

Lessons Learnt from Mathare Youth Capability Enhancement Initiative: A Case of Mathare Youth Sports Association Approach, Kenya

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Abstract

It is acknowledgeable that there is a wide range of work and research that has been done in the areas of capability improvement. However, deficiencies in other aspects of it remain unaddressed. For example, there is this need to do an analysis of the role of approaches of youth capability enhancement such as MYSAA. Whereas youth population is rising, no proportional creation of opportunities is being realized. 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. There are an estimated one billion young people, 15 to 24 years of age around the world (Tsegaye 2006). Kenyans living in urban centers increased from 5.1 per cent in 1948 to 15.1 per cent in 1979, to 18.0 per cent in 1989 and to 34.8 per cent in 2000. There are currently 194 urban centres in Kenya, with 45 per cent of the urban population residing in Nairobi (Gok 1996, 2001). 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. It is on the basis of this study that we seek to identify the lessons that can be learnt from the Mathare youth capability enhancement initiative.

Keywords: Lessons, Youth, Capacity Enhancement

1.1 Background

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). MYSA intervention seeks to improve lives through capability enhancement and encouraging community service by youth. 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 (ibid).

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'. 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 (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.

1.1.1 Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) Approach and the Paper's Mainstay

This study examines how MYSA approaches and engages with slum youth through use of sports and community service and how this leads to youth capability enhancement. The paper's main argument is that youth in slums are engines of development, with the desire to improve their lives and ready to contribute to national development. However, their capabilities are not developed, they are short of opportunities. The society seems to lack a suitable means to engage them meaningfully which would reveal and develop their potential. If opportunities are availed to them, they would be able to realise their goals. This forms the prime focus of this paper.

To locate this argument, this paper takes track of MYSA Approach as applied to Mathare MYSA youth with the main objective of enhancing their capabilities. The study eventually leads to understanding how the adoption of MYSA to engage youth can be used to enhance youth capabilities for development. Capability in this paper is a derivative from the Capability Approach by Sen. (1993). Sen. defines capability as "a persons ability to do valuable acts or reach valuable states of being; [it] represents the alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or be (Sen. 1993) This approach has been developed by other authors, for example Ingrid Robeyns (2003) to make more meaning out of it.

Capabilities' being opportunities and freedoms to achieve what an individual considers valuable is important for the youth. This is compounded by their large numbers and need for decent life. Youth need such capabilities as education and knowledge, psycho-social capability, physical well-being, bodily integrity and safety, political empowerment, paid work or employment, Shelter and healthy environment, respect, gender equality among other such freedoms. This is developing the human capabilities and institutional will and capacity to put whatever resources available to productive use (Korten 1987). Enhancement of youth capabilities as a resource may enable them to be productive and more self sustaining. Youth need opportunities, incentives to mobilize and manage resources for use by themselves and their communities (ibid).

As we look at youth capabilities, education is a basic capability that forms the basis for expansion of other capabilities that consequently result in leading flourishing lives. Unfortunately, high educational attainment rarely reaches such slum youth in Kenya, like many other Sub-Saharan countries due to un-affordable costs involved. The past decade witnessed a shift towards promotion of education as a human right issue. However, this right is routinely violated (Tomasevski 2003).

Universal primary education, introduced in Kenya in 2003, had attached hidden costs which keep children and youth away from school. Sponsorship of students whose parents are unable to afford education costs may enable them get formal education. However, with only basic formal education, little can come out of it; a feasible alternative such as non-formal education comes in handy. However, they still have to go over one major obstacle. Youth stereotyping negatively bedevils their chances to eke a living. It dictates the way they are treated. Stereotyping issue features prominently within the conceptual framework in chapter two. Mathare Youth Sports Association Concept (MYSA) for youth capability enhancement is a brainchild of Mathare Youth Sports Association. Its overview may enable better understanding of the concept.

1.1.2 Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA): Profile Overview

According to Preben (2001), MYSA is a membership organization supported by temporal and permanent staff, where the two structures work hand in hand. MYSA builds member's self-esteem and channels the skills of

youth into self improvement and their community (Preben 2001). As the bearer of the concept, its profile sheds some light on what it is. According to MYSA website (2008), it started in 1987 as a small self-help project for youth to organize sports and environmental cleanups within the expansive slum of Mathare. It grew and added other projects. It has grown to an internationally renowned youth serving organization that promotes sports for development. In 1988 it was registered as a non-profit and non-political organization under the Societies Act Cap 108. As a priority, MYSA pioneered the innovative sports and environment linkages with the motto 'healthy athletes need a healthy environment'. In 1996 about 5000 boys and girls from 50 slum villages are said to have participated in MYSA sports, slum cleanup and Human Immune Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) prevention projects. In general, MYSA aims at:

- a. Creating opportunities for youth to develop physically and personally, while engaging in community development activities.
- b. Promoting life skills and empower young people to participate in activities that affect them and their environment.
- c. Encouraging females to get involved in sports, providing many sporting and other opportunities through sports for female youth
- d. Mainstreaming citizenship and promoting responsibility in environmental matters.

