ROLE OF COMMUNITY DIALOGUES IN ENROLLMENT AND RETENTION OF CHILDREN IN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MATHARE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS, NAIROBI COUNTY-KENYA.

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been submitted for award of a degree in any other university.

Signature …………………………   **Date ……………………..**

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APPROVAL

This project has been submitted with my approval as the University supervisor.

Signature …………………………   **Date …………………….**

DR. KHAMATI SHILABUKHA

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving father, Mr. Clement Mate and in memory of my mother whose words of encouragement and discipline pushed me learn how to tackle any task with enthusiasm.

This study is also dedicated to my Children Nolan, Joseph and Felicity through constant disruptions you ensured I took rest breaks from computer work.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CD- Community Dialogue

CDF- Community Dialogue Facilitator

CF- Community Facilitator

EFA- Education for All

FGD- Focus Group Discussion

MCA- Member of the County Assembly

MP- Member of Parliament

MVC- Most Vulnerable Children

MVHH- Most Vulnerable Household

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNICEF- United Nations Children fund

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ABSTRACT

This project presents the findings of a study on the role of community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary school within Mathare informal settlements. The study was carried out in Mathare slums. The overall objective of the study was to explore the role played by community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary school. Empowerment framework was used in this study. The framework argues that empowerment is both a value orientation for working in the community and a theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decisions that affect one's life, organizational functioning, and the quality of community life. The findings related to the objectives established that community dialogues had to a greater extent minimized cases of non-enrollment in primary schools. Further the findings found out that through community dialogue initiatives children were able to be retained in primary schools with Mathare informal settlements. These initiatives through community knowledge and organization included; holding elected area leaders to account with regards to utilization of public funds, mobilizing resources for most vulnerable children and amicably dealing with barriers to children enrollment in primary schools. Based on these outcomes, the study recommends that community dialogues should be utilized while seeking rooted information on community knowledge as pertains to causes and possible solutions to community concerns. There should be proper training of community dialogue facilitators so that community knowledge on causes of community concerns is understood before implementation of any community development work to ascertain long lasting solutions thus development agencies, Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as government bodies should incorporate community dialogues in their strategies to attaining their project goals

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

Throughout all ages and across socio-cultural boundaries dialogue has served a distinct purpose of bringing people, who seem intractably opposed to change, to view and relate to each other differently (Diaho, 2008). Community dialogues have been utilized in many different countries and contexts, with the goal always the same: to foster discussion and solutions about the issues that affect the community. In Africa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) adopted the community dialogue approach as part of its fight against HIV/Aids in South Africa (UNDP, 2001). This thought came about after other interventions put in place to fight the HIV/Aids pandemic under its Leadership for Transformation (LTP) programme yielded minimal results with regards to reduction in infection cases, care and support for the HIV victims. According to Nelson Mandela Foundation (2010), "The community conversations enhancement methodology helps empower community members and helps them engage meaningfully with each other. Through facilitated dialogue, community members begin to explore HIV/AIDS challenges, understand underlying drivers of the epidemic and develop solutions" (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2010:7).

In Africa community dialogues on good governance have been initiated through different channels. Given the fact that weak democratic governance is part of the structural causes of Africa's protracted violent conflicts, it is imperative that a more sustainable and meaningful response to violence is entrenched. That can only be achieved by strengthening governance systems, institutions and embedding a culture of democracy and peace aimed towards inclusive, equitable and participatory

development (African Union, 2014). This may explain why community dialogue is a key element of UNICEF's strategy to support decentralisation and good governance in many countries. According to the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) there has been notable success in establishing community dialogue, especially in key areas of HIV/AIDS, girls' education and harmful traditional practices (ICRW, 2012). These include female genital cutting, early marriage, abduction, wife inheritance and extracting milk teeth (believed to cure some illnesses). According to this report, UNICEF in partnership with ICRW (2008) focused on Gender Equality; They realised that three-quarters of women aged between (15-49) years had undergone female genital mutilation as per 2005 statistics in Ethiopia. However, three years after UNICEF initiated community dialogues in Chancho and Cheha villages, it was noted that there was a 40 per cent decrease in children who had been cut born of these women.

After the 2007/08 post-election violence in Kenya which left an estimated 1,300 people killed and 650,000 displaced, Kenyans asked themselves a host of questions (Lotte, 2011). This historical experience forced the government and development agencies to adopt to fostering peace through cultural exchange visits with an aim facilitating community dialogue sessions amongst community members from different sections. According to Concern Worldwide report (2012). Elsewhere, community dialogue forums initiated in Migori County in 2010 had resulted to tremendous social change. Concern observed a fundamental shift in attitudes, with communities identifying personal behaviours that exacerbate their underdevelopment and vulnerability. In Mathare informal settlements community conversation sessions are taking shape with community members meeting on a weekly basis to discuss their

concerns and how best to develop solutions (Concern Worldwide Annual report, 2014). Anticipated advantages of urban living, such as greater access to employment, education and health services are often found to be illusory and many unfortunate people are reduced to living in informal settlements where conditions are reported to have fallen below those of rural areas (Mugisha, 2006). In Africa approximately 72% of the urban population is estimated to be living in slums (Cohen, 2006 in Merkel and Otai, 2007), and this density of people, along with the lack of any planned infrastructure or development planning, tests the provision of public services in these areas. Mathare is one of the largest slum in Kenya, with an estimated population of between 600,000 – 800,000; "where people eke out a living in life threatening conditions, where the most basic needs are not met for the majority, and where population growth rates are the highest in Africa. Their poverty is compounded by many factors such as domestic violence, crime, drugs and alcoholism, to name a few" (Anna Tibaijuka, 2008).

The government of Kenya has put in place measures to ensure achievement of Education for All through various means ranging from policies, allocation of 'sufficient' budgetary allocation to education, the constituency development fund (CDF) kitty, Presidential bursaries kitty, the involvement of parents and communities in school affairs, employment of teachers among other interventions. The constitution of Kenya (2010) and the Basic Education Act (2013), reiterate the fact that basic education free and compulsory in Kenya should be operationalized through the legal framework enshrined in the Act (Republic of Kenya, 2012a). Both the Constitution and Basic Education Act of 2013 guarantees and provides legal mechanisms of ensuring that every Kenyan citizen gets access to basic education and other economic

and social rights. However, there are numerous social problems associated with living in the marginalized regions and slums. These include illicit brews resulting in drunkenness, casual sex leading to sexual exploitation of women and girls, insecurity, child abuse and a high prevalence of HIV&AIDS. Residents also experience high rates of unemployment and of school dropouts and low completion rates among orphans and other children from vulnerable households. Even with the declaration of free and compulsory primary education in 2003, over 60% of the populations in Nairobi who occupy the informal settlements have been denied the right to basic education (Daraja Report, 2006). This is because the settlements though occupied, are not planned for and therefore do not have enough schools to serve the communities living there, especially the rising populations of school-age children. It is estimated that over 50% children in slums attend complementary schools (UNICEF 2014).

1.2 Problem Statement

Many school-age children in informal settlements, among the rural and urban poor, and arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) areas are still unable to access education, and when they do enroll, the retention of these children in school is always slippery; mainly due to socio-economic factors (Wildish, 2011). Lack of access to education is often severe among children in marginalized communities. Regardless of policy frameworks and innovative interventions to enhance education many children in informal settlements still do not fully benefit from this fundamental human right.

According to UNICEF, (2015) …For the Education goal to be met, actions need to address both human and material needs – buildings, books and teachers – and the organic requirements of getting all children into school and ensuring they complete a

quality education. These include gender equality in society, good health and nutrition, and the strong backing of governments and communities. It goes ahead together with the government and development agencies to implement "innovative" strategies: However, the role of community dialogues on enrollment and retention of children in school is not given adequate attention.

