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Local Participation within Water Projects: Empowering the Rural Poor?

- A Minor Field Study of the Kenya Water for Health Organization -

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Abstract

The current development approach to reduce poverty is through participation which is thought to lead to empowerment. Empowerment is a state where people actively make informed choices that benefits them. The Kenya Water for Health Organization (KWAHO) has been working extensively with participatory water management projects together with capacity building in Kenya, with the aim of empowering its participants. After investigating the Kombewa project, it is evident that empowerment is a visible effect in the area. The results have been compared with investigations in Kampi ya Moto, an area where no mobilization or capacity building have taken place. This implies that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can have a positive impact and change the poverty landscape and that empowerment can be a real outcome from participatory development interventions, which has been debated and questioned from several directions. However, it is not participation per se that empowers people, instead it has been the long-term capacity building and awareness creation that has helped the members of the KWAHO women groups become empowered, which is the result of this thesis. This realization is important since capacity building is not prominent in the current development literature which, based on these results, needs to change in order to create empowerment and sustainable development.

Keywords: Empowerment, Water Management Project, Participation, Capacity Building, Kenya Water for Health Organization (KWAHO)

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1 Introduction

Participation is recurrently used in local water management projects as a way to empower participants as well as securing access to clean water and sustainable development (<http://ocw.unu.edu/>; www.gwpforum.org Petesch, Smulovitz and Walton, 2005:53; Deepa and Fawcett, 2000:1-4). According to the concept of empowerment, poverty should not be viewed as a lack of material resources but instead it is an outcome of unequal power relations, which instilling empowerment can alter (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76). Despite empowerment being widely used as an alternative development tool, there is still no accepted method for measuring and tracking changes, as well as no clear and accepted definition (Alsop et al, 2005:1f). Thus attempts to systematically monitor and evaluate participatory NGO projects and water service programs that claim to promote empowerment lag behind. Especially investigations concerning psychological effects from participation has been neglected, since this area is especially difficult to evaluate (Narayan, 2005:3; 15; 20; Mosedale, 2005:243f). The concept has thus been questioned from various directions specifically targeting NGO empowerment projects which have, according to critiques, failed to transform the wider landscape of poverty and social inequalities in the communities (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:88). Since it is a widely used concept and method in projects, lack of evaluation hinders any development and improvement of empowerment projects which ultimately could have damaging effects on the participants as well as the communities. More research is thus needed on the possible effects and consequences of participatory management projects.

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

My overall aim is to investigate if empowerment is a real outcome from participatory management projects, and if so, try to pinpoint the structures and circumstances that lead to empowerment. Investigating empowerment is important since development agencies and NGOs believe it can lead to sustainable development and democracy in the long run (Petesch, Smulovitz and Walton, 2005:53). To find answers I am doing an in-depth field study on the Kenya Water for Health Organization (KWAHO), an NGO based in Kenya, who works extensively with the concepts empowerment and participation as well as capacity building, in their water management programs specifically targeting women. I am investigating if the water management and participatory strategies have been empowering the community and the individuals and if so, what types of empowerment are now visible. I am also investigating if there are certain

participatory factors that have been more crucial than others while building empowerment (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:20). I will compare my results with Kampi ya Moto, an area where no project intervention or capacity training have taken place. My research questions are from this outline:

- *Have the participants been empowered by the KWAHO water project, and if so what types of empowerment are now visible in the Kombewa area?*
- *Can the same empowerment factors be seen in Kampi ya Moto or are there any differences?*
- *Have some factors been more important than others when creating empowerment in Kombewa?*

Through my investigation I am contributing to the further development of the empowerment concept and how NGO projects should be shaped in order to promote the latter. At the moment few data relating to the performance and effectiveness of NGOs in development work exists, which is also why NGO projects receive much of its criticism (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:12ff; 17f). This study thus aims in giving more knowledge on NGO project sustainability, impact and effectiveness.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework consists of an introduction to the field of NGOs, since they are one of the primary actors implementing the concepts empowerment, participation and capacity building. When writing about NGOs, I will use David Lewis and Nazneen Kanji's book *Non-Governmental Organizations and Development* which gives a good introduction to the NGO-field. Thereafter I discuss the term empowerment by including different perspectives on the concept. I am using the World Bank definition of the term since I believe it encapsulated the core essentials of the concept. Empowerment is thus defined as: *the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes* (<http://web.worldbank.org>). In order to operationalize the concept I am using the empowerment division by Johan Friedmann together with my own interpretation of the concept. To complement the theory of empowerment I am using theories on participation and capacity building, since they are thought to be prerequisites for empowerment.

1.3 Operationalization

I will use a division of empowerment areas created by Friedmann. He divides empowerment into the following power groups: social, political and psychological

power. Social power relates to increased information, direct influence over resources in this case the water, increased organizational skills. Political power relates to people's ability to take part in the political sphere and represent themselves. Psychological power is a feeling of being 'empowered' such as having increased self-confidence and self-worth. All of these three areas, if improved, will increase the community member's abilities to make strategic life choices, which is essentially the core of empowerment (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76; Malhotra and Schuler, 2005:81-85). Within these power categories I have localized variables that will assist me in evaluating if empowerment has been achieved. I will thus look at the following areas, which all together represent the power categories and thus empowerment: *Increase in self-confidence, increased participation in organizations and the community, leadership-roles among the participants and increased organizational skills, regular businesses, hygiene and sanitation knowledge and ownership over the water pump and if they are involved in politics*. All of these areas relates to and represent the mentioned power categories and can be viewed as operationalizations of the term empowerment, since an increase in any of these areas enhances people's ability to make life strategic choices.

1.4 Method

I am doing a minor field study on the Kenya Water for Health Organization and its work in the Kombewa area, in Western Kenya which I am comparing with Kampi ya Moto in the Central Rift Valley, where no participatory projects have been implemented. The material I will present was collected in 2010 February to March in Kenya. I have chosen to focus on women in my field study since this group has been the primary target for empowerment efforts in the KWAHO project, and hence they should be compared to women in Kampi ya Moto. The two cases are similar in the sense that they are both rural areas with a lack of secure and clean water. The community members are all farmers with a low, often unsustainable income. They diverge on the compilation of ethnic groups however, where Kombewa is inhabited by a homogenous group of people, the Luo tribe, whereas Kampi ya Moto has a more cosmopolitan population, where all major tribes in Kenya are represented.

I have thus chosen the most similar system design comparing two similar cases with one deviant factor - the implementation of a participatory water management project. The critique against this method is the risk of selection bias, where cases can be chosen to fit the hypothesis. However, the comparative design brings forth more material, originating from different points of views, which enables me to draw more well founded conclusions (Esaiasson et. al,2005:111f) .

In the field I performed semi-structured interviews with the groups and individual group members together with closed questionnaires in the KWAHO project. I chose to do semi-structured because through this method certain central questions

can be formulated on beforehand, related to specific topics and themes, but the interviewer is able to follow up with questions relevant for the specific situation. This enables me to elaborate on certain themes and interesting directions that the interviews might take (Lundahl and Skärvad 1999:99). I then complemented my interviews with more structured questionnaires to capture more statistical elements. Due to space limitations I will not be able to fully present my findings from the questionnaires however a few of the findings will be mentioned in the text. The participants in the project have been my main target. I have done semi-structured interviews in Kampi ya Moto as well while visiting households to try and get a fair image of how the women live, work and participate in the community. In sum I interviewed 45 women in Kampi ya Moto and in Kombewa I met approximately 80 women and 4 men, all members of different women groups.

Interviewing does pose some challenges, especially in a country which differs in language, customs and traditions from the researchers own. The challenges are not surmountable though and there is a growing acceptance that the researcher will never know the objective truth, because there is no such thing. Even though the researchers construct their own interpretations of their findings, this does not negate the relevance of the findings nor the insights that can be gained from them. There is thus an intrinsic value in qualitative research (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:12). There are also methodological challenges while investigating participation and empowerment. These issues concern mainly the elusiveness of the both concepts, and the difficulties to define and pinpoint them. However, I have found a well-founded definition in the World Bank Institution, which will be presented further down. Also, research on the concepts has been done previous to mine, using interviews which is why I chose this method (Alsop et al, 2005:1).

In the field I was assisted by an interpreter, Willhelmina O'django, a former project staff member. Using an interpreter with ties to the organization can be methodologically difficult, since she indirectly might influence the respondent's answers. In a way to overcome this, I first of all complemented my interviews with closed questionnaires. Secondly, I deliberately included measurable changes such as involvement in an organization, having a business, being a leader in the community - changes that would have been present regardless. And fourth, my interpreter was a member of a KWAHO group, and she was thus primarily seen as one of the women, and not a staff member.

1.5 KWAHO and the Kombewa Project

The KWAHO mission is to enhance the health and economic well being of low income and poor communities by facilitating equitable and sustainable access to safe water and sanitation facilities by empowering them to adopt and utilize cost effective technologies (www.kwaho.org). The Kombewa/Maseno project was in effect between 1992-2008 and was mainly funded by the Austrian Development

agency ADA, with the aim of improving and securing water access, reduce water borne diseases, improve sanitation and hygiene knowledge, income levels and create empowerment among the participants, specifically targeting women (Impact of the KWAHO/ADA program, 2008). I only visited Kombewa and I will thus only draw conclusions from this area.