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 draw lessons from the Mathare urban slum youth capability enhancement

programme. In order to address the said objective the following research questions were used:
Q1: What can be learned from MYSAA as applied to Mathare MYSA youth?

1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 Youth Capabilities Enhancement

According to MYSA website (2008)¹³, MYSA as an NGO in slums comprises a couple of activities, of whom football under sports pioneered and is the most prominent after going through difficult take-off times. Some of the projects it runs are Shootback project, HIV/AIDS Programme, 'Haba na Haba' Arts and Cultural Programme, and Leadership and Academy Programme. The named projects and programmes are all meant to develop youth capabilities hence the need to include and show the capabilities involved. According to MYSA website (2008) activities were carried out through the following projects:

'Shootback' Project

According to MYSA website (2008), this project was started in 1997, targeting those who were interested, who consisted of 15 girls and 16 boys. The youth were facilitated with a camera and a roll of film each. They trained in photography and do take pictures of Mathare slum events and MYSA activities (Mysa 2008). Photography within the slum carries the message of need for decent environment, since photographs of dirty environments do not please the eyes. These skills also open the slum to the outside world, aiding MYSA fundraising for youth capability improvement.

HIV/AIDS Programme

Health as a capability deserves utmost attention during the process of developing other capabilities. Unhealthy youth can't participate in sports optimally. For this reason, among others, MYSA youth and Mathare residents' health, MYSA HIV/AIDS Prevention and Awareness Project was started in 1994 (Mysa 2008). Some health facilities are being availed, for example for HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis patients. MYSA has started a Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre (VCT) which is run by Mathare MYSA youth. Health as a capability attribute is important in the MYSA concept hence the need for behavioural change. Only healthy youth are capable of participating in society activities satisfactorily. Therefore, integrating sport and life skills through peer education, peer counselling, games, music, puppetry drama and other cultural and recreational activities were adopted (ibid). These participatory approaches are more effective and efficient means of communication. MYSA provides training to empower peer educators who in turn train fellow youth and other residents, towards a healthier community.

'Haba Na Haba' Arts and Cultural Programme

In 1998, there was less concentration on art and craft and music lessons in formal schools. Recognizing the importance of acquiring and enhancing skills in these fields and bridge the gap, MYSA, through the HIV/AIDS programme, initiated the use of music, dance, drama, and acrobatics to pass information to the community. Youth interest grew enormously leading to this new programme (Mysa 2008). The programme serves several purposes, for example, developing youth skills, entertaining and informing Mathare residents about the need to take precaution against the HIV/AIDS and other diseases for better life.

Leadership and Academy Programme

A majority of young people stop attending school due to lack of education costs, yet education is an important capability. To avoid this, MYSA started this project in 1997 to reward top volunteers who serve the community (Preben 2001) enabling them continue schooling. In this project, youth earn points from their performance in different sports and community development activities. Each year best young leaders or best performers receive MYSA Leadership Awards in form of school fees, which is paid directly to their schools or training institution. Each year award is worth KShs 10,000 (\$125) per youth who performed well. The objectives were to encourage youth to work hard and serve their community, to improve the quality of sports within zones, developing leadership, to acquire coaching and refereeing skills for the youth. Two hundred and fifty youth benefited between 1997 and 1999 community (Preben 2001). Likewise, volunteer coaches and referees go through MYSA leadership process and accumulate points which enable them to qualify for bursaries or scholarships to undertake other professional courses through which they can further serve the community. On completing the introductory course, they receive a participation certificate confirming the topics and skills received (Mysa 2008). Then they put to practice the skills attained, where those who effectively apply their new knowledge and skills in their schools and community in the months following the course are given a special performance certificate (ibid). This is meant to encourage application of skills acquired and help other youth get them too. This also serves as MYSA marketing tool which end up attracting more youth to its activities.

