UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

WOMEN AND PEACE BUILDING IN KENYA'S URBAN SLUMS:

A CASE STUDY OF MATHARE SLUMS IN NAIROBI

2007 - 2012

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DECLARATION

This project paper is my original work and to the best of my knowledge has not been presented for a degree in any other university.
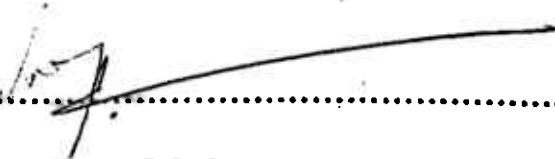
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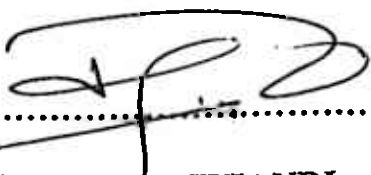**REG NO: C50/75042/2009**

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

.... DATE:.....16\11\2012.....

DR. GEORGE M. GONA

.... DATE:.....16\11\2012.....

DR. MARY C. MWIANDI

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving husband, FRANK NJERU MURUNGI, my daughters MICHELLE STACY KARIMI and TRACY NICOLE KAWIRA and my loving parents ESTHER AND JOHN K. KEBENEI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study was set to establish the participation of women in peacebuilding activities in Mathare slums, one of Kenya's urban slums, from 2007-2008. The study objective was to investigate if women were involved in peacebuilding in Mathare and to explore the challenges that could have hindered them from performing to their full potential. The study aimed to test two hypotheses namely, women are invaluable participants in peacebuilding in Mathare and patriarchy has been a hindrance to women direct involvement in peacebuilding activities in Mathare.

The study utilized a qualitative approach, examining both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through oral interviews conducted with individual informants, focused group discussions and through reports held by Government agencies, International Organizations, Christian Based organizations and Non-Governmental organizations involved in peacebuilding activities in Mathare. Secondary data was obtained from books, articles in journals and internet sources.

Purposive and snowballing technique was utilized for this study. In this method, initial subjects with desired characteristics were identified using purposive sampling technique. The few subjects named others whom they knew had the required characteristics using the snowballing technique. The target population was women and men actively involved in peacebuilding in Mathare. Data was captured by use of note taking and the data collected was analyzed and presented qualitatively through narratives and discussions.

This study established that women have participated in peacebuilding processes in Mathare slums. The women peacebuilding approaches have been informal and not incorporated into the formal peacebuilding initiatives spearheaded by the Provincial

Administration and the external actors like the United Nations and Non-Governmental organizations. Their participation has been at the lowest level of societies revolving round the most basic life daily activities, like eating food, sleeping over and buying groceries from the 'enemy' house and 'vibandas'. Most of this efforts were channeled through trainings and workshops organized by the various women groups established to build peace and empower women economically. The women groups played a critical role in public advocacy for peace through peace marches where the community was called to come out and forgive each other. Community exchange programs were started where families were encouraged to take up children of neighbours friends or family members whose parents were killed during the Post-Election Violence. Inter-ethnic marriages were also advocated by the women of Mathare slums as a way of re-building social relations and trust among different ethnic groups living in Mathare. There was also community mobilization for the construction of shelters for those whose houses had been destroyed during the conflicts.

Due to the scope of this study, the researcher could not exhaustively investigate the role of inter-ethnic marriages in re-establishing social networks; there is therefore need for further research on this area.

DEFINITION OF FUNCTIONAL TERMS

Conflict

The word conflict is used here to refer to a state of disharmony between incompatible needs, ideas or antagonism or sharp disagreement due to interest of people.

Dispute

An act of engaging in argument, fight, debate, quarrel or contest

Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution implies the deeper rooted sources of conflict and how they are addressed and resolved and also means that the behaviour is no-longer violent, attitudes are no-longer hostile and structures of the conflicts have changed.

Peace

Is a quality describing a society or a relationship that is operating harmoniously or the absence of hostility or the existence of healthy newly healed interpersonal or international relations. It transcends safety in matters of social or economic welfare, the acknowledgment of equality and fairness in political relationships and, in world matters, peace time- is a state of being without war or conflict.

Peace Building

This is the implementation of measures or action taken at the end of conflict to consolidate peaceful relations and create an environment which deters the emergence or escalation of tension which may lead to conflict.

Peace building has also come to be understood and used as an umbrella concept reflecting a more comprehensive and long-term approach to peace and security including: early warning, conflict prevention, civilian and military peacekeeping, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements, the establishment of peace zones,

reconciliation, reconstruction, institution building, and political as well as socio-economic transformation.[1]

Conflict Transformation

A process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict.

Justice

A process that acknowledges that offenses involve harms have been committed which imply obligations to "put right" by addressing harms and causes.

Reconciliation

Is the process of developing mutual conciliatory accommodation between antagonistic or formerly antagonistic persons or groups. It often refers to a relatively amicable relationship, typically established after a rupture in the relationship involving one-sided or mutual infliction of extreme injury.[2]

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[1] Michelle Maiese, "What it Means to Build Lasting Peace," 2003.
http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/peacebuilding/ uploaded on 31/10/2007.
[2] Louis Kriesberg "Reconciliation. Aspects, Growth, and Sequences,"
http://faculty.maxwell.svr.edu/kriesberg.Aspects.Growth.and.Sequences.2007.pdf, uploaded on 26/08/2009, p.10.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
CBOs	Christian Based Organizations
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
G.O.K	Government of Kenya
GBV	Gender Based Violence
ICC	International Criminal Court
JCCP	Japan Counseling Centre Project
KVP	Kenya Veterans for Peace
MSF	Medicine San Frontiers
NCCK	National Council of Christian Churches in Kenya
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PEV	Post-Election Violence
POKATUSA	Pokot Turkana Karamojong and Sabiny Ethnic Group
RPP	Release Political Prisoners
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
WIPSA	Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia
WISCOMP	Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace

Map of Mathare Slums, Nairobi-KENYA

Nairobi

KPC Staff Quarters

RUARAKA

MATHARE NORTH

KARIOBANGI

Baba Dogo

Survey Staff Quarters

KASARANI

Wanderers Cricket Club

Kenura primary

Utalii Saff Quarters

St. Benedict College

Kenya Institute of Surveying & Mapping

St. Benedict Prt

Kenya School of Monetary Studies

Standard Chartered

Mathare 4A

Kenya College of Accountancy

Stima Club

Barclays Bank

Nairobi Holding Unit College

Muthaiga Golf Course

Muthaiga primary

Mathare Mental Hospital

Gitaburu

Kosovo

Range/Mathare

Police depot

Mathare Prt

K.C.B

Baraka Clinic

Utalii College

Ruaraka

4 A

Utalii

Kenya Power & Lighting College

Mercy Care Centre

Star of Hope Academy

Huruma

Ngei

Karlobangi Nursery

Mathare North Estate

Jangwani

Madoya

Kiar Chewa

Maitopeni village

Ghetto

Mahira village

Mabatiko

New Mathare Estate

Huruma Estate Flats

Huruma Stadium

Village 1

Village 2

2 A

2 B

3 B

3 A

M.C.G. Mixed Secondary School

Good Samaritan Sch

Mobil

Benaam Hotel

Kibera Prt Sch

Valley View Academy

Juja Road

MSF Clinic, Blue House

MYSA office

Blue hao

Pangani Estate

Nami Academy

PANGANI

Muratina street

Mango Izuhwa

St. Theresa's catholic church

New Pumwani prt

St. Theresa's Boys Prt

1st Avenue

Second Avenue

PCEA M. Karol pd

PCEA Eastleigh Community Nursery Sch

Moi Airbase

Radiant Hospital

Juja Road Estate

The Mary Happy School

Bright Birds Academy

Juja Rd Prt & Nursery

St. Polycarp Nursery Sch

EASTLEIGH NORTH

Kariobangi South Estate

Legend

- Academy
- Church
- Clinic
- Technical training/College
- Hospital
- Kindergarten/pre-unit
- Mortad
- Mosque
- Office
- Primary
- Secondary
- University
- Petrol station
- Bridge
- Road
- Foot Path

1.0 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Kenya has experienced different types of conflicts in its pre-independence and post-independence period. These conflicts range from internal disputes between different groups within the country, to cross-border confrontation with groups from neighboring countries. The causes of these conflicts are many and complex ranging from poor governance, poverty, competition for scarce resources and identity based rivalries. These conflicts have caused extensive damage including the loss of life, property and adversely impacted on the economic development in the country. The impact of conflicts has been manifested psychologically, physically and emotionally going beyond the material and affecting heavily hundreds of thousands of women, children and men.[3]

In most societies where such human suffering has been experienced, the conflicting parties and development partners alike always yearn for post conflict reconciliation and building of peace. This desire for peace becomes more meaningful and successful when there is total involvement of all members of the society. Women like men have a fundamental stake in building peaceful communities, in development of civil society and democratic institutions. Notably women, just as men, have played significant roles in situation relating to peace and war for centuries, primarily as traditional peace-makers, as priestesses who confer with gods to determine whether it was right to go to war or not, as praise singers for men during battles as a boast to ensure their victory, or as custodians of culture. In each culture there are stories of women who have played some leadership roles as peace envoys or harbingers of peace in their communities.[4]

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[3] National Steering Committee On Peacebuilding and Conflict Management Secretarial, "National Policy Paper on Peace Building and Conflict Management in Kenya," Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security, Office of the President, Nairobi, Background. 2006, p.1.

[4] Ecoma Alaga, "Challenges for Women in Peacebuilding in West Africa", Women, Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-AFRICA), Accra, Policy Briefing. No.18, June 2010.

While post conflict effects are felt differently in different situations, women have and are still searching for ways to be part of the peace efforts in a bid to ameliorate the tragic effects of conflict. Anytime there is conflict suffering on a population, women are particularly affected by its short and long-term effects. Sexual assault and exploitation are frequently employed as tools of war. This brings about victimization which in turns leads to isolation, alienation, prolonged emotional trauma and unwarranted pregnancies that often result in abandoned children.[5] Patriarchal tendencies seem to exacerbate this situation in conflict time. The case in Mathare is not isolated.

For generations, women have served as peace educators, both in their families and in their societies and have proved instrumental in bringing peace to warring communities. In the Nandi community of Kenya for example, in situations where violent conflict had taken place resulting in heavy loss of life and no possibility of the warring groups ending the violence, such conflicts could be stop by an elderly woman removing and throwing down *"legetiat"* (belt tied to the stomach by women under their clothes) in front of the warriors. The act of throwing was to signify the immediate stoppage of the conflict.[6]   Such narratives and the position of women in society, therefore, make the inclusion of women critical if there is to be sustainable peace in conflicting societies. The need to include women in important decision was further articulated during the Beijing conference in year 1995. The conference clearly defined the need to increase women participation in peace building and decision making at all levels.[7] The role of women in peace building was further emphasized by the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (henceforth "resolution 1325") which was passed on 31 October 2000 and has been hailed as groundbreaking because of the sheer breadth of issues it addresses, which ranges from conflict prevention

[5] Ibid.
[6] Oral interview. Pot Nyongio, a resident of Burnt Forest, 01/09/2012.
[7] Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Fourth World Conference on Women, 15th September, 1995, http://www.unesco.org. uploaded on 11/11/2012.

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to peace negotiations to post-conflict reconstruction and peace building. The resolution 1325 included calls for women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution initiatives, the integration of gender perspectives in peace building and peacekeeping missions and the protection of women in regions of armed conflict. The resolution further, mobilized women around the world to recognize the important roles women play in peace building and to "mainstream gender in peace building."[8] According to the United Nations, mainstreaming a gender perspective is the strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally.[9]

Despite UNSCR 1325 being binding upon all United Nations member states, it is virtually unknown and unused by the population and the Kenyan Government. Women are still largely excluded from the formal peace processes and continue to endure gross human violations. The role played by women in peace efforts has often been underplayed, but it is becoming increasingly important that for any lasting peace to be achieved, the inclusion of women therefore becomes a necessity. These strategies provided a platform on which to interrogate the role of women in peacebuilding in Mathare's informal urban settlement.

The Mathare Slums and its People

Mathare slum, the subject of this study, covers only the villages that constitute the slum areas of Mathare 4A, Mathare Area 1, 2 and 3, Bondeni, Kosovo, Huruma, Kijiji Cha Chewa/Dubai, Number 10, Ghetto, Kia Maiko, and Modoya (all referred, in the local

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[8] UNIFEM: "Women, War and Peace", The International Campaign to Promote the Role of Women in Peace building, 2010 – http://www.international-alert.org/women. uploaded on 15/01/2012.
[9] Ibid.

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lingo of Mathare as the Republic of Zygone),[10] forming part of the larger Mathare in Ruaraka location. It is one of the largest slums in East Africa and the oldest in Nairobi. It is situated on the eastern part of Nairobi, five kilometres northeast of Nairobi's city centre. Mathare is a collection of slums otherwise referred to as villages. The villages have different historical background depending on the period during which they were started. Village 1 which is sometimes called A had over 150 houses by January 1966, village 2 had a population of 80 people, village 3 sometimes called Bondeni or Gichuru had smaller settlements known as village IV a, IV b, village X and Ngei II.[11]

The slum is situated on the banks of Mathare River which starts from Kabete area flowing from West to East. Mathare winds streams through a steep valley, cutting through Nairobi's northern suburbs and dividing Muthaiga from Parklands. It is bounded on the west by Thika Road and includes the Gitathune valley down to the outer Ring Road, which passes close to Kariobangi on the East. Juja Road borders Mathare on the south.[12]

Apart from being surrounded by various estates and other small slums Mathare is enclosed by Pangani to the west, to the north; it is enclosed by the Mathare Police depot, Mathare primary school, and Mathare Mental Hospital. To the east, it borders Huruma estate and to the South we have Eastleigh, an estate dominated by Somali immigrants and entrepreneurs.[13]

Currently, Mathare informal settlement has administration boundaries in form of villages namely: Mathare 4A, Mathare Area 1, Mathare Area 2, Mathare Area 3, Bondeni,

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[10] Oral Interview, Alfred Angira, 02/09/2011
[11] Wanjiku Chiuri, Mathare Valley, A Squatter Settlement in Nairobi Kenya, A Case Study. "Introduction" Nairobi, UNICEF, 1978, p.11.
[12] Andrew Hake, African Metropholis, Nairobi's self- Help City, New York, St. Martin's Press; London, 1977, p.284.
[13] Wanjiku Chiuri, Mathare Valley, A squatter settlement in Nairobi Kenya, A Case Study. "Introduction" Nairobi, UNICEF, 1978, p.11.

Kosovo, Huruma, Kijiji cha Chewa/Dubai, Number 10 (Mashimoni), Ghetto, Kia Maiko and Madoya. The villages are headed by a committee of elders referred to as village elders.[14] The slum spans across two parliamentary constituency boundaries namely, Starehe and Kasarani constituencies.[15]

Mathare is one of the densely populated slums with the population growth being on the rise since it was established.   In September 1966 it was estimated that, Mathare Valley had a population of over 3000 people. In July 1967 the population was estimated to be between 16,000 to 20,000 people. In January 1971 the population had risen to 53, 026 people while in May the same year the population was estimated to be 60,563 people.[16] According to the last official census conducted in 2009 by the Kenyan government, Mathare has a population of 177,316 people living in 60,798 households. Most community sources put Mathare as home to about 600,000 people. Children and youth (0 – 35 years) appear to make up the majority of the total population.[17] These figures can be disputed with different people giving different figures that range from 300,000 to 900,000. This can be seen from the politics attached to population census in Kenya where those involved in the exercise have various interests in the outcome of any census. For political leaders it will be prudent either to increase or decrease the numbers for political expediencies, like defeating an opponent.

The reasons fronted for the rapid growth of the population vary from falling employment, rapidly rising poor population, rising numbers of single women who had either given birth without being married, to women who had been widowed or divorced in the rural

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[14] Oral interview, Paul Chandoek, Chief Ruaraka Location, 02/9/2011.
[15] Sam Njuguna, "Why Slums Must Give Way", The Standard Newspaper. 6 October 2011, p.6.
[16] Wanjiku Chiuri, Mathare Valley, A Squatter Settlement in Nairobi Kenya, A Case Study. "Introduction" Nairobi, UNICEF. 1978. p.11.
[17] Ibid, p.12.

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areas.[18] Such women had no men to fend for them in the rural areas and so found their way into the city to look for survival. Since such people did not have stable income and finances required to pay for housing in middle class estates, they settled in Mathare slum areas where a different culture came up.

Settlement in Mathare slum villages is segmented along ethnic lines which have made Mathare prone to frequent conflicts between major ethnic communities living in the slums. Different communities are found in Mathare because of various reasons. For instance for the Kikuyu, Mathare forms part of their ancestral home where they have been living since 1930s when they were displaced from their land to pave way for European settlement. Luo, Kamba, and the Luhya were among the people who came to Nairobi to look for employment opportunities. Lack of the expected jobs forced them to Mathare slums since it was the only place they could find affordable accommodation. Other people prefer Mathare slums because they are able to carry out their illegal activities without the police interference.[19] According to the views of many however, Mathare grew due to the large numbers of migration from rural areas who had come to Nairobi in search of employment and economic opportunities.

In the recent years, however, the search for employment and economic opportunities seems to have reduced but what we now have is a generation of young adults who have been born and/or raised up in Mathare for most of their lives. They know no other home other than Mathare. As one respondent who is 45 years old and a father of five put it:-

> "I was born here, went through childhood here, married here, and waiting to die in Mathare. Mathare ni home, hii ni base, familia yangu hawana kwingine (Mathare is home, I have no other home and my family have nowhere else)"[20]

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[18] Wanjiku Chiuri, Mathare Valley, A Squatter Settlement in Nairobi Kenya, A Case Study. "Introduction" Nairobi, UNICEF, 1978, p.13.

[19] Oral interview, John Keya (not real name due to the sensitivity of the matter), 01/09/2011.

[20] Oral interview by Francis Kimani – a resident of Mathare North, 01/09/2011.

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The major ethnic groups in Mathare include the Kikuyu, the Luo, the Luhya and the Kamba. The Luo and the Kikuyu dominate two different sections of the slum; that is Mathare North for the Kikuyu and Mathare 4A for the Luo. This is not unique to Mathare; most informal settlements and some housing estates in Kenya exhibit this same ethnic community dominance in one area.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Mathare slum has experienced recurrent conflicts since pre-independence period but sustainable peace seems to have eluded the slum. The need for sustained peace and economic prosperity in urban informal settlements like Mathare where violent conflagration has been experienced is critical if the cycle of violence leading to conflicts is to be eradicated. This calls for re-evaluation of the traditional ways of building peace and the need to involve all stakeholders if such endevours are to succeed. Traditionally it was the government through the Provincial Administration and village elders who used to preside over peace missions. This has remained oblivious of the significant role of women.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that studies undertaken on the role of women in peacebuilding do address their participation at the informal levels in rural set-ups where patriarchal tendencies dictate their inclusion in the formal peace processes. However the women participation in peacebuilding in urban informal settlement is not adequately addressed. Whether women have participated in peace building in Mathare was an issue that this study intended to unravel but even significantly was to find out whether the patriarchal tendency so pronounced in most Kenyan rural set-up was reflected in such urban informal settlement as Mathare Slums. Moreover, this study pursued the cases of

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challenges facing women in peacebuilding in Mathare slums with a view of understanding if patriarchy contributed to such challenges.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research will be:

i. To investigate whether women were involved in peacebuilding in Mathare, 2007 - 2012.

ii. To explore the challenges women might have faced in their peacebuilding efforts.

1.4 Justification of the Study

Not much has been written about the clashes which rocked Mathare particularly during the 2007-2008 Post Election Violence (PEV). However, on the literature available scholars, policy think-tanks, the Human Rights Watch and other people commissioned by the government have produced an impressive bank of micro-level studies to explain the Mathare conflicts: how and why did this happen; the role of the Provincial Administration during the clashes; the role of the security personnel; the role of the religious bodies; and the role of local and international media. Yet these studies, most often based on ethnic and/or global level analysis, tended to ignore the role women played in peacebuilding in Mathare. Scant literature exists in Kenya on peace building initiatives by women in urban centres, even worse, women in urban informal settlements have drawn little attention from scholars with regard to their role in peace-building in post conflict situations. It is this gap that this study was to address. This study engages in this uncharted territory and will therefore add to the wealth of information on peace building and add to our understanding of women roles in peacebuilding in the most neglected part of the country.

