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**Refugees' spaces of participation: The case of refugee's
community participation in Meheba refugee settlement
Solwezi, Zambia.**

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at understanding what constitutes participation of refugees in their communities of settlement. It attempts to get a clear picture of the spaces formed, their purposes and the meaning refugees attach to participation. The study was conducted in Meheba, Zambia. Being the largest, earliest camp and hosting a large number of refugees living in protracted situation, Meheba offered the best site for the study of lived realities tracked in a period of more than ten years to date.

The study was theoretically pinned to the discourse of alternative development, concepts such as knowledge, agency, social capital and power were also made operational in the interpretation of the empirical data. Following a qualitative research methodology, empirical data was collected from a total sample of 29 informants comprising of 19 primary informants (refugees) and 10 key informants on the topic. The data collected was through interviews, field notes, informal dialogues, focus group discussions as well as observations.

This study revealed that participation is practiced differently by institutions and humanitarian organizations, mostly it is in line with their mandates. The major challenge is that this mismatch of practices is never understood by refugees. Refugees anticipates practices that nurture their voices all the way from planning to implementation, however this is far impossible in some agencies as the many participatory spaces formed are mere consultation and informing platforms. This problem results in a loss of confidence and trust in spaces formed especially the *invited spaces* of institutions.

The study therefore concludes that for participation to be appreciated and trusted, organisations need to have one global working definition of participation adopted so that their practices are not deviant from each other. Humanitarian organisations need to operate from the grassroots level and the decisions enacted ought to be decentralised in a manner that they are driven by the victims at stake. Adopted working customs of state ministries ought to be revisited in a way that power is evenly distributed and not too much vested in one official. Refugees themselves also need to stand firm to community cohesion for positive sustainable outcomes.

DEDICATION

To the refugees who have endured the call of been invited to participate, whose voices doesn't count in decisions making. I hope someday your ideas and suggestions shall be nurtured.

To my father Mr. Brown Chisambwe Chinyama and my brother Mr. Mwila Chinyama, I have come this far thank you for your unwavering support to my academics. I will never forget you.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Alternative Development
BS	Breakthrough Sports
CBOs	Community Based Officers
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GRS	Grass Root Soccer
IGA	Income Generating Activities
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MCDMCH	Ministry of Community Development –Mother and Child Health
NEC	National Eligibility Committee
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NTNU	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
RA	Refuge Alliance
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
UNHCR	United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
VSU	Victim Support Units

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General overview-Africa

Massive new displacements caused by conflicts, natural disasters and human rights abuses continue to hit greater levels around the globe and this continue to affect many recipient countries in Africa. UNHCR (2015), projects that the numbers of people of concern in Africa will by 2015 decrease slightly (from 15.1 million in 2014 to 14.9 million), due to repatriation, resettlement and other durable solutions. However the continent continue to receive new arrivals from emerging political crisis like that witnessed in Burundi, continued conflicts in the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. Coupled with this the world over continue to put tight security measures on receiving refugees as part of the resettlement scheme in a third country due to some terrorists attacks happening across, hence this durable solution is slowly phasing out. Repatriation is thus far from attainable as most of these countries affected by conflicts continue recording massive atrocities, in some cases where peace has restored in these countries refugees are reluctant to go back. In her master's thesis conducted in Zambia(Meheba settlement) on Angolan refugees Mazunda (2008) revealed a lot of factors refugees were so unwilling to go back home, due to the lasting freedoms, social, political and economic rights attained in Zambia that they picture could be hard to obtain in Angola when they return. Thus quiet a greater number of refugees in Africa continue to live in protracted situation¹ and the most durable solution attainable in most countries is the local integration. All these consequences have significant implication for community participation in areas of settlement, if these 'new communities'² are to be sustainable and self-reliant.

¹ More than 25,000 refugees living in exile or camps for more than 5 years without a solution

² Am referring new communities to those refugees settlements that are in the process of been locally integrated
² Am referring new communities to those refugees settlements that are in the process of been locally integrated in the first countries of asylum where these refugees have lived in protracted situation, a good example been the ongoing local integration in the study area Meheba in Zambia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Participation in the contemporary world has become the latest often used concept in policy, implementation and decision making. With the failure of development focused on economic growth to trickle down effects, more and more institutions and states are now convinced that if development is to be distributed equally it has to be inclusive and bottom oriented that is the very people in those particular settings have to be actively involved in development, thus participation comes out as the main cornerstone in achieving this.

Vast research has been conducted on participation with the most acknowledged proponents of development from below such as those published by Robert Chambers and Andrea Cornwall. Refugees participation has been widely broadcasted and documented in many areas of planning and implementation, mostly research has drawn much attention on the practices, experiences and factors that hinder refugees from getting involved within the camps(Kreitzer, 2002; Lindgren & Lipson, 2004; Olivius, 2014); participation in newly examined development initiative(Kaiser, 2005; Tanaka, Kunii, Okumura, & Wakai, 2004) and humanitarian agencies participatory approaches with refugees(Rempel, 2009). However, it is not explicit on the meaning of participation to those who come to fill those participatory spaces.

It is evident so far in the new millennium that participation has deepened, it has been as Hickey and Mohan (2004) elaborates, characterized as *tyrannical* (that is living up to the promise of empowerment and transformative development for marginal people). However though tyrannical its practices are so uneven, most specifically institutions and primary stakeholders around the world are continuously devising new and innovative strategies of exercising agency. What comes so appealing on the fore is this confused jargon of its practices, as it maintains a lack of consistence thus many have lost confidence and trust in what it stipulates to achieve in practice. It has often in time and again been accused of retaining the imperial jacket of the colonial era. There is thus no clear understanding of what participation entails and what it can achieve.

Participation in practice has often times been used interchangeably with representation, although these are two different concepts, the fact that refugees are represented does not necessarily mean they have a voice in decision making. There is often times a *lack of clarity through specificity* what Cohen and Uphoff named and Cornwall (2008) accentuated much

upon. Humanitarian and state institutions have come to practice and take participation differently, as a results participatory practices on the ground are very deviant from the other. What remains to be explored is how to re-establish it as a legitimate and transformative approach to development, consequently this has to start with an agreed upon normative global definition of participation that should inform practice. By so doing, the meanings the marginal people attach to participation in different context have to be put into ultimate consideration. This thesis explores the dynamics of community participation by identifying the spaces of participation that are formed in the refugee community in Meheba, the local meanings attached it and the sole purpose of these spaces.

1.3 Objectives and Research questions

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to explore the dynamics of community participation of refugees in the newly established refugee community of Meheba. The study mainly aims at; identifying the spaces of participation that are formed, how these are formed, their purposes and the meanings refugees attach to it. In achieving this, this study shall follow the following specific objectives and subsequent research questions:

1.3.2 Specific objectives and Research questions

1. To explore the local understanding of participation
 - a. How do refugees define participation?
 - b. Are there any similarities or contrast between the local construction of participation and the global discourse of participation?
2. To identify refugees community participatory spaces
 - c. How are some of the refugees spaces of participation formed?
 - d. Do refugees exercise agency?
 - e. What are the intended and actual outcomes across these spaces of participation?

3. To explore the factors which enable or constrain them to participate in the community
 - f. What are the factors of exclusion and inclusion?
 - g. How are the dynamics of power across spaces of participation?
 - h. What indicates the local possibilities/ opportunities for change or enhanced participation of refugees within the camp?

1.4 Personal goals and commitment to the study

My first year autumn and spring semester in my master's degree program at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) exposed me to quite a greater number of interrelated interesting developmental courses that triggered my urge to study some themes in the development context. Most specifically the captivating writing of Rigg (2007) in his famous book; *An everyday geography of the global south* where he attempted to capture mostly the practical lived realities of the global south. Coming from the global south, been impacted by such knowledge answered some questions I had always searched for answers for a long while. This bridge between theory and practice influenced my thoughts and thus the study itself generally. GEOG 3516 course: Humanitarianism: theory and practice introduced me to another motivating writer Barnett and Weiss (2008), in their core book *Humanitarianism in question: Politics, power, ethics*. This is the book I would admit captured my attention I had enjoyed reading this book over and over like a romantic novel. After reading this book, I had developed imminent passion for humanitarianism, I wanted to be part of this group of reducing suffering, saving lives and helping out strangers. The only way closer to start achieving my personal desire was to come nearer and interact with those affected by wars and conflicts and examine how humanitarianism is practiced in protracted situations like the case of Meheba. More importantly, having been introduced to the provoking ideas of alternative development, particularly participation as one interesting theme, presented several dilemmas that were worth devoting my attention.

In a refugee settlement the role humanitarian assistance is always taken for granted and often viewed as an obligation that these actors have to cure the victims of war, with the vast number of wars been recorded worldwide it is nearly impossible for humanitarian actors to continue providing and assisting these victims for over several years some of even more than 10 years in instances of protracted situations. Therefore the shift in humanitarian policy has been how

to make refugees valuable in communities. Empowerment of these refugees thus demands an equal participation in their own communities if development is to be transformative as proposed by alternative development discourse. Therefore, this gave me confidence that I can contribute to knowledge through empirical research that can inform policy through the micro dynamics of participation in a refugees setting and the meanings refugees attach to it. I am thus motivated to tell the stories from the viewpoint of refugees themselves.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is sectioned into eight chapters. The first chapter provides the general overview of the study, it brings out the research problem, objectives and research questions. Chapter two provides the contextual frame for understanding the context of the study and a description of the study area. Chapter three discusses the theoretical and conceptual positioning of the study, with a major highlight focusing on the discourse of alternative development, concepts of participation, agency, social capital, power and knowledge. Chapter four gives an account of the methodological choices the study applied, it justifies the approach, as well as outline personal reflections and ethical considerations prevailing. Chapters five, six and seven focuses on the analysis from the empirical data obtained in the field, this is in order of specific objectives. Chapter eight presents the Summary of key findings, suggestions directed to refugees, Humanitarian institutions and the government. The chapter closes with concluding thoughts and future research.

2 THE CONTEXTUAL FRAME OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter draws a step closer to the study area context. I describe the prevailing conditions and situations of refugees in Zambia and the status they have come to fill. I further give a detailed description of the study area, geographical, economic and social aspects.

