

# A Capability Enhancement Initiative for Nairobi Urban Slum Youth in Kenya: A Case Study of Mathare Youth Sports Association Approach in Mathare

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## Abstract

A high rate of urbanization has been witnessed in the recent past, with urban population exceeding rural population. Consequently there is rising spread of slums in the world, more so in Sub-Saharan Africa. Of the urban population, youth form the largest group. Unfortunately, the urbanization is without proportional opportunities for the youth. The illusion of going to the cities for better opportunities has instead become a source of marginalization which has catapulted them into desperation and poverty. The paper is based on capabilities as derived from Capabilities Approach by Amartya Sen (1993) and developed further by Ingrid Robeyns (2003). In the light of the foregoing, youth lack basic capabilities. This has consequently reflected adversely to their ability to fend for themselves. It is argued in this paper that youth can cause and propel development, but are hampered by lack of enhancement of their capabilities, by means to effectively engage them. In recognition of youth potential capabilities to cause development, Mathare Youth sports Association (MYSA) is using sports and community service as youth engagement formulae for the purpose of developing the said capabilities for urban slum youth in Nairobi, Kenya. This is referred to as MYSA Approach (MYSAA). The study then follows up MYSAA as used among Mathare slum youth to understand how it is used to improve youth capabilities and to learn from it. This serves as an eye opener to other institutions to think out best formulae to engage youth. It also contributes to development studies as an input in the current debates about youth, their numbers and contribution to development. Conclusively, the study enabled understanding of how MYSAA is utilized, its impact on urban slum youth capabilities and their lives in general and Mathare community. Lessons learned then inform that youth capability enhancement is possible given opportunities, but require a friendly and relevant concept so as to give them the space to contribute to development. On the basis of the findings the study has made proposals regarding youth and capability enhancement for development.

**Keywords:** Capability, Enhancement, Youth

## 1.1 Background

Traditionally, the process of industrialization and economic development was associated with migration to urban centres due to labour demand. But the extent of rural-urban migration in recent years has enormously exceeded the capacity of modern urban industrial centres to absorb the influx, consequently leading to rise in urban unemployment (Abol 1987). However, all cannot be attributed to migration and population explosion, failure of governance deserves its share of the responsibility. ‘...slums must be seen as the result of a failure of housing policies, laws and delivery systems, as well as national and urban policies’ (Un-Habitat 2003a).

Projections by the World Development Report 2007 indicate that most developing countries may experience further rise in young people population within the next 10 years (Wb 2007).

The World Youth Report (2007) indicates that Youth in Sub-Saharan Africa are the fastest growing labour force in the world, yet a large portion is unemployed and marginalized. To worsen the situation, youth in Africa grew by about 34 percent between 1995 and 2005. By implication Sub-Saharan Africa which houses Kenya, takes the largest portion of youth population. They need shelter, employment and urban services (Un-Habitat 2003b). They lack access to clean water, their garbage not only remain untreated but surrounds them within their community, which also affect their health. There is no single universally agreed upon definition of ‘youth’. Youth as a category is socially constructed. The Kenya National Youth Policy (2005) defines youth as those of age between 15 to 30 years. The Pan-African Youth Charter (PAYC) shares this line of thinking, but ‘...does not exclude young people below and above the specified age range who may be engaged in this transition’<sup>1</sup>. This paper conceptualises youth based on age and looseness of boundaries between children and youth and youth and adults, which comprises the attributes of PAYC conceptualisation.

Based on Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) of a number of countries, the World Youth Report (2005) points out that many developing countries don’t give youth adequate priority. Youth matters, whenever addressed have a prescription prepared in their absence and brought to them when ready, regardless of their interests and participation in decision making. If formal education is used as a basis for securing better life, then most youth from slums have negligible probabilities to have one. This invites the thought about their future,