The community members in the Kombewa area were mobilized and encouraged to register as groups and then apply for a KWAHO pump. After receiving the application and a registration certificate, KWAHO started the capacity trainings with the groups and then gave them a pump. The groups that formed were majority women groups, containing some few men. KWHAO applied the principle of gender, focusing and encouraging women to participate as well as stipulate that in order to receive a pump, the leading roles such as chair lady, secretary and treasurer should be held by the women (Interview, O'django, 2010-02-15). In my group interviews I did encounter some men, but too few to make any comparisons between the two genders regarding empowerment effects.

1.6 Disposition

I begin with my theoretical framework in chapter 2, where I give an introduction to the roles of the NGOs in the alternative development field and then I discuss and define the concepts of empowerment, participation and capacity building. In chapter 3 I present my findings from my field study while at the same time analyzing the findings using the theory and operationalisation's previously presented. Chapter 4 contains a discussion on my findings and answers my posed questions from the introduction. Chapter 5 contains a short summary of my thesis and the results.

2 Theoretical-Framework

I will in this section present NGOs as implementers of the concepts empowerment, project participation and capacity building. I will give a short introduction to NGOs, then further present the concepts I will be analyzing later on. The end of the framework will contain a model of the causality between the presented theoretical concepts.

2.1 Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been important actors in the development field for years. They are acclaimed to be a *counterweight to balance public interests – and more specifically those more disadvantage groups - against the excesses of the state and the market* (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:17). The work of the NGOs is varied, and its role complex and rarely confined to a single object or mission. In general NGOs can be viewed as having three main roles in development work, ranging from implementers, catalysts and partners. Implementers are concerned with the mobilization of resources to provide goods and services to people who needs them. As a catalyst the role of the NGO is to inspire a change or contribute to improved action and thinking which in time promotes change. A partner works together with others and a NGO can partner up with either governments, donors, companies and other organizations as well as involve themselves in broader multi-agency programs or projects (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:12ff).

Supporters of the NGOs point to their flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and capacity for innovations. NGOs are also representatives of the alternative development approach, which has the people benefitting from the project as the focus point. This approach is also a realization that there are no clear and generalized answers or solutions on how to end poverty, instead it varies with context. Some of the more important strategies or concepts that have emerged from the NGO field have been *empowerment, participation and capacity building*. These concepts are as important in development agendas as ever and are implemented by various actors all over the world (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:55ff; 89). Critics are concerned with NGOs lack of accountability, project sustainability, undermining the centrality of the state in developing countries and their unproven record in poverty reduction and development. Some even accuse them of being self-serving interest groups and inefficient do-gooders (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:17ff; 21f). Critics also argue that NGOs are now too deeply enmeshed in the promotion of Northern state

interests to provide any kind of alternative, making them a part of the hegemonic development agenda promoted by the World Bank. The World Bank is the largest actor promoting empowerment, making the work of the NGOs mainstreamed on higher levels and the cutting edge that was before representative of the NGO sector is diminishing (McEwan, 2009:186). Despite the critique the NGOs are still important in the development field (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:13; 17; 22).

2.2 Empowerment

Empowerment is an elusive, multidimensional concept that is hard to conceptualize in order to measure it, but without a definition the latter is impossible (Malhotra and Schuler, 2005:84). The concept entails the term *power*, and it is truly the very fundamental idea of empowerment - bringing power to poor, powerless people (Narayana, 2005:8). According to Winnie Mitullah, Associate Research Professor at the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi, empowerment is about ability and capacity to act in the society, in the household, and make strategic life choices, and this begins with awareness and education. Education will lead to new skills, increased confidence and knowledge, which will enable people to make informed choices and make them become aware and understand their own living situation. Thus people can act politically, economically or socially, in whatever way they choose. Empowerment is thus a step away from focusing on what people do not have, and instead make people know, which will give them *power* to make choices that will benefit them (Interview, Mitullah, 2010-03-30). Empowerment is also about letting poor people access resources, which will give them capacity to act and participate in the society (Interview, Mitullah, 2010-03-30; Kabeer, 2002:19). The World Bank definition of the concept is: *the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes* ([1http://web.worldbank.org](http://web.worldbank.org)). This definition captures the essence of empowerment and is the one I will use. An empowered person is thus someone who is aware, and uses his or her new skills, increased confidence, and knowledge, to take advantage of the opportunities opened up in the development process and in the society. Empowerment is both a mean and an end in itself. It is a means to achieve specific development outcomes, but at the same time empowerment has an intrinsic value in itself. Feeling respected, gaining self-confidence and making choices out of improved education are all values that are worth striving for (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:13-18).

Empowerment is very context specific and varies, both in countries, among projects, groups and individuals, which implies that application and implementation must vary according to the context. Empowerment does not have to be equally distributed over individuals nor over dimensions. Empowerment can thus occur among different levels of the society, on the macro, intermediate or the local level. Empowerment on one level does not have to imply the same change on other levels (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:4f; 13). The concept also depends on

the existing institutions in the society, which is important to note. Without enabling institutions, making life strategic choices becomes harder. Thus, the environment needs to have an opportunity structure in order to promote sustainable empowerment (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:13-18).

John Friedmann identifies three different kinds of power:

- Social
- Political
- Psychological

Progress within each area is important and necessary for building alternative development and hence empowerment (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76). Social power can be subdivided into the areas: human-, informational-, organisational- and resource assets. Human assets embody a person's skills, knowledge, ability to inspire and imagination. We also find informational assets which refer to a person's increased knowledge and from there on making an informed decision, or non-decision, and also a realization that information is the key for development. Organizational assets refer to people's skills in decision-making, argumentation technique, participatory and leadership skills. Resource assets refer to increased access to land, equipment, money, and working capacity. Political powers refer to peoples increased access to the political forums, arenas and rooms, access to voting and information on who to vote for. It is also the capacity to represent one self or others. Psychological power refers to an increase in self-confidence and self-worth, and how this is used to make bold decisions in life. Increased self-confidence depends on successful involvement in the other two groups (Kabeer, 2002:20f; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:11f; Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76). As mentioned in the above operationalization-section, I have narrowed the concept down to seven central focus points, which together represent the three power categories, and an increase/change in these can signify that a person have been 'empowered'. These areas are therefore:

- Increase in hygiene and sanitation knowledge
- Increased organizational skills
- Leadership
- Political activities
- Ownership over resources
- Increased confidence/self-worth
- Regular businesses

Empowerment strategies tend to focus on empowering women since they usually have less power and rights. Since bringing basic resources like water, fuel, food to the house is mainly women's primary duty in developing countries, access to resources and services stands for the first level of empowerment, since women improve their own status and situation. Increased access to these resources empowers and enables women to participate more in the society (Deepa and Fawcett, 2000:1-4).

2.2.1 Critique against the Concept of Empowerment

Empowerment theory presume that poor people, and women in particular, are subordinate, disempowered, weak, passive and need to be empowered by someone else (Escobar, 1994:8; McEwan, 2009:146f). However, this stance has received critique since it has been shaped in western agents, living in a different context than women in the developing world.

Presuming that the people in the 'third world' need rescue and guidance on how to become civilized and liberated, as western women and men, is a clear sign of eurocentrism. The developing countries are continuously being compared to and evaluated on how they differ from the superiority that is the European culture (Schech and Haggins, 2000:xiif; Mohanty 2005:197; 209). The World Bank is leading the concept of empowerment and has according to post-colonial followers' hegemonic power over the development agenda, the discourse of development and what issues in the third world that needs to be addressed. In real life, poor people might not need nor want to be 'rescued' or 'empowered', instead they live fulfilling lives. Modernization is the goal for most development projects, and through the years this has become synonymous to westernization, which might not be what all other countries want or strife for. Even though empowerment can be viewed as a part of the alternative development agenda, the goal is still to be enlightened, which is what signifies western development ideas. This needs to be discussed before implementing the concept of empowerment in a development project (Escobar, 1994:8f; McEwan, 2009:79ff; 180f).

2.3 Participation

Participation is defined by the World Bank as *the process through which stakeholders influence and share control over priority setting, policy-making, resource allocations and access to public goods and services* (2http://web.worldbank.org). People are disempowered when they do not have the right or the capacity to participate (Eade and Williams, 1994:215ff). The concept of participation arose as a part of a reaction against top-down state-led projects. The idea then came that the beneficiaries should be involved in planning and enacting solutions to the problems they faced by drawing on their own knowledge (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:73f). Voluntary participation in a bottom-up approach project is thus more likely to succeed and be sustainable, since it originates from peoples true needs (Brohman, 1996:265f). Participation from community members are also thought to make the project more effective (Deepa and Fawcett, 2000:1-4).

There are several levels of participation, ranging from: *information* - merely telling people what is planned - to *consultation* - offering some options, listening to feedback, but not allowing new ideas. *Deciding together* - encouraging additional options and ideas, and providing opportunities for joint decision-

making. *Acting together* - not only do different interests decide together on what is best, they form a partnership to carry it out. To the final participatory level *supporting independent community interests* - local groups or organizations are offered funds, advice or other support to develop their own agendas within guidelines. The projects are hence self-managed. Self-management should in this case lead to more empowerment than only being told what will happen in the project. People taking active choices through participating in organizations and the community, can learn more from this than from only listening, thus gaining skills, confidence and knowledge and hence become empowered (www.jrf.org.uk; Servaes and Patchanee, 2005:91ff).