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The findings of this study can be used to agitate for increased presence of women as alternative channels through which peace building can be enhanced as it demonstrates that post conflict peacebuilding must attain real peace which can only be achieved through an inclusive peace initiative.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study examined the role of women in post conflict peace building in Kenya between 2007 and 2012 with special attention to Mathare slums. The reason behind choosing Mathare for this study is that it provided an ideal set up of an informal urban settlement characterized by high index of poverty, high conflict scenarios and was an epitome of conflict during the Post-Election Violence (PEV) of 2007/2008. Therefore, given cultural barriers common in rural Kenya, one wonders if women in Mathare, an area within the city of Nairobi with diverse cultures had the capacity for peace building, a preserve of men in society.

The period 2007 to 2012 was chosen because this is the period that Mathare experienced the worst case of ethnically based violence. Ethnic conflicts have always been associated with the Kenyan rural set-up; therefore, the Mathare scenario was quite unique as the area is metropolitan in nature.

The Mathare Valley is an area not easily accessible by outsiders. People perceived to be strangers are treated with caution, therefore entry point become impossible. This limitation was overcome through the engagement of Research Assistants from Mathare.

1.6 Literature Review

Peacebuilding is a markedly complex undertaking that involves a multitude of diverse actors including women. Approaches to building sustainable peace cannot be achieved if half the population made up of women are still subjected to all forms of structural and physical violence and at the same time denied full participation in any formal peacebuilding initiatives. The following literature review will survey relevant discourses that inform the gender evaluation of conflict and peacebuilding. Particular attention will be given to women involvement in conflict, and how conflict and post-conflict conditions creates an opportunity to radically transform gender relations in society to create space for women voices in traditional male roles.

Johan Galtung and Charles Webel define peacebuilding in relation to structures of peace, the scope being concerned with inter-state wars and relationships.[21] In their paper, 'Peace by Peaceful Means' they observe that peacebuilding includes post-conflict initiatives to rebuild societies and forestall a return to violence and conflict situations. However, the process of peacebuilding is rife with complexities and as a comprehensive concept it; encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict towards more sustainable, peaceful relationships. It simultaneously seeks to enhance relationships between parties and to change the structural conditions that generate conflict.[22] In general, peace building missions focus on three main interrelated areas: Justice, conflict transformation and reconciliation.

They further explain the relationship between women and peace and observe that women are naturally peaceful.'[23] Women have innate qualities that make them more peace

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[21] Johan Galtung, Charles Webel, "Peace by Peaceful means. Peace, Conflict, Development, Civilization", Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies, Routledge, New York, 2007. p.4.
[22] Ibid, p.5-7.
[23] Ibid

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loving. High in empathy, their characters are horizontal and centripetal making them more prone to peaceful relationships, combined with the chemical programming of the cyclical and complex estrogen and high levels of mono amino oxidase, the chemical responsible for controlling violence. In contrast, men are portrayed as makers of war and perpetrators of violence. Galtung cites the low empathy, vertical, centrifugal expansionist character of man, pointing out that 95% of direct violence is committed by men. Galtung observations inform this study as it is prudent to know why such innate characteristics in women cannot be properly utilized to bring lasting peace.

John Lederach in his paper, 'Preparing for Peace': Conflict Transformation across Cultures,' states that there is a general and common understanding about peacebuilding that defines the terms in two ways. The first is what Lederach calls narrow definition of peacebuilding and states that it concerns the post-conflict/violence period, commonly termed post-conflict peacebuilding. He refers to it as a wide range of activities associated with capacity building, reconciliation and societal transformation, with a major concern being the repairing or positive transformation of broken human relationships.[24] In his second definition which he terms broad, Lederach states that peacebuilding includes early warning and response efforts, violence prevention, advocacy work, civilian and military peacekeeping, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements, normalization and reconciliation. The process is thus concerned with prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking and peace consolidation/reconciliation.[25]

Lederach states that peacebuilding can be driven either from above; the top-down approach by external actors (international bodies or national governments) or from below;

[24] Lederach John (2003), "Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures", a paper presentation to an International conference on peace studies. Atlanta. USA.
[25] Ibid.

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the bottom-up-approach, by local non-state actors. However, he observes that most texts

dealing with peacebuilding often tend to promote a concept that is heavily approached in

a top-down manner.[26] The reason for overemphasizing the top-down approach to

peacebuilding is perhaps due to the fact that officially peacebuilding has emerged as an

international involvement in conflict situations, and therefore is mainly associated with

the work of outsiders, donors and intervention forces.

Karin Koen in her paper 'Reconfiguring Women's Roles in Post Conflict Situation',

states that women suffer high levels of violence in situations of conflict.[27] This is

attributed to cultural/religious, economic, political and criminal factors. Culture is the first

factor that influences how women are treated. Through various cultural practices like

marriage, women are objectified. Women realities are shaped by social hierarchies and

gendered power relations. The practices set the stage for inflicting harm and

discrimination on the women.

If women voices are to be heard, there is need to eliminate such cultural barriers and

power relations that exclude women from any important societal undertaking like

peacebuilding. Women's understanding of the suffering during situation of conflicts

therefore calls for their increased participation in any meaningful process to bring an end

to conflicts.

Karin further asserts that the exclusion of African women from reconstruction efforts in

post-conflict situations or in some instances their limited participation in such efforts is

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[26] John Lederach, Janice Moomaw Jenner: "Into the Eye of the Storm". A handbook of International Peacebuilding, 2006. p.10.

[27] Karin Koen. "Reconfiguring Women's role in Post-Conflict Situations", Institute of Security Studies, Paper No. 121, February 2006, http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Paper/121/Paper.121.pdf. uploaded on 16/07/2012.

not a recent phenomenon. This scenario has been repeated over time despite that fact that women have demonstrated beyond all doubt that they are as capable as men. The potentiality of women is clearly demonstrated by their participation in liberation wars in Africa where women were involved in political armed struggles that characterized the battles against colonial rule from 1960s to the 1990s. Their participation is clearly demonstrated by the women of Mozambique and Zimbabwe who fought alongside men in the wars of independence. They took on new roles that challenged gender and generational stereotypes.

Thus while the nature of the struggles have changed, women's position in post-conflict and their limited ability to promote their own gendered agendas to secure peace and equality largely remain unchanged. To enhance women participation in peacebuilding processes will require the engagement of existing or emerging state apparatus as well as challenging societal norms and values that are often deeply patriarchal.

Anu Pillay observes that conflict and post conflict conditions create a radically new set of experiences both positive and negative especially for women and may create possibilities for the transformation of gender relations.[28] In a society like Africa where systems and structures are male dominated, conflicts provides an opportunity for gender norms and stereotypes to be debunked and discredited. Conflict therefore provides a possibility and an opportunity for many stagnant social structures to change, and has provided the most radical means for transforming gender roles.

The participation of women in traditionally male roles of maintaining security and peaceful co-existence in society is crucial to the post-conflict reconstruction, more so

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[28] Anu Pillay, "Gender, Peace and Peacekeeping, Lessons from Southern Africa", Institute for Security Studies, Paper No.128, October 2006, http://www.Kms1.isn.ethz.ch.pdf. uploaded on 26/06/2012.

during the peace processes when societal upheaval takes the focus away from the traditional gender-based roles and norms. Peace is a life-long process that is based on partnership and considering the both women and men are actors in and victims of the enactment and consequences of conflict, the representation of both genders in all the mechanisms of peace is vital.

Harriette E. Williams in her paper 'Women and Post-conflict Reconstruction in Africa'[29] states that the implications and effects of war are different for women and men. Women suffer the adverse effects of war. They are particularly targeted and subjected to rape and sexual slavery. However in all this suffering, women have proved to be more than just victims of conflict. In countries like Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo where conflicts have been experienced in high levels, women have persistently advocated for cessation of hostilities at the local and regional levels. Women have demonstrated their effectiveness as negotiators and mediators often coming up with innovative approaches to intractable situations of conflict. Yet in all this women still find themselves unjustifiably marginalized in the peacebuilding processes. As such the signing of a peace agreement usually signals the end of one struggle for the women and the beginning of another.

Women thus have an integral role to play in post-conflict reconstruction. Comprising half or more the population in most countries, their full participation is essential for sustainable peace and development. It is therefore crucial to approach peacebuilding in a holistic manner taking into account the importance of synergy across programmes that address economic, political and social developments. Successful post-conflict

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[29] Harriette E. Williams, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Africa", 2006, http://www.Ajol.info/index.php/ajecv/article/viewfile/39397/59579. uploaded on 26/06/2012.

reconstruction also requires local ownership of programmes and the broad participation of all stakeholders in shaping and implementing peacebuilding processes.

Mats Utas,[30] states that women in war are generally discussed as victims. Victimcy (a term coined to describe the agency of self-staging as a victim of war) is perpetuated by society especially the media to disempower women. Media representation of women might read like "women work and weep" and "man make war" terms that portrays women as the weaker sex ever ready to shed tears at the slightest of provocation.

Though it is widely accepted that mothers oppose war, there are many instances in history when women's support for, complicity in and collaboration with the war efforts of men to make that statement defensible. Days when women participated in armed conflict offering only supporting roles as cooks, cleaners and comfort to the soldiers are long gone. Women have demonstrated that they are as capable as men in wartime. In Liberia, Uganda and Congo among many African countries women have actively participated in armed conflicts fighting in the frontline.

The term victimhood depictions of women in war is a mere description of gendered experience, but also a product of cultural modes that may be reproduced with the same mechanical naturalness employed with all children in war are labeled 'victims'. Women victim status creates a framework for others to know her not as a person but as a victim – someone to whom violence is done. There is need to collapse this jaundiced and incorrect picture painted on women if their involvement in peacebuilding processes is to be addressed.

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[30] Mats Utas. "West-Africa Warscapes; Victimcy, Girlfriending, Soldering: Tactic Agency in a Young Women's Social Navigation of the Liberian War Zone," http://www.jstor.org/stable/4150840. uploaded on 09/05/2012.

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Just as Karin observed above, Judith Gardam and Hilary Charlesworth in their paper 'Protection of Women in Armed Conflict'[31] state that women increasingly bear the major burden of armed conflict. However the focus of violence, particular on sexual violence tends to obscure other important aspects of women's experience of armed conflict. Women experience armed conflict in a different way than men. These effects differ widely across cultures depending upon the role of women in a particular society. But the sure fact of armed conflict is that it often exacerbates inequalities mostly based on gender. This exists in different forms and to varying degrees in all societies. This makes women particularly vulnerable when armed conflict breaks out. Women are generally disadvantaged in terms of education and are considerably less mobile because of their traditional role of caring for others. These inequalities continue further after the cessation of hostilities. We find that women are often excluded from the reconstruction processes that take place after armed conflict as well as from peacebuilding initiatives. But armed conflict is not in totality a negative experience for women. Indeed for some women it can be a time of empowerment as they take over roles traditionally performed by men. In some other instances, armed conflict removes abusive partners from the home and allows women to develop new skills.

Despite the fact that women are generally responsible for trying to rebuild families and communities after conflict, they are almost always excluded from decision-making processes regarding reconstruction. This absence of women reflects the situation that exists in all cultures especially in rural areas during times of peace. Nevertheless the emphasis has traditionally been placed on the suffering and heroism of men. The

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[31] Judith Gardam and Hilary Charlesworth. "Protection of Women in Armed Conflict", Human Rights Quarterly. Vol.22, No.1 February 2000, pp 148-166, http://www.istor.org/stable/4489270. uploaded on 09/05/2012.

glorification of the combatant is an integral part of the culture of warfare. Generally, the trauma, experiences, and death of women as a result of armed conflict are disregarded. The attention paid to the experiences of women in armed conflict is frequently exploitative and damaging to the women. For women to participate fully in processes of peacebuilding, it would then be prudent to eliminate such exploitative cultural practices.

Diana Chigas in her paper 'Pursuing Peace, Peace Building at Cross Roads', [32] argues that women are more robust, resilient and tolerant when faced with conflict and are therefore significantly important in any peace building initiatives. Women are known to bring along their feminine values which are able to radically transform an oppressive social order brought by weak and discriminating structures. According to the author a number of initiatives have been made by women in post conflict peace building process following renewed impetus after Boutros Ghali's Agenda for Peace of 1992. Past experience in Europe and particularly in Kosovo and Slovakia has demonstrated that women have been seriously involved in the process of peace building with sustainable outcome to lasting peace.

Carol Gilligan has shown that women perceive the world differently from men and that they see the world as a web of relationships in which individuals can be identified by their relationship with others. [33] Their concerns with relationships are the basis of their nurturing role, their passion for affirming life and their opposition to war. She observes that men tend to have what she calls an 'ethic of justice' which precedes from the premise of equality that everyone should be treated the same. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to have an 'ethic of care', resting on the premise of non-violence – that no one

[32] Diana Chigas. "Pursuing Peace. Peace Building at Cross Roads", Schmelzle B. and Martina Fischer M. (ed) Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series. No. 7, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management, Berlin, Germany. 2009. pp72-74.
[33] George Amara Odongo, "Role of Women in Peace Building in Kenya - Focusing on the 1992 Rift Valley Land Clashes". MA Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 2004.

should be hurt. The author's sentiments inform this study with a view of investigating the attitude of women in Mathare towards peace efforts.

After generations of silence, women's stories of their struggles for social change and for peace are beginning to be told. There are thousands of stories of women in Mozambique standing up in the political struggles of independence, women combatants in Zimbabwean war of independence and women's participation in liberation struggles in South African and so on.[34]

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Peace building can be thought of as an essential life skill which runs right from ending conflict to peace making and eventually building peace. In conflicting societies, peace building play a role in transforming the present and moving towards a future with greatly reduced incidences of conflict. The potential relevance of peace-building for all societies, calls for inclusiveness and hence the need to bring women on board. This has been met with challenges, more significantly due to the patriarchal tendencies influencing the position of women in African societies. This study was, therefore, guided by the patriarchal theory.

Suranjita Ray paper on 'Understand Patriarchy' states that patriarchy is understood as a rule of the father in a male-dominated family. Women voices are not heard because of this domination.[35] Zillah Eisenstein observes that patriarchy is a social and ideological

[34]Karin Kocn, "Reconfiguring Women's role in Post-Conflict Situations", Institute of Security Studies, Paper No. 121, February 2006. http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Paper/121/Paper.121.pdf. uploaded on 16/07/2012.
[35] Suranjita Ray. "Understanding Patriarchy," Paper presented to Department of Political Science, Daulat Ram College. University of Delhi, http://www.du.ac.in/fileadmin/Du/Academics/Conhrge-006.pdf. uploaded on 17/07/2012.

construct which considers men as superior to women.[36] Power relations in society are hierarchical and unequal where men control women's production, reproduction and sexuality. Marilyn French posits that patriarchy is "the manifestation and institutionalization" of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and women are deprived of access to such power.[37]

In this study I apply the theory of patriarchy in an attempt to understand why there is determined exclusion of women in all peacebuilding processes spearheaded either by Government through the Provincial Administration and the International community despite their heavy presence in Mathare slums. Mathare slum is an area largely metropolitan in settlement but with clear patriarchal tendencies associated with Kenyan rural setting. This study takes into consideration the fact that social and cultural structures infringe on socio-cultural relations and informs how decision making is undertaken and the place of women in societies. Women voices in peace efforts are lacking in Mathare slum and are always relegated to victimhood, a patriarchal terminology used in disempowering women.

For the women in Mathare their persistent exclusion is often explained in terms of culture which dictates that women have to be silent in the presence of men. Cultural systems have been applied to subordinate and objectify women. Though patriarchal tendencies dominate society, change is not only inevitable but often desirable; the desire to escape

[36] Zillah Eisenstein in Suranjita Ray, "Understanding Patriarchy," Paper presented to Department of Political Science. Daulat Ram College. University of Delhi, http://www.du.ac.in/fileadmin/Du/Academics/Conhrge-006.pdf. uploaded on 17/07/2012.
[37] Marilyn French in Suranjita Ray, "Understanding Patriarchy." Paper presented to Department of Political Science. Daulat Ram College, University of Delhi, http://www.du.ac.in/fileadmin/Du/Academics/Conhrge-006.pdf. uploaded on 17/07/2012.

from domination is constantly there for women. Conflicts present an opportunity for women to take over domestic, economic and social power when their fathers or husbands are away at war. Women often become heads of households and sole breadwinners, roles that often deviates from gender stereotypes.[38] The theory is still very relevant to this study considering the peripheral position women are placed in conflict situation and in post-conflict reconstruction. In conflict, they are largely viewed as victims and not perpetrators and in peace efforts their role is hardly talked about. This theory will help me in understanding how the women of Mathare have managed to let go the patriarchal tendencies and wrestle powers in society that have been in the male hands for so long.

1.8 Research Hypotheses

This study tested two hypotheses. These were:

1. Women are invaluable participants in peace building in Mathare.

2. Patriarchy has been a hindrance to women direct involvement in peacebuilding activities in Mathare.

1.9 Research Methodology

This research utilized a qualitative approach; examining data collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary documents included information/records held by various churches, Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), Christian Based Organization (CBOs), United Nation Agencies and the Provincial Administration involved in peacebuilding initiatives in Mathare. Secondary sources included various books, scholarly articles, journals and newspapers articles. The researcher also made use of the internet to obtain articles, book reviews, and theoretical discussion about women in conflict, peacebuilding initiatives and relevant case studies.

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[38] Karin Koen, "Reconfiguring Women's role in Post-Conflict Situations." Institute of Security Studies, Paper No.121, February 2006, http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Paper/121.pdf, uploaded on 16/07/2012

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Purposive snowballing sampling technique was utilized for this study. In this method, initial subject, the Chief of Ruaraka Location, Mathare Division was purposively identified as he was the Government security and peace agent at the location level. The Chief was able to direct me to 2 women actively involved in peacebuilding in Mathare. Using the snowballing technique the 2 initially identified women helped in naming and contacting other people with the required characteristic for this research. A total of 34 people were interviewed but only 27 allowed the researcher to use their names for this study. The reminder indicated that they were not comfortable because of their security and the risk of revenge attacks. Mathare is an area not easily accessible by outsiders and is a multi-lingual society. The researcher used the research assistance to access the slum, break the language barrier and understand the slum dynamics.

Detailed information regarding women roles and challenges in peacebuilding was obtained through an in-depth interview with women and men. Members of the Focused Group Discussion were also utilized for this research. In both instances face-to-face interviews were carried out with the aid of unstructured questionnaires. The guiding questions in the questionnaire gave room for probing as the interview progressed enabling me to capture in-depth information and also afforded me an opportunity to develop rapport with the participants and enhanced the quality of the discourses collected. Observation method was used to capture the non-verbal communication such as expressions of pain and trauma that enriched this study. The interviews were carried at an office within Mathare provided by the Chief of Ruaraka Location.

The researcher used note-taking method. This was because the participants refused the interview proceedings to be recorded either in video or audiotapes. There was fear

among the participants on being quoted or their comments being used in the study, citing previous research undertaken by the media personalities during the 2007/2008 post-election violence, where their faces were splashed on the print and electronic media resulting on revenge attacks on those who had been interviewed.[39]

Qualitative method was used to analyze the data as it was the best method to capture words that would help in understanding human behavior and the reasons for such behaviours. Arguments were presented as narratives giving the researcher a chance to present the stories as they were told.

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[39] Oral interview, Alfred Angira, 02/09/2011.

2.0 CHAPTER TWO: MATHARE SLUMS AND CONFLICT:

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the origin, rise, development and spread of slums in Mathare. It examines the social, economic, and political effect of the spread of the slums to the people living within the slums. This, therefore, provides a foundation upon which conflict thrives in Mathare. The chapter places Mathare and its people on the 'map' of Nairobi.

2.2 Situating Mathare in Nairobi

Mathare is one of the informal settlements found in Nairobi. Its establishment is closely associated with Nairobi, a city that owes its birth and growth to the Kenya-Uganda Railway. The growth of Nairobi just like many other urban centers in Africa can be traced to the colonial period. It was established in 1899 as a depot for the British colonial Uganda Railway. The moving of the railway headquarters from Mombasa to Nairobi by its Chief engineer, Sir George Whitehouse resulted in Nairobi becoming a Commercial and business hub of the then British East Africa Protectorate.[40] By 1900 Nairobi had grown into a big town consisting mainly of railway buildings and separate residential quarters for Europeans and Indians engaged as labourers in the construction of the railway line.

The growth of the informal settlements in Nairobi has been attributed to various factors ranging from historical and legal factors such as racial segregation, displacement of African to make room for Europeans and the clearance of substandard houses all this associated with colonization, while others are classified as economical as well as cultural.

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[40] Winnie Mitullah, "The Case of Nairobi, Kenya", University of Nairobi, http://www.begakwabega.com/documenti/Nairobi-HabitatReport/2003.pdf, uploaded on 19/06/2012.

