

**A REPORT FOR THE MATHARE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY ON THE 30TH OF NOVEMBER 2023
AT THE MATHARE PEOPLE'S PARK.**



INTRODUCTION.

The Mathare Local People's assembly was convened at the Mathare People's Park bringing together community members and actors from across the board to identify various societal issues the members are confronting historically and from time to time. The Mathare People's park is a transformed green space in Mathare that was initially a garbage site and which now hosts the Ukombozi library, a children playing space and a community park that offers the community with food, and a serene environment. It has also transformed young people from drugs use and crime and offered a sustainable form of economic solutions through the different economic activities like animal rearing and other methods of farming.

The assembly was majorly influenced by the urgency to explore an inclusive alternative model that involves the community and further create a collective pool addressing these challenges. For a while, various societies have seemed to confront these challenges at an organizational or an individual level. The objective of the local assembly was to transform the culture of personal alienated approaches which have proven to be ineffective.



The assembly was also purposed to bring the society together and create a form of grassroots democracy and power to the people. An avenue to change the dominant perspective that only few people have solutions to the problems ailing their community. Mathare happens to be one of the largest informal settlements in Nairobi suffering a myriad of social problems including widespread poverty, lack of basic commodities, crime and chronic unemployment which were further broken down to other related challenges.

METHODOLOGY.

The assembly brought 100 participants drawn from the six wards in Mathare including Kiamaiko, Mlango Kubwa, Mabatini, Kiamaiko, Ngei and 3C. The participants included children, local community groups: ecological justice organizations, students, and elder members of the community. Among the grassroots organizations present were the Mathare Social Justice Centre, Ghetto Farmers, Green Park, and Mathare Community Park. Other participants who joined the discussions emanated from the different social movements in Nairobi including the Social Justice Movement Working Group and ecological justice movement across the breadth.

After the introduction of the local assembly's concept, the participants engaged in a general analysis of the Mathare society, the historical injustices, and the current political and social conditions. Thereafter, the members joined the various thematic groups influenced and adopted by the assembly. These included:

1. The Ecological and Political Committee.
2. The Drugs and Crime Committee.
3. Waste Management Committee.
4. Water & Sanitation Committee.

The thematic groups appointed a moderator, secretary and collectively examined the situation and generated a list of possible solutions to explore.



RESULTS AND OUTCOME.

Water and Sanitation

Challenges highlighted.

- Rationing of Water in areas like Mlango Kubwa.
- Diversion of water in areas like Mlango Kubwa where water is diverted to Eastleigh.
- Water-borne diseases. Poor healthcare infrastructure
- Effluent and affluent discharges: River Pollution. Mathare Hospital for example was seen to emit its waste directly into the river. Most of Eastleigh waste is poured directly into the river
- Corruption and water cartels.
- Leaking sewers.
- Poor waste disposal methods.
- Poor housing. People are constructing homes on the river.

Proposed way forward.

- Participate in public participation sessions e.g. Budget making processes.
- Develop petitions to conduct an inquiry on water institutions in Mathare.
- Policy development.
- Creating awareness through community dialogues.
- Mapping of polluters
- Consistent stakeholders meetings.



Waste Management.

Highlighted Challenges.

1. There was notable poor waste disposal.
2. Lack of awareness on waste management strategies
3. Lack of collaborations and coordination between stakeholders in waste management
4. Government lacked policies, incentives on waste management.

Proposed Solutions.

1. Creating waste management awareness programs.
2. Focus on existing networks to build and strengthen ecological networks.
3. Establish local waste management plans and strategies.
4. Include children in waste management projects

Drugs and Crime.

Challenges highlighted included:

- Poverty which leads to crime, drug
- Unemployment.
- Addiction.

Solutions and way forward.

- Organize campaigns and seminars against drugs and crime
- Involvement of different stakeholders in the campaign against drugs and crime.
- Establish local committees to fight against drugs and crime.
- Establish learning facilities for children like local libraries.
- Creating of co-curriculum activities- sports, swimming, and art.



Ecological and Political Committee.

Challenges highlighted included:

1. Existing ecological injustices and pollution.
2. State violence including:
 - Harassment.
 - Extra-judicial executions.
 - Land grabbing.
 - High level of unemployment leading to crime
3. Lack of political accountability.
4. Existing gaps in policy development.

Solutions and way forward.

1. Establish sustainable sources of economic sustainability for the youth.
2. Establish public assemblies as institutions to generate solutions for the local problems.
3. Policy development.
4. Intensify political education in the parks and in community centers.

RESOLUTIONS AND WAY FORWARD.

1. Establishing the Mathare ecological justice network involving various community parks which will in turn aid in:
 - Creating a sustainable base for young people through economic generating activities like farming and establishing seed nurseries.
 - Engage more children in the parks- Adopt a tree program.
 - Establish more green spaces to transform the Mathare ecological situation and act as community organizing spaces.
 - Provide more safe spaces like art centers, community libraries and community retreat centers.
 - Curb land grabbing, encroachment and pollution of the Mathare River.
#LetTheRiversFlowCampaign.
2. Harmonize a collective ecological justice campaign by establishing ecological justice networks in the various informal settlements.
3. Popularize local people's assemblies as avenues to generate solutions for the peoples' problems. Including:
 - Kayole.
 - Githurai.
 - Ngong.

4. Establish exchange sessions with the Indigenous People's assemblies and existing assemblies in Italy, Britain and Scotland.
5. Organize more workshops and seminars at the grassroots to discuss about the local people's assemblies.
6. Creating alternatives through electric bicycles with lanes along Nairobi River from Michuki Park to Ruai.
7. Create a secretariat to follow up on the resolutions and a guide for implementation.



'I HAVE CHERISHED THE IDEAL OF DEMOCRATIC AND FREE SOCIETY IN WHICH ALL PERSONS LIVE TOGETHER IN HARMONY AND WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES' (Nelson Mandela)

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<https://www.matharesocialjustice.org/>