigh the importance of deep commitment to participation. The SNP do not relocate decision making processes to the lowest level possible and they only encourage ownership through rhetoric and not in action. The stability factor
is somewhat of an uncertainty there are evidence speaking for both for and against. Particularly the history of division between the two main partner organisations does not instil confidence in stability. On the other hand the co-operatives with their own elected officials are likely to represent stability. In conclusion: Is the participation formal? Yes. Is the participation stable? Maybe. Is the participation deep? No. Taking this into consideration it is not likely that the participation in the project in itself will lead to empowerment. Slum Upgrading projects have many potential arenas of participation. And can if applied in a correct and committed manner contribute considerably to empowerment. The SNP and the partners involved should in the future utilise this potential further through a deeper participatory process in the construction, design of the project, design of housing and facilities, and decision making in general.

**Recommendations**

The findings from this study are determined by context, as case studies often are. It has not been a goal of this study to establish absolute causalities about mode of participation and empowerment outcome. However, it is still possible to transfer the knowledge and experience of this study to other similar cases. Hopefully this research can contribute to the world of development simply by the force of example (Flyvberg 2004).

*Community participation* and *empowerment* have become buzzwords in the international development community. It is almost unthinkable for donors to fund a project without including these words in the proposal. The intentions may be to honour the principles but far to often it is left as rhetoric because the map does not fit the terrain. There is not significant demand for documentation of the empowerment outcomes and few demands on modes of participation. This leads to a dwindling of the concepts. If measuring empowerment is to be possible the organisation developing and implementing the project has to have a clear definition of the mode of participation, the justification and the expected empowerment outcomes.

A fundamental mistake made within many development projects is predetermining participation of community members in a project that has already been developed by external agents. By predetermining the project elements and later co-opting community members into the project one of the most valuable possibilities for empowerment is eliminated. For the full potential of participatory development to be realised the participation process has to start from the very
beginning: Before the identification of the priority issue. Instead the community should be involved in defining which issues are more pressing to the community members themselves and rank the issues accordingly. It is from this that the project should take its cue. The mode of participation should also be influenced by primary stakeholders.

If it is stated as a goal of a particular development project to create empowerment through community participation, the first step is for the organisation to evaluate their commitment to change. Is there enough flexibility within the organisation and the project to act and react to the priorities and impulses that come from the community. Facilitating a deep participatory process is demanding on the organisation involved as it is inherit in the participation process that one can not predict the outcomes. The organisation has to establish a fundamental belief in the rationality of the poor and trust that they can make the right choices and trade-offs for themselves.

Training and capacity building has to include all sections of the community. However the topics of training and capacity building should arise from a participatory process of identifying and sorting priority areas of training. In order to further assist the empowerment process resources from within the community should be used in these trainings to the extent possible. Being trained by “one of our own” facilitates the learning process as the doxa is more similar than from an outside agent.

It is ideal form the participatory process to include all sections of a community: Preferably rich and poor, the formal and informal, the private and the official should all be involved. Poverty does not only concern the poor and slum upgrading does not only concern informal settlers. These issues affect and should concern the society at large. Isolating the poor in a participation process effectively limits the spill over effect as it reduces the perceived credibility for the people not involved in the project.

Empowerment is essentially about power. It can be related to shift of power between the powerful and the powerless within the society or within a development project. “Our power” still outweighs “their knowledge” in most development project (Chambers 1996). Unless the participatory development process is based on local knowledge and defines reality through the “voices of the poor” (Narayan 2001), participation is not likely to lead to lasting empowerment.
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Appendix 1

Interview Guide Coordinators

The coordinators

What is your role in the SNP?
How long have you been working here?
Do many people from the community come by the office?
What issues are they bringing?
What is your relationship with the MCM?

Co-operatives

How were they formed?
Who are active in the process?
How many in each co-operative?
How is it working?
Are structure owners involved? (absentees)

Capacity building

How many trainings have taken place?
For whom, by whom, about what?
Participation and attendance?

The People of Mavoko

Poverty, Education and Employment?
Have there been many development project in this area?
Tenure. Are people threatened by evictions?
Mode of land allocation? Transparent? Does it effect people?
The relationship between MCM an community members. How is it?
Participation process
When were the community members first involved?
How were the community members first involved?
(defining, developing, implementing, monitoring, evaluation)
In your opinion how has the participation been among community members?
Who has participated?
(look for social economic group)
Do people’s tenure status affect the participation?
In your opinion what influences participation?
(poverty, education, employment?)
In your mind, what do you think is people's motivation for participating in the SNP?
Do you feel people’s goals correspond with the project goals?
What do you think empowerment means in the context of SNP?
Is SNP achieving the goals?
What do you perceive as the greatest obstacles for SNP to achieving its goals?
Facilitating factors?
Appendix 2

Interview Guide co-operative Members

When did you first hear about the project?
What convinced you to join?
Why did you choose to join the SNP and the co-operatives?
What kind of contact have you had with the coordinators, Gok, MCM, other Habitat?
How many of you were members of an organisation or merry-go-round prior to SNP?
Did you participate in the pre-co-op training?
Where you ever in doubt about resettling?
How will the resettlement affect you?
Have you learned anything from being a part of this project?
What do you see as the main problems with this project?
Other than your savings, what can you contribute with in this development of the houses?
What would make it easier for you to do something about your own housing and poverty situation?
Is this community strong enough to facilitate changes?
Who participates in the co-operatives? Who is active and who is not?
Do you expect to get money when you go for trainings?
What are the positive outcomes of being a part of this project?
What are the main problems that keep you from saving? Are you able to save as you had hoped?
In your eyes, who been important in this process (gok, Habitat, the people, coordinators?)
If there was something that you could change about the project what would it be?

Background
Are you tenants?
What kind of work do you do?
Are you still part of other groups?
What is your impression so far?
Appendix 3

Interview Guide UN-Habitat and GoK Representatives

Why was Mavoko chosen as a site for KENSUP?
Where are you in the project implementation process?
Who in the community were mobilised and how?
When in the project cycle were the community mobilised?
How have the community members participated in various phases?
Are the structure owners involved in the process?
Are there many structure owners involved? (absentees)
Have you met any resistance to participation in the project?
How have you ensured broad participation?
What kind of community organisations existed before SNP?
What is Empowerment in the context of the SNP?
How is the communication and information sharing between local government and community?
Are there social structures that determine people's participation?
Have there been an increase of self-mobilisation after SNP?
What kind of training have been undertaken?
Can you describe the training?