

# **Unskilled Casual Work and Chronic Urban Poverty: A Case Study of Casual Workers in Nairobi**

By:

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Degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies

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## DECLARATION

This project paper is my original work and it has never been presented to any other institution for academic examination

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This project paper has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors

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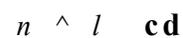


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**Date**

# DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my family, friends and the academic community.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDs	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Anti-Retroviral drugs
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
DFID	Department for International Development
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency virus
IDPM	Institute for Development Policy and Management
IGT	Inter-generationally transmitted poverty
IPAR	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SHGs	Self Help Groups
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
WeD	Wellbeing in Development

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of unskilled casual work in the propagation of chronic urban poverty. It is based on the assumption that unskilled casual work predisposes urban workers to chronic urban poverty, due to irregular work and low pay.

Chronic urban poverty has received renewed interest in policy and academic circles because, despite sustained urban development, urban poverty persists in many areas. The study argues, however, that the complexity of chronic urban poverty cannot be fully understood on the basis of income and consumption measures alone. It, therefore, uses a social exclusion framework to examine how chronic urban poverty is initiated (drivers) and sustained (maintainers).

The study was carried out in Greenfields Estate of Embakasi Constituency. Two focus group discussions and eight life history interviews were conducted with casual workers to obtain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of chronic urban poverty. The study found that lack of vocational skills is the single major driver of chronic poverty among casual workers. Casual workers with vocational skills were found to have a higher self-esteem and to command higher pay. This enabled them to work their way out of poverty. Casual workers without vocational skills were found to suffer self-devaluation, apathy and regular unemployment. This is because they were confined to prospecting for work in areas where they have personal contacts. This reduced the volume of work they could access and led to income inadequacy. Income inadequacy in turn precipitated poor nutrition, high indebtedness, and vulnerability to random shocks, leading to chronic poverty.

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The study finds, therefore, that there is a need to equip urban casual workers with vocational skills, which they can rely on to earn a living. Alternatively, there is a need to establish guaranteed work programmes and/or social protection schemes that enable urban casual workers to earn a regular basic income in order to prevent their slide into chronic poverty

## CHAPTER THREE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Poverty is generally understood as a state of persistent deprivation or the inability to exercise citizenship in a socially respectable manner. According to Ayako & Katumanga (1997), the poor are persons who lack basic needs and/or comforts considered essential for nominal participation in the societies of which they are members.

Poverty, in economic terms, has largely been measured as a function of income and expenditure. This implies that income inadequacy has been the 'de facto' measure of poverty. This monetary approach to poverty analysis has been popular among development scholars because it enables quantification and comparison of poverty trends over time and across regions (Hulme, Moore and Shepherd, 2001). It has been criticised, nevertheless, for failing to adequately explain the underlying processes that create and sustain poverty (Ibid.). It is now widely acknowledged that poverty is multi-dimensional and cannot be effectively analysed using income and consumption measures alone.

The concept of poverty has consequently been expanded to encompass other aspects of deprivation, such as risk, vulnerability, social exclusion, assetlessness, spatial disadvantage and political marginalisation, to name just a few (Hulme et al., 2001; Kabeer, 2004). A universal definition of poverty remains problematic, nonetheless, due to disciplinary biases. This gives rise to theoretical and practical challenges for development research and management.

First, identifying the deserving poor in order to effectively target poverty interventions is difficult. This is because poverty affects various segments of society differently. Populations of the needy thus tend to be dispersed over diverse socio-economic, political and geographical locations. This makes it necessary to tailor poverty interventions to specific groups, conditions and locations.

**Second**, people move into and out of poverty at different times over the life cycle. This means that it is necessary to monitor the changing circumstances of the poor. This temporal aspect of poverty dynamics makes poverty research and management an extended and complex affair. To deal with some of these challenges, development scholars have come up with the concept of chronic poverty; to differentiate the long-term poor from the transient poor.

Chronic poverty refers to severe, multi-dimensional and long-term deprivation, which principally leads to an inability to fulfil basic needs (CPRC, 2005). According to Hulme et al. (2001), the study of chronic poverty focuses attention on those for whom it is difficult to escape poverty on their own. This chronic poverty research agenda is underpinned by studies which indicate that structural factors largely prevent the poor from changing their circumstances (Hulme et al. 2001; Amis, 2002; Mitlin, 2003; Kedir, 2005). The long lasting and intractable nature of chronic poverty, therefore, challenges us to examine why this state of affairs continues to exist.

Chronic poverty in urban areas has gained increased attention in policy and academic circles because, in spite of development interventions, urban poverty persists in many areas (Amis 2002; Mitlin, 2003). The extent of chronic poverty in urban areas is poorly understood, however, as there is scarcity of literature on chronic urban poverty. This is because chronic poverty has hitherto been treated by development experts as largely a rural phenomenon (Amis, 2002). As such, rural chronic poverty research has been prioritized over chronic urban poverty because of a belief in an 'urban bias—the notion that urban areas are favoured in resource allocations relative to rural areas (Chambers, 1983; Satterthwaite, 2004; Mitlin, 2004).

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In general, urban areas have higher incomes compared with rural areas (Satterthwaite, 2004). This has resulted into many urban poor being classified as above the poverty line (Mitlin, 2004). The use of a standard poverty line has, however, been found inadequate for studying chronic urban poverty; as it does not account for differences in lifestyles between rural and urban areas (Amis, 2002; Mitlin, 2003; Satterthwaite, 2004; Kedir, 2005). Furthermore, there are indications that nationally aggregated poverty figures underestimate the degree of urban poverty (Jonsson and Satterthwaite, 2000; in Mitlin 2003). The use of a single basket of goods to compare purchasing power parity (PPP) between rural and urban areas is thus

**believed** to be misleading; due to variations in costs of goods and services between rural and **urban** areas (Reddy and Pogge, 2002; in Mitlin, 2003).

**Whereas** urban residents earn more, they also spend more on basic goods and services. This is because prices of these items are higher in urban areas than in rural areas (Satterthwaite, 2004). Urban residents pay for housing, water, sanitation, cooking fuel, electricity and **transport**. This means that it is necessary, therefore, to adjust for differences in costs and **lifestyles** when comparing rural and urban chronic poverty (Mitlin, 2004; Satterthwaite, 2004).

The global trend of rapid urbanization of populations is also set to contribute to an increase in chronic urban poverty. It is projected, for instance, that by 2015, more than 50% of the world's population will be living in urban areas ((UNFPA, 2011). Furthermore, the bulk of this urban growth is expected to occur in developing countries, many of which suffer severe capacity constraints in urban planning and management. Poor urban planning and management have been shown to negatively affect the quality of life of the urban poor (CPRC, 2008). As such, poor service delivery under conditions of rapid urbanization is likely to contribute to an increase in chronic urban poverty.

Additionally, rapid urbanisation is occurring in tandem with increasing 'informalization of the workforce' (Canagarajah and Sethuraman, 2001:1). This refers to a shift from 'high quality', formal, 'permanent' employment to 'low quality', contract and casual work (Ibid.). This changing structure of work is characterised by a high risk of unemployment and loss of conventional forms of social protection. This means that many urban workers do not have access to pensions and medical insurance. Coupled with the effects of adverse economic cycles and ageing populations, 'informalization of the workforce' is likely to put more urban workers at risk of chronic urban poverty.

The identification of the chronic urban poor is problematic, nonetheless, because the poor are not a homogeneous group (Hulme et al., 2001). The chronic urban poor are likely to vary by social category, urban form and spatial dynamics (Mitlin, 2003; Kabeer, 2004). This means, therefore, that chronic urban poverty is influenced by social, economic and political configurations, as well as spatial-geographical-infrastructure matrices. In other words, social structure, livelihood configuration, political participation and spatial location relative to

economic and natural resources, are likely to be important influences on chronic poverty outcomes.

The challenges of understanding chronic urban poverty notwithstanding, many urban poor in Kenya are known to earn their livelihoods in low-income and insecure occupations (Odhiambo and Manda, 2003). They thus experience difficulties in meeting their basic needs, which makes them hover around the poverty line. It can be inferred, therefore, that chronic urban poverty is most likely associated with unemployment, underemployment, or unskilled casual work, especially in developing countries such as Kenya .

Unskilled casual work refers to activities whose general undertaking does not require any formal training. Many poor urban workers in Kenya have low levels of education, which makes it difficult for them to obtain well paying jobs (KNBS, 2006). They are thus forced to engage in low skill, low productivity work, which makes them vulnerable to income inadequacy (Odhiambo and Manda, 2003). Low returns to their labour then makes it difficult for them to fulfil their basic needs or invest in human capital development.

Unskilled casual work is also associated with poor labour organisation (Amis 2002). In effect, this means that unskilled casual workers in Kenya can be expected not to be unionised. This exposes them to work related hazards and exploitation by employers. Coupled with a lack of formal social protection, this makes them highly vulnerable to chronic urban poverty.

Unskilled casual work is, by and large, irregular in frequency because it is affected by seasonal variations in demand for labour (DFID, 2005). Unskilled casual workers are thus prone to recurrent unemployment due to seasonal availability of work. This is more so in places with high rates of unemployment like Kenya, which increases competition for available work. The erratic nature of unskilled casual work is thus likely to make it difficult for casual workers to accumulate assets that they can use to cushion themselves against poverty-inducing shocks (Mitlin 2003). This is because their income needs to be stretched to cover periods of unemployment. Consequently, many unskilled casual workers are likely to go into debt in their attempts to smooth out their income and expenditure, especially during periods of extended unemployment. Indebtedness is known to contribute to a poverty spiral as borrowers end up paying compound interest on loans.

Low incomes may further preclude unskilled casual workers from active social participation, leading to low social capital formation (Mitlin 2003). Social capital refers to the networks of privileges and obligations that can be drawn upon in times of distress and has been shown to be important in cushioning people from adversity (Mitlin 2003). Low incomes are additionally correlated with poor nutrition, due to the high cost of food in urban areas. Given the manual nature of most casual work, poor nutrition can be expected to affect the health of casual workers because it reduces the ability of the body to cope with wear and tear. Low incomes in urban areas can thus be linked to poor health outcomes for unskilled casual workers. Poor health is generally a poverty stressor and it is safe to presume it increases the chances of casual workers falling into chronic poverty.

The multiple deprivations discussed above have been linked to the inter-generational transmission of poverty (IGT) (Moore, 2004). This is said to occur when poverty-related disadvantages are passed to future generations (Moore, 2004). We can surmise, therefore, that unskilled casual work is associated with multiple disadvantages, which can be a precursor for life-long poverty.

It can be expected, therefore, that the dependants of unskilled casual workers are likely to be trapped in a cycle of deprivations comprising poor nutrition, poor health, low education; inadequate skill training and low productivity work. These disadvantages diminish their life chances and increase the likelihood of the poverty cycle repeating itself. Consequently, the contribution of unskilled casual work to chronic urban poverty , Kenya, is the focus of this study.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Chronic urban poverty in Kenya is likely to be understated due to official over-reliance on money-metric measures of poverty (KNBS, 2006). As argued elsewhere, chronic urban poverty is associated with multiple and overlapping disadvantages. This makes exclusive use of money-metric measures of poverty inadequate for understanding chronic urban poverty. For example, levels of education and lack of marketable skills among the urban poor make it difficult for them to obtain well paying jobs (Odhiambo and Manda, 2003). Furthermore, the attendant low incomes and high cost of living in urban areas make the urban poor unable to fulfil most of their basic needs (Amis 2002). Rapid urbanization and rural-to-urban migration

on their part lead to poor provision of social services (Mitlin, 2003; Satterthwaite, 2004). This makes access to basic services expensive and difficult for the urban poor.

**Furthermore**, due to high levels of unemployment and limited economic opportunities, many urban poor in Kenya are forced to engage in informal sector work. This form of work is said to be of low quality and a major contributor to urban poverty (Canagarajah and Sethuraman, 2001; Mitlin, 2003; Odhiambo and Manda, 2003). because the informal sector is poorly regulated; making its workers vulnerable to multiple forms of disadvantage. These include low pay, long working hours and extended casual status; occupational health and safety hazards and lack of retirement benefits, amongst others.

The informal sector has, all the same, been found to be generally unable to absorb fully the increasing mass of urban unemployed (Amis, 2002). This is because profitable sections are tightly controlled by patronage networks (Amis, 2002). These create barriers to entry and lead to marginalization of the urban poor. As a result, many urban poor are likely rely on unskilled casual work to earn a living.

According to Odhiambo and Manda (2003), of the economically active population of urban poor in Kenya, more men (94.6%) are engaged in unskilled casual work than women (5.4%). This is attributed to a majority of women engaging in unpaid family work owing to gender based work patterning. This is said to allocate female labour away from markets and towards farm and household activities. The relationship between unskilled casual work and chronic urban poverty is not well known, however, due to scarcity of literature on chronic urban poverty.

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A point worth noting is that past studies on urban poverty have tended to focus on a generic category of 'urban poor', without distinguishing the chronic poor amongst them (Mitlin 2003). Paucity of theoretical and empirical studies of chronic urban poverty thus implies little or poor knowledge of factors contributing to chronic poverty in urban areas.

This study assumes, all the same, that the commoditisation of non-food items in urban areas makes urban casual workers highly vulnerable to chronic poverty (Canagarajah & Sethuraman, 2001). This is because they need cash to pay for most of their basic needs yet they depend on irregular work and earn low income. Also, urban casual workers generally

lack access to common property resources that they can use to supplement their earnings. Dependence on cash to fulfil basic needs coupled with the erratic nature of casual work, therefore, makes casual workers highly vulnerable to income inadequacy and, by extension, chronic poverty. The control of profitable sections of the informal sector by powerful groups further implies that urban casual workers may encounter barriers to viable alternative livelihoods (Amis, 2002).

It can be expected, therefore, that the chronic urban poor will be those workers who rely heavily on unskilled casual work for their livelihoods and who face extreme difficulty in changing their livelihood configurations.

This study examines the relationship between unskilled casual work and chronic urban poverty in Nairobi. It is based on the assumption that unskilled casual work predisposes urban workers to chronic poverty, due to irregular work and low pay. Unskilled casual work is used as an entry point to the study of chronic urban poverty in Nairobi because, in the literature, casual work is associated with urban poverty. The main research question guiding this study, therefore, is: what is the role of unskilled casual work in the propagation of chronic urban poverty in Nairobi?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To investigate how unskilled casual work is related to the incidence (drivers) of chronic urban poverty among casual workers.
2. To investigate how unskilled casual work is related to the maintenance of chronic urban poverty among casual worker/'

### **1.4 Justification for the Study**

Money-metric measures of poverty have been found to be inadequate for explaining urban poverty due to its multiple dimensions (Ayako and Katumanga, 1997; Hulme et al., 2001). Consequently, many urban poor are believed to be erroneously classified as living above the poverty line. This makes them 'invisible' to policy makers (CPRC, 2008:23, Mitlin 2004; Satterthwaite, 2004). This study seeks to isolate non-monetary indicators of chronic urban poverty in order to facilitate identification of chronic poor casual workers. It is hoped that this will increase our understanding of the dynamics of chronic urban poverty.

**The study** will thus enhance our understanding of the relationship between unskilled casual work and chronic urban poverty. It can then be used to promote remedial poverty interventions. In addition, the study will contribute to the body of literature on chronic urban poverty; thereby filling an academic gap and offer possibilities for further research.

#### **1.4 Scope and Limitations**

**The study** uses case study method and was limited to two focus group discussions and eight life-history interviews owing to the voluminous nature of qualitative data. Due to the statistically small sample size, generalizations to larger populations need to be qualified. However, in line with the traditions of case study method, inferences can be made from the study through comparison of similar cases.

The study relies on the ability of the researcher to render accurate representations of interviewee narratives. Clarity of communication between interviewees and interviewer, which is critical to the construction of storylines, is presumed. Whether this actually occurred is difficult to demonstrate in a study without giving the interviewees an opportunity to thoroughly scrutinise and edit the transcripts. This was not done due to time constraints. Further, the data analysis is qualitative; hence, the findings are amenable to multiple interpretations. The study should, therefore, be understood in the context of the background understandings contained in the paper.

The use of narratives in research entails the construction of storylines whose factual details are subject to the vagaries of recall. This means that research subjects re-interpret their past on the basis of new knowledge and experiences (Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2008). In other words, narratives are not factual accounts of the past (Ibid.). Rather, they entail a reconstruction of the past on the basis of current understanding. Narratives, as such, give us a window within which to explore a shared understanding of past events. They should thus not be confused with historical accounts, which aim to reproduce a record of events as they occurred.

## 1.5 Definition of Terms

**Chronic Urban Poverty:** severe, long-term and multi-dimensional deprivation, which principally leads to an inability to fulfil basic needs.

**False Beliefs:** idiosyncratic and/or unquestioned beliefs and social ideologies.

**Resource Deprivation:** lack of access to valued goods and services

**Social Discrimination:** active prejudice.

**Spatial Disadvantage:** adversity arising from environmental factors and/or restricted access to economically productive centres.

**Suffering:** the persistent threat of a sudden decline in well being; due to uninsured exposure to risk and vulnerability.

**Unmet needs:** inadequate social protection.

**Unskilled casual work:** work that requires no formal training to undertake.

## 1.6 Method of Study: Case Study Method

This section begins by discussing the theoretical basis of case study method. This is followed by a discussion of the epistemological and ontological assumptions of the study. The criteria for site and sample selection are then articulated, after which the data collection methods are discussed. Thereafter, the challenges of data collection and steps taken to overcome them are presented. The section ends with a brief discussion of the ethical issues considered for the study, a summary and conclusion.

Case study method is an approach to research that entails gathering data on persons, groups, events or social settings with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of how such entities operate (Berg, 1998). A case study is defined as 'a single case, temporally, physically, or socially limited in size, complex in nature, unique and thus not comparable with other cases' (Merriam 1988; Yin, 1989; Ragin, 1989; Ragin and Becker 1994; Creswell, 1994; Stake 1995; in Verschuren, 2003:121).

According to Hamel, Dufour and Fortin (1993: in Berg, 1998) case study method is not, of itself, a data gathering technique; rather, it is a methodological approach that encompasses multiple data gathering techniques. These include but are not limited to: participant observation, in-depth interviews, life histories, diaries, oral histories and lately, audio and video recordings. Case study method was selected because it enables extensive data collection with minimal resource outlays. This is because it uses a small sample size and thus minimises travel time and the need for a large research team.

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Case study research is also useful in exploratory research where variables are not clear. This is because it enables the examination of multiple variables at the same time. It can thus be used to unravel complex social phenomena. This flexibility of case study method is also useful in hypothesis formation. Hypotheses derived from case studies are then subjected to further testing in subsequent case studies or other types of research. In addition, case study method enables exploration of phenomena in their social setting; thereby allowing the social context to be factored into the analysis.

The focus of a case study can be either narrow or broad, depending on the objectives of the study (Berg, 1998). This means that one can study single aspects of an entity, study the entity

as a whole in isolation or study the entity as part of a complex system. Stake (1995; in Berg, 1998:216) delineates three types of case studies. An *intrinsic case study* focuses on a particular case; with the intention of understanding in detail its unique aspects. An *instrumental case study* is undertaken to provide insight into an issue or to enhance understanding of theoretical aspects of an issue. In this respect, the case study itself is said to be of secondary importance to the research questions (Ibid.). In other words, instrumental case studies are used to enhance understanding of broader theoretical questions that go beyond the cases involved. *Collective case studies* comprise a comprehensive study of several instrumental case studies. Their aim is to enhance understanding of a larger collection of cases or to enable theorizing about a collection of cases (Ibid.). This study relies on both intrinsic and instrumental case studies because it is concerned with the broad problem of chronic urban poverty.

Case study method is considered contentious, nevertheless, in terms of the object of its research, its ontology and the generalizability of its results (Verschuren, 2003). A major source of confusion is said to arise from the definition of a case study as the study of a single case instead of as an approach to research (Verschuren, 2003). Case study method is further criticised for having too few cases, making it prone to adverse selection (Berg, 1998). The validity and generalizability of case studies findings are thus contentious; due to the active role of the researcher in qualitative analysis (Verschuren, 2003). This is because it is said to introduce researcher bias into the study.

Case study method is, all the same, largely accepted as a research strategy that can stand on its own merit. This is underscored by its widespread use in social research (Berg, 1998; Verschuren, 2003). Proponents argue, for instance, that since the objective of a case study is to exhaustively examine a given scenario, the inability to generalize from it is more than compensated for by the rich detail (Verschuren, 2003). Ultimately, they say, it is confirmations from subsequent case studies that give the initial findings of a case study their greatest credibility (Verschuren, 2003). The examination of extreme cases is also used to confirm the interpretations of case studies; thereby increasing the reliability of the findings (Verschuren and Doorewaard, 1999).

### ***1.6.1 Epistemological Assumptions: Interpretivism***

Interpretivism is the epistemological position that the research approach of the natural sciences is inappropriate for the study of human subjects. According to (Bryman & Emma, 1995) the fundamental assumption of interpretivism is that while the natural world has no meaning to its objects, human action is meaningful to its subjects. From this perspective, the challenge of social research becomes, therefore, to understand the subjective meanings attached to human action (Bryman & Emma, 1995).

Social research, nevertheless, depends on the theoretical lenses of an academic discipline to interpret human action (Bryman & Emma, 1995). As such, the researcher is said to interpret the subject's interpretations of reality (Ibid.). This multi-level interpretation of social phenomena presents a challenge to the validity of research findings. To address this problem, interpretivism relies on the notion of plausibility or credibility, as a substitute measure for validity (Bryman & Emma, 1995). This means that conclusions drawn from a study should make sense at face value. In addition, triangulation of data collection methods may be used to enhance the accuracy of research findings. This is because it provides alternative perspectives on the same phenomena.

### ***1.6.2 Ontological Assumptions: Constructivism***

Constructivism is the ontological position that 'there is no reality out there'... that mind and action are culture specific...that is...contingent on the symbolic resources of a culture and that discourse is 'the central organising principle of construction' (Potter, 1996:4). Constructivists, in other words, view researcher narratives and analyses of the social world as themselves social constructions of the researcher (Ibid.). According to Gergen (1994; in Potter, 1996) there are five basic assumptions of constructivism:

- 1 The terms by which we account for the world and ourselves are not dictated by the stipulated objects of such accounts. (1994:49)
- 2 The terms and forms by which we achieve understanding of the world and ourselves are social artefacts, products of historically and culturally situated interchanges among people. (1994:49)
- 3 The degree to which a given account of the world or self is sustained across time is not dependent on the objective validity of the account but on the vicissitudes of social process. (1994:51)
- 4 Language derives its significance in human affairs from the way in which it functions within patterns of relationships. (1994:52)
- 5 To appraise existing forms of discourse is to evaluate patterns of cultural life; such evaluations give voice to other cultural enclaves. (1994:53)

Constructivism dispels with the notion of a 'fixed' reality out there, which implies that for constructivists the core of social life is negotiated meanings and not objective social facts per se. As a research paradigm, constructivism is concerned with the ways in which social **phenomena** and meanings are made into common sense knowledge. In other words, the truth or falsity of a narrative is of secondary importance to the researcher. What matters is gaining an understanding of how social perceptions come into being, that is, how such meanings are negotiated and constructed into shared understandings; and the effect of these understandings on the agency of social actors.

According to Von Glasersfeld (1984, 1990: in Doolittle, 1999) constructivism has three key epistemological tenets: one, knowledge acquisition is the result of active cognizing by the individual; two, cognition facilitates functional adaptation to particular environments and three, cognition involves interpretation of experience and is not necessarily an accurate representation of reality.

Based on these perspectives, the study will seek to understand how casual workers perceive and experience their poverty condition. To do this, the study will examine poverty narratives to identify what constitutes a 'blaming' or ascription of causality (Long & Long, 1992). This is important because by understanding causal attribution we can infer the perceived limitations on action that motivate the poor to either accept or challenge the status quo. In other words, this study will use a social constructivist paradigm to examine how casual workers socially construct and interpret their poverty condition in order to explain how these perceptions and beliefs affect their social outcomes.

### **1.6.3 Study Area**

The study used data from urban casual workers in Nairobi. Nairobi was selected due to its high levels of urban poverty. This means that there is a high probability of finding chronic poor amongst its low income earners. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2005), Nairobi has an estimated population of 874,058 people living below the poverty line. This accounts for about 6% of total national poverty (CBS, 2005).

<sup>1</sup> early half of the population of urban poor in Nairobi (48.9%) is concentrated in 3 of its 8 Parliamentary constituencies. These are: Embakasi (19.1%), Kasarani (17.3%) and Makadara

(12.5%) (CBS, 2005). Embakasi and Kasarani have the highest poverty incidence, at more than 15% each (CBS, 2005). Makadara, Langata and Dagoretti have a poverty incidence of between 11-13%; Starehe and Kamukunji range between 9-11%; while Westlands has the lowest poverty incidence in the province, at less than 9% (CBS, 2005).

Five of Nairobi's eight administrative divisions have a poverty incidence or head count index that is higher than the provincial mean of 44% (CBS, 2005). These are: Central Division (45%), Dagoretti Division (46%), Kasarani Division (48), Makadara Division (59%) and Pumwani Division (46%). This means that a large proportion of the population of Nairobi (over 50%) lives in urban poverty, which is a precursor for chronic poverty.

#### ***1.6.4 Study Sites***

The study was carried out in Embakasi constituency because it has one of the highest poverty incidences in Nairobi, at 15% (CBS, 2005). Embakasi constituency is also close to the city's industrial area, where many urban poor seek unskilled casual work. The study site in Savannah Municipal Ward of Embakasi Constituency was selected because it is a middle income residential neighbourhood where many groups of casuals prospect for work. This made it ideal for conducting interviews because a lot of the time these casuals are visibly idle as they wait for work opportunities. As such, they are easily identifiable since they have particular points of congregation; usually at road junctions or under big trees within the estates where they seek shelter from the sun.

#### ***1.6.5. Sample Selection***

The study used purposive sampling to select two groups of casuals for focus group discussions. The groups were differentiated by gender; hence, separate FGDs were held for each. Subsequently, four cases were randomly selected from each focus group for life history interviews. This public act of random selection served to dispel fears among the casual workers about targeting of individuals and this contributed immensely to the subsequent cooperation of interviewees. The final sample size was set after the data collected was considered sufficient to answer the research questions. This point of saturation is identifiable when no significantly new information is forthcoming from the cases interviewed (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

poverty  $U = \frac{C}{U} \times 100$  where  $C$  is the total population in a given area whose consumption is below the

The down side to this approach in selecting the interviewees for life history interviews is that they are likely to have internalised some concepts encountered during the FGDs. This may have influenced their subsequent narratives. This shortcoming is, however, not considered sufficiently significant to affect the findings of the study because the study methodology interprets interview narratives as social practice (Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2008). This means that the interview text is treated as accomplishing certain social goals in the eyes of both the interviewer and interviewee. This makes the research narrative a negotiated understanding of the meanings attached to the phenomenon in question. As such, the narratives can be taken as a fairly accurate representation of the negotiated understanding arrived at between the interviewer and interviewee. This is because the interaction allows for the clarification of issues and probing of narratives; leading to a mutually agreed upon storyline (McConnack, 2004).

### 1.7 Data Collection Methods

The study used multiple methods to collect data. The aim was to reduce researcher bias through triangulation of data sources. A pilot run was first conducted to test interview schedules for clarity and to approximate the time required to complete each interview. The interview schedules were then revised to eliminate ambiguity and to ensure that interviews did not exceed two hours. This duration was considered sufficient to make the interviews comprehensive without tiring the interviewees.

Data collection proceeded in two stages. The first stage was identification of the general factors that contribute to chronic urban poverty among casual workers. This entailed the use of focus group discussions to identify dominant poverty themes. The second stage of data collection entailed identifying the dynamics of poverty affecting individual casual workers. This involved the use of life histories to trace their path into or out of poverty. These methods are discussed separately below.

#### *7.1 Focus Group Discussions*

focus group discussions are a form of controlled interaction in which normative discourses are reproduced (Smithson, 2000). Focus group discussions were chosen since they enable quick collection of data about an issue. This is because they generate a diversity of opinions on a research topic. They thus enable the researcher to formulate relevant questions for a StU y as well as to identify and explore multiple variables at the same time. Furthermore,

because they are iterative, subsequent focus group discussions build on information obtained from previous ones (Smithson, 2000). This ensures that the quality of the information improves as learning is carried forward to subsequent focus group discussions.

**The** major disadvantage of focus group discussions is the time required to assemble them. Getting respondents to agree on a convenient meeting place, date and time is generally **challenging**. There is also a likelihood of some participants dominating the discussion, which may undermine the representativeness of the consensus. This weakness of FGDs is mitigated, nonetheless, by the fact that FGDs produce social ideologies and not necessarily personal opinions (Schiffrin, Tannen, & Hamilton, 2008). Their findings thus have wide legitimacy despite the relatively small sample size. This is because social ideologies tend to be shared and **are** reproduced in interaction and communication (Long & Long, 1992).

According to Potter and Wetherell (1987; in Smithson, 2000:105) focus group discussions should be treated as social performances, where 'language is viewed not as a neutral conveyor of information, but as functional and constructive, as a medium which people use to achieve a variety of actions'. This implies that focus group discussions can be used to explore cultural understandings and are thus ideal for analysing the social ideologies contained in narratives.

Focus group discussions need to be contextualised during analysis, all the same, so that the discussions are treated as occurring within specific controlled settings and not as naturally occurring conversations (Smithson, 2000). This is because the social context largely determines what gets said. It also means that background understandings need to be factored into the analysis.

Two focus group discussions were conducted. The first focus group comprised female casual workers engaged in domestic work. The second focus group comprised male casual workers engaged in construction work. Focus group participants were selected based on their membership of identifiable work groups at the different work sites. This ensured that participants were of similar socio-economic backgrounds (casual workers). This was intended to create rapport amongst them and promote free exchange of ideas.

A focus group discussion guide was used to regulate the interaction. The guide had two sections, with a total of thirty questions. The first section had fourteen questions on chronic urban poverty. The second section had sixteen questions on unskilled casual work. The separation of the guide into two sections was designed to facilitate in-depth exploration of the occupation of unskilled casual work and its relation to chronic urban poverty.

Focus group discussion data from both groups was consolidated into a data table combining responses to the different questions in the discussion guide. After editing the data for relevance, discourse codes were then assigned to data segments based on predetermined discourse categories derived from the independent variables of the study. The data were then intensively scrutinised and re-coded a second time using the key moderating variables of the study. Thereafter, poverty themes were extracted from the data. These poverty themes were then consolidated into a data presentation matrix for analysis and interpretation.

### ***1.7.2 Life Histories***

Life histories are interpretive accounts of people's lives (McCormack, 2004). They are analytic constructs used in research to bring out the salient aspects of a life story. In other words, life histories are a shortened version of a life story. According to Linde (1993:3; in Schiffrin, 2008:640), "in order to exist in the social world with a comfortable sense of being a good, socially proper, and stable person, an individual needs to have a coherent, acceptable, and constantly revised life story". Rosen (1988; in Schiffrin, 2008:640), also argues that people possess an "autobiographical impulse", that is, "an urge to make our lives coherent by telling about them". In essence, life histories are reconstructions of the past, which are used to make sense of the present, and to construct storylines of the future (Reissman, 1993; in McCormack, 2004). Life histories in this study are interpreted using a narrative inquiry framework, which entails the use of interview transcripts as data.

Life histories are useful in poverty research because they highlight the key turning points in the lives of the research subjects (Bevan, 2004). This enhances our understanding of poverty dynamics by enabling us to make causal attributions. Life histories also have the advantage of de-objectifying interviewees since they give them control over their portrayal. This is because they are based on a subject's own narratives. The life history narrative can thus be said to be a fair representation of the research subject's self-understanding.

**Life**-histories have the major disadvantage, however, of relying on recall methods. This means that interviewees may suffer memory lapses. This weakness can be countered, *nevertheless*, by constructing interview markers to stimulate recall. This study, therefore, **dramatized** life histories around the notions of growing up, major life-course events and coping **mechanisms**. This dramatization was designed to stimulate recall and draw out the key '**moments** of crises' in the interviewee's life. It was also intended to facilitate systematic **classification** and analysis of temporal data.

Life histories were obtained through in-depth interviews and semi-structured questionnaires. A semi-structured questionnaire was first administered to obtain background information from interviewees and to put them at ease. It was later used to cross-check narratives during the in-depth interviews. This approach was meant to ensure consistency of narratives. An in-depth interview schedule was then used to elicit life histories. In total, eight life history interviews were conducted over a span of four separate days. The interview sessions were scheduled to conform to the availability of the interviewees. The data from the semi-structured interview responses were then integrated with the life history narratives to construct individual case studies.

The case studies were edited for relevance and a storyline constructed in chronological order of events based on the logic of attribution of the interviewee. This was done because every individual has a perspective about their life that gives insights into their belief system about why things are the way they are. These storylines formed the basis for constructing life histories. Thereafter a within-case analysis of the life history was carried out to identify poverty dynamics affecting individuals. This was followed by a cross-case analysis of the eight life histories to identify common chronic poverty themes. These were then classified into key drivers and maintainers of chronic urban poverty.

### ***/. 7.3 Challenges to Data Collection***

The greatest challenge to data collection was getting appointments honoured. Since casual workers depend on a daily wage, getting them to commit time away from their tasks/worksites was difficult. Interviews were frequently rescheduled by interviewees without notice but, overall, the participants were very cooperative.

There was also political tension in the study area because the study was conducted during an election year (2007). Election violence is a common occurrence in Kenya and this situation made it risky to conduct interviews in the slums where the casual workers live. This is because the study would have created unnecessary suspicion over the nature and intent of the research enterprise. Since only those directly involved with the study could be interviewed, this was likely to attract unwelcome attention from those not involved in the study.

To address these challenges, a decision was made to conduct the interviews at the work sites in Greenfields Estate. This was not ideal, however, due to the inability of the research team to fully control the interview environment. It also meant that only casuals who were working on the specific interview dates could be interviewed and this may have led to adverse selection of interviewees. To mitigate this shortcoming, the number of life history interviews was increased from six to eight. This act, however, had the effect of increasing the volume of data collected.

#### */. 7.4 Ethical Considerations*

The study purpose was explained clearly in a language understood by the interviewees and consent for dissemination of findings sought. Risks attendant to information disclosure were high-lighted, such as potential identification of the interviewees by members of the public. All life stories were obtained voluntarily and open-ended questions used to minimise researcher bias.

To build trust, convenient and comfortable interview places were sought and data access by third parties restricted. Interviewees were also informed of how the research findings would be used and where they could be accessed. To enhance confidentiality, fictitious names have been assigned to the narratives.

The study similarly endeavoured to protect the emotions and pride of the interviewees, since poverty is a sensitive personal status. This ethical concern may, however, have compromised the comprehensiveness of the data collected. This is because some unasked questions may hold the key to fully understanding the poverty status of some of the casual workers. For instance, there were insinuations by some estate residents of possible involvement in prostitution by some of the female casuals. This issue was not raised in the life history

interviews, however, to avoid embarrassing the interviewees. It is plausible, nonetheless, that some casuals moonlight in prostitution to supplement their earnings as a survival strategy.

## **1.8 Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that unskilled casual work is a proximate indicator of chronic urban poverty because it is associated with multiple disadvantages for those whose livelihoods depend on it. It has further argued that the multi-dimensional nature of chronic urban poverty cannot be accounted for by money-metric measures alone. It thus lays the groundwork for using a constructivist framework to investigate the relationship between unskilled casual work and chronic urban poverty.

The chapter also argues that the multi-dimensional nature of chronic poverty requires the use of flexible research methods to uncover poverty dynamics. This study used case study method to collect data. It incorporated structured questionnaires, focus group discussions and life histories. This triangulation of data was aimed at minimising researcher bias. The study sought to enhance understanding of how casual workers perceive their poverty condition, how these perceptions influence their agency and by extension, chronic poverty outcomes.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows: chapter two reviews relevant literature to identify key variables for the study and highlight contemporary debates on chronic poverty. Chapter three tackles poverty in Kenya to give a comprehensive background of the study's setting. Chapter four and five discuss the findings of the study, while chapter six summarises the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for policy and further research. This is followed by a references section and an appendix.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CHRONIC URBAN POVERTY: AN OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

The literature on chronic poverty is replete with discussions of rural aspects of chronic poverty but very few discussions of urban aspects of chronic poverty. Available theoretical and empirical literature pays attention to urban poverty yet this is different from chronic poverty. By definition, urban poverty is transient, fluctuating around the poverty line while chronic poverty tends to be long lasting and below the poverty line. This study assumes, nonetheless, that unresolved urban poverty eventually becomes chronic, that is, difficult for the victims to escape it on their own. For this reason, the general literature on urban poverty is considered relevant for understanding chronic poverty in urban areas.

This chapter discusses the theoretical relationship between unskilled casual work and chronic urban poverty. The first part of the review examines three key dimensions of chronic urban poverty. These are social discrimination, resource deprivation and spatial disadvantage. The second part of the review examines the occupation of unskilled casual work and the associated effects of irregular work and low pay on casual workers. The third part of the review discusses the concept of a 'poverty nexus' comprising 'suffering', 'unmet needs' and 'false beliefs', which arises from the interplay of poverty disadvantages. The review then highlights key drivers and maintainers of chronic urban poverty in the literature. It concludes by examining the concept of social exclusion, which forms the theoretical framework for the study.

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#### 2.2 Chronic Urban Poverty: 'Multiple and Overlapping Disadvantages'<sup>2</sup>

Chronic urban poverty was defined as severe, multi-dimensional and long-term deprivation that principally leads to an inability to fulfil basic needs (Hulme et al., 2001). This means that, in addition to living below the poverty line, the chronic urban poor are persons who experience long spells of poverty, which, at times, lasts their entire lives (Hulme et al., 2001).

Development, Social Exclusion: Concepts > Findings and Implications for the MDGs. Brighton: Institute for

According to the 2008 chronic poverty report (CPRC, 2008), chronic poverty is **underpinned by** five major 'poverty traps'. Poverty traps refer to the difficulty the poor experience in **extricating** themselves from their condition of deprivation. The five poverty traps are **insecurity**, limited citizenship, spatial disadvantage, social discrimination and poor work **opportunities** (CPRC, 2008).

**Insecurity** arises from the chronic poor having precarious livelihoods, living in adverse **environments** and/or having few assets that they can use to cope with shocks. As a **consequence**, the poor suffer poor health and tend to trade off their long term welfare for **short-term** gain (CPRC, 2008).

Limited citizenship implies that the chronic poor lack political voice and/or effective political representation (CPRC, 2008). In other words, their needs are not well articulated; hence, they tend to be left out of the development agenda.

Spatial disadvantage is associated with geographic remoteness, political exclusion and market failures. These result into concentration of poverty in specific areas, countries or regions (CPRC, 2008). In urban areas, spatial disadvantage is characterised by overcrowding, high levels of unemployment, inadequate provision of basic services, high levels of crime and environmental risks, amongst other factors.

Social discrimination manifests as unequal relations of power, patronage and exchange. These trap the poor into exploitative relationships and/or deny them access to valued goods and services (CPRC, 2008). f

Poor work opportunities result from narrowly diversified economic activities and/or enclave economies (CPRC, 2008). Enclave economies are inaccessible to the poor due to lack of technical skills and/or restrictions on migration. Consequently, the poor are relegated to low-income occupations which, while providing daily sustenance, do not allow for asset accumulation or investment in skill acquisition (CPRC, 2008).

Poverty traps are associated with multiple challenges which make it difficult for the poor to Participate fully in society and/or work their way out of poverty. This leads to social exc usion, which has long-term debilitating effects on their welfare. According to Kabeer

(2004), social exclusion is characterised by three primary factors. These are social discrimination, resource deprivation and spatial disadvantage (Ibid.). It is the interplay of these three factors that primarily affects the poverty outcomes of individuals and they are **discussed** separately here below.

### 2.2.1 Social Discrimination and Chronic Urban Poverty

**Social** discrimination refers to the processes through which dominant or powerful groups **restrict** access to valued resources (Malcolm, 2003). According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), **social** discrimination is underpinned by group membership rules that categorise individuals and groups as either 'insiders' or 'outsiders' in order to mediate access to privilege. This implies that persons labelled as 'outsiders' often suffer a devalued social identity leading to **socially** sanctioned reduction in their entitlements (Sen, 1999). Social discrimination, as such, **gives** rise to identity-based disadvantages for individuals and groups (Kabeer, 2004). **According** to Kabeer (2004:2), social discrimination is one of the ways in which poverty disadvantages reduce the life chances of individuals and groups in society. This is because it **undermines their capacity** to acquire **capabilities** and **assets**.

Social labelling is one of the processes through which social discrimination is carried out. It refers to the transmission of cultural stereotypes by dominant groups or persons in authority. With regard to poverty, social labelling entails the cultural devaluation of the poor (Kabeer, 2004). This means that the poor are *discursively positioned* as occupying a *lowly social status* relative to other socio-economic groups. Once they are so positioned, mechanisms of social differentiation then tend to reinforce this characterisation. This involves the use of institutional barriers to mediate/access to privilege (Alexander, 2003). For example, level of education is used to characterise people's assumed competence, with the result that the less educated are likely to be presumed less competent to undertake certain tasks. Cultural devaluation of the poor worsens their poverty condition, resulting into self-fulfilling manifestations of poverty. The manifestations of poverty then serve as further justification for continued social devaluation of the poor.

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the poor, for example, tend to be characterized as lazy, stupid or alcoholics (Bevan, 2004). In this way, they are blamed and stigmatised for their poverty. This stigma leads to lack of opportunities for improvement, which is then used as justification for the continued

devaluation of the poor by the rest of society. As a result of social discrimination, the poor may thus find it difficult to access the social support and resources that they need to break out of poverty. This can lead to a vicious cycle of deprivation and blame.

Social discrimination is also associated with competition for economic resources (Kabeer, 2004). This is characterised by group 'closure', whereby specific individuals and groups are locked out of accessing specific economic resources. Consequently, economic competition motivates social discrimination, which in turn confers poverty disadvantages to some individuals and groups.

Chronic urban poverty should be viewed, therefore, as occurring in a contested social space, comprising ideological, economic, political and cultural conflict. This means, then, that chronic urban poverty is not necessarily a personal failing but could be the outcome of group dynamics that give rise to identity-based disadvantages for individuals and groups. It can be inferred, therefore, that persons who experience social discrimination are more likely to be chronic poor than those who do not experience social discrimination. This is because they are more likely to encounter difficulty in accessing the resources that they need to cope with poverty shocks. Vulnerable groups include the elderly, the youth, widows, single mothers, orphans, and the disabled; people living with HIV/AIDs; persons with low education, unskilled casual workers and slum dwellers. This is because these persons are more likely to be economically and politically marginalised. This means, therefore, that we need to examine the effects of social discrimination on unskilled casual workers and how this affects their chronic poverty outcomes.

### **2.2.2 Resource Deprivation and Chronic Urban Poverty**

Resources are here broadly conceptualised as material and non-material endowments (Sen, 1999) These include physical assets, money, education, skills, power and language. The significance of resource endowments for poverty research is that they can be used as an indicator of the level of resilience to poverty stressors. This is because it is generally possible to convert one form of resource to another. It can be expected, therefore, that the more the access to resources, the less the likelihood of falling into chronic urban poverty.

According to Sen (1999) the 'right to be' or freedom, affects our 'capabilities and functionings'—where 'functionings' refers to wilful actions or states of being. 'Capabilities' on the other hand refer to the potential to manifest different combinations of 'functionings' (Ibid.). Freedom to be who we want to be can thus be correlated with our resource endowments and/or entitlements (claims) against others. This effectively means that poverty, as deprivation, is a measure of the degree of 'unfreedom' or capability shortfalls (Sen, 1999). It can be expected, therefore, that the chronic urban poor command meagre resource endowments, lay claim to few entitlements and suffer from high degrees of 'unfreedom' (Ibid.). Accordingly, the study of chronic urban poverty should examine what factors constrain the 'capabilities and functionings' of unskilled casual workers. In other words, what prevents them from accessing the resources that they need to get out of poverty on their own?

