

FROM THE PROVISION OF BASIC NEEDS TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE.



A CASE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF A LOCAL NGO'S PROCESS ON THE PEOPLE OF KITUI DISTRICT, KENYA.

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GLOSSARY

AAK	ActionAid Kenya
AMREF	African Medical Research Foundation
ASAL(s)	Arid and semi arid land(s)
<i>Baraza(s)</i>	Open meeting(s) called by the local administration
CBOs	Community based Organisations
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
DANIDA	Danish Agency for Development Assistance
DFID	British Government, Department of International Development
DFRD	District Focus for Rural Development
Division	An administrative unit in a District
<i>El Nino</i>	Characteristic of long and heavy rains experience in most parts of East Africa in 1996/7.
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFS	Farmers Field School
<i>Fundi</i>	Artisan/Mason
GOK	Government of Kenya
<i>Harambee</i>	Pull resources together
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IRC	International Water and Sanitation Centre
<i>Jembes</i>	Spades
KAP	Kitui Agricultural Programme
<i>Kathambi</i>	Akamba female water goddess
<i>Kekunde</i>	Kikamba for Institutions
<i>Kitothy</i>	Napier grass
<i>Kiondos</i>	Akamba traditional hand-woven baskets
<i>Kuvuka</i>	To scoop water from the sand
Location	An administrative unit in a Division
<i>Mboka</i>	Vegetables
Merry-go-rounds	A self-help organisation
<i>Mung'eeto</i> (Plural- <i>Ming'eeto</i>)	Local name for sand dam(s)
<i>Musyi</i> (Plural- <i>Misyi</i>)	Homestead(s)
<i>Muzungo</i>	European
<i>Myethya</i>	Self help group or party
Napier Grass	Fodder crop
<i>Ndania</i>	Coriander
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SASOL	Sahelian Solutions Foundation
<i>Shamba</i>	Garden
SIDA	Swedish International Development Aid
<i>Silanga</i>	Earth Dam

SLDC	Sub-location Development Committee
Sub-location	An administrative unit in a location
<i>Sukuma wiki</i>	Kiswahili name for Kales
<i>Uki wa Kihio (Kaluvu or Njoma)</i>	Types of locally brewed beer
UN	United Nations
WB	World Bank
<i>Yeli</i>	Fines
<i>Yua</i>	Famine

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study gives a detailed account of SASOL (a local NGO) processes in making water available to the people of an ASAL area; Kitui District, Kenya; and how the community felt about the process. The overall theme was to examine whether SASOL, fitted into the post-development theory.

This theory is the total rejection of development because the advocates believe that policies, practices and interventions are centred on Westernisation and Modernisation. Post-development is about the awareness of institutions and politics being at the heart of development. These concepts illuminate issues of power and access, which is at the base of achieving sustainable livelihoods. Post-development focuses on the self-organising capacity of the poor. To do this local people must become the decision-makers and participate at all levels to enhance their access to basic needs, so they can improve their standard of living. Improving people's decision-making augments civil society in the local area, which expectantly will develop local governance. Therefore, the theories of governance; the participatory approach and; the environment entitlements framework were used and explored in relation to the data collected.

Kitui District is located in Kenya's Eastern Province and is classified as an ASAL¹ area. It is characterised by high evapotranspiration and unreliability of rainfall, which limits intensive and meaningful land use. Local lore states that rains fail completely at least one year in four. This leads to long periods of drought, resulting in food shortages. The main problem in the area is that there is inadequate water for a large percentage of the population, with only a few permanent water sources. Distance and time taken to search for water sources is a burden for the mainly women headed households. It is common to find queuing between three to four hours in the dry seasons at the water sources (usually scoop holes) and often these become dangerously deep. This has led to people buying water, with their scarce income. Water was found to be the biggest priority for the community when conducting PRAs.² Therefore the lack of water, which is basic to almost everything, places restrictions on many other activities.

SASOL's objective is to 'create a network of water points using shallow wells and sand-storage dams, so that no family need walk more than 2 km to get an assured supply.'³ Using the Catchment Development Approach, the sand dams are built in sequence in a catchment area. The sand dam is made as a concrete or masonry barrier on an ephemeral river, and although the upper side of the wall may be hidden by sand (or water in the wet season), the lower side is usually exposed. This barrier improves the retention of groundwater because the water is stored in the sand. Evaporation losses are much less compared to a free

¹ Arid and semi-arid lands

² Participatory Rural Appraisal

³ SASOL & Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:9

water surface in a tropical area. The sand filters the water, improving its quality; therefore shallow wells are built next to the dam, where filtered water can be drawn. The breeding of insects and parasites are prevented and the contamination of the stored water is reduced.

The aim is to provide production water so that socio-economic chances can be enhanced. These technologies are easy to construct, operate and cheap to maintain. The maintenance and operational needs meets the local expertise and resource endowment. The community is involved at all levels of the project, SASOL's only task is to provide technical assistance in the form of a trained mason and to seek financial help for cement and reinforcing that are beyond the community's resources. They also provide a variety of training such as resource management, sanitation and hygiene and leadership skills. By 2002, over 320 sand dams have been constructed by communities in the central part of Kitui District. Globally this is the highest concentration of sand dams constructed anywhere in the world.

This research looks at the different stakeholders involved in the implementation of SASOL's activities and how they view this process and what changes they have seen and experienced. These different stakeholders involve, the NGO itself and how it views its process, the local officials reactions to the processes and a community's reaction to SASOL's process and changes they have experienced since the process (restrictions meant the donor was unable to comment). To do this, qualitative research methods were drawn upon. Six focus groups were used involving a local community that had recently gone through the SASOL process. The groups were split between gender, age and socio-economic status. Each consisted of 10 people and the discussions were led by set questions. These discussions were conducted in the local dialect, Kikamba and also English. To gather more detailed information individual interviews were also conducted. Observation methods and secondary data were also utilised.

The data from the different stakeholders shows an optimistic view. It was found that sand dam technology provides a direct basic need (water) but also indirect ones as well⁴. However, one of the major adversaries to gaining long-term sustainable livelihood is the *access* to these basic needs and other resources; this can be clarified using environmental entitlement mapping. This shows that though SASOL's objective is to provide everyone with production water, not everyone will benefit from it. This is because of the numerous institutions, within and beyond a community, that guide individual's access and use of the products resulting from the sand dams. For example, the household holds different social actors that have different rules to 'access', usually based around gender and age. Women are exempt from inheriting land under Kenyan law, restricting their ability to grow products for marketing purposes.

⁴ Food, shelter, health

SASOL is aware of this lack of access through institutions and so training is provided to try and influence power structure change. The participants have noticed changes. For example, the training content included increased awareness of how important household communications, interaction and togetherness are. This will increase the sustainability of a household striving for poverty alleviation.

However, poverty alleviation cannot be done with material improvement alone. Poverty is also about non-material denial such as social exclusion. The utopia for participation (post-development idealism) is to boost the individual's feelings of acceptance and well-being, giving each one empowerment to take control over their circumstances. People are very happy with the process of the project and the results so far. There is a high demand for SASOLs services amongst the community of Kitui District, because of the positive genre they have created. With this empowerment of local people, comes the challenge of local power structures, it changes the structures of exclusion and inclusion of access and distribution of resources. Even from the focus groups these power structures were noticeable and those who were 'losing out' to this process were negative about the whole project.

Therefore it was found that SASOL fits into the post-development idealism but they have done this without being aware. SASOL fulfils the demands of the community by being a facilitator to the community's project, providing an arena for the community to develop itself into a governing body that can take initiatives and organise. At the same time, shaping the local administration so that hopefully future indicatives for development can be supported with community-government partnership.

Recognising that there are factors beyond the initial intervention that limits individuals from benefiting from it, means that alternatives can be found to decrease those that are excluded from access. This can explain why some past interventions failed because they did not look beyond the initial impact on the community. The challenge for this project is to increase participation to those that would not join the process because of past disappointments and especially to find ways to overcome barriers experienced by the very poor (because of their self image). For Kitui District, now that water is easily accessible, other initiatives beyond the provision of basic needs can be pursued to further development of the area.

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1. INTRODUCTION

'Better to let them do it imperfectly than to do it perfectly yourself, for it is their country, their way and your time is short.'

(T.E Lawrence, as cited in Adams & McShame 1992: 227)

This study shows that methods used by a local Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) to make water available to the people of the arid and semi-arid lands of Kitui District, Kenya are really making a difference to their lives.

There is an accepted need to help the poor of the Third World. It has been tackled in various ways over the last 50 years. The aid agencies have spent millions of dollars each year but the reality is that there has been little progress for the people on the lowest rung of the ladder. This is because, according to Escobar (1995), poverty has become the politics of exclusion concentrating in particular zones due to a history of exploitation and domination of the developed countries. 'It is the colonial and neo-colonial experience and the manner in which the aftermath interacts with globalisation' (Hoogvelt, 2001:15).

Today, poverty is exaggerated because 'debt and deregulation following punitive Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), have more tightly integrated the wealth of many Third World elites in the global economy, while emasculating politically the states in these regions, thus undermining their capacity to rely on any national territorial development project' (Hoogvelt, 2001:15). To this day, the management of exclusion and containment by the developed countries keeps politically insecure territories on the edge of the global economy, instead of a programme of development and incorporation into the world system that was the earliest developmentalist goal.

Different actors have undertaken the development process over the years. These include the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB),

National Governments, Social Movements, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Religious Organisations, Communities, Social groups and Classes. Their policies have been adapted to accompany changing reality, new insights and sometimes because of the expectations of financial backers. Various paradigms have developed to aid the poor of the Third World and these are discussed in the chapter entitled 'Theories'.

The latest and most ambitious of these paradigms is Post-Development. This is the total rejection of development because the advocates believe that policies, practices and interventions are centred on Westernisation and Modernisation. Post-development focuses on the self-organising capacity of the poor. To do this local people must become the decision-makers and participate at all levels to enhance their access to basic needs, so they can improve their standard of living. Improving people's decision-making augments civil society in the local area, which expectantly will develop local governance.

'Kenya is among a group of countries faced with an inadequate renewable resource base, a problem acute in arid and semi-arid (ASAL) parts and compounded by weak development institutional arrangements' (Muticon, 2002:10). One of these inadequate resource bases is the most major resource for the survival of man and wildlife; water. Only 45% of Kenyans have access to clean water.⁵ Studies show that communities living in arid and semi arid lands have limitations in accessing sources of water. They use open water sources that are more prone to contamination. A technology is needed that provides this basic need and lets the community take control, making the maximum number of people closer to a source of water, at the same time enhancing its quantity and quality.

Sahelian Solutions Foundation (SASOL) a local Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) is located within Kitui District an ASAL area of Kenya. It was established to address water problems and to reach the objectives of the local

⁵ Note that clean water does not designate potable water.

community. Its special emphasis is on sand-storage dams with shallow wells. These are suitable technologies for ASAL areas. These technologies are easy to construct, operate and cheap to maintain (WaterAid, 2003). The maintenance and operational needs meets the local expertise and resource endowment. The sand dam technology is only applicable to areas networked by ephemeral rivers⁶ and streams without black cotton soils, as the masonry dams sink in these soils.

In the past, these dams were referred to as sub-surface dams because the water is stored below the surface. However, the term 'sub-surface dam' is used in some countries to refer to a barrier below the surface. It could also be used to refer to an impervious underground barrier in a low-lying area that prevents the lateral flow of ground water thereby maintaining or raising the water table (WaterAid, 2003). In contrast, a sand-storage dam is a barrier on an ephemeral river. Although the upper side of the wall may be hidden by sand, the lower side is usually exposed, either due to excavation by water when the river is flowing or by design. Throughout this project, this type of technology will be referred to as sand-storage dams or sand dams.

SASOL uses the participatory approach to implement the project. Their interpretation of the participatory approach is to start with the community; where it defines its problems, sets its priorities, and makes decisions on how to solve them. SASOL describes itself as a catalyst or facilitator and states that its approach recognises that local people know the problems they face more in detail than anyone else; know the natural and human resources available in their area and; know what may or may not work in a given situation. Then SASOL believes that the local people seek their own solutions rather than having solutions imposed from outside; the initiative, knowledge and talents of the people are realised, the community is empowered and the likelihood that development measures will be sustained is greatly enhanced (SASOL & Majin Na Ufanisi, 1999:7).

⁶ Short-lived rivers: water flows in the channel only after participation.

It has been well documented that theories will rarely work in practice (Michener, 1998). This research takes the recent theories on development and places SASOL's process into these theories. It looks at the different stakeholders involved in the implementation of SASOL's activities and how they view this process and what changes they have seen and experienced. These different stakeholders involve the donor who provides the capital, the NGO itself and how it views its process, and a community's reaction to SASOL's process and changes they have experienced since the process. To help this study five questions were looked at:

1. How does SASOL enter into the community?
2. How does SASOL transfer post dam construction responsibilities to the community?
3. What is the impact of community participation in projects on power relations within the community?
4. How does SASOL relate with its donors?
5. What challenges has SASOL faced and how has it dealt with them in relation to:

The participatory approach?

Its donors?

The local people?

The government?

2. THEORIES

'Would to God your horizon may broaden every day! The people who bind themselves to systems are those who are unable to encompass the whole truth and try to catch it by the tail; a system is like the tail of truth, but truth is like a lizard; it leaves its tail in your fingers and runs away knowing full well that it will grow a new one in a twinkling'
(Ivan Turgenev to Leo Tolstoy, 1856)

2.1. DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The changing concept of poverty has been represented within the different development strategies and theories that have been utilised over the last 50 years. The first phase of this development discourse was from 1950 to 1970; development historians named this the 'neo-colonial phase' (Hoogvelt, 2001:32). This era was received with optimism, with the idea that poverty would be overcome by economic growth on a macro-level by 'trickle down effect' within a national frame of reference. The dominant features of this phase of 'neo-colonialism' were resource bondage and technological dependency. 'The key was for Third World states to favour voluntaristic, selective public investment in the industrial sectors regarded as the most strategic terms of spin off for the economy' (Petiteville, 1998:116), this was regarded as a state-centred approach. It was done in a Cold War context in an attempt (Petiteville, 1998:118 and others believed), to forestall the spread of communism.

Modernisation theory supported this neo-colonial paradigm. Based on Max Weber's ideas and Rostow's theory of economic growth, it was used by the developed countries as, 'a kind of "how to develop" manual for less developed countries' (Hoogvelt, 2001:35), which the developed world used with gusto. The

aim was to close the gap between traditional and modern states, by using the market forces, in a unilinear path of development. 'Most economists in the 1950-60s were confident of the universality of the Western Cultural Model of technical/economic accumulation (as they believed the Third World problems were from capital shortage) and of the dominance of this process of accumulation in any process of overall social change' (Petiteville, 1998:117).

However, this idea of trickle-down favoured the elite and did not reach the rest of society as intended. This was because the states, when setting up this type of economy, adopted the 'predators approach' (Petiteville, 1998:118) in the allocation of financial resources, which mainly went to build-up political support and neo-patrimonial systems. For the West, the role of the state elite was seen as a neutral element, ignoring this manipulation of resources by these elites. Instead, it was believed this continuation of underdevelopment was because of the lack of development ingredients. They believed that countries had to have the necessary prerequisites including societal evolution to 'develop'. 'This theory gave the state the lead role in the economic accumulation and modernisation process without taking into account the specific nature of the state, its historical and societal basis, the resources and problems of elites in terms of political legitimacy and public policy, its class strategies and so on' (Petiteville, 1998:119).

Dependency theorists of the late 1960s-1970s (Frank, 1967; Amin, 1975; Dos Santos, 1970; Prebisch, 1950) criticised modernisation theorists for masking the continuing imperialist nature of relationships between the rich and poor countries. They rejected any possibility of development for the Third World unless their economic relations with the industrialised countries were completely reorganised. The Third World had to deal with the 'subordination of the economy to the structured advanced capitalist countries' and 'the external orientation meaning extreme dependency on overseas markets' (Hoogvelt, 2001:56). This brought to the forefront the idea of unequal exchange, which challenges Ricardo's theory (early 19th century) of international trade and comparative advantage.

The Director of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), Raul Prebisch in the 1950s, put this paradigm of centre-periphery into practice with the solution for peripheral countries to set up protected industrial sectors and apply 'import substitution' strategies (ISIs). This led to the developing world breaking from the capitalist world system and proposing, within the United Nations (UN), for the New International Economic Order (NIEO: 1974-5). However, changes in the world capitalist system took place, which made the demands obsolete and eroded the political unity needed to uphold the NIEO.

The second phase, (post-1970s) was the 'post' imperialism phase (Becker, 1984). 'It created a new pattern of extraction of economic surplus of poor countries by rich countries through the instrument of debt' (Hoogvelt, 2001:42). The era has also been called the 'Lost Decade' because of the debt crisis. This was due to the oil shocks of 1973/74 and 1979, which created a global economic crisis that increased interest rates. The developing countries could not pay back their loans with increased interest.

It was in this context that the neo-classical paradigm in the discipline of economics was adopted by the international finance agencies (the Bretton Wood Institutes: World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF)). The view was that poor and stagnant economies suffered from economic policies that impeded market forces. The Washington Consensus (upheld by the WB and IMF) became the main alternative paradigm to national developmentalism, to overcome the debt crisis (Gore, 2000:792). This new approach used the Liberal International Economic Order (LIEO), which included the promotion of free trade, private property and individual incentives, and a circumscribed role for the government. 'If the developing countries were to specialise, on the basis of their comparative advantages, their natural resources and their production factors (capital, labour), to observe the principle of real prices, and to allow private enterprise to flourish in a context of free and healthy competition, they would automatically benefit from international trade and lay the foundations of

balanced development' (Petiteville, 1998:121). Therefore there was a shift in thinking, from large-scale infrastructure loans and projects towards Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), which aimed at relaxing state control of the economy and society, to privatise, and to reduce public services. This had a negative effect on developing societies as it cut government spending on the welfare state; education, health and food subsidies which lowered the standard of living for billions of people. These SAPs actually undermined the ability to develop and even exacerbated poverty (Hoogvelt, 2001:90).

Alternative Development has been concerned with finding alternative practices for development, its main advocators included Sen (1981), Chambers (1983) and Escobar (1991). This involved a list of new intentions to redefine the goals of development, such as more locally specific, people-centred approaches; moving from structural orientation to actor orientation with a focus on participation; with politics of development instead of economics of development, with development coming from *below* (from the community and Non-Governmental Organisations); and gender development. Taylor (1992) says, 'development from within is to allow local people to become the subject, not the object, of development strategies' (Barton, 1997:57). The problem with this alternative paradigm is that it has become indistinguishable from mainstream development. From the 1990s key elements of alternative development had been adopted into this thinking.

The third phase of mainstream development appeared in the 1990s. It also moved away from economic growth towards people-centred policies because of the recognition of the failure by the state and international institutions to allocate and distribute resources effectively from the top. The rhetoric echoes that of alternative development focusing on basic-needs, participation and sustainability. The Chief Economist of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz (1997-2000) highlighted this change in attitude when he proposed moving beyond the 'Washington Consensus' to a 'New Development Paradigm' (Stiglitz, 1998:5). He

called for the rejection of unfettered markets, new institutions, the end to conditionality in loans, and the World Bank to become the 'knowledge bank'. He also took up the calling for participation, ownership and partnership. Standing's (2000) critique of Stiglitz's new development strategy was that it is 'unremarkable, there is an absence of a vision of a social protection system'. Stiglitz does mention need for resources, economic management and knowledge management but as Standing points out, there is no mention of who manages, who decides, what criteria to use and so on. Though criticised as 'unremarkable' in its attempts at alteration, Stiglitz's speech showed the changing attitude of the international finance agencies. These policies being adopted however, have just been 'added on' (Pieterse, 1998:353) to the still very much neo-liberal based ideals of the International Financial Institutes (IFIs). Therefore within mainstream development there is a significant divide between the Bretton Woods institutes and grassroots organisations, under the general umbrella of social development.

Basic needs provision should be provided by NGOs⁷, with a focus on community participation, 'helping people to help themselves' (Oxfam International Slogan). Civil society became to be considered as promoters of development, 'as development co-operation is no longer the exclusive domain of a select group of professionals; it has become the concern of well-informed citizens and their networks, a display of international co-operation on all levels' (Pieterse, 1998:353). Even SAPs found to be of negative consequences to the poor, were transformed to be more socially acceptable, 'Adjustment with a Human Face' (UNICEF, 1987). The source of this community management and the ideas of local-level solutions derived from community initiatives emerged from the Earth Summit in Rio 1992, where the catchphrase 'Sustainable Development' was adopted. The process to reach sustainable development would be; 'through a combination of government decentralisation, devolution to local communities of

⁷ The rhetoric of decentralisation

responsibilities for natural resources held as commons, and community participation' (Leach et al, 1999:228). The development industry started emphasising 'co-management' or a sharing of responsibilities of natural resource management between national, local governments, civic organisations and local communities.

This catchphrase became too broad and too diverse in its interpretation so 'Sustainable Livelihoods' was adopted at the end of the 1990s, as the new process of development. Pieterse (1998) attempted to redefine development; he took Korten's (1990) ideas that 'the heart of development is institutions and politics, not money and technology though the latter are undeniably important', then linked it with the notions of governance (which determines processes and values given in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies) and the development of civil society at multiple levels. 'The most fundamental issues of development are, at their core, issues of power', which have been 'papered over by community development and other fads' (Pieterse, 1998:353). The pursuit of these issues, Pieterse believes, will offer a new way of dealing with poverty.

Post-development is the latest in the 'alternative' views towards development. It is, in fact, the total rejection of development. 'In the Third World, modernity is not an unfinished project of the Enlightenment. Development is the last and failed attempt to complete the Enlightenment in Asia, Africa and Latin America' (Escobar, 1995:221). The post-development writers focus on the discourse of the developers, how they portray and construct the object to be developed, Sachs (1992) stated that 'the idea of development stands like a rain in the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crime have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work' (Pieterse, 2000:176). They are critical of the development paradigms and practices over the last four decades. Hoogvelt (2001:225) explains it as a critique of the development discourse as a system of knowledge produced by the First World about the 'underdevelopment' of the Third World, not only as an

instrument of economic control and management, but also as a knowledge 'discipline' which marginalizes and precludes other ways of seeing and doing. 'The discourse is understood, *vide* Foucault, as an ensemble of social institutions, semiotic categories, and practices that regulate the realms of thought, subjectivity, and action' (Gidwani, 2000:3).



Photo 2: A sand dam in the wet season

The position of post-development thinkers is that of the problematisation of poverty, the portrayal of development as Westernisation, and the critique of modernism and science. The theorists argue that ideas such as 'progress', 'growth', 'poverty' and 'underdevelopment' are artefacts of a discourse of development that has imposed its normalising and technological version on the world (Gidwani, 2000:1). Therefore Escobar (1995) concludes that rather than searching for development alternatives, there needs to be alternatives *to* development.

There has been a lot of criticisms about this concept because there have been no answers to what these alternatives could be. Pieterse (2000) and Schuurman (2000) argue that post-development is flawed, in part, because it does not offer a programme on how to put post-development into practice. Nustad (2001:482) introduces the important point that lack of instrumentality is

not a sufficient basis on which to dismiss post-development, but it offers an explanation as to why so many development projects seem to fail. This is because so many initiatives for development are linked to the agencies of elite, and that there are technical constraints imposed on these developers, which shape the way in which they construct projects. Nustad believes there is a need to examine how development interventions are transformed, reformulated, adopted or resisted in local encounters, 'development interventions might not in practice function as an expression and concretisation of the ideological baggage on which they are built' (Nustad, 2001:485). This maybe because development organisations, which have limited funds and experience time constraints, need to show donors that they have achieved 'development' for their money. Meaning that any ambitious ideas for interventions and change are limited to specific problems that can be solved with technology (a well, a community centre, houses etc.). This explains the widespread emphasis on locally specific technical solutions, within localised problem areas. In this sense, Nustad believes it is the depoliticising effect of development. Post-development changes this perspective, illuminating the political and power aspects of problems. However, Pieterse (2000) critique suggests that post-development offers no politics besides the self-organising capacity of the poor, which actually lets, he believes, the development responsibilities of states and international institutions off the hook.

2.2. THEORIES OF GOVERNANCE

The most critical aspect for development is governance, because it determines the processes; and the values to be given the greatest weight in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies; and the 'overall development strategy'. It is a term that has become popular in a context of globalisation in which governments are thought to be less powerful and autonomous than they

once were. As Rosenau (1992) states 'governance is government without the necessary involvement of governments'. This growing acceptance of this term in the western world has meant that the term 'governance' has become indoctrinated into the development industry, academic world and policy circles. Governance refers to collective attempts to encourage and regulate social relations. Governance like government is still concerned with creating conditions for ordered rule and collective action but the processes are different. Now it refers to a style of governing where the boundaries between public and private sectors have become blurred, incorporating a broader range of practices and management strategies.

It has become a useful term because of its vagueness; 'it has become an umbrella concept for such a wide variety of phenomena as policy networks, public management, coordination of sector economy, public-private partnerships, cooperate governance and good governance' (Pierre & Peters, 2000:14). It is popular because of its reference to basic problems of political order such as efficiency and legitimacy and the fact that it is a wider concept than just the state, encompassing civil society, economy and multi-level institutions. It therefore is being used by groups of actors of very different ideological persuasions, for a number of different and often contradictory ends much like how other key concepts in the development debate are used.

Increasingly, regulating and managing effectively involves governments co-operating with, or devolving government functions to NGOs and the private sector. 'Governance involves building consensus or obtaining the consent or acquiescence necessary to carry out a programme in an area where many different interests are in play' (Alcantara, 1998:105). Since governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of governance focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in this decision-making, the implementation of decisions made and the formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the

decision. Government is one of these actors in governance. Other actors involved vary depending on the level of governance that is under discussion. In rural areas, for example, these actors may include influential landlords, associations of peasant farmers, cooperatives, NGOs, research institutes, religious leaders, finance institutions, political parties and the military (UNESCAP, 2003). All these actors other than government and the military are grouped together as part of the "civil society." In some countries in addition to the civil society, organized crime syndicates also influence decision-making, particularly in urban areas and at the national level.

There are five areas within development where governance is central (Alcantara, 1998:111).

- The attempt to withdraw from the dead-end of economic thinking;
- The attempt to shift power from public to private sectors, reducing the role of the state and increasing civil society;
- The need to deal with requirements of administrative and institutional reform within the public sector of Third World countries, without appearing to intervene in their internal affairs;
- A new insistence on democratisation and human rights;
- And the terrible challenges confronted on situations of post-conflict reconstruction.

In the developing world, governance has entered the policy circles with the World Bank enforcing 'good governance' as a condition for loans. On the other end of the scale, governance has also been translated into the recognition of the 'interdependence of public, private and voluntary sectors in developing countries' (Stoker, 1998:18). This is the idea that governance even at the most basic level,

involves a variety of stakeholders: individuals and groups that organise themselves to govern and manage, for example common property resources. Governance can be used, as Stoker (1998:18) believes, to achieve greater efficiency in the provision of public services. Alongside public agencies, private enterprise, NGOs and CBOs have taken on roles in the delivery of particular basic services. They have transformed themselves 'into a largely self-organising inter-organisational network' (Helmsing, 2000:18).

Theories of governance are a useful analysis for this research as it is multi-levelled with interactions between the local, national and international institutions. Stoker (1998) goes so far as to call for the theories of governance to be seen as an organising framework for understanding changing processes of governing. He proposes five aspects of governance that can be used as a guide to see the changing trends and development of governance at the multiple levels, and which is discussed later in this chapter.

2.2.1. GOVERNANCE AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The International Financial Institutions (IFIs), have been able to 'work themselves out of an intellectual and practical dead-end' (Alcantara, 1998:106) by putting the concept of governance on their agenda, as Alcantara states 'taking away the glares of their failures of economic development using the free-market ideals'. This failure was concurrent with the fact that the required administrative and governmental framework was not in place. It became clear that no economic progress would be achieved unless there was at least minimal political legitimacy, social order and institutional efficiency. This turn of events, however, did not mean a weakening of the commitment to free-market policies; it was to make them more efficient. The IFIs are very powerful agencies that dictate many aspects of development policies, especially in shaping the terms of

other donors. The donor community has embraced the IFIs concept of governance and has included it in their ideology and policies.⁸

Interpretation of governance at the international level is important when dealing with local development interventions. This is because these agencies 'intervene' to include their ideas of governance. They venture into the political arena and support many groups within civil society from developing countries. This is through two levels, the national level where they influence policy reform of the government. Governance is a way the donor community 'were able to address sensitive questions that could be lumped together under a relatively inoffensive heading' (Alcantara, 1998:107), thus avoiding criticism that they were interfering in the internal political affairs of a sovereign state. Consequently, it was introduced in relation to policy conditionalities of SAPs, under the banner of 'good governance'. The program of 'good governance' has been dedicated to mainly 'improving public sector management, strengthening accounting and auditing practices, supporting decentralisation of certain public services and establishing the legal and judicial infrastructure consistent with private enterprise in countries in transition' (Alcantara, 1998:107). Ten years later it has been widened still to 'democratic governance' (Helmsing, 2000:18). De Waal (1997) believes that these political conditionalities encourage the reorientation of government accountability towards external finances and weakens the states' responsibilities, especially providing basic services. The second is at the local level, these international donors sponsor local organisations interested in pursuing governance and civil society building. There has been an increase in channellisation of funds through NGOs rather than the state. Increasing the likelihood of donors influencing the ideology and policies of local organisations.

⁸ see the context chapter for the example of DFID

2.2.2. GOVERNANCE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

This embracing of the governance concept enables the analyst to understand the increased roles that NGOs are playing in pushing for policy change and general outcomes within the state. Pierre and Peters (2000:29) believe that the role of the government should be to set goals for governing, but the disastrous way developing countries governments handle governing, this ideas seems along way from an ideal solution. Changes in the state have triggered a need for developing new forms of governance. In developing countries this has been with the onslaught of SAPs 'rolling back the state' and increasing the private sector delivering social services. The trouble is that due to a colonial legacy, local entrepreneurs have never been encouraged and therefore private companies by locals are rare, creating a space for multinational companies or foreigners to fill. They focus on maximising profits, with little consideration for the poor communities that cannot afford the services. They generally focus on the higher income segments of the demand infrastructure services, which has led to areas with lower income not receiving services 'on the grounds that profit is too low' (Helmsing, 2000:11). There is therefore the possibility that replacing public provision by Private-Public Partnerships increases the danger that the poor will be even more under-provided for. In their place, NGOs have filled the role of providing social services and infrastructures to marginal communities. NGOs provide a crucial role as facilitators, providing community management skills, vocational training and can be intermediaries in the planning, tendering, execution and monitoring of works. NGOs have created a broader idea of governance away from the IFIs definition. They promote governance as an, 'attempt to improve people's capacity to organize and manage their own affairs in a creative fashion in many Third World countries' (Alcantara, 1998:108).

The word Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) encompasses a variety of definitions. NGOs are classified as 'service organisations, which work with

grassroots organisations to motivate and improve their performance'. There are 'many roads that lead to NGOs' and there is 'diversity in the crowd' (Farrington et al, 1993). It is a 'private organisation delivering services to the poor, pursuing social values instead of profits' (Biekart K, 1999:38). Local NGOs work at a local, sustainable level, understanding local customs, issues and needs, as they are themselves often part of the community. However, these NGOs need funds, and as their general public is the people they are trying to help, there is no immediate access to donations like the International NGOs. They therefore rely on powerful donors and International NGOs to finance them. A local NGO enters into a power relationship with these International donors and counterparts where there is more 'demand than supply'.

Poverty and poverty situations are too diverse and varied to be remedied by standard policy prescriptions. Helmsing (2000:8) believes that 'instead of communities participating in *public works*, government should participate in community planning of *community works* which also would be owned by the community' (Helmsing, 2000:12). It should be promotional and encouraging people to help themselves. Helmsing (2000:14) goes on to state that the government's role in developing countries should be as facilitator and regulator of the overall framework within which other actors deliver the services. Changing local government to become an enabler is more difficult because many NGOs and donor agencies spend time 'empowering communities' rather than local government institutions.

2.2.3. LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Decentralisation to and democratisation of local level government has been pushed by international organisations and NGOs via the formation of local government substructures at the village and neighbourhood level, and via citizen

participation in decision-making, planning and budgeting. Important changes in institutional arrangements are pursued to include a greater role for civil society, through which public policies can be initiated, formulated and implemented. Community enablement is the idea that community and neighbourhood organisations 'initiate, plan and implement their own projects according to the principles of self-determination, self-organisation and self-management' (Helmsing, 2000:8). The importance here is the increase in significance of community participation. This is by involving different institutions at local level, such as the local government, communities, their organisations, NGOs and the private sector, who are all performing different roles in varying capacities. Local governance should be about local government and civic organisations *goal setting* and gaining external *accountability* through *participation*. Local government can help to coordinate and facilitate these efforts not leaving it to the NGOs.