Historically and legally, during the colonial period, Nairobi witnessed a large scale government sanctioned spatial segregation based on race and reinforced by planning laws as well as exclusionary zoning regulations. In their efforts to keep Africans away from their settlement areas, Asians were placed in between Africans and Europeans acting as buffer-zone. The segregation along racial lines divided Nairobi into four distinct sectors. The first sector was the North and East defined as the Asian Section. Areas covered in this sector included Parklands, Pangani and Eastleigh. The second sector comprised Pumwani, Kariokor and Donholm reffered to as East and South East sector meant for Africans. The third sector was the South East to South marking another small area for Asian. The final forth sector referred to as North and West was an exclusive area for the Europeans.[41] Those Africans who could not afford to live in their sector or were in Nairobi illegally due to colonial restrictions found their way in areas such as Mathare, a quarry during the colonial period where they put up shacks to act as housing units.

Immediately after Kenya gained its independence in 1963, economic and cultural factors informed the settlement in the above sectors. The end of colonial rule relaxed the colonial racial segregation policy and the restricted movement of Africans. There was an influx Africans moving from rural to urban centers due to high unemployment rates and in search of better livelihood associated with urban centers.[42] The high movement of people and inability to get well-paying jobs with no corresponding housing provision forced people to move to areas where free land could be found to build shack houses.

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[41] Winnie Mitullah, "The Case of Nairobi. Kenya", University of Nairobi, http://www.begakwabega.com/documenti/Nairobi-HabitatReport/2003.pdf, uploaded on 19/06/2012.
[42] Ibid.

2.3 Socio-Economic Development of Mathare

As stated in chapter one, Mathare has a high population density with intense density of structures, lack of public infrastructure investment and provision of public services. The city council of Nairobi has not provided even the most of basic of services. Few facilities such as schools, health and community centres exist as part of the community's broader social network. Commerce is vibrant and thriving within the slum, informally employing many of the slum dwellers operating either food stores, bars and low scale businesses of selling second hand clothes. Many of those who do not work in the slum walk to town or Industrial area of Nairobi to look for manual jobs. Despite a large number of population engaging in some form of income generating activity, it was observed that a huge number of them had no regular income, or earnings were too low to even allow them afford food and rent.[43]

2.3.1 Education Levels and Facilities in Mathare

Generally the education index of the slum people in Mathare is low. Calvin a teacher in Mathare slums observed that in every 10 adults in Mathare, 5 have not attended basic school, 3 in every 10 adults having gone through primary school, with the remaining 2 in every 10 adults barely finishing their secondary education.[44] This particular information could not be verified at the city council of Nairobi, Education Department offices, for lack of proper records.

According to Asingo, for over 50,000 school-going children living in Mathare slums, there were only two public schools by 2007 catering for only 1,000 students. The remaining number of over 49,000 students either attended non- formal NGO- run schools

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[43] Oral interview, Alfred Angira. 02/09/2010.

[44] Oral interview, 'Calvin Mutiso', not real name, a Teacher in Mathare who did not wish to be quoted, 02/09/2010.

or do not attend schooling at all.[45] Currently Mathare has three public primary schools and a youth polytechnic. There are a number of private nurseries and primary schools run by individuals or church organizations. The private schools are all considered Non Formal because they are not registered with the Ministry of Education. Community informants regard some informal schools as purely commercial without the interest of the children as they are congested, lacking in basic learning facilities and are continuously admitting new students in total disregard to the limited space at their disposal.[46] Public schools include; Kiboro Public Primary mixed school with approximately 900 pupils, Mathari Old Public Primary Mixed 900 pupils, St. Teresa's Public Primary and Secondary Girls School, while private schools include St. James Non formal Primary Mixed School, and Genesis Non formal Primary and Secondary Mixed School and Valley View Academy.[47] The best performing school in terms of national examinations in Mathare slum is Valley View Academy which is a non formal Primary school. Performance in the government schools is not impressive, and this could explain the reason of over-congestion in the few private schools available in the slum.[48]

Walking through the slums on a school day reveals a huge percentage of children not attending school. Despite the introduction of free primary education in public schools, parents of such children claim that they cannot afford to send their children to school due to a myriad of challenges including the raising of KShs.40 monthly payment for the school feeding program and the high cost of school uniforms.[49] It is also common to see young girls who are supposed to be in school staying at home, to take care of their

[45] P.Asingo. "The Political Economy of Transition in Kenya", in Walter, Oyugi, Peter Wanyande and Odhiambo Mbai, The Politics of Transition in Kenya, From KANU- NARC. Nairobi: Heinrich Boll Foundation. 2003. p 21.
[46] Oral interview, 'Calvin Mutiso', not real name, a Teacher in Mathare who did not wish to be quoted, 02/09/2010.
[47] Oral interview, Daniel Njuguna. teacher at St. James Non-formal Mixed Primary School, 02/09/2011.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

siblings while their mothers are busy trying to make a living. Wanderi a teacher in Mathare believes that majority of the children are not in school.[50] Most of those interviewed strongly believe that education was the only way to prevent the cycle of crime and violence in Mathare. Without such considerations, this population can only disappear into crime related groups already discussed in this chapter.

2.3.2 Employment Opportunities

Most of the people living in Mathare valley lack the necessary skills to find employment. This can be attributed to the low levels of education. This has thus resulted in lack of opportunities in the formal employment sectors like the Government, private companies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), or parastatals. For these reasons the inhabitants of the slums have come up with alternative means of survival to enable them earn a living. Majority are found in the informal sector where they are engaged in hawking, brewing and selling illicit alcohol, prostitution, and the Jua-Kali sector (informal type of employment that involves manual production of goods and service) among others.

In Mathare slums, informal sector is gendered with the men and women being engaged in different economic activities. The main occupation for women living in the slums is illegal brewing and selling of chang'aa, - (an illicit brew capable of poisoning its consumers while intoxicating them), prostitution and selling of vegetables in small "vibandas" (small makeshift structures where goods, either vegetables or clothes are displayed for sale). This study established that prostitution was so rampant within the slum, with some women respondents who declined to be quoted admitting that they involve their children (girl child) in this business, something that has led to teenage

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[50] Oral interview. Peter Wanderi, teacher at Kiboro Primary School, 05/09/2011.

motherhood and the spread of sexual transmitted diseases including HIV and Aids. In Kenya prostitution and dealing with illicit brews is illegal and due to the Government policies to stop these practices, most of the women have become jail birds oscillating from prison and back to prostitution and chang'aa brewing. Those who cannot fit into the above trade are either engaged as house servants in the more affluent neighborhoods, or hawking.[51] Men on the other hand are engaged in hawking, washing cars, offering "protection" (Protection in Mathare contexts means the informal policing provided by gangs outside the regulatory framework of the state for a fee.) and shoe shinning and repairing shoes. Those who first settled in the Valley became squatter landlords by constructing and renting mud and wattle houses. A good number of them wake up every morning and walk to Nairobi/industrial area to seek for daily wage earning jobs.[52]

As for the youth, few work as security guards, while others run small businesses like water vending and hawking. Those without any meaningful ways of earning a living have formed illegal gangs and militia groups in the valley. They attack and steal from the residents and break into shops at night thus causing insecurity and discomfort in the valley. These groups include; "*Taliban*" and "*Mungiki*"[53] who "man" and extort money from the villages as a way of protecting their people within the area. In Kosovo village, these organized groups have been forcing residents to pay Kshs.20 per household, ostensibly, for their security. Residents who fail to pay ended up being beaten, their property looted or their houses burned down.[54]

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[51] Oral interview. Halima Kioko, Director Mathare Women Peace Committee, 02/09/2011.
[52] Oral interview, John Keya, 01/09/2011.
[53] Oral interview, Alfred Angira, Taliban and Mungiki are militia gangs composed of youths from the Luo and Kikuyu ethnic communities respectively, 02/09/2011.
[54] Ibid.

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2.3.3 Health Sector Development

The Government runs only two health centers serving all the residents of Mathare slum. The two centers offer subsidized health services and usually refer patients to get medication from private pharmacies. However, there are a number of private clinics in and around Mathare Slums. Most of these clinics lack even the smallest of basics of any health institution and therefore offer poor services to the people of Mathare. The provision of this health services is therefore an expensive venture in Mathare and thus out-of of reach for most residents.

HIV/AIDS has become a major health problem with indications of high infection rates in the area. Two major players that assist those infected and affected are Kenya Network of Women Living with Aids (KENWA) and Medicines Sans Frontiers' (MSF). The latter runs a centre known as Blue House where those infected can access free medication.[55] Dan, a teacher at a non-formal school says adolescent boys and girls in the slums also experience far worse reproductive health outcomes than their counterparts elsewhere in Kenya.[56] They are initiated to sexual and reproductive activities much earlier and are at an increased risk of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS.

2.3.4 Sanitation and Solid Waste Management

Sanitation is another serious problem in Mathare slum. The Kenyan Public Health Act and its subsidiary rules set out detailed standards for housing and sanitation.[57] Local authorities are expected to supervise the enforcement of the law. However the Nairobi

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[55] Oral interview, ˙Moraa˙ not real name, Blue House volunteer who indicated that her name should not be used, 02/09/2011.
[56] Oral interview, Daniel Njuguna, a teacher at St. James Non formal Mixed Primary School, 02/09/2011.
[57] Kenya Old Constitution, Chapter 242 of the Laws of Kenya. In the new constitution, Chapter 11 Article 185 (1), Fourth Schedule. Part 2, County Governments.

City Council according to Amnesty International research on urban slums acknowledged that these laws have never been enforced in relations to Nairobi slums and settlement because these areas are not and have not historically been integrated into the city's urban plans.[58] Nairobi sewerage, and waste disposal systems are generally not functioning properly and not available in slums like Mathare. As a stop gap measure a few landlords have constructed pit latrines for their tenants and are usually not open to the public. For the others with no toilet and proper drainage, the sewerage matter is directed to the open spaces that pass right in front of houses with dirty stagnant water being a common thing. It is also normal to see human waste all over the place. During the sunny season the air is dusty and when the rains comes the whole valley is turned into a quagmire of muddy sewer., The open spaces acts also as children play grounds and therefore, they are prone to eye and skin infections, cholera and other water borne diseases.[59]

2.3.5 Dominant Religion within the Slum

The majority of Mathare residents are Christians (Protestants and Catholics). There is the presence of other smaller traditional religions like the Kanitha ya Moyo, Dini ya Musambwa among others and an equally smaller number of Muslims. The churches are viewed and have acted as development partners with the community. Some of the greatest assistance in the area of education and health has been in partnership with the churches and faith based NGOs. For instance, Compassion International which sponsors children acts solely in partnership with churches.[60]

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[58] Amnesty International Report on Kenya; "The Unseen majority Nairobi's Two Million Slum-dwellers, Index": AFR 32/005/2009. June 2009, p.8.
[59] Oral interview, Rosemary Wanjiru, Landlord Mathare Area 3, 02/09/2011.
[60] Oral interview, Maurice Ongonge, Pastor Pentecostal Church, Mathare, 02/09/2011.

2.4 Mathare Slum as a Conflict "Hot-Spot"

Though conflict was not a subject of this research study, it was important to briefly go through conflicts in Mathare to understand the need for peacebuilding. Conflict in Mathare is as old as the slums itself. Conflicts causes have been diverse and changing with time. The conflicts have largely been informed by colonial history, political dynamics in the country, economic and socio-cultural factors. Economic factors gave rise to vigilantism a system that has fueled and sustained the landlord/tenant conflicts in Mathare slum. Socio-cultural factors are clearly displayed in inter-ethnic marriages, a recent phenomenon in conflict causes of Mathare.

The conflicts origins can be traced back to the Second World War and during the agitation for independence from colonial occupation. The late 1940s and early 1950s saw the growth of Mathare Valley settlements with new villages coming up as stated earlier in this chapter. From the onset Mathare slum operated on illegality with a reputation for criminal gangs and violence. These villages were the centre of the underground nationalist movement like Mau Mau, and acquired a reputation for violence that provoked frequent British military operations combing Mathare Valley to arrest and repatriate the Kikuyu, the Meru and the Embu who were blamed for the rise of Mau Mau activities.[61]

Mau Mau 'courts' are believed to have been operated from the villages of Mathare. During this period 'justice' by the 'courts' took place on a considerable scale where those accused of betraying Mau Mau were either assassinated, or flogged in public, bringing fear to the people of Mathare.[62] The people of Mathare Valley seemed to have operated outside the law and conventions of the colonial regime. After declaration of the State of

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[61] Andrew Hake. African Metropolis: Nairobi's Self-Help City. London: Sussex University Press 1977, pp.147-150.
[62] Ibid, p.148.

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Emergency in 1952, the Colonial Government destroyed all the houses and detained many of the Mathare Valley inhabitants. Up to the end of the emergency in January 1960 there were virtually no squatters in Mathare Valley.[63]

The period between 1961 and 1963, a small numbers of ex-detainees and former Mathare residents began re-building houses in Mathare area. Settlements took place in villages, each with a distinct area and social organization. Mathare valley villages operated on a pattern of grassroots populist democracy, where village elders taking leadership roles, protected the people and people paid for the service. The entire village population would be called to public meetings by the village elders, to discuss issues affecting the lives of the residents. The security was maintained by the youth militias, who formed the village 'police force', through the direction of the village elders. The youths had powers to punish those perceived to be criminals and also impose taxation as a system of 'justice mechanism'. Each village had a court of elders that settled disputes.[64]

2.4.1 Factors Influencing Conflicts in Mathare Slums

As stated earlier in this chapter, Mathare has witnessed re-current conflicts since its establishment in the colonial period. The factors informing conflicts in Mathare slums have been varying and diverse with the major factors being discussed below.

2.4.1.1 Politics Informing Conflicts in Mathare Slums

Politics has played a critical role in fueling conflicts in Mathare slums and the first such conflict was witnessed in 1969 just six years after Kenya gained its independence. The conflict was as a result of the assassination of Tom Mboya a then powerful minister in Kenyatta's government. Tom Mboya from the Suba community that is closely associated

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[63] Ibid, p. 148.
[64] Ibid. pp. 153-156.

with the Luo ethnic group. The relationship between Kenyatta government and the Luo politicians had been frosty immediately after independence and the assassination was therefore seen by majority of Luos as a way of taming the bright Luo sons from ascending to leadership position in this country. Fighting broke out in most parts of the country that had Luo occupation and Mathare slums was not an exception. These particular conflicts become a precursor for the continued political mistrust between the Luo and Kikuyu ethnic groups.[65]

Another factor contributing to conflicts in Mathare slums and related to politics is the engagement of slum residents by politicians as major campaigners, informers, and to disrupt the campaign rallies of their rivals for a fee. After achieving their goals, the politicians usually leave them basically in the same state they were in or in more desperate situation than before.[66] For example during the infamous 'mlolongo' (Kiswahili meaning lining up behind somebody) voting of 1988, the youth of Mathare were hired to intimidate and disrupt long lines belonging to political rivals. In this particular election, political candidates with the shortest lines were declared winners leading to confrontations and fighting pitting different supporters of political candidates in Mathare slums. This conflict was interesting, closely following the 1969 Tom Mboya violence pattern, with Kikuyu and Luo fighting irrespective of the ethnic background of their political candidate.[67]

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[65] Okoth Okombo, Olang Sana,"The Challenge of Mending Ethnic Relations in the Nairobi Slums," Balaa Mtaani. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010. p.14.
[66] Oral interview, Paul Changdoek, Chief Ruaraka Location, 02/09/2011.
[67] Okoth Okombo, Olang Sana,"The Challenge of Mending Ethnic Relations in the Nairobi Slums," Balaa Mtaani. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010. 2010. pp 14-15.

2.4.1.2 Role of Vigilante Groups in Mathare Slums

Vigilante has been defined by the World English dictionary as an organized group of citizens who have taken upon themselves the protection of their district, property.[68] Majority of vigilante group's members are young men and women who rise to fill void that the state actors are expected to provide in terms of security and other essential social services. They are usually categorized based on their origins, actions and effects. Existing definitions limit the ability to address the diversified nature of their activities. Whereas the groups in eastern Congo are labeled as 'rebel groups', legitimizing, at least in part, their agendas and recognizing them as a tangible threat to long-term peace and security, their counterparts in Nairobi are labeled 'gangs', implying a lack of a systematic core to their actions. The reality is that while their goals and agenda may differ, these are groups of (typically) young people, who have been locked out of the mainstream political process are fundamentally united by a common, if not always clearly articulated, social, economic or political agenda that is expressed by violent means. It is this agenda that distinguishes them from other criminal gangs. The groups are, at in their own opinion, pursuing a valid goal; violence is not an end in itself but a means towards this end.[69]

The emergence of vigilante groups can be traced back to the failure of the state to provide security, particularly in marginal areas of their territories. While most governments guarantee protection from external aggression they cannot adequately assures its citizen of their own internal security. In Kenya for example, the state apparatus do exist, but faces a lot of challenges in guaranteeing security in informal settlements like Mathare. Government authority is regularly challenged by the vigilante groups in such settlements,

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[68] Collins English Dictionary, New Edition, pg-988

[69] H. Nanjala Nyabola, "Essay on The legal challenge of civil militia groups in Kenya," African Security Review, No.18.3, Master Student at University of Birmingham, http://www.iss.co.za/unloads/18NO3NYABOLE.pdf. uploaded on 30/04/2012.

comprising the largest part of the urban population.[70] Because of difficulties of gaining access to these areas even at the best of times, the central government provides no or limited services. Critics have often accused successive governments of pursuing economic growth without addressing the inefficiency of the distribution mechanisms of the Kenyan economy, because it provides for the wealthy few at the expense of the poverty-stricken majority.[71] Furthermore, wealthier residents opt for private security arrangements while the residents of slum areas choose or are forced to rely on vigilante groups for their security.[72]

In Kenya, this has led to the emergence of community or interest-based groups, organized by a variety of stakeholders, including the regime in power.[73] Not only are the majority of the slums inhabitants unemployed, but the informal settlements provide an ideal retreat for criminals. With time, the slum dwellers have developed survival tactics, key among which is the tendency among people of the same community to live together in closely-knit 'ethnic villages.[74] Community based vigilante groups frequently emerge in response to a perceived threat against the integrity – territorial, social or otherwise – of the community.[75] Interest-based groups also develop to protect specific political or economic interests and may include in their ranks individuals from a variety of social backgrounds. These groups in particular may have a defensive element in their origin and expansion, such as the *Jeshi ya Mzee* that 'defended' the political agenda of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) in 1992.

[70] CBC News, "Kenyan Police Regain Control in Violent slum", Canadian Broadcasting Cooperation, 2006, http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2006/11/09/kenya-slum.html, uploaded on 30/04/2012.
[71] Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), "It's the economy, stupid (not just tribalism)", IRIN, 2008, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76159, uploaded on 06/02/ 2009.
[72] David M Anderson, "Vigilantes, violence and the politics of public order in Kenya", Oxford Journal on African Affairs. Volume 101, Issue No.405, 2002, pp.531–555.
[73] David J Francis, "Civil Militia" Africa's Intractable Security Menace. Burlington, VT, Ashgate, 2005, p.300.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Josephat Makori, "Kenyan Militia Strike Back," London: British Broadcasting Cooperation, 2008, http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7238489.stm, uploaded 05/02/2009.

The rise of vigilante groups in Mathare slums has followed the same trend as elsewhere in Kenya where such groups are formed based on community interest. Equally slums are by their nature prone to violence and such gangs have been at the centre of conflicts in Mathare. [76] The gangs will disrupt the peace of the resident through either looting, raping, burning of rival groups property as a way of causing insecurity. Afterwards the same gangs will emerge to offer 'protection' to the resident. At other times the gangs are ready for hire by politicians who want to either intimidate their opponents or harass supporters not to vote for their perceived enemies. In other instances the gangs have been instrumental in sparking ethnic based violence within the slum. This is when such gangs are engaged in rivalry battles over operating space ending up igniting ethnic conflicts as the gangs are ethnic based. Some of the major vigilante groups found in Mathare slums includes the *Kamjesh*, *Mungiki* and the *Taliban*.