2.2 Refugees in Zambia

2.3 Overview

With a total population of about 13 million, Zambia has 51, 277 People of concern according to Government database as of 31 July 2015, 1,930 asylum-seekers were pending status determination applications, the majority of these originating from the Great Lakes region. By country of origin: Burundi 3, 114, Democratic Republic of Congo(DRC) 20,159, Somalia 2,695, Rwanda 6,187, Angola 18,741 and Others 381(Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015a). Most of these refugees live in urban areas of the capital city of Lusaka and the two refugee settlements of Meheba and Mayukwayukwa. The rest of the people of concern are scattered all over the country in the provinces. According to the Zambian legislation of refugees, all refugees are required to live in camps, these spontaneously self-settled refugees are in time and again rounded up and relocated to designated government settlement schemes. Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) is responsible for conducting refugee status determination. United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is part of the National Eligibility Committee (NEC) and provides technical advice and country of origin information. UNHCR also provides training for officials on the NEC. Ministry of Home Affairs (2015a), documents that in July 2015, 139 Burundians, consisting of 94 households were relocated from Lusaka to Meheba, A total of 607 Burundians have fled to Zambia since May 2015. Zambia has many people living in protracted exile, the unwillingness of Angolans to return to their countries and the continued violence in DRC and political atrocities in Burundi leaves the country with little feasible durable solutions for such cases.

2.4 Durable solutions

2.4.1 Voluntary repatriation

As of July 2015, GRZ recorded a decrease in the total number of refugees repatriated as compared to these other past recorded years. In 2015, since January 2015, a total of 105 Angolans have repatriated from Mayukwayukwa while from Meheba, the number stands at

74. In addition five Congolese returned home, 15 Ethiopians, and four Rwandans from Meheba. It is a much lower number when compared to 2014 when some 1,600 Angolans returned home with International Organization for Migration (IOM)/UNHCR support. Mazunda (2008), showed that most Angolan refugees by 2012 were not willing to be repatriated as they considered themselves integrated, hence they feared the social rapture that could resurface once they relocate back to Angola a place they left many years of more than 20 to 30 years ago. Voluntary repatriation thus in Zambia lived protracted situations especially among Angolan is something not feasible at the moment.

2.4.2 Resettlement

Zambia targets to resettle up to 800 persons in 2015 from the two refugee settlements and Lusaka and identification and processing of cases is still ongoing. As of 1 August, 2015 Zambia had referred 113 cases/353 persons to Hub for further processing, 101 cases/332 persons have been submitted from Hub to third countries of resettlement and 32 cases/88 persons have departed. The majority of the refugees that have been processed for resettlement in Zambia are mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). However, to reach the target for the year, UNHCR had also incorporated other nationalities, such as Rwandans and Burundese. With the current terrorist attacks witnessed in Paris brutal killings, and the recent Belgium airport attack refugees are in constant time and again viewed as a threat to national security of developed countries. This has spurred some tight entry measures at border posts and consequently resettlement is likely to be affected in these countries. Thus resettlement as one durable solution remains something on the cross junction in terms of its continued target plans.

2.4.3 Local integration

In June, 2015, the Zambian Government approved the Rwandan local integration. The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee has since drafted the local integration criteria, which are now awaiting the approval of the Minister of Home Affairs. Government pledged to integrate up to 4, 000 eligible Rwandans and 10,000 Angolans. In 2015, 5, 450 eligible Angolans had applied and screened for local integration, and some 456 residency permits had been issued. Furthermore, in the resettlement schemes, a total of 1,209 farm plots had been surveyed/demarcated, with 949 families having applied for land. Some 605 households had been allocated plots in the resettlement schemes, of which 370 had been issued with letters of

occupancy and 60 families have since moved to their plots (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015a).

This exemplary movement by the Government of Zambia is to remain committed to honoring a December 2011 pledge to locally integrate 10,000 former Angolan refugees. The UNHCR and GRZ local integration program for former Angolans and Rwandans is part of the Solution Alliance, globally supported by the Norwegian Government. GRZ's local integration program started in 2013/14. A total of about 12,800 Angolans and 2,900 Rwandans still live in the settlements of Meheba and Mayukwayukwa and have been offered to be part of the program. The local integration has started in Block H. A rebuilt primary school and a health center are to be handed over to GRZ before the year 2016 comes to an end. Building of the clinic is still ongoing, while the school and two teachers' houses are finished. Some settlements and roads are developed (Refugee Alliance, 2014). As already witnessed UNHCR reported challenges of convincing refugees to join the program, this simply shows the lack of trust among refugees in the agencies programs as it lacks to incorporate refugees themselves in its final decisions in planning. This is a very important attribute that might in the future of this well initiated program collapse its intended outcomes, thus immediate amendment's ought to be refocused to this.

The local integration program offers an opportunity for those integrated communities a chance to a durable solution, at least they could be free and live in absolute freedom just like Zambians. As newly emerging communities, issues of participation at this stage is even more crucial and this made the case of Meheba an ideal case for the study of refugee's community participation to inform policy in its ongoing implementation phase. In the UNHCR mandate on local integration, the agency stipulates its support to the Zambian government in providing basic services; obtaining donor support for infrastructure improvement; establishing income-generating activities for these integrated communities; and advocating these areas be included in national development plans (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015a). Digging a step deeper in the areas lived realities, by focusing much on dynamics of participation and meanings refugees attach to participation, refugees past experiences could be improved to enhance the success of this ongoing integration program if communities are to be self-reliant and sustainable in the long-run.

2.5 Community Empowerment and Self-reliance

Owing to their status refugees in Zambia are in hopeless situations, it is difficult for most to get enough food. They do not have the freedom of movement and therefore they cannot leave the camps and seek employment in town. Nor will they get a work permit, no rations inside the camps there are very few jobs. UNHCR, working with the Government, continues to promote self-reliance activities targeting refugees and former refugees in the two settlements. Key interventions include income generating activities such as fish farming, bee-keeping, farming and livestock, as well as training in business and entrepreneurship skills. In an effort to increase their purchasing potential, the direct monthly food distribution provided to vulnerable refugees was replaced with cash assistance. The core purpose of the cash assistance was to enable them meet their minimum needs and in the process accord them dignity and freedom of choice (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015a). In a much effort to build sustaining community structures the government has been keen in promoting community cohesion through mobilizing and supporting refugee to form cooperatives most notably agricultural cooperatives where refugees cooperate and take advantage of limited market opportunities in associations and not individually, this has been seen as helping limit market exploitations from small scale back door briefcase buyers flooding most refugee settlements.

2.6 Refugee Control Act 1970

Under this act, all refugees must live in an area designated by the Zambian government unless they receive special permission to remain outside. Section 16 of the Act allows an authorized officer to arrest a refugee without a warrant if they are ‘reasonably suspected’ of attempting to commit, or committing an offence against the Refugee Control Act. Section 15 of the Act provides that breaches of the Act shall be punished with a period not exceeding three months imprisonment, in practice these periods are far longer (Darwin, 2005).

2.6.1 Definition of Refugee Status

According to the Refugees (Control) (Declaration of Refugees) Order (No.2) of 1971, (which amends the Refugee Control Act) refugees are defined as (section 2): ‘*Persons who are, or prior to their entry in Zambia were, ordinarily resident outside Zambia and who have sought asylum in Zambia owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality membership of a particular social group or political opinion* are declared to be refugees for the purposes of the Refugees Control Act, 1970 (Darwin, 2005)’ The 1969



Figure 1: Map of Zambia showing its districts and neighboring countries

OAU Convention definition of a refugee has been incorporated into the national legislation, it defines a refugee as “ Any person compelled to leave his/her country owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality”(Darwin, 2005, p. 13).

2.7 Description of the study area-Meheba Refugee settlement

Zambia is a landlocked country situated in the sub-Saharan Africa. It has experienced a continuous flow of refugees from its neighboring countries; Angola to the west, DRC to the north, Malawi and Mozambique to the east, Tanzania to the north east, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia to the south. Figure 1 above shows Zambia’s location and its neighboring

countries. There are two refugee settlements; Meheba situated in the north west of Solwezi district and Mayukwayukwa refugee settlement in the western part of Mongu district. Figure 2 shows the location of Meheba and Mayukwayukwa respectively.

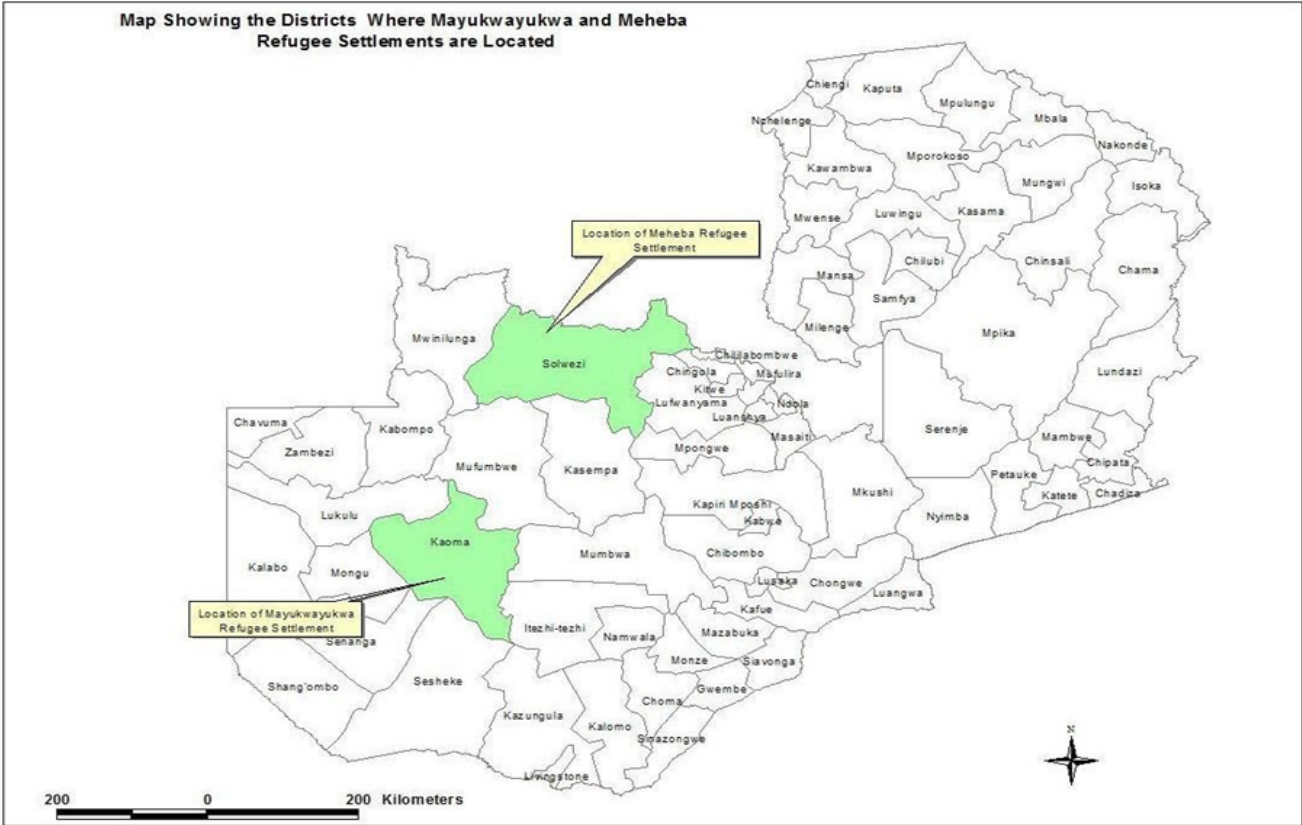


Figure 2: Map showing the Districts where Mayukwayukwa and Meheba refugee settlements