Despite the introduction of free primary education (FPE) and other interventions, concerns have been raised over children's retention to basic education in Mathare slums which has been persistently and alarmingly low. Community conversations were necessary as they would bring together community members to deliberate on their education concerns and probably come up with possible solutions to ensure enrollment and retention of children in primary school within Mathare slums. Therefore, the study sought to examine the role of community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary school in Mathare informal settlements Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was designed to answer the following questions:

1) What role does the community dialogues play in enrollment of children in primary school in Mathare informal settlements?

2) What role does community dialogues play in retention of children in primary school in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi county?

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 Broad Objective

To explore and discuss the role of community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary school in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi county.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To examine the role of community dialogues in enrollment of children in primary school in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi county.

2. To analyse the role of community dialogues in improving retention of children in primary schools in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi county.

1.4 Study Assumptions

The study was guided by the presumptions that;

1. Community dialogues have a role in enrollment of children into primary schools within Mathare informal settlements.

2. Community dialogues influence retention of children in primary schools within Mathare informal settlements.

1.5 Justification of the Study

As a major facet in local education system and as primary bearers of children who attend school, communities should be at the forefront in ensuring their children enroll and are retained in school by addressing education concerns within their areas. Despite the government of Kenya's and worldwide education stakeholders making efforts to sustain universal education for all, it was worth exploring the role communities can play at the local level to ensure children are accessing basic education and that they are retained in school to complete their education. Many studies such as, International Labour Organization Report (ILO) 2010, Daraja research on Education, 2006 among others …on the progress made in the primary education sector with regards to enrollment and retention of children in school especially in the informal settlements focused on the tremendous efforts made by the

government and other stakeholders towards Education for All(EFA). However, very little research has been done on the role played by community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary school in Kenya as well as informal settlements.

Bridging the information, the study therefore, would add value to the role played by community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary school.

If adopted, the findings contribute to future review and revision of policies and practices regarding community dialogues and their role in dealing with community concerns. The study findings would be a basis for future research on enrollment and retention of children in school through engaging local communities in dialogues around education and community concerns at large.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study was carried out in Mathare informal settlement in Nairobi county. It documented the role of community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary school in Mathare informal settlements, Nairobi. It also narrated activities that the community members were engaging in to support enrollment and retention of children in primary schools within Mathare slums. The study could be generalized to similar settings with sizable populations.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study was qualitative in nature. The study sample thus limited generalization of the study. However, to ensure validity of the findings, systematic sampling was employed to reach the required study sample and triangulation of data collection

methods utilized to compensate for any limitations in the process so as to answer study objectives and questions accurately.

1.8 Definition of Terms

For this particular study, the following terms will be used to mean:

1.8.1 Community- A group of people residing in the same location and share the same values, economic challenges, social class, concerns, identities, interests and generally know each other and their place of residence.

1.8.2 Community dialogue- is a forum that draws participants from as many parts of the community as possible to exchange information face-to-face, share personal stories and experiences, honestly express perspectives, clarify viewpoints, and develop solutions to community concerns.

Note: Mathare has established community dialogue groups deliberating on community concerns within the settlement. The membership of these groups ranges between 12-25 consistent participants. Participation in these community for a is voluntary.

1.8.3 Enrollment: officially register/enter in primary school with an intention of learning.

1.8.4 Retention: Remaining in school and completion of primary education by learners. The ability of holding learners in the learning institution as they gain knowledge by which no drop out cases are experienced.

1.8.5 Informal settlements- Areas where housing units have been constructed on land that occupants have no legal claim to. Most structures are temporal and mainly found in urban or peri-urban location. Quality is nonexistent in these places with regards to compliance with planning, regulation and standards. Informal settlement will be used interchangeably with slum

1.8.6 Primary school- An institution that provides basic education for children usually from class 1 to class 8 (Kenyan education system). This is either private, community, faith based or government owned and managed.

1.8.7 Village- The smallest unit in the slum whose head is an elder. In this document a village is a clustered human settlement mainly on the basis of tribe, source of livelihood, marriage or county of origin.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This section reviewed the literature relevant to the problem statement. The literature herein was reviewed under the following categories: Role of community dialogues in enrollment of children in primary schools and the role of community dialogues in retention of children in primary school and retention of children in primary schools

2.2 Role of community dialogues in enrollment of children in schools

Policymakers, educators, and other education stakeholders have been seeking ways to utilize limited resources efficiently and effectively in order to identify and solve problems in the education sector and to provide quality education for all children. Their efforts have contributed to realizing the significance and benefits of community participation in education, and have recognized community participation as one of the strategies to improve educational access and quality.

This is not to say that community participation is something new in the education delivery, however. It did not suddenly appear as panacea to solve complex problems related to education. In fact, not all communities have played a passive role in children's education. For instance, Williams (1994) stresses that until the middle of the last century, responsibility for educating children rested with the community. Although there still are places where communities organize themselves to operate schools for their children today, community participation in education hasn't been fully recognized nor extended systematically to a wider practice.

There is a surplus of literature which indicates that efforts to enhance enrollment and participation in education is thwarted by multifarious and intertwined factors including the school based variables (Orodho, 2013). In 2003, the Kenyan Government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) and with it, an extra 1.3 million children enrolled in public schools, raising the figure from 5.9 million children in 2002 to 7.2 million in 2003 and 8.6 million in 2010 (Republic of Kenya, 2012a). Despite this increase, statistics available at the ministry of education indicate that more than one million children are still out of school in Kenya; this is attributed to various socio-economic and cultural factors that are yet to be tackled (Orodho, 2013). Kariga (2009) and Orodho (2013) established that provision and access to education in some Kenyan communities continues to be undermined by social, political and economic factors. From the analysis of enrollment across all the mainstream levels of education the factors included: poverty, high cost of education at the house levels, insecurity and gender bias. Uwezo (2010) in a nationwide survey in Kenya comprising 100,000 students in over 2,000 schools found out that although FPE increased enrollment, students learning still remains inadequate. A research by Reche N, Bundi T, Ringu J, and Mbugua Z (2012), found out that since the introduction of FPE in 2003, enrollments in public schools increased significantly from 5 million in 2002 to 6.9 million in 2003 there was an increase of 17% represented a Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) of 99%.

Cross-country studies on school participation show the demand for schooling is an important factor in overall schooling outcomes (Griffins, 2010; McMahon, 2005; Oketch and Ngware, 2012; United Nations, 2013). A study in rural Peru found that mothers' education has a bearing on their children's school enrollment and

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attendance, particularly in low-income households (Behrman& Rosennzweig, 2002; Reche, Riungu et.al, 2012). This finding is replicated in Africa (Sibanda, 2004, Onsomu, Kosimbei and Ngware, 2006, Walque, 2005). The studies by Ngware et.al.(2012) and Wright (2009) demonstrated that school enrollment and attendance for low income and for female children is more strongly affected by changes in school fees

2.3 Community dialogues in retention of children in schools

Most governments all over the world have been committed to delivering education for their children. Particularly after the World Conference on Education for All, assembled in Jomiten, Thailand in 1990. Although some communities have historically been involved in their children's education, it hasn't been fully recognized that communities themselves have resources to contribute to education, and they can be resources by providing local knowledge for their children. Involving parents, families, and communities in the process of research and data collection can reveal to them factors that contribute to lower enrollment, attendance, retention and poor academic performance in their schools. Furthermore, parents are usually concerned about their children's education, and often are willing to provide assistance that can improve the educational delivery. In places where teacher absenteeism and poor performance are critical issues, parents can be part of the system of monitoring and supervising teachers, ensuring that teachers arrive at classrooms on time and perform effectively in the classrooms. Parents and communities are powerful resources to be utilized not only in contributing to the improvement of educational delivery but also in becoming the core agent of the education delivery.