without compatible intervention. According to the Peoples daily (2008) newspaper of China, following election of US-elect President Barrack Obama, the president of Kenya Mwai Kibaki urged youth to emulate Obama, embrace education as a key capability. He emphasized that Obama took education seriously and rose from a scratch to realize his dreams<sup>2</sup> (Xinhua 2008). Despite youth vulnerability, i.e. defenselessness, insecurity and exposure to risks, shocks and stresses (Wratten 1995) they have to struggle. In a nutshell, there is a gap in addressing young people's issues. Slums as their residence, in this case, are not provided with public amenities. Two factors make the situation worse, lack of planning for urban growth and rapid increase in both inequality and poverty which is compounded by growth policies that fight urbanization rather than work with it (Un-Habitat 2003b). However, slums play an important role in development context; it is the first probable stopping point for immigrants providing relatively low cost life prior to eventual positioning in the city. Slum informal enterprises are connected to formal ones which contribute to continue running of the formal city. It is the source of cheap labor for industries and commodities that find their way into major formal businesses. Therefore, the clamor for capability enhancement may most likely contribute to local and national development.

As a major capability, education for MYSA youth members is availed each year to the best young leaders' age and gender wise in its 16 zones. This is done through MYSA Leadership Awards project, given for their service to their community. It consists of educational bursaries and scholarships, paid directly to their schools as school fees (Mysa 2008). Alongside this, it is claimed that talented youth in sports, photography, videography, and drama, are trained to further their skills and use it as a source of livelihood. Therefore, MYSA builds self-esteem, youth skills and channels the skills of youth into self and community improvement (Preben 2001). MYSA's organizational principle as said to be envisaged in MYSAA rewarding system which is 'You do something, MYSA does something; you do nothing, MYSA does nothing' (Mysa 2008). MYSA is therefore presenting itself only as a facilitator or enabler.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

'The "problem" of youth is being constructed as one of the great challenges of the 21st century. Nowhere is the youth issue more acute than in Africa...' (Honwana 2008). The main problem is youth lack and or having unenhanced capabilities emanating from inappropriate youth engagement means. This consequently leads to inability to utilize likely available opportunities. This factor has confined them to slums, witnessing their population increase and their lives deteriorate. Little is being done by the relevant state institutions to address this issue.

Looking at the recent violent riots in Mozambique to protest against government price increases, which were led by youth, likewise to Kenya's post December 2007 disputed general election violence as was reported in the mass media, youth plight can't be assumed. It is estimated that 80 percent of the dead in these riots, for the latter case were aged between 15 and 30 years (Honwana 2008). The worst hit areas were slums, where there are high disadvantaged youth concentrations. On one hand it can be argued that the mayhem was instigated by politicians for political gains, while otherwise it can be claimed that youth are poor and hoped for better change, which didn't come to pass. All the claims are valid, for they confirm both, youth's high population in the slums due to inability to live in better residential areas and their availability and disillusioned life.

According to Honwana (2008), large numbers of youth operate in the margins of society. This circumstance may lead some of them into delinquency, either as a means of expression of frustration, as a show of power which they feel deprived of or as a means of survival (ibid). There is need to save them from this predicament. On the economic front, poverty, unemployment and underemployment have curtailed youth interest to commit their energy, intellect and creativity to their good as well as that of the society (Tsegaye, 2006). However, slums have some youth who have received some formal education. Both, who have formal education and who do not, struggle to survive, there are those who are employed, self employed, doing casual jobs when available and abide by the law and don't engage in the social ills.

Therefore, youth are not homogeneous in terms of characteristics as some literature may imply.

Despite this, intervention is required to provide for those who are struggling to survive. Therefore, the main way out is to enable youth to overcome their deficiencies in capabilities. MYSAA as a likely solution, require to be better understood in the interest to address the wider capability challenges of youth. The society has the responsibility to provide space to enable them integrate and exercise their citizenship. The state, youth, their community and other actors have to synergize for the good of youth. This seems not to be working fully hence the need to understand how MYSA addresses the challenge as a likely solution provider. Youth capability development through sports (MYSAA) as an acclaimed formula focuses on improving capabilities of active and participating youth while the community passively benefit.

## 1.3 Research Objective and Questions

The objective of this paper was to understand how urban slum youth capabilities are enhanced and the community improved through MYSAA. In order to accomplish the above objective the following research

question was formulated:

Q1. How has MYSAA enhanced Mathare Youth capabilities?