MYSA Donors and Development Partners

MYSAA progress is not attributable to MYSA efforts alone; it is attained in liaison and conjunction with donors and or development partners. MYSA serves as a fundraiser and an organizer of the funds to attain her objectives which boil down to youth capability development. Financial strength and or weakness are an amalgam of efforts by various institutions. According to MYSA website (2008), the Kenya government through various ministries

partner in various projects involving MYSA youth, for example, AIDS prevention project. There are Youth exchange projects with various municipalities in Norway. There are also partners in the categories of Sports Associations, Private Sector and Kenyan and International Agencies, which have joint projects relevant to youth. Sports Associations include Kenya Football Federation (KFF), Laureus Sport for Good Foundation, Netherlands National Sports Council, Norway Cup, Royal Netherlands Football Association Academy, and Street Football World of Germany. International Sports and Development partners like Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) and Sports for Social Change Network and Street Football World. Local and international private sector institutions donate to finance MYSA projects. The web of all the above institutions well harnessed in conjunction with youth and their community facilitate rolling of the wheel of MYSA activities.

MYSA as Experienced in the Community

According to the MYSA officer interviewed, youth generally love sports and show interest. Consequently, MYSA emphasized sports as a channel through which to reach them and get them out of idling by providing better survival alternatives and engaging them constructively for development. To enable youth improve their capabilities, MYSA act as an enabling formula which recruiting, facilitating their activities, and ensuring there is discipline among youth is done. Of all the youth respondents, 21 knew about MYSA activities through being approached during their own plays along the footpaths in the slums, while others through friends who had interacted with the staff members in slums. According to MYSA human resources officer, staff visits to the slums for recruitment is their way of reaching youths. Visiting Mathare slum for recruitment, monitoring recruits progress and evaluation of progress of recruits, this happens daily, courtesy, staff members. He asserts that their main targets are the talented vulnerable youth aged 9-18 and the unreachable ones, though they do not strictly stick to age as a prequalification. He claims that, staffs are trained to understand the mentioned targets and scale themselves down to youth level so as to identify with them. Some of the staff members who have ever lived in slums are encouraged to give testimonies about how they were once unreachable and marginalized but were changed to improve their lives. The parents and guardians consent is then sought over recruitment into a team for the purpose of uninterrupted training attendance and support. He adds that this does not flow as narrated; sometimes hostilities arise from parents, guardians, and youth who are under peer influence and or drugs.

According to findings, parents or guardians vehement resistance to recruitment are common for female youth who are relied upon for domestic work, care of siblings or casual labour elsewhere to supplement household income. Furthermore, 2 respondents admitted to have been thieves, 10 respondents were wallet snatchers while 15 respondents offered security in slums at a fee through forming and belonging to vigilante groups while the others were casual workers. According to 27 youth respondents, security risk against physical bodily harm and property loss has diminished. Though 21 youth respondents admitted delinquent behaviour, they emphasize that they were forced to by their difficult and unbearable life without ability to afford basic needs. They said that they regret it. They were proud of recognition and respect they currently receive in MYSA and in their communities which has raised their social stature.

Service to their Community

Slums such as Mathare as characterized are unplanned settlements; they have no organized infrastructural framework to sustain minimal human life. There is no formal housing, sewerage system, schools, health services, no official tap water supply and electricity supply and sanitation services by the state. Despite these deficiencies the residents eke some living and cause garbage. This garbage that is not well managed has direct relationship with disease, just as is the case with lack of or limited clean drinking and water for domestic use. Water pollution may cause waterborne diseases to the residents. Air is polluted due to rotting garbage.

These conditions are undesirable, hence youth's strong awakening to act on it in their own small way with support from MYSA as a way to appreciate and improve the community and curtail the consequent diseases and garbage hills obstructions along with other adversities. Youth respondents expressed their desire to participate in garbage collection and recycling, prompting 8 of the respondents to join MYSA through this activity. Therefore youth and general community members' health as a capability is being addressed. Youth sense of responsibility to themselves and their community is rejuvenated despite poor living conditions through this initiative.

HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns in slums by youth, who are most prone to it, cultivate a sense of self recognition and noticing their importance within the community and need to save it from the deadly scourge. This in itself signals a new crop of youth who may serve as good examples to other youth still hanging on the periphery. It encourages that 22 of the youth respondents participate in this activity consciously for themselves and other residents.

Some youth render services to the community for various reasons. Such example involves 6 respondents, aged between 20 and 30 who were trying to improve their relationship with some of the community members for having been known to have been involved in delinquent activities.

Monetary Support and Incentives to Football Team Members

As youth leave slums for the assumed handsome alternative, they hope that they will somehow be able to fend for themselves; i.e. to get some money for their basic needs at that initial stage. MYSA being aware of youth

woes in slums has an arrangement for compensation. The football players contribute talent and skills to football teams while MYSA donates money and gifts to enable them have some of the basic needs. According to the MYSA officer interviewed, MYSA trains youth and organize tournaments for various categories of ages.