2.7.1 Why Meheba refugee settlement?

Of the two refugee settlement of Mayukwayukwa and Meheba, Meheba was selected based on account that, since from its establishment, it hosts quiet a greater number of refugees and that new refugees continue to flow in. It is also reportedly shown as the earliest and largest in land size. Fitting purposes to the study intended outcomes, Meheba offers unique characteristics that this study wished to explore. It is the targeted area for the GRZ/UNHCR local integration program areas scheme, to this it is included to be among ‘the –will- be’ newly integrated communities. Also it hosts a large number of refugees who have been living in protracted exile, to this community dynamics on participation could be easily accessed and based on that inform policy that might benefit its ongoing local integration implementation and planning. The settlement was established during the Angolan crisis in the 1970s, and is

roughly the size of Singapore (50 kilometers in diameter)(Refugee Alliance, 2014). About 18,000 refugees from eight African countries, mainly Angola, Congo, Burundi and Rwanda, live in villages in Blocks/ Zones A-H. Figure 3 below shows the map of Meheba Refugee Settlement (Block corresponding to the area identified for local settlement of former refugees) Population of

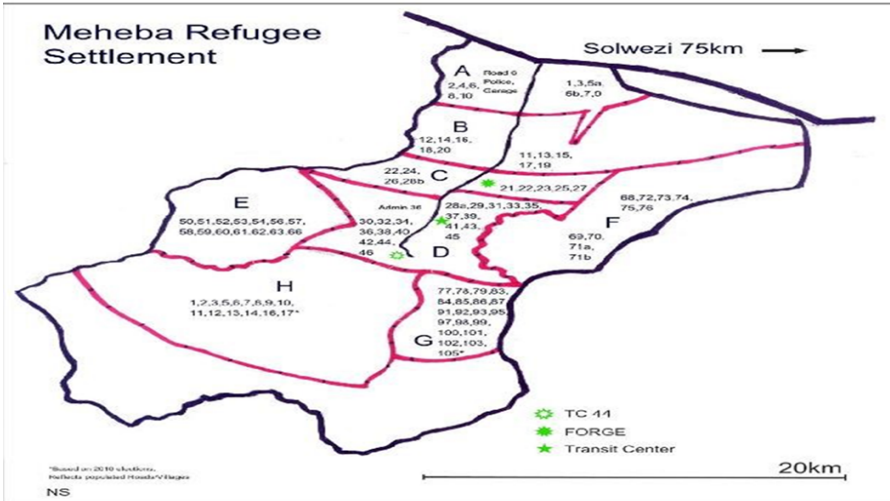


Figure 3: Map of Meheba showing the Zones/Blocks

Refugees and other persons of concern as of end December 2013 (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2015b).

2.7.2 Geographical background

Meheba is a rural agricultural set up, situated about 70km from the nearest town city of Solwezi district. The camp has existed since the Angolan crisis in the 1970s. It is 50 km in diameter, and lies in the deserted forest areas on the borders between Zambia, Congo and Angola. It was established by the Lutheran World Federation/ Christian Refugee Service in 1971 to host Angolan refugees who were previously living in Luatembo in Zambezi district. According to Ministry of Home Affairs (2015b), statistical data as at of end of 2014 showed

a total number of 17,806 refugees in Meheba respectively; former³ Angolan refugees(6,952), former Rwandan refugees (3,694), DRC(6,061), Burundi(695), Somali (275) and others (33).

The soils are acidic thus not fertile and much favorable to agriculture though zone H offers a different and unique situation all together. As already alluded in the preceding sections Meheba is sectioned into 8 village zones or blocks from A to H. Lived realities in each block/Zone/village centers are somewhat similar but different as these village centers are identified by country of origin, only Zone D which is the camp ‘capital’ comprises of different country. These demarcations are allocated through the ministry of lands in conjunction with ministry of social welfare, the aim is to draw same nationalities closer for easy adaptation to the area. Zone A is practically dominated by Angolans (Somalia & Angola), B (Angola), C (DRC), E (DRC & Angola), F (Rwanda & DRC), G (Rwanda) and H (Burundi). Though separate in locations, networks that link them do exists and this is what this chapter attempts to unravel about how the community mobilizes itself for mutual benefits.

Zone C and F are the most in-between areas and have a lot of neglected and deserted thatched houses as most have gone back or resettled but yet still with more than a thousand population, these empty spaces still look so deserted with low levels of productive ventures as compared to other zones. Farming is the most pursued venture in the settlement but unfortunately zone C and F offers a different story, the lands are dry and look like shrub. The camp consists of mud huts with thatched roofs often with UNHCR tents as reinforcement. Zambian authorities are the UNHCR’s implementing partner and they run primary schools and health centers in some of the blocks. But there is no doctor in the camp and the health centers are only operated during the day and staffed with a couple of nurses. Children are malnourished, there is no access to electricity, the local businesses that are running are merely poor in standards as the stocks are mostly that of low quality goods like bush berries, sugar canes, and locally brewed beer. Roads are poorly developed with no concrete base. Block C has a clinic with no doctor and one nurse with one volunteer woman assisting in delivery of health care. While those in Zone F have to trek to the nearest block for assistance some walk a long distance of 35km to reach, which is too far to walk when you are sick or mothers who are in maternity labor. *“Many have died on the road on their way to seek help, transports are hard to chance”* (Congolese woman). Though each zones have primary schools most children are never in school, they are often in times been sent on business errand during school times, children as

³ The Angolans' refugee status ceased in 2012, while that for the Rwandese ceased in 2014.

young as five to six years walk very long distances(covering approximately over 40 km) on foot from zone C and some from as far as F to sell forests made blooms to zone A which is a relatively well established official staffs of UNHCR and government officials residency. The access to latrines is minimal (the bush serves all purposes). In the houses we visited there were not much furniture, they have beds, but if it is enough to cover the family needs is another question. Standard of clothing is generally poor. There is a lot of malaria, infections, rape, hopelessness and war trauma among these refugees.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The development field has been shaped and preoccupied by different typologies of development thinking with varying epistemological and ontological standpoints. Different development theories and approaches have got prominence at different times to explain the episteme of the time. This study has been informed by theoretical perspectives from development studies and human geography, forming the basis creation of the analytical framework to this thesis. By defining refuges *spaces of participation*, I take up the alternative development theory as the general theoretical perspective underpinning this study. In today's contemporary development discourse, with the advance of post-structuralism, alternative development paradigm has predominantly influenced most development thinking. Current scholarship and research in development studies, including this one, position themselves in one or another aspect of alternative development (AD). I define major concepts emanating from AD and human geography such as participation, Agency, Power and Knowledge to form my analytical position of the study. These theoretical approach and conceptual standpoints are of particular interest to me especially that they speak from the ground experiences of minority groups in societies. This places refuges in such minority groupings.

3.2 Theoretical Positioning

3.2.1 Alternative Development Approach

In the 1970s development was structured along the structuralist approaches, such as the dependency theory and the global Keynesian reformism of the new international economic order that places much emphasis on macroeconomic change. It was believed that growth would trickle down to the masses, dissatisfied with its outcomes crystallized into an alternative, people-centered approach. Alternative development is not a one theory per se but a discourse containing several theories, concepts and approaches that brings back the 'human face' at the center of development. It comprises of a series of alternative proposals and methodologies that are loosely interconnected. It particularly focuses on local knowledge and expertise, marginalized people and their voices and decentralization of decision making. All these places participatory and people driven programs at the core of development (Pieterse, 1998).

According to Nerfin (1977) cited in Pieterse(1998) alternative development is the terrain of citizen, or 'Third System' politics, the importance of which is apparent in view of the failed

development efforts of government (the prince or first system) and economic power (the merchant or second system). Often the key point in alternative development is development from below. In this context 'below' refers both to 'community' and NGOs.

...“arguably this has been successful, in the sense that key elements have been adopted in mainstream development. It is now widely accepted that development efforts are more successful when there is participation from the community...The goals of 'development' have been generally redefined. Development is no longer simply viewed as GDP growth, human development is seen as a more appropriate goal and measure of development” (Pieterse, 1998: 344).

The Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen points out people as 'drivers of development' and the 'real wealth of nations'(Paola, 2011, p. 4). Same in line economist Mahbub ul Haq conceptualizes human development as “the expansion of people’s freedoms to live long, healthy and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet. People are both the beneficiaries and drivers of human development, as individuals and in groups”(Paola, 2011, p. 6). People thus become the prime drivers of development, and for development to be shared equitably it demands an active participation of individuals in a given society.

With a general, gradual paradigm shift from “top-down/trickle down” approach towards bottom up development or grassroots development, proponents of alternative development like Sanyal (1996) argue that it has had a political impact on development. In its effort to bring forth local development in communities, it seeks to empower people and enable them to rebuild a self-generating community. To break away from exploitative relationships with the state justified on the grounds that mainstream political process controlled and manipulated by the state, the official political parties, the elite and in some cases the army was not responsive to the poor’s needs. Hence, the poor people needed to organize themselves not as another political party that could be co-opted by the system but as small autonomous groups. This objective could be achieved through assistance from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s), so because NGOs are particularly appropriate for fostering development from below because of their organizational procedures that are very divert from top down approaches of the state. NGOs operate from the grassroots level, they are autonomous from the state and are non-profit driven with ultimate priority to building communities (Sanyal, 1996). In fostering development from below, empowerment demand that people are left freely

or availed the opportunity to take up their goals they value most or to at least have a meaningful voice in every final decisions arrived at in dialogues they participate in. Thus this postulates that *participation* of individuals in organizing implementing, planning of activities ought to be the main cornerstone of development. For the sake of empirical operationality, this study has been guided by the following basic conceptual keystones that constitute alternative development theory.

