They are welcome to join

- A study on participation in the co-operation between donor and recipient organizations in development work in Kenya

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Abstract

Participation is one of the most important concepts in current development debate, both in theory and practice. It is also a contested topic and it has been argued that despite well expressed intentions, problems that for long have been connected to development are not solved through participation. Despite participation being suggested as the 'new development era' many development theorists argue that imbalanced power structures, top down rule and poor understanding and consideration of local context are still present in the field. Some has even argued that participation is a form of new tyranny.

In this master thesis, the concept of participation is investigated. By interviewing representatives of four small Ngo: s in Nairobi, Kenya, co-operating with international donor organizations, participation is investigated through a local perspective. The study shows that high levels of participation is indeed an important factor and helps to make development work more sustainable and more efficient. However, the organizations in the study shows that genuine levels of participation are not reached - reality descriptions, problem formulations, project designs and evaluations are too often still controlled by the donor. The "local knowledge" that is described in development literature and in development policies as crucial for the success of development projects, is not utilized. Based on the findings of the study with support in participation theory, it is possible to say that participation is indeed an important concept and the right way forward for development work, but it is too seldom used. The study also suggests that concept of participation would be well off to change the perspective on who should be the participating actor. Drawn on ideas from the respondents – as is illustrated in the title - maybe it would be useful to encourage donor organisation to participate in the local organisation and not the opposite as is the common understanding in today´s development discourse.

Key words: Participation, NGO: s, development co-operation. **Word Count** 20921

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Contents

Abbreviations

CBO – Community Based Organisation

EXC – Ex-convicts

HSF – Hot Sun Foundation

NGO – Non Governmental Organisation

OECD – The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PRA – Participatory Rural Appraisal

RRA – Rapid Rural Appraisal

Sida - Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

SAP – Structural Adjustment Program

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

UN – United Nations

UNDG – United Nations Development Group

WB – World Bank

1. Introduction

The concept participation is considered one of the most important terms and concepts in today´s development field. By some participation has been pointed out to represent the new development paradigm. Being a concept used almost in all parts of the vast and complex field of development, the term has got to entail many different meaning and interpretations, as well as contradicting view on what participation is, or should be about. This thesis is an attempt to contribute to the conceptualization by looking at it trough the perspective of local Kenyan organisations.

This first chapter provides a background and problem discussion where I argue for which corner of the academic field of development I wish to contribute and argue for the importance and relevance of the study. I will end up in a description of the purpose and research question. The reader is asked to bear in mind that the chapter is mainly an invitation to the rest of the paper, and even though some key theoretical features are touched upon here, they will be paid more attention and focus in chapter 2.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Participation – a development paradigm

For almost two decades, participation has been an established term and concept within development theory and practice. It is often referred to as a buzzword within the development debate, frequently thrown around in policy papers, implementation plans and almost anything with a remote connection to development (Mikkelsen, 2005). There are few today that would argue against participation as an important part of the field development, yet participation is also a highly contested concept. Where, then, lies the disagreement?

In the beginning of the 90s, participation sprung up as the saviour among the major international development agents - World Bank, UN and more. Some has described it as:

> *"Where experts become helpless and representatives of state power impotent and where there is no prosperity left to share, it seems self-evident to delegate responsibility to the people".* (Bliss&Neuman, 2008, translated by Bliss&Neuman).

Even though it can rightfully be argued that "experts" and "representatives" are also people, the quote above does, slightly cynically, highlight the lack of ideas and stagnation that ended up in a focus on and belief in participation.

A few years after the term participation had enter the development field as the new "hope", some sharp critique was aimed towards how participation was being used in development practice. Cooke & Kothari (2001) argue that however described in theory and text, the reality in the field and in the actual implementations had, when put under scrutiny, not changed that much. The old colonial or post-colonial and imperialistic power structures were still present and the ones that were supposed to be given the "stick" were still poked by it (Cooke & Kothari, 2001).

Now, more than ten years after the first heavy critique was aimed towards participation as a concept, it remains one of the most important terms in the development field and it is still hard to find policy documents, strategy papers and implementation plans where participation does not have a key position. The question then becomes, has anything changed? Has the critique led somewhere and how does the power relations in current development co-operation look? Are the voices of "the poor" being listened to? What do they say?

1.2 Experiences of the author

My own experience as a development student as well as my practical experience as a development worker should also be mentioned as part of the background of this study. Below, I

explain how these experiences is an important reason for the choice of topic and angle in this Master thesis.

For almost ten years I have been involved in a small Kenyan-Swedish NGO working with youth in a slum area in Nairobi. We were one organisation divided into two partner organisations, one Swedish and one Kenyan. For six years we worked with support from the Swedish government through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The set up was that financial means were given to the Swedish partner organisation through Forum Syd (Fourm South) - a half independent umbrella organisation under Sida, responsible for global civil society development (Sida, 2015). The Swedish partner organisation then became responsible for carrying out the projects through the local Kenyan organisation. During these years, I spotted a paradox connected to the concept of *participation*. In the agreement between us, Forum Syd and Sida, it was clearly communicated that the local organisation were expected to promote local *participation* and *ownership* (Forum Syd, 2010). While all the same, we in the Swedish organisation were the ones with the overall responsibility. We were the ones writing the proposals and reports which were, of course, produced under a Swedish context and discourse – we spoke, wrote and understood development in a Swedish way. The Kenyan organisation had merely to carry out what the Swedish organisation, advised by Sida, had decided. Little of the local and contextual knowledge possessed by our local partner was implemented in the planning phase of the projects. Hence, the project remained *ours* and the local Kenyan organisation could never participate genuinely.

In my view, the structures laid out by the donor organisation, in this case Sida, worked against their own aims and expectations of promoting local *participation* and *ownership*. The consequences of these structures also became visible in the effectiveness and performance of the project. In the Swedish side of the organisation, we often felt that our Kenyan partner was not active enough; they did not take the initiatives to drive the projects forward as we wanted them to. This in turn made the co-operation as a whole less successful. When the grant ended, as it usually does after a few years, we had not reached where we wanted. The projects did not carry on without the grant as was our hope and Sida´s expectation. During these years, I witnessed how structures for development co-operations laid out by a large western donor organisation,

hindered successful and sustainable development action. I do not say that we as the Swedish partner organisations did not also carry some of the responsibility for these failures, we obviously did. However, we followed the clear instructions we got from Sida.

As an undergraduate, in my bachelor thesis, I wanted to look deeper into these issues. I interviewed representatives from Swedish organisations similar to the one I have been involved in. Organisations that were also supported by Sida and that had co-operations with local partner organisation. In interviews, representatives of these organisations described views that in many ways were similar to my experiences (Eriksson, 2012). They all expressed the view that without the local organisation, their knowledge, experience and connections, it would simply not be possible to do run their projects. At the same time, they meant that the way the co-operation was structured, in which Forum Syd and Sida carried a lot of responsibility, did not promote participation but worked against it (Ibid).

Since my study mentioned above focused at these issues from the perspective of the Swedish partner organisation, I wanted this study to look at the same issue, but from the perspective of the local organisation and see their view on the co-operation with the main focus on the concept *participation*.

1.3 Discussion of the Research Problem

1.3.1 Who speak of participation

I have been studying development for the last five years. On an early stage I became familiar with the importance of participation as a *mean*, and sometimes also an *end*, within development. I have become familiar with the critique that has been aimed towards the way participation is sometimes used to describe certain development actions while in fact it is not participation at all but more the opposite. Surprisingly though, throughout these years I have rarely come in contact with the views on participation carried by the ones that are supposed to be the participants. The grass root organisations, the "target groups", "projects users", "beneficiaries" or "the poor". I don't know how they interpret the term participation or what they put into it. Just by going through policy papers of different development organisations or theorists, it becomes clear that

participation has many different meanings. Depending on to whom you phrase the question, the answer about what lies in the term participation and what role it has or should have in development work will differ. If we, then, take into account the wide meaning of the term and on top of that add the importance it clearly has in the development field, it becomes rather peculiar that I so rarely have come in touch with the views of those that are the core of the whole participation debate – namely the "poor", "target groups" "beneficiaries".

This study aims to investigate what participation look like in development co-operation between local grass root organisations and western donor organisations. The reality tends to differ depending on who gets to describe it, though without making it less real. This study takes its stand point in *through the lens and reality* of people working in these local organisations.

1.3.2 Development is politics

There is another dimension of the problem described above. In my view, development is as much a political field as it is scientific (Brohman, 1996). Just a brief look on development history tells us that scientific reflections of reality has connections to the, at the time, dominating political order or ideology (Hettne, 2008). All major development strategies or theories that has been substituting each other throughout modern development history, weather it is structuralism and dependency school or structural adjustment programs and neo liberalism, it can be argued that they carry more characteristics of politics than science. It would then be possible to assume that also the *paradigm of participation*, as many have chosen to call the current development era, might share the same political features (Mikkelsen, 2005). If we put participation under scrutiny there is indeed evidence that it is not at all a new concept within the development discourse and that participation too has clear political features (Cornwall, 2006). Aid or other forms of development support are given with clear demands or expectations from the donor, which, in turn, are affected by the political climate in the area from where the origin of the donor (Ibid).

What I have described above creates a dilemma for the use of participation in development practice. With clear terms from the donor, it is easy to see the limitations that it might have on target groups or receiving organisations and their chance to be involved or *own* projects. How

does this affect the local organisations that lie in the focus of this study? How does it affect the co-operation and the different parties' opportunity to be involved in decision making and in what way is the local perspective and knowledge taken into account? Who gets to formulate problems, solutions and strategies, and for who are they formulated? Whose reality counts (Chambers, 1983)?

1.3.3 The role of buzzwords and their need of scrutiny

Most development theorists agree that participation is one of the most significant development buzzwords of the last two decades (Mikkelsen, 2005). Along with terms like *empowerment* and *ownership* they constitute some the new development paradigm (Ibid). There are those that have pointed out that buzzwords can play a role as they provide a sort of moral framework and foundation for solutions, even more strongly when put together in a chain of other terms, for instance participation, empowerment and poverty reduction (Cornwall, 2005). At the same time, buzzwords are also something to hide behind or use to polish a surface. When it comes to participation, some argue it is used too widely and too loosely, and that it has therefore lost its meaning (Mikkelsen, 2005).

Participation as a concept constitutes an important part in contemporary development theory and practice (Mikkelsen, 2005). It's connected with expectations of being "the right way to go"; meanwhile others claim that participation is often used manipulatively for development agencies to pretend they are on to something new when in reality it is the same old power structures and top-down rule as before (Cornwall, 2006). In my view, this paradox does in itself justify the relevance of this study. Buzzwords need scrutiny. One way to do that is to ask some of the key actors in the participation debate for their views, to create some understanding about how participation it is understood and used in "the field".

1.4 Purpose of the research

The study aims to investigate the concept of *participation* by looking at how it is used in international development co-operation. The focus lies on the perspective from local partner organisations. The aim is to, trough interviews with representatives of these local organisations,

find out how they understand participation and how, according to them, it is used in the co-operation between donor organisation and local partner organisations.