According to all MYSA youth respondents, they get some income out of playing football. This does not arise as a salary but as allowance and or prize after training, playing a match, winning a match, scoring a goal, and or participating in a tournament and winning a trophy. The tournament sponsors fulfil the contractual agreements by paying teams accordingly, from which players get their share of the bargain. In the case of show of good football skills display, community leaders may also chip in and donate to the team in question, where each player receives a share. Politicians also donate to tournament participating teams for exemplary performances; though the intention may be political, youth get a share of such money.

Such monetary support and incentives to youth teams built team unity and the urge to train further and perform even better. It also develops a feeling of belonging to each other and self confidence grows in every individual team member. Some youth hinted of being able to cater for their households as far as basic needs are concerned unlike before. They said they were able to find some medical care for themselves, rent their own room away from the congested family room. One of them claimed that he even managed to marry and is now raising a family using allowances from playing football. Exchange programmes and international trips for teams is a great morale booster and recruitment tool which gets even the most unreachable to the field to display their talents and skills. The desire for international exposure and professionalism easily enable youth to discover their potential in football. Asked why they joined football, almost 80 percent claimed that apart from other reasons, they would like to be famous and play professional football like their predecessors who are in foreign countries. Therefore, talents can be unearthed and skills developed through this means.

1.4.2 MYSA: MYSA Youth Perspective

Mathare MYSA youth interacts closely with MYSA officials and utilize MYSA facilities for their benefit. During data gathering exercise youth painted their individual pictures of MYSA in terms of a description of what it means to them through ranking against given options. The purpose of ranking is to give an idea how MYSA youth perceive MYSA in relation to its impact on their lives and Mathare community through MYSAA. Out of the ranking one can extract meanings and values about MYSA. In Appendix G, there are numbers of youth respondents against their choice as allocated to every particular.

Summed up, MYSA is seen by youth as an organization that help them improve their lives. Based on the criteria to rank in terms of popularity, improvement of lives is the top view of youth in what MYSA is doing to them and their community. The other views also add to betterment of lives. Therefore, the activities they get involved with finally improve their well-being.

Unanimously, MYSA youth appreciated that their lives had changed of improving lives, in youth eyes turns out to be the ultimate harvest out of all positively, especially those who joined in 2004 and 2005 and are aged 20 and above. In their own words, individuals said, *'I am living better'*; *'I have improved my playing techniques'*, and *'I have developed my personality'*, *'Am more responsible and morally sound than before'*. These statements imply a sense of hope, enthusiasm about life and better self esteem.

One female said that she was able to financially support her guardian. Two of the respondents were bold enough to reveal that illegal and anti-social activities were once their sources of incomes. Of the two, was a male aged 31 and above from Bondeni village, who confessed having been a member of a brutal gang, claimed that after joining MYSA, he had abandoned gang activities. His parents had disowned him and send him out of from the family residence, after joining the gang, but after being counselled and rehabilitated while in MYSA they accepted him back. He is proud of his progress. One of the females aged 20-30 claimed to have improved her morals and is more organized in her life, since she can cater for her needs.

These statements and narrations give an idea what kind of life the youth were living and their current optimism. According to youth respondents, 80 percent of them were not employed when they joined MYSA i.e. no self-earned income. Those who were working only had temporal domestic jobs. Most of them relied on parents meagre incomes, while others relied on guardians, relatives and friends. Through sports youth admitted to have had a lot of benefits though employment levels are still low.

1.4.3 Sports Wider Benefits to Youth Well-Being

Sports can serve as a lifelong investment to support physical health, social, mental development and learning of motor skills by young people. Mental and social development provides opportunities to learn important life skills, which are said to be absent in slum set-ups such as cooperation, discipline, leadership and self control. Learning of motor skills serve as a foundation for future national sport stars (Cote 2007). This paper fully concurs that MYSAA isn't all about the end result such as income, but also the other benefits in the process to youth and their community. Participation in sports is also linked to self confidence building, self esteem feeling, positive body image, sense of competence and curtails the incidence of depression (Thomas 2008). Body strength and endurance, healthy bones and optimum blood pressure levels are credited to physical fitness exercises. Implications of the benefits mentioned go a long way to control diseases, improve performance in school,

develop various skills, and use it as a source of income by participating in it for income (ibid).

1.4.4 MYSA Football Activities Branching Out

This sub-section addresses the core issues regarding youth who decide to develop their capabilities within the football sphere. It covers MYSA process of capability enhancement football analysis right from recruitment to final benefits to youth and their community.