3.3 Conceptual Frame

3.3.1 Participation

Participation has taken several forms in theory and practice. Emanating from alternative grassroots development, the world over appears to be responding to the call voiced by activists of social change for a greater public involvement in making the decisions that matter and holding governments to account for following through on their commitments(Cornwall, 2008). It is now widely acknowledged as Arnstein (1969:216) puts it “that participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy-a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually everyone”. Yet in theory and practice what participation might mean to these practitioners can vary enormously. Chambers (2005) cited in Cornwall (2008) maintains that the concept of participation ‘has no final meaning’, an agreed global definition may not precisely emerge rather development practitioners should define what they exactly mean in their action. However, taking its toll in the contemporary course these different variations in practice among development practitioners have a raised a very dangerous attack on participation as it is slowly losing its purpose and trust among people and even institution’s themselves. Cornwall (2008:269) adds that

...vagueness about what participation means may have helped the promise of public involvement gain purchase, but it may be time for more of what Cohen and Uphoff term ‘clarity through specificity’ if the call for more participation is to realize its democratizing promise.

Stating out clearly what exactly people are being enjoined to participate in, for what purpose, who is involved and who is absent is a step towards unleashing some of the challenges of participation (Cernea, 1991) cited in Cornwall (2008) . Doing this would help make clear what exactly is at stake when participation is being advocated, to create clearer distinctions between forms of participation that are different in kind, this is the ‘*clarity through*

specificity' cornerstone(Cornwall,2008). However even so, the fact that practices pertaining on the ground will still be divert, the problem still retains the same, as others shall be viewed more engaging than the so often termed exploitative kinds of participation. This presents a strong back row to development as people shun away such vices and opt to live life as normal in self isolation of development enfranchises. It therefore then becomes vital to unpack the meanings and practices associated with participation, in theory and in practice in order to have a clear view of the problem at hand. In theorizing this argument, a turn to different typologies of participation proves progressive. For the purpose of this study participation shall rely on the World Bank definition which is

...a process through which [primary] stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them(Chambers, 2013, p. 90).

On the overall, I take Participation as, signifying people working together around the community to generate ideas and action for social change. Participation as the analytical tool, it would throw more light on the spaces of participation formed within the community. By revealing questions of who actually is included/excluded, in what ways, how there are formed and for what purpose participation as a core concept adopted for this study shall help in identifying and clarifying the various forms of participation pertaining within the community.

3.3.2 Typologies of participation

Participation has taken varying degrees and kind, different typologies of participation have been useful in differentiating these. Typologies provide implicit normative assumptions which place these forms of participation along an axis of 'good' to 'bad' forms. The most famous one is the Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation illustrated in the diagram below:

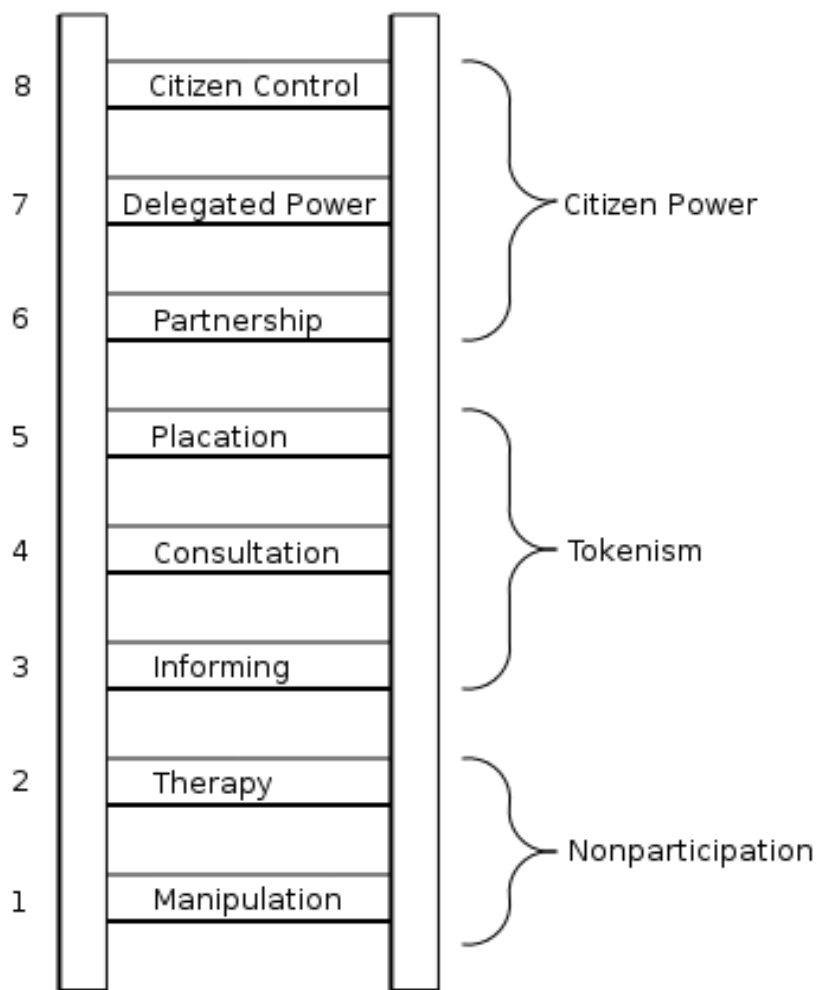


Figure 4: Arnstein (1969) Ladder of participation

Arnstein (1969) defines participation as a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. In this manner they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society. She draws a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation (through manipulation) and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process (through citizen control). Arnstein difference brings out the fundamental point that participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the power- holders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. In such ways participation is undertaken just because policy demands so but it does not reflect its meaning in practice.

Arnstein typology of eight levels of participation may help in analysis of this gap between participation in theory and practice. For illustrative purposes the eight types are arranged in a ladder pattern with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens' power in determining the end products (see figure 4). The bottom rungs of the ladder Manipulation and Therapy, describe levels of "non-participation". They are non-participatory in the sense that officials educate and advise citizens and not the other way round, it lacks the redistribution of power, it is all packaged in the organizations or institutions initiating the project. Mostly the common trend under manipulation has been that the poor people are called for to participate in committees just for formality seek to prove that the poor people are included, however the overall control during the meetings are through officials, in some ways the programs are described in general terms (Arnstein, 1969). Informing citizens of their rights, responsibilities and by providing an open environment for the free fall of new ideas is one way of legitimizing citizen participation. *Knowledge* then becomes the core cornerstone to meaningful participation to induce change. World Bank for instance uses information and consultation with the people as a one way towards empowerment through participation. However often times the flow of information is one sided with no channels for feedback and negotiations. This leaves those who come to fill such platforms with little or no power on decision making, power holders determine what they think is best after consultations. With time such participatory approaches are bound to lose acceptance and trust by those of whom policy analyst comes to consult from.

Citizens tend to have less influence on such programs initiated and consequently benefit less from such initiatives. Forms of one sided flow of communication include news media, pamphlets, posters, and responses to inquiries. When power holders restrict citizen inputs in consultations through the various methods used for consulting people such as neighborhood meetings and public hearing, participation amounts to nothing since there is even no assurance that citizens' concerns and ideas have been taken into consideration. It basically reflects that People are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions, and participation is measured by how many come to meetings, take brochures home, or answer a questionnaire. What citizens achieve is the mere notion that they have participated and power holders achieve the evidence that they have carried out grassroots engagement with the people as per required (Arnstein, 1969).

Participation in Informing and Consultation rungs progresses to levels of "tokenism" that allow the have- nots to hear and to have a voice. When they are proffered by power- holders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But under these conditions they lack the power to ensure that their views will be heeded by the powerful. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow through, no "muscle," hence no assurance of changing the status quo. Placation rung, is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advice, but retain for the power holders the continued right to decide. Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout. Citizen can enter into a Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. At the topmost rungs, Delegated Power and Citizen Control, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power. It is at this top most level that citizens demand programs controlled entirely by themselves. They initiate community programs by themselves, manage all managerial activities whether self-help community programs such as income generating activities to public goods such as corporate building of community controlled schools, clinics or libraries(Arnstein, 1969).

3.3.3 Justification of the ladder of participation

The ladder of participation simplifies citizen participation into different levels, these in turn helps in trying to grasp participation in practice. Therefore objective number one; **To explore the local understanding of participation** will be achievable by dwelling on the different rungs of the ladder, I use this theoretical standpoint to reveal participation on the ground

based on Arnstein differential viewpoint between empty rituals of participation and having the real power to initiate change. The underlying issues as Arnstein (1969:217) puts it is that, "...‘nobodies’ in several arenas are trying to become ‘somebodies’ with enough power to make the target institutions responsive to their views, aspirations, and needs". To this, participation progresses in a ladder format from the lower bad forms to the most top influential good forms of participation. Where then can we place Meheba case on? becomes the focal point of objective number one as it reveals the meaning of participation among refugees locally. The ladder of participation thus acts as a relevant theoretical lens that pictures the case of refugees as minority groupings with little or no power availed in their communities to command social change. It becomes therefore of paramount importance to explore the dynamics of participation in such minority setting areas as these are areas where participation of the afflicted is supposed to be the core base or rather the first crucial step towards uplifting the standards and the self-value of these victims of war, crimes and human right violence.