1.5 Research Question

- *According to the local organisation, how is local knowledge gained and utilized in the co-operation between western donor organisations and local Kenyan organisation?*
- *How do actors within local organisations - co-operating with western donors - perceive participation as a concept?*

1.6 Significance of the Research

The aim of the study is to contribute to the conceptualization of the important concept *participation* in development theory; this will be done in two ways. Firstly, I intend to find out how local knowledge, a crucial aspect within the concept of participation, is utilized in the co-operation between donor- and partner organisations. Secondly, examining representatives of local organisations and their understanding of concept participation as a whole is an important way to generate understanding about how theory and practice correlate when it comes to participation.

To explain it a bit more, it has been pointed out by many important development theorists (among others Chamber, Hettne, Kothary) that one key aspect of the term participation is the gain and use of local knowledge - knowledge about cultural contexts, norms and social structures in a particular area. That knowledge, according to the same important theorists, is a key in the designing of successful and sustainable development work. The four local Kenyan organisations that have participated in this study, and the representatives that have been interviewed, do posses this local knowledge to a great extant. This study tries to bring up their views on how their knowledge is utilized in the co-operation with the donor organisation. My belief is that these views will be make small but useful contributions to how we understand and use the concept participation in development theory and practice.

As mentioned, the study not only aims to look at how local knowledge is utilized, the actual understanding of participation as a concept *and* the views on how it is working on the ground is relevant to the whole development field. There is a potential problem if academic and theoretical actors have one understanding of *participation*, and actors that carry out development work have another. These potential issues become more even relevant to investigate due to the strong connections between politics and science within the development field and the status of buzzword that characterizes *participation* that are mentioned above. By being strongly connected to politics, there is a risk that development strategies are more connected to a political belief than scientific evidence. It also brings potential issues of bias as political development agencies have an interest in keeping their reputation intact and might therefore not be too willing to search for weakness in their own work and strategies. These issues do in themselves, and top of the two more specific arguments for significance, always argue for the significance of any study that aims to investigate such a contested a politicised concept.

1.7 Scope of the research

As a development student, and as the author of a soon finished master theses sometimes attention turns away from what this scientific field is really about. The main purpose of scientific field development studies is still, despite sometimes tangled up in discussions about discuses, meanings and concepts, finding ways to improve the lives for marginalized, poor, hungry. This paper concerns different parties and agents in development co-operation where the purpose of the work is exactly this. As big multinational development donors also are involved in these development co-operations for instance through funding or being behind programs executed through local organisations, the paper concerns them too. Especially since they in many ways share the academic responsibility in how influential theorists write, talk about and understand participation in development co-operation.

2. Literature Review

Participation in development theory has a widespread use (Mikkelsen, 2005). Below I will try to bring about some clarity about the origin of the concept and how it arose to become what it is today. I will then continue into the current use of participation, and some of the critique that has been, and still is, aimed towards the concept. I will do this by lifting up some key theorists and authors on the topic and through their view create a foundation upon which this study will stand. I do not intend to cover all aspects, meanings or usage of participation. I am mainly trying to 1) provide the reader with a general understanding of fundamental features within the concept of participation and 2) present and discuss the parts of participation that I find relevant for this paper and lay down a framework for analysis of my empirical material.

2.1 The concept of participation

In this first section of the literature review, we will take a brief look backwards to understand how participation came to earn it´s important position in the development field of today. Key concepts of participation and how it is being used today will be presented. I will also bring about some of the critique that has been aimed towards participation. For instance how participation came to be called the new development tyranny. I will also explain how participation will be used in this text.

2.1.1 Away with old habits

To get an idea of how participation came to earn its current position in development today, it is useful to start with a look backwards. Christens and Speer describes the period from the second world war up to the beginning of the 90: s like this.

> *"Community development (...) after the Second World War was driven by the knowledge and decision of experts. The experts were, almost without exeption, western white men with common conceptions about the recently post-colonial*

populations that they sought to develop. "Development" for these experts meant becoming more modern, rational, industrial ad westernized" (Christens & Speer, 2006:2).

In the beginning of the 90:s participation came to claim a position as one of the most important concepts in the international development debate; accompanied with courageous inspiring and fresh air breathing statements like "hand over the stick" or "putting the last ones first". According to Andrea Cornwall (2006), participation was shown in a light as though no one had ever heard of it before, which, according to her, was exactly the intention. In her article, *Historical aspects of participation* (2006), she argues that participation was not at all new, not in ideas nor terminology. But the early 90: s development establishment (World Bank and the United Nations) was in desperate need for something new, something that had never been tried before, and perhaps something that did not include their own expertise to provide answers they did not have as to how international development work were supposed to be carried out (Bliss & Neuman, 2008). Nelson and Wright also points out that the increased belief in participation came along with the decreased belief in government involvement that came along with the neo-liberal winds in the 80s (Nelson & Wright, 1995). A decreased public involvement made people start working for their development by starting community groups and small organisations which is how NGO:s and civil society movement that we see today started (Ibid)

The modern development ideas as we know them today came to be after the Second World War. The term development had been used before that, but then mainly as a mean by western colonizing powers to develop or "civilize" the populations in the colonies (Cornwall, 2006). By the end of the Second World War, and in the new era that the international community entered by forging of the UN, formulating *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and starting to liberate, or agree to let go of, former colonies, development was given the meaning it to some extent still has. That the "underdeveloped" world should catch up with the "developed" world, and that the people in these region should get "help" to start the journey towards industrialization, education and democratization (Allen & Thomas, 2000). Many claims that these are still the main features of contemporary development co-operation (Ibid).

Development has gone through a few different phases and, as mentioned earlier, the scientific theory upon which the practice has been built has often had clear connections with dominating political and ideological orientation. Walt Rostow´s "unilinear" model is a good example (Rostow, 1960, found in Desia & Potter, 2008:83). The model is step by step explaining how underdeveloped countries should follow America and Europe and focuses on economic development (Desia & Potter, 2008). In the late 60s, ideas that contested that economic growth alone could reduce poverty came along. It was argued that the concept of development as well as the understanding of poverty should in addition to economic aspects, also include other basic needs such as food, health and education (Ibid). This came in combination with structuralism that guided development strategies in the 70s with ideas of breaking dependency patterns by heavy state involvement in promoting infant industries and improving terms of trade (Allen & Thomas, 2000).

In the 80: s the neo-liberal winds that had started to blow blew also the development field into a new direction. Financial sanitation, heavy slashing of public expenses and exposure to global markets was the "new way" (Hettne, 2008). However, these reforms had some quite severe consequences and the 80: s has been called the lost decade (Ibid).

In just a brief look at development history it becomes clear that development has meant following a rout that not only had been pointed out but as well paved by experts and different actors in the global political scene. The intention was that these development paths would lead to improvement, in other words developing nations would become more like the developed in terms of political and economic systems – the origins of the experts.

In 1983, Robert Chambers, one of the most important theorist behind participation theory gave out the book *Rural Development – putting the last first* (Chambers, 1983), in which he brings up some crucial issues about contemporary development theory and practice. Chambers main concern, which is also illustrated in the title, is that development has to change focus. One, in my own interpretation, of his more crucial points, is how different forms of knowledge are valued. Chambers meant that the only valid – or at least the only important - knowledge in rural development by that time was the one produced by western science. He meant that contemporary

development research was too focused on quantitative methods, which could be misleading and done for the wrong reasons, such as just showing funders that the money had been well spent (Ibid). He stressed the importance of putting higher value to the "local knowledge". The following quote does, I think, capture these ideas rather well:

> *"To enable the poorest to do better, the starting point is to understand how they manage at present. And on this the poorest are the experts – they know more than ignorant outsiders who have not bothered to try to find out"* (Chambers, 1983:202).

These ideas of putting what Chambers meant as the "right" knowledge into focus, did indeed have its reason. Numerous development interventions had failed because of what many blamed on a too technocratic and economic orientated development approach (Bliss & Nuemann). Most of the development actions had up to this time been planned and carried out by national economists and political scientist (Ibid). What Chambers, among others, called for was a stronger perspective on "soft questions" – questions that allowed deeper examination of people´s life quality and did not only focus on material standard and economic growth (Ibid). The ideas were that technical or economic solutions have to be framed in accordance to local contexts. This required anthological perspectives but more importantly, it required the inclusion and participation of the target groups (Ibid). This was how Participatory Rural Apprisal came in as a concept in development work (Mikkelsen, 2005). PRA can be seen as a tool box with different forms of exercises that are design to visualize people's view on reality (Narayanasamy, 2009). They are design to work across language barriers and keep for instance a seminar leader from putting words in people's mouths and instead let them describe their challenges, needs and suggest solutions (Mukherje, 2004). Christen & Speers have described the ideas of early participation theorist were to brake power imbalances between development professionals and local residents and the "top-down" approach of development institutions. By implementing participatory methods, development work would become empowering, democratic, just and effective.

2.1.3 Participation in Development Today

As stated above, participatory development worked its way from the academia into the policy papers and implementation plans of international development organisations during the 90s and as we entered the new millennium it was established as an important development concept (Mikkelsen, 2005). The meaning of development is in itself target of debate and has connection to participation as a concept. Critique has been aimed towards the idea of development being about repeating what others have done before them (Hettne, 2008). Development as a term needs countries, regions or continents to be *behind* others (Ibid). This is a topic of its own and a more thorough discussion lies beyond the frames of this thesis. It does, however, have relevance to this paper and I believe to the development field as a whole as it circles the origin of the term development and shows on its limitations that we to some extent are still trapped in (Cornwall, 2006). The reasoning above is something that the development establishment – the major organisation like the UN, World Bank and national aid organisations - in the early 90:s did acknowledge, at least parts of it (Bliss & Neumann). The almost 50 years of more or less disappointing development initiatives called for something radically new (ibid).

It has been argued that the new participatory approach has not at all broken old structures but instead helped to reproduce them (Cornwall, 2006). These discussions will be examined later in this chapter. However, the idea in the early 90s - and still - when *participation* stepped into the development picture was that this in fact was something radically new (Ibid). Now, development should instead of being pointed out and paved by experts, be framed based on dialog with all the involved parties with extra attention paid to beneficiaries and target groups. Local knowledge was to be incorporated as an important part of development planning and implementation (Bliss&Nueman, 2008).

In the 90: s, and perhaps as a part of the ideas of participation – NGO's gained a position as key actors in development processes (Brohman, 1996). With the grass root perspective, local knowledge, not to mention cost efficient methods, NGO's around the world have been trusted with more and more responsibility and financial support. The development establishment had at this point spotted poorly run states and governmental institutions as another immense hinder to development accomplishments. Malfunctioning institutions and corruption turned important

political and economic sectors of the society into clogged bottlenecks in development processes (Smith & Todaro, 2009).

It has often been described that in many developing countries of the world, there are uneven power relations between three main parts of the society - the state, the market and the civil society. The state and the market are too strong in comparison to the civil society. This has negative effects on the democratic process as it limits channels for accountability. Corrupt and inefficient governments do not have the incentive to improve due to lack of established channels through which citizens can hold politicians and corporate leaders responsible. Participatory development and NGO: s have therefore become important bricks in development strategies as it is seen as a way to strengthen the civil society which would promote democratisation processes.