## **1.4 Review of Related Literature**

### **1.4.1 Youth**

There is no universally agreed upon definition of 'youth'. Youth is socially constructed hence justified to have varied conceptualizations. The concept is used in daily life and in policies; it is applied to suit given contexts. During the International year of the youth in 1985, United Nations defined youth as those between 15 and 25 years of age (Brown 1990).

According to the Kenya National Youth Policy (2005), Kenya government view youth as those of ages between 15 and 30 years. What is most problematic is defining transition from childhood to youth. According to Lloyd (2006), United Nations delimits youth between the ages of 15 and 25 years, but adds that youth isn't easily circumscribable; it represents the range of transition age between childhood and adulthood. In Kenya, like most African countries the boundaries between child, youth and adult are drawn loosely based on cultural transition rites<sup>7</sup>. Different Societies have different conceptualizations of 'youth'. The Kenya National Youth Policy (2005), view 24 youth as being of age between 15 to 30years. The Pan-African Youth Charter (PAYC) shares Kenya National Youth Policy (KNYP) age bracket, but '...does not exclude young people below and above the specified age range who may be engaged in this transition. Considering the attributes, this paper adapted PAYC conceptualization of youth.

Having conceptualized youth, it is unfortunate that their contributions to development are not proportional to their demographic strength, as most youth have all through remained mostly excluded from society's important and critical socio-economic decisions (Tsegaye 2006). There are instances where youth are exploited, especially when labor opportunities arise, and finally end up least benefitting. More so, youth are stereotyped. Societies' perception of youth is one of the major barriers to youth development, since the perception determines how they are treated.

### **1.4.2 Capability**

The capability approach is a broad normative framework for evaluation of well-being and social arrangements in the case of this paper. The main characteristic of capability approach is what people are effectively able to do and to be i.e. their capabilities (Robeyns 2003a). Based on this thinking, development require individuals with capabilities hence its importance to youth. Looking back, some aspects of capability approach can be traced to such people as Aristotle, Karl Marx, Adam Smith among others (Nussbaum, 1995). According to Sen. (1999) development should be seen as the expansion of human capabilities (Sen 1999). The beings and doings, which Sen. refers to as functioning's, combined, constitute what makes life valuable. This include working, being literate, being healthy, being part of a community, being respected, among other functioning's (Robeyns 2003a). Inadequate command over commodities and services determines other aspects of well-being such as health, longevity and self esteem (Lipton 1995). MYSAA intervention seeks to improve lives through capability enhancement and encouraging community service by youth.

There is need to live a valued life and so to be poor according to capability approach, one is deprived of basic capabilities. Where inability to afford basic capabilities imply incapacity to satisfy certain important functioning's up to a certain minimally adequate levels (Sen. 1993). This approach values ones physical condition, which influences the quality of life one lives. Monetary resources are important as they influence other capabilities. Minimal essential capabilities are counted as health, nutrition, and education, which urban slum youths yearn for.

A few of Nussbaum's features essential to life longevity, health, bodily integrity, senses, and control of one's environment politically and materially (Nussbaum 2000). Robeyns (2003) suggested a criterion that can shape public debate on how relevant capabilities can be selected in any particular setting. Thus, it would be insufficient to include only limited education when capabilities regarding health, safety, good social relations and respect might be very necessary to sustain participation in education (Robeyns 2003a). Her expansion of Sen.'s capability approach thus entails some principles for regulating debate with regard to the selection of capabilities, thus ensuring aspects of low evaluation of needs are appropriately counterbalanced. Capability Approach contributes to poverty analysis by providing a coherent frame work for defining poverty in the context of the lives people live, like slum youth and the freedoms they enjoy (Caterina 2003). To reduce poverty or develop, people need greater freedoms i.e. capabilities.

### **1.4.3 Slums**

Slums in this paper refer to unplanned settlements. They comprise of squatter settlements and illegal subdivisions of either government or private land in Nairobi, accommodate the majority of the city's population. Youth in slums are a vulnerable lot; they do not voluntarily choose to live in such densely populated poor dwellings, they are either born there or poverty pushes them to slums. Vulnerable people in this paper refer to a people whose life situation has a high probability to worsen or deteriorate (Rousseau 2008) whom most reside in

slums. Their basic capabilities such as nutrition, shelter, water and clothing is difficult to afford. Their human capabilities are minimal; they have poor health, little or no formal education. Their skills in whatever field have not been developed fully and their talents are raw due to lack of opportunities develop them. Social capabilities, which include trust in the community, sense of social belonging, sense of identity, self-esteem, having values that give meaning to life, leadership and capacity to organize are either limited or missing.