However one of the often cited limitation of this ladder of participation is that it does not include an analysis of the most significant barriers to achieving genuine levels of participation. These barriers lie on both sides of the simplistic fence. On the power- holders’ side, they include racism, paternalism, and resistance to power redistribution. On the have-nots’ side, they include inadequacies of the poor community’s political socio economic infrastructure and knowledge- base, plus difficulties of organizing a representative and accountable citizens’ group in the face of futility, alienation, and distrust. It thus can be seen that the much emphasis of the Arnstein ladder of participation revolves around concepts of power and control(Arnstein, 1969). Nevertheless, the typology is of much useful to this study as it weighs participation in practice. Refugee’s ability to act or take control is much dependent on power. Giddens (1979), argues that without any sizeable amount of power or control an individual sizes to be an agent. Refugees as minority groups in society, it becomes something valuable to determine whether they do have the affluence of power and control to influence change in their communities,

In theory participation sounds to be a very promising roadmap to development, however it does present complex dilemmas in practice. Several approaches prevailing on the ground tend to be direct inverse of people-driven change. Participation is mostly perceived as a *means* and not as *ends* where it is supposed to be transformative in bringing about empowerment. What

is commonly taking toll retains a legacy of a top-down view of social change. Expertise are not ready to take in people's knowledge, knowledge is still understood as coming from top authorities. Eversole (2010), simplifies such a situation as empty vessels; it invites communities into development processes and development decision making, and it respects their voices and their presence, but asks them, in effect, to leave their knowledge and institutions at the door. Chambers (2013) acknowledges this divergence in practice and claims that professionals are arrogant with their superior knowledge, they then see the rural poor as ignorant, primitive, backwards and people who only have themselves to blame. It then therefore becomes difficult to assume that the primitive knowledge could be taken seriously, but what these practitioners seems so ignorant about is that the indigenous knowledge offers practical basis because it is *constructed from lived experiences* and not from conceptual theoretical strands as for professionals, it is in fact grounded in context and place. To a larger extent the two knowledge need to meet in between (local knowledge and scientific knowledge), while the indigenous knowledge may be limited by intellectual and social reach for instance their ability to access information, it is eminently achieved through participation. Communities draw on the sources of experts and experts benefit by learning the context of the local people's lived experiences. However this is far from been achieved in practice(Eversole, 2010).

3.3.4 Critique of Arnstein ladder of participation

While this typology has been criticized in most publications based on the arguments raised in the preceding section, it is worth giving credit to as it acted as a wakeup call to these practitioners on the direction of participation. It raised the prominence of many researchers to study dynamics of participation and thereabout realizing many factors encroached to limit participation beyond power distribution. Therefore up until now this typology continue to generate new research studies including this one, bringing to the fore arising new challenges of participation in different geographical settings that impacts the academic world positively.

In a refugee setting power is admittedly one important factor, however there are other most crucial unique factors that determine people's participation. People may have the power to initiate change however if they are not well knowledgeable of the new areas climate topologies and market volatility for example their activities are prone to have flows or impacts negatively on self-reliance ventures. Above all, the issue of the 'mental self' in such setting is worth considering; if people are stressed and traumatized seeing the value of

participation no matter how practitioners distribute the power, is a slow or far from been attained movement. This perhaps could be one possible reason many practitioners become a bit skeptical in accepting whatever comes from such victims. It could also be that refugees are viewed as patients (not mentally well beyond the health required percentage of identifying someone healthy) and thus curing symptoms is fully taken upon humanitarian institution as their one major responsibility. Thus the ladder of participation becomes useful to this study to explore the many factors beyond power that limit participation and to bring to the fore the meanings participation has come to occupy among humanitarian organizations and the refugees themselves.

Having stated the above arising matters in the theoretical perspective, participation is made operational in this study as a level of an individual's ability to generate ideas and act upon them. It is from the same ladder of participation that I categorize spaces of participation. The level of refugees influence can be determined by focusing and identifying how that particular space is formed and its motives behind it, focusing on the results or benefits, it will become evident whether refugee voice is treated with ultimate consideration in the final decisions reached. Participation therefore is taken as a baseline in identifying and judging these spaces.

3.3.5 Spaces of participation

Refugee's cooperative ventures within the community cut across several kinds, it could either be through self or institutionally arranged platforms. The solemn purpose of such platforms is to generate ideas collectively for social change. These various forms created define *space* in this study. These spaces can either be legally formed for the public and some are counter publics or community self-mobilized groups for self-help. It is the objective of this study to identify these spaces, thus going a step further into the dynamics of refugee participation.

Cornwall (2008) makes a contrast between participatory spaces that are created through invitations and those that people create for themselves. *Invited spaces* are opportunities to participate that are made available by community development workers or public officials, these are often structured and owned by those who provide them, no matter how participatory they may seek to be. Transferring that ownership to those who come to fill them is far from easy. In a very instrumental way such spaces are regarded by those who fill the spaces as opportunities to gain access to benefits or to improve their own access to services. On the other side, spaces that people create for themselves in communities for self-help, are likely to

achieve a lot. This is basically because people share the common interest rather than representing different stakeholder's viewpoints. These *counter public spaces* are essential for groups with little power or voice in society, as sites in which they can gain confidence and skills, develop their arguments and gain from the solidarity and support that being part of a group can offer (Cornwall, 2008).

Participation is achieved when people take part in decisions that matter, spaces hence have to be created for this to be effectively achieved. Although spaces open up possibilities for participation, many decision-making are still closed to those who come to fill these spaces, responsible institutions decide behind closed doors, without broadening the boundaries for inclusion. Within the public sphere, another way of conceiving these spaces is as '*provided*' spaces in the sense that elites (bureaucrats, experts or elected representatives) make decisions and provide services to 'the people', without the need for broader consultation or involvement (Gaventa, 2004). To this participation of the locals is non-existing.

In much efforts to incorporate participation at all levels, a move from *closed/provided* to more open ones are created as *invited spaces*. Invited spaces are spaces that avail an opportunity to the locals to take part in arising matters in their setting by them been invited to attend. This could be in a public meeting, mobile counselling home visits etc., in most settings such spaces are often times used for consultations and informing. When the public sphere consists of elite representatives excluding members of the society (such as refugees) this space can be considered as empty, as the purpose was to fill it with participating beneficiaries. The *private or self-help spaces* are *claimed spaces* of participation or *counter-publics*, where citizens take action and fill the spaces to realize their own rights and representation.

When claiming spaces of participation, one tries to fill a space to compensate for the lost access in those empty invited spaces (ibid). Cornwall (2002:24) in Gaventa (2004) refers to these claimed spaces as "...'organic 'spaces which emerge 'out of sets of common concerns or identifications' and 'may come into being as a result of popular mobilization, such as around identity or issue-based concerns, or may consist of spaces in which like-minded people join together in common pursuits...". Others talk of these spaces as 'third spaces' where social actors reject hegemonic space and create spaces for themselves (Gaventa, 2004). These spaces are shaped through the exercise of *agency* in which different actors, *knowledge* and interest interact in which room can be made for alternatives, on the other side the possibility of exclusion in some is of no doubt in existence. Nearly almost all of these

participatory spaces are constrained or enabled by inclusive or exclusive practices of *power*, *knowledge* and *social capital*. Offering some operational meaning of these concepts proves progressive for this study.

3.4 Agency

Agency is the flow of action which constitutes the day-to-day activity of human subjects, sociologists such as Anthony Giddens uses agency synonymous with action, to him agency is a continuous flow of conduct defined as “a stream of actual or contemplated casual interventions of corporeal beings in the ongoing process of events in the world”(Giddens, 1979, p. 55). He takes agency as an intervention in an objective world, this intervention is in line with human activity to induce change with matters that affect their lives. In philosophy agency is the capacity of an entity or person to act in any given environment. Long (2003, p. 31), accentuate all of the above in a quote from Giddens:

In general terms, the notion of agency attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion. Within the limits of information, uncertainty and other constraints (e.g. physical, normative or politico-economic) that exist, social actors possess ‘knowledgeability’ and ‘capability’. They attempt to solve problems, learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them, and to a degree they monitor their own actions, observing how others react to their behavior and taking note of the various contingent circumstances (Giddens 1984: 1–16).

The above quote lays a basic cornerstone for making the concept of agency operational in this study, it brings out how an individual can take part in problem solving but also makes mention how the process of such can be constrained in a given environment. Agency therefore shall be taken as an inner capacity of an individual or group to act and implement positive changes for the improvement of lives. Agency is the main facet of development from below, people ought to take up the initiative themselves to improve their own lives, they are the real experts to their problem. Agency can thus be spotted in several activities, this shall benefit this study as I identify these spaces for such activities and possibly take note of the factors that constrain refugees from ‘acting’.

3.5 Power

Giddens (1979), notes down the two most prominent conceptualization of power in social and political theory. The first one dominated by Weber and many other authors conceptualizes Power as the “capacity of an actor to achieve his or her will even at the expense of that of others who might resist him...The second is that power should be seen as a property of collectivity. [Weber held that if there is no rational mode of adjudging ‘ultimate value’ claims, then the only recourse open is that of power: the strongest are able to make their values count by crushing others]”(pp. 68-69).

Following the above quote power relates to the asymmetrical relationships drawn within and among actors/individuals. Power could be exercised in two ways, it's either an individual has the capacity or ability to act on their own lives or the ability to influence the behavior of others. Relationships of individuals or between groups induces mechanisms of power, Foucault (1982) argues that the sought of relationships formed are asymmetrical where other person's exercise power over others. It is therefore through collective actions that dynamics of power come into play.

For the purpose of this study I use the concepts of agency and power as logically tied, in trying to exercise human agency through the ability to act power comes in as a transformative capacity for any action taken. I therefore take power as the conduct of agents and as a structural quality. Power is a relational concept, it comes into operation when individuals act upon social structures and human action is thus generated by structures of domination. Giddens (1979, p. 88) , states that;

Action involves intervention in events in the world, thus producing definite outcomes, with intended action being one category of an agent's doings or his refraining. Power as transformative capacity can then be taken to refer to agents capabilities of reaching such outcomes.

The way different structures⁴ in society are positioned in terms of power enable or constrain individual's ability to act. The key argument is that structures influence individual's actions either positively or negative in changing the social structures they inhabit. Agency and

⁴ By structure I adopt (Giddens, 1979) conceptualization of structures as structural properties understood as rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems

structure therefore permeate spaces of participation, in trying to understand how these spaces of participation are formed, such theoretical underpinnings shall be taken to determine the level of power among actors as this broadens the picture of the constrained and enabling factors to induce positively. Giddens (1979, p. 149), brings out how power exercised can affect human agency:

An agent who does not participate in the dialectic of control, in a minimal fashion, ceases to be an agent... [A person kept thoroughly confined and supervised, as an individual in a straight jacket, perhaps has lost all capability of action and is not a participant in a reciprocal power relation].