MYSA's Youth Recruitment to Football

Recruitment to football actively engages youth in personal and social development, with the intention of improving their lives as well as their community's. According to the MYSA officer interviewed, the process through which MYSA goes to recruit youth requires patience since it goes through stages. MYSA intends to reform their undesirable characteristics. As most youth spontaneously respond to MYSA sports' call for various reasons, there arise an opportunity for MYSA officers to approach them. According to the respondents the reasons for joining MYSA are diverse, 4 respondents aged between 10 and 20 joined so as to be with peers who had joined earlier. General reason for joining by 12 respondents was to avoid idling in slum, while 25 respondents joined so as to use it as a ladder towards getting employment. Some youth had known about the school fees scheme where one serves the community so as to qualify for fees award and continue with education hence the need to join. As regards football, 22 respondents, aged between 20 and 30 years joined so as to play football and go professional i.e. play purely for income. The data implies that almost every one of the youth had more than one reason to join MYSA including the football players.

Data collected from MYSA records indicate that for the period 1987 to 2007 MYSA had recruited 187,234 youth into teams from all the 16 zones, including Mathare. Out of the total mentioned, 150,912 aged above 10 to over 16 years were boys, while 30,492 were girls, along with mixed 5,830 boys and girls under 10. Though the number of boys is almost five times higher than girls, this is an effort worth appreciating since even in 1996 football was associated with males only (Mysa 2008). This serves as an encouraging change of attitude among females and a gender sensitive approach which avail opportunities to both sexes.

Out of 187,234 recruits from all the zones, Mathare slum had 1,318 youth recruits with 1000 boys and 253 girls of ages above 10 to over 16 years, while under 10 boys and girls were 62. The Mathare slum members joined at different times and some left long ago.

The surface meaning of such football recruitment is that 1,318 Mathare slum youth got the opportunity to join MYSA at diverse times. They improved their skills and talents, participated in community activities and improved their capabilities; including monetary capabilities which has enabled them to access some of the other capabilities.

According to the human resources officer the reasons for low female recruitment range from football being originally dubbed as a males sport. Females recruitment started late compared to males, and parents and guardians resisted the onset of their daughter's involvement in football so as to continue helping in domestic work. This later changed and improved females' participation.

Facilitation of Football and Benefits to Youth and Community

Football is the kingpost of MYSA activities hence the authors' skewed interest for study. Mathare United Football Club (MUFC) acts as the face and marketing link of MYSA's programmes and projects. According to Preben (2001), when the idea of (MUFC) for MYSA youth came up it did not seem viable to non-MYSA members due to their perception of the youth, whom they knew as glue sniffers and snatchers of ladies' handbags. They would not be expected to form a successful and the best ranked disciplined premier league team (Preben 2001). To be involved every player was expected to do eighty hours of garbage cleanup per month, as part of environmental community service. MUFC provides a good example of how sport can play an instrumental role in the development of human resources, specifically where the state and church efforts have made less substantial impact (ibid). According to the field work, 22 youth respondents joined MYSA through football hoping to develop their skills to play professional football like their forerunners. It was ironical that almost all females claimed to have joined football because they like it, yet only 1 male gave the same reason yet football is said to be a game for males. Females mainly said that they joined so as to develop their playing skills unlike males whose major interest is to use the skills to earn income. Only 4 youth joined to keep physically fit apart from other benefits. Through MYSA, a lot of changes in youth capabilities have taken place, such as developing self esteem, skills in various fields, health, education, careers, exposure to the other countries among other benefits. The community members in general have indirectly realized a positive difference in their lives through the environmental project. According to MYSA officer, out of its youth there are two of the only five football/soccer coaches who have earned international recognition by Union of European Football Association (UEFA) being issued with UEFA B license. A sense of interest to serve others has been cultivated in MYSA alumni. Currently, MUFC's chairman, head coach and Assistant head coach have all been players and youth leaders in MYSA for at least 10 to 20 years.

As an element of facilitation, MYSA human resources officer alludes that the issue of lack of playing ground for youth in Mathare slum was addressed by MYSA through negotiating with Nairobi City Council to be

allowed continuous access to Huruma grounds which is closest to Mathare slums. The NGO went further to acquire its own premise at Komarock which comprise of its' headquarter, community centre and a playing ground for training purposes. Training facilities and trainers or coaches are provided, where some are volunteers while others are on salary employment. According to youth respondents, teams elect their own team leaders who receive leadership training to improve leadership skills, courtesy of MYSA. The leaders are first part of the team prior to election. As far as transport is concerned, MYSA facilitates movement for players to and from its training grounds, by either having the players picked by organization vehicle or providing fare. The same arrangement is also used during tournaments.