In these new policies, emphasis is put on getting marginalized and excluded groups to participate in for instance local politics and other activities that concern them. In 2003, the World Bank *World Development Report,* name two factors needed for developing countries to increase democracy; *"(...) nongovernmental organisations for monitoring and evaluating government and corporate performance..."*(World Bank, 2003:23), and *"(...) Increased voice – an expansion of substantive democratisation and participation(...)"*. (World Bank, 2003:23) In another World Bank document from 2008, dealing with agricultural development, it is stated that:

> *"The world has turned its attention to governance. Ongoing process of democratization, civil society participation, the rising weight of agribusiness, public sector management reforms, corruption control, and decentralization hold great potential for improving agricultural performance".* (World Bank, 2008: 246)

The quotes above are presented here to illustrate the new era of development work. When going through development literature and policy papers as the ones quoted above, we can see a few key aspects included in this "new development era", and that these aspects are linked together. My own way of summarizing this era and role that *participation* has in it would be:

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There is an overall target of promoting democracy and good governance (World Bank, 2008). To do this, the civil society is to be supported to more effectively pressure and monitor political leaders and hold them accountable for their performance (Sida, 2009). This, in turn, includes more *participation* from citizens in countries and regions. This participation is done best when people come together, ideally through organizations (Ibid). As a consequence, western development agencies have during the last two decades, highly increased the support to NGO: s (Ibid). The NGO's, with their local knowledge and adequate connection to "the people" become key actors in implementing these policies.

2.1.4 Instrumental and transformational participation

Participation is used and defined in many different ways within the development field (Potter et al, 2008). I development theory participation is often divided into participation as a *means - instrumental -* and participation as an *end- transformational*. The discussion about *instrumental* and *transformational* participation (see below) is useful as it highlights the complexity of the concept and helps us understand what we talk of when we talk about participation. The discussion is here partly used to clarify the different meanings of the concept participation which will help us as we move further into this paper.

Instrumental participation means that participation is used as a means to improve development work, make it more effective, sustainable and successful by including the "users" or beneficiaries in a project. *Transformational* participation draws to the ideas of people´s rights to get involved in matters that concern them and take control of their lives and surroundings as a part of an empowering process (Ibid). It has been argued that this distinction is inaccurate as it has been proven that participation can be both *instrumental* and *transformational* and that the two not necessarily take each other out. Although this input is relevant, it is, in my view, important to notice that participation can look quite different if it is seen as a means than if it is seen as an end and vice versa. Thus, it is important to take the distinction into account in development work as well as research. Mikkelsen (2005) points out that aid intervention in many ways would be more efficient if distinction between the two were made clear in the design phase of aid programmes.

2.2 Participation – a contested concept

In this section I intend to, in a quite brief way, present some of the main critiques aimed towards participation by a few of many important development theorists. The frames of a master thesis force the author to limit the theoretical material quite a bit. Other authors or development scientists might have made other choices in what to present as important critical voices in the participation debate. Below I am presenting the inputs in the debate on participation that I find relevant to development studies as well as this particular study.

The concept participation has in recent years been the target for some heavy critique (Mikkelsen, 2005). Above in this chapter it has been described how development came in as the "hope" in the beginning of the 90: s, something that broke with old patterns of development work and lay a foundation for a new way of thinking and acting.

When examining how participation is criticized in development literature, one book that has to be mentioned is *Partcipation – the new Tyranny?* In this book, Bill Coke and Uma Kothari put together voices and views from different persons from the development field, many of them with vast experience from practical development work. The descriptions and analysis made by the authors suggest that very little of what is said to be included in the participatory concept actually happens (Coke & Kothari, 2001). The "tyranny", as the authors describes it, lies in how the maintenance of existing power relationships are covered up behind *rhetoric of participation* (Christens & Speer, 2006).

Coke and Kothari identifies three different types of "tyranny" in relation to participation. 1) The control of decision-making that multinational development agencies and funders have. 2) The way participation is carried out in development work often contributes to maintaining and exacerbating local power differentials. 3) Participation has a dominating position as a development method in relation to other methods for development promotion. It is said that participation holds such a strong position that its advocates become ignorant and closed for dialog or consideration of other methods (Coke & Kothari, 2001, Christens & Speer, 2006).

Mosse & Cleaver brings up another important aspect of the participation concept in their discussion of local knowledge (Mosse and Cleaver, 2001, in Coke & Kothari). Within the participation concept lays, as mentioned, a strong belief in local knowledge. This was also emphasised by Chambers, who together with others designed special methods (PRA) to get hold of that knowledge. Mosse and Cleaver add to these ideas that local knowledge is not to be seen as a "fixed commodity" that can be searched for and picked up by researchers. It is a product of social relations and continues to develop as time goes and depending on who is present (Ibid).

Mikkelsen (2005) brings up the gender issue as an aspect in certain need for sensitivity; this is related to the mentioned maintenance of power relations. Mikkelsen describes how examples show how women have been excluded when participatory methods have been incorporated in development work and research. Even in cases where they are not excluded, women can still remain silent if the participatory approach is not design with sensitivity to local social-political environments.

Looking at the different critical voices presented above it is possible to locate one thing they all have in common. They do not oppose that involvement of target groups in development projects is a desired ingredient in development work. The critique is aimed towards the problem that sufficient levels of participation are seldom or never reached. In my view, much of the critique mentioned here is aimed towards that participation is in reality *not* participation but something else. The way power relations are maintained under a covering blanket of *participation*, is described as insufficient or fake levels of participation (Kothari & Coke, 2001). The same applies to the critique against how participation can maintain local power structures and keep excluded and marginalized groups outside (Mikkelsen, 2005). According to this way of reasoning, participation would, if actually implemented, help braking uneven power structures. In other word these are critiques against non-existing, or falsely alleged, participation. I think this is important to stress, as it might bring confusion that writers are against participation per se, when clearly they are not. Summarizing this critique, the question then remains: Is genuine participation ever reached and how is it reached? And is it actually that bad?

Hickey and Mohan (2004) also points out a useful connection between participation and the distinction of imminent and immanent development – linked to the discussion of instrumental and transformational participation. The latter refers to development as an inherent process closely linked to historical and larger political and socioeconomic processes in society as a whole (Hickey & Mohan 2004). Imminent development is the one that is possible to foresee and, more importantly, to "manufacture". Mohan means that too strong focus on imminent development isolate development projects from the world around without taking ongoing social processes into account (Ibid). Participation will, in the imminent development mostly be locked to be only instrumental since it focus on particular development interventions. She argues that a more immanent focus in development work as a whole would also have the effect that the participation could more transformational.

2.3 Aid Effectiveness

In this theory chapter, it will be useful to bring up the discussion about aid effectiveness taking the stand point in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), at the second and third High Level Forum organized by OECD (OECD, 2015). The Paris Declaration is a joint statement from donors and partner countries (countries receiving multilateral or bilateral aid) where a few key aspects are recognized as crucial in order to improve the effectiveness of aid interventions in order to reach the Millennium Development goals of eradicating poverty and inequality.

In the Paris Declaration, five specific factors are described as crucial areas for improved aid effectiveness. On OECD: s homepage (2015), they are presented and explained as:

- **Ownership:** Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.
- **Alignment:** Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems.
- **Harmonisation:** Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.

- **Results:** Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured.
- **Mutual accountability:** Donors and partners are accountable for development results.

The focus in the Paris Declaration, which is discussed and followed up in the Accra Agenda for Action, is that development investments can be much improved by a strengthen partnership with mutual responsibility between donor and partner country. Also, it is clearly stated that the development interventions should be based on strategies and plans formulated by the partner countries and that development work should be adjusted to be in line with national institutional and cultural structures (Paris Declaration, 2005). Looking at the emphasis on using existing national structures within the partner countries, the focus on partnership as well as ownership does, in my view, have clear connections with participation as a concept and to the focus on development co-operation which is the focus of this study.

A limitation of the discussion of aid effectiveness, at least in regard to these High Level Forum documents and in connection to this paper, is its focus on bilateral and multilateral co-operations. As seen in the bullet points above, most of the proposed actions and implementations are focusing on the co-operation between donor and partner countries, meaning low- or middle income countries (OECD, 2015). However, it is also stated in the report that the countries and organisation behind the declaration do *"(...) encourage all development actors (...) to use the Declaration principles as a point of reference in providing development co-operation* (OECD, 2015:18).

The discussion of aid effectiveness is useful to this study as the ideas of ownership, partnership and development interventions to be in line with local or national structures are all parts of the participation concept. The Paris Declaration is also a good example of participation when used and seen as instrumental. We will come back to that later in this paper.

2.4 Participation in this text

After this theoretical review, I will explain how participation is to be understood in the context of my study. The aim of the study is to get the view on participation expressed by representatives of local Kenyan organisations. The idea is to create space in which they can fill participation with what it means to them, this will be explained more in chapter 4. Therefore I have avoided to in detail defining the term. Below, I will contradict this a little bit by still setting up a few frames for what kind of participation I am looking at. I is done as a way to clarify to the reader what part of the vast topic participation is in focus and how I which to contribute to the understanding around it.

Even if I avoid defining the term participation, some basic frames could still be clarified. The study focuses on the co-operation between donor organisations and local partner organisation and to see how participation is used. The study leaves out questions concerning the participation of target groups or communities. This also means leaving out some important transformational aspects of participation and focus on what might appear to be mostly instrumental participation (Mohan, 2004).

An aspect I will focus on is for instance is how local knowledge is utilized within the frames of the co-operation. Another interesting aspect is how, according to the respondents, the work of formulating problems and designing projects is organized between the different parties (Mikkelsen 2004).

Note again though, that the qualitative research method used in the study is designed to allow other the above mentioned aspects of participation to be into light. It is likely, and maybe also desirable, that other aspects of participation might emerge later on.

It should also be mentioned, before we move in to the next chapter, that a deeper discussion of the aid effectiveness concept could in many ways have contributed with useful and interesting inputs to this paper. However, the starting point of the study is participation and so is the empirical material. Due to this, it lies outside the frames of this study to discuss it any deeper.

3 Analytical Framework

In this chapter I will present and motivate the choice of analytical framework that later will be used in the analysis of the presented empiric material. Chamber categorisation into three uses of participation will be used in. The chapter end with a discussion about the limitations of the framework.

3.1 Different ways of categorizing participation

When studying how participation is described and discussed in development literature, a vast number of categorisations are found. From what I have come across these tables, ladders or categorisations are often scales from desired to undesired (good to bad) uses of participation. One of the first models used to categorize participation was the 'ladder of participation' by S. R. Arnsatain (1969). It is a ladder with eight different stages of participation, where some where the first one is manipulation and the last one is referred to as citizen control.