Where there is an exercise of human agency power relations are two ways-it's either predominantly held by one, certain individuals are privileged to hold power over others with literally minimal or no ability to inflict change(asymmetrical relations) and in some power relations are reciprocal among individual or between groups. Power therefore shall be taken as a tool in analyzing how asymmetrical/reciprocal power relations inhibited by refugees affect outcome in the various spaces formed, this shall benefit the study as I compare the intended and actual outcomes across these spaces. Thus responding to research question number three; **what are the intended and actual outcomes across these spaces of participation?**

3.6 Knowledge

Knowledge is a useful tool for influencing behavior and action to bring about change, it provides individual discourses in the interpretation of social reality through what is obtained from lived realities. It can be derived from heterogeneous experiments, traditions, or discoveries, a social concept that is socially constructed across geographical space. Michel Foucault links knowledge with power, to him knowledge gives individuals to conduct and apply themselves differently in different situations. In other ways it is the truth embedded in individuals which makes one to interpret the social reality in a different way from another person's. He accentuates all of the above as:

Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true.' Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, 'there is no power relation

without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations(Foucault, 1977, p. 22).

Hence, Knowledge can be used as a tool for analyzing the effective problem solving and how knowledge is used to change practice. Knowledge thus is operationalized in this study as the agency access to information and skillsets that can foster active engagement in the community for the benefit of the self. A tool that fosters individual to take up self or organized ventures for positive developmental outcomes within the community, once individuals are knowledgeable of what they are capable of achieving to change their own situation, knowledge thus comes out as one major factor reinforcing such outcomes. Once refugees are aware of their rights and well capable to claim their rights from duty bearers they are capable of holding institutions accountable and thus increase the chances and likelihood of policies to be implemented in line with their suggestions. For the full realization of their rights as liberal citizens refugees ought to become fully engaged in participation on matters that affect their lives within the community.

3.7 Social Capital

Social capital has long been recognized by sociologists and anthropologists as critical building blocks of communities and societies. At a community level it determines collective actions. Narayan-Parker (1997, p. 50), defined social capital as “*the rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity and trust embedded in social relations, social structures and society’s institutional arrangement, which enable its members to achieve their individual, household or community objectives*”. It includes one connections, networks, friends and family members. Putnam (2000), in one of his famous article: *Bowling Alone : The Collapse and Revival of American Community* he argued that civil society was breaking down as Americans became more disconnected from their families, neighbors, communities, and the republic itself. In another Putnam earliest influential book; *making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy* he argues that social capital refers to features of social organizations such as norms, trust and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions(Robert, 1993) . Others have taken the notion of social capital as those aspects of social networks that deliver benefits and could be converted into other forms of capital.

Putnam (2000), categorizes social capital into two bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital is often based on closed networks that link family, kin, ethnic groups

and leads to an inward-looking, exclusive and therefore excluding set of associations. Bridging social capital is based on bonds of reciprocity and trust with other ties that are external to the group normally between socially heterogeneous groups. It is these different bonding and social networking that allow individuals to collectively confront vulnerability and external pressures(Rigg, 2007).

In this study refugees may bond to form self-help associations at the community level which may give support and relevant knowledge and information sharing that individually they wouldn't have access to. The spaces refugees created based on ethnic, family or kin networks may to some extent limit innovation as it excludes other non-members hence such spaces are closed and positively disadvantaged those already outside the networks as they limit participation. Benefits delivered based on reciprocities and trust allows humanitarian institutions or government bodies to carry their conducts based on unaccountable codes of conducts. Other individuals are likely to receive benefits accrued on account of having some tight connections to these institutions, this explains to some extent the increase in corruption levels especially in the global south the thrive to acquire benefits accruing to their personal motives and interests based on the line of connections and links one intend to support or share the accrued benefit is rampant. Refugees may enter in exploitative relations to command benefits through the connection of social networking, this limits participation among members as the system remains anti-democratic and some refugees end up losing the trust and confidence in several spaces leading to self-exclusion. Social capital in this study is operationalized as those links and social connections that refugees inhibit that influence collective actions either positively or negatively in the community.

3.8 Community Participation

The concept of community participation is embedded in primary health care. It has become a key to improving the health and well-being of communities. However the concept has not been studied much especially from the perspective of community members who participate. The concept of community participation is rooted in community organization and development theory that evolved out of hard lessons learned from failed top-down, expert-driven development projects. Development professionals recognized that the trickle-down effect or the 'catch up' had not happened, instead the gap between the rich and the poor had increased drastically. Such reasoning of the alternative development theory already alluded to in the preceding section led to the recognition that successful projects utilized a bottom-up,

demand-driven approach that required active community member involvement and that promoted community self-sufficiency through changed community relationships and functioning (Lindgren & Lipson, 2004).

Community participation entered the international health care discourse through the World Health Organization's declaration of PHC in 1978 and has been recognized as critical to the success and sustainability of health programs worldwide. Yet there is no universal definition of community participation (Rifkin, 1990; 1999; UNICEF, 1978 cited in Lindgren & Lipson, 2004). It has often depended much on concepts of participation rooted in the alternative development theory. To participate means to act in common or to share in common with others (Webster, 1986 cited in Lindgren & Lipson, 2004) but participation has been often operationalized as being involved in the community, being active in the community, and/or being represented in project decision making (Caudill, 1999; Eng & Parker, 1994; Kahssay & Oakley, 1999; Lazzari, Ford, & Haughey, 1996; Manderson & Mark, 1997 cited in Lindgren & Lipson, 2004).

Public health researchers suggest that community participation exists along a continuum from passive/ token community involvement to active/true participation (Arnstein, 1969). Though not adequately addressed community participation can include voluntary activity by community members within the community, activities such as members providing funds or labor to build clinics, schools or it can be through active fundraising or donations to achieve the 'common good' or it can be through voluntary professional to assist within specialized areas for the benefit of the community (Lindgren & Lipson, 2004). Authors such as Meleis (1992), (Caudill, 1999) and (Manderson & Mark, 1997) quoted in Lindgren & Lipson (2004) perceive community participation as both a process and an outcome. As an outcome, participation in health and research projects is assumed to develop community members' capacity to assess and address common problems (Caudill, 1999) that, in turn, will empower communities for self-care (Manderson & Mark, 1997) and create community competence through developing community members' skills to work collectively(Lindgren & Lipson, 2004).

3.9 Community

The concept of 'community' is a highly contested issue especially in refugee's literature. As a main unit of analysis to this study it needs to have a conceptual clarity. The debate on the

concept goes between social scientists who define it geographically/spatially and those who conceive it in terms of (homogeneous) social structure. However, there is a gradual conceptual convergence that community refers to both a small, spatial unit or locality and people having shared social characteristics and interests (Lindgren & Lipson, 2004). According to Willmott (1986) in (Lindgren & Lipson, 2004), there is a strong possibility of coinciding among these three characteristics of community. Therefore, all such shared characteristics become a source of collaboration among people within a community to exert collective efforts to solve common problems. Thus, in this perspective, community is conceived as a vehicle for neighboring solidarity and self-help.

In most recent development discourse 'community appears to be the main social actor in development. "Community is about groups of people, who create relations based on trust and mutuality, within the idea of shared responsibility for wellbeing" (Adams & Hess 2001: 14) quoted in (Lindgren & Lipson, 2004). Conceiving it as locality, community has a better understanding to the local conditions and potentials than outsiders or governments do, which can be utilized for its own development, in which the notion of indigenous knowledge is implied. Conceiving it as groups of people having shared identity and common interests, community has the potential to contribute to development "...with the dynamics of trust, [reciprocity], the foci of equity and cohesion, and tools of networks providing an altogether softer more people-centered approach than is possible under either state intervention or market realities" (ibid: 20).

However, in the refugees literature little has been discussed about refugee communities. Although the term community is used in the refugee health literature, the language used by the United Nations and refugee assistance organizations implies isolation, not community (Uehling, 1998) in Lindgren&Lipson (2004). In line with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), refugee populations are often not 'communities' in an ordinary sense, with shared histories, cultures, and aspirations. They are rather 'temporary' settlements and groupings, pending durable solutions. This is also in line with what Hyndman (2000) in Brun (2008) claims that camps are not communities, rather they are 'institutions' created specifically for the purpose of providing protection and assistant to the refugee populations. As such refugee settlements are viewed as 'simulated communities' established by agencies, were she further argues that "*they cannot operate as a village or a civil society, despite employing community-development principles such as self-governance and*

democratic decision making” (ibid: 158). Other proponents like Harris (1999) quoted in Brun (2008: 158) “uses the term ‘unimagined communities’ to show that displaced people in camps are brought together purely through the dislocating circumstances of displacement”.

In viewing refugees populations as per UNHCR, Hyndman and Harris conceptualization, typically deprive refugees normal means to self-determination and self-reliance including recognition of basic rights, access to local services, or social, economic and political participation in the country of asylum (The Community Action Service Alliance, 2003). The little policy analysis on limitations and particularities within UNHCR on refugees populations to the idea of community’ in refugee settings needs to be put into reconsiderations taking on point issues of protracted situations and the current local integration policies that most asylum countries have started implementing. This claim on protracted residence is emphasized in Brun (2008: 159) where she argues that in cases like that “the camps may also change character and become more like communities” (Brun, 2008).

Gold (1992) in Lindgren & Lipson (2004) argues that refugees are frequently settled in small groups within a larger, unfamiliar community in many areas of the host country. Yet they often move from where they originally settled to be nearer family and others from their country of origin, reflecting a form of chain migration. In this way, refugees create their own communities that provide them with familiar foods via community stores and restaurants, with social interactions, with ritual celebrations, and with places of worship. This argument is of much relevance especially considering the complex contemporary wars and conflicts around the globe that continues to threaten and put citizens at risk. Hence, chain migration is a most common phenomenon currently happening on the globe, this creates new homelands.

Thus, finally, in my study ‘community’, refers to groups of people who share at least a common local residence, in which this shared characteristics facilitate the other characteristics. This facilitates collective action among local people. Placing my locality of study been Zambia, in my conceptualization I take refugees populations as ‘newly established communities’. Zambia is currently among the few countries in Southern Africa implementing the local integration process where a number of refugees have been already locally integrated and permanently given portions of land in the settlement area for permanent settlement. Also, Meheba refugee in as much as it continues to receive new arrival especially vast numbers during my fieldwork from Burundi continued to be flooded in the reception center, it also has many protracted situations . These protracted situations are forming ‘newly communities’ as

they will no longer be considered living in exile anymore, Meheba permanently integrates as their 'new homeland' with freedoms enjoyed as exactly as Zambian citizens are entitled to.