A group associated with the Luo and Kikuyu ethnic groups is the *Kamjesh*, a group that was the first to be established in mid-1990 operating from Kariobangi one of the slums that forms the Mathare slums. Apparently this group was not associated with any politician. It was composed of young unemployed school drop-outs numbering between 35 − 40, composed of Luos and a minority number of Kikuyus. The group saw an opportunity to make a living from matatus plying the Kariobangi-city route.[77] Their main activities were to organize the Huruma matatu terminus, tout for passengers at a fee of Kshs.20 per vehicle. In less than two years of its existence, *Kamjesh* had established a sense of security and order within the Huruma Matatu terminus. The group expanded rapidly because of the confidence they had built among the residents of Kariobangi. But as with any expansion, challenges set in with members complaining that the groups

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[76] Beneah Mutsotso and Simon Kinyanjui, "A Ticking Time Bomb, Nairobi Informal Settlements," Nairobi, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nairobi, 2002, pp.3-6.

[77] Okoth Okombo, Olang Sana, "The Challenge of Mending Ethnic Relations in the Nairobi Slums", Balaa Mitaani. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nairobi, 2010. p.19.

finances had become a family affair dominated by three Luo brothers. Infighting started towards mid-1998 and the *Kamjesh* group disintegrated into two groups, one operating the Kariobangi and the other Huruma matatus terminus respectively. The disintegration weakened the *Kamjesh* with most of its Kikuyu members opting to look for other better opportunities.[78]

The origin of *Mungiki* is a subject of debate beyond the purview of this study but it is understood to have originated in Central Province and parts of Rift Valley in Kenya. It emerged as a quasi-religious organization dominated by the members of the Agikuyu community.[79] But based on its activities one is persuaded to place the group as a vigilante or militia group out to benefit through illegal means. It is one of the most organized militia groups operating in Nairobi, with well-organized structures of leadership and an operating constitution.[80] The sect operates on a cell basis and it is not very easy to identify its members.

Mungiki emergency in Mathare is attributed to the disintegration of the *Kamjesh* group discussed earlier. The Kikuyu members joined the *Mungiki* and displaced the Kamjesh from operating the Kariobangi and Huruma matatu terminus.[81] This displacement created a ground for conflict between the two groups in Mathare. Presently *Mungiki* operates in all sectors of Mathare collecting Kshs.100/= per day from each matatu plying Kariobangi/Huruma route. The group also connect water and electricity to the resident at a fee, determines how much rent is to be paid to a landlord, provide protection services for timber houses at a fee of Kshs.200/=, retail traders premises at Kshs.100/=, restaurants

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[78] Okoth Okombo, Olang Sana, "The Challenge of Mending Ethnic Relations in the Nairobi Slums", Balaa Mitaani. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nairobi. 2010, p.20.
[79] Ibid, p.20.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Beneah Mutsotso and Simon Kinyanjui, "A Ticking Time Bomb, Nairobi Informal Settlements", Nairobi, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nairobi, 2002, pp.3-6.

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and bars at a fee of Kshs.700/=, and wholesale premises at a fee of Kshs.1000/= per month.[82]

Taliban is a luo-dominated group that emerged in mid-2004 primarily to keep the *Mungiki* out of the Luo areas of Mathare slums. In a way *Taliban* role was to fill the vacuum left by the *Kamjesh* groups. Its emergence was particularly informed by the sense of apprehension that spread among the Luo residents of Mathare over the possibilities of surprise attacks by the *Mungiki*.[83] During the course of this study, it was observed that Mathare 4A has only one entry/exit point and any visitors to the area must identify themselves and be given escort by the *Taliban* youths to their destinations.

2.4.2 The Major Causes of Conflicts in Mathare Slums

Just like the factors influencing conflicts discussed above the cause of conflicts in Mathare slums have been dynamic. This section will limit itself to the discussing the causes of conflicts that led to the 2007-2008 Post-Election Violence.

2.4.2.1 Landlord/Tenants Relations

Citizens against violence (CAVI) in their report "*Balaa Mitaani*" posits that the landlord-vs-tenant conflicts are a key feature of conflict experienced in Mathare slum.[84] It is spill-over of the vigilantism and as actually perpetuated the growth of vigilantism. Fights began in the wake of the increased rents, and tenants defaulting in payments.[85] The Mathare slum is a peculiar area where majority of landlords are the Kikuyu while most tenants are the Luo as discussed earlier in this chapter. This situation brings out an ethnic dimension to the Landlord/Tenant conflict.

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[82] Okoth Okombo, Olang Sana, "The Challenge of Mending Ethnic Relations in the Nairobi Slums", Balaa Mitaani, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nairobi, 2010. p.20.

[83] Ibid, p.21.

[84] Ibid p.11.

[85] The stoppage of rent payment to landlords 'for shacks that do not qualify to be called houses' was attributed to RAILA ODINGA during his elections campaigns in Mathare in November 2007.

There is a general perception by various communities living in Mathare slums that the Kikuyu are dominating all spheres of life in Mathare, from being landlords, owning all the businesses, collecting protection money to manning matatus terminus.[86]   The landlords are seen as exploitative and are accused of charging high rents even for 'tin-shacks' that do not fit to be called houses. The landlords on the other hand feel that they are charging moderately as compared to other slums within Nairobi. The accusations and counter-accusations have seen frequent conflicts that usually turn violent. As a collection strategy and to enforce the rents the landlords engages the service of *Mungiki* for 'protection' and collection of rents from the tenants while the tenants who refuse to pay any increased rents (only agreeing to pay the old rents) uses the *Taliban's* to 'protect' them against *Mungiki*. The landlord/tenant conflict prior to the 2007 election was sparked off during one of the campaign rallies by Raila Amolo Odinga, then a presidential candidate for the Orange Democratic Movement Party who advised his supporters not to pay any increased rents to the tin-houses they were occupying promising to reduced further the rents if elected the president.[87]

2.4.2.2 Inter-ethnic Marriages

The 'Balaa Mitaani' report explains that a Mathare slum is a metropolitan area with diverse communities living within the slums.[88] There is a high percentage of inter-ethnic marriages though the actual percentage could not be obtained from the Chief's office. This has contributed to an increase in marital (domestic) violence whenever conflicts break out caused by different factors. The ethnic dimensions of conflicts in Mathare slums affect women whose spouses are from different ethnic groups. They are usually

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[86] Okoth Okombo, Olang Sana, "The Challenge of Mending Ethnic Relations in the Nairobi Slums", Balaa Mitaani, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nairobi, 2010, p.12.
[87] Raila Amolo Odinga, presidential campaigns, Huruma playground, mid-November, 2007.
[88] Okoth Okombo, Olang Sana,"The Challenge of Mending Ethnic Relations in the Nairobi Slums", Balaa Mitaani Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Nairobi. 2010, p-12.

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viewed as the 'enemy' and accused of spying for their community during such periods of conflicts. These women are usually chased away during the entire conflict period and can only re-join their families when the conflict situation is stabilized. Mueni a Kamba resident of Mathare who is married to a Luo summed this up by stating that:-

> "Okello jirani yaku alifukuza bibi yake Wanjiru, baada ya vita ilipoanza akisema yeye in mkikuyu na anawesa kumumaliza, bila hata kufikiria kuwa huyu alikuwa bibi yake. (When the violence broke out, Okello my neighbor chased away his wife claiming that as a Kikuyu she can easily kill him, without even thinking that she was his wife)."[89]

Marital conflicts have also led to social conflicts in the area, because of gossip by women who eavesdrop on what is happening on other 'vibandas'. Over time this has led to quarrels and fights in the slum that goes beyond family disputes.

2.4.2.3 The 2007/2008 Post Election Violence (PEV)

The political disagreements occasioned by the results of presidential elections of December 2007 brought in a totally different conflict never witnessed in the slum before. As Angira posits;

> "The PEV was by far the worst conflict to have taken place in Mathare. Some of its causes were several with most of the blame going to politicians campaigning within the slums. This politicians were accused of inciting the public with messages like 'we cannot allow a Kikuyu to continue occupying state house; it is time we voted for change."[90]

Such utterances by the politicians clearly displayed a division of the country into Luo verses Kikuyu and affected the entire nation. They publicly made inciting and inflammatory remarks and statements that ignited the conflict. Angira went further to state that, there was a perception by the people of Mathare that, voters were being imported from other parts of the country to come and vote in favour of PNU candidates. This was after people viewed as strangers visited the slums during the campaign period around mid-November just before the 2007 elections. The main actors in PEV were

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[89] Oral interview, Mueni Nduku, resident of Mathare North, 02/09/2011.
[90] Oral Interview, Alfred Angira, Human Rights Activist, 01/09/2011.

mainly man and youths but women were also accused of having participated in the violence as Njoki states;

> "Women were actively involved in the post-election violence in Mathare. They funded the youths, they were ferrying and supplying stones to the men and youth in the front-line, cooking and feeding them, providing sex after a hard day work of fighting the enemy and protecting them, acting as brokers and intelligence collectors on when the next raid was to likely to start and alerting their men through screaming when the enemy was approaching."[91]

There was serious escalation of armed conflict within all the villages with looting of business premises arson to houses and business premises. Many people were displaced after their houses were destroyed. Casual labour associated with the people of the slums was paralyzed and thus people could not access their daily wages. The worst part of this conflict is that it took an ethnic dimension pitting mostly Luos and Kikuyus.

The wave of violence in the slum led to people hacking each other on ethnic basis. Other ethnic groups were later enjoined to the conflict. For instance when Kalonzo Musyoka was appointed vice president on 8th January 2008, more division on ethnic ground were seen in Mathare, as Kambas initially leaning towards the Luos were seen as traitors and rejected. This incident sparked tension between the Luos and Kambas that lead to violence between the two communities.[92] It was disclosed that Kyalo, a young Kamba youth had his hand amputated and placed on the bridge that separates Huruma and Mathare North because of the ethnic hatred that developed between the two communities.[93] The researcher met Kyalo during the course of the study, but he refused to be interviewed as he was still hurting and bitter from the whole episode that left him permanently disabled.

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[91] Oral interview, Jane Njoki, resident Mathare No.30, 02/09/2011.
[92] Oral interview, Cyprosa Ananda, District Peace Committee Member, 01/9/2011.
[93] Ibid.

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The whole conflict scenario in Mathare during the PEV gave rise to considerable realignments based on ethnic identities. Different groups moved to areas considered friendly and as a result completely destroying all social networks in the slum.

2.4.3 Impact of 2007/2008 Post Election Violence

There immediate effects of the Post-Election Violence in Mathare was the torching and looting of houses and business premises of those perceived to be from the wrong ethnic group. There was massive displacement of people especially from Kijiji Chewa, Mathare Area 1 and Ghetto or Mathare No.30. Economic activity was paralyzed as all the 'Vibandas" and other small scale business activities stop operating. People were being killed and women raped by the rowdy vigilante members.

To a large, women were the most affected during this conflict. Many of them were raped, with rape being used as a weapon to banish the "other" within the community. Being the homemakers, women were expected to get shelter, food and medical help for those injured during the conflict and above all, bring some sort of stability to the immediate family. Through the effects of post-election violence affected the economy and the stability of the Mathare, it is of essence to note that 4 years down the line, the psychological effects of these trauma are still haunting many women, with many children born out or rapes acting as a constant reminder of the violence that rocked the place. HIV and AIDS infections cases have been on the rise and proper shelter is still a mirage to many residents of Mathare.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has established that the history of the Mathare slum can be traced to the colonization period. The conflict in Mathare is informed by the socio-economic and political developments in Kenya as a nation-state. The context of the conflict has been

changing based on the politics of that particular time. For example during the colonial rule, the conflicts were mostly directed at the white settlers and those perceived to have betrayed the independence clarion. Immediately after independence from 1963 to 1968 the conflict is attributed to political supremacies that pitied the Kikuyu and the Luo in a race seen as attempting to lock out the latter from countries leadership positions. In the KANU era of MOI under the single party system the conflict was of intimidating political opponents. From 2000 onwards conflicts in Mathare have to some extent been informed by politics and to a larger extent has been a means of survival for those engaged in them.

Nevertheless this chapter has observed that conflicts in Mathare are mainly caused by the existence of unlawful youth groups whose membership includes and have been at the centre of conflicts in Mathare over the past decades. For instance, these youths played a significant role in the 1992, 1997 and 2008 clashes. They were used by various politicians to intimidate their rivals, destabilize the opponents and collect "ngonyo" (a word used in Mathare to mean handouts from politicians).[94] Other factors that fueled the violence included the landlord/tenant stormy relationship because of rent hikes announced by landlords in the month of September 2007, inter-ethnic marriages discussed earlier in this chapter, the media as they propagated political messages filled with ethnic undertones and vigilantism where youths were ready for hire either by the politicians or the landlords for their own expediencies. This chapter also established that women participated actively in the conflict.

Life in the slum is anchored on strong social networks that enhance the market place operations. The 2007/2008 post-election violence in Mathare completely destroyed relationships making it very difficult for business interactions at the 'vibandas' to take place.

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[94] Oral interview, Alfred Angira, Ngonyo is a word used in Mathare to mean handouts from politicians, 02/09/2011.

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: WOMEN ROLE IN PEACEBUILDING IN MATHARE SLUMS, NAIROBI

3.1 Introduction

While the preceding chapter provided historical background and conflict perspectives in Mathare, the objective of this chapter is to address the women roles in peacebuilding. The chapter will be organized in three sections. The first section will provide a brief introduction to peacebuilding. The second will examine the peacebuilding processes focusing on reconciliation, justice and conflict transformation. Discussion will address the formal processes involving the state actors and informal peacebuilding processes involving women. The final section of this chapter, the conclusion will provide a brief overview of the chapter.

Violent conflicts bring a great deal of human suffering. A significant feature of this conflict is that the civilian population especially women and children are caught up as they are deliberately targeted by the parties to the conflict.[95] While it is important to appreciate the short-term humanitarian relief and crisis intervention during situation of conflict, there is need to come up with lasting solutions that build sustainable peace.

Peacebuilding is a markedly complex undertaking, which involves a multitude of diverse actors including women. It involves a full range of approaches, process and stages needed for transformation towards sustainable, peaceful relationships and governance modes and structures.

According to Lisa Schirch peacebuilding includes a set of values, relational skills, analytical tools and processes to create sustainable, just, and peaceful communities.

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[95] Karin Koen, "Reconfiguring Women's role in Post-Conflict Situations", Institute of Security Studies, Paper No. 121, February 2006, http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Paper/121/Paper.121.pdf, uploaded on 16/07/2012, p.1.

Peacebuilding is found in every community and in every culture, but many of our communities need help to explore and strengthen their capacity to build peace. Men and women in every community are already engaged in building peace, but their tasks are always different. Ideas about gender help determine the roles women and men play in peacebuilding.[96]

The end of post-election violence left the people of Mathare, with a weak foundation to rebuild the slum that composed of different ethnic groups. It became difficult to push through different peace initiatives as stereotyping, characterized with hate and anger continued to be harboured among residents of Mathare. The peace processes found in Mathare followed what Monica Juma called two parallel paths.[97] One consisting of the formal peace processes conducted by the security agencies and politicians and in some cases involving external parties and the other termed informal that draws little attention from those out of the conflict areas. The peacebuilding processes that were visible in Mathare are what could be explained in Lederach terms as the top-down approach mainly associated with work of outsiders, donors and intervention forces.

3.2 Reconciliation Efforts in Mathare Slums

Montville in his article "Complicated Mourning and Mobilization for Nationalism," observes that the process of reconciliation is the acknowledgment and contrition from the "perpetrators", and forgiveness from the "victims." He argues that each of these three elements is essential if those who feel themselves victims are to be reassured that they will not suffer the same abuses in future and the relationship can move beyond a cycle of

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[96] Lisa Schirch, "Women in Peacebuilding Training Manual," West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, Centre for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, 2001, p.12.
[97] Monica K. Juma, "Unveiling women as Pillars of Peacebuilding in Communities fractured by Conflicts in Kenya", An interim report, 2001, http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/beijing12/women_peace.pdf, uploaded on 10/04/2012.

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revenge and retaliation to something more positive. Montville envisions that reconciliation can occur in specially designed "workshop" contexts where participants from both sides feel secure, and trained neutral third parties conduct various therapeutic exercises such as "walks through history". Besides the workshop, reconciliation can also occur in the affected community.[98] It is the later that we are concerned with in Mathare.

Reconciliation efforts were put in place in Mathare Slum after post-election violence. Majority of those involved applied the top-down approach with the lead role being played by United Nation agencies, Provincial Administration, Non-governmental organizations, the Christian Based Organization and the Media. Joseph Njoroge observed that most of the above actors appointed men to reconcile communities living in Mathare.[99]

3.2.1 Reconciliation Efforts by the International community

The international community working closely with the government, Ministry of Special Programs played a critical role in reconciling different warring communities in Mathare. Such roles included the formation of the United Nation Volunteers under the sponsorship of the UNDP and Japan Counseling Centre Project (JCCP). Capacity building was the centre of this sponsorship and in February 2008, a two weeks training was offered to the volunteers at the Safari Park hotel where a total of 21 men and 7 women were trained. Another group of 32 people, 6 being residents of Mathare were also trained at the Johnsaga Hotel in Huruma. Skills imparted to the course participants included food distribution to diverse ethnic groups, identification of genuine IDPs, 1st Aid skills, conflict early warning and anger management. The groups of women trained by the

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[98] Joseph V. Montville. M, "Complicated Mourning and Mobilization for Nationalism"(2000), in Brown, Jerome, (Ed.), Social Pathology in Comparative Perspective: The Nature and Psychology of Civil Society. Westport, CT: Praeger, http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/AvruchTrc.pdf, uploaded on 28/08/2010, p.41.
[99] Oral interview Joseph Njoroge, chairman of the landlords Mathare, 02/09/2011.

UNDP were later to spearhead the establishment of women groups involved in peacebuilding in Mathare.[100]

The United Nations Volunteers was headed by Chairman, Morris Ogenga, a resident of Mathare North, Secretary, Jeremiah Wambua Muse, a resident of Mathare Area 3 and Benedetta Wayuwa, Treasury from Huruma, Ngei 1. The three leaders organized peace forums in form of concerts and songs. The concerts were acted by groups like "MSANII" (a Kiswahili word which means artist), Kamba women dancers and "Vijana na Amani" (Kiswahili words which means Youths and Peace) groups. In these concerts the actors recited poems and sang songs touching on peace. Jeremiah Wambua a member of UNV stated that the main theme of the poems and songs were 'Vijana Tuzuiye Noma, Tuweke Amani' (kiswahili meaning 'Youth We Must Stop Violence, and Keep Peace').[101] There were also plays acted by the youths in this groups that encouraged the community to co-exist as one and not to let outsiders divide them. Such forums were acted out at the Mathare North Social Hall every Saturday starting on 8th March 2008, where all residents were encouraged to attend.[102]

3.2.2 Reconciliation Efforts by the Provincial Administration

Provincial Administration through the office of Chief of Ruaraka Location was instrumental in bringing reconciliation to Mathare residents. This was done through Chiefs Barazas that were regularly held within the slum. The Chief passed messages of peace and encouraged people to peaceful co-exist and love one another. He also appointed village elders as reconciliation teams in Mathare. Their function was to bring the different communities together and ensure that there were speaking to each other.

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[100] Oral interview, Halima Kioko. Director. Mathare Women Peace Committee. 10/09/2011.
[101] Oral interview, Jeremiah Wambua. UNV treasurer, 02/09/2011.
[102] Oral interview, Alfred Angira, Human Rights Activist in Mathare, 01/09/2011.

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Though the initial appointments of village elders excluded women, agitation by the above mentioned women who had been trained and empowered by the international community made the Chief of Ruaraka location to reconsider his position and appointed 11 women to join the 28 men as village elders. The number was small but it was big step for women who had all along been left out of any formal peacebuilding processes championed by the Government

3.2.3 Peace Marches by the Kenya Veterans for Peace (KVP)

Kenya Veterans for Peace a group that was established in February 2008 and incorporated retired military, police, administration and prisons officers. The group headed by Rev. Mathenge, a retired military officer and Patricia Shollei, a retired prisons officer spearheaded peace campaigns in all the villages of Mathare starting with Kijiji cha Chewa, and Ngei, areas considered hot-spots during the Post Elections Violence. The reconciliation efforts by this group involved the carrying of the Peace Torch dubbed 'Mwenga wa Amani' (Kiswahili for peace torch). They moved from Kijiji cha Chewa, Kosovo, Mathare Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4, Mathare no.10, 29 and 30 between 4th and 16th April 2008. All the marches ended at the "kijinjio" (Kiswahili for slaughter) presently where the chiefs camp stand, preaching 'Sisi in Wakenya, tuishii kwa Amani'.[103] The Peace Torch message was peaceful co-existence and appealed to those who had grabbed other people's houses to surrender them back. The peace torch was to symbolize that despite all that happened – 'we are still one'.[104]

> "Seeing the energy and conviction of Patricia Shollei, an elderly woman trying to bring the warring communities in Mathare together made us realize that we as women can also do it. It was upon us Mathare women to take up the challenge and come together for the benefit of our children."[105]

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[103] Oral Interview, Alfred Angira. Human Rights activities, 02/09/2011.
[104] Oral interview, Chief Paul Changdoek – Ruaraka location, 02/09/11.
[105] Oral Interview, Cyproa Ananda, Member District Peace Committee. Village elder, 01/09/2011.