From the different categories that I have come across, many of them are focused on the transformational participation (see above) (Mikkelsen, 2005). Especially when the mentioned value-loaded categorisations are used, it often refers to participation as an end in itself where increased participation is linked to empowering and democratisation processes, an example is the Arnsatain (1969) but there are many others. These aspects are important and the categorisations do, in my view, have an important function in the development debate. However, as mentioned above, this study is aimed more towards the *instrumental* − participation as a means. Primarily the study has the local organisations in focus and not the beneficiaries, this means that questions about public participation as a part of empowerment lies outside the focus of the study.

3.2 Table 1 Three levels of participation

First, it is used as a cosmetic label, to make whatever is proposed appear good. Donor agencies and governments require participation approaches and consultants and managers say that they will be used, and then later that they have been used, while the reality has often been top-down in a traditional way.

Second, it describes as a co-opting practice, to mobilize local labor and reduce costs. Communities contribute their time and effort to self-help projects with some outside assistance. Often it means "they" (local people) participate in "our" project.

Third, it is used to describe an empowering process which enables local people   to do their own analysis, to take command, to gain confidence and to make their own decisions. In theory, this means that "we" participate in "their" project, not "they" in "ours". It implies a commitment to equity, empowering those who are marginalized, excluded and deprived, often especially women.

After Mikkelsen, 2005, p: 53, After Chambers, 2002b and 1995

There are a few reasons as to why this categorisation has being used. In comparison with other types of categorisations to that I have come across, for instance "the ladder of participation" by Sherry R Aronstein (1969), the one above takes a quite wide grasp and it is suitable also when talking about participation as *instrumental*. Chambers in this case has not been too specific in describing the different stages. Instead it is left quite open and only in general terms does it describe the elements in every stage. This serves the purpose study well since it aims to have an open standpoint towards the concept of participation and let the respondents from the organisations fill it with their own meaning. It could be argued that this paper could be well off also without any such model. This would be a fair comment. On the other hand, the study takes its point of departure in contemporary participation theory. Thus, it needs to have a relevant connection to it. By using the model above, I believe it will be possible to connect the empirical material with existing theory in a clear way.

In the beginning of this paper, I have mentioned that I wrote my bachelor thesis about the same topic – participation – but through the perspective of the Swedish NGO (Eriksson, 2012). In this thesis I also used Chambers way of categorising development work, I therefore think that it would be interesting to use the same analytical framework and would connect these to papers as two contributions to the same debate about participation in development co-operation.

3.3 Limitations of the framework

Chambers categorisation will, I think, for the above mentioned reasons be useful in the analysis of the empirical material. However, it should be clarified how I intend to use it. The study aims to have an open approach to the concept of participation in order to give space for the respondent's views and understandings to come through. Because of this, the categorisation will not be used strictly to find out where the organisations in the study can be squeezed into one or the other of the three categories. Merely, it will be used as a point of reference that can offer guidance when discussing the empirical material. As mentioned earlier, this is also an advantage with the categorisation, that it in general term describes different uses of participation. It will be possible to discuss if the study shows that most of the organisations fit better into one of the stages or better into the other.

3. Method

In this chapter I will discuss the methodology of the research. Some extra attention will be paid to the semi-structured interview as it constitutes the most important part of the study. There will be a discussion about the challenges with field work and how I have taken them into account when conducting the data. In the end of the chapter, some important limitations that comes as result of the methodological choices will be also be discussed.

4.1 Methodological considerations

4.1.1 Qualitative Research

The study aims to provide understanding about how international development co-operation works in terms of *participation*. I am interested in the perspective of the local partner organisation (definition of local organisation will be given below). The aim is to get an idea of how people in local development organisation interpret participation and their own experience of how it is being used in their work. By studying these views it is possible to create understanding about how participation is perceived by the ones that are meant to participate and how their highly valued local knowledge is utilized (Mikkelsen, 2005). By investigating these matters, the aim is to create understanding of how participation works in "the field" and contribute to the conceptualization concept of participation (Esaisson, Gilljam, Oscarsson & Wängerup, 2010).

When trying to create knowledge about how people perceive certain situations or topics in their reality, qualitative methodology and long interviews has many advantages. Grant McCracken has described it in the following way:

> *"The method (long interview) can take us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world. It can also take us into the life world of the individual, to see the content and pattern of daily experience"* (McCracken, 1988:9).

McCracken describes the use of interviews as useful when the purpose of the research is to create deeper understanding of certain phenomena (McCracken, 1988). He also explains that an important aspect of qualitative methodology in comparison with quantitative is the isolating indicators in causal relations, which is normally the focus in quantitative research. When using qualitative methodology, it is neither always possible nor desirable to beforehand determine the indicators. Instead, indicators can often be defined *during* the research. It is important to design a method that is receptive towards unpredicted answers (McCracken, 1988). Since the aim of my study is to understand people´s views of their reality (views on how participation works according to them), a qualitative conversational method has therefore been chosen.

There are many different approaches in the arsenal of qualitative methods that probably would have been useful for this study (Bryman, 2012). When designing research methodology, one important questions that needs to be asked is: what kind of question do I want to answer? Does the study aim to be *descriptive* or *explanatory* (Punch, 2005)? In this study, the intention is to find out *how* the representatives in the local organisations perceive the concept of participation and – also through interviews –find out *why* certain views are expressed. In other words, get a deeper knowledge of how the co-operation with the donors works. The study can therefore be said to bare characteristics of being *explanatory* (Ibid).

It is possible to argue against the statement that the study is explanatory. This is true if we look at the possible outcome. It is not certain that I will be able to explain the data. However, this is still the intention - to try and understand the underlying mechanism of how participation is perceived in the field and how power relations and other factors affect the use of participation in development project. In the phase of deciding on methodological techniques, it is the intention of the study and not the potential outcome or result that is important (Esaiasson et.al, 2010).

4.1.2 Choice of Location

I will just briefly describe the choice of having Nairobi as the centre of the study. It does not have a lot to do with deeper analysis of different areas of the world. The reason why Nairobi was chosen had more to do with where the researcher (me) happened to be at the time of the study.

Nairobi is, however, in any way you look at it a good place for this kind of study. In terms of development, Nairobi is the centre of the whole of East Africa and many development organisations of various kind and size are located here. Another convenient aspect is that I have a good network of friends and contact that helped me get in touch with the organisations in the study and give me a "shortcut" into the core of the organisation without having to put too much effort in proving myself as trustworthy. I have mentioned in the acknowledgements that without the help from these friends, it would have been much harder to collect the empirical material.

4.1.2 Definition of a local Organisation

Before moving on to the next section, I will bring some clarity about what I mean when I say "the local organisation", I do not intend to construct a general definition but only explain how it is used in this particular paper. Local organisation is referred to as an organisation located in the area *where the development work is carried out*. In addition to that, the local organisation should be the *recipient* of economic support and thus responsible (at least partly) for producing the intended outcome of a certain development activity. Furthermore, the people working at the organisation, Kenyan or non-Kenyan, should have good experience, connections and knowledge to the community they are working in.

4.2 Interviews

4.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The main method for gathering the empiric material has been done through semi-structured interviews. Four different organisations have been used. The four different organisations are Hot Sun Foundation, Ex-Convicts, Uzima Foundation and Kamash. They have all given their approval that the real name of the organisations and those of the respondents can be used. In total, six interviews have been conducted, two from Hot Sun Foundation and Ex-convicts, and one from Uzima Foundation and Kamash.

There are a few reasons why semi-structured interviews have been chosen. Looking at the purpose of the study, two important things had to be taken into consideration. *One*, the frames of

the interview had to be open and receptive enough to give space for the respondent to put his/her influence on for instance the meaning of participation. I wanted to avoid a situation with a too detailed interview guide that could risk to put too much of my own ideas and perspectives on participation (Halvorsen, 2009). On the other and, due to reasons of external validity (Esiasson 2010), I had to make sure that whatever we talked about during the interview were connected to the topic of the study. The risk would otherwise be that I, in the end, did not have data that could answer my research question or draw any conclusions (Ibid).

Keith F Punch (2005) points out that the semi-structured interview lies somewhere in between the structured and the unstructured interview. The former is tightly structured with precise questions and often with pre-coded categories and the latter is loosely constructed where the questions are not pre-planned and the idea is to let the respondent lead the conversation (Ibid). *Semi-structured* interviews have been chosen because of its pragmatic character as it gives space for the respondents to affect the direction of the conversation and at the same time allow the interviewer to keep the conversation within the frames of the given topic. However, on the scale between the structured and the unstructured interview, this study have been aiming to lean more towards the unstructured. The interview guide (see Appendix) has questions concerning different aspects of development work and participation. These questions have during the interviews not been strictly followed. Instead I have during the interview tried to ask many open follow-up questions to whatever has been uttered. The interview guide has worked more as a guide for me as an un-experienced interview leader and as a tool to lead the interview forward (Esiasson, 2010).

Respondent vs Informant

I chose to look at the persons participating in my interviews as respondents and not informants. It is described in the methodology literature that I have come across that informants are used as experts; they can be described as an extra observer and are used for their "objective" knowledge on a certain topic (Repstad, 1999). Respondents are used when the researcher is more interested in the subjective feelings, views and opinions (Ibid). When applying this way of reasoning on my study, we end up in a grey zone. As representatives of a development organisation and as active development practitioners answering questions about development work in their area and

participation – the people being interview for this paper are clearly respondents. At the same time, and this is why I insist on calling them respondents, I am not interested in their objective description about outcome of their work. Primarily I am interested in their personal views and understandings.

4.2.2 Sampling

Sampling considerations for this study is about deciding which organisation and which representatives within the organisation that should take part (Punch, 2005). The process turned out to be relatively challenging. As a consequence of the topic and the angle of the research question, there are a number of factors that need to be taken into account. In addition to the ones most researchers face, there have been those that come as a consequence of the location of the study.

Strategic sampling has been used. In the literature I have come across a few other ways of describing this type of sampling – for instance *deliberate sampling* or *purposive sampling* (Punch, 2005). I chose to call it strategic sampling, it is called that in Swedish and I think it captures the concept well. All of them refer to the type of sampling where the researcher strategically selects the study object so that they as much as possible are representative for the purpose of the research (Halvorsen, 2008). In the case of this study the representativeness has two dimensions. The *organisation* and the *respondents* within the organisation (see below).

Another thing to take into consideration is *variation* (Punch, 2005). The aim of the study is to learn about the perceptions that representatives of the organisations have about participation. Through this, I want to be able to say something about development co-operation in general. Therefore, large variety would serve the purpose of the study well. If the empirical material would show that different kinds of local organisations have the same views of certain aspect of participation, chances are high that there are more organisations with similar experiences (Esiasson et al. 2010). The same principles of variation have been used when choosing the respondents within the organisations. I have tried to get in touch with people on different positions in the organisation in order to get a broad view of what people in general think. There

are of course limitations in how much it is possible to generalize on a small study like this one. These are, however, the principles that have been guiding the sampling process.

Choosing the organisations

The most prioritized factor when selecting the organisations was the existence of a donor, since I am interested in the co-operation between the two. Another factor was what we can call the "willingness" of the organisation. By this I mean that the organisation as a whole seems positive towards the idea of the study. I took it into consideration since it can be seen as a means for the respondent to be able to freely and confidently express views and personal opinions (Esiasson, 2010). Due to my own experience from NGO's around Nairobi, not all of them are easy to get in touch with or have good experiences of outsiders coming in to ask them questions.