In Madagascar, where Government investments at the primary level have been extremely low, parents and communities contribute money, labor and materials (World Bank 1995b). The absence of government support leaves the school infrastructure, equipment, and pupil supplies to the parents and the community. As a result, community and parents are in the center "in keeping the schools going (p.30)." Community participation can contribute to promoting girls' education (UNICEF, 1992). Through participating in school activities and frequently communicating with teachers, parents and communities can learn that girls' education contributes to the improvement of various aspects of their lives, such as increased economic productivity, improved family health and nutrition, reduced fertility rates, and reduced child mortality rates. Involving parents and communities in discussions and dialogue as part of school activities also helps to identify factors that prevent girls from schooling. Parents are encouraged to express their concern, and reasons why they are not sending their daughters to school. For instance, many parents in rural areas are reluctant to send their daughters to schools located in distance, concerned about the security of their daughters on the way to and from the school. In addition, since girls are important labors in the household, helping their mothers to do the chores and take care of their young siblings. The time that requires going to and from school seems too much to waste for the parents. These issues are serious obstacles and have to be addressed and overcome in order to promote girls' education. This can only be fulfilled through community conversations.

A survey of University of Sussex data (Bruneforth, 2006) on Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia and Nigeria on the characteristics of children who drop out of school, a number of conclusions were drawn. More than half of all

children aged 10 to 19 who had already left primary school did so without completion in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique (but not Ghana and Nigeria, where more than 80% were retained in school and completed primary school). Children dropping out from primary school were often over-age learners (around one third overall), and in four countries over-age learners accounted for 60% of drop outs. Differences in school completion are most stark between children from urban and rural areas. In Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique, more than 80% of rural children who had left primary school dropped out. Percentages are less than half of this amount for urban children. Differences were also vast between the two poorest and richest wealth quintiles. In Burkina Faso, Mali and Mozambique, more than 90% of children from the poorest 40% of households (the two poorest quintiles) who left primary school did not complete it. Drop out is much less for the richest 40% of households. Differences are also strong in relation to the mother's education (in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali and Mozambique, more than 70% of children with uneducated/unschooled mothers who left primary school did not complete primary education) and less pronounced (although not negligible) for gender.

In Kenya, it was notable that Nairobi province (Current Nairobi county), with 60 percent of its population living in informal settlements, had the second lowest primary school enrollment rate out of the then eight provinces (Republic of Kenya; 2012; Warrah, 2008; Wasanga, et al, 2011). In South Africa, Sibanda (2004) found that both individual and household level attributes are important determinants of dropping out of primary and secondary school. The study by Sibanda indicates that ethnicity, household size, female household headship and the household heads level of education are school predictors of school withdrawal. The selection process for

staying in primary or secondary school seems to favour children from upper income groups compared to their low income counterparts in Kenya and South Africa (Njeru and Orodho, 2003; OECD, 2013; Oketch and Ngware, 2012; Sibanda, 2004).

Many research studies have identified various ways of community participation in education, providing specific channels through which communities can be involved in children's education. Colletta and Perkins (1995) illustrate various forms of community participation: (a) research and data collection; (b) dialogue with policymakers; (c) school management; (d) curriculum design; (e) development of learning materials; and (f) school construction.

Heneveld and Craig (1996) recognized parent and community support as one of the key factors to determine school effectiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa. They identify five categories of parent and community support that are relevant to the region: (1) children come to school prepared to learn; (2) the community provides financial and material support to the school; (3) communication between the school, parents, and community is frequent; (4) the community has a meaningful role in school governance; and (5) community members and parents assist with instruction. With all these literatures not one study is keen on the role community dialogues can play in enrollment and retention of children in school.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the empowerment framework as postulated by Perkins and Zimmerman, 1995; Rappaport, 1981, Zimmerman and Warschausky 1998. The framework argues that empowerment is both a value orientation for working in the

community and a theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decisions that affect one's life, organizational functioning, and the quality of community life. The value orientation of empowerment suggests goals, aims, and strategies for implementing change. Empowerment theory provides principles and a framework for organizing knowledge. The development of empowerment framework also helps advance the construct beyond a passing fad and political manipulation.

According to this framework, empowerment is viewed as a process: the mechanism by which people, organizations and communities gain mastery over their lives. Proponents' conceptual definitions all point towards participation with others to achieve goals, efforts to gain access to resources at some critical understanding of the sociopolitical environment are basic components of the construct. It further elaborates that, … at the community level, empowerment refers to collective action to improve the quality of life in a community and to the connections among community organizations and agencies, organizational and community empowerment however are not simply the aggregate of mass empowered individuals.

2.4.1 Relevance of the Empowerment Framework

Informal settlements are neglected by the national government with regards to equal opportunities leading to exclusion as pertains the social and economic development and this impacts negatively on Education.

In as much as the policy is clear on the role of government to deliver basic education to all, Mathare residents have been left out due to various conditions in which they

find themselves. Therefore, this construct will elaborate on what Mathare informal residents ought to do in order to claim what is rightfully theirs with regards to attaining their goals- enrollment and retention of children in primary schools and with a collective responsibility focus on organizing themselves, to reflect, explore and analyze their education concerns and develop an action plan to collectively come up with a solution to their challenge hence an improved state of affairs.

This approach is relevant as it provides for a safe space to establish community dialogues forums which deliberate on enrollment of children in schools and influence retention of these children in school through various community initiatives. This framework also elaborates on involvement, participation or extent of engagement by communities. It implies community ownership and action that explicitly aims at social change and political change. It addresses the social, cultural political and economic determinants that underpin provision of basic education in the informal settlements.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This section described study site, study design, population under study, unit of analysis, the sampling procedure used, data collection methods as well as the ethical considerations that the study adhere to.

3.2 Research Site

3.2.1 Location and Size

This study was conducted in Mathare informal settlement, which lies approximately six (6) kilometres to the North east of Nairobi city central business district (whose geographic coverage/coordinates are 1˚19'S Latitude and 36˚47E Longitude/ 1.317˚S 36.783E) and is bordered by Thika road to the north and Juja road to the south. The area has approximately 13 villages: Mashimoni, Mabatini, Village No. 10, Village 2, Kosovo, 3A, 3B, 3C, 4A, 4B, Gitathuru, Kiamutisya and Kawa Kariuki. The settlement sits within a valley of the Mathare and Gitathuru rivers. Mathare is one of the oldest informal settlements in Nairobi (UN-Habitat, 2010; Care International, 2009)

(Source: CIA World Factbook 2012)

Map 3.1 Map of Kenya indicating Nairobi County
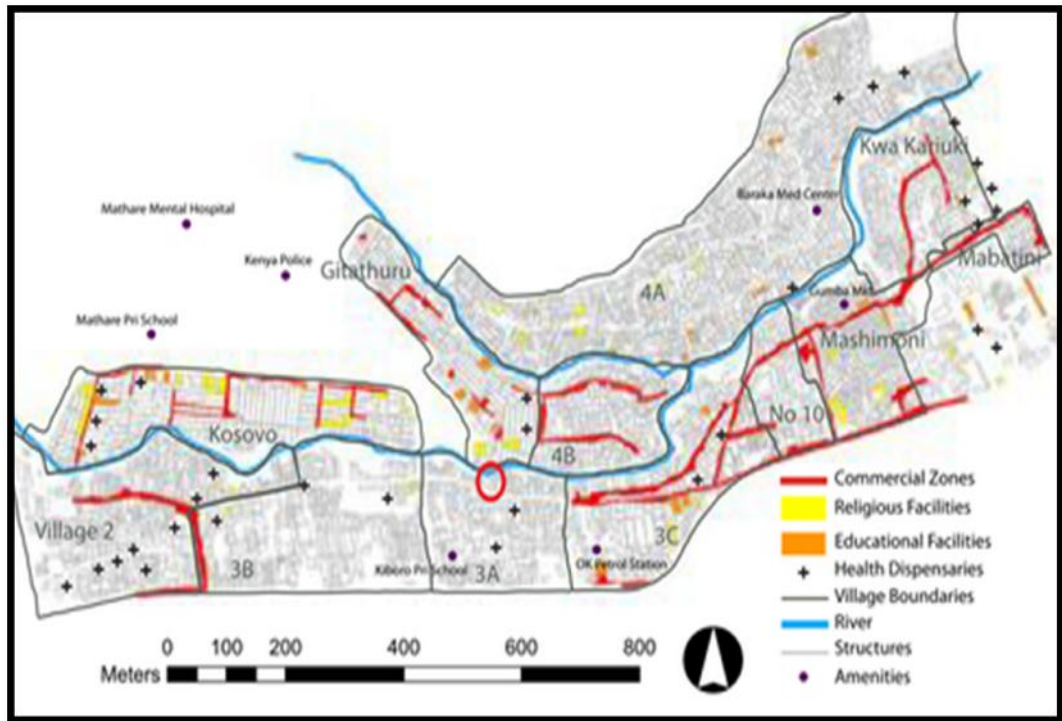
Map 3.2 Map of Mathare Source: University of Nairobi et al. (2012) Mathare Zonal plan

3.2.2 Demographic profile

Mathare slum spans on two sub counties thus Kasarani and Starehe. It has a long strip of tin and wooden shacks and earthen walls constructed on both sides of a small stream. The number of residents in Mathare slums is estimated at between 600,000 and 800,000 (UN-Habitat, 2010).