3.2.4 Release Political Prisoners Trust NGO Re-establishing Communication in Mathare

The NGOs and CBOs were also not left out in trying to ensure that peace was arrived at in Mathare after the PEV. For example, the Release Political Prisoners Trust, an NGO, which was founded in 1991 as human rights, good governance and a democracy organization, was also actively involved in reconciling Mathare residents. Headed by Lucas Kimanthi, the Program Officer, the group mobilized all the landlords in Mathare and tenant representatives, in an attempt to establish a channel of communication before addressing other issues that had created the bad relations between the two groups.[106] Their first meeting was held 8th March 2008 at the Mathare North Social Hall. Another meeting soon followed at the Lenana Mt. Hotel where the media fraternity was invited. Other subsequent meetings followed at the 'ground zero' or 'Kijinjio'[107] open space infront of the Chief Office, Ruaraka Location.

> "Haba ndio mahali tulipigana vita kali sana na wapangaji nyumba. Damu ilimwagiga hapa sana na wenye nyumba 20 wakauliwa. Hapa ilikuwa kichinjio (Kiswahili meaning, this is the stop where fighting between the landlords and tenants took place. Blood was shed and 20 landlords were killed. This spot was a slaughtering place)."[108]

Release Political Prisoners Trust was successful in bringing the landlords and tenants into a meeting with the Chief of Ruaraka Location to address rent issues, and agents (read 'mungiki') hired by the landlords to manage their properties. The communication established between the Landlords and Tenants was a motivator for women to bring peace to Mathare.

> "If I could shake hands with Vitalis, who had not paid my rent since September, 2011, then I do not see why Atieno cannot sell fish to me."[109]

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[106] Oral interview, Joseph Njoroge, Chairman Landlords, 02/09/2011.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Oral Interview, Rosemary Wanjiru, Landlord Mathare Area 3, 02/09/2011.

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3.2.5 Media and Reconciliation in Mathare

The rapid expansion of the mass media has resulted in uninterrupted assault of the public with information emanating from sources that are invariably far apart. Coupled with the recent advance in information and technology, Kenyans today find that they have almost unlimited access to information from different ethnic branded radio stations and publications. The effect is such that they easily become needlessly excited and reactive to the information[110] particularly going by the level of education, they cannot draw a line between falsehood and truth.

Nevertheless, there were deliberate efforts by the media houses to preach peace among the Mathare people. For instance, the media houses were involved in the Landlords/Tenants meeting held at the Lenana Mt. Hotel by the Release Political Prisoners Trust discussed earlier, where the function was moderated by Tony Kagwe of Citizen Television. Media was also instrumental in attempting to repair relationships between the Kikuyus and the Luos damaged by long history of mistrust. The media organized exchange programmes where Luo speaking youths were hosted at Kameme FM radio station and those from the Kikuyu community were hosted at the Ramogi FM radio station on 27th March 2008.[111] Call-ins were allowed where different issues touching on Mathare were discussed. The media went further to use different peace songs, urging Kenyans on the need to have peace in the whole nation. Images showing bodies of people killed, others without food or shelter, women who had been raped were being continuously displayed in both electronic and print media thus reinforcing the need to stop violence. Media presenters like Caroline Muthoka from KISS FM, Julie Gichuru

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[110] George Amara Odongo, "Role of Women in Peace Building in Kenya - Focusing on the 1992 Rift Valley Land Clashes", MA Thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 2004. pp35-37.
[111] Oral interview, Alfred Angira, Human Rights Activist, Mathare, 02/09/2011.

then working for Nation Media among others encouraged people to stop fighting as it was not a solution to the numerous problems they faced on daily basis. According to these Media personalities, dialogue was the only solution that could bring results. People needed to sit down, forgive each other and move forward as Kenyans.[112] A song that was repeatedly aired was Eric Wainaina's "Najivunia Kuwa Mkenya" meaning I am proud to be Kenyan.

3.2.6 Women and Reconciliation in Mathare

The efforts by the Provincial Administration, the International community, Non-Governmental organizations and the various media houses were lauded, as it played an important role in bringing the violence to a stop, but it failed short of addressing the root causes of the violence. The Provincial Administration was accused of 'forcing' reconciliation on the people. The lead reconciliatory teams from the Provincial Administration and the non-governmental organizations were accused of being gender biased in their selection of representatives in Mathare.[113] According to Grace, it seemed as though the above stakeholders had conspired to unanimously exclude or have a minimum number of women in their efforts to reconcile the different warring communities in Mathare. When Vitalis Otieno one of our informers was asked why there was deliberate effort to exclude women in the above reconciliation efforts, he stated that;

> "Women have nothing new to say, they rarely attend public meetings, and if they do attend, they always come late and are just after 'Ngonyo' (handouts). Women are only punctual at attending church gatherings, and their so-called 'chamas' (women income generating groups), where they gossip over everything and nothing."[114]

Media was praised and criticized by the resident of Mathare in equal terms. Praised for playing a key role in highlighting and stabilizing the conflict in Mathare but was also

[112] Oral Interview, Mary Waithera, United Nations Volunteer (UNV), Mathare North, 02/09/2011.
[113] Oral Interview, Grace Akinyi. UNV member. 02/09/2011.
[114] Oral interview, Vitalis Otieno, resident. Mathare 4A, 02/09/2011.

accused of being instrumental in portraying women as passive victims, a system riddled with patriarchal underpinnings for disempowering women. Grace observed that the media displayed women as people who were in constantly need of protection and sympathy and described the media as;

> "A double-edged sword. It was very useful in highlight the killings that was taking place in Mathare. Humanitarian assistance quickly arrived in the slums and killings were immediately brought to a stop. Those who had injuries were attended to, while for those who had been displaced, alternative shelter was sought and food distributed. But the same media was continuously beaming images of women and children crying and begging for help, as if they were the only ones affected by the violence in Mathare."[115]

Peace is a life-long process that is based on partnership. Most of the above reconciliation efforts were short-term and did not address day-to-day social activities of the Mathare resident. Here was a situation where resident could not speak to their immediate neighbours, buy goods from the 'enemy vibandas' or goods had different prices for those perceived to be the 'other'. For example there were different prices for vegetables (Kales or Sukuma Wiki as is popularly known in the slum), depending on the ethnic background of the buyer. The situation was so serious in the months of January to March 2008 where Kales were retailing for kshs.100 if one belongs to the 'wrong' ethnic group and Kshs.10 for the 'right' ethnic group. Children could not even share the little playing spaces between the houses. It was not possible to talk about reconciliation when such serious matters affecting the daily lives of Mathare residents and, when half of the population had been excluded from the formal reconciliation process. As I embarked on this study, the question I kept asking myself was "Where were the women of Mathare?

During times of conflict women's roles tend to be invisible at most and are treated as innocent or passive victims. The Mathare scenario is not any different from other regions

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[115] Oral interview, Grace Akinyi, UNV member, 02/09/2011.

of the world that have experienced conflict like Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Congo, Sudan, and Cambodia among many others. But studies so far undertaken indicate a totally different view of women. Today women are known to start and sustain conflicts. This is clearly demonstrated by women participation in liberation wars in Mozambique and Zimbabwe where women fought alongside men in the wars of independence.[116] Just as they are involved in conflict, their presence must also be there in peacebuilding. It is on this background and the need to address deliberate exclusion of women from the formal reconciliation process that the next section will address. Discussion will provide an exposition on the role that women played in reconciling communities in Mathare.

According to Theo Ben, 'Women are half of every community in the world and are therefore part of every solution'.[117] Women involvement in reconciliation efforts is a very important role within any community and ensures that the reconciliation processes reflects women concerns. Barriers to reconciliation are what women were trying to address immediately after the 2007-2008 PEV. The community in Mathare was so polarized with widespread ethnic hatred; lack of trust to the 'other' even if the 'other' was your immediate neighbour and different ethnic communities disconnecting any sort of interaction amongst themselves. The formal reconciliation efforts by the above mentioned stakeholders concentrated on the community level leaving small issues that were critical to normal daily lives of Mathare people. The women in Mathare had to find ways of arresting the deteriorating situation in an attempt to bring peace to Mathare. Some efforts put in place by women included community exchanges programs, public advocacy, social contracts and sporting activities, efforts that were not recognized nor

[116] Karin Koen, "Reconfiguring Women's role in Post-Conflict Situations", Institute of Security Studies, Paper No. 121, February 2006, http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Paper/121/Paper.121.pdf, uploaded on 16/07/2012.

[117] Ben Theo Gurirabi, Namibian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who acted as President of the Security Council when Resolution 1325 was unanimously passed in October, 2000.

supported by the Provincial Administration and Non-governmental organizations spearheading peacebuilding processes in Mathare slums.

3.2.6.1 Community Exchange Programs

As discussed earlier in Chapter two Mathare has had a long history of ethnic tensions, but the aftermath of the 2007-2008 Post-Election Violence strengthen the fear of the 'other' and created a situation whereby reconciliation become a herculean task. Negative stereotyping was widespread with a blame game of the 'other' being the enemy and having started the conflict. Identifying common grounds with former enemies become a primary step in rebuilding strained relations as it helped to uncover the shared priorities that could promote reconciliation.[118]

Women through Mathare Peace Committee, an organization formed in 1992 as part of the National Council of Churches of Kenya project embarked on a mission to promote reconciliation between the warring communities. According to Halima, one of the founding members of the Mathare Women Peace Committee, the priority for women in times of conflict was food and shelter and this was to become a basis of rebuilding trust between the women perceived to be from the 'enemy' ethnic group. A community exchange initiative system was initiated where families were encouraged to take up children of neighbours, friends or family members whose parents were killed during the conflict.[119] For those who could not be taken in either due to their age or limited space in the housing units, the group members ensured that there was a continuous supply of basic commodities like food and water. The Mathare Peace Committee went further to mobilize the residents of Mathare to re-building housing units for those who had their structures destroyed during the violence irrespective of one's ethnic background. The

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[118] Oral interview, Cyprosa Ananda, District Peace Committee member. 02/09/2011
[119] Oral interview, Halima Kioko, Director, Mathare Women Peace Committee, 02/09/2011.

provision of food and the re-building of structures for the 'other' broke the ethnic barrier created by the conflict and stereotyping that was being perpetuated within the slums. Mathare resident started appreciating one another and there was realization that the 'other' was the only person who had also been affected by conflict.[120]

This is consistent with the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians where there is the fear of the 'other' on both sides. The Israeli Organization Coalition of Women for Peace arrange what they call "Reality Tours" geared towards Israelis (women and men) who are willing to travel to the Occupied Territories and meet Palestinians.[121] Led by trained guides, the tours introduced participants to the social, economic, political and environmental realities of the conflicts. Several of those who participated in those community exchange programs became directly involved in peace activism following the tour and almost all send friends and family to participate.[122]

3.2.6.2 Women in Public Advocacy

Women in Mathare have also contributed to reconciliation efforts through public advocacy for peace. Though their voices were frequently missing from the formal peacebuilding initiatives, the Mathare women organized peace marches aimed at highlighting issues of conflict that needed to be addressed to avoid a relapse to the cycle of violence witnessed in Mathare. One such march was organized by the Women of Mathare Mass Action for Peace Campaign that began in early March 2008. The membership of this group consisted of both Christian and Muslim women from all Mathare slums who joined together to champion for peace.

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[120] Ibid.
[121] Jacobson, Agneta Soderberg, "Security on Whose Terms?, If Men and Women were equal", Kvinna Till Foundation, 2005, p-26, http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/Kvinna_securityonwhoseterms_2005.pdf, upload on 26/06/2012.
[122] Annalise Moser, "Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict-Affected Contexts", A review of Community-Based Approaches, UNIFEM, 2007, p.12.

The peace marches snaked through all the villages of Mathare and ended at the chief's office, where calls were made to the victims of the 2007-2008 PEV to come forward and forgive their perpetrators in public. The Peace march ended with a presentation to the Government through the District Officer, Ruaraka stating that the people of Mathare were ready to forgive each other and co-exist peacefully in the slums. Henceforth they stated: "they would not allow outsiders to come and incite the different communities living in Mathare to fight each other."[123]

3.2.6.3 Re-establishing Social Networks

During the PEV and even in earlier conflicts, social networks and relationships have been compromised. Mistrust and lack of cooperation between the different communities living in Mathare increased. The biggest challenge for the women was to rebuild trust, relationships and prevail upon on residents on the need to value each other. During this study it was realized that within Mathare there was a huge percentage of inter-ethnic marriages, though this statistics were lacking from the chiefs office.

For the women of Mathare the only way to rebuild trust and social relationship was through the family and inter-ethnic marriages presented an opportunity for this to happen. According to Cyprosa, women started praising and promoting mixed marriage unions as the best form of relationships which will bring forth a generation of Kenyans and not tribes. There was a clarion call for all young women intending to get married to try out their luck with men from different communities.[124] This same was clearly demonstrated by some of the informers who are in such marriages – Wanjiru married to Okello and

[123] Oral interview, Halima Kioko, Director Mathare Women Peace Committee, 02/09/2011.
[124] Oral interview, Cyprosa Ananda, Village elder Mathare 4A, 02/09/2011.

Halima married to Otieno.[125] These informers argued that such marriages build trust and social relationships among different communities as it is against African traditions according to Halima for one to talk ill or even fight with their in-laws.[126]

Besides this, the women who were involved in propagating inter-ethnic marriages stated that such unions were purely motivated by love, a central pillar of peace.[127] However, during the course of this study it was established that though women positively attempted to portray inter-ethnic marriages as a system of rebuilding trust and relationships, the results of such unions were not always positive. In some instances, the women in such unions became the target of gossips and ridicule within the villages of Mathare as cultural and community interests overrode societal networking.

Though the inter-ethnic marriages in Mathare have had mixed outcomes, it resonates with what was promoted in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide where the Tutsi and Hutu women were encouraged to continue with their age old practice of inter-ethnic marriages since all were "Rwandese". This is an indication of the role that social bonds and ties that bind humanity can play in reconciliation of warring parties.[128]

3.2.6.4 Use of Sports as a Peacebuilding Strategy

The use of sporting activities as a means of building relationships among the youths from different ethnic groups has also been practiced by Mathare women. For example, Mathare Women Net Peace Association established immediately after the 2007-08 PEV was

[125] Oral interview, Rosemary Wanjiru, Landlord Mathare, 02/09/2011.
[126] Oral interview, Halima Kioko. Director. Mathare Women Peace Committee, 02/09/2011.
[127] Oral interview, Rosemary Wanjiru, Landlord Mathare Area 3, 02/09/2011.
[128] John Mutamba and Jeanne Izabiliza, "The Role of Women in Reconciliation and Peacebuilding in Rwanda, Ten Years After the Genocide, 1994-2004, Contributions, Challenges and Way Forward", Oxfam Report, May 2005, p-6
http://www.nurc.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/Documents/Role_of_women_in_Peace_building.pdf, uploaded on 26/06/2012.

instrumental in the formation of two netball clubs in Mathare.[129] The two clubs brought together youthful women from different ethnic backgrounds to play together as Kenyans and rebuild relationships severed by the conflict. Jeckonia Otieno one of the referees had this to say;

> "It is hardly what one could expect of a netball pitch. Surrounded by buildings and shacks in the heart of Nairobi's Mathare slums, it is rugged and strew with waste, open sewer trenches demarcate it. Balconies of some tall buildings around it, and paths crisscrossing the neighbourhood, serve for spectators' terraces. The netball players hold friendly matches every Saturday in the afternoons."[130]

During such matches, breaks were called by the referee after every 15 minutes, where reconciliatory messages were passed to the spectators by the players. Different players passed such messages as 'Mimi ni Mkenya (I am a Kenyan), 'Kabila Langu in Mkenya, (kiswahili meaning my ethnic background is Kenyan), We are brothers, we need to live as brothers and sisters, 'Mathare in Yetu Wote' (Kiswahili meaning Mathare belongs to all of us), 'We are One', among many other reconciliatory messages. The gist of the various messages was a call on all Mathare residents to live as brothers and sisters because, as Otieno puts it – "We are all Kenyans, we cannot afford to see the repeat of what happened in 2007".[131]

This is in sync with what sports woman by the name Tecla Lorupe asserts in her peace efforts in North Rift valley dubbed "run for peace" that;

> "Sports bind people of different race, tribes, religion, nationality together for in sports the purpose overrides the enmity that exists between different tribes, races and nationalities. She further emphasizes that the run for peace has been of great help in peacebuilding in north rift valley since the communities do not see each other as only enemies but as friends."[132]

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[129] Jeckonia Otieno, "It's Life Playing for Peace. Slum Women Net Peace, Cheer with Ball Games," The Standard Newspaper, Thursday, October 4, 2011, p.3.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Tecla Lorupe, "Run for Peace", http://www.teclalorupefoundation.org. uploaded on 12/11/2011.

3.2.6.5 Using Religious Teachings and Activities for Peacebuilding

Religious activities played a major role in bringing reconciliation to communities in Mathare slums. According to Pastor Maurice Ongonge of Pentecostal Church in Mathare, women who constitute a majority of worshipers in his congregation set the mood for peace out of which reconciliation could be achieved.[133] Women in various churches within Mathare from different ethnic background formed various groups for the purpose of rebuilding relationship within the divided communities of Mathare.

Two groups that were active in reconciliation were the Women Christian Peace builders and the Small Christian Communities. These groups specialized in using the dos and don'ts of the Bible teachings to condemn war and praise peace. The groups used crusades that were held every Sunday afternoon in different villages of Mathare. The crusades attracted huge crowds of people from different ethnic groups and those in attendance were informed that;-

> "The evil was bringing hatred, death, animosity and destruction of property among the resident of Mathare. One cannot be a true Christian if he or she does not follow Jesus teachings of brotherly love and the rule of 'love your neighbor as you love yourself, God created us equally irrespective of one's ethnic background and that the God has a purpose for each one of us 'there is no greater sin that God cannot forgive."[134]

The crucial messages preached to those who attended the crusades dwelt on looking at others as sisters and brothers irrespective of one's ethnic affiliation. This gave an gatherings gave embers of different ethnic backgrounds to fellowship together and in the process break boundaries of ethnic identities and accepting the 'other' as Gods creation with a purpose in this world.[135]

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[133] Oral interview, Pastor Peter Maitha, Full Gospel Church, Mathare, 02/09/2011.
[134] Oral interview, Pastor. Maurice Ongonge of Pentecostal Church in Mathare, 02/9/2011.
[135] Ibid.

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This is similar to what happened in Fiji in response to the 2000 coup. The National Council of Women in Fiji mobilized a network of women's groups through the Blue Ribbon Peace Vigil in Suva to gather for a peace and prayer vigil. The peace vigil became a daily, then weekly event incorporating a multi-ethnic group of women from civil society organizations.[136] .

3.3 Women Transforming Relationships in Mathare

Rather than viewing conflict as a threat, John Lederach view sees conflict as a valuable opportunity to grow and increases our understanding of ourselves and others. Without conflict, life would be a monotonous flat topography of sameness and our relationships would be woefully superficial. Conflict creates life and keeps everything moving. It can be understood as a motor of change that keeps relationships and social structures dynamically responsive to human needs.[137] Conflict and post-conflict conditions create a radically new set of experiences (both positive and negative), especially for women and may create possibilities for the transformation of gender relations. As Sorenson confirms this with this remark;[138]

> "As women and men set out to win, consolidate or reclaim different rights and positions, social institutions and categories such as community, family, household, workplace and friendship take on new meanings and roles."

Conflict therefore provides a possibility and an opportunity for many stagnant social structures to change, and provide the most radical means for transforming gender roles.

Like other informal settlements in Nairobi, Mathare has had a long history of conflict characterized by violence, displacements, rapes and killings. As seen earlier in this study,

[136] Annalise Moser. "Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence", 2006, http://www.unifem.org/attachements/products/womenBuildingPeaceandPreventingSexualViolence.eng.pdf. uploaded on 13/06/2012.
[137] John Paul Lederach, Michelle Maiese. "Conflict Transformation", http://www.tetras_consult.gr/resources/Resource/Dialogue.Conflicts.Creativity/conflictTransformation.pdf, 2003, p.21. uploaded on 28/08/2009.
[138] Anu Pillay, "Gender, Peace and Peacekeeping, Lessons from Southern Africa", Institute for Security Studies. Paper No.128, October 2006, http://www.Kms1.isn.ethz.ch.pdf. pp.1–2, uploaded on 26/06/2012.