The above general facilitation arrangements, according to youth respondents have changed their lives and provided them with an opportunity to dream again. They claim that the coming up of MYSA activities in their ghetto¹⁵ gave them a new lease of valuable life, life full of hope and enthusiasm, high self esteem and easy coming respect from their households and community in general. Out of youth recruited in MYSA Football teams, several alumni have highly succeeded by securing employment, further studies, and playing abroad among other local alumni involvements within MYSA and elsewhere. These cases are serving as indicators of success and as an encouragement to those who need such opportunity and are yet to go for it. This creates an understanding how capabilities are being enhanced. These examples then are making it easy for MYSA to recruit, since potential recruits yearn for these opportunities. Some of the success cases are in Appendix E. While looking at the tables i, ii and iii in appendix D, what value or meaning does such data have to capability enhancement? The data¹⁶ serves as an indicator of MYSAA success in meaningfully engaging youth for development through use of sports and community service.

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 MYSA premises, which involved 30 participating youth from Mathare, and interview for 1 officer of MYSA.

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 MYSA slum youth as respondents because they were the target for capability enhancement. It is acknowledged that considering including non-MYSA 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 1987 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. This 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 MYSA activities fill questionnaires. Data collection was mainly organized at MYSA premise. The purpose was to understand organization's activities from which every other aspect emanates. Out of 30 MYSA Mathare youth respondents, 15 were females and 15 males. To categorize the sample further, 10 males and 10 females were MYSA football players. The remaining were 5 females and 5 males who belonged to the other MYSA projects. Football was favored for it was the basis for MYSA 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 Practical Challenges in the Field

Due to financial constraints, the researcher could not collect data in the field. A research assistant was then engaged for the task. The following were the practical challenges encountered:

- (a) The author was unable to physically travel to the sample site; instead a research assistant was engaged for data collection due to the said reason. Though he prepared and provided the tools for data collection, it was likely that the data collected may have been a little inadequate in terms of quality and less thorough interviewing conducted. To address this inadequacy, substantial secondary data was searched for to cover for the likely gaps.
- (b) Difficulty in locating the information about those who went through the organization and are a success story. The internet, the current youths in MYSA were of great help to share about their lives, and the kind of the activities they are involved with.
- (c) With the post elections violence, several people were displaced while some others were killed; due to this problem some members of teams were affected. This made the environment not conducive; and a little hostile. To avoid likely confrontation in the slums, a MYSA satellite office next to Kiboro Primary School, within Mathare provided the information about the existing members and availed respondents.
- (d) MYSA officer's likely subjective responses, with the interest of giving MYSA a good corporate reputation was checked by information from MYSA youth though sharp critical view was not realized.
- (e) Language barrier. Some of the youth were unable to read and write hence unable to fill to the questionnaire. This challenge was solved by having the youth asked the questions in the language they understood and questionnaire is then filled.
- (f) Unwillingness of two targeted key informants MYSA management staff to be interviewed by a Research Assistant. This challenge was addressed by using MYSA website for information on MYSAA.

OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM MYSAA

Since learning breeds understanding, which is one of the reasons for this study; the following sub-sections contain insight into the experiences and knowledge acquired during the process over youth capability enhancement. The lessons lead to conclusion in the subsequent section.

'Youth Are Living Today'

Youth capabilities as addressed in this paper are required now. The most ardent wish of young people is to participate in society activities, as full and equal citizens today. Youth perceive themselves as capable of assuming responsibility and playing roles in their communities. So, they need to be given the opportunity and guidance in order to prove their ability now (Unesco 2002). They want a decent future but that does not negate their need for a decent life now. They are rarely given decision making opportunities about what and how they want things done. In the words of a philanthropist, Barbara Teberas (2008): 'Don't believe all of the negative perceptions that are out there about youth. You and your families and communities can change things. ...Young people are not in a 'waiting period' ...waiting to be leaders, waiting to make a difference ...young people matter now' Youth deserve recognition, responsibilities, leadership roles, socialization that befits their age and status, skills for utilization today. Youth seem to no longer revere the structures that exclude their voices and potentials and are increasingly demanding a voice of their own.

In the case of MYSAA, youth are given opportunities to acquire skills now, make decisions within their teams, for example to elect their team leadership. They also have the chance to choose the project to belong to depending on their talents and interests. This makes MYSAA a model worth emulating.