There is however the important question on ‘who participate’ in the projects, whereas poor people, especially women, have less capabilities, confidence, and time to be able to participate, which is also the strongest critique against the idea of participation (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:75). For this reason, scholars urge for participation to be viewed as a time-consuming and difficult process for the poor, since time and energy as well as resources are being requested. If poor people are to make an investment in a project participatory organizations must concentrate on meeting the self-defined needs and interests of the poor, rather than externally prescribed goals (Brohman, 1996:266; Deepa and Fawcett, 2000:1-4). It needs to affect the everyday life of people I would like to argue.

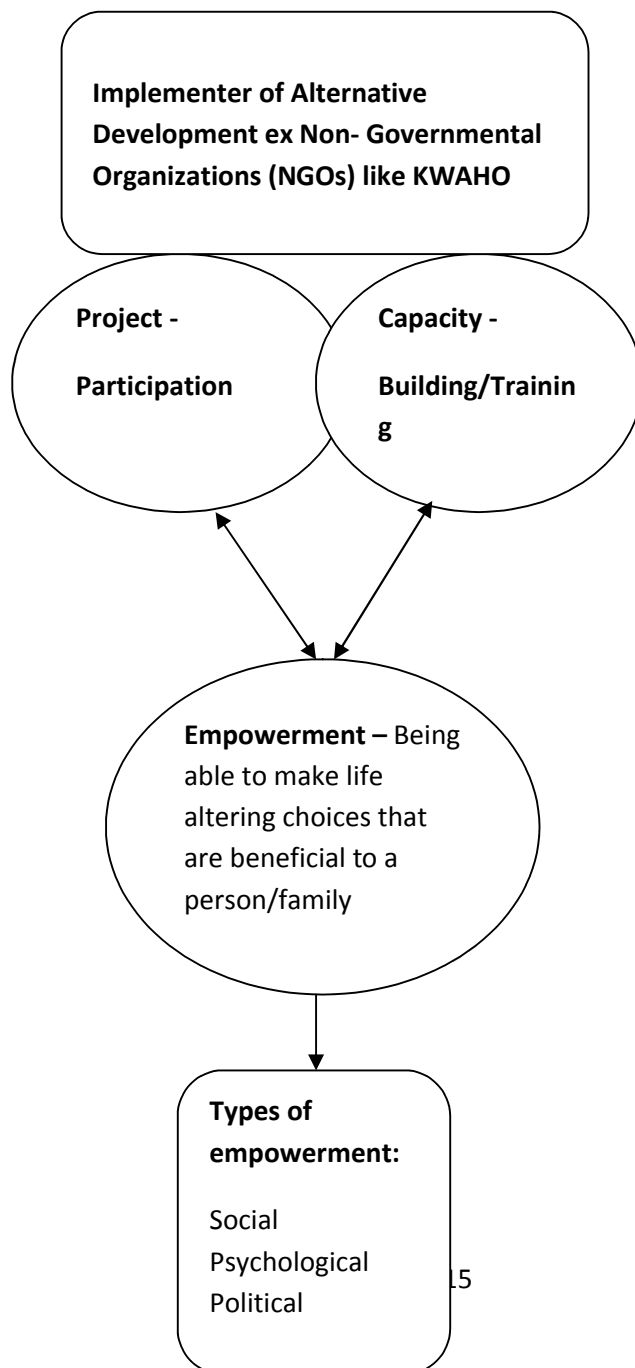
Participation is a complex tool which also carries some hindrance for empowerment since unequal power relationships in the community can be upheld and reinforced through participation and involvement. To counterweigh this potential outcome, and also because it is unrealistic to expect individuals or small groups suddenly to develop the capability and capacity to make complex decisions, projects need to devote themselves to give participants capacity building (Eade, 1997:4; www.jrf.org.uk).

2.4 Capacity Building

Building participants capacity, and develop confidence and trust in each other will make participation more effective and sustainable, and create empowered individuals. Capacity building is seen an important tool for maximizing NGO impact, and thus crucial if development is to be sustainable and centered in the people (Eade, 1997:1, www.jrf.org.uk). The focus of the trainings is to strengthen people’s capacity to determine their own values and priorities and to act on these. This is the basis of development. It is thus an approach to development instead of a prepackaged intervention. Everyone have capacities, but some might not recognize them as skills or know how to use them to their advantage. Thus they have to undergo a change of mind and a realization of what one have to offer as well as learn new skills and capabilities to increase confidence and self-worth. Capacity building implies a long-term investment in people, since a short building session will not result in any major changes. It is not risk free either, not done

properly it might have negative effects, for instance a lack of trust in organizations. Since capacity building is not a prepackage intervention it can take different shapes. It is up to the planners to take into account the social, economic and cultural hindrance in the area listen to the participants needs, and shape the projects together to really ensure that real problems are being targeted through the capacity building programs (Eade, 1997, 1-4). For a growing number of development workers capacity buildings are believed to be critical for instilling self-confidence and inspiring self-expression among the poor. It enables the individual to contemplate over the environment it lives within and gain an understanding of the forces that shapes the world. Participants can thus start to question the unequal circumstances they are living under and become more capable to express themselves and their needs in the society (Brohman, 1996:264).

2.4.1 Summarizing Model of the Theoretical Framework



The thought causality between the presented theoretical concepts is: NGOs implement participatory projects, which include capacity-building/training, which in turn creates empowerment through awareness and education. More explicitly, through project participation, and especially capacity building, people become aware about their surroundings, engage in the community, learn new skills and develop existing ones, receive education that can create opportunities for people to apply for a job. Education also enables people to critically evaluate different opportunities, and thus make well-founded and well-thought decisions about life. It is also thought to create more self-esteem among the participants, since education creates knowledge and information. Education creates self-worth, since learning develops a person. This creates social, psychological and political power.

3 Findings and Analysis

I will in this chapter introduce my findings from the field study. I will analyze the empirical material from the 7 operationalization-points, which I have presented earlier and which I have originated from the theoretical framework. These are: Hygiene and sanitation knowledge, organizational skills, leadership, political activity, ownership over resources, increased confidence/self-worth, and regular businesses. I will present my material in relation to these focus points. I will also analyze the role of KWAHO as an NGO and its potential in having a sustainable and profound impact on the poverty landscape of the community.

3.1 Hygiene, Water and Sanitation

3.1.1 Kombewa

KWAHO was the first organization to implement a project in Kombewa, Catherine Mwangi, Executive Director of KWAHO, stated in her interview. The women explained that KWAHO was an eye opener, since there had been no projects before them, nobody knew what to expect when KWAHO first came (Interview, Mwangi, 2010-02-08; Group Interviews Kombewa project, 2010-02). Capacity trainings for the groups were undertaken regularly with KWAHO visiting the groups once a month up to two years sometimes even longer. The capacity trainings were carried out by KWAHO-staff which included: Hygiene and Sanitation, Income Generation Activities (IGA's), gender sensitization, organizational management and skills, operation and maintenance regarding the water pump, and environmental protection (Interview, Muhinda, 2010-02-24; Project Impact Manual 3-9).

A couple of the trainings were created by KWAHO, while others were influenced and/or created by outside agents. For instance the PHAST, Participatory Health and Sanitation Transformation training, used by KWAHO, was written by the World Health Organization in collaboration with other international agents like the United Nations Development Program UNDP and the Swedish International Development Agency SIDA (www.who.int). The main objective of the trainings were to include the members in an interactive and participatory manner and in order to achieve this goal the trainings could be altered to fit the context at hand, by changing names and procedures. This was something that the KWAHO staff worked extensively on, but the general PHAST methodology was used which was training community members to train others on hygiene and sanitation (Interview, O'django, 2010-02-15). Having trainings written abroad can be viewed as a

hindrance for creating positive peer-trainings since the scripts are written to fit a variety of different countries and environments, and might not reflect the cultural and traditional practices in Kenya. Secondly this type of implementation is not high on the participation ladder, since the members are not creating and influencing the trainings, which according to the participatory theory is to be preferred in order to achieve empowerment (www.jrf.org.uk). However, despite imported trainings and not allowing for community involvement in the design, the women still participated in the workshops and continuously did peer-training indicating that participation in this area is not a prerequisite when creating activism in the project (Brohman, 1996:265f; Deepa and Fawcett, 2000:1-4). Instead, a committed staff and flexible and relevant trainings can be viewed as more important factors when creating active participation in projects, I want to argue.

The trainings covered several fields and I found great change and transformation among the group members. For instance, all the members displayed a great knowledge of water born diseases, hygiene and sanitation measures, and food management, a result from the hygiene and sanitation trainings. The members responded that the knowledge had increased and water borne diseases like typhoid and cholera had been reduced, since the pump was exclusively used in the households. Unfortunately some people in the area still used the rivers due to lack of knowledge or funds. But as the group members educate the community on the importance of clean water and when they have seen the benefits of using the pump water, people have slowly begun to change their behavior (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). A key here has been the seeing is believing-formula, the women in the area started to change behavior after they themselves saw how the pump water reduced the diseases in the group-member's households, together with education on the matter. After people saw the benefits, more and more groups applied for a KWAHO pump, Willhelmina O'djando, former Kombewa staff member explained. People sometimes need to see a visible impact before they trust implementations and changes (Interview, O'djando, 2010-02-15). This skepticism makes it troublesome for NGOs to create behavior change, but here water and hygiene can be a good entry point for further development efforts, since an improvement in water and hygiene will generate active participation and involvement, since it affects the everyday life of people with immediate results which is necessary for participation according to me. Other areas might not generate participation since women and men in developing countries are occupied with generating an income and have more time consuming chores than people in developed countries. This will be discussed more extensively further down.