Mathare conflicts have been dynamic, with each period in history bringing in a new type of conflict. The section exposes how conflict has transformed gender relations and informed women of Mathare to use available spaces to build and sustain peace in Mathare.

3.3.1 Women Acting as Mediators

The 2007-2008 Post-Election Violence created a situation of mistrust, resulting in the disconnection of all forms of communications between the different communities living in Mathare slums. The women decided to take a lead role in re-establishing communication between the warring groups. This was done through the provision of both medical and emotional support to the community. Halima stated that the women established mobile clinics that provide not only psychological care which included trauma healing and counseling for the survivors but also become spaces for re-establishing communication with the perceived 'enemy'.[139]

The women preferred the use counseling services, because according to them interpersonal violent conflict often involves a breakdown in communication, and that where adversaries are unable to talk to each other, it is unlikely that they will resolve their differences. The women also argued that without communication, mistrust and fear will still prevail among the different communities living in Mathare.[140] According to Halima the counseling sessions created spaces for women to break their silence and speak out on issues that had remained unmentioned and also share conflict experiences with other women. Through this, women were able to realize that they were not alone in their suffering. The victims of conflict realized that others had suffered the same fate and that they could find support amongst the different communities living in Mathare and not

[139] Oral interview, Halima Kioko, Director Mathare Peace Committee. 02/09/2011.
[140] Oral interview, Mary Waithera, UNV member. 02/09/2011.

from outsiders whose stay in Mathare was temporary. There was need to find ways to restore communication and encourage dialogue. This, they insisted would lay the groundwork for the reciprocal enactment of acknowledgement of transgressions, apologies, forgiveness and assurances that such acts will not occur in the future. In this regard they argued that rebuilding of broken relationships would open channels of communication and interaction which is crucial for overcoming ill feelings that exists among the communities living in Mathare.[141]

The women counselors were trained by Japan Counseling Centre project and Amani Counseling Centre. The objective of the training was to build capacity of the few individuals on counseling skills. This same group became trainers of others interested in becoming counselors.[142] After successful completion of the counseling course, the trainers moved around the villages of Mathare helping the orphaned, traumatized and rape victims and also drug addicts in Mathare.[143] There are visible changes in the interaction processes by the residents of Mathare and Grace summed this up by stating that; 'I can now comfortably visit Mary Waithera in her house and sit and chat with her without any fear.[144]

3.3.2 Women Breaking Cultural Barriers

The recurrent conflicts in Mathare have not only made women to understand that they need to take their nurturing roles seriously but also use it to reach out to other communities. There was a realization that as mothers their nurturing role was critical in changing children's view of the 'other'. There was need for women to act as mothers and peace builders by instilling values in their children that demonize conflicts and talking to

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[141] Ibid
[142] Oral interview, Halima Kioko, Director Mathare Peace Committee, 02/09/2011.
[143] Oral Interview, Mary Waithera, UNV member, 02/9/2011.
[144] Oral interview, Grace Akinyi, UNV member, 01/09/2011.

their husbands on the need to co-exist peaceful with their neighbours.[145] Cyprosa stated that;

> "We as women, have brains to educate the Youth and our children to love one another and to live peacefully with their neighbours. As a mother, I had to devise a method so as to enable the youths to enter into a relationship based on the real harmony of interest and understanding. I had to involve them in seminars and workshops that were forum for peace building in Mathare. As mothers, we had to make sure that the youths speak to each other in friendly language so as not to hurt each other. We encouraged reconciliation for youths from different communities so that they can have same goal in life which is to live in peace in Mathare slum."[146]

Mathare women started socializing their children to building good relationship based on love by encouraging them to eat, play and sleep-over in neighbours' houses from different ethnic communities. The practice has enabled the children to appreciate and love one other as Cyprosa summed this up that stating that;

> "If [the children] see that we are filled with hatred, they'll grow up with the hatred...most important thing is that the mothers love each other, then children will love each other too, they will play together, and they are never going to have this hatred."[147]

The Mathare Women District Peace committee members started the sleep-overs for their children in June 2008 and since then neighbouring women have made it a habit of sharing the little they have with their neighbours. The members also started conducting solidarity visits to each household around the same time as a means of accommodating the learning to live with each other.

This is in line with study in Nicaragua which found out that women for instance, upon realizing the detrimental impact of hatred, worked to socialize their children in ways that helped to ensure that the past hostilities and hatred would not continue by setting a more positive example for their children. By strengthening social bonds among themselves and

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[145] Oral interview, Mary Waithera, UNV member, 01/09/2011.
[146] Interview, Cyprosa, District peace committee member, 10/9/2011.
[147] Ibid.

fostering relations among their children, women have helped to develop the social foundations necessary for previously warring factions to move towards peace.[148]

Essentially, women's action in Mathare has helped re-humanize those who were previously viewed as enemies. Through dialogue and open communication women in Mathare have been able to overcome barriers created by conflicts and draw upon their common experience of loss and suffering as a source of strength to face harsh realities of the slums as one people who can assist each other in times of problems.[149] This experience motivated them to reconcile and take steps towards changing perceptions about each other and accepting to co-exist. Mathare women just like women in Nicaragua have identified and made use of their socially significant position as parents capitalizing on their ability to influence the events of the future by encouraging interaction among their children.

3.3.3 Income Generating Projects as Spaces for Peacebuilding

Grassroots women peace builders in Mathare have come up with income generating activities to assist the victims of 2007-08 PEV. One such activity is 'merry-go-round' strategy where women come together either weekly or monthly to contribute money or any other item of their choice to one of their members. It is done on a rotational system, depending on who picks the first number. During their meetings, the members engage in prayers, make contributions and offer counseling services to any affected member where all are encouraged to forget the past and build the future. For the benefit of all Mathare women the merry-go-round scheme was expanded and there was a conscious effort to involve women for different ethnic groups. A total of 9 women groups were established

[148] Stacie Dawn Beever, "Women's Role in Peacebuilding; Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala Compared", MA Thesis, Department of Political Studies, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada, March 2010, http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/Academic/reconnd_womenpeacebuildingnicarelsallgiat_beever-mar.2010.pdf. uploaded on 15/09/2011.
[149] Focused Group Discussion, 10/09/2011.

and others that had collapsed were re-established between August 2008 and March 2009 in all the villages of Mathare involved in income generating activities. These were the Ruaraka Women Group, St. Stephen Women Group, Songa Mbele Women Group, Ongaza Njia Maedeleo Women Group, Wachokitimu Women Group, Kiamaiko Women Group, Ngei 1 Women Group, Mwamboko Women Group and Mathare Young Ladies Women Group. Apart from using the groups to improve their economic independence, they become avenues for peacebuilding. There was a deliberate effort to reach out and talk to the perceived 'other' and women used these informal spaces to advocate for peace and kill the animosity that had been created by the conflict.[150]

This is similar to the Rwandan case where at the local level, women created or re-constituted self-help groups, or cooperatives, to assist survivors, widows or returning refugees, or simply to meet the everyday needs of their families. The development and reconstitution of the self-help groups in Rwanda was aimed at enabling the members of the group to cope financially with the social and economic aftermath of the conflict. [151]

3.3.4 Community Based Policing as Spaces to Empower Women to Build Peace

The Provincial Administration through Chief of Ruaraka location established community based policing in Mid July 2008. The goal of community policing in Mathare slum was to reduce crimes and disorder by carefully examining the characteristics of problems in neighborhoods and applying appropriate problem-solving remedies to avoid build-up of tensions.[152] The community police unit was initially made up of men. Effective community policing in Mathare depended on optimizing positive contact between patrol

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[150] Oral interview, Grace Akinyi, UNV member, 02/09/2011.
[151] John Mutamba and Jeanne Izabiliza, "The Role of Women in Reconciliation and Peacebuilding in Rwanda, Ten Years After the Genocide, 1994-2004, Contributions, Challenges and Way Forward", Oxfam Report, May 2005, p.6
http://www.nurc.gov.rw/fileadmin/templates/Documents/Role_of_women_in_Peace_building.pdf, uploaded on 26/06/2012.
[152] Oral Interview, Alfred Angira. Human Right Activist Mathare. 02/09/2011.

officers and community members.[153] As such, community policing was to place security responsibility in the hands of the community. Regular community meetings and forums accorded community members an opportunity to air concerns and find ways to address them. Women through the Mathare Peace Committee petitioned the Chief of Ruaraka location to consider including women in this noble community security project. Through this, 11 women who doubled up as village elders were appointed to be members.[154]

Since the introduction of community policing, fear has been reduced because different community members participated actively in policing. People have been made to understand, how their actions can endanger other people's safety. Although Mathare slum is home to different ethnic groups, who encompass widely diverse cultures, values, and concerns, the people are now jointly acting towards peaceful coexistence. Churches, schools, hospitals, social groups, private and public agencies, and those who work in the area also play a vital role.[155] In addition, those who ran businesses or provide services to the area are also concerned with the safety and security of the neighborhood, including the communities' interest in efforts to address problems of violence in the area.

Community policing has encouraged a spirit of cooperation that balances the collective interests of all communities with the personal rights of individuals. It has made the police efforts easy as they have worked out on strategies to prevent and control ethnic violence and other crimes that are common in the slum. Those involved with community policing have taken up investigative roles and informs the Administration police stationed at the chiefs' office about crimes and threats that are likely to escalate into violence in Mathare slum. The community policing units are responsible for bringing to justice all lawbreakers, a practice that has helped the people of Mathare to achieve the common goal

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[153] Mark Moore H., Robert Trojanowicz and George L. Kelling, "Crime and Policing: Perspectives on Policing", Washington, D.C., Harvard University, 1988, p.10.
[154] Oral interview, Paul Changdoek, Chief Ruaraka Location, 02/09/2011.
[155] Oral interview, Alfred Angira, Human Right Activist Mathare, 0 2/09/2011.

of bettering their collective quality of life. Community policing groups have also helped in identify sources of conflicts and provided an opportunity for their roots causes to be addressed.[156]

3.4 Women and Justice in Mathare

3.4.1 Introduction

One cannot talk of peacebuilding if justice has not been addressed. Justice is an important aspect of peacebuilding in a post-conflict situation where there is needs to end violence, disarm warring communities, restore the rule of law and deal with the perpetrators of crimes and human right abuses. While often not explicitly mentioned in definitions and descriptions of peacebuilding, justice is a central issue in post-conflict societies. In peacebuilding, justice can either be achieved through the formal or the informal system. The formal system makes use of the laid down governmental judicial mechanisms, while the informal system makes use of the traditionally established mechanisms within communities affected by conflicts.

Justice can be based on retribution, restoration and transitional justice. Retribution justices commonly referred to as retributive justice is based on the principle that people who have committed human rights violations, or ordered others to do so, should be punished in courts of law or at a minimum must publicly confess and ask for forgiveness.[157] Restorative justice is a process through which all those affected by an offence be it victims, perpetrators and by-standing communities, collectively deal with the consequences. It is a systematic means of addressing wrongdoings that emphasizes the healing of wounds and rebuilding of relationships. It does not focus on punishment

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[156] Ibid.
[157] Annalise Moser, "Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence", 2006, http://www.unifem.org/attachements/products/womenBuildingPeaceandPreventingSexualViolence.eng.pdf, uploaded on 13/06/2012.

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for crimes but on repairing the damage done. While transitional justice involves prosecuting perpetrators, revealing the truth about past crimes, providing victims with reparations, reforming abusive institutions and promoting reconciliation.[158] James Gilligan has argued that "all violence is an effort to do justice, or undo injustice." Both conflict and justice processes, therefore, must find ways to address these issues of justice and injustice.[159]

The Mathare conflict as mentioned in chapter two involved members of different ethnic groups which were classified as "Othaya"[160] and "Siaya."[161] For any sustainable peacebuilding processes, it was important to address issues of justice and injustices in Mathare. The Provincial Administration through the office of the Chief and the Police are agents' of the formal judicial mechanism at the District level. They are involved in the arrest of perpetrators of crimes, where they are arraigned in courts of law for prosecution.

In Mathare, the Chief of Ruaraka location is mostly involved in administration of justice through arbitration of conflicts that are likely to cause tensions. For example the Chief handles marriage disputes, disagreements over property among other issues, where conflicting parties sit down and agree on the best way to solve their own problems. The Chief hold 4 meetings in one day to solve conflicts. He is assisted by the village elders totaling 39 with 11 being women, appointed by the Chief from all the villages of Mathare

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[158] Annalise Moser. "Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence", 2006, http://www.unifem.org/attachements/products/womenBuildingPeaceandPreventingSexualViolence.eng.pdf. uploaded on 13/06/2012.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Oral Interview, Vitalis Otieno District Peace Committee Member, Othaya is a derogatory term used to refer to demarcation in Mathare for the people from Mount Kenya region not only the Kikuyu but those who dominantly support the party of National Unity (PNU) resided, 01/9/2011.
[161] Ibid, Siaya is a derogatory term used to refer to the demarcation in Mathare for people who predominantly supported Orange Democratic Movement and not only from Nyanza but also from, other region of the country resided.

slums in the administration of justice.   Their main function is the identification and reporting the same to the chief for administration of justice.

> "It is important to arrest even the smallest conflict like gossiping in a slum-setting because, if such an issue is not quickly addressed, it can easily spark a conflict that will see even 100 houses being burnt down within 30 minutes. Before you realize what is happening you will be dealing with full fledge war and handling victims of rape, looting and murders."[162]

3.4.2 Women Views of Justice in Mathare

Majority of the people in Mathare especially the women do not trust the government justice mechanism. Women view it as a composition of men who do not understand women issues and their level of suffering in times of conflicts and are only out to entrench their type of justice.[163] They also believe that, fair justice cannot be achieved through this organs of government, because of what one respondent called 'high level corruption, biasness and favouritism" by the government justice mechanisms.[164] Police the first call for justice are viewed as corrupt and brutal only dealing with those who can afford to 'pay'.[165] While women village elders appointed by the chief as stated earlier in this chapter are only allocated roles of mobilizing residents to attend the chief barazas, and not security duties deemed too demanding and may be affected by domestic chaos.[166] Justice to women can only be achieved by those who can pay for justice'.[167] These are some of the reasons that pushed women to advocate and promote justice in their own ways as shown below.

During the first few weeks of 2007-2008 PEV, the women of Mathare under the banner Amani (meaning peace in kiswahili) mobilized more than 100 women to condemn

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[162] Oral interview, Paul Changdoek – Chief Ruaraka Location, 02/09/2011.
[163] Oral interview, Cyprosa Ananda, member District Peace Committee, 02/09/2011.
[164] Oral interview, Jemima (not her real name) , resident Ngei 1, 10/09/2011.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Oral interview with Cyprosa Ananda, District Peace Committee member, 10/09/2011.
[167] Ibid.

violence and police brutality following the eruption of violence.[168]   The Amani group

founded the Amani Women organization, in early February 2008. It brought together

more than 700 women across political affiliations and ethnic groups from all the villages

of Mathare slums. To date the organization has seen its membership grow to an estimated

1500 women of diverse ages.[169]

In the aftermath of the violence the organization objectives was to reconcile warring

communities in Mathare, truth seeking and finding justice for Post Election Violence

victims.[170] For starters, Amani organized what they called 'truth and justice' workshops

or barazas.[171] In this workshops held in the open field next to the Chief's office, victims

of the atrocities were called to come forward and name those who had committed crimes

against them. The women then took it upon themselves to look for the perpetrators. In

the next workshop or baraza, the perpetrators were paraded and the community called

upon to agree on the type of punishment for each crime committed.[172] The type of

punishment depended on the severity of the crime committed and most of it was in terms

of fines, where the perpetrators were required to pay fines ranging from Kshs.1000/- to

10,000/- to their victims. In cases where the perpetrators refused to pay the fines, they

were then reported to the chief, who arrested and were later them arraigned in courts of

law for further formal justice mechanism.[173] About 50 perpetrators of domestic violence

were arrested through this system and taken to court by the chief.[174]

[168] Oral interview with Cyprosa Ananda, District Peace Committee member, 10/09/2011.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Oral interview, Jessica Mumo member Amani group, 10/09/2011.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Oral interview. Chief Paul Changdoek, 02/09/2011.

Most women of Mathare observed that though the above idea was noble, it only functioned at what they termed 'low-scale' violence of domestic nature, serious crimes like rape or murder were never brought forward by the victims for fear of revenge attacks from the perpetrators and the women used counseling to break the silence of the victims as mentioned earlier in this chapter. [175]

Nevertheless, it is important to note that most women in Mathare believe that justice cannot be found in the local system for they say that some of the "well known perpetrators" whom they reported to the police have been left to go scot free. An overwhelming majority of the participants in the FGD, however, were skeptical about prospects of justice actually materializing in Mathare slum and in Kenya in general.[176] This skepticism is unsurprising given the country's corrupt police force, weak judicial system, a political class that is widely perceived to be indifferent to the plight of victims of violence, and past abrogated attempts at investigations, prosecutions and reform. According to the participants, the main impediment to the implementation of justice is Kenya's leaders, who are seen as venal, dishonest and likely to manipulate any commissions and tribunals.[177] A woman in Mathare sums up these feelings best: "Justice is devilish. I have to bribe to get justice."[178] Likewise, a female respondent in the group captured the pessimism about the current state of politics: "It's hard for Kenyans to get justice with our current crop of leaders." [179] Nevertheless, there is hope in Mathare, that the full implementation of the new constitution will ensure that effective administration of justice that also serves the poor in society will be not be a mirage but a reality.

[175] Oral interview, Cyprosa Ananda, District Peace Committee member, 03/09/2011.
[176] Focused Group Discussion. 10/09/2011.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has established that peacebuilding is a complex undertaking that involves multitude of diverse actors' women and men included. The peacebuilding in Mathare operated at two levels; that at the formal level and visible to the outside world where Government agencies, United Nations Agencies, Non-governmental organizations and the Christian Based Organizations were anchored. Women of Mathare were active at the informal level away from the public arena.

Reconciliation, justice and conflict transformation are important avenues of any peacebuilding process and this has not been an exception in Mathare slums. The formal peacebuilding efforts were aimed at stabilizing the situation in Mathare. As observed in this chapter, women chose to use approaches which are readily accessible to them in their daily lives and capitalizing on the commonly held images of women as nurturers of peace. The approaches have been accessible at a smaller scale and at the informal in nature.

The above contribution notwithstanding, this chapter has demonstrated that for long term effective approaches to peacebuilding all members of society need to be involved. The International efforts are critical for capacity building while women efforts are equally important in re-building relationships and social networks need for sustained peace. For real peace to be achieved in Mathare, it is of essence to ensure that all stakeholders act as partners in the peacebuilding processes.

4.0 CHAPTER FOUR: CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING IN MATHARE

4.1 Introduction

Women have continued to encounter numerous challenges in peacebuilding processes in conflicting societies. This is happening notwithstanding, the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1325 by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in October 2000, that categorically calls for the inclusion of women in any peacebuilding process.[180] What then are the major factors that continue to inhibit women unleashing their full potential in achieving sustainable peacebuilding process? Through interviews, observation and focused group discussions undertaken during the course of this study, it was established that women face numerous challenges that hinders their full participation in peacebuilding processes in Mathare. Though, they are gifted with nurturing skills they still find road blocks in every step that they undertake. The challenges faced by women are outlined below.

4.2 Patriarchal Challenges

Patriarchy as discussed earlier in chapter one has been used in society to exclude women from important societal undertaking. Power is vested in men who have access and control resources within the private and public sphere. Through various cultural practices like marriage, women are objectified and discriminated in society.[181] This study established that patriarchal dominations of women in Mathare was visible and presented the under listed challenges.

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[180] United Nation Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325, October 2000.
[181] Karin Koen, "Reconfiguring Women's role in Post-Conflict Situations", Institute of Security Studies, Paper No. 121, February 2006, http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/Paper/121/Paper.121.pdf, uploaded on 16/07/2012.