Satterthwaite (2001:146 in Mabogunje, 2005) has identified eight features common to urban poverty. These are: (i) *inadequate income*, which leads to an inability to acquire basic necessities; (ii) *inadequate, unstable or risky asset base*, which affects resilience to shocks; (iii) *inadequate shelter*, which exposes the poor to physical hazards; (iv) *inadequate provision of public infrastructure*, which causes socio-economic hardships and increases the cost of living for the poor; (v) *inadequate provision of basic services*, which leads to environmental and health risks; (vi) *limited or no safety net*, which heightens vulnerability to shocks; (vii) *inadequate protection of poorer groups' rights through the operation of the law*, which increases their vulnerability and exploitation by dominant groups; and (viii) *voicelessness and powerlessness*, which make the needs of the poor secondary to those of rich and powerful groups.

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Kedir (2005) identifies household size, schooling, economic activity of the household head; and value of assets owned as significant urban poverty factors. The education level of the household head is also said to be a critical factor in the employment status of the household head and is strongly correlated to chronic urban poverty (Ibid.). The key finding in the study, however, is that while income is a major determinant of chronic urban poverty, it is inadequate as a measure of urban deprivation (Ibid.). This is because low incomes can be mitigated through provision of public goods and/or social protection (Kedir, 2005).

According to the African Development Bank (2005), provision of public goods for the urban  
\*\* as been negatively affected by structural adjustment programmes in three main ways.

One, price decontrols have led to an increase in consumer prices, especially food. Two, many governments have been forced into limiting wage increases and to freeze public sector employment. Three, there has been a drastic reduction in urban infrastructure and social services spending. Structural adjustments have thus adversely affected the cost of living of urban workers who rely heavily on cash to fulfil their basic needs. The reduced provision of public goods and services means; hence, that urban workers have to rely more on their personal resources to meet their basic needs. It can be inferred, therefore, that the location, distribution and ease of access to public goods and services by unskilled casual workers affects their chronic poverty outcomes.

### 2.2.3 Spatial Disadvantage and Chronic Urban Poverty

Spatial poverty refers to areas with high concentrations of deprivation due to low 'geographic capital'—the natural, physical, political, social and human capital of an area (Bird, McKay and Shinyekwa, 2010:2). Spatial disadvantage, then, refers to adversity attached to geographic remoteness, political exclusion and market failures (Bird, Higgins, & Harris, 2010).

Geographic remoteness affects the ability of the poor to access information, services and markets. This makes it difficult for them to be fully integrated into the economy leading to loss of opportunities for improving their livelihoods. Geographic remoteness leads to social isolation, which reduces social capital that is crucial in combating poverty stressors (Clever, 2005).

Political exclusion arises from remoteness to centres of commerce and governance. This leads to exclusion of the poor from decision making, meaning that their needs become secondary to those of the rich and powerful groups. As such, the poor lack a political "voice" to advance their social and economic agenda (Bracking & Hickey, 2005).

Market failures arise from information asymmetries, weak governance structures and market distortions caused by a corrupt and predatory ruling class. Coupled with tax evasion, under developed human rights frameworks, weak legal institutions and poor enforcement of property market failures increase the cost of business, institutionalise socio-economic and increase the cost of living for the poor (Ibid.).

According to **CPRC (2008)**, chronic poverty tends to be spatially concentrated rather than evenly spread. Multiple survey data indicate significant regional variation in distribution of poverty, with a higher incidence of poverty in remote, politically marginalised, under **developed** or conflict zones (**CPRC 2008**). The high incidence of chronic poverty in such areas is of concern to scholars chiefly because it affects large numbers of people. It is **estimated**, for instance, that **65%** of the **1.8** billion rural poor **live** in politically and **economically** marginalised low potential areas (**CPRC, 2008**). This puts them at high risk of **chronic** poverty due to the multiplier effect of spatial disadvantage.

**Spatial poverty has been found in urban areas**, with a majority of urban poor concentrated in slums and illegal settlements (Moore, 2004). This is attributed to rural-urban migration in search of economic opportunities as well as natural population growth in urban areas (UNFPA, 2011). Rapid urban population growth contributes to mushrooming of unplanned settlements due to inadequate investment in public infrastructure. According to Dowall (1991: in Olima, 2001) informal settlements are a direct consequence of or arise in response to public policies. In other words, urban residents are forced to improvise to cope with existing housing and urban planning challenges. This means, therefore, that informal settlements are most likely to occur where there is planning failure.

Urban casual workers have been found to be more likely to live in slums as a coping strategy because it enables them to access affordable housing or to be near their places of work (Bird, Higgins, & Harris, 2010). Slums provide affordable housing through circumvention of urban planning and public health regulations. They are thus characterised by substandard buildings, inadequate fire protection, lack of access roads, inadequate public transport; insecurity, poor waste management, inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure; illegal and hazardous electricity connections, and overcrowding.

Slum residence has spatial, economic, social, environmental and health implications for the urban poor. For instance, due to remoteness, it may lead to an increase in the cost of transport to and from places of work. This may affect access to work in distant locations. It may also lead to economic exclusion, due to inability to access commercially vibrant centres. This may impound poverty disadvantages thus increasing the likelihood of casual workers falling into chronic urban poverty.

The location and state of the residences of the urban poor can thus be used as indicators of the severity of their deprivation. It can be inferred, therefore, that the chronic urban poor are likely to inhabit the least desirable urban spaces. This implies a need to examine the spatial disadvantages associated with unskilled casual work and how these affect chronic poverty outcomes.

### 2.3 Unskilled Casual Work: Irregular Work and Low pay

Unskilled casual work refers to tasks whose general undertaking does not require any training. Unskilled casual work is associated with chronic urban poverty because it is irregular in nature owing to seasonal variation in demand for labour. This affects the income flow of casual workers, making them vulnerable to income inadequacy and chronic poverty. Furthermore, casual work generally commands low wages making unskilled casual workers vulnerable to income inadequacy and, by extension, chronic poverty.

Aladekomo (2004) interviewed 50 respondents who regularly sought casual work at a road junction in an urban centre in Nigeria. The study found that casual workers were not necessarily unskilled. Many casual workers were found to be victims of economic misfortunes, such as retrenchment and high urban unemployment. The study further found that most casuals (83%) had formal education; a majority (75%) had completed primary school; one third of those with primary education also had secondary school education and a majority (74%) had some training but dropped out due to un-affordability of their apprenticeships (Ibid.).

The study also found that the majority of the casuals were males (76%). The largest segment of casuals (84%) was between the ages of 30-44 years. Many had dependants despite continuing open unemployment; and came from very poor economic backgrounds. They also had low and irregular earnings, and a large number (42%) were immigrants from neighbouring districts (Aladekomo, 2004). Many of the women had serious economic and emotional problems. They were either divorced or widowed, and extremely poor; which was believed to promote sexual promiscuity between them and the male casuals (Aladekomo, 2004). It was further observed that many of the respondents (97%) indicated a desire for self-employment but cited lack of capital as a major constraint; a significant number (37%) had

**previously** engaged in self-employment but quit due to lack of finance; and a majority of the **respondents (81%)** were unaware of government assistance schemes (Aladekomo, 2004).

The study concluded that the road junction casual labour problem was a result of rural-urban migration. That, the casual labourers probably formed a large proportion of the chronic urban poor, and that casual labour was wastage of human resources—due to the educational and skill status of the workers (Aladekomo, 2004).

These findings resonate with other studies that have found casual work to be associated with multiple deprivations and urban poverty (Amis, 2003; Odhiambo and Manda, 2003; Kedir, 2005). The study also highlights that the occupation of casual work is not synonymous with being unskilled; rather, it depends on the 'structures of opportunity' accessible to the poor.

'Structures of opportunity' refers to avenues for upward mobility or self-improvement (Long & Long, 1992). The concept is important for understanding chronic urban poverty because it enables an examination of the poverty effects of membership of particular occupational groups. Structures of opportunity are largely determined by one's social identity (gender, age, ethnicity, disability); resource endowments (education, skills, experience, productive assets and economic activities in an area); and spatial location, amongst other factors (Kabeer, 2004).

Social structures have been shown to be enabling or constraining depending on how individuals and groups interact with one another (Giddens, 1984; Hulme and Shepherd, 2005). This implies that unskilled casual workers may encounter barriers to upward mobility due to their lowly occupational status. It can be expected, therefore, that those casual workers who experience the greatest difficulty in changing their livelihood configurations are more likely to be chronic poor. We, therefore, need to examine the constraints to upward mobility of unskilled casual workers and how these affect their chronic poverty outcomes.

#### 2.4 The Poverty Nexus: Suffering, Unmet Needs and 'False Beliefs'

According to Bevan (2004:10).. *'individual poverty is an ongoing process involving an unevenly structured set of varying experiences of suffering, unmet needs and false beliefs which have harmful knock-on effects for the person involved in the process'* This

conceptualisation of a poverty nexus is important for understanding chronic urban poverty because it highlights the interlinked nature of structural and agency factors which affect chronic poverty outcomes. These are: risk and vulnerability; poor social protection and false beliefs.

#### **2.4.1 Suffering: Risk, Vulnerability and Chronic Urban Poverty**

The concept of 'suffering' is used here to denote a state of persistent exposure to risk and vulnerability. Risk refers to the probability of occurrence of a hazard while vulnerability refers to the likelihood of negative impacts arising from the occurrence of a hazard (actualisation of a risk). Risk and vulnerability are important concepts for understanding chronic urban poverty because they give insights into the sources of behaviour that has negative consequences for the poor.

According to Holzmann (2003; in Hooegeveen et al., 2005), the poor are exposed to more risks than the non-poor due to their livelihood configurations, yet they have fewer risk management options. This leads to two major poverty outcomes: one, shocks cause reversals in the welfare of the poor; and two, predisposes the poor to risk aversion (Hooegeveen et al., 2005). Consequently, it is argued, high levels of exposure to risk may lead the poor to adopt risk management strategies that are detrimental to their long term welfare (Hooegeveen et al., 2005). Risk management strategies adopted by the poor include: slum residence to reduce cost of rent; poor nutrition to reduce cost of food; failure to seek medical attention on time to avoid incurring medical bills; patron-client relations to obtain favours and protection.

it is worth noting at this point, however, that not all risks are undesirable since individuals may embrace specific risks for personal thrill or expectation of gain. An example is financial speculation or gambling behaviour, which can lead to financial ruin but is common, nonetheless, because it is motivated by the prospect of windfall gains.

According to Hooegeveen et al. (2005), the management of risks in society involves three broad mechanisms. These are: informal mechanisms, market-based mechanisms and public interventions (Ibid.). Each of these has opportunity costs that influence the adoption of a risk management strategy. Informal risk management mechanisms involve reliance on social networks while market-based risk management mechanisms rely on contributory insurance

**schemes.** Public risk management interventions on their part entail both contributory and **non-contributory** schemes for social protection.

**Risk** management strategies can, in turn, be categorised into prevention, mitigation and **coping** strategies. Risk prevention strategies seek to minimise the probability of occurrence of a risky event; mitigation strategies address identified risks before they occur; while coping **strategies** address the effects of the risk once it occurs (Hoogeveen et al., 2005).

According to Duclos (2002:6) 'vulnerability is the result of not being able to fulfil the basic functioning of security and of feeling at peace when pondering the future'. In other words, vulnerability is an uninsured exposure to risk (Hoogeveen et al., 2005). To be vulnerable is thus to live with the fear of a constant threat to a decline in wellbeing (Ibid.). The concept of vulnerability is further used to refer to vulnerable social groups. These are characterised by capability shortfalls or 'defenselessness' (Hoogeveen et al., 2005). It is this 'defenselessness' that justifies social intervention to protect and/or lift vulnerable groups out of poverty. Major vulnerable groups include: unskilled casual workers, refugees, drug addicts, disabled persons, ex-convicts, HIV/Aids sufferers, the old, orphans, ethnic minorities, widows, migrants, poor single mothers and homes headed by children or grandparents.

With regard to poverty, risk and vulnerability are closely related because one usually leads to the other. High levels of exposure to risk are associated with high levels of vulnerability, due to the limited coping capabilities of the poor. We can infer, therefore, that the chronic urban poor will be those unskilled casual workers who are exposed to high levels of risk and vulnerability. This means that we need to examine the risks and vulnerabilities associated with unskilled casual work and their effects on chronic poverty outcomes.

#### **2.4.2 Unmet Needs: Poor Social Protection and Chronic Urban Poverty**

**Social** protection refers to "public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk, and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society" (Conway, de Haan et al., 2000: in Barrientos and Barrientos, 2002:10). Social protection is, by definition, meant to mitigate risk and vulnerability but, because casual workers generally have a low asset base, lack insurance and get low returns on their labour; they are typically excluded from formal social protection mechanisms.

As indicated previously, the poor's difficulty in making provisions against short-term shocks **makes** them trade-off long-term security for short-term gain (Duclos, 2002). This implies that **the** poor's short-term risk management strategies may affect their long-term welfare; and by **extension**, their poverty outcomes. Risk, as an ever present reality, **has** especially deleterious **effects** on casual workers due to their irregular work, low income and poor asset base. This **makes** them highly vulnerable to random shocks. It can be expected, therefore, that casual **workers** develop their own informal social protection mechanisms to mitigate risk. It is thus **important** for us to examine the social protection mechanisms accessible to urban casual **workers** and how attempts at risk management affect their chronic poverty outcomes.

#### **2.4.3 'False Beliefs': Identity Repair and Chronic Urban Poverty**

'False beliefs' as used here does not denote truth value. Rather, it refers to idiosyncratic **and/or** social ideologies used by individuals and groups to make sense of their lives in the face of adversity. According to Mead (1934; in (Coupland, 2003:1) 'the desire to being a **'good'** self is essential to being a social self. This means that people need positive social identities that validate their self perception of efficacy and which, therefore, define their perceived domains of action. It further explains why people have a tendency to rationalise their failure to achieve the socially defined 'good life'.

Consequently, it can be argued, casual workers who internalise a devalued social identity are likely to be chronic poor because a devalued social identity diminishes their sense of self-worth and narrows down their perceived domain of action. In other words, internalising a poverty label is likely to lead to feelings of helplessness and apathy. This, in turn, is likely to motivate 'face-saving' behaviour that may be detrimental to the long-term interests of the casual workers (Goffinan, 1963).

According to Goffinan (1963) people engage in 'face-saving' behaviour to resolve negative emotions arising from a 'spoiled identity' or social stigma. Since the occupation of unskilled casual work is socially devalued, it can be expected that casual workers engage in 'identity

Pair here refers to beliefs and actions aimed at repositioning one as a socially worthy **person**.

The concept of 'identity repair' is useful because it enables the interrogation of interview narratives as repair work (McConnack, 2004). This means that interview narratives need to be understood as social action since they tend to be constructed in such a way as to cast the narrator in a positive light. This analytic perspective is important for understanding chronic poverty because it enables us to examine how unskilled casual workers interpret their life story.

As mentioned earlier, people need a coherent life story to give meaning to their lives. Consequently, interview narratives can be used to identify those instances that constitute 'a blaming' or ascription of causality. In other words, the concept of identity repair allows us to investigate how casual workers rationalise their poverty condition. This, in turn, enables us to understand how chronic urban poverty is socially constructed by unskilled casual workers.

## 2.5 Drivers of Chronic Urban Poverty

The concept of 'drivers' of chronic poverty refers to the push factors that precipitate chronic urban poverty. According to Moore (2004), income inadequacy is the most significant driver of chronic urban poverty. Income inadequacy is generally attributed to low returns to labour, which means many urban poor are unable to meet their basic needs. Second in importance is vulnerability to random shocks (Ibid ). Random shocks have been found to predispose the urban poor to chronic poverty due to lack of adequate social protection.

Amis (2002) found that in India the urban poor had five clusters of concerns regarding poverty. The first concern was livelihoods, incomes, assets and job security. The second concern was casual labour, which was significant because it was the main source of income for many urban poor. Correlated with casual work was concern about the differential wages between men and women; with women generally earning less than men. The third concern was the issue of dependency, support and/or neglect. This mainly affected female headed households, the elderly, the disabled and children. The fourth concern was the question of social exclusion, revolving around marginalized persons. These were people left out of economic participation or who lacked access to social services. The fifth concern was the ill health of the main income earner. This was found to be a major source of household shocks which precipitate chronic urban poverty. The urban poor are thus confronted by a multiplicity of poverty stressors, which makes them highly vulnerable to chronic poverty.

Wratten (1995, quoted in Mitlin, 2003), has identified four interlinked features common to urban poverty. The first feature is environmental and health risks. These are manifested as high levels of exposure to health hazards. Many poor urban workers are forced to live in unplanned settlements and slums due to low incomes. These settlements tend to be located adjacent to rivers, railway lines and solid waste dump sites, making the urban poor vulnerable to environmental and health risks. Furthermore, the urban poor suffer inadequate access to clean water and sanitation services exposing them to water borne diseases.

The second feature of urban poverty is social fragmentation. This is evidenced in cases of street families, substance abuse, prostitution and crime. Many urban poor are driven to engage in anti-social and criminal activities as a coping measure. This includes squatting on private land, making illegal water and electricity connections and operating unlicensed businesses. As such, they are vulnerable to extortion by local authorities and criminal gangs.

The third feature of urban poverty relates to negative contact with the state and police. This is exemplified by frequent eviction of street traders and demolition of shanties. These disrupt livelihood strategies of the poor, thereby worsening their already precarious situation.

The fourth feature of urban poverty is vulnerability to rising commoditisation of goods and services. This means that dependence on cash economies makes the urban poor vulnerable to income inadequacy. Low incomes coupled with high prices of goods and services in urban areas make it difficult for urban poor to meet their basic needs.

It can be argued, therefore, that unskilled casual workers are incorporated into the market economy on unfavourable terms since many lack the skills and resources to compete meaningfully in the formal economy. This forces them to subsist on insecure livelihoods and live in unwholesome environments. As a consequence, many urban poor suffer discrimination in accessing social services. This worsens their deprivation and drives many into chronic poverty.

## 2.6 Maintainers of Chronic Urban Poverty

**Chronic** urban poverty is strongly associated with the status of employment of the individual, occupational category and economic sector; that is, whether formal or informal (Amis, 2002). **The risk** of poverty is found to be highest amongst unskilled casual workers and households **with unemployed** heads (Kedir and MacKay, 2003; Odhiambo and Manda, 2003).

**The status** of employment and the industry of engagement have also been found to differ **considerably** by gender (Odhiambo and Manda (2003). This implies that gender may be a **significant** factor in explaining the incidence of chronic urban poverty. Women have been **found to be** engaged in the lowest paying jobs in the informal sector. This makes them more **vulnerable** to chronic urban poverty than their male counterparts. In addition, parental and **marital status** of women may increase their vulnerability to chronic poverty; depending on **whether** they receive child support or have live-in males.

Unskilled casual workers and single mothers have been found to constitute a large proportion of the urban poor, while informal sector work correlates to a higher incidence of urban poverty than formal sector employment (Amis, 2002; Odhiambo and Manda, 2003). As such, unskilled casual work may be a significant maintainer of chronic urban poverty, due to the low bargaining power and attendant low incomes of casual workers.

Moore (2004) has identified the following as major maintainers of chronic urban poverty, first, lack of, low, or narrowly-based economic growth leads to limited opportunities for poor people to improve their incomes and assets. Second, social exclusion and adverse incorporation result into exploitation of the poor through inequitable social relations. Third, geographical disadvantage and/or spatial location affect distribution of economic opportunities and thus determine options for escaping poverty. This means that limited economic opportunities reduces chances of casual workers working their way out of poverty; while social exclusion ensures their continued marginalization and exploitation.

Jargowsky (1996 in Glennerster, et al., 1999) used econometric analyses to isolate macro-structural explanations of spatial poverty effects. The study found that 'poor work E<sup>MtUnjties</sup> to poor school performance and poor human capital leads to low Productivity and low income' (Jargowsky, 1996 in Glennerster et al., 1999:9). The study

concluded that some poverty effects are due to 'neighbourhood effects' and that 'the learned behaviour of poverty responses in such areas can be unlearned as jobs appear' (Jargowsky 1996; in Glennerster et.al, 1999:9). In other words, spatial poverty is influenced by socio-economic, and by extension, job opportunities. Prevalence of unskilled casual work in an area could signify, therefore, a lack of decent work in the area or low levels of skills amongst the workers.

It is noteworthy, however, that the absorption of the long-term unemployed and the lowly skilled into labour markets during economic expansion is not guaranteed (Machin, 1998; Gregg, 1998 in Glennerster et al., 1999). Due to inadequate skills, such persons are likely to remain unemployed in the short term despite availability of jobs (Ibid.). The key poverty issue then becomes whether casual workers have the requisite skills to be absorbed into the labour market. Where skills are lacking, economic growth is likely to occur in tandem with joblessness for the casual workers. It can be expected, therefore, that chronic poor casual workers are those constrained by inadequate access to training and job opportunities. This makes it difficult for them to access decent work and/or escape poverty on their own.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework: Social Exclusion**

### **2.7.1 Conceptual Challenges**

This section highlights some conceptual debates in the theoretical literature on chronic poverty in order to tease out key aspects that help us understand it more clearly and to identify an appropriate theoretical framework for the study. The conceptual issues discussed are the definitions of chronic poorly, methodological constraints and unit of analysis.

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According to Hulme et al. (2001:10) the defining characteristic of chronic poverty is its extended duration'.

**U is suggested that the tightest possible definition of chronic poverty would be intergenerationally ransmitted (IGT) poverty, which, while it may or may not be severe, is likely to be relatively intractable, and therefore is likely to escape current poverty reduction efforts. In this way, IGT poverty is both a characteristic and cause of chronic poverty' (Ibid ).**

means that poverty that is not of long duration cannot be considered clironic irrespective  
r 1 SeVCnty (Hulme et al., 2001). The definition of chronic poverty on the basis of 'long

duration' has been criticised, however, for using an arbitrary measure of five years (Bevan, 2004). This is because there is no scientific basis for assuming five years is sufficient to define 'long duration' (Ibid.). Furthermore, conceptualising chronic poverty in terms of its duration tends to ignore poverty at its inception thereby allowing it to become entrenched. For instance, severe deprivation affects new residents to slums but their deprivation, going by the five year definition, would not qualify as chronic poverty. In effect, such persons would not be eligible for priority poverty interventions. This, in turn, would entrench their deprivation and prolong their suffering. It can be argued, therefore, that there is a need to focus on the multi-dimensionality and severity of chronic poverty irrespective of the duration of deprivation.

According to Mitlin (2003), the study of chronic urban poverty is faced by four major problems. First, there is inadequate information about chronic urban poverty because there are few data sets that can be used for quantitative analyses of categories of the poor affected by chronic poverty. This is because the urban poor have tended to be lumped into one category of 'low income earners', which ignores gradations of poverty amongst them. Second, there are few qualitative studies that can enable differentiation of the various types of poverty, such as chronic and transient poverty. As such, the lived experience of poverty for the different categories of urban poor is not well documented. Third, the literature suffers from a lack of comparability because it is difficult to identify variations in findings caused by methodological differences and those caused by social context (Mitlin, 2003). Given that poverty is highly context dependent, this makes it imperative that ways be found to incorporate contextual analysis into chronic poverty studies. Fourth, urban poverty has largely been understood in terms of inadequacy of income. This means that non-monetary aspects of urban poverty have largely been ignored in the existing literature.

Green and Hulme (2005) contend that the dominance of econometric analyses in poverty studies tends to equate development with economic growth. As such, they argue, poverty is reduced to a state that people can enter or exit based on their economic activities (Ibid.). This approach to poverty analysis they observe, inadvertently downplays the social relationships that <sup>311(1)</sup> tolerate it (Green and Hulme (2005). This means, therefore, that in addition to income inadequacy, there is a need to examine the social relationships that underlie persistent deprivation or chronic poverty.

**According** to Bevan (2004) the current conceptualisations of poverty are inadequate because they treat poverty as a household phenomenon thereby ignoring intra-household differentiation. Furthermore, it is argued, these approaches treat poverty conditions **descriptively**; thus failing to elaborate on the social relations **that** underpin them (Ibid.). Bevan (2004:4) instead proposes a methodological approach that relies more on 'cases and **'stories'**, than on 'variables' and 'populations'; in order to highlight the effects of agency, **which** are presumably downplayed in **current** poverty **research**.

It can be inferred, therefore, that more qualitative studies are needed to increase our **understanding** of the contextual aspects of chronic urban poverty. This is because whereas **quantitative** data has the advantage of greater accuracy, it has the drawback of generalising phenomena resulting into generic poverty models. Given the context-dependent nature of chronic urban poverty, generic poverty models are unlikely to be useful for tackling poverty.

In summary, chronic urban poverty needs to be understood as arising from the interplay of both social structure and agency. This conceptualization enables us to examine why some casual workers manage to escape from poverty while others fail to. Consequently, it can be argued, the use of a social exclusion framework is likely to enrich our understanding of the dynamics of chronic poverty at the individual and social level.

### **2.7.2 Social Exclusion and Chronic Urban Poverty**

Social exclusion refers to the processes through which people are 'left out of mainstream social and economic activities' (Coates et al., 2001, Anon 1994). According to Alexander (2005:3) social exclusion emanates from 'a lack of action'. This means that it can be attributed to the 'social closure' of dominant groups against weak groups or the passiveness of weak groups against closure by dominant groups. The social exclusion framework is thus predicated on the notion of human agency—which attempts to account for how social actors manifest different outcomes within a given setting. In other words, the social exclusion framework examines how people succeed or fail to 'create room for manoeuvre' in their daily struggle for survival (Long and Long 1992: 36).

e Social Exclusion Unit (1998) lists the key characteristics of social exclusion as: Povcrishment, unemployment, social discrimination, inadequate access to basic services as water, sanitation, electricity, transport and financial services) social isolation

(including lack of support and non-participation in common social activities) 'voicelessness' (or lack of civic engagement) and spatial disadvantage (including remoteness or inability to 'get out and about'). Social exclusion can also be viewed as the process and outcome of 'multiple and overlapping disadvantages' (Kabeer, 2004).

Social exclusion affects individuals and groups in different ways and to varying degrees. Major risk factors include: market failures, low income, inadequate education and training, lack of civic engagement, financial illiteracy, family conflict, dependency, poor health, social stigma, 'false beliefs', superstition, ethnic minority status, urban slum residence, remote rural residence, mental health problems, age, disability and inadequate social protection (Gordon et al 2000; Kabeer 2004). This implies that some individuals are more at risk of social exclusion, and by extension chronic poverty, than others due to their greater than average exposure to these risk factors. Consequently, to address chronic poverty, it becomes necessary to identify and mitigate the exclusionary risk factors affecting a target group in order to enable the chronic poor amongst it to overcome their deprivation.

According to Kabeer (2004), the social exclusion framework offers an integrated way to examine different forms of poverty-related disadvantages and to juxtapose issues of deprivation with inequality. This integrative aspect of the social exclusion framework is what makes it suitable for analysing chronic urban poverty, arising as it were, from the interplay of diverse factors. The social exclusion framework, as such, allows us to use multiple analytical constructs within the same study and still retain coherence. For example, using the social exclusion framework we can holistically examine the interplay of social discrimination, livelihood strategies, assets, resource deprivation, spatial disadvantage, risk and vulnerability, social protection, identity repair, gender and the time dimension of poverty.

The concept of social exclusion is, nonetheless, controversial. First, it is said to fail to account for voluntary non-participation; meaning that self-exclusion is generally not treated as social exclusion (Coates et al., 2001). This critique is not relevant for this study, however, because the concern here is with poverty as an undesired state of deprivation. Second, the concept of social exclusion was initially used to refer to negative outcomes for some groups arising from economic and social transformations that changed traditional forms of welfare in "western" world (Hickey and du Toit, 2006). In this sense, social exclusion originally referred to relative deprivation and was thus not synonymous with poverty (Ibid.). Its

relevance for analysing poverty in the 'third world' has thus been put to question because of **the** difficulty of defining parameters of exclusion in situations where the majority of citizens are poor (Ibid.). All the same, the social exclusion framework is useful for understanding **chronic** poverty because it deals with issues of deprivation and inequality, which are key **aspects** of chronic poverty in developing countries.

The concept of social exclusion has also been criticised as having negative connotations and **conjecturing** prescriptive moralistic undertones (Hickey and du Toit, 2006). Critics argue that the concept implies the desirability of inclusiveness as well as harbours notions of the ideal society (Hickey and du Toit, 2006). This critique is based, however, on a presumption of the absolute separation of states of inclusion and exclusion. Social exclusion needs to be understood, however, as an ongoing process of interaction that encompasses both states of inclusion and exclusion but which, predominantly, results into disadvantages for the excluded. For example, the poor can be said to be 'excluded' in the sense that they are marginalized by their poverty. They are 'included', nevertheless, in the sense that, as members of society, they participate in relations of production and exchange, albeit on unfavourable terms.

Hickey and du Toit (2006) have also argued that the concept of adverse incorporation offers a more robust analysis of the multi-dimensional nature of deprivation in relation to the interplay of states, markets and civil society. This study, nonetheless, treats adverse incorporation as one of the mechanisms through which social exclusion is perpetuated. It thus avoids the finer distinction between the two; a distinction which is unlikely to add much value to the analysis here in. That is because the end product of adverse incorporation is unfavourable inclusion, which, in itself, is a form of social exclusion.

The social exclusion framework is thus ideal for interrogating the relationship between unskilled casual work and chronic urban poverty because it enables us to examine how the multiple disadvantages associated with unskilled casual work drive and maintain chronic an poverty. Social discrimination, resource deprivation and spatial disadvantage; risk and nerability, social protection and identity repair can thus be integrated in a social exclusion •roework. This complex interrelationship of variables, which forms the basis for the theoretical framework of this study, is discussed here below.

Unskilled casual work is associated with multiple and overlapping disadvantages. These are social discrimination, resource deprivation and spatial disadvantage. These disadvantages give rise to a poverty nexus comprising suffering (manifested as exposure to high levels of risk and vulnerability); unmet needs (manifested as poor social protection); and 'false beliefs' (manifested as efforts at 'identity repair') (Kabeer, 2004). It is this poverty nexus that gives rise to chronic urban poverty, depending on the livelihood configurations of individual casual workers and their ability to cope with random shocks.

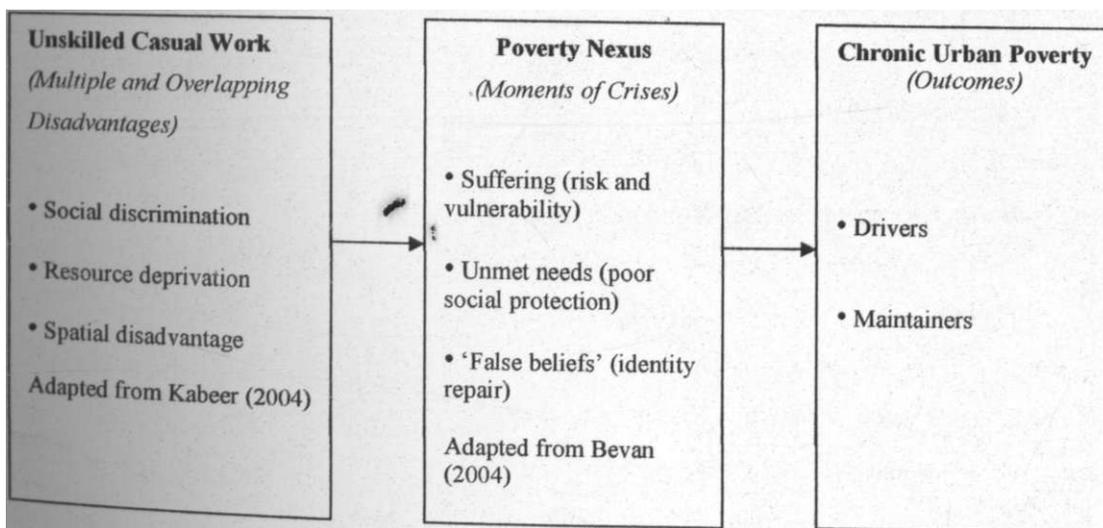
We can understand the key drivers and maintainers of chronic urban poverty, therefore, by examining the narratives of casual workers in order to identify what constitutes their 'moments of crises' (Long & Long, 1992). This understanding then enables us to examine how their efforts at coping affect their chronic poverty outcomes.

Given the foregoing arguments, the study will be guided by the following key assumptions:

1. Casual workers who experience social discrimination are likely to be chronic poor.
2. Casual workers who experience resource deprivation are likely to be chronic poor.
3. Casual workers who experience spatial disadvantage are likely to be chronic poor.

The conceptual framework of the study is represented diagrammatically here below.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



## 2.8 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the multiple and overlapping disadvantages attending unskilled casual work predispose urban casual workers to chronic poverty. In addition, that unskilled casual workers who experience high levels of discrimination, resource deprivation and spatial disadvantage, in varying combinations; are more likely to be chronic poor. However, that this is contingent on mediating factors such as the degree of exposure to risk and vulnerability, access to social protection and efforts at identity repair. Further, that the interplay of these factors, which is manifested as 'moments of crises' and efforts at coping, determines whether events become drivers or maintainers of chronic urban poverty. It is surmised, therefore, that chronic urban poverty is likely to be determined by the livelihood configurations of individual casual workers and their ability to cope with random shocks. It is also observed that chronic urban poverty has both structural and agency factors. Further, that to identify the key drivers and maintainers of chronic urban poverty, we need to examine individual life histories in order to isolate the contextual aspects of each case.

## CHAPTER THREE

### POVERTY IN KENYA

#### 3.1 Introduction

We saw in the previous chapter that unskilled casual work is associated with multiple and overlapping disadvantages for those whose livelihoods depend on it. This, it was argued, **predisposes** casual workers to chronic urban poverty due to irregular work and low pay. It was also argued that it is the interplay of poverty disadvantages which is important in understanding chronic urban poverty.

This chapter gives an overview of poverty in Kenya. The aim is to describe the social context in order to enable a deeper understanding of the cases selected for the study. The first part of the chapter begins with definitions of poverty in Kenya. This is followed by a discussion of **the** socio-economic, demographic and geographic dimensions. Thereafter, the chapter examines some causes of chronic poverty in Kenya and concludes with a summary of the discussion.

#### 3.2 Definitions of Poverty

Kabubo-Mariara and Ndeng'e (2004:14) define poverty as the 'inability to afford basic food and non-food items'. According to this money-metric conception of poverty, the poor are persons whose income and consumption falls below a standard poverty line. Based on the Kenya Welfare Monitoring Survey (1997), the absolute poverty line in Kenya was approximately Kshs 1,239 (US\$ 15) and Kshs 2,648 (USD 33) per person per month for rural and urban areas respectively (CBS, 2005).

Globally, the absolute poverty line is set at a minimum consumption of US dollar 1.25 per **day** (Ravallion, 1998). This standard is favoured by development practitioners because it enables comparative studies of poverty across diverse socio-economic strata. It has been criticized, however, for failing to account for regional variations in the cost of living (Hulme & McKay, 2005).

poverty has also been defined as "...hunger, lack of shelter; sickness and being unable to see a doctor (afford medical care)...not being able to go to school, not knowing how to read, not being able to speak properly...not having a job and fear for the future, living one day at a time... losing a child to illness brought about by malnutrition and unclean water" (Kabubo-Mariara and Ndeng'e, 2004:13). This definition incorporates a large number of indicators, but it is not easily amenable to comparative studies; due to variations in cultural understandings of poverty both within countries and across regions.

The two definitions of poverty relate closely to the quantitative/qualitative divide. This implies that definitions of poverty are largely a matter of the perspective taken. Both approaches are useful in enhancing our understanding of poverty, depending on the research interest. Whereas qualitative data is rich in descriptive detail, quantitative data is more useful for identifying trends. The poverty trends in Kenya are discussed separately here below.

### 3.2.1 Socio-Economic Indicators of Poverty

Poverty in Kenya worsened in the 1990s following liberalisation of the country's economy (African Development Bank, 2005). The removal of price controls and state subsidies has led to an increase in the cost of basic commodities and services, negatively affecting the poor (Ibid). Consequently, the number of the poor increased from 11.3 million people, or 48.4 percent of the population in 1990 to 15 million people, or 52 percent of the population in 1997 (WMS, 1997). By 2001, 17.1 million people, or 55.4 percent of the population lived in absolute poverty; rising to 56.8 percent in (The World Bank, 2001)2003 (PRSP, 2005; African Development Bank, 2005). This dropped slightly to 46% in 2006 (KIHBS, 2006).

Kenya's income inequality is one of the highest amongst the 22 poorest countries in the world, with a Gini Coefficient of 0.42 in 1997 (African Development Bank, 2005).<sup>3</sup> According to the World Development Report (2000/2001), income inequality is undesirable because it undermines both economic growth and poverty reduction. It has been argued, for example, that income inequality reduces the amount of the corresponding fall in poverty for every 1% increase in economic growth (Maxwell, 2001; in Anderson and O'Neil, 2006:3). High income inequality can create an underclass of persons with extremely low purchasing power, which effectively leaves them out of economic participation. This, in turn, can lead to a low demand for goods and services, thereby undermining further economic growth.

<sup>3</sup> The Gini Coefficient is a measure of income inequality within countries.

Key social indicators also declined in the 1990's in tandem with the poor economic performance. According to the African Development Bank (2005), gross primary school enrolment rates fell from 105.4% in 1989 to 96% in 2001 due to the high cost of education. This drop was contributed to disparities in access to education between rural and urban areas (African Development Bank, 2005). As such, there are regional disparities in education outcomes and by extension, formal employment in government and the private sector.

Generally, urban areas fare better in terms of access to education compared to rural areas. In urban areas, 87% of the poor have basic education compared with 71% of the rural poor (African Development Bank, 2005). Further, 28% of the poor in urban areas have secondary education compared with only 12% of the poor in rural areas (Ibid.). This disparity in education has partly been reversed, however, with the introduction of universal free primary education. This has pushed enrolment rates from 5.87 million pupils in 2001 to over 7.0 million pupils in 2003 (African Development Bank, 2005).

National illiteracy rates remain high, nonetheless, at 15% in 2003, with females twice more likely to be illiterate than males (African Development Bank, 2005). This can be attributed to the high value placed on the male child in African societies such that where families experience resource constraints, the education of the male child gets priority over that of the female child. High levels of female illiteracy have been shown to impact negatively on the welfare of the child; with higher child mortality rates reported amongst mothers with low level of education (Tulasidhar, 1993). This is because low education primarily reduces the mother's ability to care for their offspring.

Regardless of their poverty states, over 50% of Kenya's households do not have access to safe drinking water (PRSP 2004; IPRSP, 2000). In rural areas, large disparities exist between geographic regions. In North Eastern and Eastern Provinces, for example, less than 30% of the poor have access to safe drinking water compared with 60% in Western Province (PRSP 2004; IPRSP, 2000).-

<sup>n 1111311</sup> areas, large populations live in informal settlements without adequate water and sanitation facilities (African Development Bank, 2005; Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 1997).<sup>997</sup> Sanitation coverage is estimated at 65 percent in urban areas and 40 percent in rural areas (African Development Bank, 2005). This contributes to environmental and health risks in urban poor. It also reduces productive time for the rural poor, who have to cover long

distances in search of water. As a consequence, poverty levels are highly correlated to levels of access to water and sanitation (The World Bank, 2001). The chronic poor, as such, can be expected to be found in those areas with acute water shortages and poor sanitation facilities.

According to Odhiambo and Manda (2003) urban poverty is increasing at a higher rate than rural poverty. The proportion of urban poor rose from 29% in 1992 to 49% in 1997; while that of the rural poor increased from 42% to 52% during the same period (Ibid.). This translates to a poverty increase of 20% in the urban areas compared with 10% in the rural areas. The incidence of food poverty is lower in urban areas, however, at 38 per cent in 2003 compared with 51 per cent in rural areas (African Development Bank, 2005). These figures, nevertheless, mask major differentials within urban areas, due to the concentration of low income earners in slums and other informal settlements.

Underemployment in Kenya is significant, with only about 2 million people engaged in formal sector jobs ( Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006). The urban unemployment rate was approximately 16 percent in 1986 and 25 percent in 1999 (PRSP, 2004). The unemployment rate in the rural areas for the same period was less acute at 9.4 percent, while for Kenya as a whole it was estimated at 14.6 percent (PRSP, 2004). High levels of underemployment have thus contributed to the existence of a class of Kenyans who are termed 'the working poor' (PRSP, 2004). These include: farm labourers, low level government employees, 'jua kali' artisans, hawkers and unskilled casual workers.

The proportion of female-headed households that are in poverty is also statistically higher than that of male-headed ones (WMS, 1997). Female-headed households are more vulnerable to poverty than male-headed ones because a large percentage of the female working population (69%) is engaged in subsistence farming compared with a smaller proportion (43%) of the male working population (PRSP 2004). Subsistence farmers and pastoralists have been found to be highly vulnerable to poverty due to fluctuations in weather patterns and commodity prices (Ibid.). These two occupational categories thus have a higher than average incidence of poverty, at 46% and 60% respectively (PRSP 2004).

### 3.2.2 Demographic and Health Indicators of Poverty

Kenya's population was estimated at 31.9 million people in 2003, with 64.7 percent of the population based in rural areas (African Development Bank, 2005). The annual population growth rate was put at 1.4 percent per annum in 2003 (African Development Bank, 2005). Three quarters of the poor live in rural areas while the majority of the urban poor live in slums and peri-urban settlements (PRSP, 2004). The population is also fairly youthful, with 42% of the population aged less than 15 years (KIHBS, 2006).

Average household size was 5.1 in 2005 (KIHBS, 2006). Many poor households have large families (6.4 members compared to 4.6 for non-poor) and in general, rural households are larger than urban ones (WMS, 1997). Nationally, poor women have a higher total fertility rate (rural 7.0 and urban 4.8) than non-poor women (rural 6.7 and urban 4.1). The average TFR in 2005 was 4.9 (CBS, 2006).

Kenya's Human Development Index (HDI) was ranked 152<sup>nd</sup> out of 177 in 2004 (UNDP, 2005). The HDI is a simple average of longevity, educational attainment and decent standard of living (UNDP, 2005). It is used to evaluate expansion of human capabilities over time in order to identify areas for policy intervention (UNDP, 2005). Longevity is measured by life expectancy at birth (relative to a global target of 85 years); educational attainment by adult literacy rates and combined primary school enrolment rates; while a decent standard of living is measured by per capita income (UNDP, 2005).

Kenya's HDI declined from 0.533 in 1990 to 0.520 in 2004 (UNDP, 2005). This decline is attributed to poor economic growth, a large informal economy and reduced access to basic services, drought, HIV/AIDs and insecurity; as well as corruption and mismanagement of public finances (UNDP, 2005). This decline in HDI is confirmation that there was a general reduction in the socio-economic welfare of the majority of Kenyans for the period 1990-2004 (UNDP, 2005).

Approximately 21 percent of Kenyans have no access to health services (African Development Bank, 2005). In addition, an overwhelming majority of the poor cannot afford private health care (76% rural and 81% urban) and as such, rely on public health facilities (Mid.). This situation is made even worse by the fact that 58% of the urban and 56% of the rural poor do not seek health care due to frequent unavailability of drugs in public health

facilities (Ibid.). A further indicator of health disparity is that only 37% of poor mothers give birth in hospitals compared with 58% of non-poor mothers (IPRSP, 2000).

Maternal mortality rate stood at 570 per 100,000 live births in 2000 (African Development Bank, 2005). Infant mortality increased from 62 per thousand in 1993 to 78 per thousand in 2003, while under five mortality rose slightly from 96 per thousand births to 114 per thousand in the same period (PRSP, 2004). The percent of stunted children also increased from 29 percent in 1993 to 31 per cent in 2003 (Ibid.). Similarly, the percent of children aged 12-23 months who were fully vaccinated dropped from 79 percent in 1993 to 52 percent in 2003 (PRSP, 2004). These trends mirror the decline in welfare characteristic of the 90's.

Life expectancy at birth declined from 49.7 years in 1997 to 44.4 years in 2003; largely due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic (African Development Bank, 2005). A high prevalence of malaria and tuberculosis, as well as the worsening economic situation has also contributed to high mortality rates. Malaria remains the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Kenya; accounting for 30 percent of reported illness and 13 percent of all deaths (African Development Bank, 2005).