Fetching water is a woman's responsibility in Kenya, thus having water more closeby has also helped change the life of the women dramatically. A member of the Oruga Women Group responds to the question: How much time did you used to spend fetching water from the lake?

It was 3 km. It was very far. We woke up in the morning at 3 or 4. We go and we meet the hyenas, or the witch craft people (Interview, Oruga Women Group, 2010-02-10).

Time spent on fetching water was a great burden and getting water nearby has enabled the women to participate more in the community, not feeling worried about getting clean water, and not having arguments with their husbands about being away from the house, were some of the responds on the question ‘How has your life changed with the KWAHO project?’ (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). Soap was now a priority among the group members, and was seen as important for keeping good personal hygiene. Before the members had not fully understood the importance of soap, they explained, and cleaning hands after using the toilette and before preparing food was not always done. Joycee from the Yago Kamolo Women Group responds to the question: Did you always use soap before KWAHO?

Sometimes I would wash the utensils without soap,[or I] just dip it in water and leave. [Soap] was not a priority (Interview, Yago Kamolo Women Group, 2010-02-18).

The realization that clean water prevents diseases which in turn helps you stay active and strong was evident among the women. As one woman from the Lokotim Women group reports.

After the trainings of KWAHO, we got more knowledge [about hygiene and sanitation]. That is why we knew that if we want to do these activities [IGA’s], you have to be a healthy person/.../ If you are sick you cannot do all these things (Interview, Lokotim Women Group, 2010-02-18).

3.1.2 Kampi ya Moto

In Kampi ya Moto the responding women had low to basic knowledge of the importance of soap, clean water and sanitation and water borne diseases All of the respondents used soap, usually for utensils, washing clothes and bathing the body, but the reasons to why they used soap revolved around bringing out the dirty from things. Few stated that it is important to use soap to prevent diseases and to keep good personal hygiene. Only when the women were asked ‘Do you use soap after visiting the toilette?’ did some of the women mention that soap was important because of ‘germs’ and ‘bacteria’. Some women washed hands after toilette with soap, others forgot and a few never washed their hands. There were some basic knowledge of how water borne diseases were contracted, but it was not extensive. Also, diarrhea was also not always viewed as a diseases, it is a way of life since it occurs frequently (Interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-03). Empowerment in this case is bringing knowledge on hygiene and sanitation to women in developing countries, so they in turn can teach their families, in order to avoid diseases and even death. Empowerment, according to the theory, is an increase in human assets such as information (Kabeer, 2002:20f; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:11f; Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76). Information about health empowers people in the way that it enables people to make strategic life choices and enables them to partake in the society, since they are not sick all the time. Thus knowledge on hygiene and

sanitation is crucial for empowerment and should be regarded as this (Deepa and Fawcett, 2000:1-4).

3.1.3 Hygiene Promotion in Kombewa

The participants in the Kombewa project were trained as hygiene promoters meaning that they educate others on hygiene and sanitation. This means that the members are not being taught for private knowledge but to enhance and empower the entire community. As Ester in Kudho Women Group explains:

When we attend workshops or trainings, when there is a community meeting, we just stand up, and educate them. On the need on hygiene maybe on the need of taking the children to the hospital, that is information that they did not have. But me as Ester, me a woman, I have that knowledge, so they are also empowered in a way – through you. And through that the whole community changes (Interview, Kudho Women Group, 2010-02-15).

Also, speaking in front of men was something that changed with KWAHO, before the men spoke to the women. Celine from Kochiel puts it like this:

Before KWAHO women could not speak in front of men. It was a taboo/.../but since we received the trainings the men are now seeing how our life is changing. So [now] we can tell them something. We have something to say now (Interview, Kochiel Women Group, 2010-02-10)

Speaking in front of the community and men brought pride and confidence the women stated in the interviews (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). Being hygiene promoters meant that now the women had knowledge which others lacked and they had something to say, as Celine in the above quotation mentions, whereas before they felt they had nothing to offer. As promoters, the women are more active in the community, and have thus a greater presence and gain more respect by educating on a life-altering and life-saving messages. Training to train others in hygiene promotion, I want to argue, has been a crucial tool in achieving empowerment among the women in Kombewa, since it has pushed the women into different community activities, where they were not present before (Kabeer, 2002:20f; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:11f; Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76).

The enhancement of the group member's confidence through hygiene promotion was something very present in all of the group interviews (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). This is supported by the questionnaire which was completed by 47 group members. 85% of the respondents say that after the KWAHO project their confidence and capacity changed a lot, meaning that it increased a lot from before the project (Questionnaires, 2010-02). One woman from the Oruga Women Group replied that the continuous trainings and hygiene presentations increased her confidence, because before she felt speaking in front

of people was intimidating but now she had done numerous hygiene educations, and she no longer feared (Interview, Oruga Women Group, 2010-02-20).

3.2 Men's view of the Women

When asked if the men in the community had changed in their behavior towards the women, the group members reported that it had changed. In some cases even a great deal. In the Lokotim Women Group a woman responded that:

Now, the men give respect and also the men say that these women are the ones with power (Interview, Lokotim Women Group, 2010-02-18).

How was it before?

They were overlooking us, saying 'that is just a woman what can a woman do?' Now, they give us attention and understand what we are saying (ibid.).

The fact that the women were the ones who brought the pump has helped change the men's view of what a woman can achieve, and thus the gender roles are changing slowly in the Kombewa area I would like to argue. Some of the men in the area even complained that now the women were the ones with power, the women said. The fact that the women are the ones maintaining the pump, a traditional role of the men, is also changing the view of the woman and her role in the society (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). One woman from Obedi Women group expressed that if the pump breaks down she knew what spare parts to get and which hardware store to use. And when the men were walking by as she did reparations on the pump she felt that they were all wondering what is this woman doing, how can a woman be repairing a pump! (Interview, Obedi Women Group, 2010-02-10). Inflicting information, knowledge and capacity through the trainings are all a part creating empowerment, which in turn can, as above example shows, alter traditional gender roles, thus indicating that NGOs can have a profound effect on landscapes and communities, which goes against the critique directed towards the development actor (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:17ff; 21f).

3.3 Ownership

The groups own the pumps and not KWAHO. The groups contributed to building the pump, they did so-called cost-sharing, thus creating a feeling of ownership over the pump. The groups contributed approximately 10% of the pump, with sand and ballast. Cost-sharing is a strategy that has proven to work for KWAHO.

When there were no cost-sharing the members still saw the pump as KWAHOs and would not maintain it (Interview, Mwango, 2010-03-28).

This was confirmed in the group interviews as well. The members openly confessed that had it been KWAHO's pump they would have awaited assistance at a potential pump break-down. But now, since it is theirs, they felt obligated to maintain it since they are the lawful owners. They were the ones with the knowledge, incentives and capacity to repair it (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). I believe that in order to create sustainability in a NGO project, ownership over the resources is essential. Otherwise the participants will, as they themselves stated, not have any incentives of contributing to the reparation of the pump. A problem, I want to argue, is that the pump seems to keep the group together, and if it dries up the group might split. Thus important for the NGO is to create other activities which make the participants interested in staying together despite issues with the pump. This is something KWAHO has done through the capacity trainings - encouraged the members to partner up with other organizations and act as a money group as well, for members to borrow and receive money (Interview, Mwango, 2010-03-28). Through the ownership the group members have been empowered resource wise, giving the members pride, confidence and material wealth, and power over their own water source (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76).

3.4 Participation and Organizational Skills

3.4.1 Kombewa

One of the more dramatic effects from the capacity building and participation in the KWAHO project has been the increased participation in other activities, organizations, committees, church, barasas (community meetings), and more among the members. Almost 79% of the group members say that they are now involved in activities outside their homes, except for the KWAHO women group, which they were not before the KWAHO trainings. 15% say that they were participating in activities outside the household before KWAHO but that the trainings made them become more active, speak up more in the group and most importantly improved their ability to get leadership roles in the community, which had been impossible before. Only 6% were still not participating in anything except for the KWAHO women groups. The women and men asked all responded that they gained more confidence and capacity through the trainings to be the chair person, secretary or the treasurer, which almost all of them have experienced now at some point (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). This meant that the members now know what will be expected of them at the meetings, and they have knowledge on how to manage an organization. Some even gained enough confidence to run with men for attractive posts in other committees and organizations, which would have been impossible before KWAHO the women state. For example Ester from Kudho Women Group explains:

You know this is a patriarch society. We were brought up to believe that women should not hold positions. I am talking about being the chairperson and of that sort/.../But we were educated [by KWAHO] that all of us can do anything. Like, I can talk from experience; I/.../ served as a chairperson of a community based organization I served for 5 years, leading men, that is a pride. Before, without education and sensitization, we would not be able to do that./.../We are picking up (Interview, Kudho Women Group, 2010-02-15).

Ester from Kudho Women Group was a farmer before the project and now she wants to run for councilor, a thought unthinkable before KWAHO according to her (Interview, Kudho Women Group, 2010-02-15).

Before KWAHO, most would fear even going to the first meeting, or go but not say anything. As a woman from one group expressed herself:

Before I could not even talk in front of people, but after the trainings of KWAHO who came every month, I now have the self esteem to talk in front of a group. It is a feeling that I can just talk in barasas, in church, I can even summon to meetings (Interview, Malealea Kusodo Women Group, 2010-02-15).