The legal basis for these civic organisations such as CBOs is important so they can be recognised as actors in local government administration and planning processes. The importance of this is the question of access to public information and on the procedures to obtain such legal status.

There are problems with the promoting of local governance. Local government bureaucracies find it difficult to change their behaviour. There is lack of regulation appropriate for the community situation. For example, there needs to be recognition and registration of property rights, and protection against monopolistic practices. There has been a fragmentation of societies in developing countries where ethnic communities are then seen as units.⁹ This is a disadvantage, as local governance does not link longer goals of society as a whole, it assumes that units have the same interests and that there are no conflicts. There still is a need of a higher level to control the local level and develop long-term policies.

⁹ See context, where in Kenya ethnic divides have split communities.

With the shift from government to governance and the participation of people, what happens to the people that are left out? There are no organisations to put non-participants on the agenda within the governance process. ‘Civil society’ has been used as ‘a euphemism that hides deprivation and disempowerment’ (Alcantara, 1998:108). There are frequent examples where populations of the developing countries have had to shoulder these burdens that the state should be responsible for. To maintain a minimum standard of living, people themselves establish neighbourhood organisations, soup kitchens and childcare facilities, ‘such survival strategies are a necessity, not a virtue’ (Alcantara, 1998:108). Alcantara (1998) believes that it is wrong to assume that a new and prosperous society can be built on existing groups that are trying to survive because of the absence of any public support.

There can be governance failure due to tensions and difficulties with institutions of civil society, as well as problems in those organisations that cannot bridge the gaps between public, private and voluntary sectors. Other failures can be experienced because of leadership and social conflicts. As devolving decision-making to lower levels of authority does not mean that power gets diffused. In fact often elites are able to consolidate power and so the same patterns of power can be reproduced.

2.2.4. THE CHARACTER OF GOVERNANCE

This multilevel of governance can be taken and put into Stoker’s (1998) five propositions of the aspects of governance:

1. **Governance refers to a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government to challenge understandings of the systems in government.**

It draws attention to the increased involvement of the private and voluntary sectors in service delivery and strategic decision-making. The problem with this sharing of responsibilities is that the 'exercise of power needs to be legitimate... A legitimating deficit undermines public support and commitment to programs of change and ultimately undermines the ability of power holders to mobilize resources and promote co-operation and partnership' (Stoker, 1998:20).

Beetham quoted in Stoker (1998:21) says:

'For power to be fully legitimate...three conditions are required: its conformity to established rules; the justifiability of the rules by reference to shared beliefs; and the express consent of the subordinate, or the most significant among them, to the particular relations of power'.

2. Governance identifies the blurring of boundaries between public and private sectors and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues.

This draws the attention to a shift in responsibility for basic services, from the state towards more autonomous public agencies; the private; and the voluntary services, in general to the citizen. This shift is seen with the expanding of the voluntary sector with different labels, non-profit organisations, non-governmental organisations, community enterprises, co-ops, mutual and community-based organisations. These organizations cover a wide base with a variety of issues. They operate in a context, which Stoker (1998:21) termed 'social economy', that has emerged between the market economy and the public sector, and they have become largely responsible for this supply side of governance. The problem with this blurring of responsibilities is that it creates an ambiguity and uncertainty in policy makers and the public about who is responsible. It even can lead to government actors passing off responsibilities to other actors when things go wrong, and even to scapegoating.

3. **Governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action.**

Power dependence implies that:

- Organisations committed to collective action are dependent on other organisations;
- In order to achieve goals organisations have to exchange resources and negotiate common purposes;
- Not only the resources of the participants determine the outcome of exchange but also by the rules of the game and the context of exchange.

Governance is an interactive process that involves various forms of partnership. The principle-agent relationship rests on one party (the principal) hiring or contracting another (the agent) to undertake a particular task. The inter-organizational form involves organisations in negotiating joint projects in which by blending capabilities, they are better able to meet their own organisation's objectives (Stoker, 1998:21). The systematic co-ordination form of partnership goes further by establishing a level of mutual understanding and embeddedness so that organisations develop a shared vision and joint-working capacity that leads to the establishment of a self-governing network (Stoker, 1998:22). All kinds of associations link citizens and communities to the state (on economic, social, cultural, recreation, and consumer affairs) and they seek to participate in the public decision-making. Hirst (1994) calls it 'associative democracy'. This is because the concern is that the modern state is not accountable to its citizens so the associationalism counters this with emphasis on self-governance, taking responsibilities for social affairs and redistributing power to the lowest possible level.

4. **Governance is about autonomous network of actors.**

The ultimate partnership activity is the formation of self-governing networks. Actors and institutions gain a capacity to act by blending their resources, skills and purposes into a long-term coalition: a regime. Ostrom's (quoted in Stoker, 1998:23) work focuses on the management of common-pool resources in poor rural communities. The focus of this work is on the various institutional arrangements that can be created to enable people to co-operate over resources, which are finite, to which they have access. The dilemma with these networks is the accountability, by the individual and by those that are excluded, as all networks are exclusive. They are driven by the self-interest of their members rather than a wider concern with the public interest or those excluded from the network.

5. **Governance recognises the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. It sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide.**

It refers to the need for local government to give leadership, build partnerships, protect and regulate its environment and promote opportunity. Of course in developing countries the lack of government responsibility to do this has meant the takeover of these responsibilities by NGOs who do the job for them. The first task involves defining the situation, identifying key stakeholders and developing effective linkages between the relevant parties. The second is about influencing and steering the relationships in order to achieve desired outcomes. The third is about 'systems management', named by Stewart (1996). This involves thinking and acting beyond the individual sub-systems, avoiding unwanted side effects and establishing mechanisms for effective coordination.

These five propositions that Stoker (1998) has outlined is a useful guide to examine the way in which the world of government is changing and to see the key trends and developments looking also at the key dilemmas and concerns. Though Stoker (1998:26) is modest about his guide as 'it applies a simplifying

lens to a complex reality' and that this governance outline draws on British and broadly Western democracies, it can also be looked at from a number of levels in the developing world. This is why these propositions in explaining the changing nature of governance are relevant to this research; the five guidelines of governance can be seen to be occurring at the different levels of interactions played out by the number of actors involved in the construction of the sand-storage dams.

2.3. CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is not a single concept. Hegel (1770-1831) once defined it as everything 'beyond the family but short of the state' (Hoogvelt, 2000:252). Civil society encompasses all voluntary associations, organisations and networks engaged in some form of collective action. It is a domain where all kinds of organisations, formally and informally, represent diverse and sometimes contradictory social and political interests (Biekart, 1999; Putman, 1993; 2000; Johnson and Wilson, 2000). These social divisions have to be overtly recognised, actively negotiated, and represented if there is to be (a) greater coherence for action, and (b) inclusion of hitherto excluded groups in development interventions (Johnson and Wilson, 2000:1891). Civil society according to Biekart (1999:40) is 'the organisational density of society as a condition for democracy'. Civil society is a key actor in democratic transitions to true governance since it brings attention to the importance of issues of human rights, citizenships and accountability to the political arena.

The composition of any civil society is a product of social struggle. Social struggle is emphasised to underline often the violent way civil society has been constructed, and to stress the implicit uniqueness of civil society in each country. Even within the same nation state over time, different patterns of civil society

configurations have developed resulting from local power struggles (Biekart, 1999:40). The role of international actors needs to be examined as its forces can directly or indirectly influence the strength of civil society, by reinforcing or weakening its diversity, density or inclusiveness. White (1999) believes that, the increase of NGOs is in itself an indication of a strengthening of civil society. 'NGOs are often treated as entry points to a burgeoning civil society which donors will help to shape' (Stiles, 2002:836).

Some organisations in civil society generally are more powerful than others; they have the potential to impose decisions favourable to their interests on others. This means that not all organisations are interested in deepening democracy. This should be taken into consideration when implementing participation with the view to empowerment at local level; that some parties are not interested. For example, empowerment at the household level; persons who are holding the power, may not want to give way to democracy in the household. As Rueschemeyer et al, (1992) stated that 'those who have only to gain from democracy will be its most reliable promoters and defenders, those who have most to lose will resist it and will be most tempted to roll it back when the occasion presents itself' (Biekart, 1999:40).

When legitimacy can be strengthened, both within society and towards the state, this considerably enhances the chances for a shift in the balance between state and civil society towards democratic transition. This can explain why some people at the local level resist the idea of participation projects because they know that the training received on democratic expectations and empowerment will de-legitimise their leadership.

There are five categories that Biekart (1999) identifies of how an organisation in civil society can strengthen the political society.

1. There is importance in building the foundations of civil society by making sure that citizens are involved in decision-making. They should learn how

to interact with the state. This is the basis to the participatory approach at its full level of empowering the people.

2. Building alliances in civil society so as to develop the 'social fabric' is important too. This can be done by forging mutual beneficial relationships at various levels among constituent parts of civil society. The trust that facilitates people working together towards a common goal helps build a civil society.
3. Building intermediary channels between the state and civil society.
4. Opening up transnational political space to make alliances with external actors.
5. And building citizenship. This is based on the political systems' ability to increase its legitimacy. To maintain this, citizens should be guaranteed participation in public debates and be sure that they can trust their elected representatives.

The first two categories are central to building a strong civil society and providing conditions for establishment of political society. NGOs that focus at a grassroots level approach to participation fits into this category. The other three categories are central to consolidating and constructing a civil society. It must be noted that a democratic transition is a slow process with stages of power balance shifts between civil society and the state.

Strengthening civil society is not the only part of democratic transition; the other is to strengthen the state by making it transparent and more accountable. 'Strengthening civil society; this is a matter of combining widening participation with increasing accountability' (Biekart, 1999:41).

Partnership between state, private and civil society actors are seen as ways both sustaining and improving the effectiveness of social provision while making it cheaper and avoiding problems of social exclusion and fragmentation that are associated with purely private provision.

2.3.1. GOVERNANCE, CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY

‘Society performs complementary and occasionally competitive functions in the process of governance’ (Pierre and Peters, 2000:32). The role of society is supposedly to bring their wants and demands to government and press for their own agendas through the political processes. This in developing countries however is increasingly impossible with the lack of legitimacy and ignorance on the government’s part, thus Pierre and Peters (2000) and others believe the best way to develop democratic governance is to develop the civil society and strengthen the self-governing capacity of segments of society. Democracy is a formalised way of organising ‘true’ participation. This is ultimately done through empowerment. Putnam (1993) argues that ‘it is irrelevant whether the groups developing such capacity are manifestly political or not; what matters is the generation of organisational capacity and the movement of interest and identification beyond the family’ (Pierre and Peters, 2000:33). Programs have been designed to shift the power in society from governments and the public sector to private individuals and groups. The idea behind this power shift should create areas of self-reliance, entrepreneurship and participation, which would increase civil society and the quest for democracy.

2.4. THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH TO PARTICIPATION

The participatory approach’s general aim is to involve the community in interventions at a local level. It has become the dominant ideology in contemporary thinking to both non-governmental organisations and governmental/intergovernmental agencies to improve effectiveness of

interventions. This approach has been interpreted differently by different development actors overtime as to what ‘participation’ actually means and to the exact level of community involvement.



Photo 3: The men’s Focus Group Discussion

In a broad sense, participation as the participatory approach refers to the involvement of a significant number of persons in situations, which enhance their well-being, their income and other basic needs. This is through voluntary contributions in cash or labour by the local people, which Nelson & Wright (1995:12) call participation as a *means*, to accomplish the aims of a project more efficiently, effectively and cheaply. To the Post-Development advocates participation is an *end*, where the community or group sets up a process to control its own development. This is the involvement in decision-making and evaluation. Decision-making enhances the community’s self-esteem to improve their livelihoods; this involves empowerment of the individual and groups. This participation is about the empowerment of people that hopefully will develop into enhancing civil society and democracy at all levels, from interactions between the community and government to household levels. It can also lead to

‘empowerment’ of disadvantaged and hitherto ‘invisible’ individuals, groups, and organisations (Johnson & Wilson, 2000:1892).

2.4.1. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment is associated with participation because the idea is that one can act on others to give them power or it enables one to realise their own potential. Power is experienced in everyday life and as part of systems. ‘Power is a description of a relation, not a ‘thing’ which people ‘have’. This empowerment can be seen as, ‘*power to*’. This means increasing the capacities of individuals to make decisions that affect their lives. The aim is to find ‘more spaces of control’ where, ‘by developing confidence and changing attitudes and behaviours, they can alter the power differentials on their relationships’ (Nelson & Wright, 1995:7) and partly as ‘*power over*’; this means increasing the power of some individuals and groups who are stakeholders in an intervention process, while decreasing that of other traditionally dominant stakeholders (Johnson & Wilson, 2000:1892). There is also ‘*power with*’ or as Ferguson (1990) introduces it as ‘*decentred*’ model of power. It is possible to negotiate joint action with others that does not lead to the diminution of anybody’s or group’s power.

Participation is risky because it will challenge local power structures. Before attempting to shift power in a system it is important that the basis of existing and future institutional arrangements are well understood, these are often called stakeholders. Primary stakeholders are unequivocally stated to be the poor and marginalized; those who lack information and power and are excluded from the development process. Secondary stakeholders are non-governmental organisations, businesses and professional bodies who have technical expertise and linkages to primary stakeholders. Third stakeholders are the national and international policymakers; this includes the World Bank and IMF. Participation can be defined as ‘a process, through which stakeholders

influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them'. The goal of participation is to reach and engage primary stakeholders in transformational ways, not instrumental. 'Getting communities to decide on their own priorities was called trans-formative; getting people to buy into a donor's project is instrumental' (Nelson & Wright, 1995:5). Participation now means the community's active, not passive, involvement in development.

2.4.2. PROBLEMS FOR EMPOWERMENT

Counterarguments to the empowerment process are that 'power relations between different stakeholders cannot simply be washed away' (Johnson & Wilson, 2000:1893). For example, the unequal power relationship between outside agency and project beneficiary means it is difficult to maintain the 'participation' because this relationship is subject to manipulation and dependency.

Another critique of participation is the concept of voluntarism. 'It depends on more powerful individuals, groups and organisations and institutions voluntarily giving up some power within the participatory process' (Johnson & Wilson, 2000:1893). Chambers (1997:12) expresses this voluntarism when he suggests development professionals should 'hand over the stick' to the least powerful beneficiaries of interventions. Officials who speak the rhetoric of participation can exhibit behaviour, which is hierarchical. If the field staffs are lectured to in a top-down and directive manner on how to set up participatory processes and structures in the village, then they themselves will adopt a teacher-pupil relationship with the villages. It has also been found from studies that the participation rhetoric of agencies is often at odds with their organisational structures (Nelson & Wright, 2000:8).

Complex social dynamics may also be never revealed to the outside agency (Johnson and Wilson, 2000:1892). There are increasing problems when external agencies and government intervene to try and provide and maintain services to help deal with over-consumption, overuse and general provision of public resources. This is because these actors assume that the resources are not owned and therefore need either government regulations or a new set of community institutions to manage the resources. Research has shown that some communities in developing countries formulate and maintain effective regulations and rules of behaviour about the use of common resources and public services.¹⁰

It is believed that this concept of participation and partnership (to strive for empowerment) has not been adopted into major structural reforms, even with the benefits known. Resources have not been moved away from vested interests that control dominant social and political structures towards the underprivileged. The participatory approach to development has been accepted as a poverty alleviation strategy to implement sporadic micro-level interventions; only mobilising the resources of the poverty groups themselves (Rahman, 1995:33). It provides a 'safety net' rather than the receipt for peoples 'liberation'.

This is because poverty can be put into the context of two types, material and non-material welfare (Brock, 1999; Chambers, 1987; World Bank, 1990; Bebbington, 1998). Poverty is a consequence of unequal opportunities and an unfair distribution of knowledge, power, production and income. This 'safety net' of development initiatives helps to alleviate the immediate material poverty. Material poverty includes the lack of income, the lack of land for agriculture or shelter, a lack of food and water (clean) that leads to bad health. This material poverty changes definitions within different contexts of individuals, as poverty is culturally perceived. 'Subsistence economies which serve basic needs through self-provision are not poor in the sense of being deprived. Yet the ideology of

¹⁰ This can be seen within the Akamba community, see Context Chapter.

development declares them so because they don't participate overwhelmingly in the market economy, and do not consume commodities provided for and distributed through the market' (Pieterse, 1998:352). Whether people are able to stay out of poverty depends on their ability to cope with sudden shocks and long-term stresses.

However, poverty is also the lack of non-material welfare, which involves social exclusion that many face due to gender, caste, age or/and class divisions this is related to the lack of access to resources. There is a lack of education or lack of attainable education, a lack of security due to violence and crime; due to these divisions, there is marginalisation and isolation. Within this concept of poverty, access to material is often embedded in the non-material welfare. This exclusion brings about the feelings of powerlessness, dependency, vulnerability and shame that are at the root of poverty. In addition, rural poverty is related to seasonality. This has impact on all aspects of life, which determines availability of food, water and income for survival.

Interventions that encompasses participation that pursues empowerment of the people is not only providing relief for material poverty and to the lack of basic needs, but also the enhancement of the non-material, peoples' well-being and empowerment to choose their own development. This brings about organisation of the community, which enhances civil society and ultimately the participation in local governance.

2.5. ENHANCING THE BASIC NEEDS: ENVIRONMENT ENTITLEMENTS

Environment entitlements is about how social actors access, use and benefit from different components of the environment, extending Sen's (1999) entitlements approach coupled with an analysis of institutions, help to

conceptualise these processes. The environment in turn is shaped and transformed through people's interactions with it. To increase their livelihood chances, people need to enhance their basic needs and decrease their vulnerability (material and non-material poverty). This enhancement of a person's basic needs is linked to their access to them. Technical and social relations govern the control, access and use of resources and distribution of output, which are formalised and embedded in institutions. Therefore, institutions need to be restructured and created, that will improve the access of these resources to the previously excluded. Participation for empowerment and partnerships create new technical and social relations, to hopefully increase this access to basic needs, but also ultimately shape institutions so they are able to develop the civil society and pursue local governance, so that the community can develop as a whole.

Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), which is at the base of providing access to basic needs, has received international recognition as an approach to aid sustainable development. In practical implementation, however, as with many approaches in the development 'industry', it falls short of expectations. Leach et al (1999) believe that there is a need to build a framework, giving institutions a central role in mediating social-environmental relationships. These institutions can be related to the importance of governance, civil society and participation for empowerment.

The reason why this resource management approach has not accomplishing its objectives is because of several gaps noticed by Leach et al (1999: 226) including a tendency for the intended beneficiaries to be treated as passive recipients of project activities; a tendency for projects to be too short term in nature and over-reliant on expatriate expertise; and a lack of clear criteria by which to judge sustainability or success in meeting conservation or development goods. These gaps were enhanced because CBNRM is based on fundamental assumptions that do not actually exist in practice.

The first assumption is that a distinct, static and homogenous community exists. The community has been defined as 'the people of a local administration unit...of a cultural or ethnic group...or of a local urban or rural area, such as a neighbourhood or valley' (IUCN/WWF/UNEP, 1991). There has been an effort to explore the differences within 'communities' by using such techniques as the Participatory Rural Appraisal method (PRA), to explore what the community's wants and needs are, and what type of interventions they desire. Leach et al (1999:228) believe that 'all too often it is implied that the public airing of conflict is sufficient, and that social consensus and solidarity will necessarily result'. This assumption that a community is a homogenous unit comes from early sociology and anthropology that saw societies as 'bounded objects'. There are now more works focusing on the social differences that divide and criss-cross so called community boundaries, such as gender, caste, wealth, age, origins and other aspects of social identity. Institutions within communities can shape and reproduce relations of unequal power and authority. Communities then should be viewed as active individuals and groups.

Another assumption that weakens CBNRM is the suggestion that there is a distinct and relatively stable, local environment, which may have succumbed to degradation or deterioration, but has the potential to be restored and managed sustainably. It is believed that the local community will be the ones to restore and care for the environment collectively. This assumption has been challenged by a number of theories that believe in dynamic ecologies varying in time and space and the fact of non-equilibrium perspectives. This change of view has led to the idea that the environment is 'transforming, not simply degrading' (Leach et al, 1999:232).

These two refuted assumptions were used to suggest equilibrium or balance existed between community livelihoods and natural resources. Population growth has been cited as the reason why there has been an imbalance by the over-exploitation of resources, leading to poverty and environmental

degradation. The requirement therefore is to bring these two entities back into harmony by rebuilding traditional, collective institutions or replacements. Leach et al (1999:225) believes this oversimplification, and flawed basic assumptions, mean they serve as poor and misleading guides for translation into operational strategies and programmes, hence the relatively poor statistics of successful projects.

2.5.1. THE ENVIRONMENT ENTITLEMENTS FRAMEWORK

Leach et al (1999:226) have taken the approach of CBNRM with its practical failings and have tried to improve this approach by concentrating on 'institutions as mediators of people-environmental relations'. They see institutions as 'regularised patterns of behaviour between individuals and groups in society, rather than as community-level organisations' (Mearns, 1996). It is important to recognise that there are diverse institutions operating at multiple-scales from micro to macro, which has influences over who has access and control over which resources. This recognition that diverse institutions mediate the relationships between different social actors for natural resources help external interventions be more efficient, 'whether the objectives are to protect and promote the environment entitlements of particular social groups, or to foster particular environmental outcomes' (Leach et al, 1999:226).

They take Sen's (1999) entitlements approach to explain how it is that people can starve in the midst of plenty of food, as a result of a collapse in their means of command over food. 'A person will be exposed to starvation if, for the ownership that he actually has, the exchange entitlement set does not contain any feasible bundle including enough food' (Sen A, 1999:3). This is because the modes of production to produce the exchange entitlements depend on economic prospects. For example, wage labourers are more exposed to famines involving

unexpected rises of food prices than are peasants producing food crops (Sen, 1999:7). He then takes this further and comments that, 'the achievement of civil and political rights also has an instrumental relationship with poverty eradication and equitable economic development'. Leach et al (1999:227) believe that Sen's version does not go far enough but they do adopt key definitions for their environmental entitlements. Their entitlement analysis is useful in explaining how the consequences of environmental change in general and access to control over natural resources in particular, are socially differentiated.

Endowments refer to people's initial ownership; the rights and resources that social actors have for example, land, labour, skills. *Entitlements* refer to legitimate effective command over alternative commodity bundles, such as production, own-labour, trade, inheritance and transfer. *Environmental entitlements* refer to alternative sets of utilities derived from environmental goods and services which social actors have legitimate effective command over. *Social actors* refer to individual person also a group who share a certain characteristic (age, class, gender). *Environmental goods* means the specific source (material and energy natural-resource) inputs that are essential to sustaining present and future livelihoods. *Environmental services* refer to sinks (pollution-absorbing) and other service functions of the environment (hydrological cycle) that are essential to sustaining the livelihoods of present and future generations. *Entitlement mapping* is the process of a person transferring their endowments into a set of entitlements to improve their well-being or capabilities. What are entitlements at one time, may, in turn, represent endowments at another time period, from which a new set of entitlements may be derived. Mapping processes are not static; indeed the various elements of the framework are continuously changing over time.

(Leach et al, 1999:243; Gasper, 1993)

2.5.2. INSTITUTIONS

At the international level, policies of donor agencies play an important role in shaping local approaches to CBNRM and they also influence domestic macroeconomic policy or governance, which reaches down to local resource management.¹¹ At the national level, government policies and legislation shape management, by for example land tenure reform or approaches to local development. At a local level, rural livelihood systems and inter/intra-household dynamics operate. These levels, however, are not deterministic, with flows of influence moving between each level.

North (1990) believes that institutions are ‘rules of game’, the ‘rules’ that define the most basic relationships in social life. Then organisations may be thought of as the players or ‘groups of individuals bound together by some common purpose to achieve organisations’ (North, 1990:5). Institutions distribute resources, both symbolic and material, so the rules are about membership and access. These institutions and with it the rules vary, as to who has access, on what terms and with what degree of certainty. This focus on institutions highlights power issues at all levels of the mapping process, which Leach et al (1999:233) and other critics believe is lacking in Sen’s analysis.

There are many ways of gaining access to and control over resources beyond the market, (such as kin networks), and many ways of legitimating such access and control outside formal legal system, (such as customary law, social conventions and norms). They are very different from the rules of formal institutions that of contract-based and legally enforceable entitlements, which may operate in markets and civil society that ‘require exogenous enforcement by a third-party organisation’ and both in turn differ from access based on the idea of rights.

Therefore, resource access and control is a whole range of social institutions not just formal legal ones. The ‘effectiveness’ of command over resources suggests claims for resources are often contested, and within existing

¹¹ As discussed earlier.

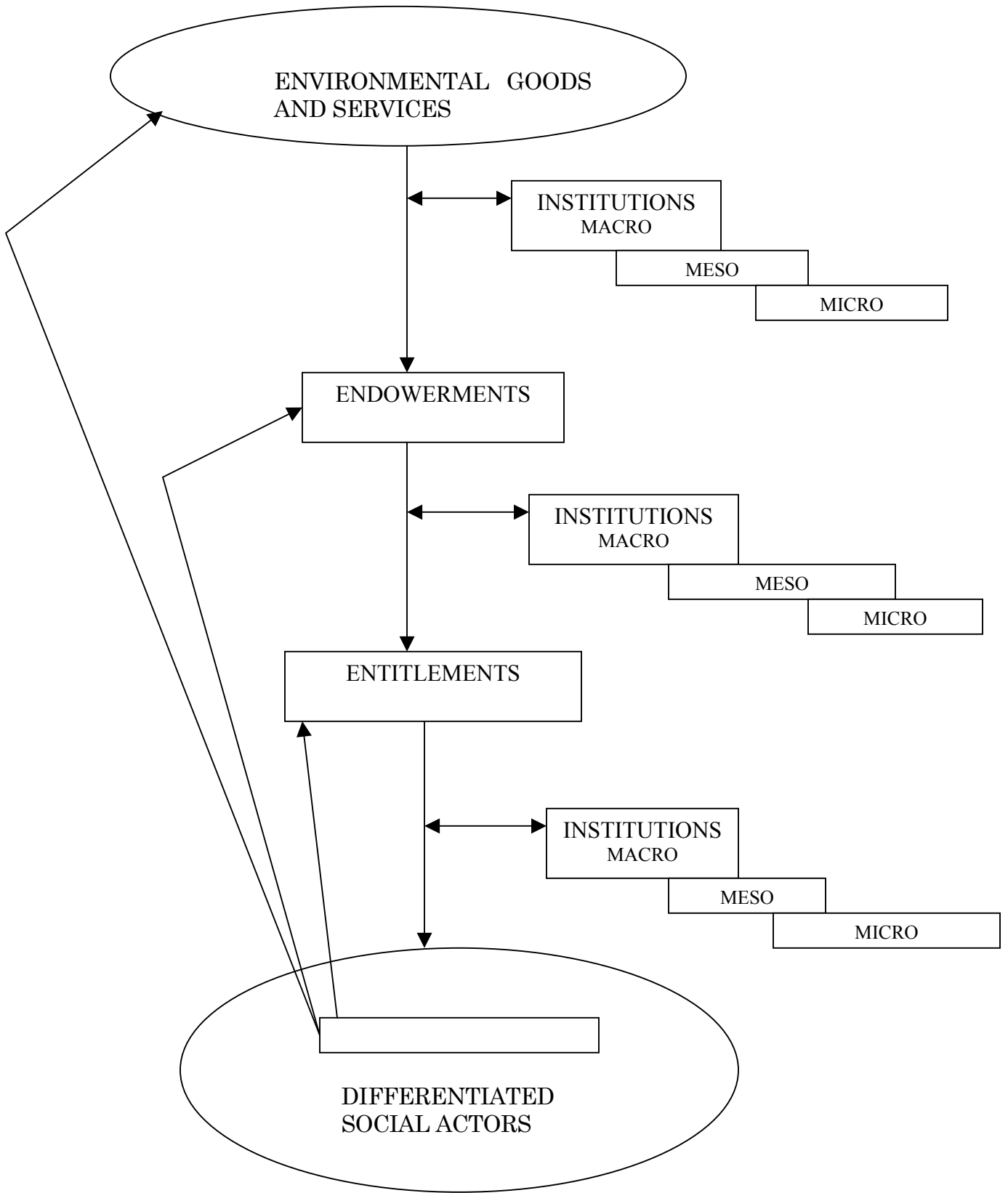


Figure 2.5.1: Environment Entitlements Framework

power relations some actors claim are likely to prevail over those of others. Also, certain social actors may not be able to mobilise some endowments (e.g. capital, labour) that are necessary to make effective use of others (e.g. land). For instance, kinship-based institutions that regulate command over labour may embody power relations structured around gender and age, that leave young men, and especially young women, strongly disadvantaged in their ability to control their own labour and to call on that of others (Leach et al, 1999:233).

There is also 'legitimate' command by a statutory system and also command sanctioned by customary rights of access, use or control, and other social norms. These differences mean that external interventionists need to find out before setting out to distort the existing institutions and power relations between and within the different levels of a 'community' (Kabeer, 2000:87).

The relationship then between a 'given' community made up of these different social actors and the changing ecological landscape, as Leach et al (1999) believes, can be 'analysed in terms of the ways different social actors gain capabilities, or a sense of well-being, by acquiring legitimate, effective command over resources through processes of endowment and entitlement mapping' (Leach et al, 1999:234).

Access and membership are the principles of exclusion. 'While institutional rules and norms can spell out particular patterns of exclusion and inclusion, they cannot *cause* them to happen. It is the social actors who make up these institutions, the collectives they form and the interactions between them, which provide the agency behind the patterns' (Kabeer, 2000:85). Many institutions do not serve a collective purpose, and different actors' perceptions of the 'collective good' depend very much on their social positions. For example, women's investment in resource-sharing networks with neighbours may be to compensate for their lack of power within the household (Leach et al, 1999:238).

The diagram in Figure 2.5.1 shows the environmental entitlements framework. Capabilities are attributes of particular social actors, and so are included within the ellipse representing differentiated social actors. The relationships among these institutions, and between the scale levels, is central importance in influencing which social actors - both those within the community and those at some considerable remove from it-gain access to and control over local resources.

2.5.3. CAPITALS LINKED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL ENTITLEMENTS

Bebbington (1999) explores a framework of capitals and capabilities to broaden the conception of rural livelihoods so that interventions can be rethought in terms of nature, location and content to compensate for the diverse ways in which people make a living and build their worlds. The reason why so many interventions fail is that practitioners misperceive the way people get by and get things done. The framework goes beyond environmental entitlements (Leach, Mearns and Scoones, 1999) to a wider meaning of 'resources', to livelihoods based on a range of assets, income sources and product and labour markets. He therefore presents livelihoods in terms of five types of 'capital' assets - produced, human, natural, social and cultural capital. This is because he believes that notions of access should not just be seen in a materialistic way (by making a living) but also the way people perceive their well-being and poverty, which is then related to their livelihood choices and strategies. 'The capacities they possess both to add to their quality of life and also enhance their capabilities to confront social conditions that produce poverty' (Bebbington, 1999: 2022).

This framework then sees assets as 'vehicles for instrumental action (making a living), hermeneutic action (making living meaningful) and emancipatory action (challenging the structures under which one makes a

living)' (Bebbington, 1999: 2022). This framework reaches across scales of analysis to address the relationships between intra/inter-household, regional and macroeconomic; and it should incorporate relationships that households have with institutions and organisations, usually the channels through which development intervention occurs.

This framework is interlinked with environmental entitlements because it focuses on the importance of *access to resources*, because *access* becomes the most critical resource for people to build sustainable, poverty alleviated rural livelihoods. Access and social capital become the most important elements to analyse. This can be the relationships and transactions between the members of a rural household and other actors - relationships mediated by the logics of the state, the market and civil society - in other words the formal and informal institutions affecting a 'community'. This access (or lack of it) does not necessarily bring about conflicts; in some cases there is a substantial collective effort to widen access, as there is conflict in the process of securing it.

More viable livelihoods appear to be characterised by a relative success on the part of households and their members to sustain or access:

- Different resources, such as credit, land, skill, labour
- Different opportunities to turn these resources into sources of livelihood enhancement
- Means of enhancing the existing ways in which those resources contribute to their livelihoods (e.g. by obtaining better terms in transactions through a renegotiation of the power relations that underlie those transactions)
- Kin and ethnic networks, social organisations, intermediate state and NGOs, and intermediary market actors. Access to such institutions and relationships has been important to securing access.