The environmental conditions of their residence are appalling, no public garbage collection services, no formal sewerage system, no public toilets, no formal security services by the state. Employment is difficult to find save for temporary casual jobs, where underpayment as a form of exploitation is the norm, since the youth are desperate for it. The slum in question is called Mathare. Mathare is a slum along Nairobi River, just outside Nairobi city. In 1960s the number of people in Mathare was estimated as being between two thousands and three thousand. Currently the population has increased to about half a million (Preben 2001) Settlement in this area was and is forbidden. To qualify the claim, currently there is a threat by the National Environmental Authority to evict about 127,000 slum dwellers along rivers in Nairobi, including Mathare and destroy their residence structures (Omondi 2008). This explains further why there is no infrastructure like roads, schools and hospitals, clean water, a sewerage system among others. However, there is some cosmetic and unreliable lighting and pathways, courtesy constituency development fund, laced with political interests by local politicians.

Late 1960s different churches started an outreach program in Mathare. Currently some schools are run by non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Preben, 2001). They aren't official schools with formal requirements though they bridge the gap, for there are no formal schools in the slum.

The institutions like religions, ethnic groupings, households, civil societies, and the state, peer groups, schools, political organizations, try to provide some of the essential services, but seem unable to fully satisfy disadvantaged youth and general community needs.

However, not all youth in slums are such disadvantaged, there are those whom, despite the tough going they somehow make their way through. The actors mentioned above enable some of the youth to realize enhancement of their capabilities and talents and end up successful. But most slum youth live desperate lives.

#### **1.4.4 Youth in the Eyes of Others**

The enormous urbanization rate worldwide has resulted in urban population exceeding rural. According to UN Habitat (2007), fifty years ago, 70 percent of the world population lived in rural settings; in 2007 urban population exceeded 50 percent of total population. By the year 2020, it is projected that most mega cities will be located in developing countries (Habitat 2007). According to Ashford (2007), Africa has a unique population profile; it had 44 percent of its population under 15 years in 2006. Sub-Saharan Africa is the youngest region of the world, and is yet to see its youth population peak (Ashford 2007) This trend raises concern about their future. Based on the preceding data, youth population outnumber other age groups (Ashford 2007). Youth issues then deserve much more attention, especially in urban areas due to rapid urbanisation without proportional opportunities. In the recent past, youth issues globally gained attention in international forums. According to Biggeri (2007), deficiencies of important capabilities during childhood, like health, not only reduces the well-being of those involved, but may also have larger societal meaning (Biggeri 2007). Due to youth importance, World Development Report (2007) had its main focus on youth, recognising the need to develop their capabilities to choose well, among any available opportunities. It also recognized them as decision makers, though they are rarely given the chance to. It also emphasizes investing in youth to build a strong human capital base. To realize this, the report proposes provision of education and basic health, provision of basic skills and well-being (Wb 2007). This is a shift from the earlier leaning where it embraced the youth bulge theory, where the World Bank perceived the rising youth population as a threat to the world. This mainstream theory led to different approaches to youth, including youth containment, punishment and control. This caused confusion in the society on how to understand and deal with youth and their issues.

It is argued that many developing countries have high young populations due to recent decades of high fertility along with rise in child survival rates due to improved health system. Without corresponding proportional opportunities, the youth bulge theory proponents view youth as dangerous and likely to be violent in their endeavour to meet their needs. They claim that such youth require to be contained to avoid disaster. People have been so distrustful of youth's capabilities such that they doubted if civilization could continue (Tsegaye, 2006). Others in the same school of thought regard youth as authors and perpetrators of violence. Such people as the Roman philosopher, Seneca, who said, 'It is the failing of youth not to be able to restrain its own violence.' English writer, Anthony Burgess, identified youth with violence by saying,

'...they don't know how to use their energy creatively, so they do the opposite and destroy'. Late 20th century, Watts wrote that youthfulness is excess, it is an implicit disorder, and for the society it is a 'problem' that require handling and control (Watts 1994). Young people are viewed in the above cases as inherently incapable as accomplishing certain responsibilities and duties (Tsegaye 2006). On the other hand, there is the anti-youth bulge theory school, which envision likeliness of a drop in fertility which impact on age structure and they argue that it will profoundly affect the economy positively vide change in age structure. This results in

higher numbers of working population and less dependants (Ashford 2007).