Need for Formal Education

On independence from colonialism, formal education was the main concentration of governments as the main means towards development. Human capital improvement and modernization theories viewed formal education as both a requirement and an indicator of modernity (Smith 1974). In the recent past education was placed as a basic human right for example in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Provision of education as a right therefore is a state responsibility. Kenya responded in 2003 by effecting free primary education. However, Slums have no formal schools; slum dwellers cannot afford the hidden costs and opportunity costs. This leads us to slum dwellers struggle for a means to raise funds for education costs. Looking at research findings, only 15 out of 30 Mathare slum youth respondents completed primary education while 6 respondents had none at all. None of them had tertiary education, which is the stage most youth develop their skills and talents heading towards employment. Inability to afford education costs, doing domestic work were pointed out as the reasons for missing to attend school.

In spite of MYSA providing a way for improved life e.g. physical fitness for good health through sports, complete lack of formal education was said to be communication and interaction hindrance to the youth respondents. Those who did not serve the community so as to qualify for scholarship regret it and narrated how

language barrier during international tours in English speaking countries hampered participation in football trainings i.e. became skill acquisition obstacles. They then had to rely on colleagues, crude sign language and or observe those who understood. This has made most youth to serve the community and have an opportunity to continue with education and graduate through leadership and award project. The affected ones were considering going for the scholarship prequalification so as to attend school. Though through difficulties, youth end up with some skill/s and utilize them in their lives.

Youth Capability Achievements Not Equivalent To End Result

Capability achievements are scanty if assumed to refer to the end result, such as being employed or playing in a premier league team for a salary. Decent youth life in MYSAA can be counted from the day of recruitment, when an opportunity was availed. Any relative change is an achievement. Getting out of Mathare towards some physical fitness, accepting rehabilitation, developing hope is in itself psychological nourishment and better state of well-being.

As a delinquent, some people in society may generally distance themselves from one. One is neither respected nor recognized, which takes away self esteem and self dignity. These qualities make up a person and give one the morale and strength to live on. Therefore in the MYSAA process, youth earn back what had gotten lost, contribute to development voluntarily, which propels their lives to heights that were never thought of.

MYSAA as A Collective Approach and Unifying Factor

There is an embedded meaning in the MYSAA which if not highlighted leaves a lot of its value concealed. MYSAA football player's recruitment in teams has got more value than the surface meaning of satisfying football rules. The background of MYSAA youth life in comparison with life within MYSAA and likely future hope forms a strong impetus to resolve to concentrate on their current activities. On this note, let us look at the use of collective approach as used. According to MYSAA human resources officer, MYSAA football teams fall within different zones, performance of each team in training and tournaments is the measure of its success as a unit. Every member is expected to be at his/her best so as to attain the best performance. Due to the fact that no single member can be counted as better than another but the team, this builds a strong sense of togetherness at all times. Members struggle to improve each other's talents and skills. The sense of solid cohesion causes a sense of care for each other all the time. This factor, according to youth respondents holds them together as teams despite their diverse tribes and life challenges.

Through Mathare Youth Fairplay Code, which they subscribe to is, against indiscipline, retaliation, foul play, and advocates respect for all. Youth internalize the said values and learn to socialize. This breeds peace with other people.

Peaceful co-existence and conducive environment contribute to capabilities development and maintenance (Preben 2001). The last item in the code addresses respect for environment and player health summing up the value of MYSAA. No individual institution has the single capacity to cause all round development without development partners. The state's place in any society is crucial for administrative purposes and providing the environment within which other actors can operate. The civil society and NGOs, in general have come up strong to supplement state efforts to cause development. Based on the MYSAA progress, MYSAA has distinguished itself as a committed development actor, notwithstanding the politics surrounding its funding as an NGO and allegiance. Other stakeholders include donors such as private companies, international NGOs, the state, Mathare community among others. MYSAA has done youth within Mathare slum proud over their capabilities enhancement. Unfortunately there are those youth who due to some reason may not have benefited.

Development and New NGO Approach

The traditional thought of NGOs roles in development are almost declared derelict. Facilitation and strict cultivation of responsibility among the youth as modeled through MYSAA cause development. As well, focus on beneficiaries' responsible contribution and building on existing resources is in vogue. This concept endeavors to reach those youth who are viewed as the unreachable, yet with high potential that development needs. A new page of using new means to cause development has been opened through MYSAA; this may be supported by other developmental stake holders such as the state to solve some of the youth plights. MYSAA has shown that youth in slums have sport and other undeveloped talents, given opportunities; they can realize their dreams of climbing to high professional ranks in sports and education. MYSAA has a unique dimension in development, in the way they use sports to develop values, talents, self-esteem, seeking ones identity (Preben 2001), developing skills, and improving life in the slum community.