It is crucial to find out the important assets for different people in different places in order to identify the most useful sorts of investments in the area. The

most important investment is in people's capability to access, control and defend assets, this is important in building social capital.

'Social capital is a relationship between individuals combining caring (degree of affinity) and social distance (awareness). It resides in transacting, communicating individuals. This relationship is like capital in the sense that it is productive. For example, it makes it possible for a person to derive utility from the welfare of others, from regard given by others, and from giving regard. And, most important for economic development, it reduces the free rider problem' (Schmid, 1999).

2.6. CONCLUSION TO THEORIES AND RELATION TO STUDY

Post-development discourse is emphasised because it highlights the concept that local people can make their own decisions on how they want to enhance their livelihoods. There can be no reform without taking power; power is at the core of development. This is from the Freirian concept of 'conscientisation', which calls for the 'self-reflected awareness' of the people rather than educating and indoctrinating them; this can lead to the exposure of a major shift in power balance between 'Elites' and the 'People'. For the people to gain this power, participation at all levels of is needed.

Environment entitlements linked with the five capitals of Bebbington that defines livelihoods, is a framework that bridges the more materialistic (World Bank, 1990) and the more hermeneutic and actor-centred (Chambers, 1987; Scoones & Thompson, 1994) notions of poverty and livelihood. These frameworks help map processes that are important because it attempts to explain the diverse role(s) of institutions in people-environment relations. These institutions, both formal and informal, shape the ways in which differentiated actors' access, use and derive well-being from environmental resources and services. This

understanding is important when studying interventions and management of resources in a community to see if institutions influence, change or contribute, to the success or failure towards enhancing livelihoods for the community as a whole. Practitioners need to be aware of these institutions, especially the power relations within and between institutions. Understanding how interventions themselves can alter institutions positively or negatively is important to understand.

Practices and actions carried out at one time - for example the sand dams - under different institutional arrangements – for example the management and ownership of the dams, may leave a legacy that influences the access to resources available for different actors in the future.

3. CONTEXT

‘Whenever in doubt apply the following test: Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to self-reliance for the hungry’

Advice to policy makers by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

3.1. KENYA



Map 1: Africa with Kenya highlighted (www.pictorialkenya.com)

3.1.1. POLITICAL-ECONOMY

Despite an impressive growth record from independence in 1963 to the 1970s, Kenya in 1997 was ranked the 17th poorest country in the world. Kenya’s real gross domestic product (GDP) growth declined from 4.3% in 1990 to 0.4% in 1992 (World Bank Group, 2003). Part of this economic decline can be attributed to the international community where, in 1991, the IMF and WB froze aid in an

effort to make the Kenyan government reform politically and economically (DFID, 2002). Donor governments followed suit and put their aid packages on hold (Germany, Denmark, Britain, Japan). In 1995, the WB resumed aid, despite Kenya's lack of indulgence for foreign demands. This resumption was necessary, because Kenya had an important role in keeping stability in East Africa. The country has been under Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) since the 1980s.

Poverty incidence in the country has increased from 3.7 million people in 1970 to 12.5 million in 2000. In 1997 Kenya's per capita stood at US\$ 250. Along with this, there is a high degree of social inequity. The top 10% income earners make 36 times more than the earnings of the bottom 10%. 10% own 47% of the country's national income making Kenya the second most unequal country in the world after Brazil (ActionAid Kenya, 1998:7). Many people continue to lack essential commodities and services making poverty the norm rather than the exception.

The nature of the economy is that it is essentially an agricultural country with a limited manufacturing base, 70% of the population derives their livelihoods directly from the land (ActionAid Kenya, 1998:9). The character of the present capitalist agricultural economy is largely attributable to the legacy of Kenya's effective incorporation into the world market from the turn of the last century during the colonial period. Along with the effects of individualisation of property rights, increase in waged migrant labour, particularly among men, and the monetarisation of the economy, has eroded communal entitlements to crucial assets such as land and livestock for the majority of Kenyans, and in particular women and women headed-households. The impact of these changes has also intensified social differentiation and the vulnerability of most Kenyans to landlessness, fragmented family units and insecurity. While the shift towards a monetary economy raised the possibility of increased savings and accumulation of resources, it was also the method by which access and control over previous communal assets, such as land, became increasingly concentrated in the hands of

the elite. While 80% of all Kenyans living in the rural areas till land of two hectares or less, about 500 households own 1,000 hectares or more of high quality land (ActionAid Kenya, 1998:13).

For administrative purposes, Kenya is divided into seven provinces,¹² in addition to the extra-provincial region of Nairobi and its environs. In 1998 the provinces were divided into almost 60 districts (DFRD, 1995). The districts are further divided into divisions, which are divided into locations. The locations are divided in sub-locations, which are formed by several villages. A commissioner heads each province and district, while a district officer heads each division; chiefs head the locations and sub-chiefs (or assistant chiefs) head the sub-locations. A village elder represents each village. All of these officials are under the direction of the President.

At the centre of Kenya's political economy are intense power struggles aimed at acquiring and designing for others the degree of control over assets and resources, basic rights and life skills. Kenyan history is defined by the efforts of diverse social interest groups to accumulate assets and resources and to demand entitlements from the prevailing system of governance. These indigenous interests have consolidated around the Kenyan state, business, and the voluntary sector and lastly, political parties and movements.¹³

¹² Coast Province, Central Province, Eastern Province, North-eastern Province, Nyanza Province, Rift Valley Province, and Western Province

¹³ Independence occurred in 1963, when Jomo Kenyatta, the leader of the independence struggle became president of Kenya, where ethno-regional and personal divisions ruled (Kanyinga, 1995:70). The officials of the provincial administration were just as feared as they had been in colonialism (Kanyinga, 1995:74). In 1978, Jomo Kenyatta died and was succeeded by David Arap Moi. Moi established hegemony by playing one ethnic group against another. In 1982, Kenya was officially turned into a one-party state. Moi's populist approach raised expectations in a period of economic decline. This and his pursuit of his own political interests led to the increase of political dissent in all factions. Therefore there was pressure for political liberalization and increased international concern, national elections was held involving several parties, in 1992. Moi's party, the Kenya Africa National Union (KANU) won and he remained president (though there are speculations that Moi brought the elections with public money). December 2002, saw the retirement of Moi and with relatively peaceful elections, Emilio Mwai Kibaki became Kenya's third president and the National Rainbow Coalition, the ruling party.

3.1.2. SOCIETY

There are approximately 30 million people in Kenya, made up of over sixty ethnic groupings (the primary identity in Kenya). 60% of the population are under 20 years of age. The population growth rate in 2001 stood at 2.1% per annum (World Bank Group, 2003). The life expectancy at birth for women is 61 years while for men it is calculated to be at 58 years of age, this figure is decreasing due to a number of factors mainly being the HIV epidemic. 60% of men are literate, while for women it stands at 31%. The religion is predominantly Christian (ActionAid Kenya, 1998).

Kenyans use dense networks of local self-help activities to organise activities in the local development sphere. There has been a history of local initiatives to help counter the struggles of poverty. These have been (Kanyinga, 1995:78):

- Women's self-help groups with a lifespan coexistence with the project such as merry-go-rounds;¹⁴
- Youth and 'men's clubs' which are usually leisure orientated;
- 'Home area' welfare groups for those that live in the big cities;
- *Harambee*, which are self-help projects that are usually, not gender specific membership. It is a one-off basic service delivery project to solve certain basic needs and problems, such as an individual's medical costs; education; building schools; health centres and water sources.

The conditions for group membership vary and include membership of a particular community, beneficiaries of a particular project, friendship ties, kinship ties, religious ties or residence in a common administrative area. These groups can be large, ranging from 50 to 200 people (Khasiani S, 1992).

¹⁴ The group meets and gives one person at a time, money for specific projects.

- Co-operative organisations, crop marketing, primary co-operatives and saving and credit co-operatives are dense and widely spread. There is, however, a high level of state intervention, poor management and corrupt practices.

This provision of basic needs is central to development politics and the socio-political relations at the local level. Kanyinga (1995: 82) believes that many of these groups are not self-sustaining; therefore there is a culture of dependency and dynamics of being external-resource driven. As far back as, 1975, Mutiso believed that these self-help groups were not an effective tool for sharing benefits at community and individual levels (Muticon, 2002). This is because in the 1970s and 1980s it became popular for politicians to align themselves with these development initiatives as a means of establishing local influence. Politicians strived for leadership and manipulation of the project's objectives. The problem was that 'politicians turned off funds when political competition was low, in order to make sure that there was still a project to mobilise support around later' (Kanyinga, 1995:70).

Before the mid-1980s, the term NGO was not known in Kenya because most of them were not distinguishable from the state, as they had also become established as part of the patron-client networks. NGOs increased importance as donors became displeased with the government's administration of development projects. International NGOs had more projects, spread over many sectors, than their local counterparts that were confined to activities in a few sectors to match their resources and were generally confined to a district.

In 1990 there was legislation to 'coordinate' NGO activities. The Office of the President (Department of Internal Security) established a centralised NGO Information and Coordination Unit (Kanyinga, 1995:85). This was because some NGOs were perceived as a political threat to the Government's sovereignty.

These NGOs usually worked via the local people's organisations and collaborated with international donor agencies, 'establishing their own clientage

relations with these local self-help groups' (Kanyinga, 1995:78). Their programme approach depended on free local labour from existing social organisations (mainly groups of women) and therefore not utilising the available male labour. Addressing women in isolation has and will lead to the establishment of 'small women empires' which men can not penetrate thus creating another problem of gender inequality. In Africa, such 'empires' are not popular with men who do not hesitate to fight or sabotage their activities (Khasiani, 1992). Using existing groups in implementing programme work accentuates the plight of marginal groups of people who cannot benefit from such programmes. These include widows who often have no or little land. Their efforts to participate in-group activities are handicapped by their inability to pay membership fees. Other people that are marginalized include married women with drunken husbands; older wives in polygamous homes who are often abandoned or neglected; divorced and unmarried women with dependent children; and disabled people (Khasiani, 1992). For any project to succeed, it is crucial that all members of the community, men and women, are involved and share the work and responsibilities (Khasiani, 1992).

Churches also have development initiatives, mainly to reinforce links between their evangelical functions and their target groups.

From within the government, the approach to development planning has been a legacy of colonialism. Decisions were made at the ministerial level in Nairobi and passed for adoption and implementation to the periphery, which was assumed to be composed predominantly of a male dominated rural peasant farming population (foreign implementers also had this assumption).

In the 1980s, the government was 'encouraged' to shift their role from 'providers' to 'facilitators', placing emphasis on resource management, like water, at the lowest appropriate level. This strategy became highlighted in the District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD), a guide for supervising local development. This strategy involved a bottom-up approach to planning 'whereby the districts

have autonomy in setting their priorities' (DFRD, 1995:1). This was an attempt to decentralise planning and decision-making from the ministries to the district level, where all development actors at this local level, integrate to generate the DFRD programmes, following District Development Plans. 'NGOs should ensure their development activities are in harmony with District Development Plans' (DFRD, 1995:7).

Development was passed to the hands of district offices with the objective to 'increase communication between the local community and government officers working in the district' (DFRD, 1995:18). Even at the lowest level of government, the Sub-Location Development Committee (SLDC) was created to be 'the actual representatives of the local interest' (DFRD, 1995:17). This local committee's job was to address the areas of provision of water, health, food and basic infrastructure to their area. The membership of the committee is preset; the Assistant Chief (Chairman), Sub-Locational Ruling Party Chairman¹⁵, Councillors, Departmental Officers, Headmasters of Primary Schools, representatives of Co-operative NGOs, Self-help groups and Local leaders. Women also must be represented. There are a number of faults with the DFRD, as it was an integral part of Moi's state politics. For example the promising of more equitable resources, actually meant resources to the regions that had not been favoured by Kenyatta so that Moi could gain legitimacy (Kanyinga, 1995:87).

3.1.1.3. ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

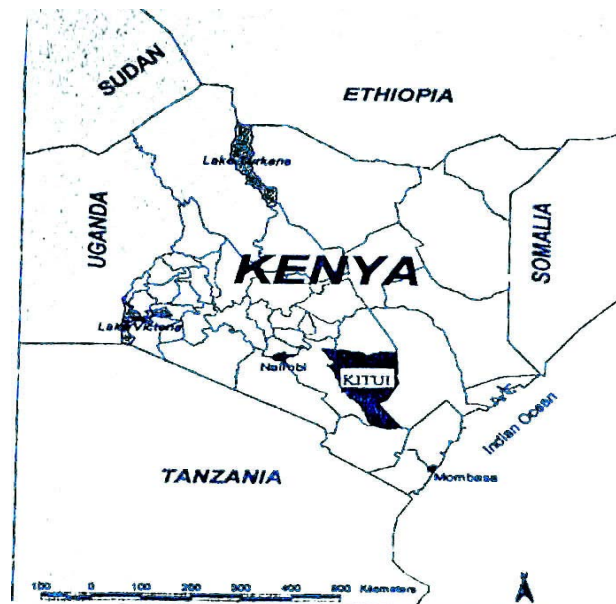
Only 45% of Kenyans have access to clean water. It is believed that households living in the medium and high potential part of the country are considered to have access to safe water if they can get 20 litres of clean drinking

¹⁵ Interesting to note as brings politics to the local level and with the reputation of the political parties especially KANU, people maybe afraid to speak out.

water daily from sources within a kilometre away (Bahemuka et al, 1998:12). However, people living in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) have limitations in finding sources of water. More than 80% of Kenya is ASAL. This limits the capacity to raise and sustain agriculture and other natural resource-based productivity. Poverty has direct impact on environmental degradation, which in turn threatens long-term strategies for poverty reduction (Bahemuka et al, 1998:13). This is a vicious circle that many Kenyans face in the rural areas.

3.2. KITUI DISTRICT

3.2.1. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND POLITICAL ADMINISTRATION

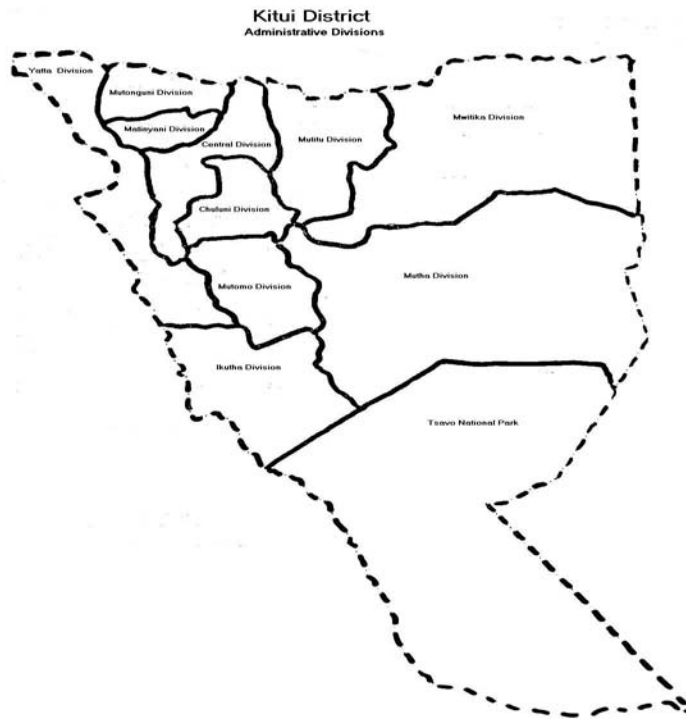


MAP 2: Location of Kitui in Kenya. (Jeune et al, 2002)

Kitui District is located in Kenya's Eastern Province (see Map 2) and its administrative centre is Kitui Town. The District is divided into 11 divisions (see Map 3), with 58 locations and 187 Sub-locations. For political representation the district has five constituencies namely: Kitui South, Kitui-North, Kitui Central,

Kitui East, and Kitui West. Each of these constituencies is represented in the national assembly. It should be noted that in some constituencies boundaries do not coincide with divisional administrative boundaries.

The district covers an area 20,556 km², including 6,389 km² at Tsavo National Park inhabited by wildlife. The district extends for roughly 200 km from north to south and 120 km from east to west. It borders Machakos and Makueni Districts to the west, Mwingi District to the north, Tana River to the east and Taita Taveta to the south.



MAP 3: Kitui Division and its 11 divisions. (Jeune et al, 2003)

3.2.2. ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

The climate is hot and dry for most parts of the year. It is classified as one of the ASALs of Kenya (Jeune et al, 2002:23). The rainfall is erratic and

unreliable and the rate of evaporation is high. This area experiences two rain seasons: the long rains in April to May and the short rains in November to December. The dry periods are from June to October and January to March. It is common for rains to fail in one or both seasons leading to long periods of drought when food shortage occurs. Local lore states that rains fail completely at least one year in four (SASOL & Maji Na Ufanisi, 1999:2). The amount of rainfall varies dependent on which part in the district, as the topography is very diverse within the district. The highest area receives 500-760 mm per year and the lower part less than 500 mm per year (Muticon, 2002:15).

3.2.3. WATER SOURCES

The main problem in the area is that there is inadequate water for a large percentage of the population as there are only a few permanent water sources. Water is a major development input; and thus remains the most essential development commodity in the District. The search for water is a significant preoccupation of the people of Kitui District. Athi River, to the southwest periphery, is the only permanent river. The major sources of water are ephemeral rivers. These seasonal rivers flood during the wet season and turn into dry sand beds during the dry season. People are accustomed to digging holes in the sand and scooping out the water, but as the dry season progresses the water level continues to drop making seepage slow and holes have to be deepened, increasing the difficulty of getting water for domestic use and livestock. It has been noted that in the dry season people queue at these scoop holes for up to four hours (Jeune et al, 2002:42). This has led to people, mainly in the dry season, to buy water, with their scarce income.



Photo 4: Scoop Holes in the sandy riverbed

Distance to source, frequency of trips to fetch the water and the number of persons per trip varies between the wet and dry seasons. In some places, women and animals walk as far 25-30 km in all, a round trip of around five hours (GOK 1997-2001). There have been reports of even higher distances and time, where people have to walk 40 km one way to the water source, which takes a whole day (12 hours) to get there (Jeune et al, 2002:38). However much of the available water is relatively good quality partially due to minimal use of agricultural chemicals and little industrial discharge in the river catchments.

There are many sub-surface dams and water pans but they do not provide sufficient water to meet the local needs and dry up during prolonged drought. Earth dams have also failed due to land degradation (SASOL and Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:3). Other water sources have been harnessed usually by external organisations. There are 50 boreholes in the district but only 9 are operational due to lack of maintenance funds (GOK, 1997-2001). Roof and rock catchments harvest water. However even though there has been substantial funds going into

providing water for the district many areas still lack an adequate supply, year round.

3.2.4. FOOD AVAILABILITY

From the earliest oral and recorded history of the Akamba people of Kitui, it is evident that they have experienced cycles of droughts and consequent famines. Historically the Akamba’s coped with the vagaries of their environment through a variety of traditional mechanisms. Hunting, gathering, and trade became viable options for survival. Out-migration from a devastated area was an option in an area where land was an abundant resource. Raiding became common in times of extreme stress. It is apparent that these traditional mechanisms of coping with drought and hardship are no longer viable alternatives, yet drought and famine remain a persistently recurring problem (Muticon, 2002:30). Today, the little harvest made is supplemented by seasonal relief food from donor agencies (GOK, 1997-2001:23).

The recurrence of droughts and famines has been institutionalised because some people’s names; age sets and other major historical events are marked by reference to unforgettable past droughts and famines; this way, memories of specific famines are kept alive.

Table 3.2.1 History of drought and famine in Kitui District

1868	Drought and famine known as Yua ya Ngovo
1870	Drought and famine known as Yua ya Ngeetele
1878	Prolonged drought and famine known as Yua ya Kiasa, when many people migrated from Kitui to neighbouring districts in search of food
1880	Drought and famine known as Yua ya Ndata
1898	Drought and famine known as Yua ya Muvunga, when famine relief rice was brought from Mombasa on the newly constructed railway
1908	Drought and famine known as Yua ya Malakwe

1914-1916	Drought and famine known as Yua ya Kalungu
1918	Drought and famine known A Yua ya Imili
1924-1925	Drought and famine known as Yua ya Kukwatwa Syua (solar eclipse)
1928-1930	Prolonged famine known as Yua ya Nzalukangye na Kakuti due to drought and locust attacks
1942	A great famine that extended to central Kenya; many people relied on cassava for food
1944-1947	Prolonged famine known as Yua ya Mwanga due to drought and locust attacks
1949-1950	Drought and famine
1959-1960	Drought and famine
1961	Famine due to severe drought followed by flooding, known as Yua ya Ndeke because relief food was dropped from the air
1966	Drought and famine
1970-1976	Prolonged Sahelian drought causing serious famine in Kitui and other dry areas of Kenya
1984	Drought and famine
1992	Drought and famine
1997	Drought and famine (El Nino)

Source: SASOL, 1999, Muticon, 2000

3.2.5. MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

The main ethnicity within Kitui District is the Akambas, where they speak the local dialect of Kikamba. There are theories that believe the Akamba migrated to their present settlement by branching off into Kenya, from a group of Bantus who were moving north-eastwards along the coast during the 14th century (Ogot, 1968; Murdock, 1959; Soper, 1967; Guthrie, 1962).

The social character of the Akamba and their primary institutions emerged from the Mbooni Hills. Terraces and simple dams helped the people to adjust to the highland environment. By the 18th century the highlands were over populated. The crossing over the Athi River into the present day Kitui District happened circa 1715 AD. The continued population growth forced people from the better-watered hill lands into the more arid and drought prone plains.

3.2.6. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

In 1999 the population was estimated at 574,000 (Census Republic Kenya, 2000) with a density of 213 people per km² and a growth rate of 3.3% per year. This population growth threatens the future development of the area. The demographic situation is one of the most alarming in Kenya. The total population jumped from 95,000 people in 1910 to about 640,304 in 1989 (Jeune et al, 2002:25). Thus, the population increased by almost seven fold in just seventy-nine years. *One* of the major factors, which has ‘fuelled the demographic flames’ in Kitui District, is the high fertility rate (Muticon, 2002:17).

Table 3.2.2 Population Growth in Kitui District 1910-1999

Year	Total	Annual Growth %
1910	95,000	-
1932	152,759	1.70
1948	203,035	1.68
1962	284,659	2.20
1969	342,953	2.60
1979	464,283	3.50
1989	640,304	3.80
1999	515,442	2.21 ¹⁶

Sources: Population Census Reports. Population numbers of 1910 and 1932 are based on hut counts by the colonial government. The 1999 population figure is from census data at Central Bureau of Statistics. The 1999 figure excludes Mwingi District Data.

Field observations show that population pressure has caused the deterioration of the environment. For example, deforestation, gullied and eroded hill-sides, use of marginal land. There are high rates of land fragmentation and

¹⁶ Note that, the current population of 515,422 people appears as a drop in the district’s population. However this is not the case because Mwingi District, which formally used to be part of Kitui District has been carved off.

sub-division. The average land holdings per capita are very low (as low as 2 hectares per person) particularly in the Central Division (Muticon, 2002:15). Land hunger is so high in the district that land issues always occupy the centre stage in matters addressed by both religious and political leaders. (Jeune et al, 2002:24).

3.2.7. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

The main economic activity in this area is dry-land agriculture (GOK, 1997-2001:34). The farming is mainly subsistent in nature and highly constrained by weather conditions. The low amount of rainfall in Kitui makes crop farming a marginal and risky business, since in most seasons, rains do not supply adequate moisture to meet crop growth requirements. The District Development Plan (1997-2001:34) states that 77% of income for poor households comes from agriculture, and better off households 29%. It states that the major food crops grown in the district include: maize, beans, pigeon peas, cowpeas, green grams, sorghum, and millet. The cash crops grown include: cotton, mangos, pawpaws, citrus fruits and bananas. Others include tobacco, and coffee on a small scale. Vegetables such as Karrella, Brinjals, Okra, Tulia Tinda, Tindori and chillies are grown under irrigation along Athi River in Mutomo division. Other local vegetables such as tomatoes, cabbages, kales, spinach, onions and capsicums are grown under rain-fed conditions district-wide (GOK, 1997-2001:35). The District Development Plan (1997-2001:35) did note that irrigation potential along the rivers has been minimally exploited.

The most important livestock in numbers and value are goats (Muticon, 2002:18). The dominant vegetation, being shrubs, makes it possible for goats to thrive. The other important animals are donkeys, which are mostly used for transportation. The majority of rural households keep cattle either for meat, milk, pulling carts and/or ploughing.

Other sources of income include businesses, regular employment, and wage earning. Observation shows that the inhabitants of Kitui, especially those living in the dry lowlands, depend heavily on the natural resource base for their basic needs (food, energy, water, and housing) over and above subsistence cropping. There seems to be a very close negative correlation between people's well-being and their resource base (GOK, 1997-2001:37).

3.2.8. SOCIETY

Within the Akamba's traditional work,¹⁷ labour is mainly divided along sex lines. Men clear virgin land for cultivation, care for animals, look after pasture, engage in trading activities mainly to do with livestock and construct fences, beehives and houses. Most male activities are occasional or seasonal. Thus men have more free time. Some men use this time to engage in self-help activities or casual employment, for wages. Due to lack of employment opportunities in the division, most men sit idle with nothing to do or look for jobs outside the district (Khasiani, 1992); in contrast, women in this division do most of the work in and around the home. They thatch houses, smear them, prepare food, fetch water and firewood, look after children and do most of the farming activities. Women also maintain hygienic conditions in and around the home. In fact, 60% of households in Kitui are female headed; this is because the men are working outside the district; single parenthood; and widowhood (Muticon, 2002:21).

Drawers of water are mainly women and children (especially girls). Sometimes children are compelled to miss school to go and fetch water. This is because water is seen as a female domain, stemming from the African wide ideology, but also from the *Kathambi* cult of the Akambas' that portrays women as the guardians of water for the water goddess.

¹⁷ Agricultural production, animal husbandry and routine housework

The Kathambi Cult

Kathambi is the Supreme Kamba Female Goddess. Field interviews suggest that she has, through her female mediums and women, total power over all matters related to water at all times and over food management during disaster periods (*Muticon 2002*).

Up to Kenya's independence, *Kathambi* rituals were strong with relation to water sources across the whole of Kitui District but more so in the south. Nobody was allowed to bring any metals into the streams or springs for to do so is to contaminate the arena of *Kathambi*. *Kathambi* women leadership enforced this. Metal is in the realm of the male arena and is related to fire, which is the opposite of water in many African cultures. Metal is not just in the male sector but also in its ostracised sub sector of smithing. (*Muticon 2002*)

Kathambi related control over water sources led to the total protection of for example, Mutha hill and a few other inselbergs, during centuries past, for it was a place of survival even during the worst droughts. This massive hill, jutting out of the flatlands, enabled local populations to survive even the worst droughts for food, as mainly millet and sorghum, could be grown in the hill at the worst times. Also significant was the availability of water in the hill springs to support livestock in the worst years. District Commissioner Kelly, who built more water structures in Kitui District than any other person, convinced the Kitui County Council to create a protected forest on the hill, in the late fifties. It is significant though that planting of exotic trees – found in all the other Kitui hills, never took place on Mutha. The *Kathambi* women refused. Any persons sent to plant did not dare fight the women who not only threatened to curse them but got snakes and bees to attack those foolish enough to climb the hills to begin preparations for planting trees! To date, anybody constructing water projects on the hill must get permission from the women. The same is true in a few other inselbergs in the south. Those who need to use the hills for collecting building wood and other forest products must also get permission from the women. (*Muticon 2002*)

However, emerging physical and economic realities in Kitui call for the cooperation of men and women to search for improved water supply systems. In fact it has been found that when there is an acute shortage of water, men also contribute to the search. They accompany the women, usually for protection purposes against animals and other men. Differences in capacity, ability, time and resources demand the contribution of both parties (Jeune et al, 2002:46; Muticon, 2002:40). Therefore, it has been recognised that neither women nor men should be addressed in isolation while implementing any rural development project (SASOL & Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:5).

Myethya groups for the Akamba's have traditionally been mutual aid institutions, which today has been transformed into self-help groups.¹⁸ Group members themselves initiate activities or as a response to local administration efforts to mobilise labour. Members are both men and women, but the majority of the members are women because males are few in the area, often elderly or very poor. The female members are usually married and live within the community. *Myethya* groups each have a committee; they are elected through a democratic process. The group members contribute labour, money, livestock or materials for projects. Members specify days of the week to be set aside for project work. They also engage in income-generating activities, and the money is used on self-help projects. There are also NGOs within Kitui District that utilise these groups to attach projects onto them (Khasiani, 1992).

¹⁸ See Kenyan Society

3.3. THE ORGANISATION- SASOL AND SAND DAMS

Sahelian Solutions Foundation (SASOL), a name coined by the founders¹⁹ to 'indicate the breadth of their vision' (SASOL & Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:7), is a local NGO in Kitui District founded in 1992. The founders saw drought and famine that has affected Kitui District, 'they watched a succession of donor-driven development projects that have come and gone with so little impact on the lives of the people' (SASOL & Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:7).

Their objective is to 'create a network of water points using shallow wells and sand-storage dams supplemented by roof catchments, tanks, rock catchments and other sources, so that no family need walk more than 2 km to get an assured supply' (SASOL & Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:9).

To date (2002), over 320 sand dams have been constructed by communities living in the central part of Kitui District supported by SASOL. Globally this is the highest concentration of sand dams constructed anywhere in the world (SASOL & Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:10).

SASOL started out by trying to improve water supplies for schools through shallow wells and rainwater storage tanks. However, SASOL found that the cost per cubic metre of water collected in a given period was found to be much higher for a tank than a shallow well or a sand dam. SASOL therefore, decided to concentrate on developing shallow wells and recharging groundwater using sand dams.

¹⁹ Cyrus Mutiso, a political scientist; Sam Mutiso, an industrial chemist; Peter van Dongen, a hydro-geologist; Jaap van der Zee, an environmental planner.



Photo 5: A sand-storage dam during the wet season

Isolated sand-storage dams were constructed in Kenya during the colonial period in 1940s and 50s and they are still functional today. The sand dam is made as a concrete or masonry barrier on an ephemeral river, and although the upper side of the wall may be hidden by sand (or water in the wet season), the lower side is usually exposed. This barrage improves the retention of groundwater because water is stored in the sand. SASOL uses the Catchment Development Approach for implementation by constructing sand-storage dams in sequence in a catchment area. Every year, SASOL selects sub-areas to work in. In these ephemeral rivers permission of the government is not necessary. Only the landowners, whose land is next to the river, have to agree, and a building licence is not required to build on private property (Beimers et al, 2001:23).

The designs of the sand dams are constantly evolving, as designs have to change, when new sets of environmental factors are found. Rivers vary in width and discharge; rock foundations vary in depth and susceptibility to leakage; the riverbanks may be high or low, and the need for wing walls has to be carefully assessed. Wing walls of the dam are constructed up the bank on either side of the river, to confine the river to the centre of the channel, to prevent erosion and

bypassing of flow when the river valley it is in flood. The quality of the water can be poor, so an adjacent well is built, where filtered water can be drawn.

There are many advantages to sand dams (WaterAid, 2003):

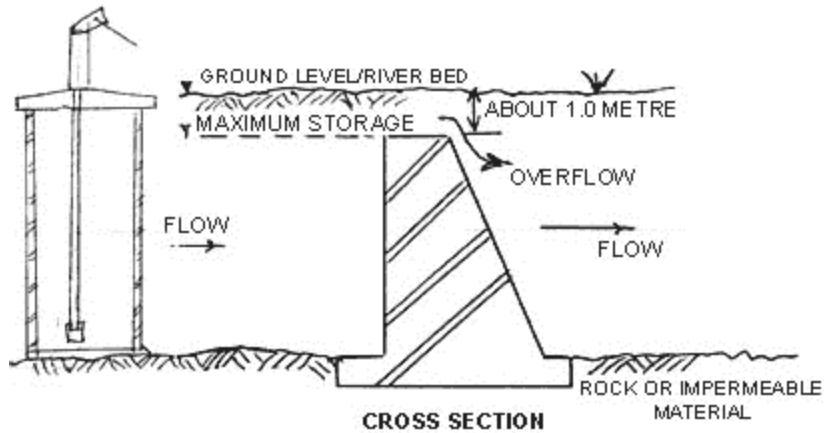
- Evaporation losses are much less compared to the average 2 meters annual evaporation from a free water surface in a dry tropical area.
- The sand filters the water, improving its quality.
- The breeding of insects and parasites such as mosquitoes and bilharzia parasites is prevented.
- Contamination of stored water by people and animals is greatly reduced, particularly as a well and hand-pump can be provided to extract water in a hygienic and controlled manner.