According to Spatial Collective, (2014), Mathare slums population distribution reads as; 41 percent people are aged 25 years and below, 38 percent are between 26 years and 35 years thus 0nly 20 percent is above 35 years of age. The sex ratio is at 50.3 to 49.7 for Females and males respectively. The levels of education were at 71 percent for those who have attained primary or secondary school education, less than 17

percent have either college or university level education and only 4 percent have post graduate education status (Spatial Collective, 2014)

3.2.3 Ethnographic profile and livelihoods

Mathare informal settlement is predominantly occupied by ethnic groups; Luo, Kikuyu, Kamba and Luhya. The settlement is the one of the biggest slums in Nairobi, following Africa's biggest slum, Kibera (Care International 2009; UN-Habitat 2010) which is also located in Nairobi, Kenya. The residents of Mathare are majorly casual labourers, unskilled workers, guards, masons, house helps who serve nearby neighbourhoods while some run small businesses such as green groceries, minishops, butcheries, hairdressing, barbershops etc.

3.3 Research Design

The design of the study was cross sectional and exploratory. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Its aim was to provide a snapshot of the situation in this case the role played by community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in school. The instruments for collection of primary data were in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

3.4 Study Population and the unit of analysis

The study population was all community members residing in Mathare informal settlements. The unit of analysis was an adult individual community member within Mathare informal settlement.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Systematic random sampling was used to reach 30 in-depth interviewees who were community members that have children attending primary school within Mathare slums or are care givers to these children. This was done by systematically selecting the names from the community dialogue registers presented to the researcher by the community facilitators. These participants were selected from 7 dialogue groups that exist in Mathare slums- Some of the villages have merged their dialogue sessions depending with their proximity to each other or the location of schools that their children attend. Between four (4) to six (6) members were selected from each group depending with the community dialogue group members with a balance in the sex representation. Head teachers of schools found within Mathare informal settlements and community dialogue facilitators as well as community leaders were also engaged in this study

3.6 Data collection Methods

3.6.1 In-depth interviews

Community members were interrogated for the in-depth interviews. Both men and women were incorporated in the study participant list. This method was used to provide a coverage of individual accounts of experiences which helped to obtain a deep understanding of the situation.

The interviews were conducted through interview guide containing open ended questions in order to allow for probing the interviewee to solicit for detailed information as pertains community dialogues on education matters within Mathare informal settlements, Nairobi county; this focused on enrollment and retention of

children in primary schools within Mathare informal settlements and also gathered detailed information on how communities within Mathare slums were dealing with issues related enrollment and retention of children in primary school.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

One (1) FGD was held each from 3 villages within Mathare informal settlements. Each FGD had between 6 to 12 members recruited and that they should have resided in Mathare informal settlements for the past 4 years and are members of the community dialogue groups. These discussions were conducted with the help of FGD guide.

3.6.3 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

This study held interviews with 3 key informants as pertains community dialogues and primary schools. This included the community dialogue facilitators, local administration thus the area chief and primary school head teacher within Mathare informal settlements.

The key informant interviews employed a key informant interview guide aimed at achieving major insights as pertains the roles of community conversations in enrollment and retention of children in primary schools within Mathare informal settlements.

3.6.4 Secondary sources

Literature relevant to this study was reviewed to provide background information. Documentary evidence such as community action plans with regards to access and

retention of children in schools were explored. Minutes and reports of the community conversation meetings were also reviewed to get further information.

3.7 Data processing and Analysis

This stage involved cleaning, coding and data entry. The data obtained from in-depth interviews was transcribed, coded and analysed thematically. For each of these data sets, separate code sheets were created to establish and interpret patterns and trends. Audio recordings were transcribed and in cases where they were not in English, they were translated. Data on socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the elements was analysed through computing their mean, mode and median.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Research clearance was sought from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before the onset of fieldwork. Participants for this particular study were consulted, briefed about the study with regards to its objectives and any point that was not clear was clarified. Participation was on voluntary basis after signing an informed consent form. Also if anyone was unwilling to continue with the process they were allowed to quit at any given point of the study. Information given or received from the respondents was treated with strict secrecy/confidentiality and it was used for the sole purpose of this research. Furthermore, the data collected was kept under lock and key. The findings have been shared by Mathare informal settlements community.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the interpretation and presentation of the findings obtained from the field. The section presents the background information of the respondents, findings of the analysis based on the objectives of the study. Explanations and narrations as gotten from respondents have been used to discuss the findings of the study. The study targeted 3 focus group discussions and a sample size of 33 respondents from which 27 were interviewed making a response rate of 81.8%. This response rate was satisfactory to make conclusions for the study as it acted as a representative. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. Based on the statement and assertion, the response rate was excellent.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This involved cases such as, the age, sex, occupation of the respondent and level of education and was intended to assess any influence on the findings. This set of data was sought from the respondents of the in depth interviews and key informants.

4.2.1 Age of Respondents

The study sought to find out age of the respondents. This was to determine the age of majority of community dialogues participants and their role in enrollment and retention of children in primary schools within Mathare slums. From the research findings the study established that majority of the 27 respondents 48.1% (13 out of

27) were aged between 25 to 34 years, 29.6% (8 out of 27) of the respondents were aged between 35 to 44 years, 14.8% (4 out of 27) of the respondents were aged between 45 to 54 years, whereas 7.4% (2 out of 27) of the respondents were aged over 55 years. This indicated that the majority of community dialogue participants were between the ages of 25 to 34 years. This is illustrated in the figure below:
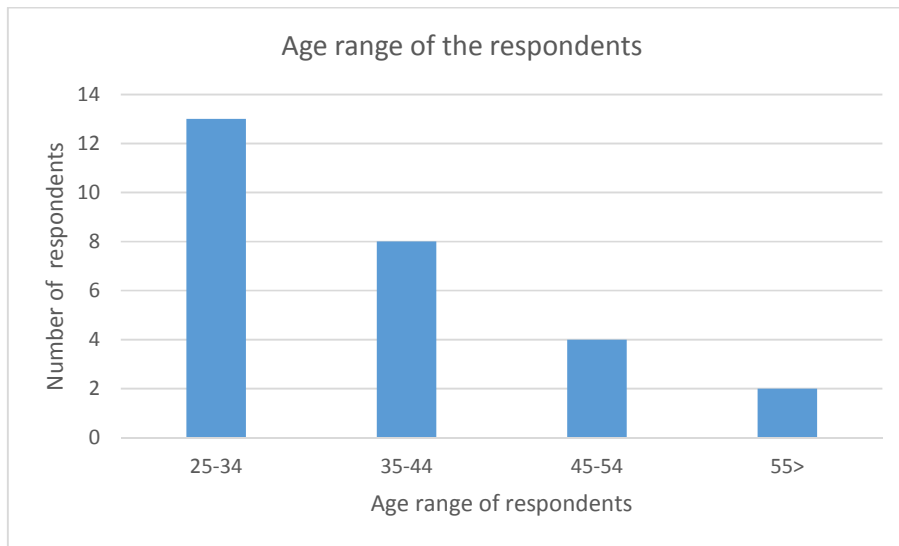
Figure 4.1: Age of the Respondents