### **3.2.2 Geographic Dimensions of Poverty**

Poverty is particularly acute in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) which make up over **80%** of Kenya's land area (CBS, 2006). In the ASALs, more than two-thirds of the population is currently living below the poverty line (CBS, 2006). This is because the population is highly dependent on livestock production for livelihoods; accounting for 90% of the employment and 95% of household income (CBS, 2006). The arid and semi-arid landscape invariably makes the inhabitants of the ASALs highly vulnerable to drought, flooding, animal diseases and conflict over resources; hence, the high poverty levels in these areas.

Recent poverty maps indicate persistent variations in the incidence of poverty at provincial level, with even larger differentials at sub-district level (CBS, 2006). For example, 50% of **total Population** in all provinces except Central Province (31%) was living in poverty (CBS, 2006)- Nyanza Province had the largest proportion of its population living in poverty, at 63% the same year (CBS, 2006).

provinces except North Eastern Province, poverty levels show significant variations within the same district and similarly for locations in the same division

(CBS, 2006). For instance, rural poverty rates within Central Province (least poor province in Kenya) ranges from 10 per cent to 56 percent across its 171 locations; while in Coast Province, about 61 per cent of the rural people are poor, with poverty ranging from 13 per cent to 90 per cent across the 140 rural locations (CBS, 2006). These trends are attributable to the economic activities in an area, which determines the availability of off-farm employment for the poor.

Poverty maps also reveal that people in relatively less poor districts, divisions and locations have much smaller consumption shortfalls (CBS, 2006). Consumption shortfall refers to the consumption deficit relative to the poverty line. Poverty gaps in such areas are typically around 5 percent of the poverty line; whereas in the poorest areas, poverty gaps range between 30 and 50 percent (PRSP, 2005). In other words, the general level of poverty in an area is a good predictor of the depth of poverty in the area. This means that the lower the level of average poverty in an area, the less severe the expected consumption shortfall or depth of poverty within the area. In other words, chronic poverty is highest where consumption shortfalls are high.

Urban areas equally exhibit considerable variation in their poverty incidence within sub locations. For instance, overall poverty rate in Nairobi is 50 percent, but at the sub-location level (110 sub-locations) poverty ranges between 6 and 78 percent (CBS, 2006). This can be attributed to the concentration of the urban poor in slums and peri-urban settlements.

Rural poverty is, on average, higher than urban poverty at 47.2% and 40.5% respectively (KIHBS, 2006). Nationally chronic poverty is estimated at 19.1%; with rural areas having an incidence of 29.1% while urban areas have an incidence of 8.3% (KIHBS, 2006). These figures are based on a standard national poverty line, which uses income as the criterion of evaluation. However, as noted elsewhere, the use of a standard poverty line is believed to grossly understate the incidence of chronic poverty in urban areas due to variations in lifestyles and the commoditisation of goods and services in urban areas.

### 3.3 Chronic Poverty in Kenya: Characteristics and Causes

Kenya is classified as chronically deprived country (CDC) on account of four key indicators used by the chronic poverty research centre (CPRC, 2008). These are: GDP per capita, child mortality, fertility and undernourishment (CPRC, 2008). Based on this classification, upwards of 20% of the population of Kenya is believed to be chronic poor (Ibid.).

According to Brewin (2007:9), chronically poor households have some or all of the following characteristics:

**"high dependency ratios; low levels of education of household heads; high incidence of household members being old, ill or disabled; low asset and livestock ownership; poor quality farmland; limited livelihood options, due to low human capability; social isolation due to inability to capitalize on services, opportunities and natural resources; broken ties with members of the family who traditionally provide social security; and vulnerability to poor weather due to heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture".**

The chronic poor are also said to display a high incidence of physical and mental capability limitations, attributed to poor childhood nutrition, more so if their parents were also chronic poor (Brewin, 2007). These factors impact significantly on their ability to learn new skills and to seek out and assimilate information on new technologies (Ibid.). This capability deprivation also narrows down/eliminates the off-farm employment opportunities available to them (Brewin, 2007).

Muyanga (2005) cites poor access to markets, unemployment/low wages and poor infrastructure (especially roads); high cost of basic services, illness or disability, and HIV/Aids; social discrimination and negative cultural practices; environmental adversity and natural calamities as contributory factors to chronic poverty.

#### 33.1 Socio-Cultural Causes of Chronic Poverty

According to Brewin (2007) the chronic poor exhibit high levels of aversion to risk. Many are also burdened by negative customs, such as female genital mutilation which interfere with girl child education. Often girls are married off immediately after initiation into womanhood. Funerals may also require large sums of money to be spent in festivities. Further, landlessness<sup>18</sup> a common problem, manifested as 'squatters' in many parts of the country (KNCHR, )• Squatters are people living on land that they do not legally own. Alcohol dependence<sup>19</sup> another common problem among the chronic poor and this is attributed to frustration at

lack of secure livelihoods (NACADA, 2010). Many poor Kenyans have been killed, blinded or made ill by illicit alcoholic drinks (Ibid.).

Some communities exhibit gender bias in favour of boy-child education, due to cultural beliefs as well as resource constraints (Girl Child Network, 2004). This leads to low levels of education among women (Brewin 2007). For example, young girls are at times married off to older men in order for the parents to collect bride price (UNICEF, 2001). This interferes with their education and contributes to chronic poverty in the event that the female becomes a household head through widowhood or divorce (Ibid). Traditional inheritance laws at times also disadvantage widows, who may be stripped of assets after the death of their husband (KNCHR, 2005; Brewin 2007). This can push the bereaved family into chronic poverty. There is also a noticeable disintegration of traditional social support networks, leading to reduced access to social protection for the needy (Republic of Kenya, 2008). Polygamy is another factor in chronic poverty because it can lead to destitution in times of adversity, where the breadwinner is unable to meet the family's needs (Bewin, 2007).

There is a notable lack of co-operation and mutual trust in some areas, due to superstition and witchcraft, leading to low social capital formation (Bewin, 2007). Even worse, some communities suffer from a general absence of positive role models for two reasons. First, anyone who achieves a certain level of success usually leaves the area, chiefly due to rural-urban migration. Second, there exists a pervasive culture of conformity; whereby poor households continue with outdated customs and practices that are counter to their economic welfare to ensure that they are not ostracised by their (poor) neighbours (Brewin, 2007).

### **3.3.2 Economic and Political Aspects of Chronic Poverty**

The overall inflation rate (excluding food, fuel, and energy) declined from 11.2 percent in 1997 to 2 percent in 2002, rising sharply from 3 per cent in 2003 to 7 percent in 2004 (African Development Bank, 2005). Annual overall inflation, as measured by the twelve-month percent change in the consumer price index (CPI), rose from 8 percent in September 2003 to 19 percent in September 2004, before dropping to 16 percent in December 2004.

These rates have exceeded the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK)'s target of 5 percent for <sup>Un</sup>er,ying 8 inflation due to poor harvest, high food and energy prices (African Development <sup>B\*</sup>nk, 2005).

Inflation, or the rise in cost of living as it is commonly understood, impacts negatively on low income earners because they have to make do with less disposable income yet they already live at a subsistence level. In effect, the poor have to forego some essentials just to remain within their means, which can lead to acute deprivation.

In 1978, the urban unemployment rate was approximately 7 percent (African Development Bank, 2005). By 1986, it had increased to 16 percent and continued to rise to 25 percent by 1999 (Ibid ). The unemployment rate in the rural areas for the same period was less acute, at 9.4 percent; while for Kenya as a whole it was estimated at 14.6 percent (African Development Bank, 2005). In rural areas, underemployment is the major problem and affects women more than men (Zapeda, 2007). Growth in formal sector employment has also been insufficient to meet the demand created by population growth; hence, most of the population is engaged in subsistence farming and informal sector work. This leads to low quality work and low incomes, which in turn lead to poverty.

There are large differentials in labour earnings with the highest incomes being in waged employment and the lowest in traditional rural farming (Zapeda, 2007). Returns to education are similarly high, especially in the case of tertiary education; which implies a high demand for skilled labour (Zapeda, 2007). As such, the two critical factors reducing the risk of poverty are having a higher education and wage employment in the formal sector (Zapeda, 2007). This means that poorly educated workers are highly vulnerable to chronic poverty.

According to Mugisha (2003) casual workers are the most affected with respect to chronic poverty because they have low incomes; generally travel on foot and consume more alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. High alcohol consumption among low income earners is linked to attempts to deal with the stress resulting from irregular work and low income. Furthermore, the irregularity of earnings puts them into debts with landlords, employers and shop keepers as they try to fulfil their basic needs (Ibid.).

Insecurity is a major problem in urban slums and the ASALs. It is underpinned by high unemployment rates, poor physical infrastructure planning, widespread corruption, weak administrative structures, poor resource utilisation and lack of accountability by government (CPRC, 2008).

There is generally low participation of the poor in decision making, due to lack of a democratic culture, low levels of education and time constraints. Furthermore, there are few, if any, specific programmes targeting the chronic poor (Brewin, (2007). This is because the chronic poor tend to live in areas which are administratively marginalised by the political establishment (Barrientos & Shepherd, 2003). Their needs are thus not well articulated in the national development agenda.

Titles to land are also not available in some parts of the country but, even where chronic poor households own land, lending institutions frown upon non-commercial land titles (Brewin, (2007). This is because of the difficulty of realising their securities in case of loan default. Furthermore, the risk of losing their land also discourages the poor from using it to secure loans (Brewin, 2007). In addition, low budgetary allocations to the agriculture sector, outdated production technologies, weak markets, and lack of credit and extension services reduce the productivity of the agricultural sector (Brewin, 2007).

### **3.3.3 Spatial and Environmental Aspects of Chronic Poverty**

Many chronic poor live in remote ASALs where they suffer from lack of roads, electricity, water and economic opportunities (International Monetary Fund, 2004). Drought is a common correlate of chronic poverty in these areas because it leads to poor crop yields and loss of livestock. As households become increasingly unable to live on what they produce on their farms they resort to other coping mechanisms. Often, this takes the form of charcoal burning and logging of trees in the surrounding areas (ICRAF, 2005). These activities have a knock on effect on soil erosion and reduced rainfall (Ibid.). This leads to a cycle of more drought and low yields thereby entrenching poverty. Spatial disadvantage in turn contributes to rural-urban migration in search of opportunities.

### **3.4 Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted the salient features of chronic poverty in Kenya. Those most affected by chronic poverty include pastoralists and subsistence farmers in remote ASALs; the poor in urban ghettos, female headed households, the elderly, disabled persons and orphaned children. Similarly, the chronic poor are likely to be persons with low educational attainment or those who lack marketable skills, such as unskilled casual workers.

From the discussions it can be seen that many of the poverty factors are covariate risks; meaning that they affect a wide cross-section of the community. This implies that the chronic poor experience high levels of structural disadvantage. In the absence of adequate social protection mechanisms, this makes them highly vulnerable to poverty inducing shocks. It can be presumed, therefore, that the chronic poor require external intervention to address their plight.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION AND CHRONIC URBAN POVERTY

#### 4.1 Introduction

In chapter two it was observed that social discrimination is the process through which dominant groups restrict access to valued resources. Predicated on the notion of "othering", social discrimination was described as the active denial of equal recognition/status/privilege to persons perceived as different. It was also shown that social discrimination is one of the ways in which poverty disadvantages are transmitted. Poverty disadvantages, it was argued, lead to reduced life chances for the affected individuals and groups (Kabeer, 2004). It was thus argued that social discrimination undermines people's capacity to acquire capabilities and 'functionings' (Sen, 1999), which in turn makes them more vulnerable to poverty stressors.

The discussion further showed that social discrimination is underpinned by group membership rules that categorise individuals and groups as either 'insiders' or 'outsiders' in order to mediate access to privilege (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Persons labelled as 'outsiders' were said to be ascribed a 'devalued social identity', leading to a reduction in their entitlements (Sen, 1999). Social discrimination was thus said to give rise to identity-based disadvantages for particular individuals and groups (Kabeer, 2004). Unskilled casual workers were further identified as one category of the poor who are likely to suffer social discrimination due to their lowly occupational status.

This chapter examines the assumption that casual workers who experience social discrimination are likely to be chronic poor because social discrimination is associated with **identity**-based poverty disadvantages. The chapter first describes the findings of the study in **relation** to social discrimination among casual workers. Thereafter, the relationship between **social** discrimination and chronic urban poverty is discussed. The discussion will seek to **answer** the following questions. First, how does social discrimination precipitate (drive) chronic poverty among urban casual workers and second, how does social discrimination **enrich** (maintain) chronic poverty among urban casual workers? To answer these questions,

the discussion examines narratives from two Focus Group Discussions and eight Life History Interviews.

The study found that social discrimination among casual workers had multiple facets. These are ill health, ethnicity, political affiliation, physical disability, gender, age and education. These facets were identified as differentiating casual workers into 'insiders' and 'outsiders' thereby leading to identity-based disadvantages in competition for work. Using our theoretical framework, the study examines how social discrimination relates to Suffering (risk and vulnerability), Unmet Needs (social protection) and 'False beliefs' (coping mechanisms). The table below summarises the key insights and forms the basis for the discussion on social discrimination.

*r*

**Table 1; Social Discrimination and Chronic Urban Poverty**

<i>j</i> <b>Discrimination factor</b>	<b>Suffering (risk and</b>	<b>Unmet needs (social protection)</b>	<b>'False beliefs' (identity repair/coping)</b>	<b>Chronic poverty outcomes</b>
/ <b>I. Ill health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Abandonment by family</li> <li>• Dismissal from employment</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">N</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical insurance</li> <li>• Income/social support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work while unwell</li> <li>• Delay seeking medical attention</li> <li>• Conceal nature of illness</li> <li>• Self-exploitation: work long hours for low pay</li> <li>• Skip work so as to rest</li> <li>• Self-devaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic unemployment</li> <li>• Social exclusion/marginalization</li> <li>• Income inadequacy</li> <li>• Depletion of assets</li> <li>• Chronic indebtedness</li> <li>• Slum residence</li> <li>• Poor nutrition</li> <li>• Stress/despair/mental depression</li> <li>• Withdrawal of children from school</li> </ul>
<b>2. Ethnicity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment</li> <li>• Unfair competition for work</li> <li>• Differential wages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-discrimination</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> <li>• Social integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reverse discrimination</li> <li>• Ethnic profiling</li> <li>• Ethnic hostility</li> <li>• Poor cooperation among different ethnic groups</li> <li>• Excessive individualism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic unemployment</li> <li>• Social exclusion/marginalization</li> <li>• Patron-client relations to access work</li> <li>• Exploitation of those not well connected</li> <li>• Low incomes for minority ethnic groups</li> </ul>
<b>3. Political affiliation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-discrimination</li> <li>• Civic education</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reverse discrimination</li> <li>• Ethnic profiling</li> <li>• Poor cooperation between different political camps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic Unemployment</li> <li>• Social exclusion/marginalization of minority ethnic groups</li> <li>• Patron-client relations to access work</li> <li>• Exploitation of those not well connected</li> <li>• Income inadequacy</li> </ul>

	<i>J</i> • <b>Unemployment</b>	<i>j</i> • <b>Affirmative action</b> <i>f</i> • <b>Technical support</b> <i>l</i> • <b>Employment opportunities</b>	• <b>Self-devaluation</b>	• <b>Chronic unemployment</b> • <b>Social exclusion/marginalization</b> • <b>Income inadequacy</b> • <b>Deferred ambitions</b> • <b>Poor health</b> • <b>Despair/depression</b>
<b>5. Gender</b>	• <b>Unemployment</b> • <b>Differential wages</b>  <b>W</b>	• <b>Affirmative action</b> • <b>Employment opportunities</b> • <b>Social support for mothers with young children</b>	• <b>Self-devaluation</b>	• <b>Chronic unemployment</b> • <b>Social exclusion/marginalization</b> • <b>Income inadequacy</b> • <b>Despair/depression</b> • <b>Poor health</b> • <b>Deferred ambition</b> • <b>Patron-client relations</b>
<b>6. Age</b>	• <b>Unemployment</b> • <b>Differential wages</b> • <b>Work-related injury</b>	• <b>Affirmative action</b> • <b>Employment opportunities</b> • <b>Social support/cash transfers</b>	• <b>Self-devaluation</b>	• <b>Chronic unemployment</b> • <b>Social exclusion/marginalization</b> • <b>Income inadequacy</b> • <b>Old-age poverty</b> <b>Despair/depression</b>
<b>7. Education</b>	• <b>Unemployment</b> • <b>Informal work</b> • <b>Low pay</b>	• <b>Employment opportunities</b> • <b>Training</b>	• <b>Self-devaluation</b>	• <b>Chronic unemployment</b> • <b>Social exclusion/marginalization</b> • <b>Income inadequacy</b> • <b>Deferred ambition</b> • <b>Despair/depression</b>

#### 4.2.1 Ill health and Chronic Urban Poverty

It was highlighted in literature review in chapter two that livelihood insecurity is one of the chronic poverty traps. This is because it is associated with income inadequacy and persistent deprivation. The study found that ill health was one of the correlates of livelihood insecurity. In general, ill health was found to be associated with a high risk of chronic unemployment. Casual workers who became ill found it difficult to secure work because unskilled casual work is largely based on physical labour. Since poor health generally leads to inability to undertake physically demanding work, ill health among casual workers was associated with loss of work opportunities. This leads to loss of income and severe deprivation. Consequently, it can be surmised that physical well being is critical to the welfare of unskilled casual workers since it enables them to earn a livelihood. Conversely, ill health is a poverty stressor as it leads to inability to secure suitable work.

One FGD participant indeed noted that casual work is associated with chronic urban poverty among casual labourers because it leads to '*vulnerability to sickness*'<sup>4</sup> In other words, vulnerability to poor health was synonymous with chronic urban poverty, which was defined as. . '*being sick without having money for treatment*'<sup>5</sup>. Many casual workers were found to lack adequate social protection in case of ill health, meaning that serious or prolonged illness was highly likely to push them into chronic poverty. This is because it would reduce their ability to work, resulting into income inadequacy and inability to fulfil basic needs.

Ill health was also found to be associated with a high risk of abandonment. A respondent noted that unskilled casual workers are prone to being abandoned by their relatives because illness imposes a cost on caregivers. These costs include financial, emotional and time constraints, which negatively affect the relationship with the casual worker. This is attributable to the modest socio-economic backgrounds of many casual workers, which makes prolonged illness of a family member a big burden on them as resources have to be put aside to care for the ill. As one female respondent expressed it, chronic poverty is... '*being abandoned by family...due to illness*'<sup>6</sup> Casual workers who become seriously ill are thus **highly vulnerable** to chronic poverty due to the risk of abandonment by their families.

<sup>5</sup> Participant #3, FGD 1 [Females], Greenfield Estate, 2007  
<sup>ibid</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Participant #6, FGD 1 [Females], Greenfield Estate, 2007

One respondent, for example, pointed out that she was abandoned by her family due to illness. As she put it, one of her relatives used to provide her with financial support but... *'this ceased when I got sick...my land inheritance has [also] been grabbed by my relatives'*.<sup>7</sup> Jennifer, the respondent, says she was denied access to the family land by her relatives. Jennifer, who is HIV+, concludes, therefore, that those who are infected with HIV/AIDS are relatively more vulnerable to discrimination than others.

A participant in another FGD concurred with this view pointing out *that... "HIV/AIDS leads to inability to work... [and] when the sick die, they leave a burden of caring for their children"*<sup>H</sup> In yet another example, a female respondent narrated how those with HIV/AIDS are discriminated against and the implications of this discrimination for their livelihood. She noted:

- *AIDS patients are discriminated against...by being dismissed from work when their health problems reduce their ability to work [if physically weak]...this makes them unable to meet their basic needs.. Many are exposed to a lot of stress...which contributes to their premature death...these people are unable to earn a decent living... they die unnecessarily...because, nowadays, ARVs can prolong the life of AIDS sufferers '.*<sup>9</sup>

Casual workers were found to rely heavily on public health institutions and none had any private medical insurance cover. Given that many public health institutions are overstretched in terms of staff and facilities, ill health was found to pose a serious threat to the wellbeing of casual workers.

To deal with the vulnerability associated with ill health, casual workers adopt several coping strategies: they may work while unwell, thereby worsening their health status; they may conceal the nature of their illness from their family, friends and employer, thereby suffering **in** silence; they may engage in self-exploitation, which entails working for long hours for low **pay**; hence worsening their health status; or they may skip work so as to rest, leading to loss of earnings.

\ case in point is 32 year old Jennifer, a domestic casual worker. Jennifer is married and **anxious** about her health status but she is afraid to seek medical attention. This is because she fears being stigmatised if she tests HIV positive. Jennifer says that... *7 do not complete a*

Case Study 1 »  
Participant # 3, Josephine, Female respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
Participant # 1, FGD II [Males], Green field Estate, 2007.  
Participant # 6, FGD I, [Females], Greenfield Estate, 2007.

month without going to hospital or being bed ridden... [however] I am afraid to find out the true cause of my illness...it could lead to stress'.<sup>10</sup> Jennifer cannot, therefore, benefit from early diagnosis of her illness. This means that her illness is likely to progress to a state of chronic poor health before she seeks proper medical care. By the time Jennifer gets courage to visit a doctor it may be too late to get effective treatment. This could affect her future ability to work. Her illness, therefore, is likely to drive her into chronic poverty or premature death.

Jennifer's fears about seeking treatment are not uncommon. They arise out of the social stigma attached to HIV/AIDs. Social stigma could lead to discrimination on grounds of ill health resulting into inability to find work. As argued earlier in the literature review, social stigma gives rise to 'spoilt identities', which necessitates remedial action to eliminate the source of stigma (Goffinan, 1963). Jennifer's refusal to seek medical treatment can thus be seen as an attempt to maintain a positive self-image. By refusing to explore the cause of her illness, Jennifer protects herself from potential stigma attached to HIV positive status.

As an example, Josephine is a 49 year old HIV positive grandmother. Josephine is demoralised and has low social expectations due to her past experiences with care providers. She is sceptical about seeking assistance from others because, as she says...<sup>4</sup>*a church official used my illness as a pretext to collect money from our congregation... I never got the money*<sup>11</sup> This betrayal of trust by someone in authority illustrates how the poor are vulnerable to exploitation by those they depend on for their well being. Often times, they are left bewildered by the lack of concern over their welfare. This tends to undermine their confidence and ability to seek assistance since they are fearful of rejection and thus develop low expectations of satiety.

Although Josephine has access to some medical services, she is dissatisfied with the church run health facility where she receives ARVs. She explains...*'the church does not provide me with nutritional support...my two grandchildren also cannot be treated at the health facility...because I am not their biological mother... they cannot get free medical care like I do'*<sup>12</sup>

to

<sup>11</sup>Case Study #2, Jennifer, Female respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> <sup>U 3</sup> Josephine, Female respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

Josephine does not understand how the church, as sponsor of the health facility, can purport to take care of her health without taking into consideration the contingent factors affecting her health, such as her responsibility to her grandchildren. In her view, her grandchildren ought to have access to medical care at the health facility. The import here is that lack of a comprehensive medical cover compounds her poverty challenge as it adversely affects her wellbeing.

Josephine is frail but still has to take care of two grandchildren left in her custody by her daughter. Her daughter is unemployed and lives in a far away town. She occasionally sends money for the upkeep of her children but when she fails to do so Josephine has to support them by doing odd jobs in the estates, such as washing clothes. This is a difficult task for her as she is recovering from tuberculosis. Josephine, as such, cannot do heavy manual work. Her illness, therefore, limits her work options and income streams since most available casual work is manual in nature. Josephine's health status thus contributes to her poverty because it makes it difficult for her to find suitable work regularly. This leads to income inadequacy, poor nutrition, poor health and chronic poverty.

lear of illness was thus found to be pervasive among casual workers. Many expressed concern about the potential effects of their inability to work. This, they felt, would definitely lead to chronic poverty. As one respondent put it... *'many casuals have no accident [medical insurance]*<sup>13</sup> This means, therefore, that any serious injury which makes it difficult for them to work puts them at risk of chronic poverty as many have no alternative sources of income or support. A case in point is 48 year old Angela who works as a domestic casual worker. Angela has no medical cover and says her major concern is sickness that can render her incapable of working. This, Angela says... *'would lead to loss of income'*<sup>H</sup> Angela has one child and three other dependants who are her deceased sister's children. Angela is thus worried that in case she falls sick and is unable to work her dependants would be vulnerable to chronic poverty.

John is another example of vulnerability to illness. At 23 years old, John is married with two children and is a casual worker in the construction industry. John has no medical insurance<sup>8,1</sup> is vulnerable to work related injury. He is acutely aware of his vulnerability and says...7 *afraid of loss of income in case of poor health because casual work is based on the use of*

<sup>U S ^ S 1 \ 1, 2, FGD</sup> Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>y</sup> Angela, Female respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

*physical labour*)\*The lack of medical insurance worries him a lot because of the effect it would have on his family if he were to find himself unable to work. For John, the main form of social protection is the support of friends in case of emergency. However, this is an unreliable form of insurance, especially for major or prolonged illness as it relies entirely on goodwill. As such, there is no guarantee of assistance in case of need and this heightens his feelings of vulnerability.

These examples show that ill health is a major correlate of chronic urban poverty among casual workers because of their dependence on their bodies for their livelihoods. Since many casual workers lack medical insurance to mitigate illness, ill health affects their ability to work and leads to negative outcomes for themselves and their families.

Discrimination on the basis of ill health occurs either because ill health leads to inability to undertake physically demanding work or fear of contagion. Ill health thus leads to erratic and/or extended unemployment for the affected casual workers. The resultant strain on their families then leads to further discrimination in their homes and/or abandonment. This situation is made even worse by lack of access to formal social protection by most casual workers.

Ill health can thus be said to be a key driver of chronic urban poverty because it triggers multiple poverty stressors. The first poverty stressor is chronic unemployment, whereby individuals go for weeks or months without getting hired and have to depend on others for their survival. This increases their chances of being abandoned by their family and friends due to the burden of caring for the long term ill.

The second poverty stressor associated with ill health is low productivity, occasioned by low energy levels due to poor health. Low productivity leads to income inadequacy as a result of low earnings. The third poverty stressor associated with ill health is rapid depletion of assets in response to the demands of treatment. This is occasioned by the need to purchase drugs and visit health centres. The fourth poverty stressor arising from ill health is poor nutrition, which is predicated on inadequate income. Poor nutrition tends to compound the illness leading to a vicious circle of deprivation. The fifth poverty stressor linked to poor health is Persistent anxiety about how to meet basic needs. This leads to shame, self-devaluation and

| \* e S t u d y # 5 > John% Male respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

social isolation of ill casual workers. Social isolation then deprives the ill casual worker of much needed social capital, thereby accelerating their descent into chronic urban poverty.

#### 4.2.2 Ethnic Discrimination and Chronic Urban Poverty

Ethnic discrimination in the literature refers to action prejudiced on the basis of linguistic difference, race or national origin [insert reference]. According to Kabeer (2006), ethnic discrimination entails the labelling of individuals and groups as culturally inferior on the basis of their linguistic affiliation, race or nationality. Ethnic discrimination can thus be interpreted as an attempt to preserve 'in-group privilege' in the face of competition and thus motivates the social exclusion of minorities.

Ethnic discrimination was found to be associated with a high risk of unemployment, unfair competition for work and differential wages among casual workers. One FGD participant observed that members of some ethnic groups get work with relatively more ease than others, arguing that... *'some casuals go for weeks without work... [while] others get up to three jobs in one day'*.<sup>16</sup> This differential access to work was attributed to larger ethnic groups discriminating against smaller ethnic groups in their competition for work. Ethnic discrimination was thus said to contribute to the chronic poverty of minority ethnic groups because it directs economic benefits to the bigger and more dominant ethnic groups.

This view is supported by a second FGD participant who stated that... *'in 'jua kali' (informal sector) there are people who prefer their ethnic group... if you come from a different ethnic group you are denied work or told you are late for work that day'*.<sup>17</sup> This claim is corroborated by a third FGD participant who was categorical *that... 'tribalism [ethnic preference] is common... [because] some ethnic groups get work more frequently than others... [it] depends on who is hiring... [especially] the supervisor at a work site'*.

These responses reveal that getting casual work at a construction site is dependent on one's ethnic affiliation relative to that of the person hiring. Ethnic discrimination at construction sites was largely blamed on foremen who were said to prefer hiring members of their ethnic groups was explained as aimed at avoiding potential confrontation in cases where wages are delayed by a contractor. As one respondent argued, *... foremen take comfort in*

<sup>16</sup> EST!! FGD # Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>17</sup> EST!! FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

*dealing with their tribesmen because they feel that they can reason with them in case they have problems getting money to pay [us] the casuals'.<sup>18</sup>*

These examples show that ethnic discrimination is a factor in chronic poverty outcomes because it leads to disparity in the frequency of getting hired between members of large ethnic groups and those from small ethnic groups. This disparity in access to work was found to be a major source of jealousy among the casual workers and fuels ethnic suspicion and hostility at the work site. This suspicion and hostility is further amplified in other spheres of social life and may explain ethnic tensions at the national level. This has been demonstrated by media reports which reveal ethnic conclaves in fields such as public administration and academia.

The study found that casual workers who experience ethnic discrimination responded with reverse discrimination, ethnic profiling, excessive individualism and lack of cooperation. This is explained by the fact that in their struggle to survive, casual workers are coerced into ethnic conclaves in order to access work. However, even within these ethnic conclaves competition is stiff. One participant, for example, noted that... *'envy [rivalry] between colleagues/friends leads to undermining one another...there is little cooperation...no one wants the other to ascend to a higher [social] status'*.<sup>19</sup> This implies that competition for work promotes disharmony and undermines team spirit among casual workers. This is demonstrated by the claim that dominant ethnic groups use unorthodox means to retain monopoly over work. As one male FGD participant put it... *'outsider tribes are given heavy tasks [undesirable work] to make them quit the job'*.<sup>20</sup> This strategy is geared towards maintaining choice work for the in-group.

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Economic dominance was further found to be reinforced through propagation of negative stereotypes about other ethnic groups. This served to provide justification for continued ethnic discrimination. For example, it was claimed that some ethnic groups are denied work on account of not being aggressive enough since they purportedly charge less than other ethnic groups for the same work done. This view is highlighted in the comments of one Participant who argued that... *'some tribes charge less for work ... this makes them to be*

» 11 " ! \* ? TM ! 8 - FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
,, 1b) d k' Pant # to, FGD » 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

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<sup>18</sup> f F W, Pam I 8, FGD # 2, Males - Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>19</sup> a, c, Pant # 10, FGD U 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>20</sup> b

*denied work...some charge more...also, quality of work output matters...panel beating is associated with Luos, trench digging with Luhyas* <sup>21</sup>

It is noteworthy that the foregoing excerpt is based on the assumption that skills are intrinsic to ethnic groups. This assumption has no scientific basis and needs to be understood as an outcome of social arrangements. It is more likely that casual workers find it easier to obtain work through family networks and associates. This leads to ethnic agglomeration in certain occupations, which then falsely serves to attribute skill to ethnicity.

It can be argued, therefore, that stereotyping reinforces social discrimination by providing justification for negative behaviour. It was alleged, for instance, that some ethnic groups are perceived as untrustworthy, which serves as justification for their exclusion from casual work. One participant stated that... *'the Kikuyu are considered thieves [untrustworthy] and denied work...in turn they network amongst themselves to secure available work'*.<sup>22</sup> This claim indicates that ethnic discrimination by one group invites reverse discrimination by the affected groups. This occurs when members of the excluded group gang up to secure available work for their members; especially when one of their own is in charge at a work site.

It can be inferred from the foregoing that competition for work makes it difficult for unskilled casual workers to obtain work in a fair and equitable manner. They thus have an incentive to undercut each other resulting into generalised low wages for casual work. This situation can be explained by the economic principle of demand and supply. Where supply exceeds demand there is a negative push on real wages. Consequently, the affected casual workers seek to increase their bargaining power by forming ethnic networks which give them a measure of collective bargaining in the absence of formal trade unions.

The perception that some ethnic groups undermine the collective self-interest of casual workers by *'charging less'* for work done, furthermore, was used to justify discrimination against them. This was especially so where casual workers from one ethnic groups felt that they [casuals] should collectively demand higher wages for given jobs or at particular work sites.<sup>81</sup> Conversely, ethnic groups that were perceived to consistently *'charge more'* were

<sup>81</sup> p S T !!<sup>9</sup>, F G D \* 2> M a, e s - Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>Panel \* 3,</sup> U 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

excluded by the rest on account of their perceived greed. This '*greed*' was seen as a threat to the general welfare of casual workers because it presumably reduced opportunities for securing work for the group.

In summary, the belief that ethnicity endows casual workers with peculiar character traits, on the one hand, propagates stereotypes and serves to justify ethnic discrimination. Reverse discrimination, on the other hand, comes into play to counter ethnic discrimination. Ethnic discrimination in both cases serves as a livelihood security mechanism in a competitive work environment. Persistent and widespread ethnic discrimination at work sites then leads to intra ethnic hostility/distrust, chronic unemployment, and marginalization of minority ethnic groups into undesirable work roles.

Patron-client relations between contractors/foremen and their artisans/casuals lead to economic marginalisation of those not well connected. This means that minority ethnic groups access work less frequently than majority ethnic groups. Consequently, numerically inferior ethnic groups find themselves forced to settle for undesirable work roles since dominant ethnic groups monopolise choice work.

Ethnic discrimination can thus be associated with chronic urban poverty because it gives rise to poverty disadvantages for minority ethnic groups who find it more difficult to access work. Irregular access to work in turn puts them at higher risk of deprivation and chronic poverty. In effect, casual workers from minority ethnic groups are more likely to fall into chronic urban poverty than those from large ethnic groups.

#### **4.2.3 Political Affiliation and Chronic Urban Poverty**

Political affiliation is the alignment of a person or group with a given political cause or party. Loosely conceived, it can also refer to support for specific political figures and their policies. Given that politics has been defined as 'who gets what, when and how' (Lasswell, 1935), Political affiliation can be interrogated as the mechanics of economic competition.

In Kenya, political affiliation is perceived as a means of accessing 'development'; generally understood as access to opportunities and resources necessary to improve quality of life of the individual and community. As was discussed earlier in the literature review, any form of differentiation into 'in' and 'out' groups can form the basis for discrimination. Consequently,

political affiliation becomes co-extensive with ethnic discrimination as both involve contestation over identities and resources.

The study found that perceived political affiliation of casual workers is associated with discrimination at the work place. One participant claimed... *'there is bias...based on political affiliation...support for a particular political leader translates into rivalry at work...persons belonging to an opposite political camp are denied work'*<sup>23</sup> This discrimination at the work place arises from the presumption that one's ethnic identity is coterminous with their political affiliation. Ethnic identity was thus seen as 'proof of alignment with particular political domains such as political parties or ethnic political leaders [presidential candidates].

Casual workers from different ethnic groups are thus presumed by their peers to be affiliated with particular political parties and agendas based on a shared ethnic identity with the key party leader. This ascribed political identity motivates political rivalry at the work place and leads to discrimination on grounds of political affiliation. Ascribed political affiliation was thus found to affect the ability of casual workers to get work, more so during election years. This is because finding work became contingent on being politically correct. Casual workers from dominant ethnic groups were found to network more easily in political and economic terms due to their large and highly diffused population. This demographic superiority enabled them to monopolize work opportunities. As one respondent explained,

*I think Kenyan politics is ethnic-based and people are highly individualistic... politicians have neglected the welfare of the people [electorate]...I have tried to get sponsorship for my grandchildren but I have not received a response in the last five years...It has [also] been difficult to obtain a plot of land for myself...I approached a local politician for assistance but I believe the land [allocations] meant for the poor was sold to people with money*<sup>24</sup>

His comment, coming from a member of a dominant ethnic group, however, serves to show that ethnic identity alone does not bestow economic advantage; rather, it is contingent on other socio-economic dynamics. In her case, her lowly occupation as an unskilled casual worker placed her at a disadvantage relative to the economically better off groups when it came to accessing bursaries and land. Nonetheless, within the domain of unskilled casual work she would derive distinct advantage in competing for work relative to members of minority ethnic groups. One of the ways in which ethnic superiority is institutionalised is

<sup>24</sup> (S T " 4, FGD # X Ma, es, Greenfield Estate, 2007  
"Wy\* 3, Josephine. Female respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

through the use of 'mother tongue' to transact business/ social interaction. This strategy is used to ring fence the in-group and lock out the out group since the out-group does not understand what is being discussed. It is not uncommon to find members of different ethnic groups conversing in their mother tongues within ear shot of each other despite the fact that they are attending the same function. This was witnessed during the FGDs where participants exchanged views in their mother tongue before translating when challenged to share their thoughts.

Inadequate social protection of casual workers was found to entrench discrimination on grounds of political affiliation due to lack of civic education on the right to equal treatment at the work place. Many casual workers were found to be powerless to fight political discrimination at the work place since they do not know how to enforce their right to equal treatment. This leads to higher rates of unemployment for politically incorrect ethnic groups and their marginalization into undesirable work roles. Unskilled casual workers from politically incorrect ethnic groups are, therefore, more likely to fall into chronic poverty depending on the ethnic composition of the ruling class. This explains why the Kenyan public is extremely sensitive about the ethnic composition of persons in authority, both in public and private sectors.

#### **4.2.4 Physical Disability and Chronic Urban Poverty**

In the literature, manifestation of difference was shown to grounds for social discrimination. Physical disability represents one of the fundamental signs of social difference and has been found to be associated with high levels of prejudice and discrimination (Kabeer, 2004).

Physical disability among casual workers was found to be associated with a high risk of chronic unemployment. This was due to the stigma attached to unattractive physical appearance as well as stereotypes about presumed inability to work of persons with disability. For example, one female participant observed that...*'those who look dirty do not get jobs...if your face looks rough for want of cleaning or has rashes you will be shunned'*<sup>25</sup> This statement implies that casual workers who manifest 'difference' are at a higher risk of being discriminated in access to work. This is because people tend to be attracted to the familiar and, all other things being equal, disability is socially perceived as a [threatening] deviation from the norm. This implies that casual workers with disability are more likely to encounter

Participant # 6, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

difficulty in finding work. Difficulty in finding work then leads to chronic unemployment, income inadequacy and chronic urban poverty.

This view on disability is corroborated by a female participant who emphasized that... *The physically challenged are disadvantaged...people prefer those without [physical] disability...even where the physical challenge is not relevant to the work to be performed*.<sup>26</sup> This observation is amplified in a statement from another participant who says that... *'some casuals are discriminated [against] based on personal appearance... skinny persons, fat people, 'ugly people' and sickly persons are not preferred* <sup>21</sup>.

These views on discrimination were, however, not widely shared among construction casual workers. As one construction worker noted, physical appearance does not automatically lead to discrimination, arguing that... *'physical appearance is not an issue in construction work...what counts is your physical endurance and willingness to do heavy work'*.<sup>28</sup> This divergent view can be explained by the nature of construction work whose physically demanding nature is likely to discourage persons with physical disability from seeking such work in the first place. This implies, therefore, that persons with major disability are unlikely to seek work in the construction industry. This may lead to adverse selection of workers in the industry in favour of persons *without* disability. This may explain why there were no persons with disability working as unskilled casual workers in the construction industry FGD group.

Casual workers with disability were also found to lack adequate social protection to cater for their special needs. Example<sup>^</sup>of necessary social protection include availability of public transport with provision for wheel chairs or ramps for ease of access to buildings. This public neglect of the needs of persons with disability is compounded by absence of broad-based employment opportunities in the economy. To cope with the challenges of disability, many casual workers were found to resort to self-devaluation, manifested as a diminished sense of self-worth. Self-devaluation has been shown to lead to low motivation to seek work due to fear of rejection. Fear of rejection in turn contributes to chronic unemployment, low income,

<sup>27</sup> ^ participant # 9, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>2\*</sup> ^ participant # 7, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

aTcipant # 12, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

despair, deferred ambition, mental depression and social exclusion. Self devaluation thus leads to long term material deprivation, poor health and chronic poverty.

#### 4.2.5 Gender Discrimination and Chronic Urban Poverty

Our literature review indicated that gender may be a significant factor in work allocation among casual workers. This was attributed to culture-based gender patterning of work (Odhiambo and Manda, 2004).

The study found that gender was indeed an important factor in determining access to casual work. This was showcased by the finding that heavy menial work was perceived to be the domain of men. This was attributed to cultural stereotypes about gender-appropriate work roles. As a female participant observed... *'women are rare in casual work in the construction industry... [because] many are discouraged by the demands of physical work...[that is] some jobs cannot be done by women'*<sup>29</sup> Better paying and more physically demanding casual work was thus found to be dominated by men. Conversely, women were found to engage in less physically demanding but low paying casual work; such as washing clothes and domestic work.

As an example of this division of labour among casual workers, there was road construction work going on at the study site in Greenfield Estate but the only visible female worker was a supervisor. It was observed that all the casual workers hand-laying stones for the road foundation were men. Scores of female casual workers could be seen, nevertheless, sitting idly within the vicinity as they prospected for casual domestic work. Apparently, women are perceived as physically weak and, therefore, unsuitable for prolonged heavy manual work. This viewpoint is illustrated by comments from a female participant who stated *that... 'women cannot do heavy work...hence; they are discriminated against on the basis of gender [Physical strength]'*<sup>30</sup>

A male participant in another FGD concurred with the gender-based role allocation, arguing that... *'some women fear heights in tall buildings...there are also very few skilled women Jundis'...there is an assumption that fundus' should be men'*<sup>31</sup> The participant felt that women lack the attributes necessary to cope with construction work. In his opinion, this was

<sup>29</sup> Interview # 4, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> Interview # 3, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Interview # 17, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

an innate weakness, arguing that...'*women's work is slow - they were bom thai way*'.<sup>32</sup> This view was, however, not shared by another male casual worker in the same FGD who argued that it all depends on the nature of the task. While generally agreeing that casual work was unsuitable for women, he was convinced that women had their areas of strength, arguing that...*[disagreement] but they [women] are faster in paying workers...they prefer administrative jobs, which are less physically demanding*'.<sup>33</sup> These comments indicate that there is a general perception amongst casual workers that women are unsuited for heavy manual work. This leads to women being locked out of many casual jobs as these tend to be heavily menial in nature. Consequently, women have less access to well paying casual work, which then increases their chances of falling into urban chronic poverty relative to their male counterparts.

One female respondent narrated further the difficulties female casuals face in obtaining work saying, ... '*pregnant women are discriminated against...[because] they are perceived as frail weak...[also]mothers with small children cannot effectively compete for jobs...this is because they lack moneyfor hiring house help...[thus] they spend much oftheir time nursing their babies*',<sup>34</sup> Mothering was thus identified as being especially difficult for casual workers because it made huge demands on their time.

One female participant explained this difficulty as follows: ...'*to find work mothers have to wake up very early... to prepare the children's food before work...they also leave work earlier than those without children...this reduces their working hours and leads to lower incomes*'.<sup>35</sup> It can be inferred, therefore, that mothering, especially for single mothers, is a debilitating experience; more so when combined with the dynamics of unskilled casual work with regard to irregular and low income. Gender thus affects female casual workers negatively and puts them at high risk of chronic urban poverty compared with male casual workers.

\* was further noted that the concerns of female casual workers are largely ignored by policy makers. As one FGD participant expressed it...'*politicians do not talk to female workers...we*

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>33</sup>

M arucipant « 10, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

:U 2> P GD #1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

I # 1 FGD #1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

*are not heard and our problems are unknown [no voice]*'.<sup>36</sup> This political neglect or 'voicelessness' may account for the apparent lack of social protection measures aimed at mitigating the effects of gender discrimination at the work place.

Consequently, many female casual workers cope by resigning themselves to their fate. They do this by internalising the culturally defined gender roles which presume that women are incapable of undertaking heavy menial jobs. Female casual workers were thus found to resort to **self**-devaluation as a means of identity repair. This is evident in their comments about female work roles and their aspirations for the future. Self-devaluation is associated with low motivation, which in turn leads to other poverty-related disadvantages. These include: chronic unemployment, patron-client relations, deferred ambitions, guilt, despair, depression, poor health, and even domestic violence.