If a sand dam has been satisfactorily constructed, there should be little or no maintenance. Most of the completed dams withstood the exceptional rains and floods that occurred in 1997 (El Nino) (SASOL & Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:39).

Diagram 3.3.1: Showing the differences between a sub-surface dam and a sand dam

SUB-SURFACE (GROUNDWATER) DAMS

TYPICAL SUB-SURFACE DAM



SAND DAM

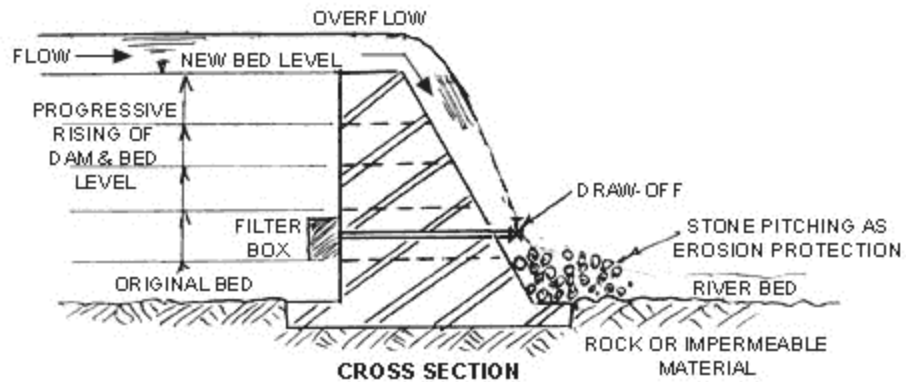
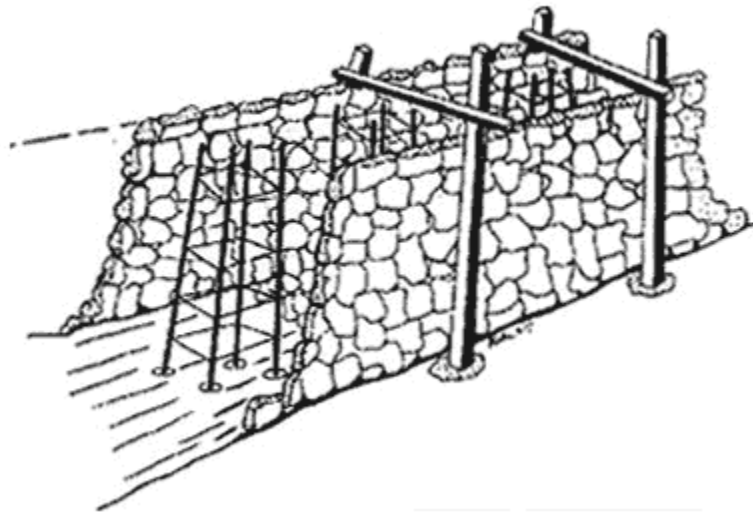


Diagram 3.3.2:

SAND DAM CONSTRUCTION SHOWING REINFORCING



(WaterAid, 2003)

The organisation feels that, if the water supply can be improved, other development will follow. 'The priority that SASOL attaches to water development might seem restricting the community's options on where to put their energies, but in the semi-arid areas of Kitui District, water is basic to almost everything, and the lack of water places restriction on many other activities' (SASOL & Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:7).

SASOL's aim is to minimise overheads. Therefore SASOL's task is to provide technical assistance in the form of trained masons and to seek financial help for cement and reinforcing that would be beyond the resources of the local community. An important component that SASOL has found is that work often slackens near completion as the construction work is hard. This can affect the wing walls. There proper construction is vital. SASOL has found that to keep up the level of community activity, they start at the wing walls and work towards the centre. This is psychologically attractive, because the gap in the centre gets

smaller and smaller as the work proceeds, and the obvious need to fill the middle is a constant stimulus to finish the job (SASOL & Maji na Ufanisi, 1999:30).

There is, a board of governors to supervise the activities of the organisation. This has 8 members and meets 4 times a year. Under this board, SASOL has an executive board of 5 members. This board is fully authorised to take direct decisions and spend money. It consists of the same members as the board of governors (Beimers et al, 2001:9).

SASOL has had a number of donors that help fund their activities. Its donors, amongst others have been WaterAid (now Maji na Ufanisi), SIMAVI, Sida, ICS, ICAC and DFID. Donors fund particular sub-areas where the sand dams are being constructed. SASOL enlisted the support of WaterAid, an international NGO, to collaborate on a pilot project to develop the necessary skills and procedures for sand dam construction. It was WaterAid that encouraged SASOL to adopt the participatory approach. It assisted with the development of educational materials for community training, procedures for assessing the impact of the project and improved methods for accounting, planning, monitoring and evaluation. SASOL enlisted World Neighbours (NGO) to train the staff on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

Table 3.3.3: COST OF CONSTRUCTION OF A TYPICAL SAND DAM.

Figures are based on a typical sand dam with main wall 26 m long and wing walls of 5 m on each side. The height of the dam is 2.5 m in the centre. The width of the wall is 1.5 m at the base and 0.75 m at the top.

<i>Construction costs</i>				
Item	Quantity	Unit price (Ksh)	Cost (Ksh)	Cost (US\$)
<i>Materials</i>				
Cement	200 bags	530	106,000	1767
Barbed wire 25 kg 16 g	2 rolls	2,250	4,500	75
Round bars 12.5 mm	6 pcs	450	2,700	45

Round bars 6.25 mm	6 pcs	290	1,740	29
Cypress timber 2" x 2"	30m	23	690	11.50
Nails 4"	1 kg	70	70	1.16
Subtotal			Ksh 115,700	US\$ 1928
Artisan 2 months @ Ksh. 5,000			10,000	166.66
Supervision and monitoring			30,000	500
Community organisation and training			40,000	666
Total			Ksh 195,700	US\$ 3261.66
<i>Community contribution</i>				
Labour 900 days @ Ksh. 100			90,000	1500
Maintenance of artisan for 2 months			6,000	100
Total			Ksh 96,000	US\$ 1600

Notes:

- The community members are not paid and they also contribute sand, stone and water that are all difficult to value the figure for labour is shown simply to indicate the proportion of cost borne to the community.
- The time invested by the community in community organisation and training, which is important for the sustainability of the project and future development, has not been costed.
- The above costs were obtained when 1 US dollar = 60 Kenya shillings.

3.4. A DONOR OF SASOL- DFID

The Department For International Development (DFID) is responsible for leading the UK government's contribution to promoting development and the reduction of poverty. The overall objective of DFID is to eliminate world poverty, set out in the 1997 White Paper '*Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century*'. At the local level it works through partnerships to reduce poverty, involving civil society and business to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). DFID overall addresses the cause of poverty and focuses on improving livelihoods, primary education, better health, creating economic

opportunities and effective government; with a human rights based approach to development. Mainstreaming sustainability in national development is one of their major aims.

In Kenya, it believes that poverty reduction depends on the implementation of Kenya's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) launched in March 2002. DFID in line with the IMF, suspended budget support to Kenya but still spent 28 million pounds (£28m) on fighting: HIV/AIDS (£4.4m), primary education (£4.4m), malaria prevention (£1.6m), family health (£4.1m), private sector and rural livelihoods (£3m), and 2 million pounds (£2m) on private administration including local government (DFID, 2002:1). The overall purpose of DFID's work in Kenya is to improve the livelihoods of the poor. To achieve this DFID supports:

- Improving governance and economic policy reform
- Improving productive opportunities and living conditions for the rural and urban poor
- Improving education services, especially for the poor
- Improvements in health outcomes, especially for the poor
- Strengthen contribution by civil society to peaceful social progress.

To do this the focus is on four themed areas:

1. To build support for and advocate pro-poor change in short and longer term
2. To assist with developing sustainable systems, particularly economic governance
3. To deliver pro-poor benefits without subsidising poor policy
4. To promote growth opportunities.

To do this effectively DFID works with a variety of stakeholders but mostly with service delivery through NGOs, private sector and public sector outlets. DFID has a 'plan' to address the water crisis. Its goal is to 'enable poor people to lead healthier and more productive lives through improved management of water resources and increased and sustainable access to water supply and sanitation' (DFID, 2001:9). There are three high priority targets, in pursuit of this goal; to have comprehensive policies and strategies for integrated water resource management adopted and in process of active implementation in all countries by 2005; to reduce by half the proportion of people who are unable to reach, or to afford, safe drinking water by 2015; to reduce by half the proportion of people not having access to hygienic sanitation facilities by 2015. DFID has learnt that 'to serve people they must put these people at the centre, with the authority and confidence to determine their own development' (DFID, 2001:9) and DFID must be ready to respond to their demands. To share water equitably between different users, it must be measured and recognised as an economic value. To provide the means to look after water properly, a fair rate must be paid for using it. To do this DFID will address the people themselves, directly and through civil society; the governments; the private sector and the international development community.

4. METHODOLOGY

*Go to the people
Live with them
Learn from them
Love them
Start with what they know
Build on what they have
And when it is done they will say
We did it ourselves
(...A Chinese proverb)*

4.1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The area of study was Tungutu sub-location in Kyangwithya West Location, Kitui Central Division. This sub-location was purposively selected because the community had just completed a number of sand storage dams in the river catchments of their area and training seminars had finished, meaning their feelings of the process and experiences were ‘fresh’ in their minds.

Tungutu sub-location has a relatively high population for Kitui District, 7,193 living in 1208 households, with a population density of 283 persons per km (Jeune et al, 2002:39). This high population density means that people in Tungutu have very small pieces of land and that there is great pressure on the available (natural) resources in the area (Jeune et al, 2002:40). Tungutu is classified as a medium agro-ecological zone. On average the rainfall is between 760 mm and 1015 mm annually, which characterizes the climate. This rainfall is considered high compared to other areas of Kitui District. The land is hilly with relatively good soils that can support a variety of different crops and animals. Even though there is comparatively lower temperatures and a more diverse

range of water sources then the average found within Kitui District, high evapotranspiration and the unreliability of the rainfall, limits intensive and meaningful land use and there is still queuing of between three and four hours in the dry season at the water sources and often deep scoop holes are created.

4.2. CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

Information for this research coincided with a report that was done by students in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam and the University of Nairobi. This report was based on an interdisciplinary, intercultural programme to bring together diverse students in cultural backgrounds and studies, for a particular subject. The report is called: *The pre and post-intervention analysis of water resource management: a participatory approach. A Case study of Kitui District*. The report intended to generate data to provide comparative information on water resource management in Kitui District. The study tried to contribute to the debates on NGO processes within communities and an exploration of the 'new' technology of sand dams and their impact in communities. This research was:

- a) For an educational experience for the students for their studies;
- b) For SASOL to use as a baseline survey and;
- c) To be used by REAL, a collaboration of organisations documenting sand dams, aiming to write a manual for application of sand dams worldwide.

Due to this range of actors interested in the report, the areas under study were chosen for the students. The choice of using Tungutu sub-location to collect data can be questioned because the implementation of the sand dams was *only* in 2001. Normally it takes a couple of years for the effects of sand dams to be fully

felt by a community. In this sense it can be argued that it would have been better if an area with fully charged sand dams had been chosen.

My role in the report was to represent my subject (International Development) and the knowledge that I have learnt from my educational experiences. At the same time I was learning to interact and to understand people with different educational and cultural background than my own, not only in interpreting and representing data, but also on a personal level. The research team was composed of six men and one woman, consisting of three 'Dutch' students²⁰ and three Kenyan students and a Kenyan supervisor. The studies that were represented were Masters in Sociology and International Development. At undergraduate level Geography, Economics, Chemical Engineering and Aqua-Eco Technology were represented. The team stayed in a small house in the compound of the SASOL office located in Kitui Town, throughout the undertaking of the study.

4.3. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The methodology drew on qualitative research methods that have been developed in the social sciences to gather information about people's perceptions of an issue. Different methods were used to gather a full range of information and improve the quality of data. The study utilised both primary and secondary data. A combination of primary data was collected using; focus group discussions, individual interviews and observation methods. Secondary data was collected from local publications, newspapers, unpublished documents, and consultancy reports.

²⁰ Dutch is in inverted commas because I am in fact British, experiencing a British education system until Masters level in the Netherlands.

4.3.1. PRIMARY SOURCES OF DATA

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Focus group discussions were done to find out how the community, where SASOL had built sand dams, felt about the processes used. The questions asked of them for this research were included in a bigger focus group discussion, though the information for this research was not fully utilised for the larger report on: *The pre and post-intervention analysis of water resource management: a participatory approach. A Case study of Kitui District* (Jeune et al, 2002). Dawson et al (1993) states that 'the questions asked of the group are usually "focused". This means that focus is on one or two main topics to get a really detailed idea about how the people think about the area of interest. They are also focused because participants of any focus group usually share common characteristics, such as age, sex, educational background, religion, status or something directly related to the topic being studied. This, hopefully, encourages the group to speak freely. Focus groups can find out about people's feelings, attitudes and opinions about a topic of interest. They examine only one or two topics in great detail, in an effort to really understand why people think or behave the way they do'.

There were six group discussions held. Each group consisted of ten (10) members. These groups were divided into men, women and youth. A range of socio-economic groups was also interviewed from the area of study, the Sub-Location Development Committee (SLDC) and teachers and religious leaders. The youth were subdivided into groups of boys and girls (school children in Upper Primary, age range 14-16 years old), still consisting of ten (10) members in each.

The men and women came from an established organisation; The Farmers Field School sponsored by KAP (Kitui Agricultural Project) a government programme, aimed at enhancing farmers' skills. The people in this school came from throughout the sub-location, giving a diverse account of experiences from

the study area. These two groups can also be viewed as a socio-economic group, as they are the farmers of the area. The Sub-location Development Committee (SLDC) was asked to partake in the discussions. It consisted of specific men and women from the community that the assistant chief had chosen, set out in the government's District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD) Handbook. The group composite was six men and four women. Teachers and religious leaders as a specific socio-economic group were also asked for a focus group discussion. Here the composite was three men and seven women. The teachers were from the local primary schools. There was only one religious leader that attended the discussions; he was from the Catholic Church. Separating the people in terms of gender, age and status was preferred because it enabled people to participate freely in the discussions thereby making it possible to establish group consensus and divergences. A set of 175 questions guided the discussions for the larger report, but not all were relevant to this particular research. Data for this research came from 83 questions asked within the larger framework (Appendix A).



Photo 6: The Women's Focus Group

The assistant chief was asked to arrange the focus group meetings because there was a need for an entry point into community. He asked

established organisations to participate, therefore hopefully not influencing who was present at the discussions. After the introductions, he was asked to leave as to give room for the community to express their feelings in a more 'open' environment.

On most occasions more people turned up than the ten members needed (though this was only a few extra). To obtain the ten members in a neutral manner, and not to offend any members of the community that turned up; the people were asked to discuss amongst themselves, away from the interviewers, who should be the ten members of the focus group.

The groups themselves chose the area where the discussion took place; for the men and women this was a half built building that served as a church and community hall. There were enough benches for everyone to sit on at the same height, creating an equal atmosphere in the focus group, an important component. For the other focus groups, one of the local primary schools was used to hold the discussions, under a large mango tree.

Introductions took time, with explanations on what the research was about and on who the researchers were. The groups were also asked to introduce themselves.

The main language that the focus group discussion was held in was the local dialect of Kikamba. There was a moderator from the research team, who conducted the discussions. He spoke Kikamba and also had had experience with working with rural communities before. Therefore I had to rely on interpreters to ask the questions and translate the answers. I took notes and also recorded the people's reactions to a question. For back up, there was also a note-taker that could speak the local language. This was mainly done for the men and women discussions, though some spoke a few phrases in English. The youth's discussions were in a mixture of languages, with many answering in English. In the two 'higher' status groups most of the people present could speak English (resulting from secondary school level of education and above); and the discussion was

therefore conducted in English with a few translations into Kikamba when questions were not fully understood.

During the focus group discussion for the SLDC, they were asked to draw a resource map of the Tungutu sub-location. This mainly comprised of water sources and settlements. The process was done with a person from the committee, in charge of drawing the map on the ground with a long stick. The sub-location's outline was drawn, and then using the stick, leaves and pebbles, prominent resources of the sub-location was identified. The researchers recorded what was drawn and developed it into a computer image.²¹

The *advantages* of using focus groups are that this method is socially orientated, studying participants in a natural, real-life atmosphere (Krueger, 1994:125). Focus groups were chosen because they abstract large amounts of information and ideas quickly. It provides quick results because people need to listen to opinions of others before they form their own personal viewpoints. 'Focus groups are aimed at encouraging participants to talk with each other, rather than answer questions directly to the moderator. The group interaction of focus groups is important because it gives us some understanding of how the people are thinking about the topic' (Dawson et al, 1993).

The *disadvantages* of using focus groups is that the interviewer has less control over a group interview than an individual one, which can result in lost time as irrelevant issues are discussed. This was the case in some groups, as the discussion became more passionate. Biases may have been introduced when letting group members choose for themselves the ten that will participate in the discussions. Though it was meant as a gesture of politeness on the part of the researchers, the rest of the members, without the researchers' knowledge, may have excluded certain people. The groups already exist as social organisations so they can already have biases and misrepresent the community's perspectives. For the men and women, these people are already active members of the

²¹ See community data chapter for the map

community by wanting to be an organisation that improves their knowledge and abilities, they can be considered as 'modern', wanting to improve their situation. There may be a bias as to who participates because these people may have big families, needing more alternatives for survival. They also have time to participate in other interventions because there are others in the family to work on their *shamba*²². It has to be recognised that the range of community members that were interviewed was not complete because a range of the non-participants of the SASOL project were not interviewed.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

To achieve more direct data, individual interviews were used as well as the focus groups. This method was independent of the larger report conducted by the researchers. This method has been described as a 'conversation with a purpose' (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:140). The use of these interviews is to uncover and describe the participants' subjective views and perceptions on events (Marshall & Rossman, 1995:142). Individual interviews mean that more information can be extracted, as there is only one person talking. It lets the interviewees be more narrative and personal about their feelings than in a group. This type of interview focuses on a special type of interviewee, who is considered to be influential, prominent, and well informed in an organisation or community and is selected for interviews on the basis of their expertise in areas relevant to the research (Kvale, 1996:101).

Those interviews included staff of SASOL²³ and the assistant chief of Tungutu Sub-location²⁴. These interviews were conducted in English. They had nothing to do with the focus groups and so were not influenced by the decisions of others in anyway or knowledgeable before hand of the questions going to be

²² Plot of land used for agriculture.

²³ Prof Cyrus Mutiso: Chairman of the board and Founder; Sam Mutiso: Field Officer and Founder; Mathew Kitema: Community Organization and Sanitation and Hygiene Trainer; Julius Munyao: Construction Supervisor.

²⁴ Mr Augustus Kasilia

asked. They were asked a shorter number of questions than the focus groups but generally they were the same questions, so that information gathered would give diverse responses. Questions with a specific context were also asked to interviewees in relation to their positions (Appendix B & C). An employee of DFID was contacted to contribute to the research as the person in charge of distributing funds to SASOL. Unfortunately due to a tight work schedule and the closure of the British Embassy for safety reasons, the interview was unable to take place.

OBSERVATION METHODS

Observations were done to back up what the focus groups said about the water sources and their surrounding areas. Photographs were taken to show the general physical environmental conditions of the area. Observations about the social and cultural structure of Kitui District and the Akambas were also done, by living within the community for three months.



Photo 7: The Boy's Focus Group

4.3.2. SECONDARY DATA SOURCES

'Secondary data is collected and researched by a third party and then used by the researcher' (Berg, 1995:211). The secondary data used, was collected through literature review from Kitui District Documentation Resource Centre, University of Nairobi Library, Muticon consultancy firm and NGO's such as SASOL and the Catholic Diocese. This literature was from local and international publications, newspapers, unpublished documents, government documents and consultancy reports. The Internet was also used as a resource for information collection.

4.4. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data gathered using the above methods were analysed qualitatively. The notes taken by the translator and the author were transcribed onto the computer. When the researcher came across a theme in the interviews, a label was attached. Data was then organised into major themes related to the questions asked at the beginning of the research and relevant to the theories studied. They were categorised through content using quotes that backed up these themes. Each category involved in the process was analysed separately. These were the community's perspective, SASOL's perspective, and the local administration's perspective.

4.5. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE FIELD

One major problem encountered was that I could not speak the local language and thus had to rely on a Kenyan student who was a speaker of

Kikamba, to be the facilitator for the group discussions and also interpreter. This meant not all the information may have been passed on. Also the translation from Kikamba to English may have changed the strength of meaning, which the person wished to convey.

On several occasions the focus groups did not turn up as scheduled. Understandably, this was because of a heavy downpour of rain during the first scheduled day for the discussions. The second time the groups of men and women had an agricultural extension activity that could not be interrupted. Therefore the meetings had to be rescheduled taking longer in the field than anticipated. The rains had started, so the community was busy planting crops. It must be recognised for future research, when to conduct the interviews, is an important question to ask when dealing with rural communities. Seasons control feelings and biases of the people and therefore will distort the data depending when it is collected. The teachers and religious leaders did not turn up for the first scheduled meeting because they had not been properly informed.

A tape recorder was not accessible in these discussions, so taking notes was the only source of documentation. This was not a solid way of getting all the data recorded, though several note takers were present, increasing the chance that everything was noted down.

5. THE ORGANISATION'S PROCESS

SASOL's structure and function was examined by observation in the field and by interviewing some of the people that work in SASOL, the Chairman, Community Organiser, Field Officer and Construction Supervisor. Presented here are their comments on the process of SASOL and SASOL's ideology and ideas behind the process.

The name of SASOL is shortened from Sahelian Solutions. Sahelian is an Arabic word meaning drylands; *'the name therefore means finding solutions to drylands'*. Surface water is not harvested when the wet seasons come, meaning that a considerable amount of rain is lost to the Indian Ocean. Therefore, SASOL promotes rain harvesting, *'utilising what was once lost'*. This process is done through supporting communities in finding sufficient quality water. The main techniques that are used are sand-storage dams and wells; *'the usefulness of the sand dams is that they are simple structures, but they are still complex and their potential will not be fully realised internationally for another twenty years as there is little documentation on their effect'*. SASOL carries out other activities, *'that support the community coming together to find solutions to other problems the community is facing'*; this is done through training.

5.1. THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE

SASOL's APPROACH:

The Chairman of SASOL explained that water is a *'public domain and not an individuals, that is why the whole programme of SASOL is built on participation of the community'*. The aim of SASOL is to provide production

water, *'not just for the household and livestock'*. The vision of SASOL is, the Chairman explained, that in the next 50 years these projects can transfer production, *'I am hoping that some bright spark from the community will be able to invent a way to pump the water. These dams are a platform for other things to happen'*.

SASOL believes that the *'participatory approach is the best approach to have in development because it brings aspects of reality of ownership of the project'*. If there is no participation then *'do not expect sustainability, management, or proper maintenance'*. To achieve this, *'the community from the start is responsible for 95% of the process'* because SASOL only provides the artisan and certain materials, once the materials are handed over to the community it is their responsibility. The community partaking in SASOL's projects are thus taking part financially, manually and mentally. *'Initially when the project starts, guidelines are given for example, about making the by-laws but they are not forced to use them, if you are a problem solver and then leave, no one will solve the problems later on'*.

SASOL has been on the ground a long time and therefore, has been able to develop its own approach; *'everyone within SASOL knows the system, which is very important to have unity in the system'*. The SASOL team believed that SASOL is *'very categorical about the approach, they (the staff) do not cheat with it because everyone knows their position within it'*. This is important because *'some agencies find that they are being pushed to cheat by the community and go against the 'programme' but that does not happen at SASOL'*. SASOL shares their findings with other NGOs and visa versa; SASOL feels that *'it is a very easy and excellent way to learn'*.

PARTICIPATORY RAPID APPRAISAL (PRA)

Participatory Rapid Appraisals (PRAs) are conducted by SASOL before they go to an area with the project. PRAs find out about the community's problems and what they need, which SASOL believes is a very important part of the development process at community level; *'It is very important that the community gets what they want to be done in their area'*. In dry areas, SASOL has found that, water is usually the number one priority, with other issues based on the water problem; *'they are tired of no water'*. In highland areas, the priority changes, *'this is why SASOL chose this area (Kitui) to do its work'*.

SASOL's process for PRA is that; *'it is done as a baseline survey at village level. Usually this is between 60-70 households; every village does this, though it depends on how many people turn up correlating with how well the village elders organise the people'*. At the sub-location level the community (all the villages) come together to analysis the data and find out what the priorities and wants for the area are. SASOL has found that now that the sand dams are well known in Kitui, and the sand dams have had positive results, *'when the PRAs are done, the community says that sand dams is what they want'*. The SASOL team explained that most communities *'know that earth dams are not good, and that boreholes need a lot of money and only a few organisations give boreholes'*.

If the community asks for a different technology other than sand dams, SASOL will advise the community which other NGO(s) and government departments to go to that offer those services. The Field Officer argued that *'people cannot be forced to work; it's their project so if it's not their priority then they cannot be forced to do it'*. If the community does not prioritise water in their PRA, but instead asks for help for example, with their livestock and the tsetse fly, then SASOL will not start their projects there; *'we cannot solve all the problems of the community', 'it is best to advice them to go elsewhere, if you leave your initial objective then you will not be able to achieve much'*. SASOL feels that it is still flexible, *'if the community talks about agriculture as a priority, then SASOL explains that water is related'*. Though this is SASOL's policy, *'SASOL*

has not yet come across a community in Kitui that does not have water as one of its main priorities. So, as yet there has been no reason for SASOL to leave an area for that reason’.

Some questions covered by the PRA/Baseline survey:

- The number of households with one wife and one husband (if two wives, each is a separate household)
- Number of people in the village (everyone included)
- Number of houses with terraces (shows the people that conserve the soil)
- Distance and hours spent getting water in the dry/wet season
- Number of homes that keep livestock- cows, goats, donkeys
- Depth of wells in river in the dry season (scoop holes)
- How long do they serve during the dry season
- How many months are the wells dry
- Number of people that fetch water from this river
- Number of people that don't fetch water from this river
- Number of vegetable farms/ homes with vegetable gardens
- Homes that don't experience hunger all through the year
- Number of tree nurseries

ENTRY POINT:

SASOL picks an area for its next project by sub-basins, not *‘the area in its administrative form’*. Once they are picked then the administration tells SASOL where the administrative boundaries are. The community identify these sub-basins (and name them) and they propose sites along them where they feel the dams should be built. If SASOL finds that *‘people are not aware what a sand dam is they are first taught about them and the best location for them’*. The people then give a *‘shopping list’* of possible dam sites; done through an official public meeting (*Baraza*) this is at a sub-location level. The people then select leaders (usually the elders) to go with the technical team to the proposed sites

but *'they (the people) are also encouraged to come along as well'*. SASOL goes through the list systematically. The technical team then says whether the proposed site is technically sound, along with other factors.²⁵ Amongst these factors is the water potential; *'finding scoop holes near where the community wants the site is a sign that there is water potential'*.

The community arranges itself into who is working on which dam site. The Community Organiser believed that this is simple because they know who is who and know which household uses which stream and scoop hole, thereby it will be the same people who construct the sand dams at or near those sites. There are usually 20-30 households per dam to help construction and then use it after completion. If there are not enough people to divide between the construction sites then the community builds a dam one at a time, *'if there is a lower participation then the dam just takes longer to build'*. If there are no scoop holes, to mark territory, it is still the same process; *'distances mark ownership, as people want to go to the nearest source so they know who goes where'*.

DEFINITION OF A COMMUNITY - LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE:

'Community' is a word used in development initiatives, but the word is difficult to define; as the Field Officer said, *'is it a realistic social structure?'* SASOL follows the definition that the community's boundaries are usually defined around an issue, social interactions or a need. These community boundaries, SASOL has found, are established around schools, water points, markets and trading (ordinary traders) areas, not the administrative boundaries. The Chairman explained that *'it has been discovered that communities can be defined with local resources, who goes to which water source or river, but this theory is not yet recognised internationally'*. When the water source is changed, the social interactions will also change, redefining 'the community'. The sand

²⁵ See MAKING SURE IT IS A COMMUNITY FACILITY paragraph.

dams are an example of this, *'the people now send their children to get the water so the women do not meet at the water point any longer'*.

SASOL has to discover how the community defines itself and go with that; *'if one goes with a perceived idea it is a very bad idea because every case is different. It is forcing an issue if you define a community for them. It is better if you let them decide what community means'*. The Field Officer gave an example to illustrate the point, *'if there is one dam and two villages then the two villages come together as a community to build the dam and if there was one village and two dams, the village splits into two communities to build them'*. There are few conflicts because the community knows, *'as long as the community as a whole feels comfortable with the definition of community then projects are successful'*.

MAKING SURE IT IS A COMMUNITY FACILITY:

There have been cases of privatisation of past communal water projects in Kitui District. Therefore, with the sand dams, privatisation is made difficult. Putting several factors in place to qualify a dam site does this: There has to be official access to the site, done by placing dams near survey routes and putting them under Kenyan law. The owner of the land, in the vicinity of the sites, allows in writing, the access and the use of the product (water and sand). This is put into the dam constitution, which has a legal basis. The Chairman explained that in Kenyan law, 6-10 meters from the riverbed on both sides, is a river reserve (government land) so no individual owns it. The dams do not extend more than these 10 meters on either bank. Even though these policies are in place, there have been attempts at privatisation but the community has been able to deal with this. The legality issue means the problem can be taken to the appropriate authorities and the SASOL team felt that it would be dealt with. *'If they so wish, they can even take the issue to higher authorities, if the chief or assistant-chief are not helping'*.

MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS OF THE SAND DAMS:

The Community Organiser said that *'everyone in the community is involved'*; usually he explained, *'the men break the stones and help the artisan construct the dam; the women carry the stones, water and sand; the old women take care of the children and cook; and the old men take care of the children and are there for moral support by telling stories and entertain, they are also there for conflict resolution'*. However, *'in some areas there are not enough men so the women break the stones'*.

There are by-laws made by the sand dam members so that if people do not participate, they do not benefit from the project but they can pay cash to become members. The SASOL team argued why some individuals are unwilling to participate in the projects. This is because of *'ignorance, negligence and lack of knowledge'*; *'they do not really understand what SASOL is doing and what the project wants to achieve'*. The Chairman explained that by this process SASOL *'shifts power to the community and some people feel threatened because of the erosion of their power base, or the fact that the initiative did not come from them'*, so they do not participate in the projects.

SAND DAM COMMITTEES:

The community at each dam site elect a dam committee to control the process of the dam construction. If the dams are built one at a time, they have the option of using the same committee for each dam or electing a new one. Once the dams start being constructed, *'the committees visit each site so they know who really is working on which site to help with their registration and make sure no one is cheating them'*.

These committees, once the sand dam is complete, rarely meet; this is because, *'they have no reasons and issues that need to be discussed, why should*

they meet if there are no issues?’ SASOL argued that the dams need minimal supervision so the committees only need to meet if there is a problem, which they apparently do. ‘The committees are effective because the water is useful to them so they do not allow anyone who did not work on the dam to be beneficiaries’.

The chairman said that SASOL does not get involved with the dam committees, *‘they go and figure out who is where and so they change the social interactions, not us’.*



Photo 8: A sand dam and newly created bricks

5.2. THE TRAINING PHASE

The SASOL team explained that there are two types of training that SASOL undertakes. The training is usually carried out after the dams have been completed or near completion. This is because *‘water is the driving force of the projects and so start with that first with the community and then deal with the issues attached after’.*

SEMINAR TRAINING:

On the seminar level, the community pick the people who come to the training, SASOL has no control over who comes to the trainings; *'The only criterion is that the person will go back to the rest of the community and give the information told in the training'*. There are usually more women than men, at the training because the men are away from home; *'others are drunkards, so they cannot turn up'*. The groups are usually well mixed age wise, with the youth there also. The numbers in these groups mean that they are not exclusively made-up with existing leaders from the community. For this intense seminar training, *'there is a limitation to the number of people that can be trained effectively'*. Therefore SASOLs policy is that there cannot be an increase in participants above 50 as, *'a number bigger than 50 is too big as people do not participate and they do not learn as much as they should do'*, and its harder for them to stay focused. SASOL trains at the sub-location level, incorporating all the villages. Therefore, *'if the dam project includes people from two sub-locations, each sub-location has its own training'*.