4.2.1 Traditional Cultures

Culture is an important component in every community. It is basis of our identification, and defines who we are in any social set-up. But there are some cultural practices that have been used to disempowering some groups in society. Such cultural practices include patriarchy that dictates power relations and gender roles in society. It defines the place of women in society. In most communities in Africa and Kenya is not an exception, women have be confined to reproductive and domestic roles. This study established that traditional cultures being practiced in rural Kenya were evident in an urban setting like Mathare slums. Through observation, there was clear evidence of male domination within the community with clear patriarchal socio-cultural order. The problem this scenario presents in Mathare as any other part of Kenya is that different roles in community are gendered. There are activities that are only a preserve of man and women and in Mathare for instance, security and protection was found to be the role of man. Women are not allowed to form part of security teams that move around the villages of Mathare by District Security Peace Committee chaired by the District Commissioner. According to Halima, women are still viewed as people who should stay in the houses and be obedient to their husband. Women are expected to be submissive to be considered as good wives.[182] Kimani one of the informants had this to say about women;

> "Their roles should include and limited to kitchen and bringing up children. When you included women in such serious matters as security, kuna shida (there is a problem) because women can bring in nothing as they are weak and have no capacity to handle such matter. They can only gossip period".[183]

The problem with such cultural perception is that women are continuously marginalized and left out in any peacebuilding arrangements. Any peacebuilding approaches put

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[182] Oral interview, Halima Kioko, Director, Mathare Women Peace Committee, 10/09/2011
[183] Oral interview, Francis Kimani – Teacher at one of the informal primary school in Mathare North, 07/02/2012.

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forward by women are viewed suspiciously by men, treated casually and receives minimal attention. They are seen as insignificant to the community's well being.

4.2.2 Lack of Support from Men

In relation to culture the other factor that has affected women peacebuilding efforts in Mathare is the entrenched nature of patriarchy, which results in the tendency for men and male dominated organizations wanting to empower women on their own terms. Not all organization promoting peace in Mathare slums were women dominated. Majority of the formal peacebuilding organizations were led by men who viewed women as people to be commanded and directed on what to do. This led to conflict between some women and men's organization who were partnering to promote peace. The reason for the conflict can be best explained by the leader of Amani women group who said that.

> "To partner with Men led organizations has not been without its own challenges because men view and treat women as children who need to be constantly given direction. According to these men, women cannot do anything meaningful on their own; they have to be constantly supervised for one to achieve results."[184]

Such perceptions by men only fuelled women exclusion from peacebuilding processes, leaving women feeling isolated and acting as lone rangers as they pursued peace. Most men in Mathare did not wish to be included in what they termed 'women affairs'. Margaret Otieno one of the responders had this to say;

> "Bwana Chief did not take their justice mechanisms of naming the perpetrators in public gathering serious and advised the women to let the law takes its cause. But the same law released the same perpetrators back to the village immediately after they were arrested... what law is this then?" [185]

She went further to say that;

> 'men are not comfortable in associating with women groups, because they think that such forums are used for gossiping and small talks that deals with low level 'vibandas' politics of how much sukuma wiki (kales) and fish one has managed to

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[184] Oral interview, Halima Kioko, Director, Mathare Women Peace Committee, 20/09/2011.
[185] Oral interview, Margaret Otieno – member of SCC, 07/02/2012.

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sell in a day and not for discussing serious issues that can benefit the community'.[186]

For peacebuilding initiatives to work and to be sustained, it must be support by all stakeholders in society including women.

4.2.3 Limited Participation in the Decision Making Processes

The challenge facing the women of Mathare is the dominance of men in all spheres of decision making. The society is highly patriarchal with male dominating important institutions that champion peace. The Beijing Declaration of 1995 states that;

> "Women empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision-making process and access to power are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace." [187]

Institutions that were established during and after the PEV including the Security Committees, Peace Committees, Village Elders, and Displacement and harmonization committees through the office of the Provincial Administration are male dominated. The level of education for most women in Mathare slum is low and this means that the few women, who are members of the peacebuilding bodies, are assigned the less significant roles that do not necessarily call on them to make decisions. Cyprosa had this say;

> "We are usually assigned the role of mobilizing people to attend Security/Peace committees, organizing sitting arrangements and taking minutes. When we contribute nobody listens ......we have to bear with endless arguments from men."[188]

Mathare Slums falls in two constituencies both with female representation. Mathare is partly represented by Margaret Wanjiru of Starehe and Elizabeth Ongoro of Kasarani. Rachel Shebesh a nominated Member of Parliament hails from Kasarani. Therefore, in

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[186] Ibid.
[187] Ecoma Alaga, Challenges for Women in Peacebuilding in West Africa. Director of Programmes at the Women, Peace and Security Network Africa (WIPSEN-AFRICA), Accra, Ghana, Policy Briefing No.18, June 2010.
[188] Oral interview, Cyprosa Ananda, member District Peace Committee, 02/09/2011.

terms of representation, Mathare slum can be said to be far way ahead of other constituencies in Kenya in terms of female representation. Nonetheless, according to women of Mathare the three leaders have not been instrumental in articulating women issues. Eunice put it succinctly that;

> "Whenever any of the three women leaders visit Mathare, they are usually surrounded by men who act as their bouncers (bodyguards) who push and shuffle people around. Rarely do we women get anywhere near them. There is completely no chance to discuss issues touching on women."[189]

4.2.4 Gender Based Violence and Domestic violence

Mathare is an area where there is excessive consumption of illicit drugs and alcohol. Majority of the population especially men are constantly intoxicated and prone to causing violence at the family level. The most rampant form of violence is the Gender based violence (GBV), an umbrella term for any harm that is perpetrated against a person's will as a result of power imbalances that exploit distinctions between males and females. Violence may be physical, sexual, psychological, economic or socio-cultural. Perpetrators may include family members, community members or those acting on behalf of cultural, religious, state or intrastate institutions. Although not exclusive to women and girls, GBV principally affects them across all cultures in Mathare.[190]

The notion of GBV spells doom to women in their attempt to be involved in peacebuilding efforts. According to Halima;

> "Women are supposed to be seen but not to be heard in public. Public is a male domain. Women are not even allowed to speak or 'voice poverty situation.' Those who try to venture into the men's world are subjected to beatings and are branded 'wajuaji' (know-it-all type of a person)."[191]

Halima goes further to state that;

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[189] Oral interview, Eunice Wanjiru a resident of Mathare No.10, 08/02/2012.
[190] Jeanne Ward, "If not Now, When, Addressing Gender-based violence in Refugee, Internally Displaced, Post-Conflict Settlings", A Global Overview, 2002.
[191] Oral interview, Halima Kioko, Director, Mathare Women Peace Committee, 20/09/2011.

"Women are usually blamed for any misfortune that befalls a community. They are blamed for conflicts, failed marriages, for being raped, for badly behaved children. It is common to hear men here in Mathare when they see children misbehaving saying – hawa watoto wana tabia mbaya kama mama zao (This children have bad manners just like their mothers)".[192]

Closely related to GBV is domestic violence defined in the context of this study as the physical and emotional abuse of women by their husbands. On domestic violence, the battering of women is a very common occurrence within the slum with Chief Changdoek of Ruaraka location terming it a daily problem that he has to deal with. But domestic violence in Mathare is not just any ordinary fights between husband and wife. Every time there is violence in the family between a wife and a husband, it usually takes an ethnic dimension. Chief Changdoek had this to say about the domestic violence in Mathare slums;

"Every night I receive about 10 to 20 different calls from different households reporting the battering of women or the locking of all family members out in the cold at night by their drunken husbands. Such calls I have to attend to personally, because of high rates of inter-ethnic marriages in the slum. If drastic measures are not taken to resolve the problems that caused the battering, it can easily spark an ethnic related conflict within the slum."[193]

GBV and sexual violence cause women to suffer from low self-esteem and their lack confidence make it tremendously impossible to initiate projects aimed at spearheading peace efforts and are therefore, not likely to seek engagement with other stakeholders, preferring to work in isolation. This type of violence according to FGD[194] discussion affects the peaceful co-existence and brings hatred to the different ethnic groups living within the slums. There is total lack of trust in inter-ethnic married couples with the community members viewing women from different ethnic community as spies. Women perceive each other in a suspicious way. Peacebuilding approaches that require total trust and involvement of all stakeholders therefore becomes challenging. Women cannot sit

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[192] Ibid.
[193] Oral interview, Paul Changdoek, Chief Ruaraka Location, Mathare , 02/09/2011.
[194] Focused Group Discussion. 20/09/2011.

together as one and the many women groups that are expected to offer financial support, care and protection, and provide a platform for peacebuilding efforts to its members are also run on ethnic leadership structures that perpetuates the seeds of mistrust.[195] One woman stated that;

> "Wengine wetu wenye tumeolewa na makabila sigine tunashida sana. Kila wakati wamama wengine wanafikiri tunashauriana nao ili tu tujuwe wanaopanga alafu tupelekee watu wetu." (Most of us who are married to different ethnic community from our own face a lot of problems. Every time we try to coordinate issues with others, there is lack of trust as they only see us as going there to know what they are planning and then pass the same to our people).[196]

As the women of Mathare try to balance between the harsh economic realities and the need to be seen as good wives and mothers among the men, they have very little time and energy left to participate in any meaningful peacebuilding activities in the public sphere.

4.3 Poverty Hindering Women's Peacebuilding Initiatives in Mathare Slum

Many people living in Mathare are poor as indicated in chapter two; they survive on Jua Kali businesses, which is never reliable. The situation was made worse by the Post-Election Violence of 2007/2008 that saw the destruction of the resident's livelihoods leaving them destitute. This has greatly impacted on the women majority of who survive on small scale businesses of selling groceries and hawking within the slum. Those who cannot fit into this type of business are engaged in chang'aa brewing and prostitution. The two trades are illegal in Kenya and those who engage in this type of business are rounded up and sent to jail. More so, all the above business activities are not reliable and women rarely make enough to provide adequately for their families. This can be testified through the comments of some of the participants in the FGD who stated that;

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[195] Ibid. 20/09/2011.
[196] Ibid.

"Though some women in the slum have some small businesses of selling groceries and brewing chang'aa to take care of their families, whatever they make cannot sustain a family and we therefore have to only have one meal in a day."[197]

The women in Mathare explained that the PEV dealt a big blow to their small businesses. Most of the traders lost all their goods through looting or being set on fire by rival groups. The impact according to this group was so great and quite devastating. Four years down the line, only few individuals dealing with chang'aa brewing and prostitution have managed to recover and move on with their business. High poverty levels has inevitably led to high rates of dependency on aid and handout mentality that reduces women to begging particularly from donor organizations.[198] Poverty means that women cannot engage in peacebuilding process.

4.4 Limited Funding and Lack of Support from Government

Related to the problem of poverty, is the challenge of funding from either the government or other international donors. This problem affects many aspects of life in the pursuit of lasting peace. Most women organization that promotes peace still lack adequate funds to campaign for peace. It is important to note that such groups also lack the legal legitimacy as they are usually formed informally with no legal binding. Any positive results associated with such groups are rarely appreciated or even documented. Maendeleo ya Wanawake, a government recognized umbrella association of women groups lacks presence in Mathare slums and thus women issues are rarely articulated. One member of Amani women group had this to say;

"Though we have been receiving support from the UNDP to promote peace, the money has not been enough to enable us reach all the corners of the slum. Therefore we have been limiting ourselves to where funds can allow us to promote peace."[199]

[197] Ibid. 19/09/2011.
[198] Oral interview, Anne Nafula, resident Mathare Area 3, 23/09/2011
[199] Oral Interview, Jessica Lugoha, member Amani Women group, 23/09/2011.

This study established that after the PEV women formed themselves into various groups within the slums in an attempt to bring back sanity into Mathare. Such groups included the SCC and Mathare women merry-go-round already discussed in this research. The groups were established by women with no support from internal government agencies like the Provincial Administration or United National agencies operating in Mathare during this period. Women found themselves shouldering big responsibilities that included trying to bring justice to the victims of the conflict earlier discussed, organizing shelter and feeding the displaced residents among others issues related to violence. There was little or no support at all received from the government through the provincial administration. Due to limited financing women organizations, have not been able to construct orphanages to cater for orphans who lost their parents during the violence. Resettlement and return to normalcy is critical for peacebuilding efforts and for it to be seen as working for the community. Therefore inadequate resettlement schemes is a clear indication that resource mobilization is needed for any peacebuilding approaches to be successful especially for women who shoulder the highest responsibility of accommodating displaced members of society.[200]

4.5 Limited Levels of Education

There is a high level of illiteracy within the Mathare slums especially among the women. Generally women have limited education and organizational experiences and leadership skills. This study established that a higher percentage of women in the age bracket 35 and above who are expected to be take up leadership roles in their community lack any formal education. While majority of young girls between the ages of 15 to 25 years have

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[200] Monica K. Juma, "Unveiling women as Pillars of Peacebuilding in Communities fractured by Conflicts in Kenya", An interim report, 2001, http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/beijing12/women_peace.pdf. uploaded on 10/04/2012.

dropped out of school due to early pregnancies or getting into prostitution as means of earning a living.[201]

> "wengi wetu hatuna elimu, na bila elimu hutuwesi wakilisha maoni yetu kuhusu amani kwa serikali kwa sababu serikali inataka maoni ilioandikwa"[202] – (most of us have little education, and without education, we cannot present our plans on peace to government as the government insist on written plans).

Limited education prevents women from engaging in constructive developments associated with peacebuilding. It also limits their access to established networks, ability to attract resources for peacebuilding initiatives and are rendered incapable of articulating issues that would elevate their profiles in society.

4.6 Poor Health Services and HIV-Aids

It was observed in chapter two that health services in Mathare slum can be considered as one of the poorest in the country. The assessment of this study revealed that the outbreak of conflict has negatively affected women. During the many conflicts seen in Mathare there have been a rise in cases of premarital sex, early marriages that bring the risk of reproductive health of the mother, unwanted early pregnancies and unsafe abortions as a result of prostitution, an informal employment sector in the slums.

HIV-AIDS has been recognized by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1308 as pandemic and is exacerbated by conditions of violence and Instability. Complex emergencies characterized by conflict, social instability, poverty, powerlessness and the breakdown of health services favours the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. HIV and Aids brings considerable complications to the women in Mathare. Social stigma associated with the disease has seen cases of marriage break-ups for those suspected to have been infected. Gossiping on those suspected to be victims within the

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[201] Oral interview, Cyprosa Ananda, District Peace Committee member. 07/02/2012.
[202] Oral interview, Eunice Wanjiru. resident Mathare No.10. 07/02/2012.

village, where most houses are separated by a layer of iron sheet this study established is a serious source of conflict. Women bear the biggest burden of HIV-AIDS infections. For example, in situations where a man infected with HIV and AIDS dies first, the widow is disinherited of the little property they shared and is usually blamed for being the cause of the disease.

Women infected with the HIV and AIDS struggle with the cost of managing the epidemic and those who are not infected are also affected, as they will be caring for orphans of the deceased patients. They also face the dilemma of balancing between social stigmas associated with the disease and progressing peacebuilding efforts. This therefore acts as a barrier to women participation in peacebuilding. One of the women said;

> "Women who have voluntarily declared their HIV status are being subjected to harsh treatment by their spouses. This has slightly impacted on the women by limiting their participation in peacebuilding for the simple reason that most people tend to look down upon women who are HIV positive and are engaging in peace building."[203]

It is important to recognize the link between HIV and AIDS and women capacity to build peace in Mathare. According to an informant working with Kenya Network of Women with AIDS Mathare has one of the highest rates of HIV and AIDS related illness.[204] This can be attributed to recurrent conflicts in Mathare that exposes women to rapes and prostitution a coping mechanism for unemployment. Social stigmas associated with this disease means that majority of women who are either infected or affected remain isolated and excluded from any public participation including the peacebuilding processes. The situation notwithstanding, it was established that women living with HIV and AIDS have formed networks under the Kenya Network of Women with AIDS and are actively

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[203] FGD. 19/09/2011.
[204] Oral interview, Purity(not her real name), a women working for Kenya Network of Women with AIDS who did not wish her name to be used . 23/09/2011.

engaged in peacebuilding processes. Their message to the people of Mathare has been 'that their death should never be in vain but be a symbol of peace in Mathare'.[205]

4.7 Loss of Faith and Lack of Consensus in the Justice Mechanisms

Conflicts can be vicious and particularly so when there has been the killing of civilians. Developing trust and cooperation within communities of people who have been enemies is a long and difficult process. It involves balancing the competing demands for justice and accountability for perpetrators of violence with the need to reconcile differences and move forward. Timing is crucial, as too few compromises may threaten peace in the short run. Similarly, too many compromises may undermine lasting peace. Justice is an important component of peacebuilding in any conflict society. Justice applications differ as seen in chapter three and it is critical to build consensus on the system of justice as a peacebuilding strategy.

However, women hold different opinions on how justice should be undertaken in Mathare. There are some who are demanding justice for perpetrators while others believing that forgiveness should take the centre stage within the community to encourage the perpetrators to live in the slum without fear of retribution. One of the women had this to say;

> "Many people especially women including myself, want the perpetrators to be forgiven. They have to be encouraged to do this by being granted forgiveness upon their confession. If they think they are going to be punished they will not be free to confess and mistrust will still prevail among the people living in Mathare."[206]

Some women in the slum are not keen on the issue of forgiveness. They view forgiveness as rewarding the perpetrators for the wrongs they committed during the post-election

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[205] Oral interview, Faith Mwaniki. resident Mathare North. 19/09/2011.
[206] Oral interview. Jane Njeri, 19/09/2011

violence and advocate for punishment through the ICC process or local justice mechanisms, asserting that wrongdoing is rewarded by punishment and it is only when these perpetrators have been punished that they can live together in the slum.[207] The different viewpoints on justice in Mathare are to a larger extent informed by the varying political positions. Majority of women are divided politically into two dominants groups, one supporting the Party of National Unity (PNU) and another Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) the two dominant political parties in coalition government in Kenya. Each group will support the position of their political party on matters of justice mechanism.[208] This means that there is lack of consensus in any peacebuilding activities as women do not stand up and support each other.

4.8 Lack of Training and Skills in the Peacebuilding Field

There was a general concern by women of Mathare involved in peacebuilding efforts for lack of necessary skills, training and experiences in peacebuilding related fields, which have often limited their active participation. This has allowed them to participate at the informal level because they lack the skills that would allow them to negotiate for their inclusion in the formal peacebuilding approaches. 'We have nothing to put on the table.'[209] Many NGOs have offered training to women on different issues including skills in pottery, wood-work, tailoring and the emphasis on such training and capacity building has been on empowering women to find new ways of earn a living. Peacebuilding skills have often been overlooked by the all the stakeholders and the women feel that in order to allow them better engage in peacebuilding process their capacity as peace activist also need to be improved and strengthen.[210]

[207] FGD, 19/09/2011.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Oral interview, Grace Akinyi, UNV member. 02/09/2011.
[210] FGD. 19/09/2011.

4.9 Coping Mechanisms

Notwithstanding the above challenges, women have gone ahead and participated actively in peacebuilding processes in Mathare. The women have established successful networks of women organizations to coordinate peacebuilding activities within the slums. The nine women groups, Ruaraka Kamba, St. Stephens, Songa Mbele, Ongoza Njia, Wachokitimu, Kiamaiko, Ngei 1, Mwomboko and Mathare Young Ladies operating in Mathare have managed to rally the women on coalition building to mitigate the varying political differences and lack of consensus on matters of justice within Mathare.

> "The collective agreement and agenda for the women groups, was to unite women and make them understand that each one of them had suffered because of the conflicts in Mathare slums irrespective of one's ethnic background or political affiliation. The most important thing to do to end the recurrent suffering on the residents of Mathare was to find means and ways of ending the conflicts. This could only be achieved if women stop pulling in different directions and remain united for the benefit of their families."[211]

The leaders of the above women groups first met in the chief's office on 16th June 2008 to brainstorm on the best way forward for the women. Consensus was then reached to engage women in peacebuilding as women and ignore politics and ethnic differences. Each member of this group took the messages to their respective members for collective agreement and implementation. Through this initiative, women were able to speak in one voice during the peacebuilding campaigns discussed earlier in chapter three.[212]

To address the limited participation of women in the decision making processes, the same women groups provided spaces for women to deliberate and relay women views to the relevant decision making bodies on issues touching on the peacebuilding processes within Mathare. Some instrumental achievements that gave women a chance not only to speak directly to the Chief of Ruaraka Location and the District Officer, both government security agents but also to participate in key decision making processes on issues of peace

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[211] Ibid
[212] Oral interview, Halima Kioko. Director. Mathare Women Peace Committee, 10/09/2011

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within the slums, were their inclusion in Mathare Security Peace Committees and the appointment of women as village elders, position that were key to bringing peace to Mathare residents.