"The way in" is another factor, connected to "willingness", that guided me when selecting the organisations. This is of course a complicated process and I have not gone into detail in the analysis, however, due to the fact that the study risk to fail completely if I don't find respondents that can speak their mind, it had to be taken into consideration (Esiasson, 2010). To meet the challenge I have used my contacts in Nairobi as much as I can. I got in touch with two of the organisations, Ex-Convicts and Kamash, through a friend with good connections to members of the organisations. The other two (Hot Sun Foundation and Uzima Foundation), I got in touch with through a friend who interviewed representatives of these organisations for a documentary. In this way I got a convenient shortcut into the organisation and it was easier for me to gain trust since I could "use" my friends as reference.

Yet another factor that I have used as a compass while judging the "willingness" of the organisation has been the structures and the process of getting in touch people within it. In cases where there has been a long bureaucratic process or when the decision whether it is ok to do the interviews has been sent to the top executives of the organisation, I have judged this as a factor that might put pressure or limitation on the respondent. Another factor when it comes to create a good climate is of course myself as the interview leader, which will be discussed below.

Choosing the respondent

Above I mention how principles of variation have been used when electing the respondents. The initial plan was to use what Esiasson et al in Swedish describe as the "snow ball model" (Esiasson et al, 2010:293). He refers to a sampling process where you let one respondent direct you to the next that will direct you to the next, etc. This worked fairly well only with limitation that in two of the organisation the potential respondents were quite few. One crucial aspect to discuss is which position the respondent should have within the organisation in order to provide empirical material that lies in line with the study purpose. In that discussion it is important to stress that I am looking at the co-operation between the organisation and the donor. This means that the respondent needs to have some experience of that co-operation. To some extent, this leaves out the "target groups" or "beneficiaries" of the development activity and puts focus on people with leading positions within the organisation. This might not be true in all cases but from my almost ten years of working with and in a similar organisation, this is my experience, so the selection of respondents was partly based on that assumption. The question about how the beneficiaries or target groups are involved in the projects aiming to support them lies at the core of the participation concept and is indeed an important issue. However, this study focuses on the co-operation between the donors and the local organisation, therefore the strategic sampling has focused specifically on people within the local organisation with experiences from working with the donors.

4.3 Field Work

W. Lawrence Neuman Describes field work as appropriate when *"… the research question involves learning about, understanding or describing a group of interacting people"* (Nueman, 2006:379). Furthermore, he means that terms like "field site" or "setting" are misleading and do not capture the core of fieldwork. According to him, a "site" of fieldwork is in fact a social relation that can interact through physical borders and does often include different locations (Neuman, 2006). This reasoning goes well in line with this study, and according to it I think it is possible to argue that my study is a type of fieldwork. This further argues that usual consideration taken into account when using fieldwork as a research method has to be accounted for in this study as well.

4.3.1 My role as researcher

During the time I have been working with small organisations in Nairobi, I have noticed that documentation can be a problem and a potential source of insecurity. I have been in situations where cameras or recording equipment has limited the "access" to certain organisations. Esiasson (2010) writes that the interview leader has to put the comfort of the respondent first, both for ethical reasons and for the quality of the study. Therefore no recording equipment has been used. The processes of documentation will be explained below.

There are a few other things to think about in the relationship between me and my respondents. McCracken describes how outsiders – researchers working in a different cultural environment than their own – has an advantage as everything is new for them (McCracken, 1988). He means that there are less things that are taken for granted and that the researcher has the benefit of seeing the environment with fresh eyes. The manufacturing of distance is therefore useful in qualitative research (Ibid). Esiasson et al also describes the importance of keeping a scientific distance in order to remain objective and able to in a sober way analyse the data in accordance to the research problem (Esiasson et al, 2010). On the other hand, in fieldwork, gaining trust and access are crucial aspects to enable data collection (Nueman, 2006). It is important to find a "way in" and to create a positive and trustful relationship. In the case of this study, and for me as a researcher, the way in was my experience of having worked in a small Kenyan NGO for many years. As mentioned earlier, I have sometimes noticed a sceptic view among Kenyan organisations towards western journalists and researchers. In order to show that I was indeed trustworthy, I used my own experience as a point of departure before and during the interviews. I do believe this had a positive impact interviews in the sense that I think much of the scepticism was reduced, and trust gained. On the other hand, the scientific distance might have been affected by it.

4.3.2 Ethical Considerations

Under the section "My role as researcher" I have discussed the question of recording equipment. Also, it is discussed how I as a researcher affect the field. This is something that partly belongs to an ethical discussion (McCracken). How do I as a researcher affect the field and the people I intend to interview? When interviewing for instance "poor" or marginalized people, there is a chance that approval to participate in the study comes with hope of getting something out of it (Neuman, 2006). In addition to this, there are a few other things to consider in fieldwork. However, the character of this study, in my view, reduced the need for discussion in some ethical aspects. The reason is, as mentioned above, that my respondents are representatives of an organisation, they do not primarily represent their own persona. This has decreased the risk for intruding on personal space. All respondents are over 18 years and fully aware of how the results of the interviews will be used. They will have their full right to avoid answering any question or back out even after the interview is done. However, I don't see the topic of the study very sensitive and perhaps more importantly I will interview people as representatives of organizations not as private actors.

All respondents have read the summaries of our interviews, and have approved to it being used and published. They have also been promised to be given this report when it is done. The study have a general objective of improving development co-operations and in that sense they might find the study valuable, the knowledge created has a potential gain for the participating organisations (Neuman, 2006).

4.4 The risk of language barriers

All the interviews have been held in English and without any translator. This means that I, as well as my respondents have been communicating in our second language which always intails the risk of miscommunication as a result of language barriers (Neuman, 2006). As Kenya is a former British colony, all education in Kenya is held in English, which has the advantage that Kenyans are often quite comfortable in speaking it. One of the respondents expressed that he felt a bit limited by having to use English. However, I did not experience any difficulty in understanding him or felt that he had trouble expressing his views. If I were fluent in Swahili this

would probably improve the interviews, but that is not the case. To use a translator also comes with dilemmas (Neuman, 2006). Overall I did not see the language barrier as something that in an obvious way affected the outcome of the interviews.

4.5 How the interviews were conducted

After all the methodological discussions above, it could be helpful to clarify to the reader how the practical process of carrying out the interviews. I have in many ways touched upon it earlier in this chapter. It would still be helpful to, in a clear summarize it.

As mentioned earlier, recording equipment was not used. Instead, I was taking notes during the interview that I as soon as I could, summarised in a typed document. When summarizing the interviews, I was keen to reflect the entire interview, not just the parts that found most connected to the purpose of the research. After writing the summary, I went back to the respondent with the printed summary of the interview. We, me and the respondent, then when trough it together and the respondent then had the chance to check if I had understood him correctly. I then adjusted the interview summary according to the respondent´s comments. After letting the respondent having a last look and comment (sent and received through e-mail) I now had a final summary of each interview which constitutes the main part of my empirical material presented in the next chapter. Limitations of this process will be one the topics in the next section.

4.6 Limitation of the study

Many of the limitations that come as a result of the chosen methodology have already been touched upon. I will now discus some of the, according to me, most important ones.

When taking an explanatory standpoint, it is often suggested in methodology literature that *case study* is a useful method as it, through different forms of methodological techniques such as focus groups, observations and interviews, allows the investigator to look at a certain case in depth and through different angles (Bryman, 2012). When planning the methodology for this study, the intention was at first to use *case study*. In the end I decided not to, for two reasons. The first was that I was not sure whether the time frame of this thesis would allow me to carry

out a set of different methods. The second and most important reason, was that it was difficult to decide what my object of study was *a case of*. The organisations that later became the focus of the study were indeed all of them cases of how local participation was implemented in development project. But my experience told me that these kinds of small organisations often have quite unique structures or internal cultures – as is the case in *case studies* (Punch, 2005). Therefore, it would be hard to draw broad conclusions based on only one or two organisations. Instead, I decided to take on an angle a bit shallower and use a few more organisation. The idea was also that these organisation could be a little bit different in their structures. If the study would come to show some common features in the different organisations, it would to a higher extent be possible to generalize and draw conclusion based on it. Of course a study of this extent does not lay a very solid foundation for any generalization, but that, I think, still has to be the aim for any researcher.

Another important limitation is connected to discussions of sampling. As the study aim to investigate the co-operation it can be argued that the study should have aimed to bring up both sides – both the local organisation and the donor- and not just one of them. This could have helped providing a more dynamic and nuanced understanding of the research topic. This is a fair question and I might have done it if I did the study again. It is true that it could have given the study more relevance, however, I judged it be outside the focus of the study as the main aim was to get the view of the local organisation. In my view, and one of the reasons behind the research perspective, the multinational donor organisation do not have the problem of not being heard to the same extant as small local organisation. I have, however, tried to complement with views from some of these organisations in the Literature Review.

Now to the limitation of the documentation methods used during the interviews. In most methodology literature that I have come across when planning the study, recorded interviews are preferred (Esiasson, 2010). Not recording limits the study as it makes the researchers values and interpretation extra present in the in the research. When taking notes, even if the respondents afterwards approve of them, the researcher will note what s/he find important and leave out the things that s/he finds irrelevant. On the other hand I think that these issues do, to some extent, apply also when recording interviews. In the end of the day, the researcher decided what part of

the interviews that will be brought up in the report and what will remain in an appendix in the back. The researcher is also the one deciding what to use in the analysis. I have tried to handle these limitations by presenting the written-down interviews in the empirical material as a whole (see below).

5 Empirical Material

In this chapter, the empirical material will be presented. The reader will notice that some part might appear a little repetitive or is not in a clear way connected to the research topic. This is because every section starts with a general introduction of the organisation. This information is gathered from the organisations websites or in general documents. The introductions are followed by the interviews. The whole summary, of the interviews, meaning a summary of everything that was said during the interview, is presented. In the interviews the respondents are asked to describe their organisation with their own words which will be a little repetitive to what is presented as general information about the organisation. The reason for doing this, as I describe in the previous chapter, is to avoid myself as a researcher to angle the empirical material by selecting what to bring up and what to leave out.

The respondents have themselves decided how they want their names to be used in the text; therefore some will be mentioned with their first name and others with their surname. The few quotes found below have all been seen and approved by the respective respondent.

5.1 Ex-convicts – general about the organisation

Two representatives from the organisation ex-convicts have been interviewed for this study - Michael and Najma Wanjiru. Before we move on to the interviews, we will start with a brief presentation of ex-convicts as an organisation.

According to Ex-convicts (from now on referred to as EXC) website, the organisation started in 2001 as an organisation supporting ex-prisoners as they were relieved from prison (Ex-convicts, 2013). The aim of the organisation was to help them find alternative ways to earn a living in order to avoid going back to their criminal careers. The organisation is located in Kariobangi, an area known for its social problems and high levels of crime, often gang-related. After a few years EXC also started working with young people with the aim of preventing them from engaging into criminal activities (Ex-convicts, 2013). They do this by going out to schools in the area to

talk, this is done by ex-prisoners and the point is to give the real (non-glamorous) views of a criminal life. They also support the youth with training in skilled labour, e.g. welding, plumbing, mechanics etc. This is done through specially designed programs that when completed offers loans to the student to start a small business. The organisation has a board of directors and about 40 members, they also have other non-members that are still active in the organisation in the way that they participate in certain activities (Ibid).