Even the members who were active and participating in the community before KWAHO respond that after the trainings they spoke more at meetings, in church, and in school for their children. Joycee, a politician in the Yago Kamalo Women Group was active before KWAHO but says that after the trainings:

I have now more confidence. I can talk with people, with confidence, I do not have any fear. Because we women we fear to talk in front of people, but with me when I have that forum I wish to talk (Interview, Yago Kamalo Women Group, 2010-02-18).

How was it before KWAHO and the trainings?

I could talk, [but] I did not talk much because I would think that what I was saying is not good. After the trainings of KWAHO, now I could have that confidence. I am more active [as a politician] after the trainings of KWAHO because I have gained confidence (ibid.).

Other women also expressed that they talked more after KWAHO and spoke up about issues in the community, whereas before they kept quiet (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). This is also confirmed by the performed questionnaires where 80% felt that they now could argue for a cause they believed in and that this had changed a lot with KWAHO. 80% of the members felt that they now discussed more now, after the KWAHO, in comparison to before the trainings. This indicates a strong organizational empowerment (Questionnaires, 2010-02; Kabeer, 2002:20f; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:11f; Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76).

They members also participated in the community as a group. The groups were trained by KWAHO to partner up with others so that they would be sustainable and develop different skills (Interview, Muhinda, 2010-02-24). As a woman from Malealea Kosodo Women group described the situation:

We [now] do catering, agriculture, PLAN [an international NGO], health, in the water department. We go to all these activities. We have even received trainings from other organizations and other partners (Interview, Malealea Kosodo Women Group, 2010-02-15).

There was also an increased awareness that groups can inform each other and how important information is. It was also apparent that there was a desire to learn more and acquire new skills, which according to me is a sign of empowerment (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02; Brohman, 1996:264). A woman from Kochiel Woman group talks about collaboration:

It is important because it enables us to acquire several skills. And we borrow so many ideas from those various projects and various organizations (Interview, Kochiel Women Group, 2010-02-10).

Many of the women in the groups now have leadership positions or other important posts in organizations, the community, or even in international organization, or they strive to have one. This since they now have knowledge that other women, as well as some men, lack. The women were chair ladies in groups, Mama Kanisa – leader of the women in church. One woman had become the local councilor, another woman had recently been elected village elder. Other women were priests, church teachers, and committee leaders. A couple of women responded that they aspired to be councilors or village elders, both prestigious positions usually reserved for men (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02. As Joycee, politician and aspiring councilor responded to the question: *Could you have imagined being a councilor before KWAHO?*

By that time, I didn't think of being a councilor, I could just back up someone who was going but now I think I am capable (Interview, Yago Kamolo Women Group, 2010-02-18).

This transformation can be viewed as positive but also problematic since the participants from the project can be identified as the new community elite and other women in the community still fear to join a group. Even if the theory of empowerment state that the transformation does not have to occur equally over individuals (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:4f; 13) I still consider the divide troublesome. The elite, or people with knowledge, are also the ones continuously being chosen to be leaders in the society. This problem is also something Winnie Mitullah points out in her interview: the women groups will choose the elite to lead them. Uneducated and shy women will never get the opportunity to lead, nor will they apply for the position, which is problematic since it divides the community into two groups (Mitullah, Interview, 2010-03-30). I did not witness the women talking about teaching other women how to be a secretary or treasurer, either, something that would empower the other community members. As the idea

with hygiene promotion, organization-promotion might be an idea, to include in future capacity trainings, I would like to argue, since hygiene-promotion has been such a crucial tool for empowerment. It also became evident that the groups are political elites in the sense that they have become entry points for politicians. If they approve of a politician, they make sure he or she wins, which gives the women groups great political power, and money in the form of bribes, that others lack in the area, thus further creating a divide between the community members (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02).

One thing that became apparent in the group interviews was how groups, formed before KWAHO-organizational training, suffered from continues break downs or group separations, due to irregular meetings, no progress, rude and unsuccessful leaders. This makes it clear that organizational trainings are necessary for group sustainability. Only starting a group, electing an experienced leader and having enough members who will contribute to the group will not secure sustainability. Instead knowledge on how to lead, keep a group together, talk to the members and merge different opinions and more, is vital. If an international organization starts a project with high involvement of the community members through active participation, as the theory suggests, the possibility that this project/organization will sustain after the NGO exit is thus low, I would like to argue. Only participation will not educate people how a group functions and create empowerment within the organizational asset area (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76; Kabeer, 2002:20f; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:11f). To show this, all the groups who received organizational trainings and a pump are still in existence. Some of these groups had problems before KWAHO and the trainings, about keeping the group together, most of these group replies that the trainings made the group more active and stronger (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02).

3.4.2 Kampi ya Moto

In Kampi ya Moto the women asked were not participating in the community or in organizations, as the women did in Kombewa. Approximately 40% of the women had at least one Merry-Go-Round-group (MGR), which is a money group where the members donate money and one member at each meeting get to keep the donations, which then circulates to include everybody in the group. However, only 7% had anything other than a MGR, for instance being active in the school committees or in a women group (Interviews, Kampi ya Moto 2010-02). When asked why they were not participating in the community, lack of money was mentioned as a factor, but there were also a fear of joining, because of bad experiences and general fear. As one woman mentioned:

I used to have a group, and we were donating money money money then all of the sudden it collapsed. It went with my money so I do not want any other group (Interview, Rosay in Interwiev with four ladies, 2010-03-05).

This kind of reply, not joining because of bad previous experiences, were recurrent in Kampi ya Moto but also the women in Kombewa, who was involved

in groups before KWAHO, expressed this problem. They mentioned that the leaders of the Merry-Go-Round would take their money and move to another town or disappear (Group Interviews Kombewa Project, 2010-02). The women in Kombewa also expressed that before the trainings of KWAHO some leaders could be rude, shout or intimidate people. In Kampi ya Moto some women did not want to join a group because they feared that the leader would embarrass them and shout if they did not have money in the end of the month. This is once again a sign that only participating in a group will not lead to organizational skills - organizational empowerment (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76) - since there is no training in how to keep the group together, how to stay active, how to uphold consequences for people stealing money, how to attract members and make them not fear to join, and how to be a good leader. And because of the breakdowns these women might never want to participate again, but shy away because of bad experiences, which is troublesome since involvement in the community is important for the development of the area.

Another reason to why the women in Kampi ya Moto were not participating was because no organization or person had mobilized them, or because no organization had come with funds. The women were instead waiting for someone to come and activate them (Interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-03). Both Catherine Mwangi and Winnie Mitullah argue that this response is due to the history of hand-outs in Kenya and colonialism. Organizations have given people things instead of them organizing and achieving it themselves. Colonialism also installed a sense of inferiority within the Kenyans, which still exists and prevents people from participating actively. It requires training and capacity building to change this way of thinking. This is where capacity training can have a great influence - instilling in people, especially the women, that they can do anything, but that they have to organize themselves, thus creating a mental empowerment (Interview, Mwangi, 2010-03-28; Interview, Mitullah, 2010-03-30; Brohman, 1996:264).

The women in Kampi ya Moto had no other activities within the MGR except for giving money, which they consumed. The groups did no awareness or education training among the members or any group activities (Interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-03). Sensitization and giving information how a group can work and how people can achieve more by being in a group as well as volunteering together, are important parts of achieving transformation in the Kenyan society, and achieving empowerment. I argue that without sensitization people will not start to question the current situation, grouping together or even volunteer, which are all important factors for acquiring new skills (Brohman, 1996:266). Volunteering was in Kampi ya Moto seen as a waste of time and nothing that could benefit the women (Interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-02). In Kombewa, volunteering was an integral part of the group members lives, and seen as necessary for development and as a tool to learn new skills (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). To sum up, to encourage people to join a group or volunteer, education about how this can benefit them is needed I argue, otherwise everyday chores will precede such activities (Brohman, 1996:266).

When asking the women in Kampi ya Moto if they wanted to be leaders the general response was that they can try or they would be it if people elected them, but there was no individual desire of being a leader or putting themselves in a situation where they could be elected (Interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-03). This can be compared to the women in Kombewa who actively sought out to be a leader, instead of waiting for someone to elect them (Group Interviews, Kombewa Project, 2010-02). This is something Winnie Mitullah also expresses, women in Kenya wait for someone else to appoint them, they are too afraid to raise their voice that they want to be a leader (Interview, Mitullah, 2010-03-30). However, the women in Kampi ya Moto also said that they could not become a leader, councilor or village elder without education or training. This shows how important capacity training is for awareness and a change of mind as well as increased confidence to be a leader (Brohman, 1996:266).

Other reasons to why the women did not want to participate or be a leader were because they felt they had too much to do. They had to take care of the children, the cattle, the house and farm in the shamba. However, Milicent from Yago Kamolo used to say the same thing before KWAHO: How did you feel about participating in other groups before KWAHO?

I could not join them. I feared to go there. I said that I was very bizzzy so I could not join any group (Interview, Yago Kamolo Women Group, 2010-02-18).

So instead of having too much to do, she actually feared going. However, this being said, the women in Kenya have a lot of chores and responsibilities, as Mitullah puts it, *sometimes the Barasas are scheduled when the chief are available and the women sometimes do not have the time because of their multiple roles, fetching water, cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children. The men often seem to have more time to do these activities, and the women let them keep on doing this* (Interview, Mitullah, 2010-03-30). A change in these activities or increased access to resources – resource empowerment - has to be prioritized, because if there is no water, fewer women will be able to participate (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76).