To emphasize the importance of youth in development, the Secretary General of the 53 member country Commonwealth, during the 63rd General Assembly in New York advised that youth needs and aspirations be given attention (Ogolla 2008), since youth are wheels of development.

In the same line is the gender based discrimination which has discouraged girls and young women from participating in socio-economic activities. Sedonean once suggested that youth involvement has moved forward and should no longer be seen as a 'rebellious act'. This debate puts youth of the centre of confusion hence attention given to them all depends on the school of thought one belongs. Youth are often victimized by forces beyond their control (Checkoway, 1992). Some of the youth bulge theory proponents seems to have changed heart. The World Bank currently recognizes the need to invest in youth, because labor is the main asset of poor people, and its productivity is the way to reduce poverty. However, questions arise about the genuineness of the World Bank's process that is meant to realize the inclusion of youth in

determining their future. For example, unemployment problem among the youth has got its roots in World Banks' own standard policies and conditions to loan, such as deregulation, privatization, cut public spending and liberalization (Wb, 2007).

To involve youth in development process in slums can best be done through developing their capabilities which empower them with skills to make wise and informed decisions. This approach, despite being aware of external influence, recognizes that every society has got ways of catering for the youth. The state, religious societies, peer groups, ethnic groupings, the household, and local civil society organizations are important actors who contribute to youth development and capability enhancement. These actors have made efforts to enable the young people meet their needs and rights. The state keeps law and order, provides security, among other obligations, though much more is expected from it. Religious societies provide spiritual nourishment, schools, socialization opportunities, and financially assist poor and bright to have education and counsel youth. Ethnic groupings provide the sense of identity and belonging, assist in solving social disputes, impute morals in youth and in some cases, provide youth with apprenticeship opportunities to enable them gain work skills e.g. in carpentry, Masonry, and metal work sometimes through apprenticeship.

Civil society organizations have played important role of making youth aware of their rights, their responsibilities in the society, the need to be morally sound, and provision of basic needs to the poor. The slum community therefore, has got ways however lean they may be, to cater for youth needs. Based on the above functioning of slum communities, it shows that there is some care system for the young people in slum set ups. However, this research appreciates all the above efforts and singles out MYSA so as to look at its approach to capability enhancement among youth in Mathare slum.

#### **1.4.5 NGO- State Relations**

According to Petras (1997), early 1980s the more perceptive sectors of the neoliberal ruling classes noticed that their policies were polarizing the society and provoking large scale social discontent. This prompted neoliberal politicians to finance and promote a parallel strategy i.e. the promotion of grassroots organizations with an 'anti statist' ideology, to form a social cushion among conflicting classes. By 1990s, they were referred to as 'nongovernmental' which by then were in thousands (Petras 1997). Economic and cultural globalization defined by a neoliberal agenda which emphasized decentralization and privatization of government functions altered the role of the state to the citizenry. The neoliberal agenda appreciated the role of NGOs as they depreciated the state role, claiming that the State is seen as inefficient and corrupt (Sutton 2004). It is argued that NGOs can be more responsive to local needs and more efficient in delivering of basic social services than state agencies. Support for the role of NGOs is from powerful international institutions and militant grass root agencies.

The World Bank, which works closely with NGOs defines them as "private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development" (Wb, 1995). This definition encompasses the most common aspects of NGOs but being from the World Bank it can discernibly be noticed that it has not mentioned the aspect of NGO source of funding and the hidden interest of the funding institutions. The said factor has led to resistance by some governments, who then censure and sometimes reject some NGOs from operating within their countries for fear of their likely invisible antagonistic objectives. The term is also widely used to mean nonprofit making organizations which are independent from the government and offer donations and voluntary service. NGOs encompass many organizations in development, these include Northern based charities such as CARE, World Vision, Oxfam to community based self help groups in the south. There are also research institutes, Churches, Professional Associations and lobby groups as NGOs. The NGO sector is so heterogeneous, there are NGOs that are credible, that enjoy community links and competent while others are inexperienced, inefficient and more rhetorical than action oriented. NGOs, as an example play roles which are viewed by states suspiciously in provision of education mainly in the developing world.