#### **4.2.6 Age Discrimination and Chronic Urban Poverty**

Age as a demographic variable plays a peripheral role in most spheres of life with the major exceptions being in the fields of work and politics. This is because experience ostensibly increases with age. As discussed previously, any factor that can differentiate categories of people into 'in' and 'out' groups can become the basis for discrimination in any competitive situation.

In relation to casual work, however, old age was found to be positively associated with an increased risk of chronic unemployment because of the general perception that older workers are physically weak. One participant's comments highlight this belief thus... *"the young are energetic and enthusiastic to work... they have an advantage over older workers"*.<sup>37</sup> Similar sentiments were shared by a female participant who argued that... *'older workers...are perceived as physically weaker...customers say they want strong workers... 'wamama wa nguvu (physically strong women)'*<sup>38</sup> In view of the physical demands of most casual work, this perception is not entirely surprising as old age increases the risk of physical injury. The study found that ageing casual workers are at higher risk of chronic poverty due to their inability to effectively compete for work with younger workers. Younger casual workers were found to be relatively easier to underpay due to their inexperience and fewer family

<sup>36</sup> Pam # 10, FGD #1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>37</sup> Pam # 7, FGD #2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>38</sup> Pam # 4, PGD #1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

commitments. One participant argued, for example, that... *'older workers are perceived by customers as being more expensive since they have more family responsibilities...younger workers are preferred...they are cheaper...they have fewer responsibilities and less experience in bargaining'*<sup>39</sup> This gives younger workers an advantage over older workers in competition for work as they are more willing to take up lowly paid work since they have fewer family responsibilities.

Another common view was that older workers are unable to keep up with technology change. This renders them redundant especially in the face of competition from younger workers. As one participant explained...*'technology tends to change; hence, the older workers are not able to use new technology'*<sup>40</sup> This difficulty in adapting to changing technology is a major challenge facing ageing workers across the occupational spectrum, both locally and globally. However, because imskilled casual workers lack adequate social protection measures, they are less able to adapt to technological change. This makes them more vulnerable to chronic poverty as they age.

Due to widespread unemployment in the country, ageing was found to place older casual workers in an economically precarious situation due to competition from younger workers. To mitigate their plight, ageing casual workers were found to cope with competition from younger workers by working prolonged hours to make up for lack of speed, engaging in unsuitably heavy manual work (increasing their risk of physical injury) and self-devaluation. These strategies have negative outcomes for their health, such as excessive fatigue, physical injury, income inadequacy, poor health, low self-esteem and mental depression. Age discrimination was thus found to be directly related to chronic urban poverty among casual workers as it reduced their chances of earning a suitable livelihood.

#### **4.2.7 Low Education Level and Chronic Urban Poverty**

Studies indicate that level of education is positively correlated with increased life chances and enhanced lifetime earnings potential. Children of educated mothers, for instance, have been found to suffer lower rates of morbidity and mortality. Furthermore, university graduates in America have been found to earn more on average during their entire working

« L<sup>a</sup> 5 C, part n<sup>o</sup> 3 » P GD #1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
C, part n<sup>o</sup> 4 » FGD # 2, Males. Greenfield Estate, 2007.

career than non-university graduates. These studies imply that workers with low level of education are more at risk of poverty than their better educated colleagues.

Low level of education was found to be positively associated with high levels of underemployment, informal work and low pay. As one FGD participant explained it... *'this [casual] work does not need education...it only requires good physical health and good eyesight'*<sup>41</sup> Casual workers with vocational skills were thus found to be less likely to fall into chronic poverty because possession of these skills leads to higher bargaining power and more work opportunities. In comparison, casual workers without vocational skills were found to be vulnerable to high rates of unemployment. This is because they have fewer work opportunities and less bargaining power, which leaves them at the mercy of employers. One FGD participant expressed it this way... *'casuals have low bargaining power...because they desperately need work'*<sup>42</sup> This makes it difficult for casual workers without vocational skills to negotiate decent wages.

In effect, employers were said to take advantage of the large pool of unskilled casual workers to underpay them. This 'reserve pool of labour', as it is called in economic terms, tends to exert a downward pressure on wages, meaning that casual workers with low educational attainment are poorly placed to bargain for higher wages. Consequently, casual work generally commands low wages, which tend to be insufficient to meet the basic needs of casual workers, this predisposes them towards chronic urban poverty.

As one male respondent lamented... *'there is dictatorship by job owners...there is no negotiated wage for casuals...employers decide what to pay'*<sup>43</sup> This situation can be further explained by the fact that unskilled casual work is largely seasonal. This means casual workers are not able to entrench themselves at the work place in a way that makes the employer highly dependent on them. As such, employers have the upper hand in wage negotiations; since they can terminate the engagement with ease and have access to many more workers to choose from.

Surplus labour, therefore, enables employers to dictate terms of engagement for casual Workers. This means that many casual workers are unable to demand the statutory minimum wage. In fact, the majority of casuals interviewed were unaware of the minimum wage as

<sup>41</sup> Pant H 18, FGD U 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> Par S 1 9, FGD \* 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>43</sup> FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

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<sup>43</sup> Par? \* 11 H 9, FGD \* 2, Males > Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
# 10, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

evidenced by their answers to the structured questionnaire. This inability to negotiate a minimum wage leads to insufficient earnings to meet basic needs. Consequently, casual workers need to find work more frequently to meet their basic needs than would be the case if they earned the minimum wage. This is because the minimum wage is by design meant to cater for basic needs. Since unskilled casual workers desperately need to find work regularly, they are vulnerable to exploitation as they cannot withhold their labour to bargain for better wages. Low education and its attendant low wages, therefore, limits exit options for unskilled casual workers and can thus be directly linked to their chronic poverty outcomes.

The study also found that for many of the casual workers casual work is a socially demeaning occupation undertaken out of necessity. In fact, casual work was perceived as offering few opportunities for advancement or escape from poverty. This is exemplified by comments from one FGD participant who argued that... *'there are no prospects [for casual workers]...these are dead-end jobs...for survival...we go for weeks or months without finding work'*<sup>77</sup> The perception that manual work is an undignified occupation can be attributed to its tedium and low pay as well as the colonial practice of requisitioning forced labour. Manual work in Kenya is thus socially perceived as 'burdensome' and a preserve of the uneducated.

The negative connotation of manual work implies that for many unskilled casual workers casual work is not their occupation of choice. Its uptake is contingent, rather, on non-availability of other options. This ensures that many casual workers approach their occupation as "transitory". This, in local parlance, is known as 'kitu cha kushikilia' or 'something to hold on to' as they await better opportunities to come by. As such, many casual workers fail to capitalise on the opportunities offered by their casual work, such as networking with the people they meet regularly or the opportunity to identify a professional niche and seek further training for career advancement.

Alternative livelihoods are few for many unskilled casual workers, however, mainly because they lack the requisite education and skills to take advantage of other opportunities. Many unskilled casual workers also lack start up capital and the risk profiles of entrepreneurs. This means that business is generally not an exit option for them. Given their precarious existence occasioned by low and erratic incomes, few casual workers have the capacity to undertake *in search of* alternative modes of advancement.

<sup>77</sup> Participant # 8, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

Low education level was thus found to form a key aspect of casual workers' social identity. It defined their perception of who they are and what they can or cannot do. Consequently, the internalization of a devalued social identity arising from a lowly occupational status served to limit the universe of work options they perceived to be available to them. This is because finding work as then seen as dependent on luck. This perception can be said to inhibit the search for alternatives since it externalises the 'locus of control'. In other words, many casual workers believe that they have few or no marketable skills due to their low education attainment. Consequently, they effectively stop seeking out alternative opportunities for personal advancement and this leads to self-devaluation and feelings of powerlessness.

Low level of education can thus be associated with chronic poverty outcomes because it defines casual workers' self-identity, determines their level of life skills, ability to find work, the level of pay and opportunities for advancement. This means that the less educated the casual worker, the higher the chances of falling into chronic poverty.

#### **4.4 Summary and Conclusion**

Social discrimination among casual workers was manifested in seven facets. These were: ill health, ethnicity, political affiliation, disability, gender, age and education. These indicators were found to lead to poverty disadvantages for affected casual workers thus placing them at high risk of chronic urban poverty.

Ill health increases the likelihood of falling into chronic poverty due to social stigma and/or abandonment arising from poor health. Social stigma and/or abandonment lead to social exclusion of affected casual workers. This makes it difficult for them to earn a regular income. In addition, lack of formal social protection and inadequate medical cover also mean that casual work is attended by chronic anxiety about inability to work that may be occasioned by ill health. This leads to suffering, defined as persistent exposure to risk and vulnerability to poverty stressors.

Ethnic discrimination increases the likelihood of casual workers from small ethnic groups into chronic poverty more than those from larger ethnic groups. This is because workers' ability to find work is influenced by the ethnic identity of the person hiring \* a f<sup>o</sup>r<sup>e</sup>m<sup>a</sup>n at a work site). Further, ethnic discrimination leads to marginalization of

small ethnic groups into undesirable work roles. This is because choice work is taken up by the larger and better networked ethnic groups.

Political affiliation, as an ascribed identity, increases the risk of social discrimination at the work place due to the perception that ethnic identity is coterminous with political affiliation. Casual workers from politically incorrect ethnic groups are more likely to be discriminated at work sites leading to loss of work opportunity or marginalization into undesirable work roles. This increases their chances of falling into chronic urban poverty.

Disability increases the risk of social discrimination against casual workers due to stigma attached to physical appearance and the perception that persons with disability cannot undertake certain types of manual work. This reduces the ability of persons with disability to find work and increases their chances of falling into chronic urban poverty.

Gender discrimination reduces work opportunities for women due to culturally defined work roles. This increases the likelihood of women falling into chronic poverty because the better paying but more menial jobs are the preserve of men. Further, mothering, as a correlate of female gender, is attended by challenges in finding work for nursing mothers due to lack of social support structures. Single mothers are especially at increased risk of chronic urban poverty due to reduced working time and limited mobility occasioned by the need to take care of their children.

Age discrimination reduces the ability of older casual workers to compete for work with younger workers because they are perceived as physically weaker and less technologically savvy. Further, employers prefer younger workers who are perceived as faster and economically less demanding as they have fewer family responsibilities and possess less refined negotiating skills. Age discrimination, therefore, increases the likelihood of older casual workers falling into chronic urban poverty.

Low education level, or lack of technical and vocational training, increases the likelihood of casual workers falling into chronic urban poverty. This is because it reduces their bargaining power and constrains their ability to identify opportunities for advancement. Low education level, as such, limits the perceived domain of action for the casual worker and increases risk

aversion. This makes it difficult for casual workers to escape poverty through venturing into business.

In conclusion, social discrimination, as a mechanism for mediating privilege, serves to explain how barriers work opportunities affects the chronic poverty outcomes of casual workers. Further, that the multiple social identities of casual workers determine their likelihood of falling into chronic poverty based on the contextual dynamics. We can infer, therefore, that the more the discrimination factors ranged against a casual worker, the more the likelihood of the casual worker falling into chronic urban poverty.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESOURCE DEPRIVATION AND CHRONIC URBAN POVERTY

#### 5.1 Introduction

We observed in chapter two that resources encompass both material and non-material endowments. It was further argued that access to resources is a reliable indicator of the level of resilience to poverty stressors because resources are positively correlated with 'capabilities and functionings' (Sen 1999). This means that the more resources at a person's disposal, the less the likelihood of falling into poverty. The discussion concluded that the chronic urban poor are likely to be persons who command meagre resource endowments, lay claim to few entitlements and suffer from high degrees of 'unfreedom' or limited options (Sen, 1999).

Unskilled casual workers were identified as one category of the poor who are likely to suffer resource deprivation due to the erratic nature of casual work and its attendant low incomes. These make it difficult for casual workers to accumulate resources that they can rely on in times of distress.

This chapter examines the second assumption of the study; that casual workers who experience resource deprivation are likely to be chronic poor because they suffer diminished capacity to cope with random shocks. It begins by describing the findings of the study in relation to resource deprivation. Thereafter, the relationship between resource deprivation and chronic urban poverty is discussed.

The discussion will seek to answer the following questions. First, how does resource deprivation precipitate (drive) chronic poverty among urban casual workers? Second, how does resource deprivation entrench (maintain) chronic poverty among urban casual workers? To

answer these questions, the discussion examines narrative data from two focus group discussions and eight life history interviews.

Table 2: Resource deprivation and chronic urban poverty

<b>Resource j deprivation</b>	<b>/ Suffering (risk and vulnerability)</b>	<b>Unmet needs (social protection)</b>	<b>* False beliefs' (identity repair)/coping</b>	<b>Chronic poverty outcomes</b>
<b>/1. Inadequate income</b>	<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inability to fulfil basic needs</li> <li>• Low quality asset base</li> <li>• Inflation</li> <li>• Economic exploitation</li> <li>• Dependency burden</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic needs (food, transport, shelter, clothing, medical cover)</li> <li>• Collective bargaining/Legal aid to enforce labour laws</li> <li>• Increased employment opportunities</li> <li>• Access to land</li> <li>• Affordable credit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indebtedness: rent arrears/debt default/frequent change of residence</li> <li>• Self-exploitation: work long hours for low pay</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malnutrition/poor health</li> <li>• Social exclusion: chronic indebtedness/slum residence/household instability/alcoholism/domestic violence</li> <li>• Economic exploitation: patron-client relations/ low pay/high risk jobs/chronic fatigue</li> <li>• Deferred ambitions: resignation/fatalism/risk aversion/mental depression</li> <li>• Little room for manoeuvre: assetlessness/ IGT poverty</li> <li>• Risk aversion</li> </ul>
<b>2. Inadequate education and training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low labour mobility: frequent unemployment/underemployment/informal work/job insecurity/ high levels of competition for work</li> <li>• Low income</li> <li>• Career stagnation/low social mobility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training/apprenticeships</li> <li>• Employment opportunities</li> <li>• Affordable credit/asset finance/business support services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deferred ambition/resignation</li> <li>• Early marriage/parenting</li> <li>• Superstition/witchcraft</li> <li>• Self-devaluation</li> <li>• Poor cooperative spirit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic unemployment/income inadequacy/chronic indebtedness</li> <li>• Assetlessness/risk aversion</li> <li>• Anger/despair/ mental depression/</li> <li>• 'Voicelessness'</li> </ul>

<p>3. <i>Insecure premises</i></p>	<p>fT <i>Eviction from business and residential premises</i> / • <i>Theft of personal belongings</i> • <i>Insecurity of person</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to land</li> <li>• Hawking rights</li> <li>• Urban planning: urban markets/stalls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slum residence</li> <li>• Squatting on public land</li> <li>• Illegal hawking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic anxiety over security of self and property</li> <li>• Recurrent conflict with authorities</li> <li>• Loss/damage to property during evictions</li> <li>• Frequent disruption of livelihoods</li> </ul>
<p>4. Inadequate Social services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate shelter/fuel/water/electricity/transportation</li> <li>• Environmental and health risks: sanitation, fire hazard, pollution</li> <li>• OHS: poor enforcement of industrial safety/labour standards/ risk of serious physical injury</li> <li>• Inadequate access to legal services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable public utilities (water, sanitation, electricity)</li> <li>• Public health education</li> <li>• Enforcement of OHS standards/ protective equipment at work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individualism/mistrust within SHG</li> <li>• Superstition: luck</li> <li>• Self-devaluation: hazardous work/uninsured risk</li> <li>• Delay seeking medical services/work while unwell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social isolation</li> <li>• Poor health: occupational diseases</li> <li>• Despair/mental depression</li> <li>• 'Voicelessness'</li> <li>• High cost of living</li> </ul>

The data table highlights four major forms of resource deprivation among casual workers. These are: inadequate income, inadequate education and training opportunities, insecure premises and inadequate access to social services. It was previously argued in the literature review that inadequate income is associated with an inability to acquire basic necessities, which makes it a precipitator of chronic poverty. It was also observed that while income is a major determinant of chronic urban poverty, it is in itself insufficient as a measure of urban deprivation. This is because low incomes can be mitigated through provision of public goods and services (Kedir, 2005). It was argued, therefore, that there is a need to identify complimentary non-monetary indicators of urban poverty in order to generate a deeper understanding of chronic poverty dynamics.

The literature further revealed that education and training increases ones' life chances. This led us to the inference that casual workers are at greater risk of chronic poverty due to their low education and limited training opportunities.

Insecurity of premises was found to contribute to urban poverty by disrupting the livelihoods of the poor and making them vulnerable to extortion by local authorities and criminal gangs. This observation enabled us to conclude that the chronic urban poor are likely to be persons inhabiting the least desirable urban spaces.

Finally, inadequate provision of social services was identified as a poverty stressor as it made life expensive for the urban poor. We therefore surmised that casual workers were more likely to be chronic poor if they experienced inadequate access to social services.

### 5.1.1 Inadequate Income and Chronic Urban Poverty

The study found that the average wage for casual work was very low and not sufficient to cater for basic needs, especially for persons with families. This is confirmed by a participant who noted that, *[casual work is]... 'lowly paid work'*.<sup>45</sup> The average wage for unskilled casual work was found to be about KSH200 per day for moderately demanding work (such as domestic work) and KSH 250 per day for intense physical work (such as construction work).

Wages were attributed to low levels of education and high levels of urban unemployment. These two factors together produce a cumulative negative push on real wages for casual work.

<sup>45</sup> Participant # 8, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

Casual workers generally complained that they were grossly underpaid and exploited. One participant argued that...*'we are vulnerable to exploitation because of being desperately poor...sometimes we have gone for days, weeks or months without work...so, customers take advantage of us...by paying very low wages [as low as 50/= per day]'*.<sup>46</sup> Casual workers were found to be easily underpaid because casual work is not organised labour. The casual workers generally did not belong to trade unions and this denied them the benefits of collective bargaining. One respondent observed as follows, *'...lack of cooperatives/trade unions leads to individualism; hence, no protection, no solidarity or meetings...bargaining as individuals leads to exploitation/low bargaining power'*.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, many casual workers have low education level which places them at a disadvantage when negotiating for wages. One participant explained it thus:

*'...Unskilled casual work is negotiated individually...trade unions are [therefore] not useful in negotiating the wages of unskilled casual workers. [The] wage depends on [your] bargaining power. [It] also depends on the employer's ignorance of prevailing rates [can be charged more]...it also depends on the employer's ability to pay. some are unable to pay much [which means casuals have to take what's on offer or forego the work]*

Casual work was also found to be irregular in occurrence due to seasonal variation in demand. This led to erratic incomes for casual workers. As one respondent narrated, *'...casuals are most affected because they search for work every day...at times they fail to find work'*.<sup>49</sup> As a result, many casual workers have very low personal savings and a fragile asset base.

Inability to save was a recurrent theme among many of the casual workers. This made them feel powerless as they were unable to change their livelihood configurations. Furthermore, they could not disengage from their current occupation without first getting an alternative source of income. A respondent argued that *'...having a family constrains escape [from casual work] due to recurrent expenditures, which are a priority...you cannot leave what you have to explore the unknown [risk aversion]'*<sup>50</sup> The urge to survive thus kept the casual workers going back to their occupation, hoping that each new day will be better than the previous one.

<sup>46</sup> Participant # 10, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007  
<sup>47</sup> Participant # 12, # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>48</sup> Participant U 9, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>49</sup> Participant n 12, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>50</sup> Participant # 4, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

Due to inadequate incomes, many casual workers expressed severe constraints on their ability to change their livelihood configurations. This is because there was little income left, if any, that could be used for personal development. Consequently, many casual workers were dependent on patron-client relations to survive. This entailed seeking favours from foremen at work sites and obtaining credit from shopkeepers. This made them vulnerable to manipulation and economic exploitation.

As an example, some casual workers reported being extorted for money by foremen at work sites in order to access work. They complained that they were required to forfeit part of their earnings as bribes to the foremen. Since their wages were paid through the foremen at the end of the day, it was difficult for them to avoid this arrangement. Those who declined to part with bribes risked not being hired the next day. As one participant expressed it '*...extortion/bribery. ..by foremen may reduce income for casuals - who have to split their earnings with the foremen*'.<sup>51</sup> Casual workers generally found it difficult to resist this exploitation because they desperately needed work. Furthermore, the foremen are the final authority when it comes to hiring casual workers at a work site. Extortion of casual workers is equally common at factories, where the foreman is replaced by the watchman at the gate, in this case, casual workers are forced to bribe the watchmen in order to gain entrance to the factory grounds where recruitment is conducted. In other cases foremen ask the watchmen to let in a given number of casuals and bribes act as incentives for the watchmen to allow in the bribe givers.

Due to high unemployment in the country and high levels of poverty, many casual workers are vulnerable to this extortio<sup>^</sup>because they have few other options for earning a livelihood. For many of them, casual work is the only source of income. Their situation is made even worse by inflation and high levels of dependency. Many casuals reported having many dependants who rely on their modest incomes. Consequently, inadequate income and a large dependency burden leads to high levels of 'capability deprivation' or 'unfreedom' (Sen,

This means that the casuals have few options for earning an alternative livelihood that enable them escape from poverty since they are unable to save and invest.

51 Part:

<sup>77</sup> Participant #8, FGD #1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

As an example, Jennifer, a 32 year old domestic casual worker has five dependants: two children, two brothers and a sister. She says the death of her grandmother six years ago affected her negatively *"...the [dependency] burden has now been passed to me...when I have no money my dependants suffer...one of my brothers has dropped out of school to work as a 'makanga' [public transport conductor] in order to help the other siblings go to school "*,<sup>52</sup> Jennifer argues that she is thus unable to save any money to start a business or improve her life because all her income goes to support her dependants.

A second example is John, a 23 year old construction worker. John has a total of six dependants: a wife, two children, two parents and a brother. While he is not entirely responsible for the upkeep of his relatives, they still expect him to chip in from time to time. John is a proud father and husband. He says the milestone of his youth was starting a family because, *'...people depend on me \* However, this has increased his responsibilities and he has thus set aside for the time being some of his earlier ambitions. He complains *'...I find the situation to be very stressful, which can drive one to alcoholism \*<sup>53</sup> John feels exploited at work and in his relationships with his family. He argues that *\..due to my large /dependency/ burden, I am not able to pursue my own goals...these people derive benefits from my meagre earnings and I am therefore unable to save any money \*<sup>54</sup> John is torn between self-interest and loyalty to his kin. Ultimately, group loyalty and fear of isolation force him to defer his ambitions in order to cater to the needs of his dependants.

Due to inadequate incomes many casual workers were found to have a chronic debt problem. They were indebted to landlords, shopkeepers, food vendors, friends and relatives. A participant explained, *'...the work if not continuous...there is constant accumulation of debts'*<sup>55</sup> This view was corroborated by yet another respondent who stated that, *'...you cannot get a loan or plan...you can get work for one month and stay without work for another Month or two [therefore]...savings end up being used during periods of unemployment'*<sup>56</sup> High levels of indebtedness were found to be associated with heightened anxiety as casual workers attempted to settle their financial obligations as well as meet their basic needs at the

<sup>51</sup> eS Udy # 2, Jennifer > Female respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>54</sup> CaS \*\* 5, John, Male respondent, Greenfield, Estate, 2007.

" Pari # 5, John > Male respondent, Greenfield, Estate, 2007.

v, p«jucipam # 4, FGD #2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

.pam U 9 > FGD # 2, Males. Greenfield Estate, 2007.

same time. Consequently, many were found to suffer from chronic stress, leading to negative health outcomes.

To cope with their erratic and low incomes, many casual workers were forced to skip meals so as to try and make ends meet. To many of the respondents, inability to access three meals a day was equated with being chronic poor. In fact, a female respondent defined chronic poverty as *'...sleeping hungry'*<sup>57</sup> Indebtedness was also said to be caused by frequent delays in getting their wages. This affected the cash flow of casual workers forcing many into debt. A male casual was of the opinion that *'...delayed payments lead to debts...upon payment of wages the money goes to clear debts...it is difficult to save anything'*<sup>58</sup> Delays in getting paid were attributed to cash flow problems encountered by contractors or craftiness by some contractors who were reluctant to pay the full wages at once preferring instead to pay the workers in instalment. This ensured that the workers would turn up to claim their wages thereby ensuring a steady supply of cheap labour.

To manage their debt problem, casual workers resorted to ingenious coping strategies. One common strategy used to manage debt was to pay rent in instalments. Most casual workers were found to live in slums for lack of affordable alternatives. Their landlords are, however, forced to tolerate late payment of rent because they understand the precarious income sources of their tenants. Generally, casual workers negotiate a mutually acceptable arrangement with their landlord to pay rent in instalments. This necessitates landlords to hire or recruit one of their tenants as a caretaker to collect rent. In the event of severe default the houses are locked by the caretaker until rent arrears are reduced. A male respondent explains: *'...tenants and landlords maintain a book where they reconcile accounts...rent payment is done in bits [instalments], depending on your cash flow...the book is a record of outstanding obligations by either party'*<sup>59</sup> This arrangement enables casual workers to match their rent payment with their income flows. Rent arrears of up to three months were found to be common amongst unskilled casual workers.

ncurring rent arrears and defaulting on personal debts was also considered a legitimate survival option in cases of extreme indebtedness. This strategy entailed moving residence to

<sup>57</sup> *Par 18, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.*

<sup>58</sup> *Par 18, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.*

<sup>59</sup> *Par 18, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.*

avoid having to deal with the creditor. In the words of one respondent, *'...some casual workers move house to avoid debts... when the shop debt reaches twice your monthly rent you may opt to change residence rather than pay up \*<sup>60</sup> This coping strategy, however, has the potential negative effect of reducing one's social capital and most likely aggravates the poverty condition for the casual worker concerned. This is because casual workers who move residence frequently are bound to lose their already established social support networks which form a large part of their social capital and is critical for survival, especially for low income workers.

Self-exploitation in form of working long hours for low pay was found to be another common survival strategy. One respondent expressed it thus:

*'...some of us have been denied lunch breaks...I once worked from 8am-6pm without a break...or being offered food [at a home-based juice making business-where they are hired to wash and peel fruits]. We stand for long hours at work...some of us have fainted from fatigue...we are not treated like human beings'*<sup>61</sup>

A variant of self-exploitation entails casual workers spending days on end at potential work sites in the hope that someone will come along to hire them. More often than not, this time is wasted as casuals average only three job hits per week. The lives of casual workers are thus characterised by severe social instability due to these erratic work patterns and low incomes. As a consequence, many suffer from malnutrition, general poor health and depression. It can be inferred, therefore, that the constant struggle for survival wears down their will to change their personal circumstances. This may partly explain the high levels of alcoholism and domestic violence witnessed in slum areas.

Most of the casual workers interviewed expressed variants of deferred ambition or resignation to their fate. A case in point is Angela, a domestic casual worker. Angela is 48 years old and a single mother. Angela says she is risk averse because she is weary of debt:

*'I never borrow money even when I have had a bad run at the work site...I prefer to sleep hungry rather than borrow money...[sometimes] I may leave home without eating breakfast...I do not normally eat lunch when I have no money. I take tea and sleep[hungry]'*<sup>62</sup>

Angela is proud to be self-reliant and alive but her expression of pride covers up much of her frustration at persistent deprivation. Whereas declining to borrow money enables her to have

<sup>60</sup> participant # 7, FGD #1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>61</sup> participant # 9, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>62</sup> case Study # 1, Angela, Female Respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

a measure of control over her life, it denies her the opportunity to invest and work her way out of poverty. This is because her low earnings from unskilled casual work do not leave her with sufficient savings that she can invest in a viable business.

Another example is Edward, a 25 year old construction casual worker. Edward is single but at the moment he has no alternative livelihood diversification strategy. He argues:

*'...my approach to life is individualistic...approaching other people exposes one's problems [ego defensive]...! first try to solve issues on my own...should there be a need to approach others, I go about it indirectly'.<sup>63</sup>*

Edward is striving to maintain a positive self identity, by projecting himself as self-reliant, yet he is barely making ends meet. Just like other casual workers, his existence is a daily struggle for survival due to erratic and low income. Nonetheless, like most young men, he remains optimistic for now that time is on his side and things may change in the near future. Because of this optimism, Edward does not belong to any association at the moment. He explains: *I... have decided to trust myself and do my own savings [self isolation]*<sup>64</sup> Edward also has no loans or debts. This is because, he argues, *'...my lifestyle cannot allow me to service a loan'*<sup>65</sup> However, by avoiding debt/loans, Edward is at risk of losing the opportunity to invest and build up his capital base. He is, therefore, in danger of becoming chronic poor when he takes on family responsibilities, unless he can come up with alternative income sources as he grows older.

These examples reveal that casual workers are weary of debt/risk averse. This is to be expected given their irregular income. The study found that personal debts are reserved for medical emergencies and for basic needs such as food and rent. It is difficult, therefore, for many casual workers to contemplate taking on additional risk for entrepreneurial activities. Consequently, many are unable to extricate themselves from poverty through borrowing to set up small scale business.

As a result of inadequate income, many casual workers require social protection. Key social Protection indicators were identified as: adequate and nutritious food, decent shelter, clothing, ;<sup>me</sup> (Hcal cover and affordable transport. For the ageing casuals, income support may be

<sup>64</sup> Case Study # 7, Edward, Male Respondent. Greenfield Estate, 2007.

« Ci « Udy U 7, Edward, Male Respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
Study # Edward, Male Respondent, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

necessary to pre-empt a slide into chronic poverty. Further, there is a need for enforcement of minimum wage as well as creation of more employment opportunities in the economy to mitigate the downward trend on real wages.

In addition, there is a need to institute mechanisms for settling wage disputes between casual workers and their employers. Casual workers complained that the current process of enforcing their rights through the courts was too demanding and therefore inaccessible to them. Many were also not aware of the role of the Ministry of labour inspectors and thus they had never tried to seek redress through them. Access to land could also help to alleviate the suffering of casual workers; as it would enable them put up small businesses and reduce their cost of rent.

### **5.1.2 Inadequate Education and Chronic Urban Poverty**

We saw earlier that level of education is a discriminatory factor since it is used to characterise people's presumed competence. In other words, education acts as a skill differentiator and confers social status. As such, persons with more education command relatively higher wages and social status than those with less education. Level of education can thus be said to affect access to resources because it influences earning potential.

Casual work was found to be populated by persons with low education levels and/or those desperately in need of work. This was explained as being due to low entry barriers since most casual work requires little or no training to undertake. In the words of one respondent '*... (casual work] is done by untrained persons or those from rural areas due to poverty...people have to start from down [unsktjied casual work] and climb the ladder*'<sup>66</sup> Another respondent concurred, arguing that, '*lack of education leads to inability to get decent work...it also leads to inability to socialize with the educated...such people become idlers / thieves / 'baby makers' (leads to targe families)*'<sup>67</sup>

These comments indicate that unskilled casual workers are conscious of the hierarchical and status conferring nature of education. Furthermore, that the menial nature and low pay of most casual work makes it unattractive to better educated persons. This is signified by a respondent who pointed out that, '*...lack of technical competence locks out people from some*

<sup>57</sup> p ^ 1 C l p a m n 1 > F G D U 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
, c, p a m # % F G D # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

*types of skilled work; such as interior design* <sup>68</sup> This low-end positioning of casual work on the occupational spectrum limits the flow of knowledge and skills to casual workers. This means that there is also little investment in education and training of casual workers by employers. This makes it difficult for them to acquire new knowledge and skills that they can use to work their way out of poverty. In addition, casual workers suffer from skill regression because their occupation does not offer them many opportunities for improving their skill set. This view is amplified by the comments of a male respondent who observed that, '*...[casuals/ lack knowledge for livelihood diversification* <sup>69</sup> Lack of adequate training and education then leads to casual workers being confined to low productivity work, which is associated with low income. As one casual worker expressed it, '*...many casuals lack education /skills to do business on their own* <sup>70</sup> Consequently, the study found that most unskilled casual workers do not have the capacity to work their way out of poverty without external intervention.

FGD participants further blamed their poverty on absence of training facilities. A male participant noted that, '*...village polytechnics are no longer available-[casuals] not considered by ministry of education [for funding]*'.<sup>71</sup> In the absence of training facilities, many casuals end up following in the footsteps of their close relatives and friends. This is because lack of exposure limits their knowledge of alternative options. Lack of training, therefore, makes it difficult for casual workers to venture into the unknown. This is aptly stated by one respondent who argues '*...children tend to follow their parents' occupation or trade - stone masons learn from their fathers [inter-generational transfer of skills]*'.<sup>72</sup> This implies that casual workers are easily trapped into poverty by following in the footsteps of their mentors and through lack of exposure to alternative livelihood strategies in the urban setting.

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To address the problem of resource deprivation, therefore, requires deliberate targeting and training of casual workers to enhance their skill sets. In particular, there is need for basic business and entrepreneurship training. This training can then enable them to work their way out of poverty through investing in micro and small enterprises. Many respondents repeatedly expressed the desire to be equipped with life skills'-understood as practical knowledge that

<sup>68</sup> Pan! # 2, FGD #2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>69</sup> Pan! # 4, FGD #2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>70</sup> Pan! # 7, FGD #2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>71</sup> Pan! # 7, FGD #2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>72</sup> Pan! # 4, FGD U2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

they can use to improve their lives. This, they felt, would help them avoid falling into poverty or assist them escape from poverty. One respondent, for instance, felt that there is a need to teach 'life skills' in schools arguing, '*...[poverty is due to] lack of training on 'life skills' (how to solve problems)...teaching students about poverty may help them to focus more on their studies and therefore avoid poverty when they grow up*'.<sup>73</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that for training to be effective in poverty alleviation, it needs to be complemented with opportunities for investment and job creation. This calls for good governance in the management of public affairs in order to create a favourable environment for investors-both local and foreign. At present, the management of urban authorities has failed to create a favourable environment for investment and job creation, which explains the high rates of urban unemployment and poverty.

From the foregoing, we observe that resource deprivation is a major cause of chronic poverty because it denies casual workers opportunities to work their way out of poverty. Low education level, as a subset of resource deprivation, forces people to rely on unskilled casual work, which in turn leads to inadequate incomes and chronic poverty. In view of the social and economic disadvantages associated with unskilled casual work, social protection measures are necessary to assist the very poor escape poverty. These measures include: training/apprenticeships, guaranteed work programmes, low cost credit to enable casual workers to engage in business and avoid borrowing at high interest rates; income support for the aged and the sick; market stalls, free hawking permits, business support services, enforcement of labour laws and access to information.

Additional social protection pleasures that can to cater for the needs of low income worker include provision of affordable public transport, low cost housing, adequate water and sanitation; and wholesale and retail markets. The economic activities attached to provision of social services in turn have the potential to provide work opportunities for many casuals and thus can contribute to combating urban unemployment and poverty.

Prom the foregoing discussion, we can conclude that resource deprivation is directly associated with chronic poverty because it predisposes unskilled casual workers to chronic

<sup>73</sup>pani C1pam # 3» FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

unemployment, low productivity work, income inadequacy, chronic indebtedness, 'assetlessness', deferred ambitions, despair and risk aversion.,

### 5.1.3 Insecure Premises and Chronic Urban Poverty

Our literature review indicated that secure residential and business premises are integral to the wellbeing of the poor (Bird, 2007). The state of the poor's abodes was thus taken as a good proxy for understanding their level of deprivation. It was therefore inferred that the chronic poor are likely to occupy the least desirable urban spaces.

The study found that unskilled casual workers are vulnerable to persistent insecurity of person and property. This is occasioned by lack of secure residential and business premises as evidenced in the following comment, *'[poverty is]...lack of business premises...leading to constant harassment by city council 'askaris' (local authority security people) and police*<sup>74</sup> Many casual workers complained of being evicted from their business premises, leading to loss of their livelihood. A female FGD participant explains: *'...frequent demolition of our business structures is a major hindrance...we do not have secure premises...we rely on empty spaces/roadsides. This makes our businesses vulnerable to demolition and/or extortion by authorities'*. Persistent and acute insecurity of premises, in turn, contributes to risk aversion. This, as has been argued elsewhere in this paper, means that the affected casual workers adopt a cautious approach to investment, since there is a permanent threat of eviction, destruction and/or loss of their investment infrastructure.

Theft of personal belongings was also found to be a common complaint among casual workers. One respondent expiored that, *'...casuals are forced to live with undesirables...you cannot progress due to insecurity!...when you go to work you have to wear your best attire I due to fear of theft] [laughter]'*.<sup>70</sup> When combined with the ever present risk of fire in slums, the long term effect of insecure premises is that many casuals do not invest in valuable assets that they can use to raise money in case of an emergency.

urthertiore, casual workers who venture into small business reported experiencing conflicts with authorities over business premises. This conflict often led to loss or damage of their

<sup>75</sup> Participant H 10, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Participant # 2, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
Clipam # 3, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

property during forced evictions. Frequent demolition of their business premises, especially by municipal authorities and land owners, leads to persistent anxiety over the security of their investments. Consequently, many casual workers were found to be in a 'permanent' state of transition, that is, they are always looking forward to improved conditions that never seem to come. Starting out in casual work, many venture into small business and hawking only for their livelihoods to be violently disrupted. This forces them to go back to casual work as a contingency measure. This cycle keeps repeating itself until they are finally trapped into poverty by increasing family responsibilities. These family responsibilities then make it more and more difficult for them to disengage from casual work.

#### **5.1.4 Inadequate Social Services and Chronic Urban Poverty**

As already mentioned, access to and distribution of social goods and services has an impact on the quality of life of the urban poor. According to the World Bank (2001), reduction in public infrastructure spending has negatively affected the quality of life of the urban poor by raising the cost of basic services. Furthermore, price decontrols have pushed up the cost of basic commodities, such as food, leading to negative welfare outcomes for the most vulnerable sections of the populations.

The study found that unskilled casual workers were highly vulnerable to inadequate access to social services. This was attributed to their low occupational status, which forced them to inhabit peripheral urban spaces, mainly slums. These habitats lack modern infrastructure and social services because many are unplanned settlements. As such, they are underserved by public services. For example, a respondent complained that *'...we lack basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and security...we are fearful for the safety of self and property'*.<sup>77</sup> Absence of basic amenities was found to cause casual workers to expend large amounts of time, money and energy to secure basic services such as water and sanitation. Inadequate social services were, therefore, found to contribute to increased poverty among casual worker as it increased their cost of living.

Overcrowding in residential areas was also highlighted as another common problem due to the inability of casual workers to afford decent housing. This was attributed to their erratic incomes, which necessitate them to seek the cheapest accommodation available. Many unskilled casual workers were thus forced to live in slums. As one male respondent

<sup>77</sup> Participant # 8, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

described it, '*[poverty is] living in a single room with a family*'<sup>78</sup> Another respondent caused laughter when he stated:

*Unskilled casual workers live in low-cost houses. for example, 'Kambi ya nguruwe' (a pig farm converted into an owner occupier scheme/site rented by casuals) along Saika/Kangtmdo road [laughter]. The rent is cheap... if you stretch your legs they enter your neighbour's house (tiny abodes) [more laughter]'*<sup>79</sup>

It was observed during the discussion that many of the urban spaces occupied by the poor tend to be illegal settlements on public or private land. There was, nevertheless, a shared perception among the casual workers that many rich people have acquired their wealth illegitimately. This belief contributes to disrespect for private property rights among urban poor and encourages them to try and put up their abodes/businesses on any empty space. This attitude is rationalized by claiming that the rich already own too much space. However, illegal settlements put casual workers at constant risk of eviction, thereby compounding their poverty.

The assumption that the rich have too much is exemplified in the following statement: '*...the rich have private houses with large compounds while the poor experience overcrowding*'<sup>80</sup> The perception that the rich occupy unfair acreage leads to contestation over ownership of land and frequent attempts by land owners to evict squatters. These conflicts in turn make it difficult for city authorities to provide social infrastructure and services in these settlements. Land disputes in Kenya are known to drag on for years, and sometimes they are characterised by arson, rioting, mass evictions and re-invasions/re-building of slum settlements. In the interim, the occupants of such settlements are forced to improvise to acquire basic services such as water, sanitation and garbage disposal. Improvisation, however, means that on average, the cost of basic services such as water and sanitation is higher in the slums than in the suburbs.

The high cost of living in urban areas further forces the urban poor to adopt survival measures which may have negative consequences for their health and wellbeing. One Participant, for example, noted that, *poverty is'...[inhabiting] an unwholesome living environment... characterised by lack of water and electricity [in an urban setting]*'<sup>81</sup> Many of

<sup>78</sup>Part Pam # FGD U 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

\* Part Pam # 16 FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

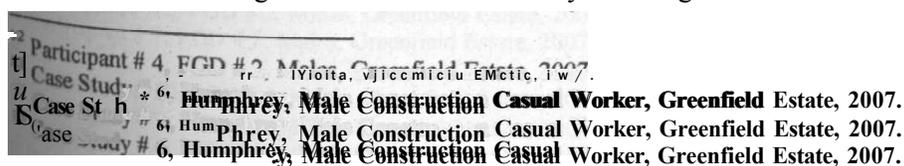
"Part Pam # 11, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

"Part Pam # 7, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

the unskilled casual workers were found to live in polluted and dangerous environments that straddle industrial areas, dumping sites and even an oil pipeline in Nairobi. Consequently, they spend a large proportion of their income on medical treatment; especially for malaria and diarrhoea caused by lack of basic social services such as water and sanitation. The challenges of living in unplanned settlements are, however, not lost on the affected, as illustrated by the following comment, '*...cheap is always expensive...lack of electricity leads to higher cost of living. We have to buy paraffin and batteries for our radios...water is also expensive in the slums*'<sup>82</sup> This quotation further indicates that for many casual workers slum residence is necessitated by the need to survive and not ignorance of the potential danger to their wellbeing.

A case in point is Humphrey's lifestyle. Humphrey is a twenty five year old construction casual worker. Married with one child, Humphrey lives in a low income settlement where his housing block has 2 toilets and 1 bathroom shared by approximately 15 people. He says the flush toilets are '*sometimes dirty*'. This appears to be an understatement given the large number of users. Furthermore, Humphrey laments, the nature of his residence (small and with many tenants) discourages use of charcoal '*...I cannot use charcoal in my single room because it's smoky*'<sup>84</sup> This forces him to use paraffin for cooking, which he argues is more expensive than charcoal. Overcrowding is a major concern for the tenants but Humphrey says the tenants have come to an arrangement for peaceful co-existence: '*...we deal with overcrowding issues such as nuisance in the plot by holding a meeting and reprimanding the offender*'<sup>85</sup> This local arrangement ensures a modicum of order as each tenant takes turns to clean the shared washroom facilities. A residents' committee also deals with difficult tenants and has powers to recommend their ejection from the premises for persistent violations.

Casual workers were also found to be vulnerable to high levels of occupational health and safety risks. This is attributable to weak enforcement of existing occupational health and safety laws by employers and municipal authorities. A common complaint was that labour officers were bribed by employers to neglect complaints filed by poor casual workers. In view of the complexity and cost of litigation, many casual workers felt that they could not enforce their basic right to a clean and healthy working environment. One participant, for



example, observed that *'...safety equipment is lacking [protective gear at work sites e.g. gloves]*<sup>86</sup> Another participant concurred, arguing that *'...cement eats our hands...the attendant need for treatment is a cost to us'*.<sup>87</sup> This view was also shared by a fellow respondent who argued that *"...inhaling cement dust shortens the lifespan of casuals [also]... there are no safety rails at the workplace... this exposes workers to hazards... such as falling*

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It is noteworthy that occupational safety and health regulations in Kenya require employers to take reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their workers. These requirements are however poorly enforced due to weak oversight capacity of the parent ministry, workers' ignorance of their rights and collusion between some labour officers and employers.