5.1.1 Interview with Michael

All of what is presented under this section is a reflection on Michael views that came out during our interview that was held 2014-04-09.

Michael have been working for ex-convicts since it started in 2001, he has a leading role in the organisation with a focus on administrative work. EXC started off by supporting men in the area of Kariobangi as they returned from prison sentences. Michael, the chairman, explains how they in different ways try to support them to leave the path of crime. Many factors has to be taken into account to be able to achieve this, a place to stay and learning a profession in order to earn a living are some of the key factors. Today the organisation also works preventive with young men who are on their way into a criminal carrier. They bring elder EXC together with these young men trying to show the negative sides of crime and encourage alternative ways of life. Even though EXC have been dealing not only with people released from prison for a long time, they have decided to keep the name because it is provocative and trigger reactions that according to Michael is positive, as it helps them to stand out among the countless numbers of organisations around Nairobi.

Michael's vision is to open a centre in Kariobangi where young people from the area would have access to education, life-skill support and other things that would help them on their way to a future free from crime.

At the moment, the means funding the organisation are private money collected through events but also by letting members pay small fees. In the beginning of 2013, they received funding from

USAID to host seminars in Kariobangi to prevent Muslim extremism that had started to grow and cause problems in the area.

The organisation has around 40 members and almost another 40 that are not members but are still within reach as they participate in activities organised by EXC. On top of that they have seven staff-members, some of them more active than others, and they are working to get an official board into place.

Co-operation with USAID

Michael emphasise in our interview that the co-operation between donors and local organisation in their case can clearly be improved. According to his own experience with USAID, they as a local NGO have had little influence on important decisions in the two education projects they have run together. In the workshops they hosted with USAID as the funder, EXC were given an implementation plan with detailed instruction of how the project was to be carried out. EXC were allowed to give the workshops a name. [1]

Another issue during the co-operation was that USAID were only dealing with one contact person from EXC - one of the staff-members. Michael explains how this creates a chain of problems not only for EXC, but most certainly, he thinks, for other similar organisations too. A result of this was that the information that reached the staff and the members were scarce. This created rumours and mistrust between those on leading positions and the members. According to Michael, he had to stand a lot of criticism from the members since he, on a key position in the organisation, was not able to give information about the grant. Michael continues to explain how these reactions from the members are understandable since corruption is a huge problem within in the development sector in Kenya, and as soon as big foreign donors get involved tension shoots high and if things are not done in an open way people will get suspicious. In light of that, Michael stresses the point of how strange it is that USAID implement routines like these when they hand out grants to local organisations.

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[1] See *Stakeholder Work shop - WORKIING WITH POSITIVE GANGS AGAINST EXTREMISM,* www.exconvicts.org

Areas of improvement

With a point of departure from Michaels experiences from dealing with USAID, there are a few key areas that could improve. One of them is what Michael chose to call "boots on the ground". Michael is aware that USAID build most of their work on their own research. The problem is sometimes that the research, and the reality that it describes, can differ quite a bit from the one experienced by organisations like EXC. Michael gives the example of the work shop that they, EXC, held in co-operation with USAID, which he after all describes as quite successful. That work shop aimed to tackle Muslim extremism that is an arising issue in some parts of Nairobi. However, Michael thinks that there are other more urgent issues to tackle, like the massive spread of firearms in the area, or the difficulty of earning an honest living without education. And without totally dismissing the research done by the USAID, Michael points out that EXC have a vast experience and connection to Kariobangi as most of the members and the staff members grew up in the area.

The issue about who gets to describe the reality and formulate problems and solutions is the second area of improvement pointed out by Michael. That is the process in which the joint work is being carried out. As Michael explains above, USAID handed out an implementation plan with detailed instruction of how the project was to be carried out. Michael suggests that it would be better if the planning of the projects would be a joint process where the two parts came together to plan, implement and evaluate projects. That would, according to him also give them as an organisation useful training and more competence.

Michael does not deny that there are things within the organisation of EXC that could be improved, and that the co-operation with the USAID could have been dealt with differently from their part as well, for instance with better organisational structures. These better structures would perhaps have made it easier to sustain transparency within the EXC organisation. Still, Michael insists, the setup of the co-operation was not something that they could do much about and the setup remains the core of the issue. Michael continues to say that if the USAID aims are to promote transparency and fight corruption within the development sector in Kenya, this is not the way to do it, this is the way to reproduce the same structures and is the grow ground for mistrust and corruption.

Participation

When it comes to participation in development work Michael says that it can mean different things in different situations. In Kariobangi people are, according to him, becoming better in taking part in decisions that concerns them, which is one important part of participation. When it comes to participation in terms of their relation to donors, this is another type of participation. Michael means that the former type of participation better describes what he understands as participation. In the co-operation with the donor it could be better *not* to use the term participation and instead talk of partnership or just co-operation. That would leave out the question of who is the owner, and maybe make the work more of a "two-way thing".

Michael clearly expresses that with more involvement and mandate given, or claimed, by EXC and other local organisation, would improve the quality of the development work that is carried out in the area. He also points out that it is not only about being involved in the sense that their views are taken into consideration. Michael says that if it were up to him, things would have been done differently. For example, there would be more focus on quality and less on quantity. Michael expresses a scepticism towards the all the seminars, where in his view the donor is more interested in the number of participants than the impact on people´s lives. Those seminars are often quite costly, and Michael would rather see that this money was spent on long term investment in capacity building, even if it meant reaching a smaller amount of people. The centre that EXC are hoping to build one day would be a good way to start.

5.1.2 Interview with Najma Wanjiru

All of what is presented under this section is a reflection on Najma Wanjiru´s views that came out during our interview that was held 2014-04-11.

Miss Wanjiru is one of the staff members of EXC. She got in touch with organisation 2008 after her husband got killed. Her husband had for long been involved in crime and was according to Miss Wanjiru a "most wanted criminal" who had both the police and other gangs after him. After the death of the husband, Miss Wanjiru got in touch with EXC and realized that she could use her horrible experience to help others. She also realized that there was a certain hole in the

organisation of EXC that needed to be filled, there were almost no girls or women involved in ESC. Miss Wanjiru describes how young girls are sometimes attracted by young criminal men because they often have money. In her own case, she did not know that her husband was involved in crime and by that time she realized, they had already got their first child. Miss Wanjiru means that it is important to inform young girls so that they are aware and can make sound choices of future partners. She also believes that young women are an important target as they are one day going to be mothers and will then be better equipped to prevent their sons from engaging in crime.

Co-operation with USAID

Miss Wanjiru says that in regard to the co-operation they had with USAID last year, she was not involved that much. As most of the other staff-members, she helped organising the seminars that USAID supported. But through the process of discussing proposals, the contact with USAID or planning the project, she was not involved that much. She explains that it was a little bit tense among the EXC-members by that time. People did not know much about what was happening, how much money they had received or how this was going to be used. She explains how this created some frustration as some of the members got their hopes up thinking that they would be able to develop the organisation. She says that insufficient information often leads to suspicion, and since corruption is such a common and well known problem, that suspicion is easy to understand.

Miss Wanjiru says that the seminar they held was fun and she thinks it's a good thing to do. However, if she was to handle the money, she would have used them differently. Miss Wanjiru explains that as long as local organisation can avoid corruption, they can use money in a much more efficient way than any international donor. She says:

> *"I don't see myself as poor today, but I grew up in a poor family in a poor neighbourhood, everyone around you is poor. One thing you learn is to make the money last. If we (EXC) were the ones handling the money, we know how we should use it without spending too much, we could even put many young people in school"*
> (Wanjiru, Najma, 2014).

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Miss Wanjiru says that she does not know how much money that was spent on these few workshops, but thinking about the expensive food that was served to a large number of people, the facilities that she knows are expensive, plus the different lecturers that were hired, it is clearly a large amount of money. That money, she means, could have been spent much more efficiently if EXC were the ones handling it.

Participation

When Miss Wanjiru thinks about participation, she thinks about people's involvement, people voting or gathering the local community to discuss something that concerns them. She says that she is not really familiar with it as term in development co-operation but that the same principles are possible to apply to organisations. She thinks that participation in organisations should be about communication and shared responsibility. She takes up the example of USAID and says that participation in this case should mean real co-operation. Not delegating tasks downwards, instead there should be discussions where the different voices should be given sufficient space. She is sure that USAID has a lot of things to teach them, but the USAID also have a lot of things that they can learn from the EXC. If that was the case, Miss Wanjiru believes that they would be able to create some real change in Kariobangi.

5.2 Hot Sun Foundation – general about the organisation

Two representatives from the organisation Hot Sun Foundation have been interviewed for this study – Roy Paul Okello and Pauline. Before we move on to the interviews, we will start with a brief presentation of ex-convicts as an organisation.

Hot Sun Foundation (HSF) describes their mission as "social transformation through art and media" (HSF, 2014). Film is the main tool and they run a top quality film education for young people. The education is highly subsidised from 200,000ksh (about £ 2000) to 50,000ksh (£ 500) and a few spots are completely free of charge. HSF used to be located in the slum area Kibera but has now moved to a different location still, though, in reach from Kibera. Before, most of their students were from Kibera but now they come from all over Nairobi, some of them even

from other parts of Kenya. They take in 12 students at a time and the course runs for four intense months. After the course, many of the students proceed to get jobs in the Kenyan media industry. HSF also have regular screening sessions were they show their films in slums of Kibera on big projection sheets for the public to watch and discuss. They encourage their students to make films that bring about discussions about social issues, and in other ways contribute to create awareness among the population.

5.2.1 Interview with Roy Paul Okello

All of what is presented under this section is a reflection on Roy Paul Okello´s views that came out during our interview that was held 2014-04-15.

Paul describes HSF as a foundation were they try to find and nurture talents in film making so that they can carry on telling stories and spreading ideas and information to various parts of society, and through that contribute to a social transformation. He pushes on the fact that he hopes that the students they educate, carry with them the will to transform the society and to tell important stories as they enter their carriers as film makers. He means that even if you have a career at news stations or production firms, you always have the option to choose stories, or angles of stories. He hopes that HSF might in the long run affect workplaces so that more people become interested in social transformation and film as an important tool in it. HSF is clearly a development organisation but maybe a little bit unconventional as they are also having a clear agenda of making film important, and given it a larger role in the Kenyan society. That means for instance convincing parents that filmmaking is a legitimate job that is worth spending time and effort on.