Few women in Kampi Ya went to community meetings, school committees or meetings, or in other official meetings where information was dispersed, in comparison to the Kombewa women. Instead the husbands of the Kampi ya Moto women were the ones that joined or attended and then carried on the information to the wives. This way the husband have the control over the information and can decide what will reach the women. Information is the key to empowerment, and asymmetrical information dispersion will most likely uphold the unequal living situation that women face in Kenya (Interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-03).

Participation in other groups was also hindered by money, according to the women in Kampi ya Moto. All organizations cost money. As one woman in Kampi Ya Moto expressed it:

Even if they say it will be a group where you do not have to pay, sooner or later they will need membership fees or start a merry go round, and then I do not have money so I just stay out of it (Interview, Grace and Monica, 2010-03-12).

Thus enabling women to make their own money enables them to participate more in the community. This is also something that needs to be acknowledged in the theory, that participation is both time- and money consuming. Time spent away from chores and farming is also an income loss (Brohman, 1996:266).

3.5 Income Generating Activities

3.5.1 Kombewa

Almost 85% of the KWAHO participants had a small scale business. 72% the women and men had not done any business before the income generating activities training, they all respond that this training changed their way of thinking, and made them confident and capable to sell something, and keep something to invest, and use the rest for the household. Not knowing simple account was what made the 13%, who had done some small scale business before KWAHO, experience losses or break-downs. In some cases the women even decided to stop selling after experiencing losses, but this changed with the trainings from KWAHO. As Pamela from Oruga Women Group describes her situation before the trainings:

I started [selling baskets] before KWAHO, but I could not make it. I failed again. When I got trainings from KWAHO now I succeed.

What made you fail?

I could not sell properly because I used to use all. Now I had depts., depts, so I left (Interview, Oruga Women Group, 2010-02-20).

Pamela now sold regularly and knew how to keep the business going (ibid.). The trainings focused on accounting and on separation of the money for re-investment so that the businesses would survive losses. Mary from Lower Kajagomgo Women Group explains her situation:

Before I was just mixing the money I had. The capital and interest. Putting them together. After the trainings from KWAHO I could put the capital and interest separate. This meant that I now put the capital I earned [the income] separate from the money I spent (Interview, Lower Kajagomgo Women Group, 2010-02-14).

Money earned in money-groups like a MGR was not used in a productive way either before KWAHO, which also highlighted the need to focus the trainings on

how to invest in shops and make a profit. A woman from Amollo Nyagwer Women Group describes how the MGR money was used before:

Before, we were doing MGR, but with that money you just get to the market, and eat. We did not keep anything (Interview, Amollo Nyager Women Group, 2010-02-22).

The knowledge and confidence in combination with awareness about how women can be more than housewives made some of the women start to sell, which again shows how important capacity building and awareness creation is for empowerment:

Before/.../We only knew that we were housewives and that we should go to the shambas (Interview, Kawkor Women Group, 2010-02-12).

And how is it now?

Now we are so bizzzy, we can come here and each individual has a small scale business. Idleness is not here anymore (ibid.).

KWAHO did extensive trainings on income generating activities, before the pump was installed, so that the women and men would feel interested in the project as well as being self-sustainable. For a project to attract participants, according to the theory, it is necessary for the project objective to focus on the true need of the community members, and achieving an income is always attractive in developing countries. However, research should always be done before hand to pinpoint exactly the wants and needs of the potential participants (Eade, 1997, 1-4). As Mitullah points out, in poor countries the desperation makes people participate in anything, even if the workshops or projects duplicate existing knowledge (Interview, Mitullah, 2010-03-30). However, in order to have a project that is sustainable income is needed, and education in income generating activities is necessary for participation in other projects and organizations, as mentioned before.

KWAHO also taught the members how the group could come together to make and sell pots, baskets, ropes, do catering, rent chairs and tents and much more. They also farm together and help each other in harsh times, making them a social safety net for the members (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02; Interview, O'django, 2010-02-15). Coming together also makes work easier, which is now recognized in the Kombewa area, and is also why the women continue to join other groups (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). A change towards group activities and participating together is an important transformation since the members together has more power than if they would continue to stand alone.

3.5.2 Kampi ya Moto

The women in Kampi ya Moto were not active in the market. Approximately 13% of the women did business regularly, either by having a shop or doing wholesale. A few women had done some small scale business, but had stopped because of the post-election violence or because of losses in the business. The rest, 87%, farmed for self-consumption or went for casual work, which is working for a farmer. When asked why they did not sell, most of the women replied that there was nothing to sell, because of drought (Interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-03). Before getting secure water the women in Kombewa also experienced problems with the harvest, and then had nothing to sell (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). Thus not selling is more than a lack of training or confidence it is also due to a lack of water. However, capacity training is necessary for a sustainable and successful business for re-investment, since without training the women in Kombewa stopped selling when there were losses. The women in Kampi ya Moto could sell other things, like the women in Kombewa, for instance pots, ropes or baskets, but since there had been no awareness creation about alternative businesses, there were no activity. Also, the money made in the MGR was not being used in a productive way. Things bought were primarily cups, utensils, plats or food, the money was thus not being invested or used to bring a future income. For this to change awareness and education is needed otherwise the women will never change their current ways of handling the money I would like to argue. If there is no awareness creation, then people will never question their practices. There is a wish to gain empowerment in Kampi ya Moto in the sense that the women expressed that they want to become economically independent. However, when asked how they would achieve this most of the women said they did not know. They lacked knowledge about the path to empowerment (Interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-03).

Earning money can be viewed both as a direct empowerment, because money enables activities and participation in the community. A person can also change the institutions if he or she can be active in the community. There is also an increased opportunity to educate the family properly (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76). However, I would like to argue that knowing how to get money is the first stage of empowerment, how to keep money to reinvest in the business and to know what prices to charge as well as how to avoid losses. Then, getting the money is the second stage of empowerment. This is a very important distinction which should be noted. Even if access to resources is a part of empowerment, one can argue that if there is no knowledge how to handle and maintain the resources, the possibility that the use of the resource will be sustainable is quite low. Being able to generate an independent income and how to make it sustainable is very important for empowerment, since only education will not enable the women to choose life altering decisions as the empowerment theory predicts. Instead with a stable income the women will be more able to challenge institutions in the society,

and alter unequal power relationships (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:13-18; Narayana, 2005:8).

I would like to argue that even if the concept of empowerment was created by western actors it still has relevance for poverty reduction and it is also a desired concept in the Kenyan society. This contradicts the fears and objections directed by the empowerment criticism (Escobar, 1994:8f; McEwan, 2009:79ff; 180f). When asked if the women in Kampi ya Moto knew what empowerment was and if they had heard it before, some women replied that they had heard something about *empowerment* and that it was something happening to women in certain areas in Kenya, which they had heard about on the radio. They were also told that these women were starting their own businesses and were active in organizations (interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-03). The women in Kampi ya Moto expressed that they also wanted to take part in this transformation. As one woman stated:

We have heard about women being empowered in a sense that long ago women did not used to talk just hide in the house but now they have been told to speak out to be chairlady's in the groups in the committees in school to be secretary's to learn more. Not just to stay at home. That is why we feel angry because we do not have that power (Rosary, Interview with four ladies, 2010-03-05).

The critique against the concept is still justifiable however. The concept presumes that women know very little, are passive recipients of aid and project support and that everybody is starting from the same point, which is not reflecting reality (Escobar, 1994:8; McEwan, 2009:146f). Women in developing countries are occupied with everyday chores, sometimes unable to participate or sometimes lack confidence to attend meetings. There are a multitude of reasons to why participation are low and everybody have different knowledge and needs, which needs to be taken into consideration before implementing an empowerment project I argue.

3.6 Differences among the group members

There were slight differences between the groups who had received the trainings in the 1990:s and the groups who had attended the trainings more recent. The older groups were more active and present in the community whereas the newer groups were still learning how to start collaborations, knowing what to sell and how to expand their activities. A larger difference was between the participants who had received the trainings from KWAHO, and the women who had joined after KWAHO had been in the area to educate the groups. A few women still had not received any training despite KWAHO training group members to train others. These women were also the ones not having businesses and a lower participation level in the community (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). This compromises the sustainability of NGO projects and still is a severe criticism

directed towards NGOs, it also shows how important the capacity trainings are for empowerment and the development of the members (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:17ff; 21f; Kabeer, 2002:20f; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:11f).

4 Discussion

Empowerment, when reviewing the KWAHO efforts, can be a real outcome from water management projects, if long-term participatory capacity building activities are present. The interviews indicate an increase in both the psychological power area - with an increase in self-confidence - and the social-power area with greater participation in the community, more leadership roles and business-skills, increased information, organizational skills were also present. There was also an increase in the resource asset with ownership over the pump. The women have also been empowered with greater knowledge on how hygiene and sanitation, and increased information about the community and how important it is to acquire information from different directions (Kabeer, 2002:20f; Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005:11f; Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76).

According to the alternative development theory, projects should be designed bottom-up and with an inclusion of the real needs of the participants (Brohman, 1996:265f; Servaes and Patchane, 2005:91ff). However, KWAHO had ideas before entering the area, with inputs, trainings and requests from the Austrian Development Agency. Little input from the ground was taken into consideration when designing the project (Interview, O'django, 2010-02-15). This indicates that people can participate and benefit from a project despite of low involvement. This contradicts the very idea of alternative development theory, which is very interesting, indicating that participation on higher levels are not as important as the theory suggest, since empowerment is existent in the Kombewa area. Instead the capacity trainings, which were done in a participatory, interactive and meaningful manner, have been very influential in creating a transformation in Kombewa. This also corresponds positively with the capacity building theory, which states that capacity building and trainings are essential for instilling self-confidence and critical thinking (Brohman, 1996:264). The capacity building was in the KWAHO case meaningful in the sense that it was training to train others, thus ensuring the women taking an active part in the development of the community and instilling knowledge that have direct impacts on lives. The development of hygiene promoters have been a crucial tool in creating empowerment and development, I would like to argue. This since training others keeps the empowerment skills fresh, and develops the confidence of the women since they are pushed into community activities (Group Interviews, Kombewa KWAHO project, 2010-02).