It was also highlighted that casual workers are exposed to the risk of water borne diseases due to lack of safe water at construction sites. This is demonstrated by the comments of a male construction worker who explained:

*'...(here are instances of shortage of clean drinking water at work sites. This is a common problem and it leads to water borne diseases due to use of untreated /contaminated water... casuals are fatso] exposed to poor hygiene in their eating places - there are many flies and an unhealthy environment that can lead to illnesses such as cholera'*<sup>w</sup>

The study further found that lack of access to affordable credit was cited as a major impediment to escaping poverty. Many casual workers felt that they could improve their livelihoods if they could access affordable credit to start or shore up their fledgling businesses. One FGD participant expressed the view that *'...[its] difficult to get a guarantor... casual workers find it difficult to obtain loans (for business)'*.<sup>90</sup> These sentiments were shared with another respondent who argued that *lack of capital to purchase equipment for skilled artisans prevents them from pursuing their profession or earning higher incomes'*<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, it would appear that the main problem is not just access to capital per se but lack of social support during the transition from unskilled casual work to small enterprise. It was noted, for

instance, that participants were concerned that they have very little space

„ Participant # 12, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
 W Part # 13, FGD # 2, Males - Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
 Part # 4, FGD U 1 Males - Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
 \* > Part # 10, FGD U 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
 " Part # 9, FGD U 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
 Part # 4, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

within which to manoeuvre when trying to change their livelihood configurations. This observation is validated in the comments of one participant who says:

*'...lack of capital [cash and other resources] is [not] the main obstacle., whereas one can scrap up enough money to start a small business... the biggest problem is meeting basic needs while the business picks up'.<sup>92</sup>*

This view is further supported by yet another participant who argues that:

*'...one needs money for rent, business premises and food before the business can stand on its own...several challenges confront the individual venturing into small business...lack of licenses leads to conflict with city authorities....although you can pay a daily fee of 25/= to the city council, this ends up being expensive [9000/= per year] .*

Whereas lack of capital is a recurrent theme among casual workers, the financial markets are awash with liquidity. Furthermore, numerous studies indicate that the primary problem of access to credit by small businesses is inability to demonstrate sound business plans and/or creditworthiness. As such, there is a discrepancy between the needs of the borrower and those of the lender centred mainly on information asymmetry. It has been established by numerous studies that lenders require accurate information to be able to assess credit risk, but that potential borrowers, especially low income and small businesses are unable to provide this information in a form acceptable to the lender. Consequently, lenders decline to lend since the applicant cannot demonstrate ability to repay the loan. This means that there is opportunity to assist casual workers to obtain credit by providing them with business support services or entrepreneurship training.

Casual workers also demonstrated ignorance of where to seek assistance in times of distress. As an example, the government of Kenya has programs to assist the very poor in times of distress, but few of the casual workers interviewed were aware that they could seek assistance from the provincial administration. This ignorance is captured in the views of one participant, who says... *'there is no assistance from government or religious organisations'* [some participants expressed surprise that relief food is sometimes distributed through the chief's office'. This shared perception that casual workers are a neglected lot is contained in the comments of another respondent who argues thus:

<sup>c</sup>Pant # 5 FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
M<sup>p</sup> Pan!<sup>r</sup> <sup>i</sup>Pant # 4, FGD # Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007  
<sup>p</sup>GD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

*'...there are no programmes to assist casual workers in construction work. S.H.G formed by casuals assist by giving loans' [Many of the participants agree that there are no formal organizations which can/are involved in assisting them improve their lives]'.<sup>95</sup>*

Lack of knowledge by casual workers on where to seek assistance can be attributed to their low education levels as well as lack of outreach programmes targeting the chronic urban poor. As such, many poverty interventions fail to reach the poorest of the poor, who tend to be highly represented amongst unskilled casual workers.

To cope with inadequate access to social services, many casual workers engage in illegal hawking or production and consumption of illicit brews. To enhance personal security and pre-empt eviction from business stalls, many also pay protection money to municipal council workers and criminal gangs which run parallel 'governments' in the slums. This extortion leads to further impoverishment of the urban casual workers.

## 5.2 Summary and Conclusion

The study findings reveal that income is a critical component of chronic urban poverty because it determines casual workers ability to meet their basic needs. All the same, income inadequacy is also associated with multiple factors attending casual work. This makes it necessary to understand the contextual dynamics when evaluating the effect of income inadequacy on chronic urban poverty. Contextual factors identified include the level of education and training, the frequency of finding work, wage rate, bargaining power, dependency, extortion/exploitation, seasonality of work, personal debts and social disruption. When considered together with pe income level, the contextual factors appear highly important in determining chronic poverty outcomes of individual casual workers than the wage rate considered in isolation.

The study also reveals that inadequate education and training opportunities initially cause People to take up casual work. However, the descent into chronic poverty arises from casual workers getting trapped into a cycle of deprivation. Low initial education consigns casual workers to low productivity work. This then leads to low and erratic incomes. Arising from

<sup>s</sup>< casual workers are unable to save and invest in their personal development. They then  
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an.C.pant n 4> **FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.**

despair and effectively suspend their ambitions for upward social mobility due to repeated frustrations of their efforts by structural factors. Consequently, casual workers retreat into a state of suspended existence, harbouring ambitions for the good life but not actively seeking it. This disengagement enables them to rationalise their low socio-economic achievement; because they are then able to externalise blame for their predicament to forces beyond their control.

Insecurity of premises was found to lead to unstable livelihoods due to frequent disruptions **caused** by conflicts over land ownership (illegal settlements) and location of business premises. Many casual workers who attempted to establish small businesses were forced to go back to casual work after their business structures were demolished by local authorities. Many others resorted to casual work after they were prevented from hawking in the city centre. Furthermore, slum residence was associated with perpetual insecurity of persons and property; making many casual workers weary of starting small business since they could not guarantee security of their property. Insecure premises made casual workers who ventured into business vulnerable to extortion and exploitation by criminal gangs and local authority personnel as they had to pay bribes to be allocated space and to carry on their business. This is because many cannot afford the annual license fee and opt to operate illegally. Consequently many casual workers were discouraged by the lack of control over their businesses and opted to do casual work for survival because while it subjected them to a low income, it was less frustrating than constantly doing battle with local authority personnel and criminal gangs over control and access to business sites.

inadequate social services were found to arise from the informality of the casual workers habitats. Due to irregular incomes, casual workers were found to occupy the cheapest residential premises comprised of slums and other informal settlements. These habitats are poorly served with social amenities, meaning casual workers have to rely on improvised solutions provided by local entrepreneurs. This invariably makes the cost of basic services such as water, sanitation and lighting expensive for casual workers thereby increasing their cost of living. Coupled with low and erratic incomes, inadequate and expensive social services thus predispose many casual workers to chronic poverty.

His study finds that resource deprivation is directly related to chronic urban poverty because it leads to high levels of capability deprivation among unskilled casual

workers. Capability deprivation, broadly conceived, is associated with irregular and low incomes, lack of basic needs, occupational health and safety risks, poor nutrition, risk aversion, and despair. Resource deprivation, therefore, serves to explain why casual workers fall into and remain in urban poverty as it subsumes within it the notion of capability deprivation.

## CHAPTER SIX

### SPATIAL DISADVANTAGE AND CHRONIC URBAN POVERTY

#### 6.1 Introduction

We saw earlier in our literature review that spatial disadvantage is associated with geographic remoteness, political exclusion and market failures (CPRC, 2008). These three factors, in isolation or in combination, it was argued, result into concentration of poverty in specific areas.

Geographic remoteness was said to affect the ability of the poor to access information, services and markets (Bird, et al., 2010). This makes it difficult for them to be fully integrated into the economy. It thus leads to loss of opportunities for improving their livelihoods. Geographic remoteness also causes social isolation, leading to reduced social capital which, as was shown earlier, is crucial in helping the poor cope with poverty stressors (Clever, 2005).

Political exclusion was associated with remoteness to centres of governance (Bracking & Hickey, 2005). This was said to contribute to marginalisation of the poor from decision making. Consequently, the needs of the poor were said to become secondary to those of the rich and powerful groups. It was argued, therefore, that the poor's lack political of "voice" or the inability to advance their social and economic agenda predisposes them to chronic poverty. This is because they are unable to lobby for the resources they need to escape from poverty.

Market failures were linked to information asymmetries, weak governance structures and economic distortions caused by a predatory ruling class (Sen A. , 2000). Coupled with under developed human rights frameworks, weak legal institutions and poor enforcement of Property rights, market failures were shown to increase the cost of business, institutionalise socio-economic inefficiencies and increase the cost of living for the poor. Market failures, as such, reduce economic opportunities; thereby making it more difficult for the poor to find work- This contributes to higher poverty levels among casual workers.

Spatial disadvantage, it was argued, leads to multiple disadvantages for the urban poor and is one of the ways in which poverty is transmitted (Bird et al., 2010). It was thus inferred that spatial disadvantage affects the ability of casual workers to change their livelihood configurations, which makes them more vulnerable to chronic poverty stressors.

It was further noted that a majority of urban poor live in slums and unplanned settlements. This was attributed to high levels of rural-urban migration, natural urban population growth and rapid expansion of urban areas without a matching investment in public infrastructure. It was also noted that casual workers generally live in slums as a coping strategy. This is because it enables them to access affordable housing and/or to be near their places of work. It was also argued that slums provide affordable housing through circumvention of urban planning and public health regulations. Slums were thus said to be an outcome of existing social arrangements which make access to affordable and decent housing a challenge for the urban poor.

The circumvention of urban planning and management regulations, however, was said to give rise to social, economic, environmental and health challenges for urban casual workers (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2008). These challenges were identified as: overcrowding, fire hazard, insecurity of persons; poor access roads, inadequate public transport; poor disposal of garbage and inadequate water and sanitation facilities. The location and state of the residences of casual workers were, therefore, identified as a possible indicator of the severity of their deprivation. It was surmised; hence, that the chronic urban poor are most likely to inhabit the least desirable urban spaces.

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This chapter examines the third assumption of the study, that casual workers who experience spatial disadvantage are likely to be chronic poor. It begins by describing the findings of the study in relation to spatial disadvantage. Thereafter, the relationship between spatial disadvantage and chronic urban poverty is discussed.

The discussion in this section seeks to answer the following questions: first, how does spatial disadvantage precipitate (drive) chronic urban poverty? Second, how does spatial disadvantage entrench (maintain) chronic urban poverty? To answer these questions, the<sup>8</sup> examined data from two focus group discussions and eight life history interviews.

**Table J: Spatial Disadvantage and Chronic Urban Poverty**

<i>Spatial disadvantage</i>	<i>Suffering (risk and vulnerability)</i>	<b>Unmet needs (social protection)</b>	<b>'False beliefs' (identity repair/coping)</b>	<b>Chronic poverty outcomes</b>
<b>1. Geographic remoteness</b>				
<b>(a) Distance to work</b>	<p>High cost of transport Excessive commute time Bad weather/Erratic fares when it rains Unavailability of public transport Insecurity Adverse legislation [e.g. ban on travel in open carriage/pickups]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable public transport</li> <li>• Credit to purchase bicycles</li> <li>• Transport provision by-employers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk to work</li> <li>• Forego work beyond walking distance</li> <li>• Resignation to the vagaries of nature (dust, rain &amp; sun)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic fatigue from walking long distances</li> <li>• Poor health: Erratic work: unable to secure regular work when they report late to a site</li> <li>• Reduced net income due to high cost of transport/ loss of earnings</li> <li>• Insecurity of persons</li> <li>• Harassment by police patrols</li> <li>• Exposure to the elements</li> <li>• Poor diet/skipped meals</li> <li>• Poor health/mental depression/ low energy-levels. lethargy</li> <li>• Diminished ambition</li> </ul>
<b>(b) Urban Spatial segregation</b>	<p>Urban zoning into commercial and residential areas Concentration of poverty' into distinct settlements Overcrowding/high densities Severe environmental health risks Poor provision of services Ethnic conclaves in settlement patterns Illegal settlements/squatting-insecurity Social exclusion/Marginalisation of the poor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated urban development</li> <li>• Planned urban poverty interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slum residence</li> <li>• Squatting</li> <li>• Criminal behaviour-illicit liquor</li> <li>• Unlicensed businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Segregated residential zones</li> <li>• Social exclusion</li> <li>• overcrowding</li> <li>• income inadequacy</li> <li>• highest levels of morbidity</li> <li>• high cost of basic utilities</li> <li>• poor waste management</li> <li>• Insecurity of land tenure</li> </ul>

<p><i>/ 2. Political</i> <i>/ Exclusion</i></p> <p><b>3. Market failures</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Economic and ethnic enclaves</b></li> <li><i>j</i> • <i>High cost of land</i></li> <li><i>j</i> • <i>Limited access to land</i></li> <li><i>/</i> • <b>Extortion by municipal authorities/gangs</b></li> <li>• <b>High cost of basic services e.g. electricity</b></li> <li>• <b>Few work opportunities</b></li> <li>• <b>Neglect of the needs of urban poor</b></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduced access to social and economic opportunities</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of decent work</b></li> <li>• <b>Lack of medium to large enterprises</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Municipal Housing</b></li> <li>• <b>Efficient public transport</b></li> <li>• <b>Effective representation</b></li> <li>• <b>Equitable access to basic social services</b></li> </ul> <p>^ <b>Planned development e.g. markets</b></p>
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## 6.2 Geographic Remoteness

Geographic remoteness broadly refers to spatial isolation, which can be understood as inadequate access to information, exclusion from political participation and poor access to markets. Geographic remoteness gives rise to spatial disadvantages which adversely affect the poor and predispose them to chronic poverty. With regard to urban areas, the study found that the major factors in relation to geographic remoteness were distance to work and urban segregation.

### 6.2.1 Distance to Work and Chronic Urban Poverty

Distance to work can be conceptualised as the number of kilometres covered to and from work or the time taken to move from one's residence to their work site. We saw earlier that many casual workers live in slums and unplanned settlements in order to access affordable housing. This, however, has the disadvantage of placing many of their residences far away from places of work. As such, distance to work can affect access to work opportunities since it limits the radius within which casual workers can prospect for work on foot. This is because the high cost of urban transport makes it difficult for many urban poor to afford it due to their low and erratic incomes.

The study found that distance to work was a major concern for casual workers. Further, that many casual workers walk to work to make ends meet. One respondent expressed it thus, *'...unskilled casual workers work everywhere...it depends on where the work is...distance [to work] determines what work gets taken up'*<sup>96</sup> This view was shared by another FGD participant who stated that, *'...where a person gets work determines whether the returns are worth it based on incidental expenses and the daily wage'*<sup>97</sup> In other words, despite availability of work in some sites, casual workers only took up work that increased their net gains from employment. Where the costs of getting to work outweighed the benefits, then such work opportunities were forfeited.

Long distances to work were found to have negative health consequences for casual workers. Casual workers reported suffering persistent fatigue from trekking long distances in the course of work. Persistent fatigue was found to affect their health and thus their ability to get the most out of their work. They had to take frequent breaks to recover from fatigue. As one respondent



<sup>96</sup> -Kollif 18, FGD H 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>97</sup> ^Pantfil 12, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

argues, *casuals are vulnerable to sickness due to fatigue caused by walking long distances and [heavy] manual work*.<sup>98</sup> It is noteworthy that walking is a healthy physical exercise in itself, but, as with any exercise, excessive walking can be harmful to the body. This is because it does not allow the body sufficient time to recover from wear and tear. Coupled with poor nutrition occasioned by low incomes, walking long distances is detrimental to the health of casual workers. In fact, many of those interviewed appeared malnourished and under weight.

Walking to work was also found to be associated with increased insecurity of persons. This was attributed to risk of violent crime and/or harassment by police. One participant narrated how this affects them, stating that *'...walking to work exposes casuals to robbery and some have been mugged as they use shortcuts to their work place*The police were also accused of persistent harassment of casual workers as they frequently arrested them on petty charges such as lack of identity cards or carrying suspect stolen goods (work tools).

In addition, walking to work was found to be affected by the weather. Casual workers explained that when it rains, walking to work becomes more difficult. When combined with the prospect of walking long distances without a guarantee of finding work, rain served to discourage casual workers from making the trip to potential work sites.

One respondent narrates this predicament thus, *'... during the rainy season it is difficult to get work...our work site has no shelter against rain...we are forced to go back home [customers are also less likely to wash clothes on a rainy day]*.<sup>100</sup> This view was shared by another casual who explains, *'...rain can stop casuals from going to work - some sites have no direct transport connection to work places'*.<sup>101</sup> Poor transport infrastructure, especially for new construction sites, further makes it difficult for casuals to access work in far off places. Even worse, constant change in public transport fares was found to act as a disincentive to casual workers seeking work in distant places. This is because public transport operators, especially for Matatu's (private mini vans) tend to increase their fares whenever it rains. This was attributed to the long traffic jams that occur when it rains. Transporters, especially within the City and its environs, generally claim traffic jams eat into their profit margins and that this

<sup>99</sup> JW CIPam # 6, FGD # 2, Males - Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>100</sup> PAC, Pam U 4, FGD n Z MaJes - Greenfield Estate, 2007.

<sup>101</sup> Participant H 9, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
Participant U 8 FGD U 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

necessitates the fare hike. These fare hikes, however, negatively affect casual workers because it interferes with their budgets, which have little room for variation. This is indicated by the following quote: *'...there is no fixed fare by public transporters...when it rains fares increase dramatically, which affects us [casuals]...also, rush hour fare is higher than normal fare'*<sup>102</sup> Erratic fares thus make it difficult for casual workers to access work in far off work sites, especially during the rainy season when walking long distances is difficult. As noted earlier, slum residence is attended by poor infrastructure provision.

To mitigate the high cost of transport some casual workers, especially in the construction industry, opt to live at work sites whenever this is possible. One respondent explains, *'...at times casuals stay at a work site [camp]...this reduces transport costs...where the cost of bus fare is high...work is forgone'*<sup>m</sup> These living arrangements, nevertheless, have their own challenges. These include: lack of affordable quality food, lack of clean water and sanitation, lack of electricity and cooking fuel; separation from family and friends; and insecurity of persons due to the presence of high value construction equipment and materials on site which attract robbers.

Other casual workers opted to cycle to work or use motorcycle taxis. The number of casual workers who cycle to work was, however, found to be very small since most cannot afford the lump sum money needed to purchase a bicycle given their erratic and low incomes. For many casual workers; hence, ownership of a bicycle could be considered a status symbol that indicates upward mobility on the social ladder. Nonetheless, given the state of insecurity in the slums, one casual worker expressed fear that his bicycle would be stolen if he brought it to Nairobi and so he chose to leave it in his rural area with his relatives. Another concern against the use of bicycles is the high levels of road accidents and lack of clear cycling lanes.

The advent of motorcycle taxis, nonetheless, promises to ease the transport challenges for many casual workers since these are more affordable than other modes of public transport. It should be noted, however, that this mode of transport carries with it a higher risk of injury due to poorly trained riders and the Kenyan culture of riding motorcycles without wearing helmets.<sup>84</sup> Given that most casual workers do not have accident insurance, the use of

<sup>m</sup> Participant # 10, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>et</sup> Participant # 15, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

motorcycle taxis increases their chances of falling into chronic poverty should they be involved in a road accident.

It is also noteworthy that current transport regulations outlaw the transportation of passengers in open vehicles (pickups and lorries). Previously, casual workers used to travel in pickups and lorries to and from their work sites. Transportation regulations now require employers to buy or hire buses for transporting their workers. This is prohibitively expensive for many employers and they have largely stopped ferrying workers to and from work sites. As such, it is now the responsibility of casual workers to find their way to the work site. This has negatively affected their ability to find work in far off places because of the high cost of transport. A male respondent explains:

*'...safety belt rules [popularly called Muchuki rules' in reference to the Transport Minister who enforced them] outlawed being carried in open vans/pickup. This destroyed our previous mode of transport [pickups and lorries].'<sup>104</sup>*

In effect, law abiding employers now find it more expensive to provide transport for their employees. This is especially so in the construction industry which engages hundreds of casuals at a time, depending on the size of the project. This view is shared by another respondent who argues, *employers are reluctant to provide transport and instead pass the cost to casuals'*.<sup>105</sup> Some casuals deal with the challenge of high cost of transport and long distances to work by using public transport in the morning and walking back in the evening. Others choose to disregard the law and their personal safety by hitching lifts on open pickups/lorries for a small fee. In their view, they don't have much choice if they want to earn a living. This mode of transport exposes them to risk of grave injury in case of a traffic accident, dust, rain and the sun. These elements potentially have negative long term effects on their health.

### Urban Spatial Segregation

Urban spatial segregation refers to the division of urban areas into distinct socio-economic cultural spaces based on land use (Olima, 2001). This is evidenced by urban planning by-laws which designate some areas as commercial zones while designating others as residential, schools, shopping centres, hospitals or public recreational parks (Ibid ).

<sup>104</sup> Participant # 3, FGD # 2, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
<sup>105</sup> Participant # 8, FGD # 1, Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.

Urban spatial segregation occurs through both planned and unplanned development as witnessed by the existence of many informal settlements in urban centres in Kenya (Olima, 2001). Urban spatial segregation has existed in Nairobi since pre-independence and has been getting worse as urban planning fails to keep up with the rapid population growth of the city. It is estimated that up to 55% of Nairobi's population lives in informal settlements comprising about 5% of Nairobi's residential land area (Olima, 2001). Kibera, for instance, with a density of about 2000 people per hectare, is said to be one of the most densely populated informal settlements in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ibid).

Urban spatial segregation in Nairobi has economic, legal and cultural origins traceable to the colonial system of racial segregation (Olima, 2001). This system created separate tribal homelands for the Africans, White Highlands for the British settlers and urban ghettos for Indians and Arabs (ibid). This colonial policy of 'separate development', as it was called in South Africa during the apartheid regime, was implemented in Kenya's urban centres through creation of exclusive residential areas along racial lines.

Racial segregation was reinforced through restrictive migration laws as well as use of punitive urban planning regulations that made it difficult for Africans to construct dwellings in the city and was further underpinned by unfair land allocation skewed against the natives (Olima, 2001). Nairobi was thus historically divided into four distinct sectors, the North and East were the Asian Sector (Parklands, Pangani and Eastleigh); the East and South East were the African Sector (Pumwani, Kariokor, Donholm); the South East to South was also an Asian area (Nairobi South, Nairobi West) while the line North and West was the European sector (Olima, 2001). Currently however, urban spatial segregation is largely based on economic and ethnic differentiation as opposed to racial differentiation.

Urban spatial segregation was found to affect casual workers by concentrating them into densely populated, poorly serviced and remote informal settlements/urban ghettos.

According to one participant, *"...the money we earn is too little...so we live in slums"*. Urban spatial segregation thus made it difficult for casual workers to access work in commercially vibrant areas. As one respondent narrated.

*•many of us walk to work due to the high cost of transport...distance to work is not a major problem when you live in the residential estate unless one has small children to prepare for school. In that case, one will*

*get to the work site late and may not get work. However, distance to work is a significant factor for those seeking work in the industrial area... many arrive late and are unable to find work'.<sup>106</sup>*

Furthermore, the informal nature of these settlements makes it difficult for mainstream businesses to set up shop in these areas due to lack of planned business space and social amenities. As a consequence, these settlements suffer from lack of decent jobs, thereby consigning many of the urban poor to prospect for casual work in surrounding areas.

Urban spatial segregation was found to have the unintended consequence that casual workers were either forced to look for work in areas within walking distance of their residences to mitigate the high cost of transport or suffer reduced income due to high cost of transport when seeking work further afield. As one FGD participant noted *"...casuals live far from their place of work-due to high cost of rental houses [in prime locations]...hence, a large part of income is spent on food (lunch) and transport"<sup>107</sup>*. This observation was supported by yet another FGD participant who observed that *'...long distance to work implies that casuals cannot eat lunch at home, which contributes to increased cost of living*

Many casuals were found to cope with these challenges by carrying food from home, foregoing lunch or eating at roadside kiosks. The need to provide affordable food for the large numbers of casual workers in these areas was noted to have spawned an entire food industry comprising road side kitchens/food sellers, grain suppliers, firewood and water vendors; as well as unskilled casual labourers engaged to prepare and serve meals.

### 6.3 Political Exclusion

Urban spatial segregation was found to contribute to the political marginalisation of the poor. According to Oliina (2001), the existence and expansion of informal settlements is underpinned by inadequate provision of land, over-regulation of land use and official indifference to the needs of the urban poor by local and national authorities. This is because whereas there is plenty of land in the city and its environs, the poor cannot access it because they lack political voice and much of the land is in the hands of speculators. The remote location of the residences of casual workers also means that the urban poor have little or no access to national Politicians and cannot, therefore, easily influence land-use policies in their favour.

  
<sup>107</sup> FGD, Part # L FGD # Females, Greenfield Estate, 2007.  
FGD, Part # 12, Males, Greenfield Estate, 2007

Consequently, landlords take advantage of this situation by building cheap and often illegal structures for rental to the urban poor. Whereas many NGOs exist which claim to champion the needs of the poor, they appear ineffective in tackling urban poverty as evidenced by the torrid living conditions in Nairobi slums.

As a result of poor urban land management, the urban poor are forced to live in densely populated settlements where they suffer severe environmental health risks. This is linked to poor regulation of waste disposal and inadequate provision of social services. Furthermore, urban segregation was found to promote settlement patterns that give rise to ethnic enclaves. This is because the social support networks that facilitate migration to and survival in the city encourage affiliation with one's ethnic group. For example, a new migrant to the city is more likely to be hosted by a relative than a friend because of the kinship bond they share. Over time, ethnic affiliation or kinship ties in residential areas lead to creation of ethnic enclaves. This occasionally erupts into conflict between different ethnic groups in the slums as they compete for resources.

Since a majority of unplanned settlements tend to be illegal, political patronage enables slum dwellers to establish mutually beneficial arrangements with politicians whereby slum dwellers provide political support to the politicians in exchange for protection from eviction from private or public land. Nevertheless, lack of legal tenure marginalises the urban poor and entrenches poverty because the occupants of such land cannot construct permanent dwellings and frequently find their structures destroyed in an effort to evict them. This means that unskilled casual workers who live in slums experience frequent disruption to their livelihoods and this increases their chances of falling into chronic poverty.

#### 6.4 Market Failures

The existence of unplanned settlements means that these areas lack proper amenities to cater for the needs of the inhabitants (UN-Habitat, 2009). For example, there tend to be no designated economic spaces and frequently the inhabitants have to make do with illegal occupation of public land such as road reserves to build houses and business stalls. They are vulnerable to eviction by local authorities. This makes it difficult for urban casual workers to start and sustain viable businesses. Furthermore, the lack of proper urban planning investment in medium and large businesses in these areas. This ensures that the majority of enterprises in informal settlements remain small and owner managed.

Consequently, few decent jobs are created in these settlements despite the fact that they tend to have high population densities that provide a ready market for goods and services.

Absence of designated land use in informal settlements/slums further affects provision of social services. Since ownership of the land is frequently contested, the local authorities do not feel compelled to provide essential services. As such the cost of water, sanitation and lighting tend to be high. Casual workers thus suffer the additional burden of acquiring essential social services at a cost higher than that prevailing in planned settlements.

## 6.5 Summary and Conclusion

The study findings reveal that spatial disadvantage makes it difficult for casual workers to effectively seek work beyond walking distances. This is because the zoning of Nairobi into commercial and residential areas means that many casual workers reside far from commercial centres where they can find work. They need, therefore, to commute long distances from their residences to work sites in the morning and from work sites to their residences in the evening. Spatial adversity in turn leads to erratic work patterns and low incomes. This drives many casual workers into poverty thereby forcing them to live in slums.

Slum residence was found to be associated with poor provision of social infrastructure. The lack of social infrastructure makes it more difficult for casual workers to get work, especially when it rains due to poor roads, mud and occasional flooding that destroys their houses. This is because many slums are located in peripheral areas of town, chiefly along riversides, garbage dumps and abandoned quarries. As argued by Kabeer (2006:3) *'it is usually culturally devalued and economically impoverished groups that inhabit physically deprived spaces* Casual workers as such! suffer spatial disadvantage in accessing work due to their remote residences. Geographical remoteness was thus found to have a negative effect on the economic and health status of casual workers.

Despite with spatial disadvantage many casual workers opted to walk to work. This is a healthy practice where distances covered are manageable, but, more often than not, casual workers were forced to walk exceptionally long distances to and from their places of work because they could not afford public transport. This led to negative health outcomes for them.

The poverty effects of spatial disadvantage were found to be: chronic fatigue due to frequently walking long distances; social marginality, due to isolation from main commercial activities; difficulty in finding work due to high transport cost of commutes from places of residence to work sites; high rates of infectious diseases, due to inadequate provision of water and sanitation at work sites and insecurity of person due to presence of high value construction material at work sites; muggings and police harassment while walking home.

Consequently, spatial disadvantage can be said to contribute to chronic urban poverty because it negatively affects the ability of casual workers to obtain work regularly. If work leads to low incomes, which in turn forces casual workers to live in slums. Since residence in turn is associated with environmental and health risks that lead to negative outcomes for the majority of casual workers.

Urban spatial segregation was found to concentrate casual workers into densely populated, poorly serviced and remote informal settlements/urban ghettos. This made it difficult for them to access decent work in commercially active centres and/or gain access to affordable social services. This predisposed them to low productivity work within the vicinity of their residences or to incur high transport costs when they ventured out. This reduced their disposable income leading to chronic poverty.

Political exclusion was found to be associated with inadequate provision of land and official indifference to the needs of the urban poor. This promoted the proliferation of informal settlements with their attendant poverty disadvantages. These include geographic remoteness, insecurity of land tenure, environmental and health risks and general low quality of life for their inhabitants.

Market failures were found to result from poor urban planning that made it difficult for medium and large businesses to take hold in the informal settlements. This reduces the ability of existing businesses to grow and create decent jobs for the urban poor.

In conclusion, the study finds that availability of work is not the only factor in regularity of employment of casuals. The opportunity cost of searching for work informs casual workers' decisions of where to take up work. Spatial disadvantage also serves to confine casual



## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1 Summary

This study examines the relationship between unskilled casual work and chronic urban poverty. It is based on the assumption that unskilled casual work predisposes urban casual workers to chronic poverty due to irregular work and low pay. Unskilled casual work is used as an entry point to the study of chronic urban poverty because, in the literature, casual work is associated with urban poverty.

We saw in the literature review in chapter two that chronic poverty refers to severe, multi-dimensional and long-term deprivation that principally leads to an inability to fulfil basic needs (Hulme et al., 2001). Also, that unskilled casual work refers to tasks whose general undertaking does not require any formal training. Many poor urban workers have low levels of education. This forces them to engage in low skill, low productivity work, which exposes them to income inadequacy and chronic poverty (Odhiainbo and Manda, 2003).

Chronic poverty in urban areas is of interest to development scholars and practitioners because, despite many interventions, urban poverty appears to be on the increase (Amis, 2002; Mitlin, 2003). The extent of chronic urban poverty is poorly understood, however, due to scarcity of literature on the subject. This is because chronic poverty has largely been presumed to be a rural phenomenon (Chambers 1983, Amis, 2002).

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Whereas urban areas in general have higher incomes than rural areas, the use of national poverty lines understates the extent of urban poverty because it does not account for differences in lifestyles between rural and urban areas (Amis, 2002; Mitlin, 2003; Satterthwaite, 2004; Kedir, 2005). Consequently, many urban poor are believed to be erroneously classified as living above the poverty line, which makes them 'invisible' to **Policy** makers (Hulme et al., 2001).

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**The** identification of the chronic urban poor is problematic, however, because they are not a ; <sup>Or</sup> homogeneous group. The poor inhabit a broad spectrum of socio-economic and geographic

spaces, which makes it necessary to tailor poverty research and interventions to specific groups, conditions and locations. This study seeks to distil key indicators of chronic urban poverty in Nairobi in order to assist in the identification of chronic poor casual workers. Further, it seeks to identify the key drivers and maintainers of chronic urban poverty among unskilled casual workers in order to enhance our understanding of the dynamics of chronic poverty.

According to Kabeer (2004), poverty emanates from distinct interlinked sets of varying experiences of suffering, unmet needs and 'false beliefs' that are detrimental to the welfare of the individual affected. This conceptualisation of a poverty nexus highlights the interrelationship of structural and agency factors which influence chronic poverty outcomes. These include: risk and vulnerability, poor social protection and identity repair (false beliefs).

Risk is the probability of occurrence of a hazard while vulnerability is the likelihood of negative effects arising from the actualisation of a risk (Holzmann 2003; in Hoogeveen et al., 2005). The poor are exposed to more risks than the non-poor due to their livelihood configurations but have fewer risk management options (Ibid). As such, poverty stressors lead to a decline in their welfare and predispose them to risk aversion (Holzmann, 2003; in Hoogeveen et al., 2005). High levels of exposure to risk, coupled with inadequate social protection—defined as public interventions to mitigate risk and vulnerability—cause the poor to adopt risk management strategies that are harmful to their long term welfare (Hoogeveen et al., 2005).

The literature also shows that people have a tendency to rationalise their failure to achieve the socially defined 'good life' (Vfear 1934). They are thus motivated to engage in 'face-saving' behaviour ('identity repair') to resolve negative emotions arising from a 'spoiled identity' or social stigma (Goffman, 1963). The need for a positive social identity provokes people to validate their perception of self-efficacy and thus delimits their perceived domains of action (Long and Long 1992: 36). 'False beliefs'—which are idiosyncratic and/or social ideologies used by individuals and groups to make sense of their lives—arise to help people cope in the face of adversity. The concept of 'identity repair' thus enables the interrogation of interview narratives as repair work and reveals how unskilled casual workers interpret and rationalize their life story (Long & Long, 1992).

The social exclusion framework, which informs this study, was adopted because it examines how differential power attached to group membership affects social relationships and outcomes (Sen, 2000; Louis, 2007). It was also chosen because it can accommodate multiple analytic categories and still retain coherence. According to the social exclusion framework, chronic poverty emanates from the interplay of both agency and structural factors. Agency factors are contingent on the individual while structural factors are external to the individual. Social structures have been shown to be both enabling and constraining depending on how individuals and groups exercise their agency (Giddens, 1984).

Social exclusion framework subsumes three major processes. These are social discrimination, resource deprivation and spatial disadvantage (Kabeer, 2004). Social discrimination is underpinned by group membership rules that mediate access to privilege (Malcolm, 2003). These give rise to identity-based disadvantages for individuals and groups (Kabeer, 2004). It is thus one of the ways in which poverty disadvantages reduce the life chances of individuals because it undermines their capacity to acquire capabilities and assets (Sen, 2000). Resource endowments, as such, are proxy indicators of the level of resilience to poverty stressors. Spatial disadvantage rounds off the social exclusion framework by highlighting the effects of geographic remoteness, political exclusion and market failures (CPRC, 2008).

Geographic remoteness affects the ability of the poor to access information, markets and services. This makes it difficult for them to be fully integrated into the economy. Political exclusion denies the poor an opportunity to advance their social and economic agenda. Market failures increase the cost of business, institutionalise socio-economic inefficiencies and increase the cost of living for the poor.

Based on these theoretical insights, three assumptions were derived to guide the study. First, unskilled casual workers who experience social discrimination are likely to be chronic poor. ; Second, unskilled casual workers who experience resource deprivation are likely to be chronic poor. Third, unskilled casual workers who experience spatial disadvantage are likely to be chronic poor.

study found three major themes related to social discrimination. These are exclusion from group membership, powerlessness and lack of social mobility.

### 7.1.1. Exclusion from Group Membership

Exclusion from group membership in this case means that casual work, as a lowly paid occupational status is an overriding determinant of a casual worker's social identity. Given the negative connotation of unskilled casual work, casual workers can thus be said to be excluded from occupying a 'respectable occupational identity'. This is because, socially at least, unskilled casual work is not a desirable occupation due to its inherent instability of income and hard labour. In this sense, unskilled casual work attracts social stigma leading to exclusion from respectable group membership.

According to Goffman (1968; in Howarth, 2001:10), social stigma is...."an undesired differentness from what we had anticipated". This means that social stigma dehumanises; because it ascribes to others a 'spoilt identity' (Goffman, 1963). It also means that to justify discrimination, we are psychologically inclined to come up with what are referred to as '*stigma theories*', or accounts of the perceived inferiority of others in order to highlight the dangers they represent to us (Ibid.). In other words, the occupation of unskilled casual work is itself socially perceived as '*evidence*' of the inferior quality of the casual workers. This social perception serves to strip casual workers of the rights accorded to 'normal' human beings. This explains why it then becomes socially permissible to neglect their plight, the unstated assumption being that since 'they' are not like 'us', there is no need to accord them the same rights and privileges. This rationalization does not generally occur at the level of the individual, rather, it is institutionalised through social representations of 'us' and 'them', wherein 'them' signifies difference, and is used as the justification for discrimination (Louis, 2007). This is one reason why it is socially permissible to underpay casual workers because they' have a '*low level of education*'. This rationalisation ignores the fact that casual workers engage in productive work and desert a just wage for their labour.

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the casual worker is, hence, largely defined by his/her failures instead of his/her achievements. For example, chronic poor casual workers were defined as... '*people without those with low education. ... people without marketable skills or business... those unable to pay school fees...*' These negative definitions of the casual worker lead to delusion from respectable group membership and reinforce the self-devaluation of the individual casual worker.

occupation of casual work itself, differentiation occurs on the basis of health > ethnicity, political affiliation, disability, gender, age and education. These structural

factors are used by dominant groups of casual workers to discriminate against minorities or 'outsiders' in order to monopolise and secure access to employment and other economic opportunities. For unskilled casual workers, membership of an 'in' group is thus a critical determinant of access to work and by extension, chronic poverty outcomes.

### 7.1.2 Powerlessness

Persistent exposure to negative evaluations among unskilled casual workers leads to what has been termed as 'frustration-instigated behaviour' (Rabow, Berkman and Kessler, 1984). This is a condition whereby an individual dissociates effort with reward, resulting into a state of 'learned helplessness' or powerlessness (Ibid.). 'Learned helplessness' or powerlessness is the perception that one is unable to influence outcomes in a desired direction. This condition has been observed in situations where subjects are exposed to a prolonged tension (dissonance) between expectation and outcome.

In situations of powerlessness, the subject comes to believe that their actions have no effect on their outcomes, meaning that it is pointless to try and change things. This largely explains the apparent apathy or indifference of casual workers to opportunity. It can be concluded, therefore, that the longer the duration of engagement in unskilled casual work, the higher the likelihood of occurrence of 'frustration-instigated behaviour'.

To reduce the gap between social expectation and personal outcome, the negatively defined individual has two major options: one is to raise their level of achievements to conform to their high expectation or to lower their self-evaluation to conform to their low social outcomes. The latter entails internalising a devalued social status or lowered self-esteem.

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Self-identity can thus be seen to be an important influence on the agency of casual workers. Those casual workers who internalise a devalued social identity are likely to end up chronic Poor. This is because by occupying a devalued social status, they are likely to narrow down their perceived domain of action since a devalued social identity inhibits ambition. In other words, exclusion from group-membership or lack of a respectable social identity acts as a trigger for self-devaluation, apathy and diminished ambition. This leads to feelings of powerlessness.

The affected casual workers associate their lack of an acceptable social status/identity with their occupation as unskilled workers. The findings show that casual work is socially constructed as demeaning work; fit only for the lowly educated and social misfits. This means that unskilled casual work carries with it psychological baggage or social stigma because it reinforces the casual worker's self-perception of being under achieving and/or powerless to influence outcomes. This perception becomes entrenched over time as the casual workers find that they are unable to change their social circumstances.

### 7.1.3 Lack of Social Mobility

Casual workers are 'trapped' into unequal relations of production and exchange characterised by economic exploitation and lack of social mobility. This makes it difficult for them to accumulate assets that they can use to improve their lives. 'Assetlessness' in turn leads to inability to change their social circumstances resulting into social stagnation. This is characteristic of the lives of many unskilled casual workers who live a precarious existence day-in-day-out for years on end. Unskilled casual workers are further at the mercy of the market for their labour, which is in abundant supply. In effect, they experience 'loss of control over their labour' (Harriss-White, 2005:881). This explains why casual workers command low wages and their lack of social mobility, both of which reinforce their feelings of powerlessness.

Social discrimination can thus be seen to contribute to chronic urban poverty because it leads to exclusion of unskilled casual workers from respectable group membership. Exclusion from respectable group membership is in turn associated with a devalued social identity, which leads to severe material and emotional deprivation.

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Unskilled casual work is thus associated with a psychological burden, which requires unskilled casual workers to justify their lack of social mobility. To do so, casual workers either externalise blame to the 'other' or internalise it to the self. This process is referred to as management of stigma. It can be inferred that those casual workers who externalise blame can be said to be fighting to change their circumstances but those who internalise blame are more likely to end up chronic poor, since they can be said to have given up.

## 7.2 Resource Deprivation and Chronic Urban Poverty

The findings reveal that capability deprivation can be both a cause and effect of chronic urban poverty. It is a cause of chronic urban poverty in the sense that only persons with low education level and limited skills sets are engaged in unskilled casual work. This generally guarantees that they earn low incomes. It becomes an effect of chronic urban poverty when it binds casual workers to low productivity work thus negating their ability to acquire new skills and work their way out of poverty work.

As a result of severe capability deprivation, many unskilled casual workers have low bargaining power, which makes them vulnerable to economic and social exploitation. As shown elsewhere, casual workers are vulnerable to extortion by foremen at work sites, municipal authorities and criminal gangs at their places of work, business and residence. This exploitation worsens their poverty, leading to chronic urban poverty.

Social instability arises from the adoption of adverse coping mechanisms. These include squatting on public land, paying protection money, indebtedness, frequent change of residence, patron-client relations and alcoholism. Consequently, the lives of unskilled casual workers are subject to sudden disruption, which makes it difficult for them to plan for the long term.

Inability to plan for the long term leads to risk aversion, which in turn makes it difficult for casual workers take advantage of new opportunities. Consequently, due to prolonged suffering, unskilled casual workers can be said to enter into a state of suspended ambition. I bus, they express nonnal desired to, improve their lives but demonstrate little effort or conviction that they can actually change their outcomes. This mental state has been referred to as *learned helplessness*'. As seen elsewhere in the literature review, 'learned helplessness' can be overcome when new opportunities are become available, but because it is a mental state which deprives the sufferer of motivation to achieve, it is difficult for the affected to perceive new opportunities in the first place. This is one reason why overcoming chronic urban poverty in most cases requires external intervention to provide the initial impetus for change.

### 7.3 Spatial Disadvantage and Chronic Urban Poverty

The findings show that spatial disadvantage is characterised by three facets. One, urban spatial segregation concentrates casual workers into densely populated, poorly serviced and remote informal settlements or urban ghettos. This makes it difficult for them to access decent work in commercially active centres and/or gain access to affordable social services. Two, political exclusion leads to inadequate access to land. This makes it difficult for the urban poor to access secure premises and promotes the proliferation of informal settlements with their attendant poverty disadvantages. Three, market failures complete the picture of spatial disadvantage through poor urban planning, which makes it difficult for medium and large businesses to take hold in the informal settlements.

Spatial disadvantage thus contributes to chronic urban poverty by negatively affecting the ability of casual workers to obtain decent work regularly. Irregular work leads to low incomes, which in turn forces casual workers to live in slums. Slum residence exposes them to environmental and health risks that have negative welfare outcomes for the majority of casual workers.

The study finds that availability of work is not the only factor in regularity of employment of casuals. The opportunity cost of searching for work informs casual workers' decisions of where to take up work. The zoning of Nairobi into commercial and residential areas means that many casual workers reside far from commercial centres where they can find work. Due to high transport costs, many casual workers opt to walk to work. This limits the distance they can cover per day and hence many look for casual work within walking distance of their residences. Many walk exceptionally long distances to and from their places of work which leads to negative health outcomes. (Chief among these is chronic fatigue and emaciated bodies due to poor nutrition.

Spatial adversity leads to erratic work patterns due to the difficulty of finding work. This contributes to inadequate incomes, which drives many casual workers into chronic poverty, which forces them to live in slums. Slum residence is associated with poor provision of social infrastructure which raises the cost of living for the urban poor. Slum residence is also associated with high transport cost when commuting to work sites. Further, it is attended by the fates of infectious diseases due to inadequate provision of water and sanitation, and the high risk of person is also common due to overcrowding and lack of secure land tenure.

Spatial disadvantage can thus be said to confine casual workers to a narrow realm of economic activities bounded by geographic remoteness, political exclusion and market failures. This pushes them into chronic urban poverty.