Most African countries have been and are struggling to deliver public services, including education, training, health care, security and social amenities. A variety and combination of factors like dire economic and political

crises, the debt burden, institutionalized corruption, austerity measures, and domestic policy failures have worsened the state's inability to translate resources into development (Okwany 2004a). To cover for the states' weaknesses to deliver services is the consequent rise in the number of NGO's in Kenya as is the case for other developing countries. 'State incapacity in the provision of social services has created an institutional void that is being filled by indigenous self-help groups and non-governmental organizations' (Okwany, 2004b) In Kenya, the NGO sector experienced its biggest growth between 1996 and 2003, rising from 511 to 2511 registered NGOs (Hearn 2007). In an era of depreciating financial resources and worsening poverty, governments are looking at NGOs as a means of getting benefits to the poor, an awareness NGOs are ably using to command national attention and international funding and exerting leadership in addressing development issues within a broad policy and institutional context (Korten 1987). In this case, MYSA that brought about MYSAA is a local NGO but with linkages with other NGOs for development. Nairobi city has witnessed massive growth in the number of NGO's, due to inability of the state to deliver services, and also due to several other factors. The first factor is Nairobi's position as a regional centre for international organizations, secondly, Kenya's relative political stability and thirdly, the spirit of *Harambee*, which has been adopted as a development ideology (Ndegwa, 1996:9). This rise has been exacerbated by channeling of funds through NGO's and not via the government.

NGO approaches to governments vary from active opposition to complementary i.e. filling the gaps left by the state, and trying to improve the state through deliberate collaboration (U.N.Habitat 2003). On the other hand the state can repress NGOs through outright oppression or legislation which can make such services as their registration and or renewal extremely bureaucratic or levy impossible tax regulations. Relationships between NGOs and states vary from country to country and regimes within a country. In most situations, mainly in the developing world NGOs are seen as opponents of the state hence hostility between them. While in other cases the two works together and share goals. In between the two extremes is another category of relation where the government may tolerate NGOs without supporting them or may be identify with NGOs segregatively. NGOs may also be unwilling to work with the government (Wb, 1995) Variations in relationships may emanate from the feeling of illegitimacy and survival insecurity by a government, and suspect NGOs specific activities, objectives, ideology and its ties with certain other institutions. In cases where the government agencies are weak, NGOs have always come in as an alternative, which raises government's tentacles for fear of erosion of legitimacy to govern. On the other hand some governments call on NGOs to offer services where their capacity is low. There is need of complementing each other than competing or antagonizing.

#### **1.4.6 Ingrid Robeyns adapted Capability Yardstick**

MYSAA being the main focus can only be seen to have meaning in this process of capability enhancement through its effect on youth capabilities and improvement in their community; other indicators are as partly listed below. The indicators were used to determine how MYSA intervention to the capabilities enhancement of slum youth and the community at large, in analysis as in Ingrid Robeyns work (Robeyns 2003b) as adapted, as follows:

(a) Physical well-being

Bodily health, sanitation of environment, HIV/AIDS awareness and control

(b) Psycho-social capability

Mental well-being/mental health, self-esteem, acceptability in their community and community relationships and networks

(c) Bodily integrity and safety from violence, robberies, rape risks, etc.

(d) Political empowerment

Being able to participate in and have a fair share of influence on political decision making in the slums.

(e) Education and knowledge

Receiving education and using it and produce knowledge.

(f) Paid work or employment

Working in the labor market or using acquired skills and developed talent to undertake contracts e.g. play for a club and or start own artistic project e.g. photography

(g) Shelter and Environment

Being able to shelter oneself and live in a safe and pleasant environment

(h) Respect

Being able to be respected and treated with dignity by others.