4.2.2 Sex of Respondents

The study sought to know the sex of the respondents as it is important in deducing the group disaggregation from the entire population. The findings indicate that 30% of the respondents were males while 70% are females (Figure 4.1):
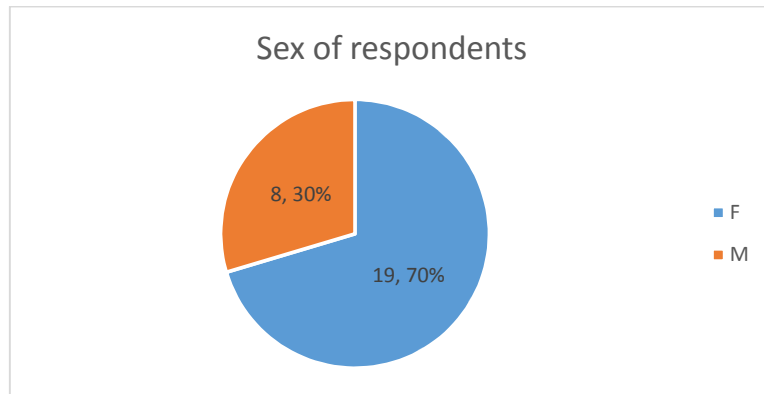
Figure 4.2: Sex of the Respondents

4.2.3 Respondents Level of Education

The study sought to find out the respondents' level of education. This was to deduce their socio-economic status and thus determine whether this had an influence on their participation in community dialogue forum and if at all this influenced enrollment and retention of children in school. The study indicated that majority of the respondents as shown 51.8% (14 out of 27) had secondary school education as their highest education level, 14.8% (4 out of 27) had acquired primary school education, 25.9% (7 out of 27) had tertiary education while 7.4% had attained university education. The table below illustrates these findings:
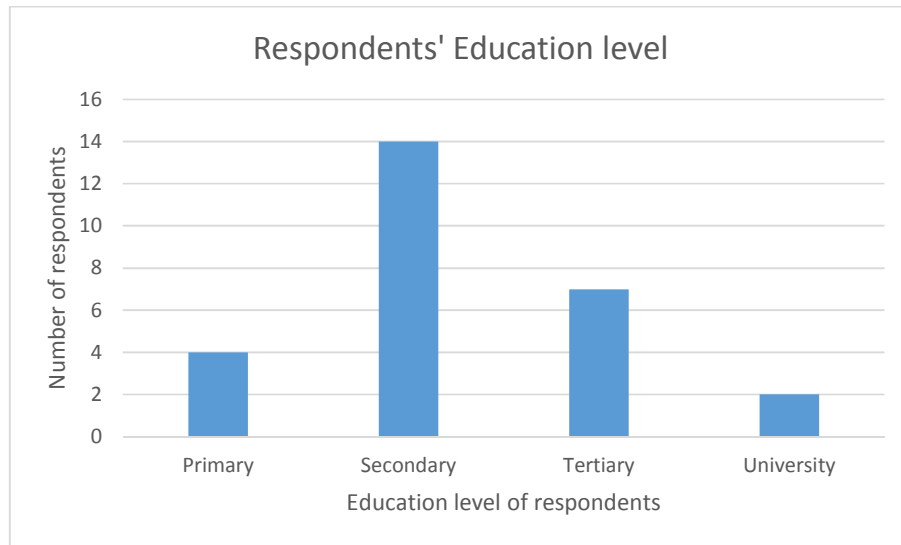
Figure 4.3: Respondents' level of education

4.2.4 Occupation of the Respondents

The study sought to find out the respondents' source of livelihood. Their occupation was to be used as a proxy for their income. The study found out that most of the respondents (59.3%) were engaged in small business activities within the slums making it flexible to attend these meetings. 22.2% of the participants were working in nearby industries on a shift basis hence their participation in these meetings was dependent on when they were available while 18.5 % were 'home/house keepers' hence their regular participation in these dialogue meetings. Figure 4.4 illustrates this.
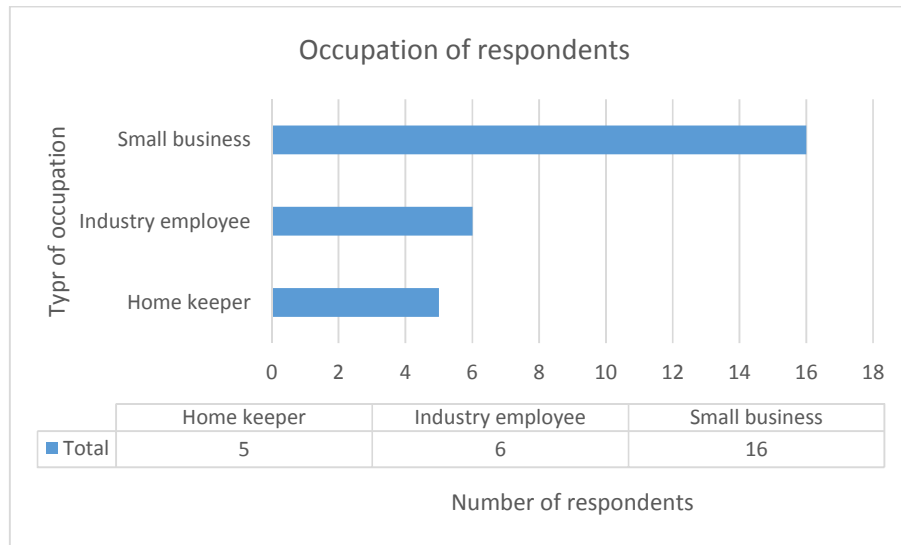
Figure 4.4: Occupation of the respondents

4.3 Challenges of schooling in Mathare

Mathare informal settlements have two public primary schools that to serve the entire population of school-age children. However, some of school going children are enrolled in schools run by private proprietors, faith based organizations and community based organizations operating within Mathare slums. One in-depth interviewee said, "Hapa shule za serikali ni mbili tuu, Kiboro Primary Na Mathare 4A primary-Heidmarie, nayo Mathare tumebarikiwa na watoto, hawawezi tosha huko. Sasa watu binafsi pamoja na makanisa hata vikundi vya mtaani walianzisha shule humu humu kuwasaidia watoto wetu kwenda shule hizi shule ni mingi hapa kuna *hope academy, Breclares... yaani ni mingi."* Loosely to mean, *... there are two public schools that serve us: Kiboro primary and Mathare 4a primary-HeidMarie. In Mathare we are blessed with children they all can't fit there. So private proprietors, churches and community groups started schools in order to help children enroll in school. Some of these schools are; Hope academy, Breclares Centre... They are many*.

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The in-depth respondents also reiterated that some parents/guardians were afraid of taking their children "far" from their residential houses citing insecurity as the main reason for this. *"… in this slum there are so many people who are not good, my neighbour's child was raped last year, she was going to school early morning, my son was slapped by a stranger for looking at him while he was coming back from school… for these reasons I prefer to take my children in nearby schools to avoid risking their lives"* said another in-depth interviewee.

When asked about challenges faced by Mathare residents as pertained primary schooling, This FGD participants reported that there were too many school-age children within Mathare yet the public schools had limited space for all of them. They reported that declaration of free and compulsory basic education by former president Kibaki triggered mushrooming of private owned primary schools which to a large extent has enhanced enrollment of most children into primary schools in this particular setting. Shortage of government schools comes along with challenges: the distance that may be covered to school by young children in the insecure environment, schools employ untrained teachers, poor learning environment, poor school management, weak parents' participation in school affairs among others. "*Living in a slum and going to school within is very hard. Most teachers in the schools around here are not trained, the classrooms are small, some schools have only one toilet for teachers and the pupils, families are poor, no jobs for some parents, some parents are bed-ridden, it's hard to take children in school with all these problems*" (FGD participant).