#### 7.4 Conclusion

Several perspectives emerge regarding the social construction of chronic urban poverty amongst unskilled casual workers. Social construction here refers to the way discourse is used to frame issues in order to create a shared understanding between two or more people.

There are three main thematic findings on chronic urban poverty in the study. These are deprivation, personal failure and insecurity.

In the first perspective, chronic urban poverty is primarily perceived in terms of deprivation or social neglect. This is manifested as lack of basic needs, poor sanitation, inability to pay school fees, lack of electricity and roads; lack of medical insurance and abandonment. The unstated assumption in this perspective is that chronic urban poverty is an outcome of failure by the state to institute welfare measures.

In the second perspective, chronic urban poverty is synonymous with personal failure. The chronic urban poor are characterised as persons of low educational achievement, unemployed and unskilled labourers. They are categorized as second class citizens, who have to make do with second hand clothes, buy groceries in small amounts, share a single room with a family and/or live in slums. The unstated assumption in this perspective is that the individual who is poor is a social failure and bears responsibility for their poverty status.

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This perspective is aligned to economic issues and reveals a desire by many casual workers to be prosperous like the rest of society. Hidden in their statements are evaluations about what constitutes personal success, such as quality of clothes, type of business, lifestyle, morality, family size and education. Poverty, as such, marks one as a failure in the eyes of the community. It sets one apart from the rest of society and manifests as social exclusion. This leads to a devalued social identity and ostracism by relatives and friends.

- <sup>third</sup> Perspective chronic urban poverty is characterised in terms of general insecurity.

^P chronic urban poor are seen as persons exposed to high levels of risk and vulnerability to Parity of person and property. Their security needs are not adequately catered for by

social institutions and some are victims of state terror. These aspects of chronic poverty demonstrate that the chronic urban poor are marginalised and, therefore, socially excluded due to lack of political voice.

Close examination of the interview responses shows that perceptions of poverty vary by gender. For females, poverty is largely associated with deprivation, while for males it is largely associated with personal failure. This can be attributed to cultural expectations whereby women are socialised to be home makers and men to be breadwinners. Consequently, for the females (home-maker orientation) poverty is perceived as originating from social neglect while for the males (provider-orientation) poverty is perceived as originating from lack of economic opportunities.

The theme of insecurity appears to concern females more than males. This may be because women are generally more vulnerable to physical insecurity compared to men due to their comparatively smaller musculature. Alternatively, considering that African males are socialised to put up a brave face in public, public expressions of fear or doubt are frowned upon. This may have hindered male FGD participants from freely expressing their views on insecurity in order not to appear weak. The experience of poverty; hence, comes across as qualitatively different for men and women. Females in the study seem to attribute poverty to relationships (commissions or omissions by others) while males appear to attribute poverty to structural constraints or lack of opportunities for advancement.

The study finds that lack of vocational skills is the single major driver of chronic poverty among casual workers. This is because casual workers with vocational skills were found to have a higher self-esteem and to command higher pay. This enabled them to work their way out of

poverty. Casual workers lacking vocational skills were found to suffer self-devaluation, apathy and regular unemployment. This is because they were confined to prospecting for work in areas where they have personal contacts. This reduced the volume of work they could access and led to income inadequacy. Income inadequacy in turn precipitated poor nutrition, high indebtedness, and vulnerability to random shocks, leading to chronic poverty.

Also finds that irregular and low income is the key maintainer of chronic urban poverty because it prevents the urban poor from accumulating assets that they can use to themselves from poverty stressors. Further, that poor land use policy is detrimental to

the welfare of the urban poor as it denies them reasonable access to land for earning a livelihood. This makes it difficult for them to save and invest. It also exposes them to harassment and extortion by local authorities and criminal gangs. Consequently, social instability and exploitation ensure that the little income they earn is used up to purchase basic services like water and sanitation at exorbitant prices. This makes it difficult for the urban poor to save and invest thus trapping them in chronic poverty.

### 7.5 Recommendations

The study finds that there is a need to equip urban casual workers with vocational skills, which they can rely on to earn a living. Alternatively, there is a need to establish guaranteed work programmes and/or social protection schemes that enable urban casual workers to earn a regular basic income in order to prevent their slide into chronic poverty. Further, labour inspectors should visit casual workers on the ground to learn firsthand the challenges they encounter. This will give them insights on how labour laws can be strengthened to reduce abuse and exploitation of unskilled casual workers.

Training programmes need to be instituted to equip unskilled casual workers with life skills as many felt that they were ignorant of how to extricate themselves from poverty. This may take the form of social workers specifically going to the work sites and holding regular training sessions/counselling to encourage and support these persons to remain hopeful that they indeed have a chance to escape poverty. This is because once the mind sinks into despair the individual concerned suffers diminished capacity to think objectively and as such external intervention is necessary to uplift the chronic poor from their perceived and actual helplessness.

There is opportunity to investigate the extent to which casual work is used as a cover for prostitution in the estates. This is because it places young persons at increased risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections as they are the ones who are left at home while their parents/guardians go to work. Unsupervised contact between young persons and casual workers could, therefore, pose an increased public health hazard for the youth, especially in relation to sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/Aids.

Finally, there may be a need to investigate the extent of illegal activities among casual workers such as complicity with criminals in surveillance and break in of homes. This is

because casual workers, as an oppressed social class harbour contempt for the middle and upper classes. They can, therefore, be easily recruited to undertake surveillance for criminals under the guise of seeking work. This entails knocking on peoples' doors ostensibly looking for work but it also enables them to know which homes are unattended. Since casual workers tend to operate regularly in a given estate, they develop awareness of the resident's movements and this is a potential source of insecurity for residents.

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**ANNEX I: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

**Michael Mbai Kinyota  
Institute for Development Studies  
University of Nairobi  
P.O. Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi.  
/09/2007**

**To Whom It May Concern:**

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

**RE: Invitation for a Focus Group Discussion**

**My name is Michael Mbai Kinyota. I am a post-graduate student in Development Studies at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi. I am currently conducting a field study to collect information for my dissertation entitled *'Unskilled Casual Work and Chronic Urban Poverty: A Case Study of Casual Workers in Nairobi'*.**

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to a focus group discussion at.....to be held on ..... at ..... am/pm related to the objectives of the study.

**The main objective of the focus group discussion is to exchange ideas on how Unskilled Casual Work is related to Chronic Urban Poverty.**

The data collected will be used to identify common ideas associated with *Unskilled Casual Work* and *Chronic Urban Poverty*. The findings will form part of my research data and will be included in the research report.

Selection for the focus group is done at random from among suitable persons and your participation in the study is completely voluntary. Your identity will not be sought or revealed to third parties Please note that no payment will be made but refreshments will be provided. Nevertheless, your sacrifice of personal time is highly appreciated as a contribution to the fight against poverty. Thank you.

**Yours faithfully,**

**Michael Mbai**

Michael Mbai Kinyota  
Institute for Development Studies  
University of Nairobi  
P.O. Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi.  
/09/2007

Dear Respondent,

RE: Field Research

My name is Michael Mbai Kinyota. I am a post-graduate student in Development Studies at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi. I am currently conducting a field study to collect information for my dissertation entitled '*Unskilled Casual Work and Chronic Urban Poverty: A Case Study of Casual Workers in Nairobi*'. The purpose of this letter is to request for your cooperation in answering questions related to the objectives of the study.

The main objective of the study is to investigate how Unskilled Casual Work is linked to Chronic Urban Poverty. The study will be conducted using three data collection methods. These are focus group discussions, semi-structured questionnaires and life histories.

The data collected will be used to identify recurrent themes associated with *Unskilled Casual Work* and *Chronic Urban Poverty*. The findings will be published as part of my dissertation and may also appear in other media such as academic journals and newspapers.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and serves as proof of your informed consent. Your identity will not be sought or revealed to third parties. Further, your anonymity is guaranteed through random selection of respondents. Your sacrifice of personal time is highly appreciated as a contribution to the fight against poverty. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Mbai

## (i) Focus Group Discussion guide

### Objectives:

1. To identify the key drivers of chronic urban poverty among casual workers
2. To identify the key maintainers of chronic urban poverty among casual workers

### Focus Group Discussion Guide

i

Discussion Topic	Key Concept	Guide Questions
(a) Chronic Urban Poverty (C U P) Casual Workers (CWs)	<b>Identity aspects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conception of C.UP</li> <li>• Characteristics of C.U.P</li> <li>• Labour force participation</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Family background</li> </ul> <b>Resource aspects</b> <p><i>Drivers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Dysfunctions</li> <li>• IGT poverty</li> </ul> <p><i>Maintainers</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is chronic urban poverty ?</li> <li>2. What are the key indicators of C.U.P?</li> <li>3. Which category of workers is among the C.U.P?</li> <li>4. How is discrimination related to C.U.P?</li> <li>5. How is family background related to C.U.P?</li> <li>6. What are the causes V C. U. P?</li> <li>7. Is laziness a factor in C.U.P?</li> <li>8. Which major family problems contribute to C.U. P?</li> <li>9. What are the major factors that maintain CWs in C.U.P?</li> <li>10. What programmes exist to assist CWs escape C.U.P?</li> <li>11. What are the challenges to escaping C.U.P?</li> </ol>
	<b>Spatial aspects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Distance to work</li> <li>-Work environment</li> <li>-Residence</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. How is distance to work related to C.U.P?</li> <li>13. How is the work environment related to C.U.P?</li> <li>14. How is residence related to C.U.P? _____ "tfMf M</li> </ol>

## (i) Focus Group Discussion guide

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### **Focus Group Discussion Guide**

Discussion Topic	Key Concept	Guide Questions
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**(b) Unskilled Casual Work (U.C.W)**

**Casual Workers (C.Ws)**

**Identity aspects (Discrimination)**

- Education
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Disability-
- Age
- Self-employment
- Attitude to trade unions

**Resource aspects**

- Employment
- Livelihood diversification
- Social protection

**Spatial aspects**

- Distance to work
- Residence

15. How do you define U.C.W?

16. Which people are engaged in U.C.W?

17. What is their attitude to self-employment?

18. What constrains participation in trade unions?

19. What is the procedure for employment of casual workers?

20. What are the prospects for career advancement of C.Ws?

21. How is education related to U.C.W?

22. How is ethnicity related to U.C.W?

23. How is gender relate^to U.C.W?

24. How is disability related to U.C.W?

25. How is age related to U.C.W?

26. What alternative livelihoods are available for casual workers?

27. What constrains access to alternative livelihoods?

28. How does distance to work affect access to U.C.W?

29. How is residence related to U.C.W?

30. How is U.C.W related to C.U.P?



**(ii) Semi-structured Questionnaire**

Interview number

A. Identity aspects

1. Name (optional)
2. Place of birth
3. Age
4. Gender (Male/Female)
5. Marital Status (Single/Manied/Widow/Widower/Divorced/Other-please specify)
6. Age at Marriage
7. Education level (Primary/secondary/polytechnic/university/ other-please specify)
8. Ethnicity
9. Religion
10. Disability

B. Resource aspects

11. Work history (type of work and duration)

12. Training (in the last 5 years)

13. Current occupation

14. Reason for selecting the current occupation?

15. How were you introduced to your current occupation?

'6. What is the level of job security? (High/medium/low)  
How come?

17. What is the level of income security? (high/medium/low)

How come?

18. Daily wage

19. What is the statutory minimum daily wage?

20. Other sources of income

21. Average monthly expenditure

22. Net monthly savings/deficit?

23. If deficit-how financed?

24. Effect of occupation on personal welfare (Positive/negative?)

25. OHS issues

26. Health status of respondent (good/average/bad-please explain)

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27. Access to insurance (type and source).

28. No. of children

29. Age on becoming a parent

30. No. of other dependants

<sup>31</sup> Type of Relation to dependants

32. Effect of dependency burden on self?

33. Major assets owned (individually/if jointly-please specify with who)

34. Major livelihood risks (types and sources)

35. Major vulnerabilities (types and sources)

36. Social protection (type and sources)

37. Access to credit (where from?)

C. Spatial aspects

38. Reason for migrating to the city (if applicable)

39. Current residence

40. Reason for selecting the residential location?

41. No. of rooms

42. Total No. of occupants

43. Type of ownership (owner occupied/rented)

44. Rent paid per month (if applicable)

45. Affordability (default frequency?-please explain)

46. Brief description of the living environment

- Type of houses (stone/bricks, iron sheet, wooden slabs, carton/plastic sheets, other)
- No. of *houses* in the compound ..... size of compound
- *Roads* (all weather-tarmac/murram, earth road) .....

Daily cost of transport

Effect of cost of transport on livelihood

- *Water* (in-house/in shared compound/other)

Cost per month

Effect of cost of water on livelihood

- *Sewage* (to city mains or surface overflow)

Effect on health

- *Toilets/bathrooms* (in-house/shared, if shared-with how many other people?)

Type of toilet (pit latrine/flush)

Cost per month.....v

Effect of sharing utilities on health/livelihood

- *Electricity* .....Yes/No .....cost per month

Effect on livelihood

- *Security*.....Good/average/bad/very bad, please explain

Cost per month.....paid to whom?

Effect on livelihood

**(iii) Life History Interview Guide:**

Interview number

Location

Interview group/cluster description..

Date

Time: Start\_\_\_\_\_End

Interviewer

Comments/observations

1. Growing up

- Identity aspects (*IGTpoverty disadvantages?*)
  - Parental education/occupation/attitude/mentoring
  - Corporal punishment (home/school)
  - Discrimination (ethnicity/stigma/gender/age/disability)
  - Malnutrition (scavenging for food?)
  - Dysfunctions (substance abuse, crime, domestic violence)
  - Dependency ratio
  - Overcrowding
  - Schooling conditions
  - Reading materials (books, newspapers)
  - Radio/TV
  - Teenage pregnancy
  - Early marriage

*Core identity when growing lip-rich, poor, very poor?*

How did you perceive yourself relative to other children?

Best memories of childhood?

Worst memories of childhood?

Early childhood (0-13yrs) nursery school? Age at class one?

Adolescence (13- 19y<sup>^</sup>-milestones? Rites of passage? Ambitions?

Youth (20-35)-mi lest ones? Ambitions?

Adulthood-milestones? Ambitions?

**Resource aspects** (*Deprivations?*)

**Family wealth/assets, land ownership/livestock**

**Career-investment in education/training/ambitions?**

**Capabilities**

**Spatial aspects** (*disadvantages?*)

Distance to school, nearest towns/markets  
Roads  
Economic activities in the area  
Agro-ecological factors-drought, floods, agriculture

## 2. Major Life-course events

- Identity aspects (*Stage in life-cycle?*)

Youth (16-35)

Middle age (36-55)

Old age (56+)

- Resource aspects (*Deprivations?*)

*Assets*

Inheritance

Social Networks

*Social relationships (powerlessness/adverse incorporation?)*

Major choices made

Commissions-by self/others

Omissions-by self/others

Effects of choices made

Missed opportunities/Consequences to self/others

*Shocks*

Illness

Deaths in family

Criminal conviction

*Social protection*

Family, state, NGOs, Church, other

*Economy*

*Politics*

- **Spatial aspects** (*disadvantages?*)

**Migration**

**Distance to work**

**Work environment**

**Residential environment**

### 3. Coping mechanisms

- Identity aspects (*Attitudes?*)

#### *Psychological*

Ambition

Optimism

Despair

Religiosity (frequency of prayer)

Fatalism

Addictions

Recreation

#### *Personal Attributes*

Resilience

Dependency

Substance use

Innovation

Aggression

- Resource aspects (*strategies?*)

#### *Socio-economic (individualistic/collectivist)*

Human capital formation

Livelihood diversification/entrepreneurship

Continuing education

School drop-out of children

Nutrition (diet/frequency of meals/reduced consumption)

Cooking fuels/lighting

House sharing

Networking for jobs

#### *Social protection*

-Education and training

-Savings and investments

-Extended family/friends

-Ethnic associations/village associations

-Remittances

- Borrowing/debt (microfinance)
- Health insurance
- Government/NGOs/Religious organisations (programmes)
- Trade unions
- Welfare expectations
- Risk management (family size/strategies)

- Spatial aspects (*strategies?*)
  - Transport (bicycles, walking)
  - Migration
  - Squatting/illegal hawking
  - Overcrowding
  - Insecurity

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## ANNEX II: QUALITATIVE DATA

### **Focus Group Discussions**

*(i)FGD I Domestic Casual workers*

Date: 17/09/2007

i

Venue: Greenfield Estate, Savannah Ward, Embakasi Constituency, Nairobi.

Time: Start 8.58 a.m...End 10.56 a.m.

#### Objectives:

1. To identify the indicators of chronic urban poverty among casual workers
2. To explore the perceived relationship between unskilled casual work and chronic urban poverty
3. To identify the key drivers of chronic urban poverty among casual workers
4. To identify the key maintainers of chronic urban poverty among casual workers

#### Criteria for selection: purposive sampling

Participants were casual workers in an identifiable work group and location. This enabled comparison of this group with other work groups, in-group comparison of members and their group dynamics.

#### No. of participants

9 female casuals, 1 male moderator (researcher), 1 male observer cum assistant

#### Recording method

Hand written notes

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#### Brief description of the focus group

The FGD participants were casual workers who regularly assemble under a tree in the expectation of being hired for casual domestic work to wash clothes in people's homes. The discussion guide had thirty questions. The interview lasted approximately two hours with an additional 30 minutes set aside for free exchange of ideas.

#### ^comments on group dynamics

## ANNEX I: QUALITATIVE DATA

### **Focus Group Discussions**

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4

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#### Recording method

Hand written notes

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#### **Brief description of the focus group**

The FGD participants were casual workers who regularly assemble under a tree in the expectation of being hired for casual domestic work to wash clothes in people's homes. The discussion guide had thirty questions. The interview lasted approximately two hours with an additional 30 minutes set aside for free exchange of ideas.

The interview started with 8 participants in attendance, increased to 11 and closed with 9 after two left early. The group was enthusiastic and cooperated in answering questions. Most of the participants did not require much prompting to contribute.

***(ii) FGD II Construction casual workers***

Dates: 15/10/2007, Time: Start 16.45pm...End 18.17pm

16/10/2007, Time: Start 16.30pm...End 18.28pm

21/10/2007, Time: Start 17.02pm...End 18.52pm

Venue: Greenfield Tavern, Greenfield Estate, Embakasi Constituency

No. of participants

Day 1: 12 male casuals, 1 male moderator (researcher)

Day 2: 11 male casuals, 1 male moderator (researcher)

Day 7: 9 male casuals, 1 male moderator (researcher)

Recording method

Hand written notes

Brief notes about the focus group

It took a total of 12 days to complete this FGD. An appointment for 12/10/2007 was not honoured because the group needed to be persuaded to move from their work site to the arranged venue. On 13/10/2007 I visited them at their work site to seek their cooperation arguing that I needed the owner's consent to use her premises and also it being a private home (the construction site) would raise suspicion about the nature of the meeting [this being a highly tense election year and the study area prone to election violence].

The initial invitation had been extended via a letter through one of their colleagues sought out at their local eating place. A prior meeting with the contact had been arranged and the purpose of the FGD explained but, despite earlier confirmation by the contact that the group would turn up, it failed to do so at the last minute; insisting on shifting the venue to their work site. The group wanted the FGD conducted in their familiar work setting. This was, however, not conducive to the study due to lack of control of the environment by the investigator and so the request was declined and a new meeting date set.

The next meeting was scheduled for 15/10/2007 at 16.00 hours but it started at 16.45pm. Since it was running late we agreed to conduct the FGD in two sessions to avoid releasing the workers late because many lived far away from the FGD venue. The cooperation of their supervisor was vital in assembling this group. This is because during the day they were busy at work and in the evening there was a narrow window for conducting the interview due to their desire to go home before dark. The supervisor, therefore, offered to release them from work one hour early in support of the research and this got the process going after much negotiation about venue, duration and purpose of the research.

#### Brief comments on the group dynamics

The participants articulated issues well. There were some minor interruptions; 2-3 telephone calls; 3-4 people left the room and returned - but this did not have much effect on the discussion. The group comprised both young and middle aged persons. It was enthusiastic about participating once it confirmed that the FGD was not going to be a probe into their personal lives [ at this point I was hesitant to inform them that I would eventually conduct life history interviews...this omission was deliberate because I was still building rapport with the group].

The FGD started with a quorum of 8 people and it was agreed that the rest would join us as we proceeded. During the entire interview the composition of the participants changed and in total the FGD involved 17 different casuals and their supervisor. This is because construction work progresses in stages with different tasks available on a daily basis. Depending on the stage reached in the construction work, many casuals get one day assignments and so they did not attend subsequent sessions of the FGD.

All new casuals were briefed by their colleagues before coming for the FGD and they were also briefed by the researcher. The decision to bring in new casuals was made by the casuals themselves [indicating a positive reception by the group since the new casuals were **persuaded** beforehand by their colleagues to participate in an on going exercise of which they knew little about]. The group and their supervisor had been informed of the need to maintain a minimum number of participants, which had been set at six people and this motivated them to in the new casuals to maintain a quorum. In addition to refreshments, the FGD also **Provided** a break from their daily routine of work.

**Notes:**

Although the FGDs were conducted separately on different days and locations, the data presentation uses an integrated format to enable visual intra-case and cross case analysis as well as coding of responses. This also situates the coding within the data set thereby enabling independent evaluation of the researcher's interpretations

/C consolidated FGD 1 and 11 responses	Discourse code 1	Discourse Code 2	Poverty Theme
<p><b>7</b> / Q.1 What is chronic urban poverty?</p> <p>' FGD # 2 [males]</p> <p># 9 inability to solve problems, for example, financial inadequacy.</p> <p># 4 When income source is small (less than expenditure) this leads to inability to fulfil basic needs.</p> <p># 1 Low education level contributes to poverty.</p> <p>FGD # 1 [females] %</p> <p># 1... lack of jobs or businesses.</p> <p># 11 ... dependence on irregular work or lack of food.</p> <p># 3 ...vulnerability to sickness... (being sick without having money for treatment).</p> <p># 4 ...Lack of basic needs (food, clothing shelter)</p> <p># 10 ...lack of business premises... leading to constant harassment by city council 'askaris' (local authority security people) and police.</p>			
<p><b>Q.2 What are the key indicators of chronic urban poverty ?</b></p> <p>FGD # 2 [males]</p> <p># 3 Residential areas such as slums - [poverty is perceived to be visible - to have external</p>	deprivation	unmet need	shelter

/ *manifestations*].

#9 *People walking to work* versus people who drive to work.

# 11...*Clothing...the poor's clothes are low quality, tatters or second hand.*

# 1 1...the rich have private houses with large compounds while the poor experience overcrowding.

...the poor also lack sewage systems in their residential areas.

# 1 ...Living in a single room with a family

# 7...Buying groceries in small amounts because the poor cannot afford bulk purchases.

#3... Inability to put up proper business...[reliance on informal sector]

FGD # 1 [females]

# 7...An unwholesome living environment...characterised by lack of water and electricity [in an urban setting]

# 6 Being abandoned by family...due to illness.

# 8 ...living in incomplete houses [or shacks?] that lack doors or windows.

# 6 ...sleeping hungry

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<b>disadvantage</b>	<b>unmet need</b>	<b>transport</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>unmet need</b>	<b>clothing</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>overcrowding</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>unmet need</b>	<b>sanitation</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>overcrowding</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>inflation</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>unmet need</b>	<b>formal business</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>marginalisation</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>illness</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>unmet need</b>	<b>shelter</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>hunger</b>
<b>i</b>		<b>1</b>

<p>j Q.3 Which category of workers is among <b>the chronic urban poor?</b></p>			
<p>/ FGD # 2 [males]</p>			
<p># 12 Casuals are most affected because they search for work everyday - at times they fail to find work.</p>	deprivation	suffering	unemployment
<p># 3 ...lowly paid work</p>	deprivation	suffering	low income
<p># 4 No fixed salary/wage - a new contract is negotiated^each time.</p>	deprivation	suffering	variable pay
<p># 9 Casuals have low bargaining power because they desperately need work].</p>	deprivation	suffering	exploitation
<p># 9 The uneducated casuals have communication problems...they are unable to communicate well about their need for work.</p>	deprivation	suffering	marginalisation
<p># 12 Those most affected includes unskilled workers -house girls and watchmen are among the chronic urban poor.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training
<p>FGD # 1 [females]</p>			
<p># 4 All 'jua kali' (informal sector) workers...this includes casuals in the construction industry and casual domestic workers.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training
<p><b>Q.4 How is discrimination related to chronic urban poverty?</b></p>			
<p>FGD # 2 [males]</p>			
<p># 10...in 'jua kali' (informal sector) there are people who prefer their ethnic group...if you come from a different ethnic group you are denied work or told you are late for work that</p>	discrimination	suffering	ethnicity

<p><b>Q.3 Which category of workers is among the chronic urban poor?</b></p> <p>FGD # 2 [males]</p> <p># 12 Casuals are most affected because they search for work every day - at times they fail to find work.</p> <p># 3 ...lowly paid work</p> <p># 4 No fixed salary/wage - a new contract is negotiated each time.</p> <p># 9 Casuals have low bargaining power because they desperately need work].</p> <p># 9 The uneducated casuals have communication problems...they are unable to communicate well about their need for work.</p> <p># 12 Those most affected includes unskilled workers -house girls and watchmen are among the chronic urban poor.</p> <p>FGD # 1 [females]</p> <p># 4 All 'jua kali' (informal sector) workers...this includes casuals in the construction industry and casual domestic workers.</p>	<p>deprivation</p> <p>deprivation</p> <p>deprivation</p> <p>deprivation</p> <p>deprivation</p> <p>deprivation</p> <p>deprivation</p> <p>deprivation</p>	<p>suffering</p> <p>suffering</p> <p>suffering</p> <p>suffering</p> <p>suffering</p> <p>unmet need</p> <p>unmet need</p>	<p>unemployment</p> <p>low income</p> <p>variable pay</p> <p>exploitation</p> <p>marginalisation</p> <p>training</p> <p>training</p>
<p><b>Q.4 How is discrimination related to chronic urban poverty?</b></p> <p>FGD # 2 [males]</p> <p># 10...in 'jua kali' (informal sector) there are people who prefer their ethnic group...if you come from a different ethnic group you are denied work or told you are late for work that</p>	<p>discrimination</p>	<p>suffering</p>	<p>ethnicity</p>

# 11 *...there is a preference for* one's ethnic group [ethnic affinity] - this excludes others...you **won't know** *that it is ethnicity* that locks you out.

# 8 ...foremen take comfort in dealing with their tribesmen because they feel that they can reason with them in case they have problems getting money to pay the casuals [delay by employer],

# 11 In-group affinity...casuals drink together [socialise] after work and this encourages them to prefer those known to them.

# 9...some tribes charge less for work... this makes them to be denied work [not aggressive enough/sell-outs-so they are excluded on this basis]..7.some tribes charge more (money minded)...also, quality of work output matters...panel beating is associated with Luos, trench digging with Luhyas [stereotypes: some skills ascribed to tribe]

# 4 There is bias...based on political affiliation-support for particular political leaders translates into rivalry at work among casuals...persons belonging to an opposite political camp are denied work [electioneering is currently on for parliamentary, civic and presidential elections].

# 3...the Kikuyu are considered untrustworthy/thieves and denied work...in turn they network amongst themselves to secure available work [reverse discrimination, tribal affinity serves as a barrier to entry at work and as security due to familiarity with kin and culture in a hostile environment].

# 7 Social problems also contribute to tribalism...for example, among the Luo...they need to contribute for burials...[this] Luo affinity [cooperation] helps to hedge against burial expenses (to transport bodies back home)...the Kikuyu...bury theirs at Langata [laughter].

<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>ethnicity</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>ethnicity</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>social networks</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>false belief</b>	<b>ethnicity</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>politics</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>false belief</b>	<b>ethnicity</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>unmet need</b>	<b>funeral insurance</b>

# 10 *Outsider tribes are given heavy tasks [undesirable work] to make them quit the job.*

FGD # 1 [*females*]

# 7 ...tribalism [ethnic preference] is common...some ethnic groups get work more frequently than others...depends on who is hiring...the supervisor at a work site.

# 2 ...some casuals go for weeks without work...others get up to three casual jobs in one day [this disparity is a source of jealousy among this group of workers],

# 9 ...Physical disability...is a source of discrimination... the physically challenged are disadvantaged...people prefer those without disability...even where the physical challenge is not relevant to the work to be performed.

# 3 ...People perceived as ugly ('sura mbaya') are not easily hired.

#### **Q.5 How is family background related to chronic urban poverty?**

FGD # 2 [*males*]

# 11 People from rich families who fail Form Four can either be taken to other training courses or have a business opened for them...those from poor families get swallowed into casual work.

# 6 Rich families...the children of the rich don't have to struggle much...their money opens doors for them (through corruption and connections) making it easy for them to get jobs.

# 10 Lack of inheritance - poor workers have nothing to inherit from their parents. They have to struggle to build their lives, often starting out with nothing.

# 3 Lack of a shamba... small holding among many siblings forces others to leave home to

<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>ethnicity</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>ethnicity</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>unemployment</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>disability</b>
<b>discrimination</b>	<b>suffering</b>	<b>appearance</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>false belief</b>	<b>social class</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>false belief</b>	<b>social class</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>false belief</b>	<b>inheritance</b>
<b>deprivation</b>	<b>unmet need</b>	<b>land</b>
<b>1</b>		<b>i</b>

/ seek casual work in towns.			
#12 Single parenting leads to a large dependency burden (poor casuals end up supporting / their relatives).	deprivation	suffering	dependency
# 8 Parental background can contribute to poverty...bright kids drop out of school due to lack of support - children of the rich get jobs while still in the womb.	deprivation	suffering	IGT poverty
# 3 Early pregnancies create a burden of raising children for single mothers - large dependency burden for the casual workers who now have to cater for their sisters and their sisters' children.	deprivation	suffering	pregnancy
Q.6 What are the causes of chronic urban poverty?^			
FGD # 2 [males]			
# 10 Drunkenness - hangovers lead to loss of productivity or loss of opportunity to work the following day [Alcoholism is associated with family stress]... people take alcohol 'kupunguza mawazo' [alcohol is an escape].	deprivation	suffering	drunkenness
# 1 HIV/AIDs leads to inability to work... when the sick die they leave a burden of caring for their children.	deprivation	suffering	illness
# 7 Promiscuity...propagates inability to save money due to having multiple partners. The unmarried [casual] persons use their money to buy sex.	deprivation	suffering	illness
# 6 [Disagrees]...females benefit through income earned from prostitution.	deprivation	unmet need	employment
# 7 [Counters]...but this leads to diseases such as AIDS.	deprivation	suffering	illness
# 3 Cost of transport...is high	disadvantage	unmet need	transport

<p><i>a 10. Env\ rivalry between colleagues /friends leads to undermining one another (there is /little cooperation) no one wants the other to ascend to a higher social status.</i></p>	discrimination	suffering	competition
<p>/ # 9 Lack of education leads to inability to get decent work...it also leads to inability to socialize with the educated -such people become idlers / thieves / 'baby makers' (leads to large families)</p>	deprivation	unmet need	education
<p># 10 Delayed payments lead to debts...upon payment of wages the money goes to clear debts - it is difficult to save anything.</p>	deprivation	suffering	exploitation
<p># 4 Lack of stable jobs contributes to chronic urban poverty due to irregular work... which leads to irregular income.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	job security
<p># 5 Low salary...200 - 300 per day is not enough for personal upkeep - minimum wage for now should be 500/= per day.</p>	deprivation	suffering	low income
<p># 9 Difficult to get a guarantor... casual workers find it difficult to obtain loans (for business).</p>	deprivation	unmet need	collateral
<p># 4 Lack of capital to purchase equipment for skilled artisans prevents them from pursuing their profession or earning higher incomes.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	capital
<p># 10 Socializing (social networks) - bad company leads to the influence of peers, such as excessive drinking.</p>	deprivation	suffering	income
<p># 4 Children tend to follow their parents occupation or trade - stone masons learn from their fathers [inter-generational transfer of skills].</p>	deprivation	unmet need	information
<p># 3 Extortion/bribery...by foremen... may reduce income for casuals who have to split their earnings with the foremen.</p>	deprivation	suffering	exploitation
<p># 4 Religion can propagate poverty -some religions prohibit certain jobs...bar work for saved</p>	discrimination	suffering	religious restriction

<p><i>fpeople... selling of pig products by Muslims.</i></p> <p>#10 There is dictatorship by job owners -...there is no negotiated wage for / casuals...employers decide what to pay [due to high unemployment/surplus labour].</p> <p>FGD # 1 [females]</p>	discrimination	suffering	wages
<p># 6 AIDS patients are discriminated against...by being dismissed from work when their health problems reduce their productivity...this makes them unable to meet their basic needs such as paying rent. Many are exposed to a lot of stress... which contributes to their premature death...these people are unable to earn a decent living...they die unnecessarily...because nowadays ARVs can prolong the life of AIDS sufferer^'.</p> <p><b>Q.7 How is laziness related to chronic urban poverty?</b></p> <p>FGD # 2 [males]</p> <p>Laziness - people begging in town while they can work is a sign of laziness.</p> <p>FGD # 1 [females]</p>	discrimination	suffering	illness
<p># 5...Some people can be found idling at home waiting to steal from their neighbours...they even steal food. Laziness also leads to poor academic performance [there is little effort to excel].</p> <p><b>Q.8 Which major family problems contribute to chronic urban poverty?</b></p> <p>FGD # 2 [males]</p>	deprivation	unmet need	employment
<p># 9 Illness among family members who are dependent on casuals creates a burden.</p>	deprivation	suffering	insecurity
<p># 10 Casuals are constrained by social expectations of remittances due to a perception that</p>	deprivation	suffering	dependency

<p><i>life is better in urban areas (by kin) hence they are</i> expected to share their income with rural / folk.</p> <p>/ # 4 Early pregnancies affect casuals because their low income has to be used to support new I children.</p>	deprivation	suffering	early pregnancy
<p><b>Q.9 What are the major factors that maintain casual workers in chronic urban poverty?</b></p>			
<p>FGD # 2 [males]</p>			
<p># 3 Inflation contributes to high cost of living. ^</p>	deprivation	suffering	inflation
<p># 9 Lack of collateral for loans.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	collateral
<p># 4 Lack of knowledge for livelihood diversification.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	education
<p># 10 Lack of capital to buy equipment contributes to poverty e.g. cement mixer is expensive to hire.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	credit
<p># 12 Lack of cooperatives / trade unions leads to individualism; hence, no protection, no solidarity or meetings...bargaining as individuals leads to exploitation / low bargaining power.</p>	deprivation	suffering	exploitation
<p># 3 Lack of training on 'life skills' (how to solve problems)...teaching students about poverty may help them to focus more on their studies and therefore avoid poverty when they grow up...</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training
<p># 4 Casual [construction] work is taken up by default... through loss [lack] of employment, which drives people to this type of work.</p>	deprivation	suffering	unemployment
<p># 4 [unemployment]...There are many well educated people doing casual work...such as ex-</p>	deprivation	suffering	unemployment

<p><i>military officers.</i></p> <p><b>/ Q.10 What programmes exist to assist casual workers escape chronic urban poverty?</b></p>			
<p><b>FGD # 2 [males]</b></p> <p># 4 There are no programmes to assist casual workers in construction work. S.H.G formed by casuals assist by giving loans [Many of the participants concur that there are no formal organizations which can / are involved in assisting them improve their lives].</p>	deprivation	suffering	social neglect
<p>FGD # 1 [females]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">N</p> <p>#7 There is no assistance from government or religious organisations [some participants expressed surprise that relief food is sometimes distributed through the chiefs office].</p>	deprivation	false belief	assistance
<p><b>Q.11 What are the challenges to escaping chronic urban poverty?</b></p>			
<p>FGD # 2 [males]</p> <p># 4 Inability to change careers/occupation due to constant need for income [little room for manoeuvre/risk averse]</p>	deprivation	suffering	career stagnation
<p># 12 Village polytechnics are no longer available-not considered by ministry of education (for funding)</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training
<p># 7 Education - many casuals lack education /skills to do business on their own</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training
<p># 12 Lack of capital to buy machines, for example, for making cement blocks.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	capital
<p># 3 The poor's lifestyle is based on low income; hence, their inability to save money...it is expensive due to bulk breaking of basic goods...this costs more per equivalent unit cost of</p>	deprivation	unmet need	savings <i>m</i>

*breaking bulk is a thriving business among the poor*],

/ # 4 Lack of technical competence locks out people from some types of skilled work; such as interior design.

FGD # 1 [females]

# 5 Lack of capital [cash and other resources] is the main obstacle... whereas one can scrap up enough money to start a small business...the biggest problem is meeting basic needs while the business picks up.

# 4 ...One needs money for rent, business premises and food before the business can stand on its own...several challenges confront the individual venturing into small business...lack of licenses leads to conflict with city authorities....although you can pay a daily fee of 25/= to the city council, this ends up being expensive [9000/= per year],

# 3 ...The high cost of living [inflation] adversely affects our ability to engage in business...

# 2 Frequent demolition of our business structures is a major hindrance... we do not have secure premises...we rely on empty spaces/roadsides. This makes our businesses vulnerable to demolition and/or extortion by authorities.

#### **Q.12 How is distance to work related to chronic urban poverty?**

FGD # 2 [males]

#12 Transport cost is high-casuals live far from their place of work - due to high cost of rental houses. Hence, a large part of income is spent on food (lunch) and transport.

# 6 Long distance to work-implies that casuals cannot eat lunch at home, which contributes to increased cost of living.

deprivation	unmet need	training
deprivation	unmet need	credit
deprivation	unmet need	credit
deprivation	suffering	inflation
deprivation	suffering	insecurity
disadvantage	unmet need	transport
disadvantage	unmet need	transport

*#10 There is no fixed fare by public transporters...when it rains fares increase dramatically, /which affects casuals , also rush hour fare is different from normal fare [higher],*

# 4 Some work is not taken up due to the high cost of transport; especially for far away places/sites (construction workers move from site to site).

# 12 Insecurity... casuals face harassment by policemen when carrying their tools of trade to and from work sites

# 4 ...walking to work exposes casuals to robbery and some have been mugged as they use shortcuts to their work place

# 7 At some sites there is no public transport so the work is forfeited [inaccessible],

# 6 Casuals are vulnerable to sickness due to fatigue caused by walking long distances and manual work.

# 8 Rain can stop casuals from going to work-some sites have no direct transport connection to work places.

# 4 Employers are reluctant to provide transport and instead pass the cost to casuals.

# 3 Safety belt rules [Muchuki rules] outlawed being carried in open vans/pickup. This destroyed our previous mode of transport [hiking on lorries]

FGD # 1 [females]

# 1 Many of us walk to work due to the high cost of transport...distance to work is not a major problem when seeking work in the residential estate unless one has small children to prepare for school. In that case, one will get to the work site late and may not get work. However, distance to work is a significant factor for those seeking work in the industrial area...many

disadvantage	suffering	bad weather
disadvantage	unmet need	transport
disadvantage	suffering	insecurity
disadvantage	suffering	insecurity
disadvantage	unmet need	transport
disadvantage	suffering	ohs
disadvantage	unmet need	transport
disadvantage	suffering	neglect
disadvantage	suffering	legislation
disadvantage	suffering	transport cost

*[arrive late and are unable to find work*

/ # 9 *During the rainy season it is difficult to get work...our work site has no shelter against rain...we are forced to go back home [customers are less likely to wash clothes on a rainy day].*

**Q.13 How is the work environment related to chronic urban poverty?**

FGD # 2 [males]

# 12 Safety equipment is lacking [protective gear e.g. gloves].

# 7 Cement eats our hands...the attendant need for treatment is a cost to us.

# 4 Inhaling cement dust shortens the lifespan of casuals

# 10 There are instances of shortage of clean drinking water at work sites. This is a common problem and it leads to water borne diseases due to use of untreated /contaminated water.

# 10 Casuals are exposed to poor hygiene in their eating places - There are many flies and an unhealthy environment that can lead to illnesses such as cholera.

# 4 There are no safety rails at the work place...this exposes workers to hazards... such as falling down.

# 12 Many casuals have no accident insurance...

FGD # 1 [females]

#10 ...We are vulnerable to exploitation because of being desperately poor... sometimes we have gone for days, weeks or months without work... so, customers take advantage of us... by

disadvantage	suffering	bad weather
deprivation	suffering	ohs
deprivation	suffering	ohs
deprivation	suffering	ohs
deprivation	unmet need	water
deprivation	unmet need	sanitation
deprivation	suffering	ohs
deprivation	unmet need	accident insurance
deprivation	suffering	exploitation

/ arrive late and are unable to find work			
# 9 During the rainy season it is difficult to get work...our work site has no shelter against rain...we are forced to go back home [customers are less likely to wash clothes on a rainy day].	disadvantage	suffering	bad weather
<b>Q.13 How is the work environment related to chronic urban poverty?</b>			
FGD # 2 [males]			
# 12 Safety equipment is lacking [protective gear e.g. gloves].	deprivation	suffering	ohs
# 7 Cement eats our hands...the attendant need for treatment is a cost to us.	deprivation	suffering	ohs
# 4 Inhaling cement dust shortens the lifespan of casuals	deprivation	suffering	ohs
#10 There are instances of shortage of clean drinking water at work sites. This is a common problem and it leads to water borne diseases due to use of untreated /contaminated water.	deprivation	unmet need	water
#10 Casuals are exposed to poor hygiene in their eating places - There are many flies and an unhealthy environment that can lead to illnesses such as cholera.	deprivation	unmet need	sanitation
# 4 There are no safety rails at the work place...this exposes workers to hazards... such as falling down.	deprivation	suffering	ohs
# 12 Many casuals have no accident insurance...	deprivation	unmet need	accident insurance
FGD # 1 [females]			
# 10 ...We are vulnerable to exploitation because of being desperately poor... sometimes we have gone for days, weeks or months without work...so, customers take advantage of us...by	deprivation	suffering	exploitation

<p><i>/ paving very low wages [as low as 50/=per day].</i></p> <p><i>#9 Some of us have been denied lunch breaks... I once worked from 8am-6pm without a break ...or being offered food [at a home-based juice making business-where they are hired to wash and peel fruits]. We stand for long hours at work...some of us have fainted from fatigue...we are not treated like human beings.</i></p>	deprivation	suffering	ohs
<p><b>Q.14 How is residence related to chronic urban poverty?</b></p>			
<p>FGD # 2 [males]</p>			
<p># 12 the money we earn is too little...so we live in slums.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	shelter
<p># 3 Casuals are forced to live with undesirables...you cannot progress due to insecurity. ...when you go to work you have to wear your best attire [due to fear of theft].</p>	deprivation	suffering	insecurity
<p># 4 Cheap is always expensive... lack of electricity leads to higher cost of living. We have to buy paraffin and batteries for our radios...water is also expensive in the slums.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	electricity
<p># 7 The slum environment is unhealthy -children get sick frequently leading to increased cost of healthcare - which negatively affects the welfare of casuals.</p>	deprivation	suffering	environmental risks
<p>FGD # 1 [females]</p>			
<p># 8 We lack basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and security...we are fearful for the safety of self and property.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	social services
<p><b>Q.15 How do you define unskilled casual work?</b></p>			
<p>FGD # 2 [males]</p>			
<p>#10 Working as an assistant to a skilled person -'mtu wa mkono'</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training

<p><b># 4 It refers to work without formal training</b>, once you gain skills it ceases to be unskilled / <b>work ...it is work acquired on</b> a 'walk in basis'...learned on the job.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training
<p><b>#17</b> Type of work which requires no prior knowledge to perform. One only needs to be shown what to do and they to do it.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training
<p><b># 15</b> Type of work which one does but is not trained for.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training
<p>FGD # 1 [females]</p>			
<p><b># 5</b> It includes work such as domestic work, farm hancfc, construction jobs, metal fabricators, carpentry, stone masons, road construction, shoe shiners, cobblers, handcart pushers, small businesses such as hairdressing, brewing alcohol [there is an emotional exchange over whether this is a legitimate business].</p>	deprivation	suffering	informal work
<p><b>Q.16 Which people are engaged in unskilled casual work?</b></p>			
<p>FGD # 2 [males]</p>			
<p><b>#18</b> ...it is done by all sorts of people...the most available type of work is construction work; hence, even if one is educated/trained one starts as a casual to become known and with time enter the profession.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	opportunity
<p><b># 1</b> It is done by untrained persons or those from rural areas due to poverty...people have to start from down (unskilled casual work) and climb the ladder.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	training
<p><b># 10</b> It is done by those willing to do tliis type of work...persons who feel capable and physically able to do this type of work.</p>	deprivation	suffering	unemployment
<p><b># 18</b> This work does not need education...It only requires good physical health and good eyesight. Even engineers come and learn from casuals in the construction industry because</p>	deprivation	suffering	unemployment

*/ they only have book theories.*

*/ # 4 It's a path through which people gain skills in the construction industry [entry level]*

# 18 The training is free...you only need diligence/ interest to learn. It is therefore easy to enter unskilled casual work in the construction industry.