(i) Gender equality

Treatment not based on your gender but a person

#### **1.4.7 MYSA Approach**

MYSAA is loosely the formula used by MYSA to intervene to initiate youth capability enhancement process in the slums of Nairobi. The approach is based on MYSA such as 'healthy athletes need a healthy environment' so as to encourage youth to keep good health and do garbage management. Another principle is, 'You do something, MYSA does something; you do nothing, MYSA does nothing' (Mysa, 2008), which encourages taking

responsibility and actively participating in activities. The concept encompasses the use of sports and community voluntary service as channels to reach and engage youth in slums for development, based on the understanding that youth like sports. Sports are also an end in themselves, since youth can enhance their sports skills and talents through it and attain the desired capabilities such as physical health and or employment. It is also alleged to give the uneducated the opportunity to get education or acquire skills and use it to earn a living among other benefits. Community services draw youth closer to their communities as reformed people who can serve the community free of charge and understand the need to serve. Youth are also encouraged to ensure that they live in healthy environments by making them clean.

To understand MYSAA, let us look at the conditions of the place it is utilized. Mathare slum is a densely populated urban slum environment with a couple of tough living challenges to residents. Emanating from the said conditions is youth temptation to use illegal means to survive, whereas most youth struggle to look for whatever job so as to get an income. According to Honwana (2008) in reference to child soldiers agency, claim of doing wrongs for having no choice does not arise, their agency does not cease, because they can mobilize resources in their own way to alter activities of others and thereby theirs. For example, she refers to Mozambique war, child soldiers can pretend to be ill to avoid certain tasks like killing civilians (Honwana 2008). In the case of disadvantaged slum youth, they can invoke their agency to avoid being drawn into any likely ills, which Giddens (1984) calls 'dialectic of control' (Giddens 1984). Like former child soldiers, as mentioned by Honwana in her speech slum youth can avoid anti-social behaviour. Mathare disadvantaged youth have to struggle to move from lack of capabilities like education, marketable skills and employment, so as to live a decent life and exercise full citizenship.

Despite the myriad of difficulties they face, youth in Africa and specifically in Kenya are engaged in socio-economic and political development. They have been on the forefront of major social transformations, i.e. politics, religion, economic, or community building. In South Africa, youth were involved in the Soweto uprisings against apartheid (Honwana 2008). They are involved in creative and innovative forms of popular cultures such as theatre, arts, music and dance. For example, in Kenya young musicians have established what they refer to as "Hip Hop Parliament" meant to denounce violence through rap music following the 2007 post-election violence (Mcferran 2008). While in Mozambique, young artists are transforming weapons of war into works of art (Honwana, 2008), others must rise and do something about themselves and their societies. As Devlin (2006) puts it, youth stereotyping in a negative way as irresponsible, threatening, determines how members of the society view and treat them. It also curtails their access to opportunities e.g. access to decision making processes in the society (Devlin 2006).

Despite difficult circumstances, youth are able and have to rise above any likely belief of inability as emphasized by Fanon (1961), '...each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its own mission (and either) fulfil it or betray it' (Fanon, 1961). Young people must push on with the agenda to contribute to development for they have the potential. MYSAA usage therefore finds a dichotomised but needy environment.

### **1.5 Methodology**

This is a study of MYSAA as used on Nairobi's Mathare slum youth in Kenya. MYSAA was chosen due to its unique way of usage, target group and objective i.e. youth capability development, how it seems to fill in the socialization and development gap seemingly assumed by the society in general. MYSAA, if it develops youth talents and skills it rejuvenates their enthusiasm and hope in life to improve and utilize their once neglected capabilities. To further this, the research examined any realized changes in the lives of slum youth, through use of questionnaires, used purposive sampling at the MYSAA premises, which involved 30 participating youth from Mathare, and interview for 1 officer of MYSAA.

A research assistant was equipped with author prepared questionnaire and interview guiding questions as methods which were used to collect data. Description and explanation was used to build the research paper. Data collection considered Mathare MYSAA slum youth as respondents because they were the target for capability enhancement. It is acknowledged that considering including non-MYSAA youth would have enabled further understanding about why they have not joined or whether they left and why. However, that was outside the scope of the research due to time and resources constraints. The paper focused on the period between 19876 and 2008. This enabled a follow up of youth lives through questionnaires to note the process and mark any changes in their capabilities assuming that other factors are held constant as the means to understand MYSAA usage.