OPEN TRAINING:

The other training is an open meeting where there are no limitations on who should attend, *'more people attend the training the better for change of the village'*. The Community Organiser felt that increases in participants would make the community *'more literate than illiterate, as they now know their responsibilities'*. The dam is the community's facility and in the training they are trained on conflict management to help manage the facility. This is because *'SASOL does not have the capabilities or legal framework to sort out problems'*, so the community is left to sort out their own problems.

CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAINING:

Some of the content of the training is about sanitation and hygiene. The quality of water, is an important issue, so the community is taught for example, about the disposal of excrement; *'even the artisans are trained about not going to the toilet near the source'*. The SASOL team felt that *'most people used to waste time doing nothing, which increases poverty levels, so they are trained by SASOL so they can increase efficiency in time'*. They are also taught what they can be doing during the dry and wet seasons. There is leadership training, which includes examining a list of what good qualities a leader should have, *'hopefully so they can pick their future leaders based on these prerequisites'*. Natural resource management training is done, which includes soil conservation, tree planting, grass planting, pruning trees, manure application, early planting and, making compost. This training helps the community *'realise the natural resources (including human resources) around them and how to utilise them'*.

The SASOL staff felt that training the community in these aspects makes life more sustainable, as *'they rely on the environment for their business'* (sustainable agriculture); *'if the environment is more protected its more productive'*. The effectiveness of the training the staff felt is measured by how many people have taken up the training methods but had not gone to the training.

5.3. AFFECT OF THE SASOL PROCESS ON POWER STRUCTURES

SASOL's staff has found that there are power structures within communities that affect peoples access to development. The SASOL process in the construction and training phases affects these power structures. These power structures are; the institutions of the community, the power elites, gender and household relations.

INSTITUTIONS:

SASOL has found that only if there is water in a community, then water management systems have been set up. If the community has to travel substantial distances to fetch water they do not seem to manage it.

SASOL works with existing institutions within the community because *'they do not want to cause any disruptions'*. The existing institutions SASOL has found have included clans, merry-go-rounds and self-help groups. The Community Organiser has found that the community develops itself further once SASOL has finished its part of the project. *'There is an extension of knowledge amongst the community, a 'communal mind' that affects other activities'*. There is usually new organisational structures, *'in fact these institutions have become more focused on what they want to achieve and into building bigger institutions like, CBOs and co-operatives'*. The Community Organiser talked of an example of this process happening in a part of Kitui District, Kamale. *'The people have hired a vehicle to take people's vegetables to Kitui Town for marketing purposes. They have organised a marketing system, they have dug their own wells and introduced zero grazing units- hybrid cows and goats for milk'*. This example shows that one of SASOL's objectives, which is to help set up more complex institutions, is succeeding. The relationships between people seem to have become stronger after the SASOL process because before, not many people met. After SASOL the community finds that they can meet in large numbers and can organise larger issues for the community. Kamale can also be used as an example of this relationship, *'In Kamale, the people there used to work on their own, when they were trained and on the construction sites they got to know each other and the relationship has grown stronger'*.

POWER ELITES/ LEADERSHIP:

SASOL has found that before SASOL has been to an area, mainly rich people dominated everything such as the chairman of schools, teachers, church elders, who when any development projects came to their area, *'suffocated it'*. This is because, *'teachers have always automatically been perceived as leaders.'* The Chairman gave an example of this power elite; teachers are usually the only employed people locally, so they often act as the local bank, this gives them the feeling of power; *'they think they are the gatekeepers of the community'*.

There was an incident with the power elites in the Tungutu area (the community under study). SASOL also builds tanks and wells in schools but SASOL has found that the teachers pretend they are not interested. This was seen when the teachers were interviewed for this SASOL research. They did not mention that SASOL was about to start a project in their school, within that same week. The participatory system is supposed to involve everyone, but SASOL believes it is better to leave some people out because of their attitude, *'they are employed so they do not really care about water; they can afford it'*. SASOL has found that *'it is not theoretically possible for a whole community to participate in a project, no community in the world will fully participate'*. Therefore, SASOL deliberately leaves out the power elite to cut down the existing power structures because *'they want direct benefits from development agencies such as us'*. This is due to the fact, past NGOs have paid the power elites off or worked through them; *'if they demand, we move on'*.

The SASOL staff believed that there are definitely power shifts in the communities once the SASOL process has started. There is a shift in the leadership structures because *'the community learn how it should be, especially when they get an opportunity to elect leaders'*. The community learns that they do not have to listen to the person just because s/he is there, that person has to deliver, to be accountable. The SASOL process enables *'the community to get more options about what they want'*. This is a deliberate strategy of SASOL; *'we are challenging power structures so the community can get the resources'*.

GENDER/HOUSEHOLD:

SASOL has found that in Kitui, there are 60% female-headed households. This has been the case since about 1910, when Kitui started exporting labour, because it is a marginal district. The Chairman feels that gender analysis is taken as historical but this fails the Akambas, as the male dominant role has changed with the situation. *'Gender is the sharing of responsibilities in the household'*, they have to split the household to survive. The men work away from home because of income, not social reasons and the wife is in the house controlling the farm produce, income and marketing, *'women have very powerful roles in this district'*. Marketing and trading networks throughout Kitui District, are in the female domain. The Chairman believed that the women have learnt to survive through basically single parent households but *'they are still friendly with their husbands'*.

The SASOL team have found that men in Kitui drink, *'the trouble with the men that stay here is that they are loitering, taking the local brew, leaving the wife to do everything, so the poverty level increases'*. This is because of social deviances; they cannot provide for their family, *'its escapist behaviour as they have to rely on rainfall. They go away to the towns and make very little money. They come home and see the wife has nearly killed herself farming. Their image of self is that of failure'*.

SASOL has found that *'women are more development conscious than men in terms of participating'*, 80% of the workers are women at the dam construction sites. This is because water being in the female domain, is more of a burden for women since they have to find it, *'where as a husband comes home and just needs water, they do not care where it comes from'*. Therefore, *'the women know that they will get more 'time' from this SASOL project'*. SASOL would like to research these time gains, but as yet there is not enough resources for SASOL to pursue this avenue. When SASOL starts in a new area, the SASOL team

explained that usually the men attend the meetings first to see what it is about and *'if we are good people'*, then the women come; *'the women want them to do this to 'scout out' what these new people want'*.

Even though the women seem more powerful in these kinds of activities, there are some issues that the women need to consult their husbands about. This affects community participation and the flow of the project. For example in some cases, the women have to discuss the monetary contribution to sand dam construction with their husbands. It has been found, that there is generally a high consultation amongst people before they participate in the project, amongst husband and wives but also amongst the wider community and those that did not attend the *barazas*.

Even though, the Field Officer stated that gender is not the agenda for SASOL, the need to improve gender relations is such that SASOL does approach the subject. The SASOL team have discovered that *'the people know about NGOs and the gender issue, so we just 'up-date' them'*. This is done through on-site training but the gender issue is not brought up as a direct issue. It is worked through the idea of the human resource issue in resource management. *'The people come to realise that every member of the community can participate in management effectively and efficiently as everyone is a human being'*. The SASOL team insisted that *'it is not up to us to decide how many women should be on a committee; we insist there needs to be women there but not how many and their positions'*. SASOL's training also aims to bring more uniformity, harmony and sharing of responsibilities within the household.

It can be seen that the sand dams have helped to reduce the desperation feeling, felt by many. SASOL predicts that each farmer could make about 2000 shillings²⁶ per year from the produce grown with the sand dam water. A positive example is that of a wife who was going to leave her husband because of the poverty. The sand dams were built and the husband was able to make bricks. He

²⁶ 1 US\$ = 60 Shillings

was then able to build a new house and sell the excess bricks. They are now living happily together. If there have been changes in the power relations within a household due to the SASOL process, it is '*hearsay for us*', there has been positive signs but *I do not know how far this goes, the good thing is that it cannot go back to before*'.

5.4. THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

SASOL goes through the provincial administration as '*they are there for the people*' so that SASOL does not compromise the operations of existing institutions and organisations. The provincial administration mobilises, by telling their community the importance of the project and how they should take part and '*in general they do this well*'. The SASOL staff did comment that '*we do not depend on them entirely to mobilise the people*', because it depends on the individual as to how much they participate actively or passively, '*but it's easier if they cooperate*'. SASOL has found that it is very individual on how officials view development. An example of this is that a community ignored the dams for five years but now they have the fastest growing vegetable production around. This was because the assistant chief was drunk all the time, but when he was promoted to chief he stopped drinking and started organising the people to move forward. However, SASOL cannot completely by-pass the provincial administration as, '*it is illegal to work without the chief's knowledge*'.

A *baraza* (an official public meeting) is called by the provincial administration where the people can meet the SASOL staff. These meetings are to show the people that SASOL has had the blessing from the chief.²⁷ The SASOL staff has found that '*if the place is well organised most people turn up*'. The challenge for SASOL is in the people spreading the word about the projects

²⁷ Also to give information about the sand dams and question and answers.

from the *baraza*, not the *baraza* itself. It is felt that the village level *baraza* is better because people know each other and it is easier for communicating between SASOL and the people. A location *baraza* is difficult because it is hard to attract a huge crowd. But, the Community Organiser felt that this lack of people attending is not because of the association with the colonial period, *'as most people coming cannot remember a colonial baraza'*. At location level SASOL makes it a chiefs *baraza* so that the leaders meet and can spread the message. If two sub-locations are bordered by a stream that will be constructed on, SASOL holds *barazas* in both locations; *'water goes beyond a village or sub-location and the people know how to solve these issues of who uses the river'*. There has never been any conflict when two chiefs/assistant-chiefs come together when dams cross administrative boundaries.

The official's other role is to act on the by-laws and enforce them and there is evidence that this has been done effectively. An example, from Tungutu (community under study), was when the chief and assistant-chief had forced non-members to pay when they had violated the by-laws of the sand dams. The SASOL team argued that *'SASOL has a good relationship with the administration so they do intervene when issues arise'*.

SASOL does not engage in the political field as this may change the objectives of SASOL. Though, *'there is the problem that politicians are part of the community, and the question could be asked are they then participating as a person who lives there or as a politician.'*

SASOL also works with the line ministries such as the health ministry, water ministry, agricultural ministry and partly the education ministry, which *'is very productive'*. There are usually no disagreements with the officials about SASOL working at the grassroots level because SASOL is also part of the DDC-District Development Committee,²⁸ *'it's the highest authority around here'*. The

²⁸ see Context chapter,

Field Officer confirmed that SASOL follows the DFRD- District Focus for Rural Development.

5.5. THE DONORS

There were problems getting donors to accept SASOL in the beginning as *'they thought the sand dam technology was not good enough'*; *'people think about water in a very different way then we do'*. SASOL had to convince the donors that sand dams work. The donors' policies are based around the participatory approach, which is the basic principle of SASOL. A big dilemma for donors is that *'they do not even know what they mean half the time as translation of policies are impossible'*. The Chairman gave an example of this problem; *'the new idea is to talk about advocacy to make projects work, advocacy of what? The policy paper (for advocacy) has not even been done yet but they are pushing for this advocacy, it has not even been defined yet. I think that SASOL is doing advocacy anyway, I think it means popularising the sand dams, not just in Kenya'*. The Chairman felt that these policies coming from donors do not really affect the workings, capacity or the development of ideas from SASOL.

The Chairman admitted that they have even *'kicked donors out because they did not fit into SASOL's way, because donors have conditionalities and tell NGOs like SASOL what to do'*. However, *'there is a person writing these policies in an office somewhere and has not really gone into the field properly'*. If the donors do not believe in the design and objectives of SASOL then *'we let them go'*.

Often the main guidelines that the donors give SASOL are about how to do the accounts, *'which is only fair'*. SASOL's Field Officer is accountable to the board of SASOL as they give the money to him to utilise it. For the donors *'it is for their returns, always, it is their funds'*. SASOL has even been known to

account ahead, *'we have been audited so many times, and everything is accounted for'*. The donors also evaluate the sand dam sites.

SASOL does not have many overheads and money is managed very tightly, because SASOL relies on these bilateral donors for funds. *'Donors do not support projects once they have been completed'* so there are no funds for SASOL to stay in the community after the project is finished and assess the changes that are taking place. The Community Organiser would like to see SASOL remain in the community to find the loopholes in the training and bridge those gaps. *'There is a need for post-project assessment, not just of the actual sites but also of the community's reaction to it'*. The financial constraints at this time means they are unable to do this work. Middle management has only just been added last year (2001), as there was no money to pay them.

5.6. CHALLENGES DURING THE SASOL PROCESS

The SASOL team has found that there have been challenges and conflicts while implementing the SASOL process.

PAST PROJECTS:

The biggest challenge faced by SASOL has been the mishandling of communities by development agencies in the past; *'you have to find the ways and means to convince them that failure is not perpetual'*. The Field Officer explained that *'first you have to identify the resistance then you can find a way of dealing with it'*. The SASOL staff has noticed that communities are very angry of past projects and their failings. They have found that there was (and is) a challenge in how to convince the community to take part in the project; that SASOL is not like past projects and that the project is theirs; *'they have ownership rights*

through participation. A way to overcome this dilemma has been for SASOL to take communities to view existing sand dam sites and talk to the community there. They then ask questions and assess if it is a project they want to get involved in.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR APPROACH:

All the SASOL staff commented on the fact that it was a challenge at first to talk about participatory approach, because *'the entry was not easy as the communities were not sure of the process'* and the people were used to being given incentives; the Community Organiser summed this up, *'when they have to get food for themselves and the artisan they do not understand'* so *'the importance of participation and ownership is explained to them and they talk about past projects in the community that they do not own'*. Now the main challenge for SASOL *'is that the demand is so high that this cannot be met'*.

RESISTANCE:

The Field Officer commented that a challenge has been that some communities have resisted the dams. *'This stems from what the opinion leaders perceive is important for the community, if they have foresight to see what they think is right for the community, they influence it positively or negatively'*. The community organiser commented that some people have refused to participate because *'they are near main streams with available water throughout the year so they feel there is no need for more water, why be tired if they have water near by'*.

MORE THAN SASOL'S OBJECTIVES:

Another challenge for SASOL, is that *'a lot of the time the community wants a borehole, which SASOL does not provide.'* External people have also commented that they see that SASOL is not helping with the marketing of new crops and other products *'but that is not SASOL's objectives; they think local people do not have knowledge and cannot do it themselves'*. The Chairman said that *'national markets are a future prospect and when that event occurs then discussions can be made'*. There *'is still a latent demand within Kitui'*, because the district has absorbed the extra crops produced by the sand dams.

CONCEALED SOCIAL STRUCTURES:

There are undefined social structures within a community that creates a challenge for SASOL. There have been issues with the 'African gods' in some communities. For example, after sites have been identified and the preliminaries done, sometimes certain clans have said that their god stays there so there cannot be construction with cement in that place as the water will dry up or the cement will disappear. Eventually the community solves it; in a particular case, *'the whole sub-location questioned the clan on what they wanted, it was solved that way'*.

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION:

The interaction with the district's government officials has been a difficult challenge for SASOL because the officials are used to being given allowances for working on such projects. SASOL does not have any incentives like that. The Construction Supervisor explained that it is *'a complicated issue...if we work with a government department, like agriculture then they usually ask for food allowances, as staff of SASOL, we do not get that'*. Higher up the administration of the district, the officials usually have been posted to the area, *'they do not really care about the area, and they may not have even asked to be transferred'*

here’. However, SASOL has found that at the lowest level, the assistant chiefs *‘are usually cooperative, they are mainly from that area so want to see things developed’*. But there have been challenges from all areas of the government. An example was given about a chief in Changwittiya West Location, who is now retired. He did not see the benefits of increasing water in the area, and wanted incentives, he became a barrier to the projects, but the community pushed him to accept. Tungutu (which is the community in this study) is also another example. Even though Tungutu is near Kitui Town they have only just joined SASOL’s process. This was because the chief was considered corrupt by SASOL as he asked for money in exchange for helping to set up the projects, so SASOL refused to go to the area till he was sacked. *‘Once he was sacked the people came to SASOL and begged them to build the dams’*.

5.7. CONCLUSION

This data shows that SASOL follows an approach that involves the participation of all the community (if they want to participate). SASOL has a systematic system to follow in the construction and training phase.

SASOL has found certain power structures within and outside communities, such as institutions, power elite and gender and household relations. These power structures are affected (often deliberately) by SASOL’s process, to try and; set up more complex institutions for development; challenging power elite so access to resources are transferred and; to show that everyone has a role to play in the household, so everyone can participate in the reduction of poverty.

SASOL involves to an extent the provincial administration as long as the officials are development conscious. For funding, SASOL relies on bilateral

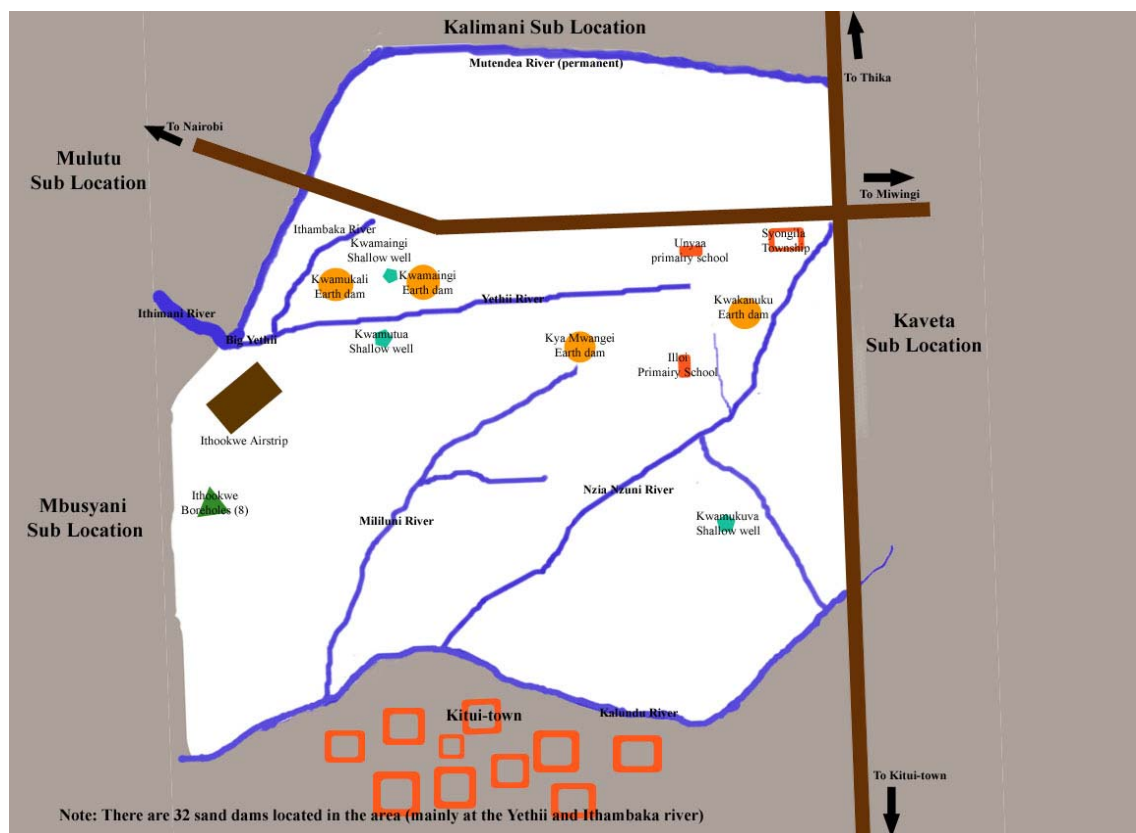
donors, but if they try and manipulate SASOL's process then their services are concluded.

There have been challenges for SASOL while developing their process, but these have been able to be overcome.

6. THE COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE

This data has been collected from the focus group discussions. This included the men, women, youth, Sub-Location Development Committee (SLDC) and the teachers and religious leader, of Tungutu sub-location. These groups were answering questions that were asked to all of them, producing different answers. This chapter attempts to represent these diverse answers to particular topics.

6.1. TUNGUTU'S RESOURCES



Map 4: SLDC's map of water sources in Tungutu

This resource map was made by the Sub Location Development Committee (SLDC) to show the water resources of their area. This is the only detailed map of the area that was available.

6.2. PAST WATER INTERVENTIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

The community has in the past had institutions to deal with development issues including water issues. These have been small in number. The government has failed to provide Tungutu sub-location with adequate water. Therefore, according to the data, external agencies have come to provide water interventions for the area. However, according to the focus group discussions these have not been very successful.

COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS:

The community follows its own development agenda as well as that of external agencies. According to the focus groups, the community has always met to discuss water issues. The women described that in the past there have been being several community groups in the area, (*Kekunde*) focused on specific projects like planting trees, digging terraces or bush clearing. There are self-help groups, *myethya*, and *merry-go-round* groups in the area covering a range of issues not just related to water and the environment. The men believed that these groups have not changed in role or status since external projects have come along, they still do what they used to do, '*they will not die; there just came another organisation*'. However, most of the people in these groups went to training offered by external agencies and so the SLDC assumed that they would become more efficient in their own projects.

THE GOVERNMENT:

The women mentioned that they tried to consult local politicians about the problem of water and failed projects but nothing ever happened. They felt cheated and thought they were looked at as being stupid. However, the men commented that the chief and assistant chief of their location and sub-location respectively are good at the moment as they are starting to repair the broken dams. The men said that the people who discussed and were responsible for communicating with the local government about these water issues were, the Sub-Location Development Committee (SLDC). However, this committee when asked if they were holding meetings to discuss water management said that they were not. The SLDC said that there are '*boreholes in the area that work but they are run by the ministry of water, inherited from the colonial government that supply Kitui Town not the area itself.*'

EXTERNAL INTERVENTIONS:

The focus groups explained that there had been several external agencies attempting to provide water in Tungutu sub-location. These include the Danish Agency for Development Assistance (DANIDA), African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) and Sahelian Solutions (SASOL). The latest of these has been the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) (2002), though not directly involved with the water problem, it is related. Data was collected more thoroughly for the SASOL process, as this was the main area of investigation.

DANIDA:

The women explained the process of DANIDA; it worked in the area from 1988 to 1992. This donor agency built roof catchments and water tanks in primary schools and in the community. In the schools, the head teachers were the points of entry to establish the project. In the community, this donor agency

entered through group committees that were already in existence in the community with the aid of the areas' assistant chief. In order for people to be registered as members of the water tank projects, they had to pay 5 shillings per household. DANIDA also helped to construct several *Silanga* (earth dams) in the area 'using earth movers'. Committees were set up to look after these earth dams. The organisation also educated the community on soil conservation through terracing. The community provided labour (carried cement, rocks, sand) and DANIDA provided expertise and monetary assistance in the water tank project.

Even though the approach of DANIDA seemed good, there were several problems that the focus groups identified. For example, the men said that, the work was not well done since the tanks cracked and started leaking after a short time. After about 2 seasons (1 year), the earth dams were silted and were no longer holding any substantial amounts of water. During the focus group discussions, people expressed bitterness that the agency never revisited the area to repair the tanks and de-silt the dams. As a result, the focus groups termed the work of DANIDA as a failed exercise. A local politician even raised money to mend one of the broken earth dams giving more emphasis to the fact that the agency never came back. They were also given tools such as *jembes* (spades), ploughs, wheelbarrows, but the community never saw these tools, they only heard about them, they have a feeling that the tools were given to the leaders²⁹.

AMREF:

The focus groups said that in 1998, AMREF entered the community and mobilised it to dig shallow wells and construct latrines in their homes. In this '*AMREF project*' as the people called it, community members did all the manual work while AMREF provided cement and expertise. There were no monetary

²⁹ They did not express who these 'leaders' were.

contributions from the community towards this project. None of the focus groups expressed any direct dissatisfaction with this intervention.

FARMERS FIELD SCHOOL:

The focus groups did not divulge much information about the Farmers Field School, as the group (men and women of the focus group discussions) had only just started the project. It is an important intervention psychologically for the community because the project had come since SASOL and agriculture cannot be achieved without water. Showing that there has been an increase in the area's water, for there to be experimenting with agriculture. There was confusion from the focus groups over who was funding this intervention; the women said the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO); the SLDC said it was Kitui Agricultural Project (KAP) sponsored by DANIDA.³⁰ This intervention taught groups about the different seeds that can be used and different fertilizers, it provided the group with money to start the work, buy the seeds and use as a group loan.

6.3. SASOL'S PROCESS: THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE

SASOLs intervention has been seen by the focus groups as successful. The focus groups described the process of this intervention and the feelings they had about it. SASOL came to the community in the first week of July 2001. They eventually built 32 sand-storage dams in the sub-location, along 2 main rivers and its tributaries.

ENTRY POINT OF SASOL:

³⁰ This intervention was funded through KAP by DANIDA.

The focus groups said that SASOL entered the community through the provincial administration³¹. They had to mobilise and organise the people. The SLDC stated that SASOL started in the neighbouring sub-location first. There were a lot of consultative meetings with the local administration before the community was involved.³² The teachers exclaimed that '*SASOL told the people they wanted to catch water from the rain*'. The women found that the idea of *Ming'eeto* (sand dams) was explained well to the community and they '*bought the idea*' so they did not have to go on the exchange visit that was offered to them. A list then had to be drawn up where the community wanted the sand dams to be built. According to the men, the chiefs and elders were the ones that went and surveyed the streams and then came back and told them of the appropriate places where the sand dams would go. The teachers and religious leader backed this up by saying the elders, went and surveyed where the sand dams should go, and then told the community. The SLDC said that '*SASOL people said yes or no*' to the sites proposed and only after that was the community given any information about which site to go to, to start work. Only, when the community was assembled at the appropriate places did SASOL bring material to start work. The people were given cement and iron reinforcing rods by SASOL and were told to '*come and work with your hands*'. SASOL also provided and paid the artisan. The people said they were expected to dig trenches, collect sand, break and carry stones and feed and accommodate the mason.

MEMBERS OF THE SAND DAM:

The men said, '*if you are not a member you cannot use the water*'. The SLDC said that the people who became members of the *Ming'eeto* project were those who would directly benefit from the water. The teachers said it was mainly

³¹ See 2.7 THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

³² This was said with indignation by some of the members of the SLDC.

the people in the circumference of the dam that were members. To become a member, participation in the construction had to be throughout. The women said that people had to register to become a member and pay 50 shillings. The SLDC, women and men said that, the community implemented this project, though it was unanimously agreed by all the focus groups that the majority of the members were women. The teachers claimed that it was the *'village women'* that participated in and implemented the project as *'they always participate in these kinds of projects'*. The other focus groups had other explanations why this majority was so. The men alleged that it was because most of the men in the community were working outside the area such as Nairobi and so could not physically participate. They said that if a woman was a member so was her husband as it was a household membership. The men also asserted that SASOL did not differentiate between the rich and the poor of the community, all the community could benefit. It was expressed that the members understood when people were working and could not participate physically, so these people paid to become members instead.

CONSULTED:

The respondents were asked if they consulted anyone before they participated in the project, to determine who were the decision-makers in the household. The men believed that *'women allowed husbands to work on the project and men allowed wives to go on the project'*. If neither could go they sent a worker from home, the eldest son or daughter to go and do the work, so the household is represented. The SLDC had the opposite view saying that women consulted their husbands and sought information but that the men *'only woke up and left to the meetings'*. Sometimes, the men said, husbands and wives went together to the trainings and meetings as there were so many sensitive issues being discussed.³³ The religious leader was very adamant that he did not consult

³³ They did not elaborate on what these sensitive issues were.

anyone, *I sat down and evaluated it myself.* Each of the women was asked whom they consulted. This is represented in Table 6.3.4. It shows that husbands were not the only ones consulted; the women consulted their children too. In two instances this pattern changed, with one woman saying that she and her husband consulted each other but the other did not consult anyone, just telling her husband that she was participating.

Table 6.3.4 Representing who the women consulted before participating in the sand dam construction

Woman	Who they consulted
1	Husband
2	Husband/ children
3	Children
4	Husband
5	Children
6	Consulted each other husband/wife
7	Children
8	Husband/ children
9	Children/ daughter-in-law
10	Self: just told husband doing it

DIVIDED WORK:

The work on the project was divided amongst the participants; the community arranged this system themselves. Two to three women cooked for the rest of the group, this was usually the older women who also looked after the children. The women divided themselves between carrying and breaking the stone. The men started digging the trench, then there was an exchange and they swapped jobs, *'so everyone does everything'*. The men held that they did the stonework and the women carried sand and fetched the water. They stated that

the women volunteered to dig the trench and carry the stones but when asked if they volunteered to go and fetch the water, they laughed and said no but they gave their donkeys. The men said that they did not do women's work because they were '*special men*', as they were digging stones from the ground and carrying them, involving a stretcher with four men per stone. The women said that it depended on the individuals' capabilities as to which job they were prescribed.

NON-MEMBERS:

There were people who did not participate in this intervention and there were many explanations from within the focus groups as to why people did not become members. The men stated that there were more non-members than members '*they just refused*'. The reasons that the members gave for people not participating were because of reluctance after past failures of projects; people did not want to work as they were used to being given '*free*' projects and when they found out that SASOL did not give free things they left. People were described as '*just being lazy*' and '*fear working*'. The men said that some ignored it, as they thought it was '*a passing cloud*'. This comment came especially from the aged as the colonialists had forced community work to build dams. Then when other projects came, they thought that it was the same.

SAND DAM COMMITTEES:

The women stated that each *Mung'eto* had its own committee consisting of 13 people with representatives from men and women and also the youth. The majority of the committee members were usually women, but special positions held within the committee were as equal as possible because as the men explained '*if one sex dominates, the other raises issues, so there cannot be a majority*'. Every sand dam group selected their committee differently; it

depended on the agreement of the community. Within the men's focus group there were members of dam committees. One man was the chairman of two sand dams; another was an elder and a member in three sand dam committees. This was because their dams were built in sequence, so they stated if the first committee was good then it was transferred to the other dams. If it was bad, then new committees were formed.³⁴

The focus groups believed that the time lapse between sand dam construction and the present day had not been long enough to change the dam committees. *'These people know how the project was started so are the best people to be in office'*. If an official resigned or resigns from now on, then they elect a new one by calling a general meeting, the new candidate will be proposed and seconded. To vote, the community close their eyes and when the name is called they raise their hands, or not. To arrive at a decision in meetings, they *'vote on the majority rule'*. This style of decision-making is believed to be satisfactory by the men and women because *'there is no force used'*, *'even if they feel defeated, it's democratic'*, *'and it is representative of peoples' opinions'*.

The men stated that now that the project is complete, the committee usually meets only when there is a need. For example, when a non-member interferes with the project and they have to *'determine their fate'*. They also meet if someone wants to become a member (applicants) of the sand dam. They do not meet in the rain season because most people are involved in other projects besides water. They will definitely meet again when the shallow wells need to be organised and dug.

The relationship between the committee members and community members has been problematic in the past the women said, as there were conflicts about money, *'as money is like the devil'*. Now that the project is finished the women feel it is better, *'but not best'*. There is usually a general meeting to sort out these and other differences. The SLDC pointed out that the

³⁴ NB. The women were not asked who were in dam committees.

majority at these meetings are the poor because the rich do not come and also mainly women. The women stated this also as they believe that this representation is because *'men do not want to get tired; they have no vision; they are not paid for their time; they believe group work is for women'*.

THE CONTRIBUTION:

The focus groups explained that the community (members of the project) had to contribute 50% of the construction cost. The contribution was mainly in the form of labour and local material. There was also a monetary cost though the amount depended on the population of the members for each sand dam; this included 5 shillings for tea everyday, *'as everyone needs tea as you get thirsty'*. Everyday everyone brought ½ kilo of maize and beans for lunch; they took care of the *fundi* (mason) by each paying 50 shillings³⁵ a month for his accommodation, and food such as tea/ milk/ sugar/ bread. The process to collect the monetary contributions was said to be okay by the men, because the members received updates on expenditures. The people that did not contribute are *'forced to contribute, if one wants to use the water s/he has to clean the balance'*. The women were asked what happens to those that do not contribute and they said that *'everybody contributes'*. The men commented that there are deadlines for people that do not contribute; *'there is a law that gets hold of them if they do not pay after the deadline'*. During the building of the sand dams the treasurer kept the money at their house as it was being used daily; *'sometimes the treasurer ate the money; he had to refund'*. The focus groups said that their contribution was also that they worked full days from Monday to Friday. The teachers said that the members worked on Saturday too.³⁶

THE BY-LAWS:

³⁵ 1 US dollar = 60 Ksh

³⁶ They had already admitted that they did not personally participate in the construction.