Both the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions confirmed that not all children of school- age attend school within Mathare slums alluding to the many challenges faced by Mathare residents both at the school level and at the household level as well as within the community. Those interviewed strongly felt that the key challenges with regards to enrollment and retention of children in school were household based challenges due to meager resources, child headed families, ailing parents, single parenthood; school based challenges; poor sanitation, lack of scholastic materials, unqualified teachers, poor school management and community based barriers to education; insecurity, early marriages, presence of video vendors, illegal gangs, illicit brews, child labour and child abuse cases.

The key informants cited school based challenges as the major challenges of schooling within Mathare slums. *"… schools in this slum are run like businesses, head teachers want many children within their institutions for money not to teach pupils. Quality of education is very low and they do not care"*. Said one of the key informants. Although the key informants acknowledged problems that may hinder children from attending school like child labour, illicit brew, poor school infrastructure, they also blamed parents for failing and allowing some of the challenges to persist within the slum. "*…how can someone take her/his child to a school that has no adequate classrooms, no toilet, no teachers and if they are there 90% of them not trained hmmm! Yet they pay money it's not free. Let them not complain they made that choice"*. Narrated another key informant.

4.4 Community Dialogue Forums

Community dialogues are recognized in Mathare. The in-depth interviews conducted on this subject revealed that in deed these forums exist and have community members participating in them regularly. One of the interviewees said that, *"... these meeting groups began in 2013 towards mid-year when there were floods that swept away some houses followed by a fire incident that burnt houses along juja road and three children died there..."*. As a matter of concern, the interviewees reiterated that they attended a chief's meeting (baraza) and then realized they needed each other in dealing with community matters that directly affected them. The formation of these groups is on voluntary basis, however not everyone participates in them. *"These community conversations happen twice a month or on weekly basis, the leaders are called community facilitators work closely with the local administration specially to pass on any communication from top offices and also deliver community's concerns to those top offices. In these meetings everyone talks and there is room for everyone to feel safe and talk without prejudices or victimization"*.

11.1% (3 out of 27) of the in-depth interviewees dismissed existence of these groups. They claimed that the local administration was using these groups to help him do his work and also used them to station his spies. *"I only hear of these groups, they are all over but they are used by the leaders to set up people... they pretend to help the poor, more so children going to school so that they gain mileage in this area. They simply don't help..."* (one of the in-depth interviewees)

Two focus group discussion (FGD) indicated that community dialogue forums came to be in 2013 when the members felt that if they organized themselves, understood

their environment; the limited resources, their way of life, their situation-slum dwellers-they would easily utilize their knowledge, share ideas, put to good use whatever resources were at their disposal and even influence and have a say and some form of bargaining power in projects brought to them by ''outsiders'' thus development agencies. This was triggered by a tragedy experienced within the slum whereby houses along the riverbed were swept away by floods. The CD forums provide a safe space for each community member to participate in their moving forward. In these forums no one can be intimidated. They are allowed to share their views and ideas on matters concerning them especially education of their children because there are very few public schools that serve Mathare slums population, reiterated the FGD participants. These dialogue groups hold their meetings either weekly or bi-weekly. They are guided with a community facilitator (CF) who is the lead person that guides dialogue sessions. The CF moderates the sessions focusing on gender balance, participation by all and ensures inclusiveness in decisions made during the dialogue sessions. The CF also mobilizes community members to take part in their own development agenda. With the support of community members, the CF represents the villages in stakeholders' meetings and has the mandate to deliver petitions to the relevant authorities whenever necessary.

On the contrary, one FGD was very pessimistic about community dialogues. This FGD reported that the community dialogues were formed in 2013, but they felt there was a force behind it. *"...to find people of Mathare so organized as these groups is unheard of, these groups have confidence, its possible they are being used by some powerful force. When I attend I don't talk much lest am quoted. But again people have benefitted even those that don't work very hard. They received cash transfer for*

being poor. That's the force we are talking about how? just how?" (one of the FGD participants). They also reported that these groups have leaders who guide the meeting discussions.

4.5 Roles of community dialogues

Many in-depth interviewees indicated that they first heard about community dialogues from a community facilitator who went from door to door mobilizing community members to start participating in the community dialogue forums. This was then confirmed by the FGD participants who said that there was a "strong wave" of community members being mobilized by community facilitators to form (organized) groups to deliberate on community concerns at their own time and then come up with possible/workable solutions for the same in order to handle their underdevelopment within Mathare settlements…. *The facilitators walked door to door in all these villages telling us to form community dialogue groups which would help us learn to deal with our own problems before we ask for help from outsiders* (FGD participant).

The community dialogues play a crucial role in the development agenda of Mathare slums. A key informant told the researcher that, "…*since initiation of these conversation groups, there has been an attitude change amongst community members, they share freely how they contribute to the community concerns and after self-search they work towards changing the practices that let the community down then look for solutions for these problems*".

The FGD participants reported that indeed the dialogue meetings were and are leaving a mark in the lives of Mathare residents due to the roles they play. They affirmed that

indeed people are living in dignity because of the works of dialogue meetings and their initiatives. The dialogue groups work towards bettering the lives of people of Mathare. Once the community concerns have been identified and enlisted, they are then ranked according to the community priority, action plans are then developed to deal with real issues per concern after which implementation is initiated by the community members with the help of service providers and development agencies that work within this slum. For instance, through stakeholders' meetings organized by the dialogue groups, several services have been delivered to Mathare people. A case in point is the free care a treatment offered by Medicins San Frontieres (MSF) organization's clinics for rape victims and gender based violence victims from Mathare slums. This was a result of information shared and petitions raised seeking assistance for such services during these meetings. Both the in-depth interviewees and a section of FGD participants confirmed that more services have been rendered to Mathare residents since community dialogues began than when people had their "impersonal" lives. They stated that togetherness brought about by the conversation meetings has borne fruits to all community members.

Despite a bigger percentage of the respondents alluding to the great works of the community dialogues, a section of the respondents thus 11.1%of the in-depth interviewees and some FGD participants disagreed with the roles played by the community dialogues. "*We only hear of these groups doing one, two, three, … but I have never benefitted from them, they are biased and they only help their relatives. They are being used. How comes none of my relatives or friends has benefitted from the good things I hear they do in this slum. I take alcohol why can't they save me, why haven't they paid my daughters' school fees? They only help themselves. We don't*

like the way they pretend around" (FGD participant). Adding to this was an in-depth interviewee who said that, she had never known such groups exist and whatever they do. "*I am a member of a small women group within Mathare, that's where I seek help they know me and understand me best. About groups here accommodating every member that's news to me*".

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Discussions of the Findings

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the researcher's inferences from the study findings and shows how well the objectives of the study have been met. The researcher also illustrates responses that adequately respond to the research questions. The section further summarizes the of key findings, conclusion drawn from the findings are highlighted and recommendations made there in; all of which focused on addressing the objectives of the study the researcher intended to explore and discuss the role of community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary school in Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi county.

5.2 Functions, operations and structures of community dialogues

In-depth interviewees indicated that community dialogues were very systematic in the way they handled community concerns. The CDs have members who voluntarily participate in these meetings. These groups are led by the CFs who facilitate conversations amongst community members. The community facilitators work hand in hand with the area leaders and service providers who support them in implementing community action plans. Community dialogues are at the forefront of supporting children attend primary school in Mathare. The interviewees asserted that community dialogues functions revolved around identifying community problems and creating a road map to help come up with possible solutions for the same. A case in point was cited that every dialogue group had developed an enrollment action plan that clearly indicated activities to be conducted in order to ensure 'all' children attend school. "There are seven CDs in Mathare each has its own work plan to enable

implementation of activities that will enhance enrollment and retention of children in school".