3.10 Towards an analytical framework

The previous sections have provided detailed discussions of the approaches and concepts in theory that are useful for analyzing field material collected for this study. Admittedly, coming up with the analytical framework incorporating approaches of alternative development and broadly participation itself has been a difficult task as there exist so many processes named to be people oriented therefore it does not identify or name which approaches are acceptably acknowledged as almost all of the practices are justified differently in a logical way. This is somehow confusing, however with the identification of concepts such as power, social capital, knowledge and agency has helped in uplifting this matter on a lighter note. The main purpose of these concepts was to make a setting for the reader to understand my own position within theory and to understand how I use concepts to enlighten the situation of refugee participation.

The approaches and concepts utilized in this study are linked through alternative development roots that pay a particular focus on bottom-up initiatives, power thus still retains its significant consideration. In a refugee setting, the data collected extended the limits of participation beyond power, it incorporated other emerging factors that led to my going back to theory and incorporates such concepts; *social capital*, *knowledge* and *agency*. These concepts are tailored for specific use through operationalizing of terms.

3.10.1 Spaces of participation?

This thesis argues that the way participation is defined shapes its practices and outcomes. Different spaces are formed with varying degrees and kinds of participation in practice, this has not helped raise a befitting positive outcome of participation it has however increased the loss of trust and confidence in some of the spaces formed for refugees. UNHCR for instance through its government ministries as implementing partners has taken and formed many ways of incorporating refugees to the fore the most common one been that of consultation and informing. Other humanitarian and Christian organizations (as they have come to call themselves) have also come to practice and form spaces differently from the main funder UNHCR in the area, mostly Refuge Alliance (RA) works hand in hand with the refugees themselves. It is likely that refugees will tend to shun away from UNHCR platforms and opts

for RA spaces formed. For effective and meaningful participation to prevail, there is need for a shared global meaning rather than letting owners of spaces define their practices aligning to participation.

As a consequence, different actors think about participation differently and this causes challenges that are highlighted all throughout this thesis. Thus participation is not a set process but rather a constantly changing and negotiated process within the different organizational worlds, it is a socially constructed term across different geographical settings which ultimately define spaces of participation. Thus these spaces of participation highlight the fact that participation is practiced and taken differently.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I provide an account of the methodology approach of my study and my field experiences. I discuss the complex procedures that I encountered during the course of inquiry. My research problem and the feminist theorists' perspectives to geographical research guided my methodology approach applied. The former, before approaching the field using only theoretical lenses pictures a scenario where participation is taken and practiced differently by different institutions and organizations, many have come to oppose participatory practices without fully understanding what participation is to these different spaces formed. This does present a negative incredibly contagious impact on public perceptions of participation especially when outcomes across these different organizations are considered. Therefore the main objective of this study was to explore the dynamics of community participation of refugees in the newly established community of Meheba. The study aimed at achieving this through an exploration of refugees live realities with community participation. The later postulates subjectivity of a researcher in the research process, subjectivity has been emphasized much in Dowling (2000) as the insertion of personal opinions and characteristics of a researcher in the entire process of research. Feminist theorists argue that all knowledge is produced in specific circumstances and that those circumstances shape it in some way(Rose, 1997).

As per my objectives, I had to socially interact within the community, paying particular attention to refugee's narratives and some of their actions by observing their behavior. The knowledge produced therefore shall be taken as situated in the context of my study area. Situated in the sense that my personal histories I bring to the field has an influence on my interpretation and hence the production of knowledge is shared between me as the researcher and the researched in this context and cannot by any chance be generalized. The methodology logically falls to the qualitative approach strand. Qualitative inquiry as pointed out by Crang and Cook (2007), utilizes methods of inquiry that aims at understanding the world more or less as they are experienced and understood in the everyday lives of people who 'live them out'. It portrays a world in which realities are socially constructed, complex and ever changing, its goals then follows that the social world is interpreted from the perspectives of social actors. I attempt to elaborate further my research method choice in the section to follow, as I also describe the procedure I undertook to complete the data collection process.

At the end of the chapter, I further highlight some of the ethical challenges, field relations and experiences.

4.2 Justification of the research approach- qualitative research

Dowling (2000), mentions how the conduct of social research influences society and the people involved, there is no separation between the research, researcher and society. He further emphasizes how by asking questions or participating in an activity can alter people's day to day lives and communicating the results of the research can potentially change social situations. Not disputing this both qualitative and quantitative modes of social research acknowledges this lack of separation what distinguishes qualitative from quantitative research is the much emphasis it places throughout the entire process of research. At this point it becomes important to make mention that both qualitative and quantitative research are relevant in research, what entice one to pick either one of them or a mixture of them through the mixed method approach entirely depends on what one intends to study, the research problem and goals of a study determines which among the three approaches (qualitative, quantitative or a mixed-methods approach) one can choose. Cloke et al. (2004), argues that these methods are not simply different, but, they in themselves have particular strengths and serve to collect different forms of empirical material. Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, and Ormston (2013, p. 16), offer a working definition of qualitative research that captures its key characteristics as:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (16-17).

As highlighted in the above definition, qualitative research offers an interpretative approach to the real world by exploring deeper insights into the complex world of those who live it out. For the purpose of this study the research methodology adopted shall be qualitative. My justification of qualitative research does not in any way dismiss quantitative enquiry but it will shed more light on how the study naturally falls on the qualitative strand of enquiry.

Qualitative research treats people as knowledgeable, situated agents from whom researchers can learn a great deal about how the world is seen, lived and works in and through ‘real’ places, communities and people (Crang & Cook, 2007). My methodology naturally falls on the interpretative paradigm. I therefore relied on two interpretative strands for my epistemology *idealism* and *pragmatism* philosophy. Refugees and the community stood at the core of my research, I needed to pay attention to the interaction of refugees within the community. In understanding participation of refugees in spaces of participation within the community, the search for the *valid truth* to loosely say, proved so inevitable. Whilst in the field I needed to be familiar to how the community mobilize and organize themselves for the ‘common good’⁵ and observe the patterns of how inclusive the several spaces of participation were. A process towards community cohesion thus could only be understood by immersing myself wholly to come closer in terms with refugees lived realities.

This naturally meant that I had to be action oriented in the different activities in the community to understand the behavior and interactions of the community and refugees. This justifies my pragmatic stance in my study. The pragmatic approach suggests that “rather than a focus on individuals, attention should be paid to society and the interaction of individuals within society” (Rob Kitchin & Nicholas Tate, 2000, p. 13). Pragmatism was used because it provides a deeper understanding of participant’s behavior and experience towards community cohesion, it argues that knowledge is achieved only through experience. By exploring the lives of people within a community the beliefs and attitudes that shape societies are reviewed (ibid). Unlike realists philosophers who believe a world exist independently of ideas idealists believe that the world cannot exist independently of the mind. They view reality as a construction of the mind, thus they hold that the world can only be known indirectly through ideas with knowledge based on subjective experience (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

My role as a researcher becomes then empathetic as I try to access my participant’s ideas and interpreting myself through my participant’s actions and intentions. I had found this approach inevitable to triangulate with pragmatism philosophy as it emphasizes one aspect not much present in pragmatism. The ‘construct of ideas through empathetic understanding’. In my study I needed to gain a deeper insight of how refugees understood participation and its practices in the community they live in. Most precisely, the data collected in the field was

⁵ The advantage or benefit of all people in society, community or in a group regardless of

brought to light through qualitative participant observation and in-depth interviews. Qualitative inquiry was thus selected on the practical matter of what best works with my study. Entering in the field I had a task of interpreting the true reflections through their own stories by nurturing voices and critically bringing with me my understanding in my own lens throughout the research process. This was something very complex as I had to take up many decisions and reflections, as shall be discussed in the subsequent sections to follow.

4.3 Making preparations for the field

The end of 2015 spring semester marked the beginning of making final preparations for entering the field. This was initially in June and my flight back to my home country was scheduled on the 15th of June. Whilst in Norway, I was so nervous about the whole process. I imagined how hard it will be to gain access in the field and build rapport with my intended participants. Where to start from seemed to be a challenge, however it was important I acknowledged all these before going in the field as I made necessary connections whilst in Norway that extremely helped ease the whole research process to some extent. I searched on the internet organizations operating in Meheba, from big organizations such as UNHCR and government offices to grassroots based Christian organizations such as the Norwegian based Refugee Alliance.

On UNHCR-Zambia website I had found that they were organizing a fundraising dinner for world refugee day that was celebrated on the 20th of June in Zambia and the dinner was slated to be on the 18th of the same month. I made my reservations and this I would say marked the beginning of my field work. It presented a great opportunity to interact with refugees and officials from all corners of the country, the panel discussions where so beneficial to my study. I reflected much on my study practical point of view, how to access my informants and what best I needed to be action oriented whilst in the field. I remember my personal interaction with one program officer for UNHCR we discussed many of the practicalities of research and he advised me to at least get attached to Ministry of Community Development Mother and Child(MCDMC)that focuses much on community services within the camp. This he assumed would assist me get closer to the many activities they do implement encompassing broader participation within the community.

4.4 Entering the field-multiple gatekeepers

It was time to get to the ground to practice the empirical world. I had to seek for permission to conduct research in the camp before entering. Not been so familiar to the procedures this process took almost two week for me to be issued with the research permit. The first office I visited was UNHCR headquarters Lusaka offices, the receptionist directed me to see the officer in charge of refugee's research and apparently by that time the officer had travelled out of town and was told to wait for two days for him. During my meeting with the refugee officer, I introduced myself and my topic of inquiry. The officer informed me that he was in no capacity to grant me permission especially that I was coming from abroad. I had to pass through multiple institutional gatekeepers as a student from abroad researching on refugees in the global south. I had to make a formal request through the ministry of home affairs that was presented to the permanent secretary (PS) of the ministry and this took almost a week and some days. I tried to take follow-ups through the commissioner for refugees under the ministry of home affairs who was handling my case and all the time government procedures frustrated and annoyed me a lot. It used to be "we don't have government bond paper" or the following day "no ink in our printers" I remember the day I had to get my research permit(see attached in the appendix) it took me the whole day to push officials to release it, there were just not cooperating and kept giving me lame excuses. I failed to understand the reason they acted in such a manner.