The sand dams have not yet experienced any damage but the community has by-laws, enforced by each sand dam committee for such eventualities. The women are satisfied with the rules and regulations that have emerged from the sand dam project. It is their project and their responsibility, *'because it's our sweat, we worked for it and contributed more than SASOL'*. If these by-laws are violated and the sand dam committee cannot deal with it then the matter is taken to the provincial administration. These by-laws are usually accompanied by *Yieli* (fines).

MAINTENANCE:

The focus groups were asked who is concerned with the maintenance of the *Mung'eeto*. The men believed that it was the members who are concerned with the maintenance. The women however, felt that they were the ones that took care of the dam because the men had left the work (construction) for the women. The teachers and religious leader believed that it is the *'surrounding people'* who (should) take care of the maintenance. The SLDC believed that it is the job of the sand dam committee. It was expressed by the men that SASOL employs people in the area but that there are no real masons amongst the community, if any serious problems should occur. The teachers pointed out that the community should be responsible for the dam so they do not have to wait for the donors, because then *'the dam would not be ours and it will be misused'*. The women said that even though there were people within the community that were trained to construct dams (apprentices), no women were trained in maintenance, but they claim that they can do it, because they learnt most of it when participating in the project. They felt that if they were asked they could construct one, themselves. The only area that they found difficult was the stones. The SLDC claimed that if the sand dams broke they would not know what to do and probably have to rely on the masons at the Catholic Diocese for help. They

therefore suggested that, there needs to be masons near by to fix the sand dams when they get damaged.

6.4. SASOL'S PROCESS: THE TRAINING PHASE

The focus groups explained that SASOL had also provided training within the community. There were also contentions between and within the focus groups over the content and process of this training.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAINING:

The focus groups believed that SASOL has changed the way they manage water, through the training, because they have been taught how to use water more efficiently and with sound environmental principles. The focus groups all agreed that they had implemented the training they received, though, to different extents.

The men listed the content of the training mainly as farming techniques and the women listed health and food issues. The men said that SASOL taught them to dig 'cut-in' drains instead of 'cut-off' drains, *'so as not to let the water get away'*. They said that people have started to do these 'cut-in' drains on their *shambas*. People have been taught and started to manure the land. This is because the men said the good soil has already eroded away so they have been taught to dig deep, overturn and manure. They said *'soil is part of health, so we have to protect from soil erosion, so many people are now digging more terraces'*. SASOL told them that planting grass on top of the terraces could be used as fodder for the livestock and also stop erosion of the top part being eroded down into the trenches. They were taught, the men said, to plant early in the dry season so that the first rains can be utilised, they were told that it is important to

learn to weed these crops. SASOL also told them the best seeds to use in their area because of little rainfall and what pesticides to use for them. They had started to plant *Kitothyra* (napier grass) to help conserve the dam area. The community was told the trees to grow in the area, '*we know which ones to keep and not to keep now*'. This was to show them the trees to plant for fuel so they could boil water, which some people are doing. Natural resource management was a topic discussed at the training sessions. '*Training on how to use the water*', the women said is by participating and doing it themselves. They were taught how to survive on the little available in the community. The youth focus groups even knew about the use of these techniques to conserve the environment.

There were talks on sanitation and hygiene in the household and also around water sources. The women said SASOL talked about taking care of food by not selling all the food they produce but use it to better their diet; they were taught how to plan a food budget for the whole year. The SLDC said that latrines have been built on the lower side of the sand dam so that the people '*do not help themselves in the dam*'. This was done before construction began. The people were taught where to water their livestock.

The women said that SASOL also held training sessions on how to live with each other and work in unity. '*We were told not to expect everything for free, but to work for ourselves*' as SASOL told them, free things do not benefit a community. They got training on leadership and dedication, '*to always have an expectation*' (of what a leader should be), and rely on advice from informed leaders. The women said that if there were weak leaders at a sand dam site, there were no changes to the way the people managed, this was especially true if these weak leaders had gone to the training sessions and did not relay what they had been taught back to the other members, as intended.

RECRUITMENT FOR THE TRAINING:

There was contention between the focus groups on how the people were recruited for the training sessions. They all agreed that not all the community was trained, some people were trained and then expected to go back to the community and pass on the knowledge they had been given. The SLDC and the teachers and religious leader said that the people were recruited for the training through volunteering. They said that the people came from each site so that each dam was represented, and *'if there was no volunteer the chairperson or vice would go'*. The women said that the chief was informed of the training and told specific people that there was training and they were the ones that went. The men said that the people were picked from the already established organised groups in the community and a few sand dam members from each dam, *'so the work on the dam would not stop'*.

WHO WAS INVOLVED:

There was disagreement amongst and within the focus groups about who were the majority in these training sessions. The teachers and religious leader believe that the men were the majority because *'they have more freedom to learn as the women are working with the children and household matters. This is a difference in cultures between the West and Africa'*. The women said that there were more of them at the training sessions, *'men have no commitments. Men think that women are stupid so they think we need the training more than them'*. The men agreed that the women were the majority. One man said that it was because *'men were bigheaded'* but the rest refused this statement. They said it was because many men had left the area, *'the men that are left here are unable to go to work, lazy, useless fellows that would never go to a training session'*. The SLDC with a mixture of men and women contested within the discussion on who was the majority. The men said that it was 50/50 but the women in the discussion said that women were the majority at the sessions.



Photo 9: Young boys at a scoop hole near a sand dam

WHEN THE TRAINING WAS:

The training sessions were conducted in the dry season, as the women said, *'people had nothing to do and all the time to attend'*. This training was done on a seminar level that lasted for five consecutive days. The training times were working days (Monday till Friday) from 9am till 4pm or 5pm, with a lunch hour. However, the men and religious leader believed that these times did interfere with the people's daily routine, the running of the household and work schedule but *'they re-adjusted to cope'*. They had no regrets about the training because they received good knowledge from the training. The women suggested that if the seminars were shorter in length then they would have been better. The SLDC said that there was also a general training for the whole community, which lasted four continuous days, *'but not everyone came'*.

6.5. PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS ENCOUNTERED IN THE PROCESS

The focus groups discussed that there had been some problems and conflicts created from the SASOL process.

CONSTRUCTION PROBLEMS:

The focus groups felt that there were many problems with the construction phase of the sand dams. The amount of time taken up by the project was a problem. This was pointed out by the teachers; *'they (the women) complained; and when will we be doing our housework?'*

The men stated that there were problems with the actual construction; there was no sand near by so sand was a problem to get and the transportation of the iron rods from the storage to the site was very far. They thought the dam was constructed with stones so they collected a lot of small stones but they were then told that they were not needed and they had to go and get big stones. There were only a few people capable of doing heavy work in the area and therefore it was difficult to get enough stones. The women even said that the *'old women suffered because they could not carry the big stones'*. The members lacked the appropriate tools to do the work, such as breaking up the large stones. They said that they used all their efforts and persevered trying to finish before the rains started, *'it was a short season'*, so *'they were forced by seasons'*.

The project was planned with many people but *'people were used to handouts so they pulled out of the project'*, so it had to be done by a few and they got tired. The SLDC believed, that there were a lot of conflicts during the construction phase. For example, they commented that the chairman of the sand dam *'was abused if he forced people to overwork'*. On the other hand, when the

leaders or chairperson was lazy or inactive, the leaders were then '*given hot words by the people*'.

FOOD PROBLEMS:

The focus groups mentioned that water was a problem to get for the construction of the dam and also for consumption, as there was drought. This caused a famine so they '*were hungry throughout*' construction; '*we were hungry as it was July and there was a famine*'. Thus, there was low physical energy and they could not contribute a lot as; '*by 1pm everyone was crying to go home*'.

Another problem, which also turned into a conflict, was that they had to cook on site but it was always a problem getting food. They even had to give a variety of food to the *fundi* (mason), when they themselves were hungry. The women mentioned that if a person of SASOL found nothing cooking at the site, he threatened to take the mason away. The SLDC seemed surprised that the members of the sand dam quarrelled, if '*one does not bring the food for those working*'; the men seem to counteract this statement by saying that the people felt over worked and over tired, that's why conflicts occurred.

CONTRIBUTION PROBLEMS:

The 50% cost sharing was a problem for the people, because they said, of the poverty in the area, '*most of the men and women were unemployed and one can see 5 shillings daily*'.³⁷ The women said that people found it hard to find enough money daily. So there were conflicts when people pulled out of the project due to these financial problems. The teachers said, these people '*had not got permission to go*'. The trouble was that some people would incur too much debt that they just could not repay so they pulled out.

³⁷ 5 shillings for the tea everyday

The teachers also complained that SASOL went to the poor women to do the work, *'a woman that doesn't get more than 100 shillings a month and is forced to pay the fundi that also gets a wage'*. The *fundi* was also given money for rent, which was brought up as a problem by the focus groups. The teachers believed that the community was *'forced'* to bring lunch and pay the loggings of the *fundi*. They commented that SASOL said *'we will assist you'* but the *fundi* is paid by them and then is also given substantial support by the community, *'so he goes home saving 100%'*. Therefore the teachers felt SASOL was not really assisting them at all, *'if they are assisting us why can't they pay the fundi's rent?'* The group had to contribute 100 shillings a day if there was no food to give to the *fundi*.

THE TEACHERS PROBLEMS:

The teachers had a problem with the implementation of the dam as it interfered with the development of the school. This was because parents were called for meetings but they did not turn up because they would be fined if they did not go to the dam site, so the teachers felt the school suffered. This they said was because the sand dam rules were very strict³⁸, they felt that many *'feared the fines'* because it *'forced'* the parents; they were *'torn between the two'*. They also felt that it was a *'top-down'* approach as it was *'not us telling them what we need-they told us what we need. They told us- the elders told the people the time and place all to meet to build the sand dams'*.

Due to the fact that the teachers and religious leader were not confident about the process, they were asked what the right approach would be. This they said would be when you deal with the community you need to educate them first, so that they understand what they are doing. There needs to be a seminar that shows how good sand dams are. They said that the community also complained that there was no water straight away, *'they are crying these days that they*

³⁸ Even though members of the sand dam were the ones to create them.

were not trained how sand dams work and not prepared on what work they were going to do. They were not told how long the project would take so people could not calculate how long they would have to pay 5 shillings a day, or how the people who could not manage to pay this amount still participate. The teachers, who are considered 'working class' by the local community, sent their house-help to represent them. The teachers felt that they were sidelined because they could not come and work themselves, though members of the sand dams did not mention this problem directly; they believe that the working class '*do not do anything, they just send workers*'

OUTSIDERS:

Contrary to what the SLDC said, the men and women commented that there were no conflicts from within the construction group but the conflicts had come from outsiders. After completion of the sand dams non-members wanted to use the project and they tried this by force; the women said that '*these people have been sued*' as the chief's office deals with these offences because the projects rules are legally binding.

For example the men explained, one sand dam in this area had people that tried to use the water by force but they had to pay a fine of 4500 shillings, this fine also makes them a member of the dam. '*It's a fine because they were available for work but they were just lazy*'. The men and women who could not participate as they were working, their membership is 3000 shillings. The men then explained that the difference between the two amounts, 1500 shillings, is the fine. In some areas membership is up to 7000 shillings. The men explained that to arrive at this figure, it was the total cost occurred by individuals when constructing in food and paying the fundi.³⁹ They keep the money that they get from the new members so that they can construct a shallow well, needed next to

³⁹ Interestingly they did not calculate their time and energy into the figure

the sand dams for 'clean' water, they also bought something to celebrate when the dam was completed.

6.6. IMPACT ON GENDER AND THE HOUSEHOLD

The focus groups explained that the process of SASOL had especially had an impact on gender and household relations.

FROM THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE:

The women said that the men had left work (construction) to the women; *'Men think that there are some things that women cannot do, but we think we can do all, though it takes a longer time because we are not as physically fit as men.'* They also said that, *'the men come home to ask for food, especially as it is now time for politics so all men have gone to politics and the women are ploughing the shambas'*.

The youth demonstrated that they also experienced gender issues. The boys during the focus group discussions never mentioned the sand dams as sources of water. The girls on the other hand, talked extensively about the sand dams, having been sent to collect water from them since their construction.

There was also conflict within the teachers and religious leader focus group, the men in the group said that the men broke the stones, which according to them is very hard work. The women said that the women had a harder job, *'as carrying the stones is harder then breaking them'* therefore they believed that the women worked the most.

The SLDC said that *'women now can do the work of men'* such as mixing cement. The men exclaimed that the women have learnt to mix sand and cement, and their husbands now say that this is the work that we do in town, so

the women are now proclaiming that if they hear of a construction job they will go and get the money, *'they have discovered a potential they never knew'*. The men said that now in the home if there is construction work to be done the women do not need to find someone to do it as they (the women) can do it themselves. Asked what the men had learnt, the men replied *'that women refuse to do the hard jobs but they can actually do it!'*

FROM THE TRAINING SESSIONS:

The women said that they had observed change in the men since the training, though *'it was mostly the older men who came to the sand dam construction, and these men are more responsible'*. They were encouraged that at least two young men came to the training and that now they had become very responsible. But this the women said was not the norm because most young men do not turn up for training.

Amongst the men's focus group discussion one man answered that *'I am the big man in the house, the controller of the household is the man, as head of the family'*, but another stated that he is *'always in consultation with the wife'*.

The SLDC and the teachers and religious leader believed that SASOL had changed the structure of the household; *'before men sat and agreed on all issues, but SASOL said that the family is men, women and children and they should all sit together and arrange duties'*. They said that SASOL had introduced democracy into the household with no resistance. *'They sit together and decide what they are going to plant, though the management of the shamba is sometimes left for the wife'*. The religious leader said that money is still in the domain of the man. The man gives the woman money *'to buy home stuffs and she comes back and accounts for it'*. It can be noted that when asked about the changes made in household dynamics, the people always mentioned what the women have learnt, that they can do men's jobs. When asked about the other way round, they always laughed and do not answer the question. One man

answered that now *'men sweep the compound'*. The men however did seem to recognise the fact (thought the training taught this) that husband and wife should consult each other in all household matters.

6.7. THE ROLE OF THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The focus groups described the role of the provincial administration and how they felt about what the officials did. The men said that in the colonial times they were forced to dig dams so no one wanted to do community work. When the dams broke they then had no water, *'our freedom but no water'*. So, they believed, it was good when the chiefs and SASOL talked *'to provide water through people groups and a united community'*. The women said, *'the provincial administration helped us to get more water'*.

The focus groups said that involved in the process was the chief, assistant chief and village elders; they are the advisors to the community. They helped formulate the rules for the sand dam committees. The SLDC said that to acknowledge the legality of the rules the provincial administration signed them when they were completed. They explained that there were six copies in all signed, one for the court, SASOL, police, sand dam members, chief and assistant chief.

The SLDC said that the administration mobilised the community members by arranging public meetings and *'even went door-to-door'* and; sensitised them briefly, informing them about SASOL; *'they helped sell the idea'*. The men said that the chief and assistant-chief also assessed the progress of the projects and motivated the people to carry on working. The women were very impressed by the assistant chief's commitment to the project, *'he even left his work to visit the projects'*.



Photo 10: Some of the Sub Location Development Committee

6.8. RESULTS

The focus groups explained the results from the sand dams and SASOL's process. They found that the results they expected had occurred, but also that there were unexpected results as well. The focus groups discussed the extent to which they were satisfied with the process, and the technology. They had suggestions for future external agencies wanting to come to their area.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

The community had a list of expectations from the sand dams. The men stated that they expected that the environment would change, with the area becoming wetter and greener and eventually more rainfall.⁴⁰ The women

⁴⁰ Though not documented, there has been evidence that suggests increased rainfall in areas with existing sand dams, there is ongoing studies at the moment investigate these claims.

concentrated on more immediate expected results, such as not having to go far to fetch (drinking) water, growing vegetables, watering the livestock.

The men and women of the focus group discussions believed that looking at the evidence, the sand dams have fulfilled their expectations and changed their lives. The women said, even though the sand dams are still '*young dams*', there is now adequate water throughout the year and that they expect there will be more once the shallow wells are dug. The men said that there is visible evidence that the environment has changed following the establishment of the sand dams, '*it is green all year round*'. Food production has improved. People are now planting *mboka* (vegetables) that they could not do before, by irrigating the crops; such as onions, cabbages and *sukuma wiki*, even '*banana plants are available all year round*.' The women said that this increased food production saves money, as they had to go and purchase these types of vegetables before. Amongst the youth, the girls also noticed that the dams had water in them, and that there was an impact on the environment; '*the surrounding areas are greener than before*'. The men and women stated that they are saving time going to the water sources and this time is used elsewhere. The girls mentioned that before there was queuing at the water sources in the dry seasons but now with the sand dams, this has been reduced. The men commented that '*livestock feed near the sand dams all year round, that never happened before*', and that the livestock can be watered for 2-3 hours now that the source is nearer. The men and women said that some have started constructing bricks that was not possible before, hopefully creating a new market, but as yet houses have not been built with the bricks.

The SLDC were more careful in their assessment, they stated that as yet there was not much water in the dams (as it is only the second rains since they were completed) but when there is, they will make bricks and sell them, then buy iron sheets and build good houses. They said that there is sand now for building, that was lacking before. Soil erosion has also decreased because they have been

planting trees to use for timber, wood and construction and also there has been an increase in terracing in the *shambas*. The people, they believed had also been taught how to build the dams themselves by watching what the *fundi* did; *‘they witnessed the fundi measuring, digging trench, learnt how to mix cement/sand and pebbles proportionately’*.

The teachers believed that the sand dams had not really changed the people’s lives; *‘the water level needs to come up so that there can be shallow wells and then hopefully in the future the environment will change’*.

UNEXPECTED RESULTS:

The focus groups expressed that there were some unexpected results from the sand dams. The SLDC commented *‘that the quality of the water in the dams is not very good and that the quantity is less than they expected’*. The teachers captured this view by asserting that, *‘the walls are too low, the water cannot stay in them, and it only collects sand and rubbish’*. The women noted that the dams had brought conflict to the community because; there are people who never constructed the dam but are misusing the water. The men were more concerned about how the sand dams were constructed that they had not anticipated.⁴¹

SATISFIED WITH THE PROCESS:

The community was satisfied with the process of the project. They *‘saw the need once SASOL had approached them, with the idea and we saw that it was good’*. They were satisfied that people were given jobs to their ability. The contribution they felt was fine and when the situation was getting too tough for them, SASOL helped with the equipment.⁴² *‘The plan was achieved even if some people ran away when the going got tough, but it was done’*. They felt that the representatives of SASOL explained everything so they felt that it was their

⁴¹ See 1.5 Problems and Conflicts Encountered in the Process for more on this issue.

⁴² The *fundi* (mason) keeps these tools they are not given to the community to keep.

project, unlike other external agencies that went straight into the project and did not consult them. They will fully appreciate the project when the final phase is complete; the sinking of the shallow wells. They understand that it could take up to five years before the sand dam is optimal.

SATISFIED WITH CONTRIBUTIONS:

All the focus group members were satisfied with their contribution towards the project because, the women said they can *'see the water'*, *'we were straining but we made it'*. They are very satisfied, as they have gained extra time and good scenery. The people that now want to become members must pay a fee, this they felt is fair and that, it means more benefit from the extra water. The teachers and religious leader, were the only group that were pessimistic that the contributions have helped them because there is little water and the water that is there, they feel people do not know what to do with it, *'they do not know how to build bricks'*. The problem they envisage is that only a few people are using the water for production, *'a boy was using the water for making bricks but the women went to the assistant chief to stop him as it was in the rules'*.

OVERALL SATISFACTION:

Through all these problems the projects were finished. The men believed that this was because of the *'solidarity in the groups'*; they had perseverance with the goal of getting water, *'for each other as the only way to keep going'*. They felt also that the local leaders were encouraging as they kept them going when it looked tough. They are *'feeling better'* now, and feel they can develop further, expressing interest in forming a Community Based Organisation (CBO).

FUTURE SUGGESTIONS:

Asked what suggestions they had for future projects, the women responded that projects should target the poorest of the poor. The SLDC believed that they should not contribute 50% *'as we are poor and we are working on the project, so let the NGOs cover more than 50%'*. The teachers and religious leader thought that people should be *sensitised* to know exactly what they are doing, as *'some people are doing the work and they do not know what they are doing'*. The men believed that in future there needs to be full participation, which involves all calibre groups, everyone should be involved. The teachers also suggested this because they felt SASOL's process *'does not involve the working class with this water harvesting. They should not be made to feel guilty for not being able to go and help construction because they are working'*. The lessons the community has learnt is that an individual cannot do much on his/her own but has to work at a community level and be united with others to succeed. The women concluded that *'future projects should be more like SASOL's approach'*.

6.9. CONCLUSION

This data shows that between the focus groups there were differences of opinion about development processes in their area. This should be taken into account when assessing the data. The main differences are that the women seem to have a clear perception of what the processes have been, especially involving SASOL. They know what the process entailed and were candid about how they felt about it and the results. The men seem to give politically correct answers, showing that they were possibly not expressing their true feelings about SASOL's process. The teachers and religious leader appear to be sidetracked away from the positive results of the sand dams for the community. This maybe due to the fact they are annoyed with the process and therefore care should be taken when interpreting their answers.

The data shows that within Tungutu sub-location the government and past external agencies have failed to deliver water to the community. The community have established organisations for their own survival but these have been small in number and membership.

The SASOL process is different because it has made most of the focus groups satisfied especially because of the results produced from the sand dams. The focus groups explained the process of how SASOL entered the community, via the political administration. People do seem to consult before deciding to participate in the project, which anyone from the community could join; however the majority of workers were the poor and women. Even though the work was hard, the workers were given jobs depending on their ability. However, the men did not fetch water, they still view this as a female role. Contribution was considered high but the focus groups seemed to understand and accept that this was part of the process towards ownership. The sand dam committees were created to organise the workers and create by-laws. This was a chance for the community to learn how to organise and be involved in a democratic process. The data showed there were people from the community that did not participate in the project; the focus groups gave a number of reasons why this was, which was mainly negative reasons. They could become members afterwards by paying a membership fee. There was confusion over who should maintain the sand dams, even though SASOL claims that they need minimal maintenance.

The focus groups explained that the training provided by SASOL was being implemented, even though not everyone went to the training. The training focused on practical issues to do with natural resource management and sanitation and hygiene. It also focused on social issues; leadership skills and household dynamics, which the focus groups said had changed in various ways since SASOL's training.

The focus groups felt that there were some problems with SASOL's process but because they now see the positive results, they felt the problems were worth it. In future they would like to see other projects use the SASOL process.

7. THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION'S REACTION

From the provincial administration, the assistant chief was interviewed to discover if there was any more information about the SASOL process that the focus groups had not mentioned. Also, what role the provincial administration played and how he felt about the process and his role.

7.1. THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION'S ROLE

The assistant chief of Tungutu described that the sand dams were built in two phases. Phase one was completed after three months, when people became committed to the process and then when phase two was started, the same people could also participate in these dams too.

The assistant chief has only been in Tungutu for 1 year and 4 months; in fact he was still on his probation period. SASOL has been his only water project in this area. Before SASOL there was DANIDA but he was not assistant chief then. His role in SASOL was to mobilize the community, pass information to the community and see that things were done. He did this by calling the village elders from the 12 villages in the sub-location; each village has a village elder, and he sent them out to further mobilize the people. If the village is big then it usually is split between two elders but this has not happened in Tungutu.

The assistant-chief's superiors are interested in the projects that come to his area. He gives feedback every month on the projects that are taking place in the sub-location and how they are doing. He commented that his colleagues do

not have the same enthusiasm for the sand dams, so they do not really help mobilise their community, *'some do not even know where the sand dams are located'*. He went with the survey team when they were deciding where the sites should be and helped name all the dams. *'The community can only accept what you tell them when they see you do it, so they can do it, you set an example'*. To do this he also was working on the sand dams, *'doing the real work with the people'*. This helped the people to work harder; he worked one day on each of the 32 sand dams. He gave an example that on one day he mobilised 40 youths to help on the dam, *'I felt really good, like I had mobilised a strong Myethya'*.

The assistant chief felt that SASOL has changed the community, increasing the knowledge of the community in how to maintain water, crops and how to improve yields in small *shambas*, *'there are some things that the community was not aware of like farming, there was little knowledge'*.



Photo 11: Sukuma wiki being grown next to a sand dam

The challenges, that were experienced with the SASOL project was that, *'they (SASOL) wanted us to do work that was a bit hard'*, for example like the focus groups listed, the community did not have the machines or tools to do the work; there was a drought at the time of construction so no food. The first project that was done was hard, as the idea of cost sharing was difficult to comprehend as the community was used to being given things; *'it was hard to take'*.

The assistant chief commented that to stop privatisation of a dam, there are several steps to be followed. First before the dam is constructed, there is an agreement with the owners of the land on both sides of the dam and the access to the dam. There is a written agreement with signatures of both the parents and the children, so that no time can they privatise. There are six copies of this agreement that go to the people themselves, assistant chief, chief, police, District Office and SASOL.

He explained in detail the training process; there were five people represented from every dam and ten people from every village who came to the training. The group at each dam chose the representatives and the village elder chose/ approached the people from the village, *'they are requested a chance to attend'*. About half in training were women, a quarter men and other quarter were youths of both genders. This training lasted four days from 9am to 4.30pm with an hour lunch break. The assistant chief believed that SASOL should have trained more people than this number from the community.

The assistant chief thought that the sand dam committees are very effective, as they take care of the dams, making sure that there is no misuse of the water. He believed that it is the responsibility of the community to sort out problems that arise but *'if it is beyond their reach, the administration should step in'*. The highest authority can be called upon if the problems are serious but *'we try and deal with any problems at the lowest level'*. If these problems are having a negative impact on the project, the assistant chief reflected that it is the weakness of the community not SASOL's; *'SASOL's work is finished here so it is the community's responsibility'*.

The participatory approach of SASOL, he felt was the *'best we could use. It's why we had to succeed because we were participating'*. He thought going through the administration was good. Though, if the community does not have a good relationship with the administration then there would be problems with this process. He had noted that there has been a change in the relationship

between the community and administration. The chiefs have less power today and cannot use excess force, a colonial tool for controlling people. Now the people know their rights and what is expected so the administration has to respect these rights.

7.2. CONFLICTS AND CHALLENGES

There were some people that did not get involved with the SASOL project. *'Some just did not want to be led, if they were not leading; they are power thirsty people'*. He believed that some people were ignorant which stopped them participating in the project. Experiences of past external agencies have caused problems. These agencies automatically came and gave the project to the community, so people did not understand the cost sharing principle of SASOL and therefore did not want to contribute. The assistant-chief said that he went to these people two or three times to convince them to participate in the project. *'Most of the people that would not participate were men, women are usually advised by men on what they should do and even commanded not to go'*. However, he believed that the women are more development minded and understood. It has been known for the women to *'drive their husbands to projects'*. For example, *'there was a wife that was driving her husband the village elder to work. The wife is now the village elder!'*

The assistant chief experienced challenges while trying to mobilise the community to participate in the project. He explained that to start the SASOL project a *baraza* had to be called but *'the people are fed up with the chiefs calling barazas, they do not understand and think it is a colonial thing so they do not like it'*. The women attend the meeting, some men but never the youth. He commented that the agenda of the meeting had to be announced before the day; otherwise the people did not turn up. He said SASOL is good because it came and

sat with the assistant chief and discussed what they were going to do and say in the *baraza*. The village elders are then told the agenda and are sent to mobilise the people and tell them the agenda. In the past, projects came and did not give the assistant-chief any information about the project, so it was very hard to convince the people to go to a meeting; *'it's the question of approach'*.

7.3. POWER STRUCTURES

The assistant chief explained that there were some institutions around before SASOL, but they were a few. For example, there was adult education on planting trees; they have nurseries to share the digging of terraces and seedlings. Since SASOL had come, these institutions have changed, *'they have improved a great deal, with now at least two or three groups in every village'*.

There is, he felt, an impact on gender relations within the community. *'There used to be mostly men on the committees and maybe one woman as the treasurer, because women can be trusted, but this is out of five posts'*. Now, the situation has changed and both men and women can chair a committee, there are many groups that have women as the chairperson; *'women are changing a lot and improving'*.

At the household level there is also a change. The women used to get up early to prepare the tea, the children and milk the cows. Now the men participate more than they used to. They get up early and help, such as sweeping the compound. *'They recognise that there are jobs to do that are not just for the women'*. He said that there are already large changes within the households that are placed along the rivers and near the sand dams. They have experienced a massive increase in harvesting of market vegetables. The men and women sit down and talk about income and sharing it, as it now has improved. This he

believed has happened because of the training; *'everyone is now involved in discussions about the household, even the children get involved'*.

He commented that people consulted each other before participating in the project because one person represents the family (household) and so they have to agree who will go and the ones that stay behind what they have to do.

The community itself will develop further; *'they have been educated and now they can utilise it, but at the moment it is only small things'*.

7.4. SUGGESTIONS

The assistant chief believed that future projects should use the same format as SASOL as it will bring *'a lot of good things to the area'*. *'Kitui is stuck somewhere; if they come and use this format we will move fast. SASOL can show the way, SASOL should not just concentrate on sand dams alone but other development issues'*.

7.5. CONCLUSION

It can be seen from this data that the assistant chief is an individual with a development conscious. That is why he participated in the project and mobilised to the extent that he did. It must be remembered that not all officials are like this; this is the exception rather than the rule.

The data backs up what SASOL and the community have said about the process, giving more detailed descriptions in areas that affect the administration.

8. ANALYSIS

'Till taught by pain, men know not water's worth'
(Groothuis, 1996:2)

Finding the answer to alleviating poverty in Kitui and providing the basic needs to the people is a difficult process. The data from talking to the different stakeholders involved in this road to alleviation shows an optimistic view, with ways in which improvements can be made. This data can be woven into the development theories that were discussed at the beginning of the paper. Does SASOL encourage the communities to achieve these development goals? The first goal is the provision of basic needs. The objective of the sand dam technology is to provide certain basic needs to the community. This provision will enhance individual's livelihood chances and the ability to cope with sudden shocks and long-term stresses that can be experienced.

One of the major adversaries to gaining basic needs and increase livelihood chances is the access to resources; this is described through environmental entitlement mapping and the membership of different institutions. However, poverty alleviation cannot be done with material improvement alone. Poverty is also about non-material denial such as social exclusion, and negative feelings about oneself. The utopia for participation is to boost individual's feelings of acceptance and well-being, giving them empowerment to take control over their circumstances. Leading to an increase in organisational capacity for local people and even local government. This will increase institution building, which is at the heart of constructing civil society and achieving local governance. This analysis can be viewed in 3-D, like a cube. Looking at how SASOL's process influences institutions from three angles; basic

needs, environment entitlements and governance, over time and space. The same examples can be used for these three different viewpoints

8.1. BASIC NEEDS

The basic needs for individuals to lead a sustainable life consist of food, water, shelter, clothing, and health. SASOL's initiative aims to directly provide the community with one of these basic needs, water. The majority of communities that live in Kitui District rank in PRA surveys that water is their number one priority for development. This is because water is hard to find for the growing population. In the particular area under study, Tungutu, scoop holes in the river floors had become the main sources of water, becoming dangerously deep during the dry seasons, with long queues.

The difference between SASOL and other water sector interventions that have come to Kitui is that its aim is not just about providing clean drinking water for the community. It is to provide **production water** so that socio-economic chances can be enhanced. The recent 32 sand dams built in Tungutu, show that this basic need (water) is improving, though not to its expected extent. The sand dams have started collecting water but the water is not yet suitable to drink, the quality is still inadequate (by international standards).

Some people have already used the water for production purposes. For example there has been an increase in the production of vegetables. This is done through an improvement in irrigation but also an increase in the knowledge of cash crops. This indirectly is providing another basic need to the community, **food**. Households have improved their nutrition intake and income marketing the produce. The improvement after income improves the access to services. The family also saves money from no longer having to purchase a variety of products that they can now produce in their *shamba*. It also means that Kitui District has

more vegetables in the markets. Imports of foodstuffs and even relief food may not be needed in such high proportions. Other activities such as brick making increase and diversifies income but also improve the conditions of **houses** (to become permanent structures). This is another indirect benefit for the provision of basic needs.



Photo 12: Children in their shamba, note condition of building

Though there is little evidence yet that long-term health has improved; **health** is another basic need that indirectly benefits from the sand dams. This is for a number of reasons such as an increase in the quality of the water once the shallow wells are dug; the nutritional increase from the variety of foods and; the training done on sanitation and hygiene. For example, SASOL encourages the planting of certain trees, not only for soil conservation but also for firewood so that the water can be boiled.