Partners and Donors

HSF works with a number of different partners, both Kenyan and international. For the past three years, the most important one has been Africalia, a Belgium donor organisation that support different development projects in many African countries (Africalia, 2013). Mr Okello has, in general, positive experiences of working with donors, especially Africalia. He describes how Africalia do have guidelines, just like every other donor, as to how and to what they support, but

those guidelines are reasonable and it would be strange if they were not there as Africalia as a donor has to make sure the money is spent well and do not support the wrong ends, for instance corruption. Mr Okello continues to say that despite the guidelines, HSF as a local foundation still have space to come with initiatives, as well as having a say as to how they want to use the money. Mr Okello, describes it as a well-functioning process of communication where both parties have a say. On the direct question on whether he or HSF feel that they own their projects, he answers with a clear yes.

Challenges

One of the most striking challenges that HSF faces, according to Mr Okello, is changing attitudes of youth wanting to be given things without meeting up with an effort. According to Mr Okello, this issue is extra predominant in Kibera. He gives an example of students that have been taken in for free in their film school and still expects sitting allowance (small payment), transport or free lunch. On a direct question about where these attitudes come from, Mr Okello underlines that it is hard to speculate about it, but that it is not completely unlikely that the vast numbers of NGO: s active in Kibera can be one of the reasons. He brings up the fact that it is common for different organisations to offer sitting allowances for people to participate in seminars or workshops. Mr. Okello means that by offering these sitting allowances, you make it impossible to know why the participants come and how interested they actually are in the education or the theme of that particular workshop. He also says that organisations have started to try and work differently but these attitudes can, he says, take some time to change.

Another challenge that they face in their Kibera-based activities is that the community often expect them to do more than they can, or to do things that lie outside of the frames of their organisation. This can, according to Mr. Okello be drawn back to the attitudes of wanting to be given things. For instance, when HSF organize one of their screening sessions in Kibera, they can be asked to do something like provide school fees or in other ways support individuals in the community.

Participation

Mr Okello says that to him participation is indeed an important part of development work. To him, it is about letting all different actors in a project or program participate, and having their views taken into account when planning and implementing a project. Participation is also a crucial factor in development work if the ambition is to achieve sustainability and actual long term change. Mr Okello states that an important thing in terms of participation is to put up structures that not only allow participation but that demand it. He means that one part of reaching participation is by letting users of a certain project take active part, by having structures that rewards activity and creativity.

In the case of HSF, the film school is a chance for a lucky few, but it also entails a lot of work and it becomes what the student makes it. In other words, the more the students participate in the education, the more will they gain. Through process of recruiting the students, a process that involves an application with many different elements plus interviews, HSF let the applicant know what is expected, and what they as students can and cannot expect. This lays the foundation for a, later on, well-functioning course with the right amount of participation from students.

5.2.2 Interview with Pauline

All of what is presented under this section is a reflection on Pauline´s views that came out during our interview that was held 2014-04-16.

Pauline started working for HSF recently and have little previous experience of development work. When starting the interview by asking Pauline to describe, in her own words, what HSF is to her she replies that she wants to build a community of film makers and perhaps more importantly story-tellers in Kenya. She also wants to create an understanding and interest of what film is and what it can do. Pauline explains how she sees one of the reasons behind the success of western countries, is that they document themselves, their lives and society. This, she means, makes people in a society learn about them and teaches them look at themselves in a different ways. She claims that this is missing in the Kenyan society, and she believes that it can, and

should, be an important part in the Kenyan development from a developing country to a developed – not dependent – country, with its own ideas and stories. To her, film has a unique role as an inspiring, accessible and entertaining story-teller.

Donors – "the death of creativity"

Pauline explains that the HSF works with a few different donors. The most important one is Africalia. According to her the co-operation with the donors is good, the donors are happy with the reports that HSF provides them with and are glad to keep sponsoring the projects. But despite the fact that the donors are the an important reason for the existence of current HSF-projects, Pauline is generally critical towards how donor money is given out to organisations and what and how the money affect the organisations. According to her, donor dependency is the death of creativity. She takes her point of departure from HSF, but means that this is a general issue in the development sector in Kenya. She makes up an example of a small local initiative, starting off with scarce recourses but with a mission. After some time, as is usually the case, a contact is made with a donor and proposals are approved. At that moment, Pauline means that the focus of the local organisation turns from the original goal and instead turns towards the donor. Time and energy is focused on keeping the donor satisfied to assure a continuous flow of capital. That means that the organisation stops focusing on developing as an organisation, as well as developing missions and projects, and instead gets passive and stagnant.

In HSF´s case, their donors are happy with their work, likes their reports and are willing to continue supporting the organisation. But according to Pauline, the question the HSF should ask themselves is – are *we* happy with our work? Do we work in line with our missions? Are we contributing to a social transformation? She admits that these are hard questions and does not underestimate the magnitude of their mission, but she means that if they want to be more than just a film school, these are questions that they have to take seriously.

Areas of improvement

Pauline means that donors should not be afraid to put higher and tougher demands on receiving organisations. The funds could even be given as loans, and should not be given more than once for the same project. Instead strategies for income generation should be built into the projects

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fundamental ideas. That would, she means, keep up the creativity and the drive within the organisation.

She explains how she would like to see HSF change in the future, from a foundation to a social enterprise that could find ways to distribute and make money on their products and concepts. In that way, they could offer employment to more people as well as keep their mission in focus instead of just sending off educated technicians into the media world as is too often the case at the moment. She says that surely this could only be achieved with hard work, and it won't be easy. She refers to her experience from other fields where they also have to work very hard and she means that actors in the development sector should also work that hard. She adds that this would probably send signals to beneficiaries and target groups, and would have a similar effect on them and in turn help brake the dependency and victimizing tendency that, according to her is too common in the sector of development.

Participation

Pauline is new to the field of development and says that maybe she interprets the word differently than most development practitioners and theorist. The first thing that comes to her mind when she hears participation is what she said in the beginning, about stories. Participation is not only about voting or actively be involved in some kind of process; it is also about being able to tell stories and have someone listening to them. She continues to say that maybe a better word is "voices" – participation is about giving space to voices. She means that this can be done in many different ways and it does not necessarily have to include aid interventions or politics.

5.3 Uzima Foundation – general about the organisation

One representative from Uzima Foundation has been interviewed for this study – Mr Esau Muruye. Before we move on to the interviews, we will start with a brief presentation of ex-convicts as an organisation.

In comparison with other small NGO: s in the Nairobi area, Uzima is quite large. They work not only in Nairobi but in many different areas around Kenya. Today their work can be divided into

three different categories, which all of them have different sub-projects running under each umbrella. The three categories are health, capacity building and peace and reconciliation. The last one started after the post-election violence that shuck Kenya in the beginning of 2007. The vision of the organisation is to build capacities for poor and marginalized people in different part of the country.

5.3.1 Interview with Mr Esau Muruye

All of what is presented under this section is a reflection on Mr Esau Muruye views that came out during our interview that was held 2014-04-20.

Partners

Mr Muruye explains how almost everything that Uzima do is funded by donors. He explains that as a development organisation there are few options if the projects should be able to continue. The relationship with the donors is good, and they are able to do a lot of things with the means that they receive. However, there are things that would work differently, if Uzima had greater influence in the set-up. One thing is the way money is given out and the terms that follow with them. Mr Muruye explains how many donors today have very precise and specific areas that they support, if it is to educative purposes, health, to promote entrepreneurship or something else. According to Mr Muruye, Uzima wants to work in with a more holistic approach towards the communities and people they work with. This does not work well with the way the money is given out. The consequence is that Uzima have to work with a lot of different donors to fund specific parts in their holistic approach. This consumes a lot of administrative and financial capacity.

Other challenges that Mr Muruye describes when it comes to the co-operation with the donors, and that can be drawn back to the issues mentioned above, is the focus on quantity on expense of quality. There is a lot of focus on how many people that are reached through different programs, for instance how many have been taking part in seminars or workshops. The question that according to Mr Muruye has to be asked is how are these people helped, or what effects for the life in general did these programs bring about? Simply, there should be more focus on quality

and less on quantity if the aim is to reach sustainable programs with long term improvement for the lives of the individuals they aim to reach.

Participation

Mr Muruye underlines that participation is a crucial factor in any successful development activity. He describes that good participation is characterized by a two-way set-up between all the parties in a project. This means that all parties, from the bottom and upwards, has a say about what is being done. This has according to Mr Muruye ethical aspects, the most important ones have clear connections to the efficiency of the programs. If time and energy is not spent on proper research before of the implementation of a project, there is a risk that the project will not succeed. Another reason to include beneficiaries is that people might end up suspecting or having bad images of certain activities if they do not feel included. That is when you have situations where people ask "what do I get" before they join a program. With a sufficient level of participation – where the target groups feel they are, for real, included in the project – chances are much higher that they take it seriously and are active. And, in the long run, those are the projects that will survive.

5.4 Kamash – general about the organisation

One representative from Uzima Foundation has been interviewed for this study – David Otieno. Before we move on to the interviews, we will start with a brief presentation of ex-convicts as an organisation.

Kamash is a CBO based in the same area as EXC – Kariobangi (Kamash, 2014). They started in 2002 by engaging youth in garbage collection. The youth started collecting and taking care of the trash and were able to use this as a mean of income, as their neighbourhood paid for the service and some of the trash had a recycling value (Ibid). The target was young people who were on the "wrong track in life – involved in drugs and crime. Since then the organisation has grown. Today the organisations run a few football team and arrange different activities with the aim to educate

youth but also just a way to awake interest and keep them busy. For many years they have been receiving funds from World Vision[2].

5.4.1 Interview with David Otieno

All of what is presented under this section is a reflection on David Otieno´s views that came out during our interview that was held 2014-04-21.

Mr Otieno has been working with Kamash since they started in 2002. He is a former football player in the highest division in Kenya. He is a member of the organisation with an overall responsibility for the Kamash football team.

Co-operation with World Vision

According to Mr Otieno the co-operation with World Vision is good. World Vision support most of the educating projects that Kamash run, projects that benefit the participants in the workshops as well as the members of the organisation, as it gives them training in the subjects too. World Vision also arrange training for the Kamash staff, which according to Mr Otieno is valuable since many of the staff members, including himself, have only gone through primary school. He think that they generally have a good contact with the donor.

Areas of improvement and participation

When asked for his view on how participation works in the co-operation between Kamash and World Vision Mr Otieno answers says.

> *"We don't see them that often and would be nice if they could come and participate more in what we do. We are always here so they are always welcome to join us"* (Mr Otieno, 2014)

According to Mr Otieno much of the areas of improvement in the relationship with the donor is linked to questions about participation. He states that they are a poor organisation dependent on

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[2] World Vision, 2014, http://www.worldvision.org/about-us

support, and with the support that they get from World Vision they are able make an impact in young people´s lives. However, their ability to change and improve the community would increase if World Vision did participate more in the activities. He means that if they were more present in Kariobangi and had more interaction with Kamash, they could do a lot for the young people in the area. Mr Otieno says if World Vision could help them with the fundraising – something that is difficult and takes time and needs educated people – Kamash could contribute with their practical knowledge and use their strong connection that they have in the area. By doing this, their co-operation would be stronger and they would be able to do a lot.