The FGD participants reported that, community dialogue sessions have and were playing a great role in ensuring children were enrolled in schools and that their retention in these institutions was guaranteed. The conversation meetings were keen on barriers to children's enrollment in schools and thus they worked closely with relevant community groups, families of school going children especially vulnerable girls, development agencies working in this slum, local administration and elected area leaders to ensure "all" children were enrolled and retained in school. A case in point as narrated by the FGD participants was that all care givers to school going children were given clear regulations on how to indulge them with regards to division of labour at the household level. Thus children attending school would not be given chores past 7.30pm during school going days and that they would not be allowed to stay at home in order to aid in supplementing their household daily income- this was to allow them attend school regularly.

The study further found out that these community dialogue forums had developed gender sensitive action plans towards enrollment and retention of children in schools. These action plans were being implemented by community members directly or indirectly through these community dialogue forums in partnership with stakeholders and service providers working within Mathare informal settlements. "*The CDs have each action plans that clearly explain how they are going to implement enrollment into school and retention of children in schools, actions towards this course is well*

written down and if you have time I can ask our CF to show you these action plans…" said one of the FGD participants.

The FGD participants further reported that through the CD meetings the residents together with the local administration had come up with by-laws to deal with barriers to girls and boys education. For instance, one FGD mentioned that video den vendors were instructed not to let in children during school-going days as a measure to ensure children attend school. Parents/ guardians who had a habit of practicing child labour were put on notice and a social network established for them. These dialogues had also gone ahead to initiate negotiations with school head teachers and managers to subsidize fees for children coming from most vulnerable households so as to assure their regular attendance and retention in school. Most schools within Mathare slums had school feeding programme through the aid of CD forums which strengthened linkages with the service providers as well as advocating for these provision from the public funds kitty like the Constituency Development Fund. A Petition was raised to World food program through Feed the Children (FTC) with community's commitment to ensure monitoring of utilization of the food provided to the schools in Mathare. This was to ensure all children are retained in school. This saw 25 schools benefit from this service provider. This was refuted by a section of FGD participants who claimed that these schools benefitted directly from the organization without the intervention of the community dialogues. "*when we get any aid in this community, CDs claim it's their effort. Feed the children brought our school children food now we hear it was the effort of conversation groups if they can intervene on food giving agency why can't they start their own organization*" (FGD participant).

The highlighted roles of community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in schools were: school managers were involved in these meetings hence improvement in the learning environment, school fees subsidies for children from most vulnerable households, school managers ensured that teachers were trained on a gender responsive pedagogy through involvement of stakeholders and agencies working within this slum in partnership with government. One of the key informants (school head teacher) said that, "*... when these groups hold their stakeholders' meetings we attend and the government agencies and service providers listen to us, we have been able to have our teachers receive three-days' training on gender pedagogy through networking, we are more sensitive to the needs and rights of children especially those from vulnerable children. At school level we have a database of such children and after meetings with the CFs, some of them do not pay school fees.*"

The CD group members organized themselves and conducted voluntary contributions of scholastic materials to support children attending school. Local leadership was tasked with raising awareness of importance of education for both girls and the boys during public meetings and chief's local meetings (Baraza). According to these dialogues, Child labour is forbidden in Mathare slums. Thus the perpetrators of such practices face the full force of the law. The area chief is always involved in these dialogues monthly stakeholders' meetings and the community members through own networking have pro-bono advocates of children rights including the right to basic education. Community Dialogue Facilitators (CDFs) have the mandate endorsed by the area chief to conduct random door to door home visits to ensure 'all' children of school age are attending school. The Facilitators through meetings with community

members keep a record of the most vulnerable children and households. These databases are always presented to development workers, elected leaders for consideration when necessary before any other community members benefit from any 'fruit basket' privileged to be in the community. Other than these data, each group has developed action plans based on the community concern/issues that is presented to 'pioneers' of any development work in the community for support.

Keen to note is that through community dialogue initiatives, seven hundred and ninety-eight (798) vulnerable children had their families benefit from cash transfers that were being disbursed by Concern worldwide- An international NGO implementing education based project within Nairobi slums. These information was revealed through analysis of secondary data of the community dialogue forums. The parents/ care givers are keen that action may be taken against them hence they enroll their children in school.

5.3 Enrollment and retention of children in schools

In-depth interviewees who participated in this study confirmed that indeed community dialogues had played a great role in enrollment of children in primary schools and also the retention of children in schools was highly influenced by the initiatives of the CD groups. Through the dialogue sessions, it was recognized that if the community members failed to have own initiatives in ensuring that their children were attending primary school, they would have themselves to blame. These dialogue meetings have enhanced sharing of information more so on stakeholders that support Primary education.... *Since initiation of these community conversation meetings, we took*

*charge, we contribute books, pens, old shoes, old bags to enable children get necessary materials to attend school. (*in-depth interviewee).

It was noted that through these meetings a number of school going children were retained in school after their households were supported with cash transfers from a local NGO-Daraja Civic Initiatives Forum. This was made possible after a list of most vulnerable children was presented to them for consideration based on the groups priority ranking criteria. The cash transfer funds were given for a period of 8 months.

The CD group members monitored beneficiary households to ensure proper utilization and more so to support vulnerable children enroll into primary schools. Some of the households who benefitted from these cash transfers started up small businesses to supplement their household income this in return kept children in schools who would have otherwise dropped out to supplement their families' income. These meetings also facilitated proper utilization of bursary Funds-Constituency development funds, Ward development funds among other Kitties. These groups petitioned the MPs and MCAs to use their list of preferred beneficiaries from the funds hence all children assured of enrollment into school. Some of these groups went ahead and proposed to the industries around them thus Babadogo based companies to support education of children within Mathare slums as their social responsibility-this was on the basis that Mathare slums produced a large percentage of the companies' workers. This effort saw a number of learners receive scholastic materials like pens, books, school uniforms, soaps, shoes, mattresses and food stuffs from these companies.

One FGD was of a different opinion with regards to the role played by CDs in enrollment and retention of children in schools. This FGD reported that even elected leaders were using these groups to gain favour in Mathare. " *MPs and MCAs are now using this groups to list for them people to benefit from bursaries, our children are always send home for school fees, oh uniform... if these groups are serving all community members why are some vulnerable children still home, why have ssome dropped out of school completely? These groups are serving politicians not us, let them not use us. They are paid."* (FGD participant). Acknowledging that some members of the community had benefitted from cash transfer to support them in taking children to school and ensuring they were retained in school, this group refuted claims that the lists of beneficiaries were based on agreement by the community members who ranked vulnerability reporting that those who benefitted did so by sheer luck.

Secondary data revealed that, each community dialogue group kept a record of its members. The groups were led/ guided by 2-3 community conversations facilitators (CFs). The groups had a database of most vulnerable children (MVC) and most vulnerable households (MVHH) within their villages. They also kept copies of petitions raised to the relevant authorities either verbally or written and the outcomes of these petitions were well documented. For instance, one groups records revealed that 13 primary school learners had their school fees waived when the community members intervened and negotiated with school managers to subsidize their fees on the basis that they came from a vulnerable household (vulnerable household was determined by the community's set criteria). Further, a list of service providers was written down and services and goods offered to learners to keep them in schools like

deworming, distribution of sanitary towels for the girls was also recorded. The records revealed that these groups have action plans that they were implementing with regards to enrollment and retention of children in primary schools within Mathare informal settlements. Noticeable activities that were being implemented to support enrollment and retention of children in schools were, voluntary contributions of scholastic materials; sweaters, shoes, books, money to pay school fees, sanitary towels, foodstuffs, pens and school bags to needy children. These groups also made attempts to support schools in construction of toilets and cleaning the school compounds on a roaster basis, once in a while these groups would provide cleaning services to the schools to ensure a conducive learning environment for the learners. The CFs occasionally negotiated with the school head teachers to waiver school fees for some of the most vulnerable children. The area member of parliament and the Members of the county assembly were also persuaded to support the schools' projects like the feeding programme, construction of ablution blocks and supply of sanitary towels. These efforts had ensured enrollment and retention of children in schools.