The paper used both primary and secondary data. As regards primary data collection, the research had a sample of youth, who reside in Mathare and are currently participating in MYSAA activities fill questionnaires. Data collection was mainly organized at MYSAA premise. The purpose was to understand organization's activities from which every other aspect emanates. Out of 30 MYSAA Mathare youth respondents, 15 were females and 15 males. To categorize the sample further, 10 males and 10 females were MYSAA football players. The remaining were 5 females and 5 males who belonged to the other MYSAA projects. Football was favored for it was the basis for MYSAA coming up, a typical and the most prominent activity based on information from

MYSA website (2008). Mathare slum comprises of villages, the respondents live in different villages and play for different football teams within Mathare slum and belong to different projects. The rationale behind this spread of respondents was to have a fairly balanced set of responses. The following were the villages and the number of respondents respectively: Kosovo 4, Area 4 4, Mashimoni 5, Mradi 3, Mlango Kubwa 5, Kwa Chief 2, Number 10 2, Bondeni 4, Kiboro 1.

Age was also given attention since respondents of different ages were expected to respond differently to questions based on their experiences in life and in MYSA. Ages 10-20 were 19, 21-30 were 10 and 31+ was 1. None was below 10 years. It used Mathare slum as a sample slum for the purposes of the filling questionnaire by MYSA youth. It would have been desirable to interview the general population of the slum so as to get an idea about their perception of MYSA; unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of the study due to time and likely security risks. The choice of Mathare was necessitated by the fact that it was the centre slum of MYSA projects and was likely to provide valuable respondents who have participated and or interacted with MYSA and former MYSA youth members more. Secondary data was obtained from books, articles, reports, journals, and internet. MYSA records and MYSA website served as reliable sources.

## 1.6 Findings

### 1.6.1 MYSAA for Capability Enhancement

As seen in chapter one, the objective of this paper was to understand how youth capabilities are enhanced and the community improved through MYSA Approach among Mathare MYSA youth. In summary, according to the analysis of the empirical findings, it has emerged that application of MYSA principles through sports programmes and community service enhanced capabilities.

It is evidenced that large numbers of youth get recruited to youth projects which enable them receive education through scholarships and bursaries. This is a capability that is basic and an enabling one for the others to grow. Through recruitment, nurturing, facilitating and financing activities, which is part of MYSA Approach, youth have had skills in various fields, especially in football which is the main activity of international repute. In the process of youth capability improvement, the youth community has benefitted through such programs as garbage collection and HIV/AIDS.

These programs have improved health within the slum. Insecurity against bodily harm, property loss, has been put to check through youth involvement in MYSA projects and learned the importance of security for a community and it has discouraged insecurity perpetrators.

The central objective for undertaking the activities was to enable youth to realize their potentials and live better lives which coincide with the main objectives of this paper, which to some extent has been realized according to youth respondents who participated in this research. However, political empowerment has not appeared to have been realized based on the indicators or capabilities as enlisted by Ingrid Robeyns (2003). As seen in adapted Ingrid Robeyns work, Youth and community wellbeing has been improved and the process for new recruits is on-going. There is physical and psycho-social improvement among MYSA youth members. They have gotten the capacity to be employed and have better shelter and clean environment. The few who were involved in delinquent activities have willingly joined MYSA due to the opportunities created as admitted by youth respondents. Gender equality as envisaged in traversing of females to male dominated football has changed the community and empowered females.

Respect, recognition, acceptability to youth by the community improved. Security from bodily harm has been enhanced; anti-social behavior has been curtailed according to the research respondents. However, improvement realized can't be attributed to MYSA efforts alone, since it was working with other actors, though its approach through MYSAA may have provided the inroad for the other actors to contribute positively. Youth lives, by their own testimonies improved and their morale to serve has gone a notch higher. Also noted is that, perceiving youth as engines of development is not enough, how to engage them and harness their resources is equally crucial. Unfortunately, previously there was no workable mobilizing formula to engage them and bring out their capabilities for development. MYSAA bridged the gap. The research therefore has enabled learning from how MYSAA has been used and created understanding how it works to enhance youth capabilities. This concludes that youth are engines of development when diligently approached and given opportunities to develop their capabilities.

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