The surrounding **environment** of the sand dams is starting to change and improve. Though not a basic need, indirectly it will enhance people's access to the basic needs. For example, though under study, it is thought that the retention of the water in the sand dams and the associated increase in vegetation and evapotranspiration will improve the microclimate and even encourage rainfall.

The community, with the help of the sand dams, can experience less strain on their lives.

The fact that it is only two years since the start of sand dams in Tungutu area, there are noticeable changes identified by the community which is a positive sign that the sand dams are fulfilling their aim of improving communities' and individuals' basic needs.

8.2. ENTITLEMENTS

The main way of alleviating poverty is not only to enhance basic needs but also to provide *access* to these resources and others. Institutions at various levels have a central role in mediating social-environmental relationships. The different social actors involved in these institutions gain capabilities, or a sense of well being, by acquiring *legitimate* and *effective* command over resources. The principle of exclusion and inclusion is found within and between these different institutional levels. These institutions also influence the uses of the resources and the ways they are managed. In time the way this is done will help modify and shape the landscape. This difference in command can be shown through endowment and entitlement mapping.

The sand dam process experienced in Kitui District particularly Tungutu can be incorporated into Leach et al (1999) environment entitlements framework; Figure 8.2.1 represents this. A sand dam is constructed for groundwater retention. The water can be utilised for production of various products for use by the household but also as a commodity. This commodity can be marketed which leads to an increase in income and ultimately to an increase in entitlements that will improve a person(s) well being. There are different social actors that play important parts in this process. These actors are part of different institutions at a multiple of levels but still they are all interconnected and influencing one

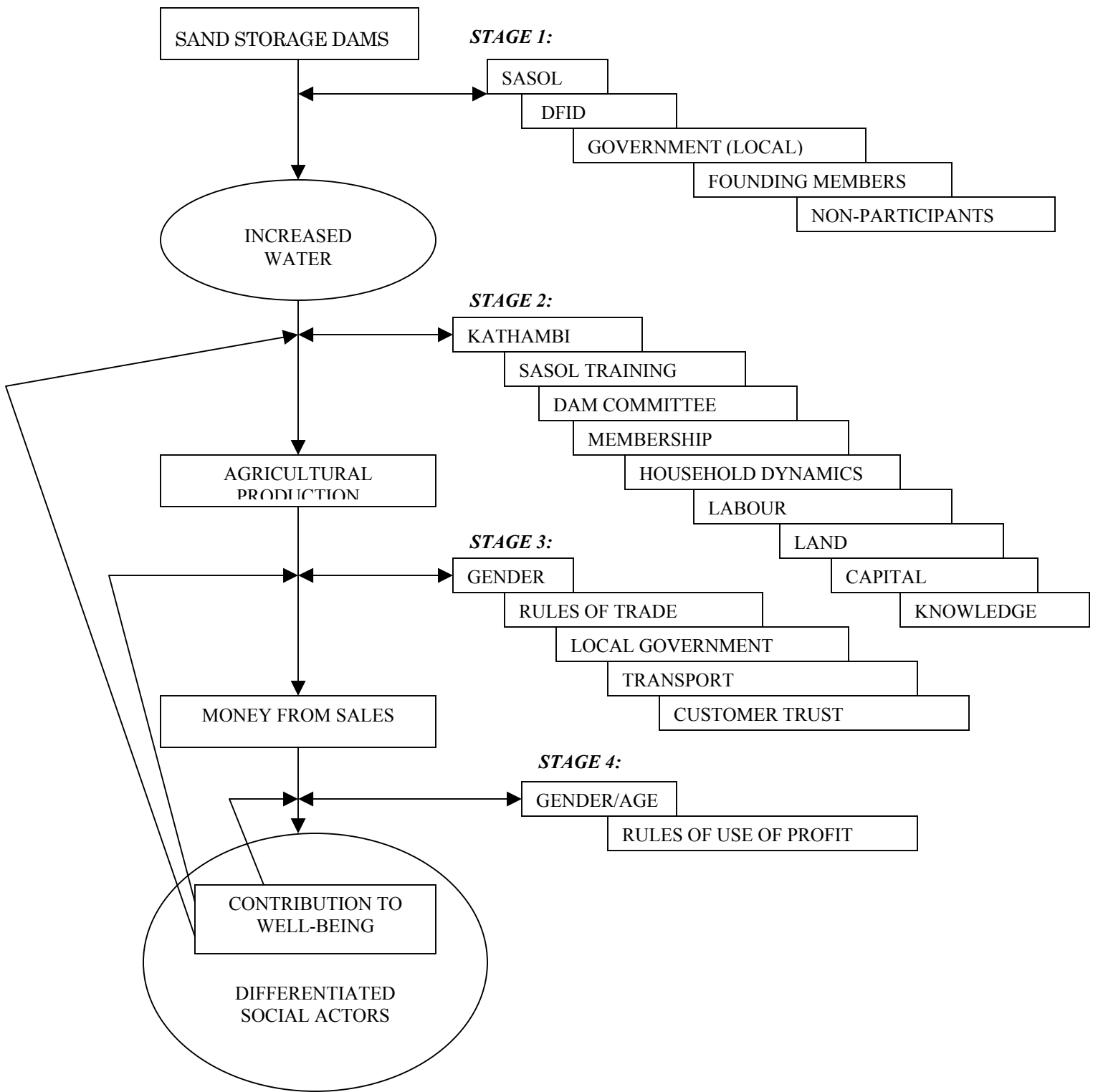


Figure 8.2.1: Entitlements Map

another. They all have different ideas of what *access* entails, and what benefits can be derived from this *access*.

The framework (Figure 8.2.1) shows that there are a number of institutions at the various stages that interact with a person before they can gain their capabilities. The feedback loops vary from Leach et al (1999) framework because the increase in well-being goes to enhance the institutions and access to them rather than ‘things’; the water, agricultural production and money from sales.

8.2.1. STAGE 1: SAND DAMS TO WATER

SASOL is part of the civil society of Kitui District. It has ultimate control over who gets *access* to the sand dam process, as they can decide to go to that area or not. From previous studies (Muticon, 2000, Jeune et al, 2002) the community determined that distance to source is a major determinant in choice of water source, with quality and quantity following. These objectives of the community are in aligned to SASOLs objectives, to provide water to all households within a distance of less than 2 km. They are also very specific about disregarding the power elites of the community; *‘we are challenging the power structures so the community can get the resources’*. Once SASOL has achieved its objectives, providing sand dams they leave the area, and SASOL does not extend activities into more complicated areas of development policies.

There is the international external agency, **DFID** that to an extent controls the local ‘climate’ on development. DFID says in its policy papers (White Paper, 2000) that it influences the policies of the Kenyan Government on how it deals with local and national development. This ultimately has had an affect at the local level of government with the promotion of decentralisation and liberalisation. It has direct influence on local development and institutions in

Kitui District because it funds SASOL's operations. SASOL disputes that DFID influences its policies, stating that they have '*disregarded*' earlier donors that tried this. Though data is one-sided in this analysis, if it is true what SASOL says then this is an interesting relationship, showing that DFID is willing to step back and let SASOL get on with their objectives as long as they stay accountable to the funding, DFID must expect a level of success to carry on funding this project. This relationship is probably acceptable because the projects are showing results and SASOL's ideology is to an extent in line with the basic approach of DFID policies, giving DFID a taste of success. However, DFID's relationship with SASOL seems time-bound. DFID, no doubt will change its policies over time meaning SASOL will probably find another donor to follow their objectives.

The **government** is an institution. The government has been unable or unwilling to provide the people of Tungutu with water. This can be seen because there is highly unequal access to resources in Tungutu. It has water in boreholes within its boundary. However, the government runs these, to supply Kitui Town, rather than for the people of the area, who are denied access. The District for Rural development (DFRD) plan meets the scaling down of development operations to the local and regional levels of government. SASOL has been obliged to work through this DFRD and local officials to proceed with projects. Good relations have been forged but it has also made SASOL less flexible.

Being a **founding member** of the sand dam is an important step towards access of water. This membership is due to the participation of the construction and a monetary fee. This means that there has been a transformation; where once the scoop holes that were used by specific households were a free resource (though restricted by nature), it has been transformed to a commodity. People know which household uses which scoop hole therefore explaining why people participate in some dam construction and not in others within the community. There is an interesting question that rises from this possession of scoop holes. What happens if there is a household that uses a scoop hole but does not partake

in construction of the dam, are they still able to use the scoop hole? This has partially been answered in the non-participants.

There are **non-participants** of this process who essentially should not benefit from the sand dam products. From the data collected, it can be established that non-participants are created because of their livelihood choices. The interviewees talk about these non-participants in a negative light, *'lazy,' 'just refused,' 'reluctance,' 'and fear of working'*.

The non-participants are the wealthy of the community that do not need access to water as they already have it as a basic need. They feel that they do not need to extend their energy and capital towards this project. The people who participated called them *'lazy'*, but maybe it was a strategic choice based on these ideas. The people of Kitui District have so little water that most people have to pay for it. The power elite of Tungutu can afford the water from the taps and have individual wells. They have also built tanks themselves. This is because they have an income other than relying on the land for survival. This gives them more choices, but also a feeling of power. Sand dams therefore are not directly beneficial to them, it is a process for the community and the powerful do not need to have strong bonds with the community to enhance their basic needs. However, they are so negative of the process and do not seem to see the benefits for the community, which could be translated as them feeling threatened. This is why they have reservations that the sand dams have positively affected the community. The SLDC said that, the quality of the water is not good (a shallow well will increase the quality as the men pointed out), the quantity is less than they imagined (the dams are still *'young'* building up water slowly, though the women feel that there is a lot there already). The teachers' comment *'the walls are too low-the water cannot stay in them, it only collects sand and rubbish'* shows their ignorance to the process. They obviously did not go to meetings, training or construction, as they would know that the point of the sand dams is to collect sand, hence the low wall to let water flow over it. Another issue that

was not touched on in the discussions was that maybe the people with water sell the water to the other community members though they would never admit this. This is why they feel threatened that there is a new source of 'free' water in the community.

Other non-participants are the extremely poor, '*the poorest of the poor*' who cannot contribute to the monetary section of the 50% or even the time for the labour. They are therefore being excluded from the process. The women, who suggest in future that the projects focus on them, touch upon these *poorest of the poor*. However, the women also mentioned that everyone has access to the water. In theory there are the by-laws that stop non-participants from using the water, but it is very possible that people are not refused access to the water, especially ones that do not have access to basic needs. The community would not be so harsh as to stop people who are unable to pay, from using the water. The community interviewed was reluctant to talk about if there were these types of non-participants, probably because they are not following the rules that SASOL had encouraged them to make. This is an interesting concept, because SASOL should be following the rules of the people, and if they decide that anyone can use the water, then this should be considered acceptable. Deciding this acceptance is done probably, at the sand dam members' level. SASOL does not say that the poor should have 'free' access. They may not know that this process occurs, but either way SASOL cannot be seen to know about the process, because then everyone will say that they are this poor! This shows that though SASOL has a strict view and encourages strict rules from the participants, they let the community translate and adapt to how the community feels the project should go, though they do not openly admit to this.

There is also the free rider problem. Though not covered in this research, Muticon (2000) did interview non-participants to establish why they would not join the projects. Their conclusion was that non-participants of the SASOL project rarely join in other interventions or organisations at the community level,

showing that there are just some people in a community that do not participate in anything community-orientated. This area of study, the non-participants, is an interesting topic, one that was not elaborated on in this research because the non-participants as a group were not interviewed for their reactions. This is a possible future project that could find out the reasons behind non-participation and try and find ways in which to fit them into the process.

8.2.2. STAGE 2: UTILISING THE WATER FOR PRODUCTION

There is the **cultural institutions'** such as gods and myths, which influence where resources can be abstracted and by whom. In Kitui District there are several examples of these types of institutions, the biggest being the Kathambi cult that restricts access to water and the way it is managed. Though the community interviews did not mention this societal factor, studies show that this culture underlines the access to water. This is an important find in understanding the relationships within the community as it shows why women dominate water, not being denied rights as international policies believe but in fact, their dominance and access over this major resource.

SASOL is also an institution within stage 2. This is because it also provides training to the people once the sand dams have been constructed. This training provides access to knowledge for the people now that they have a new resource to manage. The training teaches the community to manage this increase in water more sufficiently and environmentally sound. The community has implemented at least some of the training, *'if the environment is more protected then it's more productive'*. As SASOL said, *'the training helps the community to realise the natural resources, including human resources, around them and how to utilise them'*. It provides information to help challenge existing institutions and access to other resources. The training the people receive also enhances their management and organisational skills at household and

community levels. This has been successful, showing that the community has learnt to interact together because-as the assistant chief said-there is a huge increase in community organisations in Tungutu area that were not there before, such as co-operatives and the suggestion to set up a CBO, to develop the community still further. SASOL's process enhances the existing ways resources contribute to livelihoods because they show the community what resources they have and how to enhance them through natural resource management. The natural resource management also gives the people the knowledge for production, how to utilise what they have, but still there are other factors that need to be taken into account. The object of SASOL's training is '*a breeding ground for leaders*' to build on long-term capacity of local institutions. These leadership skills mean that people in the community who did not have the opportunities before, can become leaders. This provides access to social networks, organisations, the intermediate state and NGOs and intermediary market actors. The access to such institutions and relationships is an important aspect in securing *access* to other resources.

There are other institutions guiding the usage of water. This is in the form of the **sand dam committees**. These committees ensure that the by-laws that were created by the community are followed. The committee also enforces the by-laws that may restrict what types of activities are allowed with the use of the water. They are the access to the water for the non-participants who want to become a member and be able to use the water.

To become a **member** to have access to the water, it does not necessarily mean that one has to participate in construction. A monetary fee decided by the founding members also allows membership. This fee varies with the dams and usually calculated by the amount the community had to contribute. The interesting social factor here is that the fee does not include the participant's contribution in time and energy just in the monetary value, the amount of money they spent themselves. This could lead to a free rider problem. If a person is fined

for misusing the water, the fine is added to the membership fee, so automatically the person becomes a member.

The sand dams provide the opportunity to expand production, such as diverse vegetables and other crops, livestock rearing and brick making. The community is split up into different social actors that have different *access* to water and other resources; the **household** is one such institution holding different social actors within it, usually based around gender and age. Outside resources such as access to labour, land, capital and knowledge ensures that some actors/households have products to sell in the market. The problem is that each of these resources has its own institution and organisation restricting access to only a few people in this poverty stricken area.

There is limited data on intrahousehold arrangements because the research was restricted to more interhousehold institutions. Therefore this data was taken from observations and informal discussions. **Labour** to help production, depends on household size and position within family in controlling this access. Women married into a household are under the directions of their mother-in-law. **Land** access is restricted for women, as in the Kenyan law they are exempted from inheritance. Another issue that could arise is that land next to the sand dams will increase in value, leading to the wealthier members of the community taking the best land. Certainly experience shows that when land obtains commercial value, it usually changes hands from female to male control. **Capital** by women is seen as part of the household money, for the men, as their own. Therefore, new ventures to increase production, needing capital to buy seeds, fertilizer and tools, certain people will not have access to. **Knowledge** relies on the transfer of the training sessions to the community. Lack of access to knowledge restricts the diversification of water use. Though SASOL's objective is for the water to be production water, it is not their affair to provide these other resources. To an extent knowledge is provided by SASOL, as part of the empowerment process because they have a specific 'household policy'.

The sand dams have to an extent increased more people's access to these other resources. The increased *access* to the water has increased women's own livelihood ideals; it means that they do not have to walk such long distances and queue to fetch the water. This means increased time to do other chores and income generating projects but also leisure activities and sleep. This in itself adds richness and diversity to their lives. For the youth change has occurred too. The girls now are sent to the dams to collect water rather than the women as it is not so far away. The shortness of distance means that several trips a day can be done and so less people can be sent to fetch the water. The decrease in distance reduces the likelihood that girls are forced to miss school in search of water and also reduces the vulnerability of women and girls when fetching water from wild animals and rape, and reduces unwanted pregnancies. The boys are asked less to go to fetch the water, and that is probably why they did not mention the sand dams when asked about water in their area. The boys are the ones that look after the livestock. The closeness of the water means that they do not have to travel far away to water them. SASOL has increased the awareness of how important household communication, interaction and togetherness are. This increases the sustainability of the household in striving for poverty alleviation. More viable livelihoods are characterised by a relative success on the part of households and its members to sustain or access specific ideas. Awareness that households must work together for production purposes reduces the vulnerability of individuals within the household and the household itself.

8.2.3. STAGE 3: FROM PRODUCTION TO THE MARKET

Though this part of the framework is important the study did not focus on market rules thoroughly as its main focus was the sand dams and their influences. There are several institutions that govern the access to markets in Kitui District. **Gender roles** are important in gaining access to the markets. The

women do trading of vegetables in Akamba society and the men do the livestock marketing. Therefore for either sex, restrictions are placed on them if they want to market products not in their set gender perceived roles. Therefore people and households that lack a certain gender, usually associated with age, marketing goods can be a tricky process to coincide with the cultural norms. The markets also may be of some distance away, limiting young unmarried women from leaving the homestead unaccompanied. On the other hand, Akamba women do trade with the livestock markets in neighbouring Kayiado District, which indicates that these rules may be flexible and liable to change.

Local government also has control over the access to markets; there are taxes to pay to be able to sell the goods; permits and applications. Within Kitui Town, there is a daily fee to be paid to the municipal council if selling goods within the Towns limits. These are formal rules to gain access to the market. There can also be informal rules such as establishing 'relations' with the market director, municipal council officials to access a spot. These arrangements are based on ties usually to do with ethnic, clan, village, family and background. Age can play a role in this informal access.

Transport rules to the market are also another access denial for people wanting to market their produce. A reliable person with transport needs to be found and relationships formed. Access to this would be tied to background, clan and village. SASOL encourages the community to work together. If they do this, the community can create co-operatives and transport systems that the community can use to get to the markets. The training sessions of SASOL also encourage this process but do not directly influence the setting up of these new institutions to help market new produce. An example was given of the Kamale community that have been able to organise themselves by creating community transport for goods to get to Kitui Town.

To guarantee a sale, access is needed to **customers**. Especially in an area where the people have been encouraged to grow similar crops, competition

will be high. Ties at the market are formed through customer loyalty and trust, usually by customers sticking to the same person for their goods. This customer loyalty is usually based around village, clan, family, gender and age.

8.2.4. STAGE 4: FROM THE MARKET TO A CONTRIBUTION TO THE WELL-BEING OF HOUSEHOLD AND INDIVIDUALS

Institutions still govern the access and use of the newly created resource of market income. These institutions are mainly encompassed in **gender and age** issues. Though not covered in the data, it is known that there are **rules on the use of the income** produced at the market. Therefore even though SASOL's aim is to provide production water for everyone, there are restrictions on the use of and access to the resource ultimately produced; well-being. This means in the worst-case scenario only a few people will actually make a living from these dams. SASOL has noticed these restrictions and through the training has tried to influence these institutions, to allow greater access to resources within the earlier stages. Only time and the willingness of the people will tell if these influences have worked.

The notion of access described in this entitlements mapping, above, is not just about making a living from the production water but it is the way people perceive their well-being and poverty. There is an increase already in the well-being of the community purely from the creation of the sand dams. For example, the woman who was going to leave her husband because of the strain of poverty, the sand dams gave him the opportunity to make bricks to sell and to build a better house for them. They are now very happy. An indirect result of enhancing a basic need has meant that there has been a reduction in drinking of alcohol. The men in Tungutu noted that they have stopped drinking as much since the creation of the sand dams (Jeune et al, 2002:89). Drinking problems do not affect men only. This drinking was a form of escapist behaviour, to get away from their

intolerable lives that rely on rainfall. The creation of alternatives in their lives means they drink less; a very positive reaction for the community and households. Sustainable rural development therefore requires tackling vulnerability by creating access to resources. This enhances the idea that poverty is not just about lack of material things but non-material as well, self-esteem and empowerment. This process is embedded in the concept of participation.

8.3. PARTICIPATION

The participatory approach is a *means* to an *end* where as participation in itself is a goal, for people to become empowered. This empowerment is about changing lives so they become sustainable and self-respecting. This utopia of participation comes from post-development theorists.

8.3.1. PARTICIPATION AND THE NGO

SASOL did not start out as putting participation for empowerment as their goal. SASOL started out as a technical NGO. They used the participatory approach to help them get the community to establish their own water supply. They believed in the idea of co-operation, a partnership with the community.

In the beginning, establishing the sand dams was a dilemma because the sand dam technology was not the traditional method used by promoters of water development. SASOL therefore had to convince the communities that they wanted the sand dams. This would not have been participatory but they knew technically that they had a good idea and had to persuade the community that the sand dams worked. The community lacked technical knowledge. This is contrary to what a 'post-development' NGO would aspire to, which would follow

the participation objective so stringently that the community may end up with a technology that they asked for, that may not be efficient for that particular area. This is a dilemma for the development agencies that wants to find the utopia of participation, but at the same time, have the technological-know-how, that communities may not have. However, to overcome this dilemma teaching and discussing with the community the different options that they have in dealing with a problem in the community and then letting them choose for themselves, can still be viewed as participatory with empowerment. SASOL shows therefore that at the beginning they weren't following a participation objective but a technical one. This dilemma turned into a success because of the acute shortage of water in the area. The people were willing to give this new technology a chance. SASOL went for impact, not effects.

Now there is a high demand for SASOLs services from the local community, and this is a post-development ideal. From this process, empowerment was developed as a side-effect. To enhance this empowerment, PRA methods and particular training was encouraged by other NGOs that were funding SASOL at the time. This demand is shown when PRAs are conducted to see what the people need and want in their community. The biggest priority for the people is water and the people now suggest sand dams as a solution. Interestingly the community did not mention the PRA when describing the process of SASOL. This is because they do not consider it an important process, as they know what SASOL does and provides. The women of Tungutu said they knew about the sand dams before SASOL approached their area. They had heard from the neighbouring locations about the success of this new intervention. This was why they suggested sand dams as the technology of choice to improve the water situation and, though they were offered to go and visit existing sand dams, they did not need to go. This suggestion by the community of wanting sand dams is giving the start to a truly participatory design. The teachers expressed that the *'the people did not know what they were doing'*, actually showing that they themselves did not know about the technical details of sand dams. The teachers

also did not go to the meetings when visiting other dams was discussed and declared SASOL as having a 'top-down' approach. This shows their ignorance of the actual process.

The challenge for SASOL is going into new areas that have not heard of sand dams and therefore suggest in the PRA other technologies. For this SASOL has found a viable solution, they offer advice to the community and leave if their technology is not wanted. This shows that SASOL realises that it has a limited capacity to develop all of the community's wishes, and sticks to its simple, straightforward design. In some ways SASOL can be seen as *immoral* because they leave community's that do not have water. On the other hand this is true participation; if the community does not want them it is their choice. SASOL has developed a clear approach, it is very rigid with the way it operates; this is to make sure that SASOL does not 'get lost' in the bureaucracy of the development 'industry', *it is very important to have unity in the system*. This progression of understanding, learning and developing shows that SASOL is a learning organisation, empowering itself, especially with the way it is open to new suggestions and improving itself, if they see the benefits. This is an important example for other NGOs to see the success of a simple structure and system that is willing to transform when necessary.

Past projects have not been participatory in Tungutu nor in Kitui District as a whole. The community believed that past projects within the area did not benefit the community and were failures, as the intervention is not theirs, *'the agency never revisited the area to repair tanks and de-silt the dams'*; *'nobody comes back'*. This is probably because these agencies thought they had followed the participatory approach method and the community 'owned' the project. The people have become used to external agencies providing everything in their area and now rely on their support.

The external agencies may have viewed these projects as participatory but failed because of their entry point. This was through teachers and already

existing organisational groups (*Myethya*). This is because the programme approach demanded free labour from these existing social organisations, mainly groups of women and so did not utilise the available male labour. The targeting of women within the groups was also to the exclusion of those who were economically, socially and organisationally marginalized and therefore not part of these groups. The community also had only a few organisations before SASOL came, limiting the amount of people targeted in these projects. There has been an obvious distribution of 'bribes' by past agencies because the community commented that there were tools given out for community work but they went to the leaders.

There is definitely huge resentment of these projects failing. This resentment made it difficult for SASOL to gain the trust of the community, especially when the role of participation of the community is so high in their projects. However, they succeeded to a degree, because people have participated and want their process to be repeated by future agencies in the area. The challenge now would be to increase the participation to those that would not join the process because of past disappointments especially to find ways to overcome barriers experienced by the poor (for the sake of their self-image). SASOL involves the people by encouraging them to ask many questions and to analyse why these past projects went wrong in the community's eyes, so as to explain that SASOL's way is not the same.

8.3.2. PARTICIPATION AND THE DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

SASOL's design does not follow the process of past agencies in the area. They start with the whole community and it is up to the individual, or household whether they should participate or not in the projects. Community is a very important concept for participation, because it is 'the community' that should participate. However, there are so many different definitions of a community.

Agencies can believe that they are encouraging the whole community to participate but actually it is only a few actors within a larger picture. SASOL's approach to a community is therefore interesting. They let the community define themselves, because they focus the projects on a nature bases, the catchment area, rather than a social or political basis. This means that at each project area, the local people could describe themselves in different ways. They have found during their work that communities are often based around resources, for example the households that use a certain scoop hole. The community then defines itself on a larger scale when interacting at the different levels.

Their entry into the community is via the political administration because they are part of the community and the best way to mobilise as much of the community as possible. This is not the most desirable method for SASOL to work with because there have been problems. One is the corruption that surrounds officials and inefficiency caused from the inheritance of the colonial period and after. However, SASOL is not afraid to decline going to an area, because of corruption of the administration. They will also tell the community why they have declined. This process is a very important part of the empowerment of the community, as the officials and those in power become accountable for their actions.

SASOL is ultimately shaping the local administration. SASOL's process can enhance or discredit the local administration with the community. If an official is extremely good at mobilising and motivating the people to work, then his accountability and respect increases, making his other job easier to do. The assistant chief of Tungutu said that *'the community can only accept what you tell them when they see you do it, so they can do it, you set an example'*. It worked because the women commented that they thought the assistant chief *'did a good job'*; this has increased his legitimacy within the community. This is different from the last assistant chief who was fired because he was considered corrupt by SASOL and they had refused to start the projects in the area. The community is

also trained on what to expect in the qualities of leaders. They then have the ability to determine if the powerful of the community are acceptable leaders. They have confidence amongst themselves that they can mobilize against them.

Another problem is the history of colonialism, though SASOL does not believe that this is true because it is too long in the past. The men and the assistant chief believe that colonialism does not help participation in projects because of their likeness to colonial projects of community work. This complaint should be looked on sceptically because they knew the researcher was British and therefore may have wanted to say something about the past. The fact that the interviewees were relatively old may have caused this idea to surface, also.

If the process was truly participatory to the post-development level, the population should be able to design the dams themselves. However, they are not technologically knowledgeable enough about them, so this cannot happen, as it would not be efficient or sustainable⁴³. The community is however, expected to be there for the whole process. SASOL explains thoroughly what sand dams are and where they can be built. The community, following this knowledge gives a list of possible sites. This is done at a *baraza*, so it depends on who turns up, who participates in the selection. This is participation as much as it can be with an introduction of a new technology. True empowerment is not experienced here (because they did not design the dam) so they are educated on the condition of a sand dam site and participate in sections.

There was however objections from different actors in the community over who participated in this section of the dam site selection. They understood that the process was not fully participatory because the SASOL technicians ultimately chose the sites. SASOL insisted that everyone could join this process of surveying the community's list. The men, teachers and religious leader said that the chiefs and elders went to survey the streams and then told them where

⁴³ Sand dams have to be designed separately for each environment that they are in, depending on a number of factors, such as topography. Therefore, following one set way of designing a sand dam would not work.

the dams would go. There was resentment felt here caused probably by a positive role for the women. To make the process more accountable for all, after the survey is done, the technicians of SASOL should go through the list to the community and explain to them why some sites were not chosen.



Photo 13: Child playing on a sand dam in the wet season, note the terraces beyond

The training sessions that SASOL provides does not involve the entire community. Instead a limited number attends these training sessions and from there these people are supposed to go and train others. SASOL relies on leadership to come out of the training sessions. The community say that if there are weak leaders then there has not been a change in the water management system, which in some areas of Tungutu has happened. The community realises these problems of stagnation, making it easier for them to spot these weak leaders and demand new ones. The reliance on training from those trained earlier is an important step in participation as it gives people in the community a chance to experience teaching others. However, there are many problems with this process, as well. This is called the ‘Chinese whispers’ syndrome, where certain bits of information can be muddled as the information is passed on further down the line away from the source. Problems could happen if they trained the undemocratic type of people who enjoy the power they will receive

from gaining knowledge from the training sessions. These people may not share certain bits of information or choose who to share the information with and who to exclude. To get beyond these dilemmas, communicating with the whole community about what is going on in the training sessions and who is involved, means that there is transparency and forces accountability on those that attended the training because the community, hopefully, will demand those people to share the knowledge they gained. The confusions that occur within the community over certain issues start from this expectance of people spreading the message.

8.3.3. PARTICIPATION AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Participation in implementation consists of the community contributing 50% towards the projects. This is done as in other interventions from their labour and using local resources. But the monetary costs are quite high and this is where the design differs from others. This shows the community members how much they can do with the resources of labour and material that they have already. As it shows in the interviews, the people that helped on the sand dams are very pleased with the process; they feel it is their work, not SASOLs. It shows them that they do not have to wait for someone else to take the initiative but they themselves can improve their situation with co-operative work. They realise their own potential and this enhances the ability of members to deal with challenges of development, as far as possible, with their own resources. This stimulates individuals and as they said themselves gives empowerment to them, individually and in groups.⁴⁴

However, there were problems with certain areas of the process. If the communication would be even clearer between SASOL and the community, and

⁴⁴ There are of course the non-participants that were not really discussed in the focus groups. This group of people has already been discussed in entitlements.

SASOL even more transparent, then these problems in the future could be minimised. One of these problems coming from the Tungutu community is with the monetary contribution. The people complained considerably about the monetary contribution especially for the *fundi* (mason). This is probably because there is a lack of total financial accountability of SASOL to the community. They have clearly not been told enough about why they have to contribute towards the *fundi*. Another issue that needs to be addressed by SASOL, if true, is that the community was not told how long the project would take so they could not budget for the 5 shillings a day and *fundi* contribution. This is however difficult to calculate because it depends on the community itself. SASOL is trying to create an environment of ownership, and though overall this seems to have worked from the community's comments, SASOL should have made a break down of the costs with the community.

The biggest complaint in this respect actually came from the teachers suggesting that there is a lack of communication between SASOL and the teachers. The teachers believe that this contribution is '*forced*' on to the people; the SLDC also raised the issue why they should pay 50%, (but this could be them lamenting over not receiving free things). The women however, understand why they have to contribute so much towards the project; they know it is because it is ultimately their project and not SASOL's. This shows that the participants of the process know that they will own the project. The men are trying to understand why they have to contribute so much. Complaints about money are normal in every society, especially for communal benefit and so these complaints should also be taken as normal. It also reflects the fact that in financial matters, there is little openness between many partners within Kenya.

The teachers did not attend construction and were little informed about it. For example, they believed that construction was from Monday to Saturday were as the other members of the community said it was from Monday to Friday. From the data collected it can be seen that the participants accepted that the

‘working class’ (as the teachers are known to belong), could not participate and so paid to become members after the construction of the dam. The people that were looked on badly by the participants were the ones that sent their house help to contribute. This meant they did not have to feel the ‘*sweat and blood*’ that was shed to build the dam but also they did not have to raise a large amount of capital after to become a member. Another question arises from this is the house help. They are representing another household in the construction, what about their own household? No wonder there was tension between the teachers and the participants because there was ‘class’ tension here, they were not drawn together by the toughness of the project and the house helps were not representing their own household, a soar point for the community.

Part of the success of SASOL is because it understands the differences and overlaps between the male and female roles and responsibilities. The people involved in establishing SASOL and the implementation of the process are all of the same ethnic background as the local communities. They understand the sensitive relationships because it is their own culture.