FGD # 1 [females]

# 4 All types of people...'jua kali' (informal sector).

**Q.17 What is their attitude [casuals] to self-employment?**

FGD # 2 [males]

# 9 This depends on individuals... some seek only daily sustenance; others think of their future...you can start saving for investment.

# 16 Someone can be interested in doing a particular training course but lacks money so they engage in unskilled casual work to raise money for their ventures.

# 4 Some people see construction work as a career; hence, unskilled casual work is an entry point to work in the construction industry.

# 17 Unskilled casual work can be a pathway to becoming a contractor [source of the many collapsed buildings in Kenya?].

# 9 Unskilled casual work is unreliable... you have to save money until you have your own business...The erratic work [income] makes you think of the future [begin saving for livelihood diversification],

[FGD # 1 [females]

deprivation	false belief	opportunity
deprivation	false belief	opportunity cost
deprivation	suffering	informality
deprivation	false belief	savings
deprivation	false belief	capital
deprivation	false belief	training
deprivation	unmet need	training
deprivation	suffering	job insecurity

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<p>/ #3 <i>Many people would like to be self-employed but lack capital for operating a business.</i>  / <i>Women's merry-go-round schemes are useful in starting and supporting a business...but the low earnings of such businesses lead to a high rate of default...or inability to contribute consistently...this leads to their collapse.</i></p>	deprivation	unmet need	capital
<p># 2 There is distrust...about giving lump sums to individuals...they might abscond. The alternative is group savings... these are shared out at the end of the year, each according to their contribution [this reduces the benefits of pooling resources and introduces risk, administrative and bank costs]. [There is fear]...defaulter's assets [household goods] can be auctioned ...worsening the poverty condition.</p>	deprivation	suffering	mistrust
<p>Q.18 What constrains participation in trade unions?  FGD # 2 [males]</p>			
<p># 18 The work is not permanent... when you get paid at the end of the day you are effectively fired from the job.</p>	deprivation	suffering	uncertainty
<p># 9 Unskilled casual work is negotiated individually...trade unions are [therefore] not useful in negotiating the wages of unskilled casual workers. Their wage depends on their bargaining power. This also depends on the employer's ignorance of prevailing rates [can be charged more]...it also depends on the employer's ability to pay...some are unable to pay much [the casuals can take what's on offer or forego the work].</p>	deprivation	unmet need	collective bargaining
<p># 4 Also, pay rates are different...unskilled casual workers have no common goal.</p>	deprivation	suffering	unequal pay
<p># 17 Trade union membership fees discourage joining trade unions because unskilled casual work is not permanent; hence, casuals cannot commit to payment of regular union dues.</p>	deprivation	suffering	social isolation
<p># 9 Trade unions are corrupt-people are asked to join the trade unions in order to be</p>	deprivation	suffering	corruption

*/represented in disputes* but employers bribe to have cases dismissed/ignored by unions.

# 4 Trade unions have no links to workers...workers are not sensitized on their functions - there is lack of interaction with union officials.

FGD # 1 [females]

# 1 ...Lack of awareness about where to seek help... [Labour and union offices]...Trade unions are not active in recruiting workers in the estates...we only see the officials on TV.

# 11 ...Low bargaining power...leads to exploitation by employers/customers [a take it or leave it attitude],

Q.19 What is the procedure for employment of casual workers?

FGD # 2 [males]

# 10 Casual workers report to a work site and the foreman selects people at random.

# 16 It also depends on your social networks... those out of work are notified of openings by their colleagues.

# 10 At times it is luck - one just walks around looking for construction sites.

# 4 Casual workers look out for each other and alert their friends about new openings for work.

# 16 Foremen have their own groups of casuals that they rely on and frequently employ recruit].

# 18 Some casuals depend on their 'fundi' for work... this is based on their work performance

deprivation	suffering	social isolation
deprivation	unmet need	information
deprivation	suffering	exploitation
deprivation	suffering	uncertainty
deprivation	unmet need	social networks
deprivation	suffering	uncertainty
deprivation	suffering	social isolation
discrimination	suffering	social networks
deprivation	suffering	patron-client
1	i	i

*/ and relationship.*

#4 *Your fame in the work* [competence] sells your name and leads to repeat work...also, *casual* workers have a base where they lounge [hang out] when out of work... employers/ 'fundis'/residents know where to find them.

FGD # 1 [females]

# 9 Initially, one depends on luck...but, repeat work depends on good performance...the difficult part is getting hired...to demonstrate one's ability.

**Q.20 What are the prospects for career advancement of casual workers?**

FGD #2 [males]

%

# 18 This depends on one's attitude. For some, this job is just for earning money... they do not take interest in learning...Others are keen for career growth and take interest in the skills/training of their mentors ('fundi') as well as the higher income of skilled persons...hence, they try to learn and advance [motivation],

# 4 If you are lazy you stagnate...if you have interest in the work you will advance. The career progression is from unskilled casual worker, to skilled 'fundi', to a foreman, to a contractor.

# 10 This depends on the person's attitude to the work...if one takes the work as a career they can advance. If they lack interest in this work they invest elsewhere [lack of commitment leads to diffuse activities away from unskilled casual work].

# 18 Attitude to unskilled casual work depends on one's background...those with secure bases [livelihoods] use unskilled casual work as a source of money for entertainment but for others it's a source of livelihood.

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deprivation	suffering	unemployment
deprivation	unmet need	opportunity
deprivation	false belief	personal effort
deprivation	false belief	laziness
deprivation	false belief	commitment
deprivation	false belief	life chances

/ # 4 Entry to this type of work depends on <b>one's reason for</b> joining...necessity or choice.	deprivation	unmet need	opportunities
# 10 The irregular nature of unskilled casual work can discourage unskilled casual workers from <i>taking this</i> work seriously as a career path... some heavy tasks can lead to loss of interest in unskilled casual work.	deprivation	suffering	despair
FGD #1 [females]			
# 10 There are no prospects [for casual workers]... these are dead-end jobs... for survival...we go for weeks or months without finding work.	deprivation	suffering	despair
<b>Q.21 How is education related to unskilled casual work?</b>			
FGD #2 [males] %			
# 9 The educated casual workers know the relationship between themselves and their work. Those who are educated have an advantage with the employer and 'fundis'. The uneducated casuals are slower learners on the job - they take longer to understand instructions.	deprivation	unmet need	education
# 4 Education is necessary to be able to read a house plan and interpret instructions... communication is facilitated through use of English and Kiswahili. This can determine [mediate] getting work because some casual workers cannot articulate their needs.	deprivation	unmet need	education
# 10 Education can assist to solve some problems...an educated contractor dealing with delayed salaries has better skills to solve such a problem by persuading his casuals against work stoppage.	deprivation	unmet need	education
# 15 Education helps in career advancement...to become a contractor one needs to be educated.	deprivation	unmet need	education
# 4 Lack of education is a barrier to career advancement [in the construction industry]	deprivation	unmet need	education

<p>/~FGD #1 [females]</p> <p>#8 One needs to have basic education for 'hesabu" (counting) in order to give correct change in business. Also, when washing clothes one is able to identify the different colours, which helps to avoid mixing [staining].</p> <p># 7 We are able to know how to wash clothes...such as what soap to use and the correct quantity</p> <p># 6 We are able to differentiate between different types of bleaches; for example, the difference between 'jik white and jik colours'...we also appear knowledgeable...when we ask a customer to provide 'window shine' for cleaning windows [a branded product][great laughter],</p> <p>Q.22 How is ethnicity related to unskilled casual work?</p>	<p>deprivation</p> <p>deprivation</p> <p>deprivation</p>	<p>unmet need</p> <p>unmet need</p> <p>unmet need</p>	<p>education</p> <p>training</p> <p>training</p>
<p>FGD# 2 [males]</p> <p># 18 This depends on how you relate to each other...when recruiting, a 'fundi' can insist on particular persons [ethnic groups] as his assistants...some ethnic groups ask for more money (higher wages), others want low pay but [to work] more days [greater income security versus higher income]...some tribes are preferred by employers...they ask for low pay, do not go on strike...everyone is a foreman[laughter].</p>	<p>discrimination</p>	<p>suffering</p>	<p>ethnicity</p>
<p># 9 ... Stereo types of tribes... thieves are said to come from the Kikuyu...at times they are denied work.</p>	<p>discrimination</p>	<p>suffering</p>	<p>ethnicity</p>
<p>FGD #1 [females]</p> <p># 4 Ethnicity is a basis for discrimination...people specifically ask for their 'tribesmen/women' when hiring...getting casual work is determined by who you know and</p>	<p>discrimination</p>	<p>suffering</p>	<p>ethnicity</p>

*I your 'tribe'.*

**Q. 23 How is gender related to unskilled casual work?**

FGD # 2 [males]

# 4 Women are rare in casual work in the construction industry...many are discouraged by the demands of physical work... some jobs cannot be done by women.

discrimination suffering gender

# 18 Women are assigned light duties...

discrimination suffering gender

# 17 Some women fear heights in tall buildings...there are also very few skilled women 'fundis' (believed to be fewer than 50 in the country).Where is an assumption that 'Hindis' should be men.

discrimination false belief gender

# 17 Women's work is slow - they were born that way...

discrimination false belief gender

# 10 [disagreement] but they are faster in paying workers, as such they prefer administrative jobs, which are less physically demanding.

discrimination false belief gender

FGD #1 [females]

# 3 The public belief is that women cannot do heavy work...hence they are discriminated against on the basis of gender [physical strength] [there is road construction work going on in the estate but the only visible female worker is a supervisor. All the casual workers hand-laying stones are men].

discrimination false belief gender

# 2 Pregnant women are discriminated against...they are perceived as frail/weak...mothers with small children cannot effectively compete for jobs... this is because they lack money for hiring house help...they spend much of their time nursing their babies.

discrimination suffering gender

# 1 To find work mothers have to wake up very early...to prepare the children's food before

r n

<p><i>/ work, they also leave work earlier than those without children...this reduces their working hours and leads to lower incomes</i></p>	discrimination	suffering	gender
<p># 10 Politicians do not talk to female workers...we are not heard and our problems are unknown [no voice] [the group is excited that today someone has bothered to spend time with them and listen to their problems].</p>	discrimination	suffering	gender
<p><b>Q.24 How is disability related to unskilled casual work?</b></p>			
<p>FGD # 2 [males]</p>			
<p># 4 A disabled person is disadvantaged - they cannot climb tresses... there is a lot of climbing in construction work.</p>	discrimination	suffering	disability
<p># 17 The blind cannot work in the construction industry...the disabled are discriminated against; they can only work while seated (there is not much of that type of work in the construction industry).</p>	discrimination	suffering	disability
<p># 12 [Disagreement] physical appearance is not an issue in construction work...what counts is your physical endurance and willingness to do heavy work.</p>	discrimination	suffering	appearance
<p>FGD #1 [females]</p>			
<p># 7 Physically challenged persons may lack the ability to do some casual jobs due to physical handicaps...some casuals are discriminated based on personal appearance... skinny persons, fat people, 'ugly people' and sickly persons are not preferred.</p>	discrimination	suffering	disability
<p># 6 Those who look dirty do not get jobs., .if your face looks rough for want of cleaning or has rashes you will be shunned.</p>	discrimination	suffering	appearance
<p><b>Q.25 How is age related to unskilled casual work?</b></p>			
<p>FGD # 2 [males]</p>			

#17 *You cannot use a walking stick and do plastering in a construction site [the old are disadvantaged in this line of work],*

# 16 Older workers are slower; hence, less productive - they are downgraded to light work...such as painting.

# 4 Technology tends to change; hence, the older workers are not able to use new technology.

#17 The young are energetic and enthusiastic to work - they have an advantage over older workers.

FGD #1 [females]

# 4 Older workers are discriminated against...because they are perceived as physically weaker...customers say they want strong workers...'wamama wa nguvu' (physically strong women).

# 3 Older workers are perceived by customers as being more expensive since they have more family responsibilities...younger workers are preferred...they are relatively easier to underpay/cheaper-they have fewer responsibilities and less experience in bargaining.

#### **Q.26 What alternative livelihoods are available for casual workers?'**

FGD # 2 [males]

#17 They can do business...

FGD # 1 [females]

# 2 ...Small business or farming...where land is accessible. However, many casuals cannot access land and they also cannot raise the money required for advance payment of farm

discrimination	suffering	infirmity
discrimination	suffering	age
discrimination	false belief	age
discrimination	false belief	age
discrimination	suffering	age
discrimination	suffering	age
deprivation	unmet need	diversification
deprivation	unmet need	land

**I** leases.

# I Attempts to get financial assistance are frustrating...many give up due to time constraints... we depend on a daily wage and cannot afford time for running around from office to office.

**Q.27 What constrains access to alternative livelihoods?**

FGD # 2 [males]

# 9 Lack of capital [cash]

# 4 Having a family constrains escape due to recurrent expenditures, which are a priority...you cannot leave what you have to explore the unknown [risk aversion],

#17 An alternative is to start a business for your wife to act as a buffer before changing your career.

# 10 High dependency reduces capacity to save money.

# 4 Lack of exposure /awareness of alternatives by many casuals.

# 18 Overspecialization...exposure to work experience - people stick to the familiar.

# 10 A career focus contributes to some unskilled casual workers staying put - they accept the occupation and expect to advance in the construction career.

**FGD # 1 [females]**

deprivation	unmet need	credit
deprivation	unmet need	capital
deprivation	suffering	dependency
deprivation	unmet need	social support
deprivation	suffering	dependency
deprivation	suffering	information
deprivation	suffering	risk aversion
deprivation	unmet need	opportunity
1		

/# 9 Lack of business capital is the major factor....	deprivation	unmet need	capital
# 6 Inexperience in doing business leads to ignorance of existing opportunities...low educational levels lead to loss of money... through faulty counting of change.	deprivation	suffering	business experience
<b>Q.28 How does distance to work affect access to unskilled casual work?</b>			
FGD # 2 [males]			
# 18 Unskilled casual workers work everywhere...It depends on where the work is...distance determines what work gets taken up.	disadvantage	unmet need	transport
#12 Where a person gets work determines whether the returns are worth it based on incidental expenses and the daily wage.	disadvantage	unmet need	transport
# 15 At times casuals stay at a work site [camp]...this reduces transport costs...where the cost of bus fare is high...work is forgone [work].	disadvantage	unmet need	transport
FGD # 1 [females]			
# 1 Many of us walk to work due to the high cost of transport...distance to work is not a major problem when seeking work in the residential estate unless one has small children to prepare for school. In that case, one will get to the work site late and may not get work. However, distance to work is a significant factor for those seeking work in the industrial area...many arrive late and are unable to find work.	disadvantage	unmet need	transport
<b>Q.29 How is residence related to unskilled casual work?</b>			
FGD # 2 [males]			
# 16 Unskilled casual workers live in low-cost houses, for example, 'Kambi ya nguruwe'(a	deprivation	suffering	overcrowding

<p><i>/ former pig farm converted into an owner occupier scheme/site rented by casuals) [laughter] along Saika/Kangundo road. The rent is cheap...if you stretch your legs they enter your neighbour's house (tiny abodes) [more laughter].</i></p>			
<p>FGD # 1 [females]</p>			
<p># 8 We lack basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and security...we are fearful for the safety of selves and property.</p>	deprivation	suffering	insecurity
<p># 6 Sanitation is poor and stagnant water is a breeding ground for mosquitoes...we are exposed to malaria and [water borne] diseases.</p>	deprivation	suffering	poor sanitation
<p><b>Q. 30 How is unskilled casual work related to chronic urban poverty?</b></p>			
<p>FGD # 2 [males]</p>			
<p># 4 Irregular incomes make it difficult to acquire assets.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	assets
<p># 9 You cannot get a loan or plan...you can get work for one month and stay without work for another month or two...savings end up being used during periods of unemployment.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	credit
<p># 10 Lack of money (being broke) means any work found goes to fulfil basic needs but no savings occur.</p>	deprivation	suffering	low savings
<p># 4 The work is not continuous... there is constant accumulation of debts.</p>	deprivation	suffering	indebtedness
<p># 18 Unskilled casual workers have the most debts with shopkeepers.</p>	deprivation	suffering	indebtedness
<p># 7 Some casual workers move house to avoid debts...when the shop debt reaches twice your monthly rent you may opt to change residence rather than pay up.</p>	deprivation	suffering	social instability
<p># 18 Tenants and landlords maintain a book where they reconcile accounts...rent payment is</p>	deprivation	suffering	low income

<p><i>/ done in bits, depending on your cash flow... the book is a record of outstanding obligations by f either party.</i></p>			
<p># 17 Low wages contribute to chronic urban poverty...there is no progress...unskilled casual workers live a bare existence.</p>	deprivation	unmet need	low savings
<p># 16 Delayed payments lead to debts; hence, its difficult to save money...piecemeal payment of wages is common.</p>	deprivation	suffering	indebtedness
<p># 14 Dishonest employers default on payment yet unskilled casual workers do not have written contracts...It is not cost effective to seek legal redress...its too time consuming[and expensive].</p>	deprivation	suffering	non-payment of wages
<p>FGD #1 [females]</p>			
<p># 1 [through] lack of jobs or businesses...</p>	deprivation	suffering	unemployment
<p># 11 ... dependence on irregular work or lack of food</p>	deprivation	suffering	uncertainty
<p># 10 ...Lack of business premises...leading to constant harassment by local authority and police.</p>	deprivation	suffering	insecurity

Borrowing money is problematic because low incomes make it difficult for small businesses to support a loan repayment; since the income is shared between loan repayment and basic needs of rent and food. The participants therefore argued that one needs to have an existing business to be able to repay a loan [a lesson for MFIs].

They recommend that they be given enough assistance to cater for 3 months rent and subsistence in addition to business start up capital. This is because asset accumulation is a challenge due to low income [they live from 'hand-to-mouth'].

To put figures to this argument we calculated what they thought would be a minimum investment to escape poverty.

A family of 7 persons could survive on 300/= per day *30days*3 months=	27,000
Cheapest accommodation (2 rooms) is 1500 per month*3 months	4,500
Minimum start up capital (including premises)	<u>10,000</u>
	41,500
Contingencies 20%=	<u>8,300</u>
Total	<u>49,800</u>

This rough calculation indicates that for a poor person with a family to escape poverty on their own through starting a sustainable small business requires an initial capital outlay of about 50,000/=. This amount is difficult to raise as a lump sum for many urban poor people. The micro credit approach may thus not be the way forward for the chronic urban poor.

Observations: FGD I

From the foregoing discussion the poverty challenge appears to be the provision of decent jobs and business support services. In view of the fact that many of these people lack marketable skills, economic efficiency may have to be sacrificed (in the short term) for social efficiency [such as offering them odd job positions in organisations. These are used to provide employment to unskilled workers].

It is noteworthy that casual workers waste a lot of time [from hours to weeks] waiting/prospecting for work. This time could be productively used for handicraft work if suitable training was provided so as to increase their income streams [examples include basket weaving or wood carving].

The women casuals are 'registered' into group of sorts [informal]. New 'members' are required to pay 300/= to be allowed to prospect for work from the site. This registration fee is shared among the older 'members'. Registration serves as a barrier to entry. For instance, a young lady came and sat at die site during the FGD and the group was quick to point out that she is not a regular [they only accommodated her due to the presence of the research team].

It later emerged that the group discourages young girls from sitting at the site because some were believed to be using it as a base for prostitution. This was giving a bad name to the whole group, leading to calls for their eviction by the estate residents [the same accusation is levelled against these women by some estate residents; one resident claimed the women were increasing HIV infection rates in the estate by using the casual domestic work as a cover for prostitution].

The majority of the FGD participants were able to articulate issues well. They expressed joy at being sought out for the discussion. While many had been interviewed before, the FGD was perceived as different because it did not make any [false] promises about offering assistance. The participants' demeanour, nevertheless, betrayed expectations of future benefit from their participation [use of expressions such as a desire to be 'included in the list']

The participants expressed confidenne that the research team was on the level and it had a genuine interest to understand the problem of chronic urban poverty. For example, the participants were asked whether to begin the discussion with issues of unskilled casual work or chronic urban poverty and they unanimously chose to discuss chronic urban poverty [indicating it was an issue clQpe t to their hearts]. They further claimed that no one had shown an interest to assist them at the work site, including the religious organisation outside which they sit. They complained of harassment by estate residents, city council officers and police on patrol.

The group generally looked needy as evidenced by worn out shoes, slender frames and rough hands. Some expressed joy at having decided to come to the site on a Monday [apparently a bad day for work] because they were given freebies by the research team-a rare occurrence for them [these included a token 10/= pencil each, tea and mandazi at the start of the discussion and sodas at the end of the discussion], [It was emotionally touching to see so

much joy evoked by such a small gesture of appreciation; after all, the research team had spent close to two hours conducting the discussion and everyone was exhausted].

One lady [a late comer] remarked, 'who can give a soda to a woman "ameparara kama mimi" (who gives soda to a scaly-faced woman like me?). There were repeated expressions of gratitude as we bade each other farewell, such as 'God gives to those who give,' and 'may you be blessed with more'.

In general, the group felt that the interview was time well spent because it was able to express and share its ideas, its frustrations and aspirations for a better future. The participants expressed the desire to form a SHG but were fearful of losing their money to selfish members who may disappear after getting the group contribution. Some participants expressed a desire to have the researcher chair the SHG [this was politely declined].

Ethnicity, jealousy and suspicion were evident. The group dynamics seemed to indicate ethnic affinity, with people of similar ethnic background sitting next to each other or conversing in their mother tongue to reinforce a point.

Rape and incest were frequently mentioned during the discussion. What was striking about it was the casual way in which they were talked about, like it was 'normal'. For example, # 3, 'saa zingine mama anaweza kuja nyumbani apate mzee ameshika katoto (at times a mother can come home and find that her husband has raped the child). 'Huwezi kumushtaki, ama hata we we utakaa masaa, na hio pia ni shida' (you cannot report your husband or you will be chased away, and that in itself^ a/so a problem). 'Saa zingine hata huna pesa za kupeleka katoto hosipitali, utafanya nini? Si utakaa!' (at times you do not even have money to take the child to hospital, what will you do? You just ignore it!).

Following these comments not a single participant refuted or challenged the speaker on her narrative. It was as if they all had similar experiences or it was common knowledge not worth belabouring [or a taboo subject?].

The impression I got was that rape and incest are a serious problem in the slum but the women feel powerless to do anything about it. The issue was pursued further and what came

out was that incidents go unreported for fear of reprisal [one participant claimed that death squads can be sent to eliminate people perceived as a threat to a perpetrator].

The perpetrators are mostly husbands/fathers/relatives or security agents who wielded power over the victims. In addition, frequent negative contact with state security agents have made people fearful of interacting with local administrators and police. The general belief is that one cannot get justice if one is poor. The participants kept trying to commit the researcher to come and help them- 'Kuja utupeleke kwa hizo maofisi' (come and take us to those offices) [a common comment when asked whether they had sought help from various agencies such as the provincial administration, children's department, ministry of education and NGOs],

It was evident to me that as mothers and wives, the women were acutely aware of how poverty affected their families. Some lived in constant anxiety knowing that their loved ones were engaged in dubious activities in an attempt to earn a living. There was an unacknowledged understanding [between family and even within community] that one did what one had to do in order to survive [ at no time did I get a hint of shame from a contributor]. It was as if there was embarrassment about a topic but not about how the speaker was involved with it. This appears to be a form of externalisation that enables the individual to have two separate identities-one of the true self and a second one of the slum victim who is 'powerless' to do anything about their condition and is thus resigned to their fate [in a way it enables them to shift blame and thus legitimise deviant behaviour].

They thus talk as if they are talking about someone else; despite the narrative being delivered as if the narrator *was there or experienced it*. For example, #-/...'Askari anaweza kuja atake ku rape mtoto wako mbele yako au aku rape mbele ya bwana yako na hakuna kile utafanya' (A policeman can attempt to rape your daughter in front of you or your husband and there is nothing you can do about it [many rapes are alleged to have occurred during security operations to flush out the outlawed 'Mungiki' sect members].

The participants continuously exhorted each other to contribute to the discussion and not to act 'as if they had no problems of their own'...'si ueleeze shida zako...kwani wewe huna shida?' (go on...articulate your problems...don't you have any issues?' [a participant being urged by her colleagues] [in this sense the FGD session was therapeutic because it enabled the women to ventilate their frustrations].

One participant argued that any assistance to the poor should be channelled directly to the beneficiaries [this is difficult in practice] to avoid corruption, which benefits the less needy. 'Bursaries go to the children of the rich'. One lady felt that, 'education has no value since some fonn four leavers have no jobs and education has not helped [her] my life'. She confessed to being pessimistic about investing in her daughter's education since the return on education was not guaranteed. 'Why take my child to school if I, the mother, never benefited from education?'

**Life Histories: Interviewee Profiles**

**(a) Identity Aspects**

Casual workers	Place of birth	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Age at Marriage	No. of children	Age at parenting	Dependants	Relationship to dependants	Effect of dependency burden	Formal education	Ethnicity	Religion	Disability
Case# 1	Machakos	48	F	Single	N/A	1	36	3	nephews, nieces	medium, poverty	Primary, Drop out	Kamba	Christian	None
Case H 2	Kitui	32	F	Married	12	2	16	5	2 brothers, sister,	high, poverty	none	Kamba	Christian	None
Case #3	Nyeri	49	F	Single	N/A	1	19	2	2 grandchildren	high, poverty	Primary school	Kikuvu	Christian	None
Case #4	Nairobi	34	F	Divorced	20	5	21	5	5 children	high, poverty	Primary, Drop out	Kikuvu	Christian	None
Case #5	Kisumu	23	M	Married	22	2	23	4	2 parents, brother, wife	high, poverty-	Secondary school	Luo	Christian	None
Case # 6	Naivasha	25	M	Married	24	1	25	1	wife	low (minor)	Primary school	Kikuvu	Christian	None
Case #7	Hildoret	25	M	Single	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	brother	Medium, poverty	Secondary, Drop out	<b>Luhya</b>	Christian	None
Case # 8	Nyeri	35	Male	Married	26	2	28	3	mother, brother, wife	None	Primary school	Kikuvu	N/A	None

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*(a) Identity Aspect\**

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<b>(b) Resource Aspects</b>															
Casual workers	Work history (vrs)	Training in last 5 vrs	Current occupation	Motivation for current occupation	How introduced	Job security	Income security	Min. wage	Daily wage	Other income sources	Average monthly expenditure (a)	Savings/deficit (b)	Average monthly income (a+b)	If deficit, how financed	Effect of casual work on welfare
Case # 1	veg. seller (3) casual(4)	none	domestic casual	business collapse	self	Low, irregular work	Low, irregular work	unaware	250	none	6000	3000	9000	no borrowing (risk averse)	positive, self reliant
Case# 2	House maid(3) casual (+10)	none	domestic casual	marital problems	self	Low, irregular wok	Medium, higher earnings tlm H/maid	unaware	200	none	3000	4000	7000	savings, personal loans	positive, able to educate child
Case # 3	bar maid (18) casual( 2)	none	domestic casual	Poverty, need to support grand children	self	Low, irregular work	Low, irregular work	unaware	150	daughter	9000	2000	11000	shopkeeper, salon	negative, poverty, low income
Case # 4	veg. seller (1) hawker (3) meat seller (3) casual (6/12)	none	domestic casual	lack of capital	friend	-Low, irregular work, few customers	medium variable income	unaware	250	none	3000	2000	5000	merry-go-round	positive, business capita]
Case # 5	casual (1) welder (1/2) driver (1)	computer packages, driving	constructs n casual	survival, support family	relative	very low, insecure payment terms	low, little protection on contracts	unaware	200	none	4000	-2000	4000	shopkeeper, friends	negative, low savings
Case # 6	mason (4) carpenter (1) fanner (8/12)	masonry, informal	mason	better career prospects	relative	medium, irregular work	medium, unreliable payments	unaware	5(X)	farming	5000	3000	8000	no borrowing (self reliant)	positive, financial independence
Case # 7	casual (6/12) farmer (2) businessman (3)	none	construction casual	no entry barrier	self	medium, irregular work	low, low wages	unaware	250	none	2000	1000	3000	no borrowing (risk averse)	negative, OHS risks
Case # 8	painter (4) Mason (7) plumber (3)	plumbing, village polytechnic	plumber	freedom, negotiable pav, flexible hours	self	medium, irregular work	high, better bargaining power	unaware	1200	none	4000	20000	24000	no borrowing (self reliant)	positive, good income

**I (b) Resource Aspects (continued)**

Casual workers	OHS Issues	Health status of worker	Insurance	Major assets owned	Livelihood risks	Vulnerabilities	Social protection	Access to credit	Poverty status
Case # 1	exposure to cold, arthritis	poor, poverty induced stress	none	none	eviction from site	sickness, inability to work	Informal: social capital	shopkeeper	chronic poor
Case #2	sickness, fatigue, injury	poor, frequently ill	none	none	eviction from site	domestic conflict	Informal: merry-go-round	merry-go-round, Pastor	chronic poor
Case # 3	fatigue	poor. HIV+, stress	none	none	eviction from site, lack of work	sickness, inability to work	Informal: church, daughter	shop, salon	chronic poor
Case #4	cold, fatigue, back pain	good, but suffers back pains	none	none	debtors, capital decline	national insecurity	Informal: friends	no need-previous good income	chronic poor
Case #5	dust, heavy loads, stress, exposure to elements	average, joint pains, exhaustion	none	none	illness, loss of income	children's health	Informal: friends	money lenders, high interest rates	chronic poor
Case #6	risk of physical injury, exposure to dust	average, suffers from exhaustion	none	2 steers, 1 goat. 1 acre land (squatter)	illness, loss of income, building by-laws	eviction from squatter land, unemployment	Informal: personal savings, parents, merry-go-round	merry-go-round, brothers	non- chronic poor
Case #7	Lack protective gear, poor hygiene at eating places	average, joint pains, exhaustion	none	none	illness	unemployment	Informal: personal savings, friends	friends	chronic poor
Case # 8	poisonous fumes from burning plastics	Good, no immediate concerns	none	12 goats	illness	poor workmanship, professional liability	Informal: personal savings.	bank, but has never borrowed	non-chronic poor

**1 ( c) Spatial Aspects**

Casual workers	Reason for migrating to the city	Current residence (estate)	Reason for selecting residence	No. of rooms	No. of occupants	Type of ownership	Monthly rent	Affordability of rent	Type of house	Total no. of houses	Compound size	Type of roads	Transport cost
Case* 1	poverty at home	Savannah	affordability, near to work place	1	1	owner occupied	Nil	N/A	Iron sheets	3 rooms	small	earth	: N/A
Case #2	discrimination, sexual abuse	Kayole	affordability, escape from family	1	4	rented	1500	low, frequent defaulter	stone/bricks	6 rooms	small	earth	; N/A
Case #3	expulsion, teen pregnancy	Tena	financial support from daughter	2 b/d	3	rented	9000	low, chronic defaulter	stone/bricks	8 flats	small	tarmac	N/A
Case #4	look for work opportunities	Soweto	affordability, near relatives	1 %	4	rented	600	low, chronic defaulter	earth and cement	8 rooms	small	earth	N/A
Case #5	seek training	Kayole	affordability, decent housing	1	4	rented	1300	low, frequent defaulter	stone/bricks	8 rooms	small	tarmac	N/A
Case #6	look for work opportunities	Dandora	proximity to friends and relatives in the area	1	3	rented	1200	high, affordable	stone/bricks	8 rooms	small	tarmac	Ksh70 per day
Case #7	look for work opportunities	Kayole	cheap rent and meals	1	1	rented	1000	affordable	stone/bricks	12 rooms	small	murram	irregular, Ksh70 per day
Case #8	loss of employment	Dandora	proximity to friends	1	4	rented	1400	affordable	stone/bricks	26 rooms	medium	tarmac	irregular, Ksh 70 per day

**( c ) Spatial Aspects (continued)**

Casual workers	Effect of transport on welfare	Water access point	Cost of water per month	Effect of water access	Sewage system connected to	Toilets (T) bathroom (B)	Type of toilet	Cost of toilet use per month	Effect of sanitation	Access to electricity	Cost of electricity per month	Effect of electricity on welfare	Security of person/property	Perception of residential security
Case # 1	Negative, spatially limiting	external, shared source	600	shortages, expensive	city mains	(1) shared, 3 people	flush	Nil	health hazard	No	N/A	high cost of lighting	good	Secure
Case #2	Negative, spatially limiting	external, shared source	Inclusive of rent	None	city mains	(1) shared, 7 people	flush	Nil	health hazard	yes	inclusive	low cost of lighting	bad, youth gangs attack people at night	Insecure
Case # 3	Negative, spatially limiting	in-house	300	affordable	city mains %	in-house	flush	Nil	low health risk	yes	300	low cost of lighting	good	Secure
Case #4	Negative, spatially limiting	none, vendors	180	expensive	surface overflow	(1) shared, 20 people	pit latrine	Nil	health hazard	No	N/A	high cost of lighting	good	Secure
Case #5	Negative, spatially-limiting	external shared source	Inclusive of rent	None	city mains	(2) shared, 30 people	flush	Nil	health hazard	yes	inclusive	low cost, lighting only	bad, heavy-tenant traffic	Insecure
Case #6	reduces net savings	external, shared source	Inclusive of rent	None	city mains	(2 T, 1 B) shared, 15 people	flush	Nil	health hazard	yes	inclusive	comfort, low cost of lighting	good	Secure
Case #7	reduces net savings	external, shared source	Inclusive of rent	None	city mains	(2 T, 2 B) shared, 17 people	flush	Nil	low health risk	yes	100	less savings	good	Secure
Case # 8	Negative, spatially limiting	external, shared source	Inclusive of rent	None	city mains	(3 T, 6 B) shared, 23 people	flush	Nil	Nil, washed in turns	yes	250	comfort, low cost of lighting	good	Insecure, depends one if you are known

## 2 Life History Narratives

2.1 Case# 1 Angela's story	Summary Profile
<p>Angela has no fond memories of her childhood. Her mother was a single parent who did not own a profitable business. Angela's parents were separated.../my father sold our only piece of land...the area chief was bribed to suppress the case'.</p> <p>Her family initially owned a small 'shamba' (farm) of about 1 acre but had no cows, goats or chicken. Food shortages were common as they grew up. Compared to other children in her neighbourhood, her family was worse off in terms of income, clothes and food.</p> <p>Bad memories of her childhood include starting work early...as a casual worker... 'where I got low pay'. Angela did not attend nursery school or complete primary school. She lacked school books and school uniforms, in addition to being perpetually hungry. She also had no access to non-school books or newspapers.</p> <p>Angela was frequently sick as a child and was left locked up at home. 'We have not encountered much illness in the family...except for me. I wonder about this...could it be witchcraft?'</p> <p>She considers her parents' failure to educate her as being responsible for her poverty... 'I can't recall growing up with much ambition'.... She did not undergo any rites of passage to mark her</p>	<p><b>Growing up</b></p> <p>Childhood poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor family-raised by a single parent</li> <li>• Father sold family land</li> <li>• Few life chances</li> <li>• Food shortages</li> <li>• Primary school dropout</li> <li>• Child labour</li> <li>• Poor health in childhood</li> </ul> <p><b>Major Life course events (suffering)</b></p> <p>Persistent anxiety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single mother</li> <li>• Many dependants</li> <li>• Lack of support</li> <li>• Inflation</li> <li>• Estrangement from paternal relatives</li> <li>• Insecurity; business premises demolished</li> <li>• No training</li> </ul>

*I adulthood. 7 migrated to the city in 1999 to escape poverty at my rural home'. She is now a casual domestic worker, an occupation that she has engaged in [on and off] for the last 4 or 5 years after the collapse of her vegetable selling business.*

Her casual work has OSH disadvantages.... 'It exposes me to cold through constant contact with cold water'. It also has low job security because the work is irregular....' I can go for weeks without getting hired'. The level of income security is low due to the low and variable pay. 'My income is a major source of insecurity...it makes me face the future with fear'.

Her 'kibanda' (business stall) was demolished by city authorities...'the economic situation [high cost of basic commodities] makes it difficult for me to raise the money to reopen my vegetable business...I need about 2000/='. She is risk averse... 'I never borrow money even when I have had a bad am at the work site...I prefer to sleep hungry rather than borrow money'...She is proud to be self-reliant and alive. 'I may leave home without eating breakfast...I do not normally eat lunch...when I have no money, I take tea and sleep [hungry]'.  
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Her major concern is sickness that can render her incapable of working...'tliis would lead to loss of income'. Her living environment is 'smelly and has surface overflow, which exposes children to diseases'. She has three dependants [who are] '...my deceased sister's children'. She once tried to get work at a horticulture export company at Embakasi but found 'the distance to be too far from my residence, so I gave up'.

She is a single mother and has had no [tormai] training in the last 5 years. She has no other

- Unemployed
- Spatial disadvantage-distance to work
- Unskilled casual worker
- Inadequate income

### **Unmet Need (Social protection)**

#### **Employment**

- Assets
- Child support
- Investment capital
- Income security
- Livelihood diversification
- Social infrastructure

### **'False beliefs' (identity repair)**

#### **Risk aversion**

- Superstition
- Attributes her poverty to lack of education and land
- Identity repair- through activity (work) and self-devaluation (low ambition),

*I sources of income or access to any form of [formal] insurance... I own no major assets\*. She has no [formal] social protection and dislikes borrowing.*

'I live alone among other squatters on some undeveloped land'. There are no access roads where she lives... 'The place is served by footpaths which get muddy in the rainy season<sup>7</sup>. They all share an external toilet and bathroom with 3 other houses... 'I find no problem in sharing these facilities'. She has no access to electricity and uses paraffin for cooking and lighting.

Angela has been unable to find [decent] work. She has no job seeking networks and does not belong to a SHG. I have not inherited any tangible assets and I have no [social] networks that can assist me...I have no link with my paternal relatives... because my father is the problem...he sold our family land'.

'...I strongly hope and believe that God will bless me...even if it is just through my child in old age'. She has no personal savings at the moment and none for her daughter's future education. She is also not aware of any social support programmes. 'My eldest nephew ought to be in form one but lacks school fees and is therefore idle at home'.

She considers her casual work occupation a positive factor in her life../because I do not lack food... it enables me to cater for most of my household expenses; my medical needs; child's expenses; and I am also debt free. She believes that lack of land is a major constraint in escaping poverty... 'It is what contributed to my childhood poverty'. She finds idleness to be bad [disempowering] and longs to be in control of her life.

proud to be 'self-reliant' at a low level of existence

Poor nutrition

Squatter

## 2.2 Case # 2 Jennifer's story

Jennifer has no fond memories of her childhood... 'My worst memories/regrets are failure to go to school'. Her experience of growing up was one of extreme deprivation and dejection 'due to lack of food and clothing'... 'I grew up being discriminated against by my grandmother... I was hated even by my neighbours... I was blamed for all manner of ills in our community... [because] I was born out of wedlock... I believe that is why my stepfather was not willing to support my education'.

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She says her grandmother was very violent and physically abused her until she was hospitalised... I used to eat once a day because I was deliberately denied food... I was being punished for the sins [omissions] of my mother... I was denied parental affection and was constantly fearful (of rape) even when at my grandmother's house. She lives with constant fear of rape... 'I was once raped by a relative... my grandmother and I lived in a single hut that we shared with two other people-my two uncles'. She ran away from home to avoid FGM... 'this is what brought me to Nairobi... I was forced out of my grandmother's home and was disowned by the family for refusing to be circumcised'.

Jennifer migrated to the city for lack of a place to stay... 'I am isolated from my family and friends. I do not go to my rural home'. She got her first child at age 16yrs and has no formal education... I have been on my own since then... I depend on my teenage daughter to read for me... after failing to go to school I lost all ambition... Her childhood ambition was to become a

### Profile

#### **Growing up**

##### Childhood poverty

- Poor family
- Few life chances
- Food shortages
- No formal education
- De-motivated by lack of schooling
- Ostracised-born out of wedlock
- No training
- Cruelty by family; physical and sexual abuse
- Escaped forced FGM
- Deprived of affection
- Discrimination
- Severe loneliness

#### **Major Life course events (suffering)**

##### Poor health

- Rape victim

<p><i>doctor 'in order to heal people'.</i></p> <p>Jennifer has not had any skill training in the last five years and her current occupation is casual domestic worker. She previously worked as a house maid, 'the work was not very good but I tolerated it for lack of alternatives'. She chose this occupation due to 'domestic problems' [unsupportive husband/lack of income]. Her biggest concerns are her irregular work and domestic conflict [fear of losing her husband. She gets infrequent support from her husband...'my marriage is not formalised...at times he demands for my money&gt;and when I refuse to hand it over he chases me away from home' [she may be a victim of domestic violence, her face is discoloured].She therefore has to invest time in mending the relationship, which leads to loss of work opportunities/income.</p> <p>Her level of job security is low because of the irregularity of finding work. The income security is average...'because the income I get is better than that for a house maid'. She has no other source of income and is not aware of any assistance programmes by the government. She has heard of a microfinance organisation in her residential area but 'I gave up following on a loan because it was time consuming'. She is aware of some tribal [ethnic based] SHGs but says 'outsiders are not welcome to join...even if it is not openly said so'.</p> <p>Jennifer has 4 dependants but has no medical insurance cover and owns no major asset. She has also not inherited any property from her parents. Her health is bad because 'I do not complete a month without going to hospital or being bed ridden. .. I am afraid to find out the true cause of my</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teenage pregnancy</li> <li>• Marital problems</li> <li>• Little support from husband</li> <li>• Discrimination in employment</li> <li>• Insecurity, business premissociales demolished</li> <li>• Ethnic rivalry over business sites</li> <li>• Dependency</li> <li>• Inflation</li> <li>• Social isolation from friends and relatives</li> <li>• Social violence; eviction from street hawking</li> <li>• Unskilled casual</li> <li>• Inadequate income</li> </ul> <p>Unmet Need (social protection)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Assets</li> <li>• Formalisation of marital status</li> <li>• Autonomy</li> </ul>
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I illness... it could lead to stress' [fear of HIV].

She is a chronic rent defaulter because her earnings are irregular. 'I once shared a house in 2001 while trying to survive'. In her residential area roads are poor and impassable during the rainy season and the area's security is 'very bad...youth gangs attack people after 9.00 pm'.

She shares her rented room with three other persons, her two children and husband. Their flush toilets double up as bathrooms and are shared with seven other tenants. 'This makes them constantly dirty and unhygienic...our sewer tends to overflow during the rainy season'.

She says there is discrimination [favouritism] even in hiring for menial jobs. Excuses given by employers include asking her, 'how will you sign for your cheque...what if a visitor comes along who only understands English; how will you direct them?' She is bitter that even menial jobs require 'experience and education'. The long distance to her work site also causes her to get fatigued...'because I cannot afford bus fare... I walk to work every day'.

The death of her grandmother six years ago affected her negatively...the [dependency] burden has now been passed to me...when I have no money my dependants suffer...one of my brothers has dropped out of school to work as a 'matatu tout' [public transport conductor] in order to help the other siblings go to school'.