A concern with NGO empowerment projects is the sustainability of the activities, that even if the women educate others on hygiene, the more present group members have not received the fundamental trainings once given to the founding group members (Group Interviews Kombewa project, 2010-02). This compromises the sustainability of the project and is also a recurrent criticism

directed towards NGOs (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:17; 21f). The KWAHO project idea is that the members should hold trainings to the new members. However, some women confessed that they had forgotten the trainings, and could thus not train others (Group Interviews Kombewa project, 2010-02). This issue needs to be addressed further in order for NGOs to develop different strategies which ensure sustainability of projects. Otherwise the potential project effects will disappear before having had a profound impact (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:17; 21f).

4.1.1 Combining Self-confidence and Science

The overall increase of self-confidence and self-worth was evident in the interviews done in the Kombewa area (Group Interviews Kombewa project, 2010-02). Increased self-confidence is essential in making life changing decisions and being able to participate actively in the community and do businesses. I argue that in order for the concept of empowerment to develop further more attention and investigation needs to be placed on psychological power, since this is overlooked in today's research (Narayan, 2005:3; 15; 20). If participants claim they have experienced a change or process towards increased self-confidence due to participation, or trainings this needs to be closely examined, so that it can be replicated. It thus needs to be taken seriously and not be brushed over as something intangible and non-scientific, since it is a feeling. It is also necessary to more fully concentrate on how the participants in poor countries want empowerment strategies to be implemented, and be included in the creation of the upcoming trainings. Because only they know what the needs are and how they can and should be empowered. Even if the Kombewa project was designed on higher levels, inclusion of community members and research of the areas are in fact in order for the project to be sustainable, I would like to argue, even if it goes against the previous statement. In order to have a project that inspire to participation, people need to feel it affects them. Water is an area that always affects people, thus it is easier to find willing participants, but for other areas to create activism in the community, people need to have some sort of input in the implementation and design of the project. KWAHO has implemented a strategy to better inspire participation and secure sustainability of the projects by including community members in the earlier stages of the project, which is the right direction (Strategic Plan 2008-2013).

4.1.2 Political Activity and Kenya

Political empowerment was the only area that had not increased as much as the other power-areas (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:76; Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). A few women in Kombewa wanted to participate in the political sphere or in the community as members of parliament or local politicians. A few wanted but did not feel they had the money and how they could overcome this, which is a sign that a mental blockage is still in existence. Some women did not want to be involved in politics at all, due to the harsh political climate in Kenya,

which lead to political violence in the last election. Other reason was because they did not want to or feel they had the capacity and confidence to do this (Group Interviews Kombewa project, 2010-02). However, increased political power did exist in the Kombewa area, the women groups had become entry points for potential Members of Parliament and local politicians. Also, some of the women wanted to be a member of the parliament in the future, and aspired to have greater influence in the community in some way. The change that women can and should have a role in politics, or be involved in politics in some way, is an immense alteration in the Kenyan society, since, as one woman responded, women are not brought up to have positions as leaders. They are told to withdraw (Interview, with Ester in Kudho Women group, 2010-02-18). With more women entering the government and the community leadership positions, other will gradually change their minds about the capacities and the role of the women in society, but in order to get women to run for election, an awareness creation and confidence building is necessary. This is also something Mitullah argues, that women need to undergo trainings in order to run for elections, otherwise few will put themselves in that situation. They will be politicians if someone elects them, but in order to be elected, one have to express a wish to be in the government, which is not done by women in Kenya today (Interview, Mitullah, 2010-03-30). There are still more work to be done in the Kombewa area, but already a few women were leaders in the community and aspiring councilors and village elders, indicating a change in the area (Group Interviews, Kombewa area 2010-02). This shows that empowerment efforts can have implications on democracy as the theory predicts, since now more women are becoming interested in the political sphere in Kombewa, even if more work is needed in this area (Petesch, Smulovitz and Walton, 2005:53).

4.1.3 Contributing to the NGO-discussion

The capacity trainings and its empowering effects are evidence that NGOs are flexible and innovative since they can implement the trainings in harsh climates in areas where people have not participated in anything before, making them essential for bringing transformation from the ground (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:55ff; 89). KWAHO is working as both a catalyst, for promoting change, and implementer of projects (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:12ff). KWAHO is a partner in that sense that it is partnering up with international aid agencies and organizations. In the Kombewa project, KWAHO has not been partnering up with the Kenyan government, but it was regularly updating and informing it about their activities in the area. As Catherine Mwangi responds, there is an openness towards the government about KWAHO activities *'but we do not go to them for clearance/.../if you go for clearance they will want to sit on you.* (Interview, Mwangi, 2010-03-28). Information about activities is necessary since this reduce the risk of duplicating activities in the area however the government cannot be empowered if KWAHO is not collaborating with them. NGOs can empower developing country governments in the sense that since governments lack competence and capacity, NGOs can complement their efforts in a cost-effective

and flexible way and educate the government from their own experiences. However, it might not be the role of KWAHO and other NGOs to empower governments, and in fact maybe they should focus on the communities and its participants. Despite this argument, I think empowering the government is an important approach that NGOs should include in its efforts. Supporting the government more could reduce the lack of accountability that now surrounds the NGO sector and also reduce the idea of NGOs as being self-interested actor as the NGO theory implies (Lewis and Kanji, 2009:17ff; 21f).

As mentioned in the theory, the trainings need to be very context specific and include education on issues that affects the everyday life of the participants, in order to promote empowerment (Eade, 1997, 1-4). I would like to argue that the trainings can cover a wide variety of fields, but they need to entails useful knowledge that captures people's attention and when used, people can directly see the benefits from it. This was also something that the KWAHO staff had experienced; it was not until people saw that others benefitted from the projects that they applied for a pump (Interview, O'django, 2010-02-15). This is where focusing on water projects can be a strategic investment, since clean water and hygiene information can be used with immediate results which inspire participation. Water can thus also be a starting point for other projects. The trainings need also to include awareness building and a transformation in how people think. KWAHO instilled in the participants that women can do whatever the men are doing and that there is not intellectual difference between the genders (Group Interviews, Kombewa project, 2010-02). This captures the core of empowerment, bringing education and awareness that instills and change in the way people see things. When looking at the women in Kampi ya Moto they were awaiting help and funds, instead of mobilizing the community themselves. This is not evidence of laziness, idleness or ignorance but instead a mental blockage, that the women did not know how to promote and start a transformation out of poverty and they also felt they were not educated enough to participate in the community. Changing negative thinking together with instilling skills and education through capacity building is essential for poverty reduction I want to state, since capacity and a will is there waiting to be mobilized (KWAHO Training Manual/Guidelines, 2005; Interview, O'django, 2010-02-15; Interviews, Kampi ya Moto, 2010-03).

4.1.4 Discussing other Reasons to Why the Kombewa-women are Empowered

Of course there can be other reasons to why the women in the Kombewa area were more active and confident than the women in Kampi ya Moto, I am aware of this and point this out to the reader. For instance natural resources are more abundant around Lake Victoria than in the Rift Valley which is dryer. For instance fish was easily accessible in the Kombewa area and sold frequently by the women, which might have promoted some of the businesses. Furthermore, there is

a more homogenous population around Lake Victoria than in Kampi ya Moto, which is inhabited by various ethnic groups. Homogeneity creates a better climate for collaboration, since ethnic and tribal hate is severe in Kenya (Wamwere, 2008:12f). However, the research and answers point to the KWAHO project and the long-term investment of capacity training in these women which in turn has promoted a transformation in the way the women see themselves, and others. They are now better equipped in making choices that benefit them and their family, and understands that isolating oneself in the house will not promote a change, there needs to be participation, education and information in order to change their own living situation.

5 Summary

KWAHO has made long-term investments in Kombewa, training groups on hygiene and sanitation, keeping the compound clean, operation and maintenance of the pump, organizational skills and leadership, income generating activities and gender sensitization. The village of Kampi ya Moto represent a case where no major organization has implemented a project.

My initial question *Have the participants been empowered by the KWAHO water project, and if so what types of empowerment are now visible in the Kombewa area?* can be answered with a yes, the women in Kombewa have in several areas been empowered. There has been a substantial increase in both the psychological and social power areas, ranging from increased participation in the community, in knowledge of hygiene and sanitation; an increase in businesses and income. There has also been an increase in leadership and organizational skills, and a confidence increase among the participants together with access to safe and clean water which is an increase in financial power. Political power was not as visible however. Participants still feared entering into politics, or where not interested in this area. The second question - *Can the same empowerment factors be seen in Kampi ya Moto or are there any differences?* Can be answered with a no, there are clear differences. In Kampi ya Moto the women did not fully participate in the community, few participated in group activities except for money-groups. Hygiene and sanitation knowledge was in general basic to low in the households with few means and resources to buy safe water. Few women had a business, and only one woman was a leader for a money-group. This indicates that NGOs can transform lives through participatory capacity trainings, as have KWAHO done. Down-sides with NGO projects are the lack of sustainability and the risk of creating an elite group, thus not enabling the whole community to be empowered, which in turn might produce tension in an already ethnically segregated country.