MYSAA as an Avenue to Engage Youth for Development

Youth are an important asset for development which can not be ignored. Through sports and community service, youth can easily be reached and engaged in a manner that can easily cause development and transform them to useful citizens. Sport and development can be harnessed to have a positively substantial impact to family lives and slum community. This calls for an effort to look into the possibilities of having sport-development programmes or deeper thinking about what else apart from sports can be used the way MYSAA has used sports to cause development.

Recruitment, the incomplete story

Despite having discussed MYSA youth recruitment and facilitation of activities, some areas still seem grey. Recruitment forms the first major step towards capability development, and so requires some closer attention than just pointing out numbers. Whenever there is recruitment in any institution or for some activity, there is always the expectation of an exit of the recruits at some point, either in small numbers or in masses. What determines how is the purpose of recruitment and how long the activity is meant to take. For example, on introduction of free primary education in Kenya, there was a rush for recruitment which was counted by the government as success but retention of recruits was never followed and highlighted. Success in this sense cannot be based on recruitment alone. In the case of MYSA youth recruitment as covered in chapter 3, numbers show massive entry of youth but does not give any idea how many maintain within to completion of their training, they tell the entry ages but no mention of exit ages, no proportionate mention of where the masses recruited go to after training. How many drop out and why? No mention of exit whether successful or not, save for a few mentioned successful cases. It is not clear what happens to those who get recruited then are unable to fit into any of the projects run by MYSA.

The Missing Capability Development Link

Further to the concern about youth capabilities throughout their lives, it is pertinent to also care about the returns out of the skills acquired after training. Despite having better life during the course of training, they also have to utilize the skills acquired after course completion. MYSA, along with the other stakeholders may have enabled acquiring and enhancement of skills, but the skills are of no meaning without being put to use. As informed by youth respondents, there were many who received training and got skills in football but still live in slums with relatively the same old life. All youth cannot achieve and rise to the same level in terms of income, but the respondents revelations leave some questions unanswered.

Empirical findings show that out of 30 youth respondents only 8 have some form of employment. Furthermore, those having some kind of employment are mainly volunteers and casual employees. Asked where former MYSA members are, 3 of the respondents claimed that some still live in slums in relatively the same deprivation like before. Though it may not be reasonable to blame MYSAA for not having delivered them out of poverty, it remains that their lives have not improved significantly. This revelation then calls for some review of MYSAA, to address the issue. Lack of the connection between training and employment creates the gap.

In a nutshell, it has come out clearly that to engage youth for development require a well thought out formula. Youth need education, recognition and incentives and acknowledgement as living today, to serve their communities, in environmental conservation, entertainment, leadership, health among other areas. Strong cohesion of purpose and focus as teams, regardless of sex, tribe or race is a beacon to embrace. There is need for pooling of resources among committed actors for youth development, with one central responsible actor coordinating. Otherwise, for completion of the circuit, the links of trained and qualified youth to potential employers need to be encompassed in the concept.

Pending State Responsibilities

The Kenya government is expected to provide education and training to all youth as a fundamental governmental overall development strategy. Education as the basis for other capabilities expansion deserves priority by the state. Despite this, the state seems not to take responsibility to put the required education infrastructure in place within slums. Furthermore, the state as a prime actor has not laid the infrastructures for the required amenities for use by slum residents. The state has not built schools; does not manage garbage, playgrounds for children, health facilities, recreational places and tertiary institutions. This has curtailed the level of enhancement of capabilities. The results being realized out of MYSA efforts would be better with the state playing the mentioned part in Mathare slum.

Youth Monetary Capability Management

Throughout the process of capability enhancement, youth claim to live better than before, and hope for better incomes, but no indication has appeared to imply planning how to manage future incomes. Football player respondents indicated that they get some income out of playing and there were testimonies about how they have been enabled to fend for themselves and for others, but this may not be the best way to manage the money they receive. They need some basic financial management skills as they head towards the possibility of getting salaries and investing. This is important because of the limited exposure to large sums of money in their youthful lives, and may be bound to make unsound decisions about management of their incomes.

CONCLUSION

After going through data collection and analysis it is convincing that MYSAA is a workable idea being put to practice by MYSA for good of youth and Mathare slum community in general. The idea which has been rolled out has made an impact on its target group as seen in the paper under the achievements in capability development. However, the grey areas in the idea and the process need to be addressed so as to maximize on youth and community benefits out of it.

MYSAA for Capability Enhancement

The objective of this paper was to identify lessons that can be learnt from youth capability enhancement programmes Mathare MYSA. 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 well-being 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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