Another obstacle to women's involvement in peacebuilding seen earlier was poverty, lack of funding and support from Government. To address these challenges, the women of Mathare through the above mentioned women groups established income generating projects to provide funds for women daily sustenance. The income generated by the groups was then disbursed to women members through a merry-go-round system discussed earlier in chapter three. Women would then invest the funds in small business like food vending, second hand clothes shops among others income generating projects. Eunice a member of Songa Mbele women group stated that;

> "These merry-go-rounds have been very beneficial to the women of Mathare. Apart from allowing us more time to participate in peace meetings to promote community reconciliation, including peace marches because we are no longer running up and down trying to make ends meet, our men can now listen to us. Because I can buy food and pay rent, my husband now respects me and allow me time to attend the "chamas" (Kiswahili word meaning groups and used in Mathare slums to meaning attending women group meetings) every Saturday. When I tell him that we need to live with mama Akinyi (considered the enemy during the violence) peacefully, he can now see sense and even engages in discussions about community development with her."[213]

To build capacity for women in peacebuilding approaches and support networks for those traumatized by conflicts as a result of rapes, displacements, loss of loved ones or those infected by the HIV and AIDS, women, who were initially trained by the Japan counseling Centre project have been instrumental in offering counseling services. The counseling sessions also become training spaces to train women to build peace and bring warring communities together using religious teachings by the members of the Small Christian Community discussed in chapter three.[214]

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[213] Oral interview, Eunice Wanjiru. 07/02/2012
[214] Oral interview, Margaret Otieno, member Small Christian Community. 07/02/2012

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4.10 Conclusion

Women have encountered numerous challenges in their endevours to finding lasting peace in Mathare slum. The approaches to peace building have been hindered by tradition cultures, lack of support from men, their limited participation in the decision making processes and gender based violence as a result of patriarchal tendencies so pronounced in Mathare slums. Other obstacles faced by women in peacebuilding are poverty, limited funding and support from government agencies within Mathare and lack of training and skills in the peacebuilding field. There is also lack of consensus for any peacebuilding efforts because of political party affiliations meaning that peacebuilding approaches are dictated by the political party one belongs. There is also the cultural aspect that ensures women contributions are not highly valued. Nobody listens to women and those in position of leadership are considered just figureheads with little to offer.

Women of Mathare have little trust in any government efforts through the establishment of all inclusive peace institutions like District Peace Committees and Village elders Committees, bodies are intended to rebuild the areas affected by the conflict. They argue that such institutions do not cater for their needs and are only active on paper but little result is reflected at the grassroots levels. They feel that apart from the women peace committee which they championed, the government is not serious about involving women in peace initiatives in the slum.

Women have put in place measures in an attempted to address the above challenges, though it was noted that some of the challenges would require a radical transformation of gender roles and change of social structures in society. Conflict and the peacebuilding period provide an opportunity for these societal transformations, however, its effects and results will take a long period of time for its benefits to be felt and realized in Mathare.

5.0 CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study has established that Mathare has experienced different types of conflicts throughout its historical existence. The contexts of the conflicts have been changing and informed by different socio-economic and political factors. During the colonial period conflicts in Mathare were directed at the white settlers and their objectives was for Kenya to gain independence from the colonial rule. Immediately after the country gained independence in 1963, the conflicts were purely motivated by political supremacy battles. These post-independence conflicts took ethnic dimensions mostly pitting the Kikuyu and the Luo ethnic groups. Presently the conflicts though largely influenced by politics, are caused by socio-economic factors. In all these conflicts the main players have been the youths of Mathare.

The conflicts have negatively affected women and the study has established that serious cases of violations against women and children have taken place in the entire history of the conflict. There have been rape cases and serious acts of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), family separation and women disinheritance as a result of conflict in Mathare, because one is perceived to be from the 'wrong' ethnic group. It can be argued that the conflict in Mathare in one way disempowered women through these violations and on the other hand empowered them to realize that they had a potential to mobilize their own in order to bring change to society.

There is overwhelming evidence that women have been involved in initiatives that promote peace or have contributed to the peacebuilding process despite the fact that most of their contributions remain unknown or invisible. This is because most of the peacebuilding activities initiated and conducted by women have been carried out outside

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the official and formal peace-building mechanism. The driving force behind the success of women's contribution to peacebuilding process has been a combination of their motherly instincts and their committed leadership at different levels. The women of Mathare took responsibility to initiate peacebuilding approaches through the formation of women organizations.

The involvement of women in peacebuilding in Mathare slum has been through the traditional peacebuilding approaches; that is reconciliation, justice and conflict transformation. Women in Mathare have contributed to reconciliation efforts. Even as women voices have frequently been excluded from the public spheres, women networks through the women groups were able to use public expressions aimed at highlighting issues of conflicts that needed to be addressed to stop the cycle of violence in Mathare. Such public expressions include peace marches aimed at rallying the community to forgive each other and peacefully co-existence.

One of the longest legacies of conflict is the undermining of relationships and networks that enable trust and cooperation among the people. Women had a heavy task of re-establishing social networks. Women involvement and the encouragement of inter-ethnic marriages was one way of addressing this challenge. The idea behind these efforts was to rebuild trust, relationships and cooperation between the different communities living in Mathare. Promoting mixed marriage concept was seen as a long term strategy of killing ethnicity and bringing forth a generations of Kenyans.

Fear of the 'the other' can be a key barrier to reconciliation among conflicting parties. Negative stereotypes and lack of understanding about a different group of people often foster fear, especially in context where 'the other' is also blamed for starting the conflict. Another approach used by women was to promote reconciliation, greater understanding

and compassion among the warring communities was through the community exchange programs where the ultimate goal was to reduce the fear of the 'other'. Women have a strong potential for educating their children and imparting on them positive values that enhance reconciliation. Women encouraged families to take up children of neighbours, friends or family members whose parents were killed during the PEV. Despite their challenging economic position in society, the women of Mathare have been very instrumental in taking on the burden of caring and providing for hundreds of orphans and vulnerable children. There was also community mobilization spearheaded by women for the re-construction of shelters for those whose houses had been destroyed during the conflicts.

Youths are an important group of any society because of their energy and ability to respond to issues. The youths of Mathare have through the slums conflict history been involved in violence on hire to commit crimes either as individuals or operating as members of the vigilante groups. For reconciliation to happen in Mathare, it was important to reach out to the youths. The best way for women to address this matter was through the use of sporting activities as an instrument of rebuilding relationships among the youths. Sports are not discriminative and accommodate youths from different ethnic backgrounds. During matches organized by Mathare Women Net Peace Association, players were used to reach out to youths through reconciliatory messages of "One Kenya, One people."

Women were also able to bring reconciliation to communities living in Mathare through religious teaching and activities. Women Christian Peace builders and Small Christian Communities applied the Bible teachings that call for people to live together as brothers and sisters and also "the forgiveness of sins, as no sin is greater for God to forgive". Such

forums gave Christians an opportunity to fellowship together and in the process re-established communications and the breaking ethnic identifies among the conflicting communities.

Conflict and post-conflict conditions create a radically new set of experiences that are both positive and negative especially for women. It creates possibilities for the transformation of gender relations and provides an opportunity for many stagnant social structures to change. Mathare women contribution toward conflict transformation has predominantly been through strategies that are readily accessible to them in their daily lives. The women acted as mediators in situation of mistrust and communication breakdown between different communities. This was done through counseling session that created spaces for the residents of Mathare to come out and break their silence on conflict issues. Most residents especially women were able to speak out of issues that had remained unmentioned for so long like rapes and share conflict experiences with others. Through this, support groups were established and the restoration of communication and dialogue between different communities re-established.

The women also capitalized on their commonly held images of being nurturers and arbitrators to reach out to other communities. Women took up their roles as mothers to socialize their children on values that demonize conflict and promote peaceful co-existence in society. There was encouragement within the Mathare community for children to eat, play and sleep-over with different families in order for children to learn and appreciate each other. In this way, women were exploiting their stereotypes gender roles to empower themselves.

Another salient approach utilized by women was the setting up of self-help groups that not only contributed to the healing process in the community but also empowered

individual women through economic support in order for them to be able to re-build their lives. Women income generating groups were started throughout the slum to offer financial and mutual support to members. Members were usually drawn from different ethnic communities.

Frequently, victims of ethnic conflicts especially women are unwilling and unable to report crimes to the police. Majority of the people of Mathare view police as corrupt and biased. One initiative aimed at overcoming this barrier was the establishment of community policing. The goal of community policing in Mathare slum was to reduce crimes and disorders by carefully examining the characteristics of problems in the neighborhoods and addressing them before they build up into tensions. Community policing involved the police working in partnership with the community. There has been general improvement in the reporting of crimes as residents find it easier to directly deal with community representatives as opposed to going to a police station since the community policing unit was started.

While experiencing differing levels of success within each of these three areas, the challenges they have faced, continue to be contingent upon the specific socio-cultural, economic and political dynamics of the slum. Women face a host of challenges that hinder their full participation to the peacebuilding. Some of the outstanding challenges are linked to women's subordinate position in society. Mathare is a reflection of Kenyan society where patriarchy dominates the socio-cultural relationships. Patriarchy dictates power relations and gender roles in society. It defines the place of women in Society. Women are confined to reproductive and domestic roles. Peacebuilding and security is the domain of men. It has also been observed that men rarely support women. Women are supposed to be seen but not heard and any peacebuilding initiatives advocated by

women receive little or no attention at all from other stakeholders in peacebuilding. Limited education and the domination of men in all spheres of decision making undermine women confidence to participate effectively in efforts geared towards bringing sustainable peace in Mathare. Because of this inadequacy women are usually confined to auxiliary duties during peacebuilding forums.

Another challenge is linked to the persistence of poverty in Mathare slum with women being the main victims. There is an acute scarcity of resources and the inability to address basic needs, forcing women to participate in illegal income generating projects like prostitution and chang'aa brewing. These acts place them in collision with the law enforcement agencies and thus living them little time to contribute towards peace and reconciliation. Violence against women is still a threat to women's role in peacebuilding. There are serious cases of SGBV in Mathare perpetuated by men. This phenomenon affects women's security with regards to their role in participatory justice system. Victims of such crimes find it difficult to report perpetrators because of the fear of revenge attacks. Those actively participating in peace advocacy are usually threatened and since their very existence is threatened, their energy in the resolve to be agents of peace is greatly undermined.

Another fundamental obstacle to women's involvement in peacebuilding in Mathare is the lack of sustained funding and support from government. During the conflict period, there was an influx of funds from the government, well-wishers and Non-governmental organizations for shelter and food for the internally displace people of Mathare. In the immediate aftermath of conflict, when peacebuilding was to start proper, the NGO's and well-wishers funds were no-longer being channeled to Mathare. Government on the other

hand was offering limited services and therefore, the women of Mathare were left with the responsibility of rebuilding the lives of Mathare residents on their own.

Despite these impediments, women have put in place mechanism to overcome the multiple constraints in order to effectively build peace in Mathare. The women have established successful networks of women organizations to coordinate peacebuilding activities within the slums. The networks have been used to rally the women on coalition building to address differing political view points and in the process bring consensus on matters of justice within Mathare.

There is evidence that women have mobilized resources through the various women's group in Mathare slums, to provide funding for their daily upkeep and run peacebuilding process. The economic independence realized by women has earned them respect among the men and in the processes, significantly altering the power relations and gender roles within the community.

While at the national level the role of women in decision making is clearly pronounced in Mathare with three women parliamentary representatives, the participation of women in decision making at local level is still weak. Women's visibility in peace building programs remains limited mainly as the result of the negative gender stereotypes characterized by patriarchal structure in all spheres of decision making in Mathare slum. The women networks have therefore, created spaces for women to participate in important decision making processes on matters touching on security and peacebuilding in Mathare.

The adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in October 2000 that stressed the importance of protecting women who are victims of war and determines that women should play a significant role in peacebuilding processes. It was a big milestone in women empowerment, but change is usually a slow process and involves numerous contending positions by various actors. This is particularly so at legislative and policy levels. A lack of awareness, especially at the local levels of such international instruments that seek to address the rights of women influences the effectiveness of women organizations as they attempt to claim space at the formal peacebuilding forums.

While women commonly lack access to formal peacebuilding processes, there are many examples of women working informally within Mathare to resolve conflict and building peace. Engaging women and empowering them to participate in peacebuilding is crucial for sustainable peace. It is these women who often bear the brunt of conflict and failure to include them and seek their support will not advance the cause of women's empowerment and equality at the national level. But at the same time, it is problematic to assume that since women have a greater stake in peace, the work of peacebuilding is something that should be their responsibility. Therefore a more pragmatic approach to peacebuilding is in coming up with a truly gender sensitive process of peacebuilding and reconstruction process which should seek to engage and educate men alongside women, to ensure and encourage their participation in peacebuilding process.

There is no doubt that advancements have been made in Kenya in respect with women issues, especially with the passing of the new constitution, that significantly seeks to increase access of women in public spaces, especially at the local and national politics, and in the education sector. The new constitution takes into account the interests of women and other marginalized groups. However for this investment to be translated into

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a fundamental change for the betterment of women, we need the strengthening of rights culture in this country, the understanding that rights for each individual are not divisible and they apply equally to everyone at all times and that all citizens are entitled to protection and equal treatments in terms of those rights.[215]

[215] The Constitution of Kenya, Chapter Four, Bill of Rights, Article 20

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# Appendix – Images Captured in Mathare during the Study Period

Above the researcher, Mary Kebenei (centre) with the respondents and her research assistants; extreme left Arthur Magero, extreme right, Faith Mwaniki and second right Juliet Wachana. Images taken on 02/09/2011

Image of open spaces in front of Mathare houses where sewage is directed into and acting as playground for children, taken on 02/09/2011
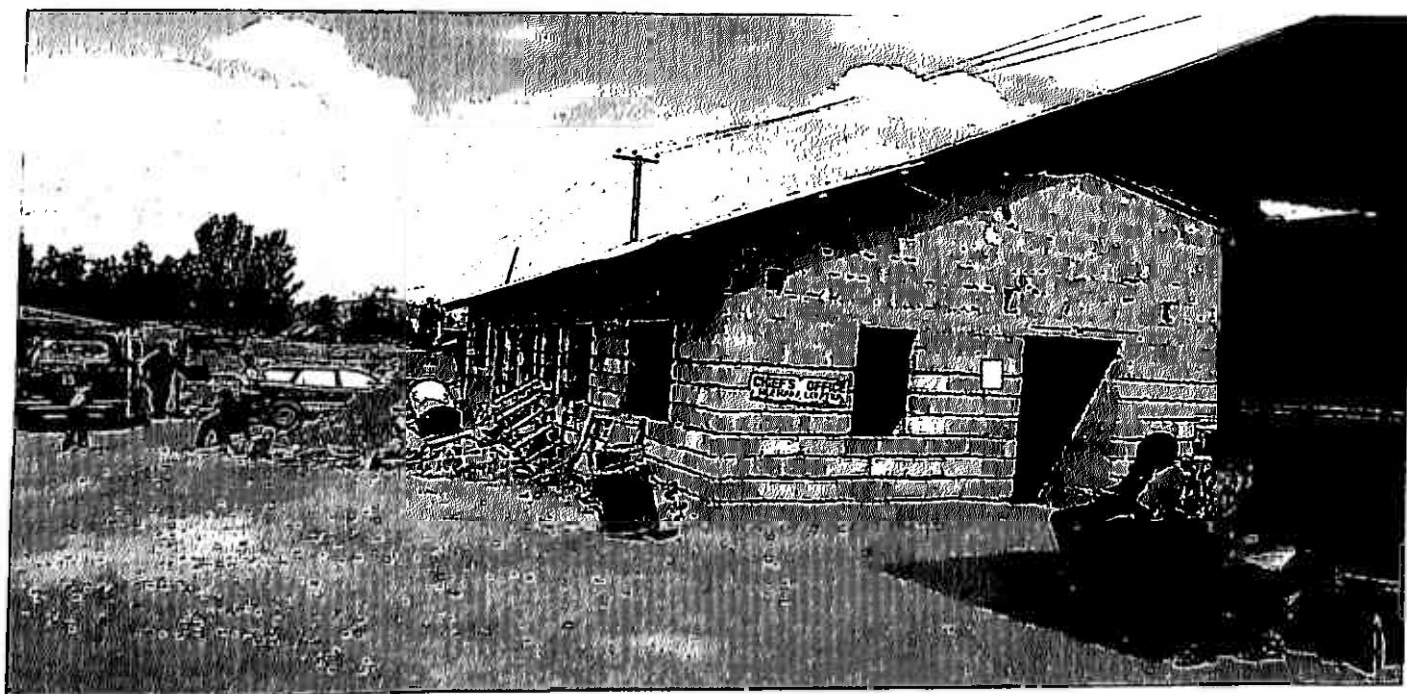
These two buildings are monumental in the conflict and peace process in Mathare. During the conflict the place was the 'kichinjio' (Kiswahili word meaning to butcher) where majority of the killings took place during the post-election violence of 2007/2008, while after the violence, the Chiefs office offered a good space where peacebuilding forums took place. The images were taken on 02/09/2011.

The photograph shows some of the respondents from left Mrs Rosemary Wanjiru Njoroge, Landlord Mathare North, Cyprosa Ananda, member District Peace Committee and Mr Vitalis Otieno, a member of the peace committee being interviewed on 02/09/2011.

The researcher with some of the women informants from left, Grace Akinyi Odera, Mary Waithera, the researcher, Judith Achieng and Halima Kioko, on 10/09/2011

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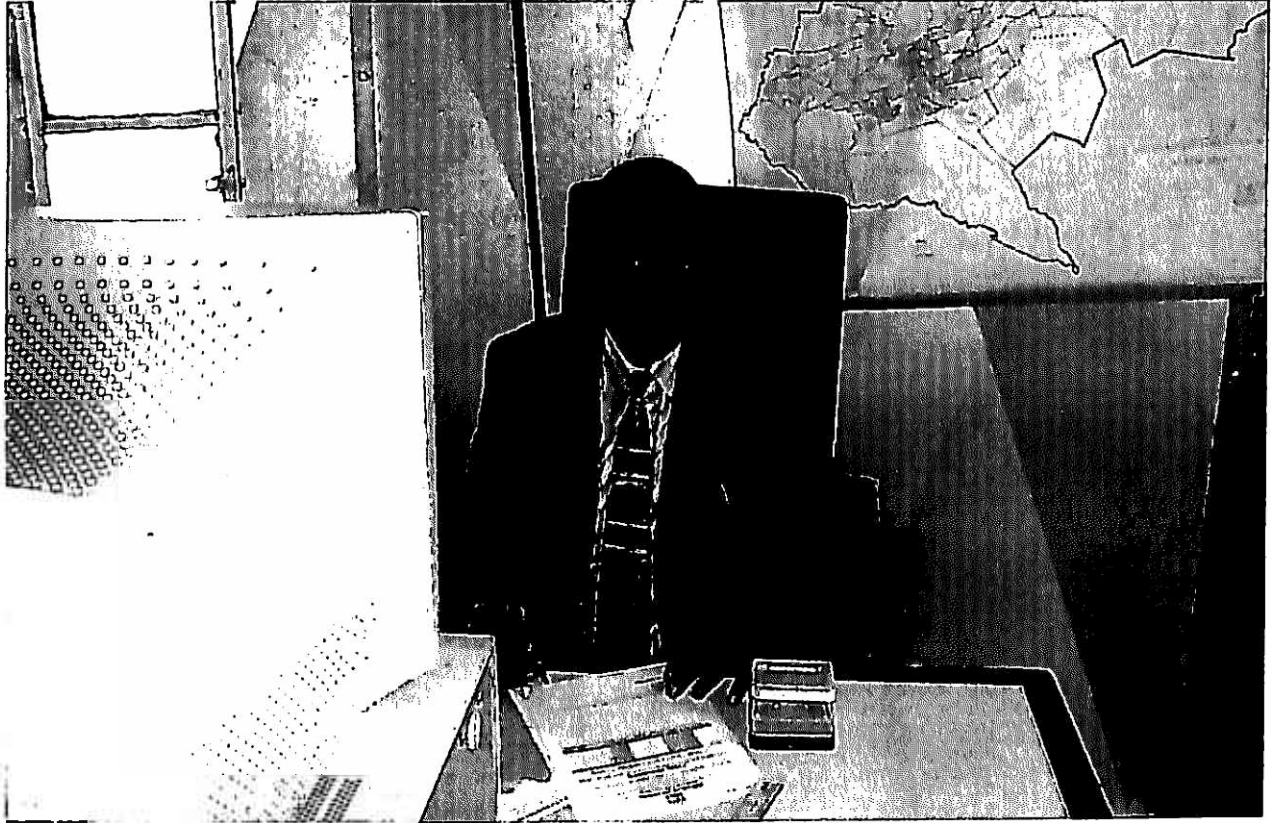
Paul Changdoek, Chief of Ruaraka Location, in his office within Mathare North Area on 02/09/2011