The second question posed in the introduction was: *Have some factors been more important than others when creating empowerment?* The hygiene promotion-trainings, executed by KWAHO, were designed so that participants trained others, which have been essential for empowerment since this pushes the women to participate in community activities which have in turn increased their self-confidence. Thus the capacity trainings should be participatory, and designed to teach others. In order for the project to have a real impact, the trainings must also address issues in the everyday life of the community members, be adjusted to the context at hand, and contribute something to the participants and not putting on more duties and responsibilities without any benefits. The result from the thesis is that participation solely will not enable empowerment, instead, long-term investment in capacity trainings and participation in these, giving education and

awareness creation will contribute to a transformation that can be called empowerment.

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6.4.1 Group Interviews

Kochiel Women Group, 2010-02-10

Obedi Women Group, 2010-02-10

Nyaolo Women Group, 2010-02-11

Lower Kajagomgo Women Group, 2010-02-11

Kawkor Women Group, 2010-02-12

Kudho Women group, 2010-02-15

Malealea Kosodo Women Group 2010-02-15

Church Women Group, 2010-02-16

Nyikwa Michura, 2010-02-16

Yago Kamolo Women Group, 2010-02-18

Lokotim Women Group 2010-02-18

Wi-Got Women Group, 2010-02-19

Chung'ni Kimiyi Women Group, 2010-02-19

Oruga Women Group, 2010-02-20

Amollo Nyagwer Women Group, 2010-02-22

Members from groups interviewed:

Jacinta, Member of the Kochiel Women Group, 2010-02-20

6.4.2 Individuals Interviewed in Kampi ya Moto

Four ladies: Corine, Ella, Ella, Rosary, Interview, 2010-03-05
Three ladies: Tabitha, Jennya and Eunice, 2010-03-05
Mary Akuru, 2010-03-05
Ester Emuria, 2010-03-05
Veronica, 2010-03-06
Judy Waweru, 2010-03-06
Susan, 2010-03-06
Unknown Woman no 1, 2010-03-06
Unknown Woman no 2, 2010-03-07
Unknown Woman no 3, 2010-03-07
Nancy, 2010-03-07
Leah Tobetho, 2010-03-08
Laura, 2010-03-08
Juliett, 2010-03-08
Cecilia, 2010-03-08
Theresia and Emelie, 2010-03-09
Rose, 2010-03-09
Unknown Woman Interview no 21, 2010-03-09
Jedidak Maina, 2010-03-09
Wholesale woman, 2010-03-10
Siphora, 2010-03-10
Regina, 2010-03-10
Prisca, 2010-03-10
Sabina, 2010-03-10
Margaret Wanjiko, 2010-03-11
Margaret Kulia, 2010-03-11
Margaret, 2010-03-11
Magdalen Wairimu, 2010-03-11
Lucy Duta, 2010-03-12
Leah Wanjiku, 2010-03-12
Tracy, 2010-03-12
Jennie Wamboi, 2010-03-12
Jacinta, 2010-03-12
Grace Djeri and Monica, 2010-03-12
Ester Wanjiru, 2010-03-12
Damaris Wanjiru, 2010-03-12
Celine, 2010-03-13
Margaret Wanjiku, 2010-03-13

6.4.3 Questions posed in the KWAHO project, in Kombewa

1. Group name, members, When did you get pump and trainings?
2. How did this group start and when?
3. When did KWAHO come?

4. How has your life changed with the KWAHO project?
5. For how long did you get the trainings?
6. What happened during this time?
7. What do you do as a group?
8. Is anyone selling anything? Did you sell before KWAHO?
9. What made you start to sell?
10. How was it selling before KWAHO (if yes on 7)? Did anything change for you?
11. Do you know now how water borne diseases are spread? How? Did you know this before KWAHO?
12. Is soap a priority now? How was it before?
13. Do you wash hands with soap? Did you always wash hands with soap before KWAHO?
14. Did you think about hygiene and sanitation before KWAHO? Do you think about it now?
15. How much time did you used to spend fetching water from the lake?
16. Where did you get water from before? How was it then – diseases, cleanliness?
17. Do you boil or purify the water from the pump? Did you boil the river water?
18. Have you noticed a reduction in water borne diseases?
19. Do you all have toilettes? Why is it important to have a toilette?
20. Do you participate in any organizations, church, committees, women groups, table banking, Merry-Go-Rounds, except for this group? How was it before- were you participating in anything?
21. If previous participation existed – have your way of participating changed in any way after the trainings of KWAHO? How?
22. What do you do in the other groups – are you a leader? Were you a leader before KWAHO?
23. How did you feel about participating in other groups before KWAHO?
24. Did the trainings of KWAHO change you into participating more in the community? If yes, in what way?
25. How has your life changed with the KWAHO project?
26. Does anyone feel more confident?
27. Do you go to Barasas? Did you go before KWAHO? Why/Why not?
28. Do you speak there? Did you speak before KWAHO? Why do you speak?
29. Do you fear speaking in front of men and the community? Did you fear before KWAHO? What made you change and have more confidence?
30. Could anyone imagine being a councilor or village elder? Could you have imagined this before KWAHP? Why/Why not?
31. Could anyone imagine going into politics? How was it before KWAHO?
32. Do you think you have required more organizational skills? Like what?
33. Do you feel you speak up more about issues in the community? Examples! How would it have been before KWAHO?
34. Do you feel the men in the community look at you differently? How? Do they give you more respect?

35. Do you feel that your relationship with your husbands have changed in any way?
How was it before KWHAO?
36. If your husband does something wrong, do you feel you can tell him?
37. What skills do you feel you have required from this experience?
38. Do you think the trainings have benefitted you in any way?
39. How should a good leader be? Why/Why not?
40. Why is it important that you get to elect your own leader?
41. Has participation in this group made you think more about politics and how a good political leader should be?
42. What did you learn as a chair lady? As a secretary? A treasurer?
43. Did you change as a person after being a leader in the group?
44. Is it important that you are the owners of the pump? Why/Why not?
45. What would happen if KWAHO was the owner of the well?
46. What is empowerment to you?

6.4.4 Questions posed in Kampi ya Moto

1. Name, age, education, number of children, marriage status
2. Do you sell anything? Why/Why not?
3. Do you use soap?
4. What do you use soap for?
5. Is soap a priority for you? Why/Why not?
6. Why is it important to use soap?
7. Do you have a toilette?
8. Why is it important to have a toilette?
9. Do you wash your hands with soap after visiting the toilette?
10. Which diseases can you get if you do not wash your hands after toilette?
11. Where do you get water from?
12. Do you boil the water from the river?
13. Do you know which kind of diseases you can get when you draw water from the river?
14. Have you ever had any problems with the water from the river?
15. Are you participating in any organizations, committees, Merry-Go-Rounds, volunteering, church, women group?
16. If yes, which kind of participation do you do and why?
17. If not, why do you not participate?
18. Do you think participation could benefit you in any way?
19. Could you imagine volunteering? If yes, in what? If no, why not?
20. If the answer is a Merry-Go-Round – why did you decide to join this group? Are you a leader there? Would you like to be a leader in the group? Why/Why not?
21. Could you imagine being a chair lady of a group? Why/Why not?
22. Could you imagine being a village elder or councilor? Why/Why not?

23. Do you feel comfortable speaking in front of men and the community at large?
`Why/Why not?
24. Do you ever go to public meetings (barasas) or the school committee? Why/Why not?
25. Do you speak there? Why/why not?
26. Is water a big stress for you?
27. Have you ever heard the term empowerment before? What does it mean?
28. Would you like to be empowered?

6.4.5 Questionnaire

Hiki en adi - Age

School Class - Education

Chuech - Sex

Yie indik 0-3 e penjogi, ma

0= Akia – I do not know

1=Onge Lokruok – No change

2= Lokruok nitie matin – Small change

3= Lokruok Ber a Berie – Medium change

4= Lokruok ahinya – Big change

1. Atiyo kanyokla oko mar dala bang project mar KWAHO?

1. After Project KWAHO I participate more outside my house

2. Ase yudo I bedo gi teko maigeny kendo anyalo timo gimoro bang Project mar KWAHO?

2. After Project KWAHO I have more confidence and feel more capable

3. Bang project mar KWAHO: After Project KWAHO

A, Anyalo wuoyo e weche mangeny – I discuss issues more

B, Anyalo tudora maber gi jomoka – I collaborate better with others

C, Anyalo wuyo koa kuoma mangeny – I speak out more

D, Anyalo wacho weche ma ayiego matek – I can argue for a cause I believe in

4. KWAHO Aneno ka anyalo: After KWAHO I now feel I can

A, Dhie e weche mag siasa – Go into politics

B, Donjo e committee mar school – Join a school committee

C, Bedo jakom e group – Be a chairperson of this group

D, Bedo jatelo mar gweng – Be a village elder

5. An gi ngeyo moromo mo e: I now feel I have enough knowledge of

A, Kaka tuo mar diep, cholera oto landore – How diarrheah and cholera are spread

B, Kaka inyalo rito ahora maler – How to keep the compound clean

C, Gima omiyo ber mondo oluok lwendo – Why it is important to wash hands

D, Gima omiyo kik wamodh pi aora – Why I should not drink river water