Community dialogues play a great role in ensuring enrollment of children into primary schools within Mathare informal settlements. It was evident that community dialogue groups had organized themselves at the village level and at the settlement level with clear structures including the local administration. Their initiatives were recognized by the members of the community while their efforts received adequate support from area leaders, development agencies and the elected leaders thus the area MPs and The MCA. The community dialogues played the role of conducting door to door spot checks to ascertain that all children of school age were enrolled in school whether private owned or public. These groups through the community facilitators

negotiated with school managements to give an opportunity to children within Mathare so that they could be enrolled in school as their fundamental basic right. The CD members also had a key role in mobilizing resources necessary to facilitate enrollment of children into school, they contributed voluntarily to attain basic requirements for children to enroll in school, they used the household databases to fundraise for the needy learners and even raised petitions to relevant authorities in order to deal with barriers to children enrollment into primary school. For children to be retained in schools within Mathare slums, the CDs played a role of enhancing the learning environments through participating in school clean ups, working closely with other partners to support schools. For example, some schools had received toilets through a proposal submitted to 'eco-toilet', others had established a feeding programme at the school level courtesy of the Feed the Children-an organization working closely with the World Food Programme. The girls from some schools had received sanitary towels from well-wishers and some organizations like Girl Child Network (GCN) to enable them attend school regularly hence their retention in schools.

In evaluating the research objectives in relation to the research theory and relevance which engaged an empowerment framework, the fundamental principle of this approach was the belief that empowerment is a process: the mechanism by which people, organizations and communities gain mastery over their lives. Proponents' conceptual definitions all point towards participation with others to achieve goals, efforts to gain access to resources at some critical understanding of the sociopolitical environment are basic components of the construct. It further elaborates that, … at the community level, empowerment refers to collective action to improve the quality of

life in a community and to the connections among community organizations and agencies, organizational and community empowerment.

Community dialogues play a role in the enrollment of children in school while influencing their retention in these learning institutions. Community dialogues' initiatives as found out in this study point out that community members worked hand in hand with each other to mobilize resources internally and externally to ensure children were enrolled in school. The CDs also influence retention of children in primary schools by periodically dealing with 'barriers' to retention of these children in the learning institutions. A case in point is the establishment of by-laws that were supported by the local administration to curb community practices that pull children from school. Throughout this study, the theory was increasingly significant in explaining that when the communities organize themselves and come together to execute a common goal, the end results are for the betterment of community members' lives. In this case, the objectives of the study were achieved to a larger extent. Furthermore, the theory clearly explained that communities are knowledgeable on their issues and they should have a say in decisions concerning their lives free of sociopolitical influence. Therefore, the theory sufficiently served to explain the role of community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary schools within Mathare informal settlements.

5.4 Summary of Findings

The study was exploring the role played by community dialogues in enrollment and retention of children in primary school within Mathare informal settlements. It established that majority of respondents were aware of the existent of community

dialogues and their role in handling community concerns more so enrollment and retention of children in primary schools within Mathare slums. These dialogue fora play a crucial role in ensuring all children are in school. They mobilize resources both local and external resources to enable children enroll in school, they are keen in ensuring the guardians and parents are enrolling their children in school on their own volition or by the support of these dialogue groups. Furthermore, these dialogue groups have a greater influence in the retention of children in schools. The forums support school management in having school based projects that keep children in school at the same time pushing these managements to adhere to their mandate of providing basic education while fostering the rights of children so as to maintaining them in schools. By-laws have been created through these community dialogues with an aim of fostering a conducive environment (both at school, community and household level) to allow for enrollment and retention of children in school. Since initiation of community dialogues in Mathare in 2013, community members have been involved in their own development with them deciding who is eligible to benefit from the projects implemented within the slum be it from the NGOs. Private or the public sector. Most community concerns are best handled through community dialogue forums. The community dialogues have enhanced community knowledge, sharing of ideas within the community and generally the community has some bargaining power with regards to defining what is best to them.

5.5 Recommendations

- The study recommends that community dialogues should be recommended as a platform and vehicle to handle community concerns bearing in mind that the

members are aware of what is aching them and the required efforts and resources to leverage these concerns.

- Proper training should be conducted for the community facilitators so as to gain competent skills and capacity to facilitate these sessions and push them to a higher level. With this in place then communities especially in marginalized areas will be able to have some form of bargaining power with regards to their development agenda

- The study also recommends that all bursary beneficiaries from different kitty funds must be evaluated and ascertained by community dialogues to ensure genuinely deserved cases benefit from these funds based on the diverse roles played by these dialogue groups. To increase participation in these community based sessions, awareness should be raised by the local administration through public meetings like chief's barazas.

- Finally, the study recommends that the government and development agencies should adopt utilization of community dialogues as the surest way to effect the bottom-up approach for greater results of the development projects.

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APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Stephanie Chebet. I am carrying out a research on the Role of Community Dialogues in Enrollment and Retention of Children in Primary School in Mathare Informal Settlements, Nairobi County-Kenya. This study is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Gender and Development studies from the University of Nairobi.

I am requesting you to voluntarily participate in this study by taking part in an interview. You are asked to participate in this study because you are a member of community dialogue group residing within Mathare informal settlements in Nairobi. If you agree to this interview, it will take approximately 40-60minutes of your time. There are no known risks associated with participating in this interview, neither are there direct benefits to you for taking part in this interview.

With your permission, this interview will be audio recorded. You are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation in the interview and study altogether at any time without prejudice. This interview will be kept with the highest degree of confidentiality and anonymity. Pseudonyms and codes will be employed to protect your identity. The information gathered from this study may be used in the public domain.

Full title of Project: Role of Community Dialogues in Enrollment and Retention of Children in Primary School in Mathare Informal Settlements, Nairobi County-Kenya

Researcher's Details:

Name: Stephanie Chebet Mate

Address: 11868-00100 Nairobi

Cell No: +254721825947

Please initial box

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

☐

3.	I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

4.	I agree to the interview / focus group / consultation being audio recorded	☐

5.	I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications	☐

Name of Participant_____**Date**_____**Signature**_____

Name of Researcher_____**Date**_____**Signature**_____

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Introductions
- Explanation of the process and consent

Demographic characteristics

Age_____   Sex_____

Village_____

Level of Education_____

Occupation_____

Challenges

- Where do children attend school in this place?
- What are their challenges?
- Are all school age children attending school? Explain your response.
- What would you say are the three major challenges faced by Mathare residents with regards to enrollment and retention of children in primary school

About community dialogues

- What is your understanding of community dialogues in Mathare
- Share a personal experience with community conversations within Mathare
- How do these groups operate?
- For how long have these dialogue groups been in existence
- Share when you first heard about community conversations
- What role do these groups play in enrollment and retention of children in primary school within Mathare
- What can be done to improve the operations of community conversations?

APPENDIX III: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

- Introductions

- Explanation of the process and gaining Consent

- What would you say are the challenges faced by Mathare residents with regards to enrollment and retention of children in primary school

  -Public schools' vs Private/ faith based

  -Household socio-economic status

  -Teaching learning materials

- For how long have the community dialogues been in existence within Mathare slums

  -what triggered initiation of these fora

  -who attends these meetings

- Do community dialogues work? Explain.

- How have community dialogues helped in bridging the gap in enrollment and retention of children in primary school

  What are the community groups roles and activities?

- How do community dialogues operate?

APPENDIX IV: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

- Introductions

- Explanation and consent

- What would you say are the three major challenges faced by Mathare residents with regards to enrollment and retention of children in primary school

- For how long have the community dialogues been in existence

  -what triggered initiation of these fora

  -who attends these meetings

- What is the role of these groups as pertains to enrollment and retention of children in primary school and how do they operate?

  -Activities conducted by these groups