6 Analysis

This analysis chapter will be structured based on some common features drawn from the analyses of the interviews (see Table 2). These will be linked to the research question, analytical framework and theory presented in earlier chapters. At the end of the chapter I will argue for how the findings of the study contribute to the understanding of participation as a development concept.

Table 2 Coding table

Code label	Explanation	Organisation*
Ownership Issues	Donors formulate problem and solutions? Exclusion.	Ex-convicts Kamash Uzima Foundation
Partnership	Need for closer partnership with donor. Joint actions and co-operation	Ex-convicts Kamash Uzima Foundation
Insufficient use of Local Knowledge	Donors do not implement local knowledge in projects.	Ex-convicts Uzima Foundation
Participation as transformational	Stake holder involvement on ethical democratic basis and for reasons of pubic interests	Ex-convicts Kamash Uzima Foundation Hot Sun Fondation
Participation as instrumental	Participation used to improve effectiveness to improve result	Kamash Ex-convics
Holistic Development	Development focusing on a number of issues hindering individuals or communities to develop	Uzima Foundation Ex-convicts

*Organisation means from which of the four organisations a certain code label can be connected.

6.1 Ownership, partnership and local knowledge

As seen in Table 2, two organisations in the study express issues with ownership, where them as the local organisation does not own the projects run by them and the donor. Three organisations call for a closer partnership with the donor. Mr Moroye´s words can be interpreted to claim that Uzima Foundation, despite their knowledge and experience, have little input in reality description, problem formulation and solution design. The lack of ownership is also shown in the way that Uzima Foundation need to approach different donors for different development purposes, one for health, one for peace conciliation, one for education, etc, which swallows tremendous administrative resources and time. The local ownership therefore, cannot be claimed to exist as Uzima Foundation does not get to carry out their work in the way they think would create the best long term results.

Similar issues are expressed by the representatives of Ex-convicts (EXC) - Michael and Miss Wanjiro. EXC have a deep connection to Kariobangi as an area and knowledge about its issues. Many of the members and leaders have grown up in the area and have been involved in crime previously. During the interview with Michael, he explained that EXC and USAID had different descriptions of what issues that should be tackled and how. USAID thought that Muslim extremism should be on the top of the priority list, and that these issues should be tackled through educative seminars. EXC thought that lack of jobs, lack of education and the close access to crime were issues more urgent and that they should be tackled by offering young people mentorship, life skill education and a chance to make an honest living. In the co-operation between USAID and EXC, the latter had little influence in any important decision. Their role was to carry out a few duties, name the seminars and make people show up. The USAID did not take the chance as a donor to promote ownership and partnership to improve the development intervention. It also shows in the way the actual co-operation was structured. Both Michael and Miss Wanjiru express how the co-operation with USAID led to many issues within EXC due to the way information were channelled and the set up with only one contact person.

When it comes to local knowledge, the interviews of the two representatives of EXC give us a little deeper understanding about what it is about. As is described in the theory chapter, local knowledge is not a fixed commodity that can be localized by development research (Mosse and

Cleaver, 2001). It has been described rather as an ongoing and changeable social process. The interviews with EXC add to this that it is also a will, focus and ability to wear the shoes of the people targeted by development intervention, to tell their story and channel their view on reality. Michaels expression "*boots on the ground*" to me entails a sort of ability to see, hear and feel the people and the area.

In the case of Kamash, Mr Otieno does not express issues with ownership but calls for closer partnership with the donor. The donor organisation could, according to Mr Otieno, contribute with skills that Kamash does not have within their organisation. A stronger partnership where the qualities from the two parties were coordinated effectively would lead to greater development achievements.

When drawing back to some of the theory and the analytical framework for this study, we can spot some interesting connections. As mentioned in chapter 2, much of the critique aimed towards the concept of participation has not been about participation being a negative thing in development work, but that genuine participation is seldom reached (Mikkelsen 2005). Also the issues and solutions expressed in the Paris Declaration about how aid effectiveness could be improved by local ownership and genuine partnership between stakeholders. According to three organisations in this study Uzima, EXC and Kamash, these ambitions are not yet met. Instead the donor organisations keep on being in charge of important decisions and the local organisation´s job remains to carry out what they have been assigned.

6.2 Participation – instrumental or transformational

When the respondents in the interviews have explained how they understand participation it turns towards *transformational* aspects of participation rather than *instrumental*. This is shown for instance in the interview of Miss Wanjiru in EXC when she express that she does not know much about participation as a development term but for her it is connected to community involvement and democracy. It is the same with Roy Paul Okello in Hot Sun Foundation (HSF). According to him participation is when people in a community are participating in questions and decisions that concern them. Others, like Michael in EXC or Mr Muruye in Uzima Foundation,

see that participation in the sense of a better use of local knowledge and a closer interaction between the donor and the local organisation would clearly improve the work that they together are responsible for. In that sense they see participation as *instrumental*.

At the same time though, and especially based on the reflections from Mr Muruye in Uzima Foundation, genuine participation within a project does entail more parties than just the two co-operating organisations. He argues that participation must also in a clear way include the target groups. He talks of a kind of participation where all parties "from top to bottom" that are involved in or affected by a certain development action must take part in it for it to be successful and sustainable. If we try to read between the lines of these reflections, they can be traced back to ideas of transformational participation. The idea that participation can be both instrumental and transformational goes in line with some of the views that were presented in the theory chapter.

6.3 Holistic and immanent development

Mr Muruye explains how Uzima Foundation would prefer to take a holistic approach in their work. To focus on many different issues that people or communities face and how they are connected to each other. Education programs require peace and health. It also requires something to follow the education such as opportunities for jobs or entrepreneurship. This way of reasoning has clear connections to the argumentation put through for instance by Mohan and Hickeys (2004), that an immanent approach to development, meaning that it is in line with larger social processes. The holistic development approach bear similarities with immanent development in the way that all aspects, including large socio-economic processes, has to be taking into account in order to reach successful development work. In order to do that, it would require a type of transformational participation where people are taking active part in the development work. The understanding of those social processes would not be possible to gain without utilizing local knowledge which, in turn, needs participation.

Table 1 (Presented again)

First, it is used as a cosmetic label, to make whatever is proposed appear good. Donor agencies and governments require participation approaches and consultants and managers say that they will be used, and then later that they have been used, while the reality has often been top-down in a traditional way.

Second, it describes as a co-opting practice, to mobilize local labor and reduce costs. Communities contribute their time and effort to self-help projects with some outside assistance. Often it means "they" (local people) participate in "our" project.

Third, it is used to describe an empowering process which enables local people   to   do their own analysis, to take command, to gain confidence and to make their own decisions. In theory, this means that "we" participate in "their" project, not "they" in "ours". It implies a commitment to equity, empowering those who are marginalized, excluded and deprived, often especially women.

 After Mikkelsen, 2005, p: 53, After Chambers, 2002b and 1995

Table 3 Level of participation

Organisation	Level of participation*	Explanation
Ex-convicts	1	No partnership, very limited use of local knowledge, no local ownership.
Kamash	2	Poor use of local knowledge, no partnership
Uzima	2	Certain amount of partnership. Lack of communication and poor use of local insights and knowledge
Hot Sun Foundation	3	Genuine local ownership, space to for ideas and input. Partnership
*Level of participation refers to one of the three of Champers levels of participation		

6.4 Which level of participation

Table 3 is used as an attempt to match the organisations of this study with Chambers three levels of participation. As mentioned in chapter three, the categorisation of the organisations into the table is a bit too simplified and should not be seen as a rigid labelling but merely as a point of reference and tool for analysis.

Starting with the EXC and USAID it is clear that the "co-operation" is not built upon the main ideas behind participation. The lack of partnership, the ignorance of local knowledge and the limited influence EXC had over the project put them on the first level in the table.

Kamash and Uzima foundation, reach the second level in the talbe as they have clear influence in the projects. However, the lack of partnership and, in Uzima Foundations case, limited use of local knowledge shows that genuine levels of participation is not reached fully.

In the case of Hot Sun Foundation (HSF) the co-operation with the donors, where Africalia is currently the main one, is expressed in quite positive views. Both Roy Paul Okello and Pauline express that HSF do *own* their projects and can design and structure them in a way they find suitable. In accordance to that, it can be stated that the co-operation between Africalia and HSF reach the third step as the local partner do own the project. This does not mean, off course, that the organisation and the projects are without issue and struggles connected in their work.

In addition to just fitting the organisations into the different uses of participation, it is possible to connect them to the discussion of aid effectiveness expressed in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action (OECD, 2008). The ambitions of improved aid effectiveness, through strengthen partnership between stakeholders and higher levels of local ownership, is in many ways the same ideas of genuine participation illustrated in the third level of participation (see Table 1). These High Level Forum documents are stands as important proof that participation − ownership, partnership and use knowledge − is recognized as a crucial ingredient in successful development work. The documents also prove that there is an ambition to implement these ideas on a large scale in development co-operation. When analysing the interviews of this study, it stands clear that the respondents in many ways share these ideas. They

also believe in partnership, ownership and the use of local knowledge and the inclusion of all stakeholders. Despite this, what it seems, mutual agreement of the importance of genuine participation, the experience of the organisations in this study is that these levels of participations in most cases are not reached.

6.5 They are welcome to join

The last interesting aspect of the concept participation that came up in the interviews is captured well in this quote:

"We don't see them that often and would be nice if they could come and participate more in what we do. We are always here so they are always welcome to join us" (Mr Otieno, 2014)

The aim with this study has been to contribute to how we can understand participation. I have been reading and writing about participation almost constantly for the last few months, and the authors that I have come across have been dealing with it much longer than that. Yet, neither I nor any of the other has been able to twist the concept in the way I think the above quote illustrates. His invitation to the donor to come and join them "and participate more" is to me a fundamental difference in how participation can be understood. It also shows that western development theorists, me included, might still to some extent be trapped in old conceptions of development. Throughout the discussions that I have come across it is the "local" organisation that is to be included and participate. The idea that donors could participate in local projects run by local organisations through funding or by offering their skills is in many ways appealing.

7. Conclusion

What this study, to some extent, show is that most parties, from "top to bottom", within the global development field seem to agree that genuine participation characterized by local ownership, partnership and use of local knowledge is the right way to improve development action. At the same time, the study shows that local organisations experience that these levels of participation are seldom reached. The partnership is still not there fully and three out of four organisations do not own the projects that they run. Three out of four organisations clearly express that with a stronger partnership, there work would be improved. Why then, is genuine participation so hard to reach? Answering this question would be a natural and highly interesting next step in the research on this topic.

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Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

Briefly about the organisation:

➢ How did it start, by who and why?

➢ What are the objectives and visions?

➢ How is the organization funded?

Co-operation with international organisation

➢ How would you describe the co-operation with the donor?

➢ Describe certain part of the work that is better performed by the donor or by your organisation. What is the reason for that?

Challanges

➢ Can you describe some challenges that you as an organisation face in your work?

➢ Can you describe some challenges connected to the donor organisation?

➢ How can is it possible to meet these challenges?

Participation

➢ What is the first thing that comes into your head when you hear the word participation? Please try to develop your answer

➢ In what way do you think participation is related to development?

The interview will take between 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Thank you for participating!