Jennifer has not experienced any economic improvement despite claims of the same by the

[unreadable text]

- Personal security
- <sup>1</sup> Sanitation
- Income security
- Livelihood diversification
- Support of husband
- Affordable transport
- Social integration
- Social infrastructure
- Literacy
- Land

- Justice
- Adequate nutrition
- Social capital

**'False beliefs' (identity repair)**

- Fatalism
- Attributes her suffering to lack of schooling
  - Self-devaluation; low ambition
  - Loner
  - Despair

*time...my nutrition is not good...at times I survive on 'ugali and sukuma wiki' (maize meal and kales) for a whole month'.*

Slum residence

Rent defaulter

She used to sell vegetables until her 'kibanda' (stall) was demolished by city council 'askaris' in 2006. She claims there was discrimination in the exercise. 'Some stalls were not demolished...they only demolished the stalls [structures] of the poor. She claims to enjoy doing business but 'getting a place to conduct the business is a problem...I am fearful of my business structure being demolished'. Business structures at times are demolished and the owners told to relocate elsewhere or pay protection money...'there is rivalry and tribalism [ethnic conflict] over the construction of [informal] structures for businesses'. She tried hawking but was chased out of the city streets by city council 'askaris [security personnel]. She injured her leg while trying to escape from them... 'they threw me onto a lorry like a sac [of potatoes]'.

Jennifer wishes she could own a plot where she can build her house and/or put up a business. She however feels discriminated against by the authorities, 'one of my neighbours was allocated a piece of land and the children are getting bursaries... tribalism [ethnicity] is at play because my neighbour is of the same tribe as the local politician [involved in the land allocation]'.

She cannot pinpoint any major life-changing decisions she may have made in the past because she claims to have known only poverty and deprivation [victim mentality], 'I have spent most of my life reacting to adversity and therefore I have not been a decision maker [prime mover]'. Commissions by others which have affected her include deprivation of affection and education.

*/ She says that 'my lack of schooling is the cause of my ignorance'.*

Jennifer claims to have suffered police harassment; including attempted rape and extortion. 'I reported the matter to the local police post but nothing happened to the offender, who I could identify. Instead, I was called insane and directed to the chiefs office'. She is fearful of reprisals if she follows up the matter...'killer squads (youth) can be sent to eliminate you...I do not believe it is possible to get justice from the existing [state] institutions'.

Generally, Jennifer survives on two meals a day. She has no job search networks and is not aware of any education or training support offered by any organization. Her ambition is to own her own home or plot of land. She considers her casual job a positive factor on her welfare because 'it has helped me to educate my child...my passion is to protect my child from experiencing problems similar to my own [past]'. She believes that schooling [education] could have helped her to understand and fight for her rights. She copes by living for the moment, 'I do not focus on the future...I believe that [social] life is difficult by nature'.

/2.3 Case # 3 Josephine's story	Profile
<p>Josephine is a working grandmother. She opted to take up casual work in order to support her two grandchildren. Her current occupation is, however, a negative influence on her welfare... 'I only do it because I have no other option... it is hard work with low pay'. Her health status is poor...'because of stress...and also because I have previously suffered from T.B'. She is HIV+ and used to hawk clothes before T.B weakened her...'I had to abandon that line of work'.</p> <p>Josephine finds caring for her grandchildren to be a ha^vy burden due to poor health. Furthermore, she owns no major assets and feels vulnerable due-to lack of capital for starting a business...'my land inheritance has been grabbed by my relatives'.</p> <p>Josephine is a primary school drop out who got pregnant by a drunkard and swore never to get married. She migrated to the city as an unwed teenage mother after she was chased away from her parents' home. 'I think my decision not to continue with schooling is the reason why I am suffering today...I believe schooling would have secured me a better career...because in those days jobs were easy to get'.</p> <p>She cannot afford the rent for her two bedroomed flat and gets very little financial support. One of her relatives used to give her [financial] support but...'this ceased when I got sick. The cost of living is affecting her negatively because, 'basic items are very expensive and alternatives are few...my nutritional status is poor... but I have to make sacrifices for my grandchildren...in fact, I can no</p>	<p>Growing up</p> <p>Troubled adolescence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle class family</li> <li>• Many life chances</li> <li>• Primary school dropout</li> <li>• No training</li> <li>• Orphaned parents, no paternal or maternal relatives</li> </ul>

*I longer afford cooking gas'.*

Josephine's parents were both orphans, 'we had no relatives on either side'. The death of her father affected her very much, until she was bedridden. Her close relatives had accused her of keeping the family's property' titles and at some point broke into her house to look for them.

Josephine is demoralised and has low [welfare] expectations. 'A church official used my illness as a pretext to collect money from our congregation... I never got the money collected'...

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She receives medical care at the church health facility, but explains, 'the church does not provide me with nutritional support...my two grandchildren also cannot be treated at the church health facility (where she obtains ARVs)...because I am not their biological mother... they cannot get free medical care like I do'.

Josephine has minimal social protection except for ARVs and some occasional support from her daughter, who is unemployed and resides in a coastal town. 'My lack of assets or income makes me feel hopeless and powerless'.

Josephine has had no formal training in the last five years. Her casual work occupation has low job security because it's irregular. The income security is also low because it has no fixed wage. Her major source of concern at the moment is lack of work/income... 'I think Kenyan politics is ethnic-based and people are highly individualistic....politicians have neglected the welfare of the people [electorate] I have tried to get sponsorship for my grandchildren but I have not received a response

### **Major Life course events (suffering)**

Poor health

- Teenage pregnancy
- Bar maid
- Poor health-TB, HIV+, Unable to continue hawking
- Loss of land inheritance
- Grand mothering; two dependants
- Inflation
- Abandonment-illness
- Exploitation; church fund raising-not given cash
- Unskilled causal, contingency
- Exploitation, low pay

### **Unmet Needs (Social protection)**

- Cash transfers
- Assets
- Investment Capital
- Income security

*I in the last five years...It has been* difficult to obtain a plot of land for myself...I approached a local politician for assistance but I believe the land [allocations] meant for the poor was sold to people with money... I [also] wonder where donor money for HIV programmes goes?

- Adequate nutrition
- Utilities; cooking gas
- Political voice
- Bursaries for grandchildren
- Land

'False beliefs' (identity repair)

Despair

- Attributes her poverty' to incomplete education-believes she would have been better off if she had completed school

12.4 Case # 4 Teresia's story	Profile
<p>Teresia attended primary school but never sat for the final exam. She relocated to her father's rural home in 1978 after her mother fell ill. 'My mother's decision to relocate to the rural area affected me... because, as a minor (8 years old) I could not be left in the care of my father... this led to my low schooling achievement....my mother's sickness prevented me from concentrating on schooling since I was a caregiver'. She felt deprived relative to other children because of her role as a care giver. 'I had to frequently visit my mother in hospital and so I could not concentrate on m^ school work'.</p> <p>Teresia attended a tailoring course but did not complete it because she felt that 'the proprietor was not offering me value for money'...I dropped out after two months...because I got married'. She got married at age 20 years and had her first child at 21. T am a divorcee now...I discovered that he had another wife'. The divorce led to her initial separation from her children, 'because I dumped them at his new wife's home (in anger)'.</p> <p>Teresia lives in a rented single room; although she says T used to occupy two rooms [in better times]...I share this room with three of my children...my estranged husband came and took one of my sons'. She shares one toilet and bathroom with 20 other tenants. She has no access to water or electricity in the compound and this contributes to a higher cost of living...'I rely on paraffin for lighting'. The area roads are poorly done and get muddy when it rains, 'my shoes get damaged'.</p>	<p><b>• Growing up</b></p> <p>Stolen childhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle class family</li> <li>• Many life chances</li> <li>• Primary school dropout</li> <li>• Care giver to ailing mother</li> <li>• Tailoring course</li> </ul> <p><b>Major Life course events (suffering)</b></p> <p>Poor health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early marriage</li> <li>• Polygamous husband</li> <li>• Divorce</li> <li>• Conflict over children</li> <li>• Insecurity, led to collapse of business</li> <li>• Inflation</li> <li>• Hawking affected by change</li> </ul>

<p><i>I fearful of working on credit... because of poor repayment habits of my clients'. 'A while back I decided to sell my wares in another town...this decision led to the collapse of my business...I had anticipated that fanners would have ready cash to pay me with...however, I found that they had not yet harvested their maize crop...so, they ended up paying me in instalments for my goods'...These small payments [income] were all consumed by my subsistence expenses as I tried to collect my debts...I ended up running down my capital base and was soon out of that business'.</i></p> <p>Teresia's life was fine until she resumed casual work, following the failure of her hawking business. Casual work has low job security...'because it is difficult to get customers'. She is also exposed to cold and dust at the work site, 'I suffer from backache and physical fatigue'.</p> <p>The change of government in 2002 brought in new rules [enforcement of old laws?] that have made it difficult for her to earn a living [hawking], 'As a hawker, I have been caught up in street battles with the authorities...we were removed from the city center [by force]...hawking in residential areas is not profitable...I experience food shortages when I am unable to find work'.</p> <p>Teresia received some support from her husband in 2006 but has not received any in 2007. She has no insurance cover and owns no major assets at present. 'I need 50,000/= to buy a water pump for irrigating my farm'.</p> <p>Teresia's monthly rent is 600/= but she is a chronic defaulter...'the cost of living has gone up very much in the last two years...my child has been out of school for the last 3 years after completing class 8...I am unable to secure sponsorship for him due to lack of a national identity card...mine got lost...It is difficult to follow up on</p>	<p>of regime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social violence; eviction from street hawking</li> <li>• Risk management errors; loss of investment capital</li> <li>• No identity card; lack of credit</li> <li>• Unskilled casual</li> <li>• Inadequate income</li> </ul> <p>Unmet Needs (Social protection)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credit</li> <li>• Assets</li> <li>• Sanitation</li> <li>• Income security</li> <li>• Adequate nutrition</li> <li>• Social infrastructure</li> <li>• Investment capital</li> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Child support</li> </ul>
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the issue [ID card] because I need to earn a living and cannot afford to waste time moving from one office to another...lack of an identification document has also limited my ability to obtain credit [contradicts earlier statement, she had said she dislikes borrowing],

Teresia has a low opinion of Kenyan politics... 'I once spent a whole day at a hospital but still had to buy the prescribed drugs...I resent wasting my time at the hospital, which I feel could have been [productively] utilised to earn money'.

Teresia blames the collapse of her meat business on insecurity [she abandoned it during a security operation].../my spoilt stock was worth about 5000/=...it went bad due to lack of cold storage facilities... I have not been able to raise the required capital [to restart it]'.

Teresia has not received any inheritance from her parents but belongs to two SHGs...T have not been very active in them...due to low income...the low purchasing power of consumers is a major problem...because, whereas I can obtain credit to stock up, it is risky because my customers have a high default rate [low incomes; hence, high credit risk profiles]...I therefore prefer to accumulate my own capital slowly; so that I have no debts in case my business collapses'. She is looking for a plot of land...'so that we can establish [secure] business premises'. Her major [welfare] expectation is to obtain loans for business.

- Business premises
- Cold storage facilities

#### **'False beliefs' (identity repair)**

Risk aversion

- Capital accumulation through personal savings
- Attribution; lack of identity card has denied her access to credit

2.5 Case # 5 John's story	Profile
<p>John grew up with an absentee father, 'my dad used to work in a different town from our home'. Food deficits were frequent and severe because his father had retired and had no source of income [contradiction], i had to engage in work [child labour] to pay my school fees and get food for myself. His [core] identity while growing up was 'poor'. His worst memories of childhood include his struggle to pay for his education and lack of food...'I attended classes under a tree from class 1-4...An average class size was 30 students and we had to share about 5 textbooks which belonged to the teachers...most students in the school could not afford text books'.</p> <p>John grew up in a home environment devoid of books, newspapers and television. He experienced frequent corporal punishment both at home and in school...'I disliked mathematics and so I got punished for ignoring it...this is because I was the only boy [in the family] and so I developed an arrogant attitude, which frequently got me into trouble'.</p> <p>At times he was locked up at home during sports days...'I was a good footballer but was discouraged from pursuing it in order to concentrate on my schooling...I had qualified for a good school but due to lack of money I ended up in a 'harambee' (self-help) school...the school had a serious shortage of teachers and text books, but I managed to complete high school (form four)'.</p> <p>He feels that failure to join a good school reduced his progress in life...'lack of school fees was a major factor that has shaped my life'. He did not undergo any rites of passage as he grew up.</p>	<p><b>Growing up</b></p> <p>Childhood poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor family</li> <li>• Few life chances</li> <li>• Food shortages</li> <li>• Inadequate learning resources</li> <li>• Completed secondary school</li> <li>• Absentee father</li> <li>• Harsh discipline</li> <li>• Frequent floods</li> <li>• Child labour</li> </ul> <p>Some skills training</p> <p><b>Major Life course events (suffering)</b></p> <p>Deferred goals</p>

<p><b>2.5 Case # 5 John's story</b></p>	<p><b>Profile</b></p>
<p>John grew up with an absentee father, 'my dad used to work in a different town from our home'. Food deficits were frequent and severe because his father had retired and had no source of income [contradiction], T had to engage in work [child labour] to pay my school fees and get food for myself. His [core] identity while growing up was 'poor'. His worst memories of childhood include his struggle to pay for his education and lack of food...'I attended classes under a tree from class 1-4...An average class size was 30 students and we had to share about 5 textbooks which belonged to the teachers...most students in the school could not afford text books'. *</p> <p>John grew up in a home environment devoid of books, newspapers and television. He experienced frequent corporal punishment both at home and in school...T disliked mathematics and so I got punished for ignoring it...this is because I was the only boy [in the family] and so I developed an arrogant attitude. which frequently got me into trouble'.</p> <p>At times he was locked up at home during sports days...'I was a good footballer but was discouraged from pursuing it in order to concentrate on my schooling...I had qualified for a good school but due to lack of money I ended up in a 'harambee' (self-help) school...the school had a serious shortage of teachers and text books, but I managed to complete high school (form four)'.</p> <p>He feels that failure to join a good school reduced his progress in life...'lack of school fees was a major factor that has shaped my life'. He did not undergo any rites of passage as he grew up.</p>	<p><b>Growing up</b></p> <p>Childhood poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor family</li> <li>• Few life chances</li> <li>• Food shortages</li> <li>• Inadequate learning resources</li> <li>• Completed secondary school</li> <li>• Absentee father</li> <li>• Harsh discipline</li> <li>• Frequent floods</li> <li>• Child labour</li> </ul> <p>Some skills training</p> <p><b>Major Life course events (suffering)</b></p> <p>Deferred goals</p>

*John's home area* gets flooded three times a year and crops get destroyed... 'the farm was not profitable due to frequent floods'...also; the land is not very fertile...floods have washed away the top soil". He accuses the government of failing to assist in controlling the floods. 'Politicians have neglected the economy...they could assist to control floods through food-for-work programmes. Public transport in his rural area is scarce and most people cannot afford fishing equipment..., 'so they work as casuals for boat owners'.

John has done computer packages and driving classes but has not found employment...'this forced me to enter occupations not of my choice...I do casual work to support my young family'. Distance affects his ability to find work. Work in far away places is foregone due to the high cost of public transport. 'I prefer to walk to work in order to save money'. He hopes to acquire a bicycle to improve the distance he can cover in search of casual work.

Walking long distances leads to fatigue which reduces his productivity. 'If I get to a work site at 9.00 am I usually find I am late and miss work'. He works an average of 4 days a week and is barely managing to make ends meet. Casual work has a negative effect on his welfare because its irregularity makes it difficult to save money. Working as a casual leads to low income security because, 'employers think they are doing you a favour'.

John's health is not very good because i frequently use pain killers and muscle toners'... I suffer chest pains from lifting heavy loads...also, exposure to the sun and rain leads to poor health', white cement also affects the respiratory system...The work is stressful because 'one is never sure if he will be paid...there is constant harassment by supervisors'.

- Early marriage
- Dependency
- Powerlessness
- Betrayal-co-opted into casual work
- Low savings
- Spatial disadvantage
- Unemployment
- Casual work, contingency
- Limited room for manoeuvre

### **Unmet Need (social protection)**

#### Employment

Assets

Adequate nutrition

Income security

Livelihood diversification

Investment capital

Credit

Adequate accommodation

*John* believes his biggest mistake in life [commission] was his decision to come to Nairobi in the hope of attending college, "this made me leave behind a fish business I had established...my trust was betrayed by a relative who had promised to finance my college education but failed to do so...instead he co-opted me as a casual into the construction work that he was engaged in. This turn of events led to my marrying early and this has led me into financial distress due to lack of regular work to support my family'.

John got married at age 22 years and became a parent at age 23. He has two children. The milestone of his youth was starting a family, 'people depend on me'. This has increased his responsibilities. In total, he has six dependants. He has thus set aside for the time being some of his earlier ambitions. I find the situation to be very stressful, which can drive one to alcoholism'. Despite the government offering free medical care [to children under five years], accessing these facilities is a challenge due to their location. 'This keeps me worried because my two young children can get sick at any time...I am forced to borrow from money lenders using my household goods to cater for their medical expenses. I am charged up to 30% interest'. The only major assets he owns are his household goods.

John's rented house is a single room shared with his wife and two children. 'I find my house unaffordable... because I am a frequent rent defaulter and can accumulate up to two months rent arrears'. The tenants in his residential building share two Asian type flush toilets, which also double up as bathrooms, among approximately 30 people. Because of the large number of users the toilets are dirty and difficult to keep clean. Security in the premises is also bad...'the gate is never locked...because the compound has many tenants...I live in this place for lack of affordable alternatives...I am anxious about the security of **my property**'. John feels exploited at work and in his relationships with his family...'due to my

- Affordable transport
- Social infrastructure
- Security of property and person
- Collateral

### 'False beliefs' (identity repair)

#### Self-exploitation

- Starting a family as a youth
- Schooling better than a sporting career
- No inheritance because parents still alive
- Failure to join a good school slowed his upward mobility

large [dependency] burden, I am not able to pursue my own goals...these people derive benefits from my meagre earnings and I am therefore unable to save any money'. He laments that casuals are treated as dispensable. 'Employers feel that they can do without us since the technical work is done by the 'fundi' (stone mason, plumber, and carpenter). The occupation has very low job security 'because you can be employed in the morning and dismissed by 10.00 am'. The wage payment for casual workers is unreliable, T can complete a week without eating breakfast or lunch'. Good nutrition is a challenge, 'I have a poor diet, just for survival.'

John has no other source of income and has not receded any inheritance, 'because my parents are still alive'. He was once forced to share a single room with three other people due to lack of work. He has received no assistance to further his education. He thought the youth fund could assist to uplift his lifestyle but on enquiring was informed that to be eligible 'we need to register a group of about 20 people...worse still, the fund gives a paltry 50,000 (for 20 people) which is not enough for business...I have not taken any other [commercial] loans due to lack of collateral'.

John has no formal insurance and is therefore vulnerable to work related injury. T am afraid of loss of income in case of poor health because casual work is based on the use of physical labour'. He relies on the support of friends in case of emergency. Due to responsibility for his family and dependants he cannot quit casual work at present, T am looking for money so as to invest... I hope to set up a business for my wife so that she can support me and the kids as I attend a training course. For John, casual work is a transition phase in his life...'as I wait to pursue my true career objective'.

<p><b>2.6 Case # 6 Humphrey's story</b></p>	<p><b>Profile</b></p>
<p>Humphrey grew up being subjected to severe corporal punishment at school and a milder form of the same at home. 'My family experienced domestic violence due to my fathers alcoholism...as a child I was taken to live with my uncle who discriminated against me by giving me heavy workloads...he also did not support my education'.</p> <p>Humphrey's self-perception while growing up was thatYf being poor, 'we experienced severe water shortage...the nearest water point was 15km away. At school 'books were in short supply and the average class size was 50 students'. He lacked adequate clothing and had no access to extra reading materials at home (books, magazines, newspapers) but he had access to a radio. All the same, the average family in the area was poor; so he did not feel very different from the rest.</p> <p>Humphrey's mother was more supportive of his education than his father, 'my father failed to pay our full school fees...I believe he had the money but just did not want to pay...he probably felt like he was throwing away his money. My parents' investment in my education has been minimal; except for primary school...I therefore consider myself to be a self-made individual...my earning capacity is based on my own effort'.</p> <p>Humphrey's worst memory of childhood was being forced to repeat class six 'so that I do not catch up with my sister, who was lagging behind'. Again in class eight he was forced to repeat the class to</p>	<p><b>Growing up</b></p> <p>Childhood poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Poor family</li> <li>•Few life chances</li> <li>•Completed primary school</li> <li>•Forced to repeat two classes</li> <li>•Harsh discipline</li> <li>•Alcoholic father</li> <li>•Domestic violence</li> <li>•Discrimination</li> <li>•Lack of school fees</li> <li>•Harsh economic environment; water scarcity</li> <li>•Lack of basic needs</li> </ul> <p><b>Major Life course events (suffering)</b></p> <p>Landlessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Migration</li> </ul>

<p>enable his sister to proceed to secondary school (with the promise that he would follow suit). 'After repeating class eight and passing my exams well I was not financed to go to secondary school... instead, I was taken to a village polytechnic to learn carpentry... I stayed for one year...the church running the polytechnic allowed me to complete training without paying the full fees'. He was given books and housing but had to fend for his food. He says that he would have been better off if he had completed his carpentry course.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Unskilled casual</li> <li>•Exploitation at work</li> <li>•Opportunity; acquisition of competence</li> <li>•Moral support</li> <li>•Transformation into skilled worker</li> <li>•Improved income</li> <li>•Escape from poverty</li> <li>•Work stoppage-city by-laws</li> <li>•Uncertainty; change of government-reduced work</li> <li>•Spatial disadvantage</li> <li>•Squatter</li> </ul>
<p>Humphrey's approach to life is individualistic, 'I believe that a collectivist approach can lead one astray...I now have to depend on myself...I have received no inheritance from my parents...I have no social debt to anyone with regard to my training...I depend on my abilities'.</p>	
<p>Humphrey believes his migration to the city led to his neglecting his rural home. 'One must have a home base in the rural area...I asked my father for a piece of land but the request was declined...I therefore feel that I would have achieved more for myself had I been given some land; but, the lack of support has forced me to work hard and acquire my own land'. He laments, 'I approached one of my sisters for a loan (to do business) but she declined because she had no faith in my ability to repay'.</p>	<p>Unmet Needs (Social protection)</p>
<p>Humphrey says having a goal has helped to keep him focused... 'my goals are to buy my own 'shamba' so that I can live in my own house. He is currently a squatter at a settlement scheme in Naivasha.</p>	<p>Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Training</li> <li>•Affordable transport</li> <li>•Sanitation</li> <li>•Income security</li> </ul>
<p>His first job as an unskilled casual labourer lasted for 3 consecutive months due to the support [connections] of his brother-in-law. T received some assistance from my brother-in-law and my</p>	

sisters who were instrumental in helping me to find work-and settle down in Nairobi as a casual worker'...upon arrival in Nairobi accommodation was a problem...at first I lived with my sister for three months while doing casual work. This enabled me to save and buy household items... I then moved into my own house but continued to get assistance from two of my sisters for a further two months'.

His house has 2 toilets and 1 bathroom shared among approximately 15 people. The flush toilets are 'sometimes dirty'. The nature of his residence (small and many tenants) discourages use of charcoal, i cannot use charcoal in my single room because it^ smoky'...we deal with overcrowding issues such as nuisance in the plot by holding a meeting and reprimanding the offender'.

His casual work has medium job security because it is irregular. 'There used to be a lot of construction work and there was little inspection... construction work was rarely stopped by town planners...today, work is scarce due to stringent enforcement of building codes'....this leads to work stoppage as the owners sort out the paper work...during the electioneering period some people stop construction [work] because of the uncertainty associated with change of government'....'also people previously used to build on grabbed plots but today they only build on their legitimate plots and this has reduced the volume of work available...there is fear that some plots may be reposed by the new government... so the owners adopt a wait and see attitude... this reduces the available work'.

His income security is of medium level because 'there are frequent delays in getting paid'...some employers default on payment or pay in bits., we end up completing work as creditors...sometimes we

- Personal security
- 'False beliefs' (identity repair)
- Flexibility of tasks
- Observing others
- Accepting responsibility
- Networking
- Quick learner
- Diligence
- Never admit ignorance
- Social capital
- Self-made
- Rural base
- Building code leads to work stoppage
- Collateral to access loans
- Inheritance necessary
- Individualistic

are forced to stop work to demand payment of our dues but this leads to reduced earnings'.

His major concern is the risk of physical injury and exposure to dust [OHS], He has no health insurance cover. 'At times there is conflict at the work site between different plots owners...this can lead to one abandoning the work to avoid getting caught up in the conflict'.

Long distances to work consume a huge chunk of his income... 'one may be forced to forego work when the [transport] cost is high'...'I spend 70/= per day on transport. This reduces my net income'.

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He explains how he used casual work to gain skills, 'I was fortunate to come across some 'fiindis' who were former casual workers themselves...they were willing to teach me and supported my learning their trade...while they passed their work burden to me, I saw this as an opportunity to learn'.

In 2005 he met a different foreman who gave him a job to prove himself...'he (the foreman) would retain 50/= out of my then 400/= daily wage for the privilege of letting me [a novice] prove myself as a 'fundi'...' 'I later managed to network with the owner of the building and the foreman, both of who noticed my good work...they encouraged me to buy my own tools and to set out as a 'fundi' for myself... I was advised to venture to sites where I was unknown since in my regular work area I was still known as an unskilled casual worker...I performed exceptionally well and was accepted as a 'fundi'...they therefore endorsed [confirmed] me as a full 'fundi' [moral boost]. This gave me the confidence to now market myself as a competent 'fundi'.

This 'promotion' led to his improved income, which doubled from 200/= per day to 400/= (in 2005).

'As a 'fundi' I have more opportunities for learning; hence, more work opportunities...'Fundis' are likely to find work more frequently than their unskilled casuals.

Humphrey's secret [of success] has been to study people, to try and understand why they are the way they are so as to avoid making their mistakes. 'I looked at the way we live and I also received advice from others as well as encouragement...I also have confidence in myself...I can take responsibility for my failure without blaming others...

I started out as a casual but then I noticed that at a construction site work is done in stages so I asked myself why can't I learn the different stages? So, I started learning the different jobs so that I could take up the different types of work...tying out many tilings has helped me to learn.

I also have multiple ongoing activities...my strategy is to take up all sorts of jobs...and....never admit ignorance or inability to do a particular job...you must always do a good job so that you get repeat work'.

When out of work he hangs out at 'stone city' in Kayole. 'This is my base of operations...It has more work opportunities since it is a relatively newer estate'. To deal with personal safety (insecurity) he avoids using routes with known danger spots, 'occasionally, we arrange to walk home together in a group... we wait for each other after work.

His [social] protection is based on his cash savings. 'I have never applied for a loan because I believe one needs a security to access a loan\_\_when in need I csn still call upon my immediate family

members... He belongs to a family SHG where they contribute 500/= every three months (2000 per year) to a pooled savings... 'I also belong to a burial association of work mates'.

He has received no assistance from the government to date...his [welfare] expectations are to see more state protection at work. 'My major vulnerabilities include eviction from my squatter land and temporary unemployment'. His [spatial] strategy is to buy a bicycle to enable him to cover longer distances to work.

<p><b>2.7 Case # 7 Edward's story</b></p>	<p><b>Profile</b></p>
<p>Edward joined class one aged 9 years old [late schooling]. T used to range from position 1-10 in class'. At age 13 years he underwent circumcision and was taught how to become a man. 'We were taught that a man should be able to think and take responsibility over his family or society'...we were also taught to respect parents and elders in general...we were required to obey instructions from those in authority, such as teachers'...He completed class 8^ged 17 years. Registering for KCPE was a problem due to lack of fees.</p> <p>Edward's [core] identity while growing up was one of being poor compared with other children. He had few clothes to wear and also, 'most of the families had a bicycle for transport but we had none...we had no radio or TV'. His school had few books and few teachers, 'we had 14 teachers for a student population of 400'. Corporal punishment was common...'being late for school led to automatic punishment...this was not very good...discipline is not all about being caned...severe canning led to some students abandoning school'.</p> <p>Edward suffered discrimination in school because of his tribe (ethnicity), 'I was the only Tiriki [a sub tribe of the Luhya] while the teachers were Bukusu...the Tiriki cannot negotiate [interact] with people from Bungoma'.</p> <p>His parents had marital problems which arose out of financial difficulties. This led to their separation.</p>	<p><b>Growing up</b></p> <p>Childhood poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Late schooling</li> <li>•Poor family</li> <li>•Few life chances</li> <li>•Form three drop out</li> <li>•Late schooling, completed class 8 aged 18yrs</li> <li>•No training</li> <li>•Polygamous father</li> <li>•Harsh discipline</li> <li>•Ethnic discrimination</li> <li>•Domestic problems-parents separate</li> <li>•Parental responsibility for siblings for a while</li> <li>•Rite of passage</li> </ul> <p><b>Major Life course events (suffering)</b></p> <p>Identity crisis</p>

<p>'The main problem was the little money my father forced [expected] my mother to manage with...I have 2 sisters and 5 brothers. This big family was a strain on my parents'. At age 15 years while in class six his mother left four children under his care as she went to seek work. His father also returned to Nairobi, 'leaving me with the responsibility of caring for my siblings'. He carried this parental responsibility for one year...his father remitted money regularly through his grandfather, who lived nearby. 'This responsibility distracted me from my school work'.</p> <p>He was not satisfied with his father's decision not to take the children with him to Nairobi...but,' I could not discuss the issue with him...because he was short tempered'. The constant conflict between his parents 'caused my father to marry a second wife...I believe he was seeking someone who he would not quarrel with'.</p> <p>Edward has not inherited any assets from his parents. He believes his father's decision to marry a second wife has affected them because 'his new family takes up most of his income...this has led to reduced financial support for my family...My father's polygamy affects me psychologically because I now have three step brothers and we are 6 boys [total 9]. This reduces what we can inherit, which forces us to work hard to acquire our own property...our inheritance has been diluted'.</p> <p>Edward laments, 'failure to pay school fees by my father has denied me a form four certificate, hence, I cannot get a good job [attribution]... the lack of a form four certificate has denied me work three times in the past'. He has not had any formal training in the last five years.</p> <p>His father was not very supportive of their education. 'He stopped being concerned when we attained</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Peasant farmer</li> <li>•Businessman</li> <li>•Brick maker</li> <li>•Lack of market access</li> <li>•Dependency</li> <li>•Limited room for manoeuvre</li> <li>•Spatial disadvantage</li> <li>•Social isolation</li> <li>•Migration</li> <li>•Unemployment</li> <li>•Unskilled casual worker, contingency</li> </ul> <p>Unmet Needs (Social protection)</p> <p><b>Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Assets</li> <li>•Social support</li> <li>•Identity resolution/repair</li> <li>•Income security</li> <li>•Livelihood diversification</li> <li>•OHS</li> </ul>
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the age of 18 years...we were expected to be independent...my mother was supportive of my education and struggled to put us through school...It was my father's responsibility to pay school fees because my mother had no means of earning a living'.

During form one his parents paid half the school fees. In 2002 he filled a bursaiy form and approached the church elders for endorsement 'but I still did not get a bursaiy...since that occasion I have never witnessed the forms being distributed agai\\

In form two he carried forward the balance from form one. Eventually he dropped out of secondary school in first term of form three due to lack of school fees, i did not accept this turn of events because I still wanted to continue with education; and spent one year at home thinking about how to resume my schooling'. I tried brick making to raise money for school fees but it did not work out... because there was no market for my bricks'.

After this failure he decided to become a vegetable fanner. He did this for two years (2003-2004) and made some money but it was not enough for school. He also tried his hand in the business of buying and selling maize. He then decided to come to Nairobi to look for work. 'This is because the maize business was seasonal and my income was shared with my parents'.

His migration to the city has not improved his life...T still live the same way I used to in the rural areas [poverty stricken]...my income is almost the same...The major difference is the cost of housing, which does not exist in the rural areas....also, in the city there is the additional problem of transport'.

- Social infrastructure
- Sanitation
- Academic certificates/training
- Affordable transport
- Investment capital

**'False beliefs' (identity repair)**

Risk aversion

- Individualistic
- No inheritance; seen as a stumbling block

He is unable to raise enough money to acquire a bicycle in Nairobi, i normally work in the estates that are within a walking distance from my house...this reduces my work options because the cost of transport negates any benefit of working further afield'. He spends about 70/= per day on transport when working away from the estate. This eats into his net income. 'At times I go to sleep tired and wake up late, forcing me to use public transport...I use public transport in the morning and walk back in the evening [crucial for securing work]....In the rural areas, all one needs is a bicycle...I bought one while living in the rural area but it would be unacceptable (funny) to bring it to the city [laughter]...This is because it is also required back home, so I cannot take it away from them [social obligation]...also, due to the insecurity in the city, I caiN)e robbed of the bicycle'.

Coming to Nairobi was meant to improve his earnings by finding work in a company but he has not found any; nevertheless, he argues, 'it is better than being in the rural areas'. He once applied to a milk processing company but was asked to bring a photocopy of his form four certificate, which he didn't have and still doesn't have even now.

Edward works mainly in casual construction jobs... because these types of jobs are easier to get'. The income security is low because the work has low wages. The work is of medium level of job security because it is irregular in occurrence. 'On average, I work 4 days a week...I have no other sources of income'.

He considers his occupation to have a negative effect on his welfare. 'It affects one's health due to the work environment and lack of protective gear... inhalation of cement dust is a health hazard...we

are also exposed to poor hygiene because we eat in dirty places'.

His health status is average 'because I suffer from regular joint pains due to lifting heavy loads'. His major livelihood risk is his health status because he has no health insurance...I have not considered joining the NHIF or NSSF because now is when I am getting exposed [made aware]... that I am eligible to join'. He owns no major assets and depends on his personal savings and family for his [social] protection.

Edward chose to live in Kayole 'because the rent is cheap and meals are also cheap'. They share two toilets and two bathrooms among 17 people. 'I have no health concerns about sharing these facilities'.

He considers the security of his residence to be good 'because there is a gate; hence, I have no worries about my personal property'. In his residence tenants meet once a month, the meeting is chaired by the landlord. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss tenants' problems and to get to know their needs. They also use this forum to clear any misunderstandings between them and to assist each other solve their problems. 'We are happy with the landlord...every one attends the meetings...the meetings have helped us to interact with each other...those with personal problems are able to seek assistance from the others...these good relations with the landlord have benefited us...it is rare for the landlord to lock our houses in case of rent default... [Because] we are able to approach him with our problems'.

He philosophises, 'I am optimistic that I am somebody [identity crisis?]'...I have learned that people

have many problems...some worse than mine., this has widened my horizons...I am now contented with who I am...I can make my own decisions on what I can or cannot do...I can do some things better than those who appear better than me'.

He considers himself a good businessman, 'especially when I have good capital'....but he has not sought youth loans...'the programme is misleading... because we thought these were free funds [grants]'. His major problem in raising capital is his dependency burden...' I have one dependant, ...this lowers my personal savings because my brother is in a private primary school and it costs 1500/- per term...during the planting season my parents [also] require support for buying inputs and these two factors have made it difficult for me to save money...I just do casual work to sustain myself for the time being'.

'Once you become a casual worker there is no time to do business...when you are new [in business] customers may go to the more established businesses... you cannot be sure if customers will buy from you...this makes you to give up after a week...you cannot wait for a month for the business to pick up; because at the end of the month rent is due...so; you are forced to go back to casual work for survival...I cannot predict the reaction of potential customers and this stops me from taking the risk of starting a business'. He argues that if VAT can be reduced, businessmen can prosper. 'VAT is added onto the cost of goods to consumers and reduces sales of goods, leading to stock moving slowly [hence less profit]'.

He has not been to his rural home since coming to Nairobi, 'I do not have a major reason to go and

visit right now...when you want to learn about a new place you have to forget about where you came from for a while [rationalisation]'...all the same, my cousin keeps me informed by telephone about the welfare of the people back home'.

The main economic activity his rural area is what he calls 'plantation fanning' [large scale maize growing]. In 2006 his family leased 2 acres and in 2007 they intend to lease 4 acres. His brother is in the military and is supporting them to pay the farm leases.

He says they have not received any social protection<sup>^</sup>. i do not receive any remittances but I make some myself...to my rural home, on average, about 1000/= per month... I have also not received any support from my extended family...seeing how [poorly] my father is faring there is no need seeking help from my uncles since they are not assisting him'.

His view of politics in Kenya is '...it's all about unfulfilled promises. If politicians focus on youth problems, this can improve our lives...they need to [politicians] revive failed industries in order for the youth to get jobs'. He considers himself an innovator 'because I always think about my future—how it will be and how I can stop relying on casual work'. His abilities include playing a musical keyboard but, 'I have not explored the possibility of a career as a musician'...He also used to be above average in athletics (marathon)...'when I came to Nairobi I realised it could have made me into a millionaire; but now, it is difficult for me to pursue it...due to the nature of my work [casual work].

He once tried migrating to Nakuru "but found life to be better in Nairobi'. He networks for jobs

through his workmates...'the primary purpose of [our] frequent exchange visits is to prospect for work'. At work they also exchange ideas, 'which help us to progress...my peer group in the estate helps to discuss on how to improve our lifestyles'.

He has no livelihood diversification strategy [at the moment]. 'My approach to life is individualistic...approaching other people exposes one's problems [ego defensive]...I first try to solve issues on my own...should there be a need to approach others I go about it indirectly'. He does not belong to any association at the moment, i have decided to trust myself and do my own savings [self isolation]'. He also has no loans or debts...'my lifestyle cannot allow me to service a loan'.

Currently, his only [social] protection strategy is recourse to his savings. 'I intend to train as a mechanic at a polytechnic...I expect this will cost about 20,000/= for a three month course...raising this money should not be a problem...[because] while training as a mechanic I intend to work as an apprentice in a garage and earn some money to pay for the polytechnic [wishful thinking?]...this should be easy because, even now, I can draw a house plan and build it to completion [impression management]...This means that I can become a 'fundi' but I am not interested in becoming one [ego defensive]'.

<p><b>2.8 Case # 8 Maurice's story</b></p>	<p><b>Profile</b></p>
<p>Maurice is a primary school leaver. His school was situated five kilometres from his home in a real forest. He grew up with no access to books and newspapers at home 'except for my dad's copy of 'Taifa Leo'. He had problems with learning and so he lacked interest in schooling. This led to excessive corporal punishment. T was always in trouble...a habitual truant...I used to go fishing and hunting...in fact, I was taken to an approved school'.</p> <p>His [core] identity while growing up was that of a middle class family. He felt equal to other families in his area; however, he has no fond memories of his childhood. At age 7 years his mother was chased away from home. 'My father had married a second wife and my mother ran away for fear of being bewitched'...she sought work as a plantation worker in a coffee farm...this led to financial distress for us, which resulted into poverty'. Maurice thus grew up as a squatter on a coffee farm. He underwent circumcision at age 18 years and 'was taught to respect all people, especially elders'. At age 20 years he ran away from home, T assaulted someone who had threatened my mother... I went to another town to avoid arrest'. Thereafter he started brewing 'chang'aa' [bootleg]...he did this for six months...'but I did not make any money so, I went to work as a plumber'.</p> <p>His early ambition was to become a driver but he ended up as a plumber...'I was sponsored by an elder brother'. He likes his job 'because there is no harassment...the pay is negotiable and I have flexible working hours...plumbers earn a lot of money and it is not hard work... you only need to think of how to economise on materials'. The income security is high because 'being skilled work, it has better bargaining</p>	<p><b>Growing up</b></p> <p>Childhood poverty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Primary education</li> <li>•Few learning resources</li> <li>•Few life chances</li> <li>•Harsh discipline</li> <li>•Domestic conflict; father marries second wife</li> <li>•Mother runs away from home fearing witchcraft; works as farm labourer-poverty</li> <li>•Troubled childhood; slow learner-truant</li> <li>•Approved school-rehabilitation</li> <li>•Rite of passage</li> </ul> <p><b>Major Life course events (suffering)</b></p> <p>Adequate savings</p>

power...I prefer a contract with a fixed amount so that I can load a 'profit factor' to my fee [in addition to labour and materials]'.

Plumbing work has medium job security because it is irregular. In addition, he has on several occasions been conned of money for work done. 'In this type of work, you can at times chase for your money for up to 3 months...until you give up... It wastes your time to chase for this money...we adjust by making money when costing a project to supply fittings [overpricing?]. We know where to source for fittings at prices lower than the market average; however, when supplying we sell at the prevailing market rates.

Maurice has no other source of income and his main concern is 'exposure to inhaling poisonous fumes from burning plastic pipes...my major livelihood risk is illness'. His major occupational liability is 'doing unsatisfactory work which can force me to repeat it'. He has no formal insurance but says his occupation has had a positive effect on his welfare, 'because I earn good income...I don't see any negative effective arising from low education as far as earning a livelihood is concerned...nevertheless, I consider my failure to complete schooling a major omission...which means that I am not where I should have been'...I don't think I have missed any major opportunities...but I am yet to achieve my ambitions'.

Life has not always been good, he once shared a room with six other people...'we each paid 20/= per month (a room was renting for 120/= per month)...I think when I got married the devil visited my house [laughter] because; from 1997-2000 I did not handle a single 1000/= currency note of my own...work was very scarce...I was a slow learner and also a slow worker...so I was discouraged [disillusioned]'.

in 1993 he wanted to migrate from Nairobi because life was hard but he lacked the means to leave,'...there

- Brother sponsors training as plumber
- Fugitive, trouble with the law; assault charge-runs away from home
- 'Chang'aa' brewer
- Inadequate income
- Becomes a plumber
- Insecurity in Nairobi slum, gets recruited as enforcer/caretaker
- Political mercenary
- Settles down with family
- Steady income

#### **Unmet Needs (Social protection)**

Land

- Personal security
- Contract enforcement
- Livelihood diversification
- Regular work

was little work...also, there was a lot of killing in Dandora...he muses that 'death is nothing to me... when I came to Nairobi I found 8 people had been killed by thugs in Dandora'. His friend discouraged him from going back [to the rural home]... 'I did not know the bus terminus to my rural area...so I roamed in town for 8 hours before going back to Dandora...at some point, I asked a woman for directions but she accused me of being a criminal (thug)... I did not bother to ask again'.

Maurice lives in a rented single room with his wife and two children. The residential plot has 3 toilets and six bathrooms shared among 23 people. He also works as the building's caretaker... T have problems with my tenants... [so] I replaced the English type toilet^ with Asian flush type to improve hygiene. These [toilets] are washed in turns, despite resentment by some tenants; but, they have now gotten used to me'.

He considers his living environment to be insecure...'a person's safety depends on how well they are known...most of the local thugs fear me...people suspect me to be 'Mungiki' [He refused to talk about his religious affiliation]...Since I took over, however, security has improved... but that is one reason why I am suspected of being 'Mungiki'...but, the local boys know me...that's why they leave my tenants alone...we provide our own security...we do not go to the police... it is a waste of time and money... we use the laws of 'Musa' [Moses?]...an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth... [when pressed for more details] some people take oaths... they are administered here and there [he is evasive about the issue].

Most of his friends from his rural village have migrated to the city; hence, 'when we are in need we raise funds for each other'. This village-derived social network also helps them to find work. 'We do this through telephone calls...we also meet regularly at work sites....there are no outsiders amongst us [it's a

#### **'False beliefs' (identity repair)**

- Cash savings
- Gang Member?
- Task flexibility
- Migration
- Social networking
- No inheritance
- Major omission; failure to complete schooling
- Low education not a factor in ability to earn a livelihood
- Not missed any major opportunities for lack of education
- Has enough cash to last four years without work

closed system]...we give each other work and assistance...that way, we build our network [social capital]', f

His [livelihood] diversification strategy is to buy a plot and build [a house], 'I have not inherited any property from my father..but, I have a bicycle that I use to go to work...it takes about 45 minutes of cycling time'. He has received little [social] protection in the past; for now, he depends on his personal savings with a local bank, 'I have enough money...it's a lot... I can last four years without working [he is very confident]. His view of the economy is...'it flows according to price increases [inflation]...when prices go up I increase my charges [bargaining power]'

He says he has no interest in politics, I once got involved in a stone fight and witnessed my friend lose an eye... we used to be taken there by a local politician [to %ht]... 'I cannot be bothered to fight again...'

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