Individuals consulted other people before they participated in the project. This finding can determine who the decision-maker is at the household level. It is important to remember that in Kitui, 60% of households are female-headed. When the men of Tungutu said that both parties consulted each other, they are being politically correct. The SLDC, a mixed sex group, were open about the difference that one would expect. They maintained that the women consulted but the men just went. The religious leader is even more adamant that as a male and head of the household he would not consult anyone. The women had a mixed response to whom they consulted, the children probably because the husband was not there. It is in the woman’s role to discuss before doing something this major and concerning money, if it will benefit the household. If a woman has to consult their husband who is elsewhere, before they decide to participate or not, this will mean it will take time to mobilise the community members. This is

important to note for any development project as the community is the entry point, and the concerned parties have to be given their due weight if the project has to receive community support.

There were gender issues involved in the participation of the implementation of the projects. On the construction side, the women were very bitter towards the men for not participating in the projects even though the men are saying that they have equal relationships. *Men don't want to get tired; they have no vision; they are not paid for their time; they believe group work is for women.* This lack of participation by men is the fault of past projects that have focused too much on gender issues rather than the community. The men have been able to exploit this as they know the rhetoric of NGOs and so are able to avoid work at the same time knowing the right words to use for the outsiders. There needs to be a conscious effort on the part of NGOs to embrace the community as a whole and not distinguish between gender or age as the people with power will exploit these initiatives. There were also gender problems with participation in the training. The men said that the training interfered with household activities and so they readjusted to cope for SASOL yet the women said there was nothing to do anyway. Are the men trying to show that they are involved in household activities? There were also disagreements about who went to the training sessions. This is a power issue being played out here. The teachers degrade the women by saying that the men went because the women have to stay at home for the children and household matters. The women said the opposite that they were the majority in the sessions because *'men have no commitments, men think women are stupid so they need more training than them'*. The men agreed that the women were the majority but because of legitimate reasons, the men being away from home.

People are stretched because of their poverty situation. This must be recognised when pursuing a project on the basis of participation. Along with the people giving up their daily chores, especially the women, there were problems

with the construction because the resources, sand and water were not easy to come by and few people could find adequate time. There was also a drought/famine at the time of construction. This shows that the area already has an acute problem if these resources are hard to come by, but it shows that any increase in these resources in the area is a blessing. SASOL does not give concessions and are hard lined when it comes to the suffering of the members. Even though there was a famine, *'if a person from SASOL found nothing cooking at the site, he threatened to take the mason away'*. This could be viewed as SASOL protecting its employee more than interfering with the process. This should have been communicated more to the people, for them to understand this. SASOL does show a moralistic side too, because when it saw that the community was struggling with the lack of efficient tools, they provided them. The mason possess these tools, so the community do not keep them, an important issue, because of past projects, the leaders of the community took the tools for themselves.

8.3.4. AFTER THE INTERVENTION

There is a sense of a continuation of change, because, from the money obtained from the new members and the fines, the community is already planning the next stage of the project, the shallow wells, to get cleaner water. The new members are contributing to the next part of the project, so they are becoming part of the process.

Interestingly within the community there are different ideas about who is in charge of the maintenance of the sand dams. The women believe it is their project so it is their responsibility and they will do this. This is a very different reaction from past projects that no one claimed responsibility for, *'because it's our sweat, we worked for it and contributed more than SASOL'*. The women also said it was their project because the men left them to do the work. The men

interviewed however again were politically correct when they said that it is the members that maintain the dam. The members are the households but, as the men commented, household's means women because the men are away working, so in fact though they do not say it, the women are responsible for the dam. The teachers say that it is the surrounding people of the dam but this begs the question what happens to the non-members. The SLDC said that it is the dam committees that are responsible. They said this because they too are a committee and it is to make them look credible, though they already admitted earlier that they do not discuss water even though it is their responsibility as the development committee. There is a lack of communication over who will take responsibility for maintenance. The women are the only ones that claim this. Therefore as said before, they are the majority that construct the dam and even though it is household ownership, the women will feel more ties to the dam and look after it more carefully than others in the community. What will happen when the men come home and use the sand dam, but do not feel the same attachment to it? They could pollute the source without knowledge or regard because it is just there. Women must be made aware of this problem and be able to approach the men and teach them the information they learnt while SASOL was there, without causing undue tensions between the genders. Though the community brought up the maintenance of the sand dams SASOL did say that the sand dam technology is low and there is little maintenance involved. The community seem to not be aware of this, as they are worrying about who will maintain the dam. This is worrying that no one is aware of this issue.

The provincial administration is supposed to intervene if, after construction there are conflicts. What happens if conflict resolution needs to go higher up, and authorities are corrupt or simply do not care for the process? Though SASOL said that they leave the community after construction finishes and leave the community to deal with issues themselves, rumour has it that they do return to communities that are having difficulties they cannot sort out.

Old social rules have been replaced⁴⁵ by more formal rules. This can be seen in the idea that they have set up a legal framework upheld by the administration that guard the sand dams. The people seem to respect these laws. This is because in the past, the people had formulated and maintained detailed and effective regulations and rules of behaviour about the use of common resources and public services, through the Kathambi cult, *‘there is a law that gets hold of them’*. The sand dam committees have learnt to organise and lead and in the future will be an important asset to the community. They are now a legally recognised organisation, rather than a moral and cultural organisation that is hidden from outsiders. SASOL wants to encourage the growth of catchment development committees, so that management of the common goods can be done at that level rather than an administrative level with the SLDC, that doesn’t even discuss water issues, the one major priority for the people of Tungutu.

New technical and social relations, involves the changing of institutions and they need to be sustainable. From the data it can be seen that these types of relations have changed or are changing and this is due to the training. Though it can not be seen from the focus group discussions whether relations have changed, the community does know what needs to be changed and does give examples.

One major change with this sand dam process is the potential loss of sources of power. SASOL tries to change the community’s power structure shifting power to the community and some feel threatened by this erosion of their power base. This is why the teachers feel vulnerable and why they are so negative towards the SASOL process. They are rude about the people that participate in the project, *‘it’s the village women that participate’*. They do not have much knowledge of the dams or are just denote them, when they say *‘they don’t work anyway all they collect is sand and rubbish’*. The teachers are

⁴⁵ There may not be the ‘replacing’ of the social rules, but because this institution is secret it will be hard to find out if it is being replaced.

obviously trying to undermine the process with rumour spreading and telling the researchers things that are probably not true or exaggerated. They are afraid that their position of authority is being undermined. Maybe they feel they are outsiders from the community and are bitter about this. The need is to identify these people early and convince them of the usefulness to the community.

The women, who used to rely on meeting at collection points for water but also on neighbourhood networking and interaction, now send their children, mainly girls, to fetch the water. This can also be seen as a loss of power, a chance for the women to meet outside of the homestead, to discuss issues. This must be understood when designing a project; other ways to network must be introduced. SASOL does this by training to help start other organisations. The construction process also brings people (especially women) together and they can see that they can organise themselves and can start other organisations from there.

The men have no similar informal institution among themselves as they do not go and fetch water for the household. When they talk about the sand dams giving them more access it has to do with income generating ideas, such as brick making. The men still have a preconceived idea of what their roles are and this has not really changed. Instead they focus on the idea that the process has changed the women much more. It has reduced the barriers experienced by women, *'it shows that women can do the same hard jobs as men, they have no excuse now'*. The assistant chief backed this up by saying that *'women are changing a lot and improving'*. The women even asserted that this is the one attitude change they have seen in the men. This can be seen, when they explained their roles in the construction phase, the men said that they did the stonework and dug trenches but the women sometimes volunteered to do this. However, the men never volunteered to do the women's jobs such as fetching the water. In fact, they laughed at this idea but said they gave their donkeys to help. This does not show that the men have changed their behaviours or are willing to show to outsiders that they have. The only example of changed gender roles that

was given by the men was that now the men sweep the compound. Gender roles and responsibilities are being questioned. Could this realisation from the men that women can do their jobs as well bring negative feelings, especially since the women are saying that they can mix cement and so will go and apply for construction jobs in the town? Though gender issues may still bar them from doing this, this is a threat to the men's employment sector. The women are even saying that in future they could build sand dams themselves and want SASOL to train women masons to understand the technical side, another threat to men's employment opportunities.

8.3.5. SUMMARY

With this empowerment of the local people, comes the challenging of local power structures. It implies the loss of central control and the proliferation of local diversity. There is power in everyday experiences and those that exercise power over others have problems when their status is threatened. This process of empowerment changes the structure of exclusion and inclusion of access and distribution of resources. The people that participate in this project receive '*power to*'; this increases the capacities of individuals to make decisions that affect their lives. This is from the start when the people consult or not, others that may have power over them. Individually the people participate in community work and are trained. This gives each confidence and changing attitude and behaviour that ultimately can alter the power differentials over their relationships. This is coupled with '*power over*'; increasing the power of people in the project, by introducing by-laws that restrict use by non-participants. This decrease the power of traditionally dominant stakeholders because they can not use the facility, and do not have control over it either. Not all parties are interested in this 'deepening of democracy'.

8.4. GOVERNANCE

Governance is in play here at different levels. Governance is still concerned with creating conditions of ordered rule and collective action but the processes are different to government. This can be seen in the way each set of stakeholders have created their own set of rules and regulations that govern the way they perform and interact with other stakeholders. Though boundaries have blurred between public and private sectors, there are still rules on how to interact with each other and pursue similar goals. Decision-making and implementation are important when different interests are at play.

Taking Stoker's (1998) five proposals for governance, three are very relevant to the process of SASOL. *'Governance refers to a set of institutions and actors that are drawn from but also beyond government to challenge understandings of systems in government'*. The government is supposed to deliver the basic service of water to their people. However, due to international pressure and their own incompetence, the Kenyan government does not adequately deliver these services. Therefore to provide these services, increasingly people have been doing it themselves. It has become the role of private individuals/enterprises that sell the water, a supposed public good. These entrepreneurs, probably the ones that do not participate in the SASOL process and therefore are bitter about it, aim to make a profit. They do not care about the long-term sustainability of natural resources. There is a lack of control of these entrepreneurs. This is why another way needs to be found.

There is an increased involvement of the voluntary sectors in service delivery. SASOL is trying to encourage the community to deliver the services, such as to provide water, for themselves especially to those who cannot afford to buy water. There is legitimacy in this process because at all stages there are laws and rules that govern the process. Ownership of the project by the community

means that it is a legitimate process. SASOL provides an arena for the community to develop itself into a governing body that can take initiatives and organise with rules and regulations themselves. At the same time, SASOL is educating and involving the local government from the provincial administration to the line ministries at the District headquarters to understand the process going on in the communities. This helps their legitimacy but also hopefully; improve their own performance towards this common good. SASOL is strengthening the legitimacy of the administration. The interaction between the administration and the community opens up channels of communication and awareness for future initiatives. Leading to community-government partnerships, which will be a sustainable way of managing the common good rather than privatisation.

‘Governance identifies the blurring of boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues.’ The process shows the people how to use their resources and become self-sufficient, not having to rely on external agencies or the government. There is a shift in responsibilities to the ‘social economy’ where new institutions have been set up to deal with new areas of social and economic issues generated by the establishment of the sand dams. Such as organisations, CBOs and co-operatives to carry on development. New roles are created to deal with these social and economic issues. There are new roles for men, women and children so that they interact at a household level rather than a gender/age level. New roles for government and NGOs, now that there is water, other initiatives beyond provision of this basic need, can be pursued for further development. There are also new roles for the government for conflict resolutions and upholding the community rules rather than the government rules. Civil society is growing because the people are being decision-makers. They are interacting with the state and creating new roles that can develop into partnerships.

'Governance identifies the power dependence involved in the relationships between institutions involved in collective action. Governance is an interactive process that involves various forms of partnership'. There are partnerships at different levels within this project. There is partnership between the provincial administration and the community. This builds up trust and accountability between them. There is a partnership between the government at the different levels and SASOL, opening up an entry point for future NGOs to utilise. SASOL encourages partnerships between the different NGOs working in the area but also internationally by sharing its findings with International NGOs. This shows that it is an open organisation. Partnerships occur at the household level, utilising everyone's capability. Partnerships from this process are also being forged between the genders showing them how they can benefit from one another. With the increase in organisations within the community, hopefully organisations will form partnerships with each other, sharing information and capital. The sand dam committee is democratic, *'even if we feel defeated, its democratic', 'its representative of peoples opinions'*. Hopefully in the future sand dam committees will form partnerships in the area and develop into catchment development committees. Building up of civil society from the local level is possible because from the process and the partnerships formed, a level of democracy has been experienced. Now the local level knows what it is, hopefully demanding it higher up.

Stoker's (1998) last two proposals (governance as autonomous network of actors and governance uses new tools and techniques to steer and guide) may eventually happen in this process. These partnerships have not been running for a long enough period of time to see the formation of self-governing networks. However if catchment development committees are established this will encompass this proposal. However, all networks are exclusive and it is those that are excluded from this process that have not got a say in this research. The last proposal has been started from the SASOL process and hopefully in the future

this will happen, that the local government gives leadership, and helps build and encourage these partnerships.

Governance is about the participants in this process and the relationships between them. The trouble with governance is that not everyone has access, what about those that are left out of the participation process of SASOL. These non-users are not SASOL's affair. Ultimately SASOL is only involved in the first phase, therefore the eventual impact may be different than they expected because they cannot control the process. There may be a sub-group within the community who uses the sand dams and those that do not. This process in fact could increase the differences in a community to access, wealth and power. There needs to be real democracy to prevent the elite from taking the best land along the side of the rivers, and displacing the poor. This process towards local governance is good and bad. It is good because it is affective in creating institutions and awareness for the community. They have been provided with a basic need and partnerships have been developed. But it is also bad because there are exclusions. Governance means that there is a lack of planning for the whole community; they are unaware of certain peoples needs because they are not included. There is a lack of co-ordination between policies across the sections. Therefore SASOL needs to become more of a forum so that all the community is included.

9. CONCLUSION

*For I will provide water in the wilderness and rivers in the barren desert.
(The Bible: Isaiah 43:20)*

This research was to discover if SASOL's activities ultimately fits into the Post-development discourse. It looked at the different stakeholders involved in the implementation of SASOL's project, to explore views on the process and what changes they had seen and experienced. Post-development is about the awareness of institutions and politics being at the heart of development. These concepts illuminate issues of power and access, which is at the base of achieving sustainable livelihoods.

To achieve a successful project especially linked to natural resource management it must start by analysing the vulnerability context of the surrounding society as well as the natural one. The poor are risk prone and unless these risks are understood, and where possible mitigated, the project is in jeopardy of being undermined, or worse still, making the people more vulnerable.

Sand dam technology provides a direct basic need (water) but also indirect ones as well. This reduces people's immediate vulnerability to basic needs provision. However, SASOL provides opportunities beyond the basic need; the water is seen as production water, to increase individual and households entitlements so that their long-term vulnerability is also reduced. Following the entitlement mapping process, it can be seen that even though the objective of SASOL is to provide everyone with production water, not everyone will benefit from it. This is because of the numerous institutions that guide individuals on their access to this production water. In the end only a few will fully benefit from the production water.

SASOL is aware of this lack of access through institutions and so training is provided to try and influence power structure change, which will lead to institutional transformation. The participants have noticed changes. The training could be even more utilised if the ones trained are made more accountable for their knowledge and the community is encouraged to pursue this knowledge. Then more people would be reached. Ultimately local governance can be pursued through the legitimate and accountable local government that SASOL has helped to shape, incorporating it into their process, and through the communities that have organised and formed rules to build up civil society. In the future, the encouragement of catchment-based development committees for natural resources seems accessible now that large numbers of the communities in Kitui District have been exposed to this process.

Other NGOs and donors in the area are covering similar activities. There is a huge risk that the community will be taught things they already know, or taught different ways, making them confused and annoyed with external agencies. There needs to be collaboration with other NGOs to co-ordinate their programmes. SASOL is also open to new ideas showing that they are learning NGO and in fact empowering themselves.

SASOL does not just strive for an increase in material welfare. It follows the process of participation to try and achieve a utopian effect-empowerment of the people. In some aspects SASOL does follow the post-development discourse. For example, when the community does not want sand dams, it advises the community where to go to get what they want and leaves. Though they have found that through the spread, by word, of the success of the technology, the community say they want sand dams. To a large extent SASOL has succeeded in this objective, the people are happy with the process of the project, even suggesting future projects should follow the same pattern. This is a huge step towards alleviating non-material poverty, people's feelings of dependency and shame.

There is also a need for all the community to be involved if natural resources are to be managed sustainably. In the SASOL process there are people that do not participate for various reasons. There needs to be a study on why these people do not participate and how they can be incorporated into natural resource management. The people that did not participate in these projects were not necessarily the powerful. The 'poorest of the poor' probably are allowed access to the water, without being a 'member'. This may have increased feelings of humiliation on these people, as the community is providing for them, not an external agent. The sand dams have in fact left out the most marginalized and probably enhanced their feelings of dependency and shame.

A uniqueness of SASOL is the way it handles its donors. It is very strict with their ideas of what SASOL should be and its ideology, so if donors suggest alternatives they do not like, they leave the donors services. These donors have even been other NGOs; it shows SASOL is confident and strong that they do not mind other NGOs interfering with their process. DFID's relationship with SASOL is therefore time-bound, because DFID's policies and ideas are always changing and so sooner or later they will suggest an ideology change and SASOL will need to find a new donor.

SASOL is an optimistic example that there are projects that are working for the community, to an extent, fitting into the post-development discourse. The relationship between the communities of Kitui District and the NGO are not strained. This is an exception. It is because SASOL is an academic NGO. It insists that it is not going to broaden its scope. This success has not gone to their heads. They have developed as an NGO and have found a good formula and they are sticking to it. This is a matter of leadership. The leadership who started SASOL do not risk income or status on SASOL so they do not strive for better things, even though the routes are plentiful now they have established themselves with good rapport in the community.

It is still a young organisation, and small by most standards. This could also be one of its successes; making the organisation larger may mean it loses its simple straightforward structure. For now this organisation needs to flourish as it is not only a forum for research for encouraging this obviously successful technology but also a research medium on communities that are finding these projects a success and how they are utilising and developing themselves.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY (with Kikamba translations)

1. Have you experienced any external interventions?
Nimwethiwe na utethyo kuma nthae ?
2. What was this intervention?
Utethyo usu ni mwau ?
3. When was this project implemented?
Muradi uu wambiiye indii?
4. Where was this project implemented?
Weekiwe va ?
5. Who implemented it? (Community, donors, political leaders, religious leaders)
Nuu ula wa wikie? (Inywi, andu ma siasa, Ikanisa,)
6. How was the project implemented?
Muladi uu weekiwe ata?
7. How was the project communicated to you? (donor→committee→members)
Mwamanyie uvoo wa muladi uu ata?
8. How did people become members of this intervention?
Andu matwikie a memba ma mulandi uu ata?
9. Who were the majority of these members?
Niaau mai amemba maingi?
10. Are there some people who did not become members? Why?
Ve andu mataatwika amemba?
11. What was the outcome of the project implementation?
Muumo /utetheku wa muradi uu ni mwau?
12. What problems were encountered on implementation of the project?
Ni mathina mau moonekie muradi uu ukwisa kwithiwa?
13. What were the expected results?

- Nikyau kyendekaa?di*
14. What were the unexpected results? (quality, quantity, gender balance, culture acceptable)?
Nikyau kyaumilile kitendekaa?(Ki utheu wa kiw'u, wingi, Kwitikilwa kana kuvulana kwa aume na aka?
15. How do the community members feel about the outcomes? (+/-)
Andu ma ndua mew'aa ata iulu wa muradi uu?
16. How has the water projects changed the environment?
Muradi uu wa kiw'u walyulite mazingira ata?
17. Are there any new trees, plants or animals after the project? Which?
18. And are there any trees, plants or animals after the project disappeared? Which?
19. Was the community able to contribute towards construction costs?
Andu maumisye kyua iulu wa muradi uu?
20. Do you feel that your contribution benefits you? Why? How?
Nimwiiwaa kila mwaumisye ta kyamutetheisye? Ata? Niki?
21. Were there any unexpected contributions?
Ve syindu mwaumisye mutendaa?
22. In what ways were you able to maintain this project?
Ni nzia syiva syamutonyethise kuendeesya muradi uu?
23. Who is concerned with maintenance of the water project? (men/women)
Nuu ula usuviaa vala mumasya kiw'u?
24. Has there been any damage to this project?
Muradi uu ni wathukie?
25. Who repairs the water project?
Nuu ula uuseuvasya?
26. B) Why are some not repaired?
Niki miradi imwe itenzeuyye?
27. Are there trained masons available or contacts known that are accessible and affordable?
28. Have there been any conflicts over this project? (pre / during implantation / post)
Nivethiiwe maemano yiulu wa muradi uu?

29. How did you feel about the project work was organized?
Weewie at yulu wa undu wia uu wavangitwe?
30. How did you feel about the activities people in the village were asked to undertake?
Mweewie ata yilu wa maundu ala andu ma ndua makulilwe meke?
31. Do you think the water supply system has changed the life of the people in this community? In what ways?
Nimwonaa kana kiw'u kii ni kyalyulile undu and mekalaa? Ata?
32. Do you get anything else from the development partners apart from the project?
Ve kindu kingi mukwataa kuma kwa andu ma maendeeo teka muradi uu?
33. What suggestions do you have for future external projects / organizations?
Nikyau mutonya kuweta iulu wa miradi kuma nza nikana mutonye kutetheka?
34. Before SASOL started working with you were you holding meetings to discuss water management?
SASOL itanoka nimweethiawa na mbumbano sya kuneenea uungamii wa kiwu?
35. If you did so who was and who was not involved in this meetings and why?
Enthiwa nimwombanaa nauu ala methiawa na nauu matethiawa mbumbanoni isu?
36. What institutions were there in the community?
Ni ikundi myau mwainasyo kisioni?
37. Have they changed in role/ status since SASOL came?
Ikundi ii nisyavindukie kuma sasol yooka?
38. Did SASOL change the way you managed the water before?How?
SASOL niyavinduie miungamiile yenyu ya kiwu? Ata?
39. What training did you receive from SASOL regarding management of the dam(s)?
Ni uvundisya mwau mwakwatie kuma SASOL yiulu wa ungamii wa kiw'u?
40. Have you implemented this training?
Ni mwatumiie mauvundisyo aa?
41. How were participants for the training recruited?
Andu ala mavundiaw'a manyuvawa ata?
42. Among men and women who were the majority in the traineeship? Why?

- Kati wa aume na aka naau ala mai aingi nthini wa uvundisyo uu? Niki?*
43. When did SASOL hold its training times?
Ni ivinda yiva yila SASOL yaendeesya mauvundisya aa?
44. Did the time and duration interfere with your work schedule and how?
Mavinda aa ma mauvundisyo ni mavinduie mivango yenyu ya wia na ata?
45. Before the training who controlled family labour, money and who decided what to plant in the farm? What is the current situation in regard to the same?
Mbee wa mauvundisya aa nuu ula walungaa uthukumi wa musyi, mbesa na kila ki uvandwa? Nayu kwithiawa kuilye ata yiulu wa maundu aa?
46. While working on the project how was the work divided amongst the participants?
Muithukuma kati ka mirandi ii mwaanaa mawia ata?
47. Whom did you consult before participating in this project?
Nuu ula wamunengie myanya ni kenda muthukume milandini ii?
48. What was the role of the Provincial Administration in the implementation of the project?
Wai wia mwau wa selikali katika milandi ii?
49. Has the process affected the role of men and women? How?
Uvundisya na uthukumi katika milandi ii ni wavinduie mawia ma aume na aka? na ata?
50. Do you think that some things have changed either for worse or for better? If so which ones?
Ni maundu mau maseuvie na nimeva maanangikie?
51. Has there been a change in the water management system?
Miungamiile ya kiwu niyavindukie? Ata?
52. If there is any change are you happy with this change?
Ualyuku uu numwendeeasya?
53. Are you satisfied with the approach adopted by SASOL towards the community members while implementing the project?
Nimwendeeiwe ni undu SASOL yamulikilye muradini uu?

54. Has there been any other water developments since SASOL started working with you?
Ve muradi ungi wa kiwu waaithiwa kuma SASOL yambiia kuthukumana neenyu?
55. What times do you meet to talk about water management?
Mukomanaa indii muneene iulu wa muradi uu wenyu?
56. Who chooses the time and venue for such meetings?
Nuu ula uvangaa masaa na vala muukomania?
57. Who informs people about these meetings?
Ula utangasiaa andu yiulu wa kukomana kuu nuu?
58. How is the information passed?
Amatangasiaa kwa nzia yiva?
59. Who formulates the agenda for the meetings? How? Why?
Ula uvangaa kila mumanyisya nuu? Avangaa ata? Na niki?
60. Who chairs these meetings? Why?
Ula uungamiaa kikalo kiu nuuu? Na niki?
61. Who is the majority of these meetings? Why?
Ala methiawa me aingi naau?(ngya, athwii, aume, aka, syana, andu aima)
62. How do people become members?
Andu matwikaa amemba ma muradi wenyu ata?
63. Are there people who do not become members? Why?
Kwi andu matatwikaa amemba? Niki?
64. Who are involved in the deliberations?
Ala meethiawa nzamani ya muradi uu naau?
65. What language do you use to conduct meetings?
Ni kityomo kiva kitumiawa mbumbanoni kana nzamani sya muradi wenyu?
66. How are decisions arrived at in the meetings?
Mautwio maumawa ata nzamani kana mbumbanoni ii?
67. What are your feelings on these methods of decision-making?
Nzia ino ya kumya mautwio mwiwaa yiieye ata?
68. Do community members contribute money for projects? How much?
Andu ma kisio kii ni maumasya mbesa muradini yenyu?Syiana ata?

69. How is the money collected? (monthly/ weekly) Who collects it?
Mbesa ii syumbanawa ata? Nuu?
70. What are your feelings about the collection and use of the money?
Umbanya uu wa mbesa na utumiku wasyo mwiwaa uilye ata?
71. What happens to those who don't contribute?
Ala mataumasya mbesa mekanawa namo ata?
72. Where is the money kept?
Imbesa siiawa va?
73. Why do you think some people contribute and others do not?
Mwiisilya andu amwe maumasya mbesa na angi mailea kumya niki?
74. For how long do officials stay in office?
Anzama makwatiia ivila kwa ivinda yiena?
75. How are they replaced?
Anzama aa makuanawa ata?
76. How are the power arrangements among the officials?
Utonyi wa anzama withiawa uvangitwe ata?(ula munene nuu)
77. Are you comfortable with this power arrangement?
Mwithiawa mwi eanie ni muvango uu wa utonyi?
78. How is the relationship between the officials and the community members?
Atongoi na mamemba methiawa malikanite ata?
79. Who does what during the actual and work in a project?
80. How are disagreements in meetings resolved?
Kulea kueleanwa maumbanoni ma mulandi kuminawa/kutatuawa ata?
81. Who ensures that the water sources are protected? (traditional/ law/ individual)
Nuu ula usungaa/usuviaa vala mutuvaa kiwu?
82. What happens to those who pollute the water? Who takes action?
Ala mekuthokoania vala mutavaa kiwu mekanawa namo ata? Nuu ula umoseaa itambya?
83. How do you ensure that everyone behaves according to the agreements?
Mwekaa ata nikana andu maatiie mwamulo/mituo ila mwatwa?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS FOR SASOL STAFF

The community:

Community Itself:

1. What changes has SASOL seen in the community?
2. What challenges has SASOL faced while working with the communities?
3. Has the community's responses to your approach made you change it? If so in what ways?
4. What is SASOL's idea/definition of a community?
5. Has SASOL found communities that do not fit into its definition of 'a community'? If so are there problems which have resulted from it?
6. What would be the ideal situation in defining a community that works on a project?
7. Have there been communities that have resisted the idea of sand dams?

Power structures:

8. How does SASOL come into the community without compromising the operations of the existing institutions?
9. Are there any changes, which SASOL has witnessed in relation to community power structures?
10. Do you find communities that are difficult to relate to, owing to the success or failure of past interventions past? If so what were these interventions? And what had been the approach of that project?
11. Have there been cases of privatisation of either the wells or the sand dams? Who deals with such cases and how? Do you think this is affective?
12. Do you see a visible change in the power relations in a household on income, labour and expenditure after resulting from the process of implementing the project?

13. Do you at times come across communities with water management systems and projects? How do you cope with these systems?
14. Have there been negative responses in relation to the above?
15. If you come across established community water management structures do these systems and structures influence your approach while implementing sand dams?
16. According to your experience why do you think some individuals are unwilling to participate in the projects?

After SASOL:

17. Do you find that the community has developed themselves further after you left?
In what ways?

Training:

18. In some cases there are more men involved in training than women. Why is it so?
Was this intentional?
19. Do you think it would help the community more if you increased the number of people to be trained?
20. Have you thought about the idea of training them to open up markets for the products resulting as a result of establishment the sand dams?
21. When training, do you prefer to work with new leaders or leaders existing in the community structures?
22. Do you think if you trained dam committee members in new initiatives like new markets, environmental protection it can work?

Committees:

23. Do you find that the water committees are corrupt? Or leave other members of the community out?
24. Do you think that it is your responsibility to sort these problems out or leave it up to the community?
25. What if these activities are having a negative impact on the dam? Do you view this as a weakness (failure) of SASOL or the community?

26. According Muticon (2002) socio-economic report, water committees rarely meet after the construction of the dam; do you find this a negative response to the project?

Approach:

27. Why do you put the provision of water first and then train later on quality?
28. What do you think about the idea of sharing your findings with other NGOs and working together in this area?
29. How have you dealt with the gender perspective that is the rhetoric of the moment?
30. SASOL builds on experience rather than theoretical knowledge; in the beginning did the projects have negative results? What were these? What major changes did you do to build on these results?
31. According to your policy you deal with the community and not individuals? Why is this so?
32. Are there disagreements among the members of SASOL on what community participation means and on the definition of a community?
33. What disagreements and how they dealt with?

Donors/ funding:

34. What challenges have been faced while working with donors?
35. In the beginning, how did you manage to raise money for initiating the first project?
36. Do you evaluate the projects after their completion?
37. How far do your donors translate their policies into practical policies according what you find while working with communities?
38. Do this restrict your capacity and development of ideas?
39. How far are you accountable to your donors?
40. Do you think there are weaknesses with this accountability?

Government:

41. What have been the challenges when dealing with the provincial administration?
42. Have officials changed their views on approach to development over time?
43. Do they try and turn the project political?
44. Do you think using the administration boundary of a village to identify a community is the best way?
45. Have you found that working at the grassroots of the government has led to disagreements with officials higher up the chain?

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONS FOR THE ASSISTANT CHIEF

General water projects

1. What water projects have you worked with during your tenure as the assistant chief of this sub-location?
2. Has there been a difference in approach among these organisations?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses in these approaches? Which was the best way for the community?
4. What was your role in these projects?
5. Do you feel that they asked too much of you? Why?
6. Do you have to report to your superiors that an organisation is working in your area?
7. Do your superiors appreciate the work of these organisations?
8. What was the role of the Provincial Administration in the implementation of the project?
9. Have provincial administration officials changed their views on approach to development over time? In what ways?
10. Do they show any vested political interests?
11. Do you think using the administrative boundaries of a village in identification of a community is the best?
12. Have you found that working at the grassroots level of the government has led to disagreements with officials higher up the chain? How?
13. In what ways has SASOL changed the community?
14. What challenges were there when SASOL was working with the communities?

Power structures:

15. What institutions existed in the community before SASOL came?
16. Have they changed in role/ status since SASOL came?

17. What is the impact of community participation in projects on power relations within the community?
18. Do people consult each other before participating in the project?
19. What would you do in case an individual privatised a community's sand dam?
20. Have you witnessed a change in the power relations at the household level on income, labour and expenditure resulting from the process of implementing the project? What changes?
21. According to your experience why do you think some individuals are unwilling to participate in community projects?
22. What difficulties do you face while mobilising the community to participate in community interventions?

Post-SASOL:

23. Do you think the community will be able to develop itself further once SASOL pulls out of the area?

Training:

24. What training did you receive from SASOL regarding management of the dam(s)?
25. How is the training organised?
26. How were participants for the training recruited?
27. In some cases there are more men involved in training than women. Why is it so?
28. Do you think it would be more beneficial to the community if SASOL trained more people?
29. Do communities' implement this training? Are there cases where they do not? Why is this?

Committees:

30. How effective are the water committees?
31. Do you think that it is your responsibility to sort these problems out or leave it up to the community? Why?

32. What if these problems are having a negative impact on the project? Do you view this as a weakness (failure) of SASOL or the community?
33. According to muticon, (2002) socio-economic report, water committees rarely meet after the construction of the dam; do you find this a negative response to the project?
34. What are your feelings on the concept of the participatory approach being put into practice by SASOL?