One receptionist from the ministry on that day I remember yelled at me why I was so pressuring them that they had to receive warrants from top officials to release my permit when am not precisely the first time researcher they were issuing this. She went on by exclaiming that other researchers wait for a month or more until we call them not where you take follow-up pressurizing people's lives, she asked me how special I was of all the researchers they have been releasing permits for "*is it because you are coming from abroad*" she further questioned me. I knew the implications I had to encounter through these multiple gatekeepers and at least I would say I was patient enough my greatest fear was that time was not on my side I only had two months in the field and projecting my expectations there was greatly much to be done in my quest for knowledge. Moreover it was evident enough on the letter that the junior officials were too reluctant to issue it out. On the letter it was dated been signed and granted on the 25th of June but I got it through a hard earned time on the 29th of June. This meant that I also had to extend my days in the camp to the ones I had planned before my coming, from 31st July to the 17th of August.

Finally, on the 30th of June I took my flight to Solwezi, the North-Western part of Zambia where Meheba refugee camp is located. Upon my first arrival in the camp I was directed to see the refugee officer in charge of the camp. I was so amazed at his warmly welcome and interest he had with my research. He had to direct me to the project officer under ministry of Social welfare whom also was so open minded and he also redirected me to Ministry of Community Development –Mother and Child Health (MCDMCH). The ministry received me with a surprisingly shocking news that I had felt was also going to be another two weeks to be accepted. Upon our discussions with department officials of my research they actually themselves requested me to join them if I didn't mind lending a hand to some of their many community services outreach programs within the camp. I was greatly humbled at this attachment to the organization as I promised them to volunteer the best in my own capacity but also bearing in mind my research process of which I believe actually complemented with the task I was given. This provided me with a great opportunity to be action oriented all throughout my research though it presented some methodological dilemma that I shall discuss in the sections to follow.

4.5 Recruitment of research participants

I was so privileged to join the field staff under MCDMCH. In line with my study they were very helpful in identifying relevant programs under community services that are within the camp and my gaining access to these programs was made much easier. Whilst in the field having MCDMCH as my main gatekeeper paved easy access for my active engagement within the community as I had the pragmatic task of understanding refugee's interaction within the community. A gatekeeper can be a person or organization who controls access to something. Observing refugees meeting dialogues, the women counselling club or social cash transfers and child protection forums was done so much easy. The camp itself is very vast consisting of blocks or zones from A to H. Before recruiting my research informants I had decided to first of all get familiar with ongoing community activities for refugees and this I had to wait upon my gatekeepers for the time there were going in the field so that I accompany them as off course a field staff and a participant observer at the same time.

The time I reported with MCDMCH they had budget reviews for the previous year, all sectors were entirely engaged. So field work was put on hold, I stayed in the camp for two weeks observing the lives and refugees experiences before getting access to community outreach programs. Off course this time gave me the chance to know other informal gatherings within

the community. It was the best time I had interacting with refugees informally in the community especially those who visited our offices with cases related to my study. It was this time some of them got exposed to me as an “outsider”.

4.5.1 Research assistants

The task seemed so huge to accomplish myself, everything was so dependent on me. At some point especially in the early days I felt so stressed with many unknowns to clear out. I figured out I needed someone close. I started to hang out with my colleagues in the department I was attached to, we would visit many places in our free time and discussed about the many things both outside and within my topic. On our outings they would introduce me to some of the refugees they were close and we would go for picnics together. This whole thing looked so divert from my research but little did I realize that I was becoming so familiar to their ‘space’ I would call it. The friendship created in the two weeks spent informally interacting with refugees in the camp lifted my spirit of “I can do it” at least I had somewhere I could say I can start from with the help of my two assistants.

We became so close to collaborate with Rose and Clinton throughout the research process. The two initially became my research assistants in a very swift research partnership we initiated, we became so committed, eager and focused to the study objectives. Rose Daka (39 year old), child protection officer under MCDMCH, she is also an active member of the community mobilizing her fellow women to stand up for their rights. She also volunteers at Refugee Alliance a Christian based grassroots organization with the mandate of giving hope to refugees. Her welcoming personality and passion for the plight of refugees made us connect so easy, I found her to be one kind person open and flexible to new ideas, easy to mingle with and one strong advocate for change in the camp. Born in the camp her parents were from Angola, she got married to a Zambian and on a sad account the husband passed on leaving her a widow of four children.

My second assistant was Clinton Dofu, a 30 year old refugee representative and also assistant field officer under MCDMCH originally from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It appeared to me that members of the community trusted Clinton very much. He was a part time student pursuing community development and in most instances he was on call basis assisting MCDMCH in field work outreach programs, his salary was not paid directly by government but through the ministry allocation of funds, this was beneficial to my study as it

avoided some biases to the many decisions we had to undertake together. I choose these two because they were very much knowledgeable and had many years practical experience in the field. Most of the people in the camp were used to seeing them.

4.5.2 Research assistant's role

I had thought I was so fortunate to be in an area where my tribe is a common language, Meheba been in the north western part of Zambia, luvale (my family tribe) is a common language for inhabitants. However it proved to be the opposite, quite well when interacting with some of the refugees on a one to one basis my language helped me a lot as I realized they became so open to me and considered me like their own sister.

The main challenge was when conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGD), because we mixed participants originally from Burundi, DRC, Angola, Somalia and Uganda. Swahili was the agreed language for all my FGD. My assistants came in with the role of interpreter though it was time consuming to translate we managed to conduct all the planned FGD. During their free time we would sit down with them again and translate further as they helped me when transcribing my results.



Image 1: Research assistants right (Rose) and left (Clinton)

4.5.3 Pilot study

I used a pilot study to try out my research methods on a few selected pilot sample. The main methods I tested were my interview guides and my observation techniques, all in all it helped me evaluate my whole research process and myself as a researcher. I approached some few participants and clarified my piloting intentions. I made them aware that their role was to answer the questions but with the intent to improve them if appropriate. My use of the local language diverted meanings of most questions, I had thought I knew my language but not in translating from English to Luvale. Henceforth there was need to go with my research assistants even during in-depth interviews. Also I took much longer time to be done with one interview mainly because with some it wasn't just direct to the research we would chat concerning other issues. This I believe helped me to build rapport with my participants.

Hence I had to change my plan of scheduled interviews and settled on first building rapport with my participants.

Most of my sample attested to the fact that my questions weren't clear enough and I could actually see it from the response I was getting they never meant what I had thought initially. I rephrased my questions to simpler questions with the help of my research assistance. I took a direct observation in one of the community mobile counselling meetings, my intentions were made clear to them and I sat at the back observing. It was so clear that many were not comfortable with my presence. One instance was when one woman stood up and politely asked me to leave the room as she considered what she was going to share with her fellow elderly women private because I was too young and unmarried. I excused them but I felt so hurt that my presence was disturbing all of them from their fruitful meeting. I reflected upon this much on my position as a researcher.

4.5.4 Sampling procedures and informants characteristics

Most research situations are too vast to interview everyone or to observe everything in the field, a justifiable selection strategy by which to choose people and events is needed. Unlike quantitative researchers that utilize random sampling, which is appropriate for selecting a large, statistically representative sample from which generalization can be drawn. Interpretivist researchers tend to select cases purposefully and usually deal with smaller populations. The logic behind qualitative sampling strategy is to study the population in depth for a more rewarding rich information obtained that helps in learning issues central to the purpose of research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

I used purposive sample to select my primary informants and snowball sampling for my key informants. Purposive sampling was used because respondents are chosen based on their special characteristic features that distinguish them from others within the community (refugees and host nationals) and most specifically because the study had no sampling frame. Snowball sampling is a networking strategy that uses one contact to help you recruit another contact (ibid). I used snowball sampling on most occasions with organizations but not all the time, some contacts I identified myself using purposive sampling. This helped me form a representative sample across the study are, as other key most crucial key informants I couldn't have managed to note them all across their different activities they do implement in the community.

4.5.5 Primary informants

Primary data was collected from a total of 29 informants comprising of 19 primary informants and 10 key informants. The refugees that I decided to include in my sample were between the ages of 18-65 years. I preferred this age range because these are mostly the most influential in communities, they are prone to make decisions that could be morally accepted by everyone in the community and by large. Initially, notions of childhood and adulthood are considerably different between societies. Importance attached to children is culturally constructed and thus varies among societies. “While Western culture views children as individuals, moving towards autonomy, many cultures construct children as fundamentally part of a family, lineage or clan” (Ansell, 2004, p. 64). Morally acceptable decisions from children below the age of 18 therefore within the community become questionable and mostly above the age of 70 elderly citizens become so weak and dependent on others. To this I find my age range fitting perfectly well with engagement in participatory practice within the community.

I picked at least two refugees from each block except for zones D, C and E that I had 3 from each. Block D, C and E are vast and are the most closer to organization offices, block D is considered the headquarters of all zones. I concentrated on picking three from these blocks because it proves to me that these blocks are the most active communities and I one would definitely expect them to have a lot of community mobilization programs that encourage active participation of refugees and also the fact that these blocks have a lot of occupants than the rest. Primary informants comprised of refugees most of whom have stayed for long within the camp, the least stayed was a woman participant for 15 years. Of the 19 participants 10 were women and 9 men.

4.5.6 Key informants

Key informants refer to those in higher authorities that are linked to your area of study. Yin (2013), call these as ‘elites’ these are the most experienced and have developed experience in researcher’s field of inquiry. I had all in all 10 key informants; project coordinator, Sports officer, District Health Coordinator, two field officers from MCDMCH, the refugee leader for Refugee Alliance and four Community Based Officers (CBOs). These were purposively selected and some on snowball selection specifically due to the practical experience and knowledge they possess in relation to my topic of inquiry. Initially I had intended to interview at least one CBO from each block but this was far from my expectation as appointments with

some of the CBOs proved to be hard and some had travelled all throughout the time I was in the camp.

4.5.7 Data sources

I used both *secondary* and *primary* qualitative data as sources of knowledge to my study. Secondary qualitative refers to data which already exist. Just as quantitative research Kitchin & Tate (2000) reviews the whole series of archival qualitative data which an Interpretivist research can utilize through document analysis. Secondary qualitative data helps in providing a contextual background to the research through the review of existing literature. My first objective is to explore local understandings of participation, my aim is to bring to light the contrast between the global discourses of participation and how participation is locally perceived in my study area. This therefore requires an engagement with theoretical review of literature, hence document analysis proved so inevitable.

Mikkelson (1995) acknowledges the wealth of information from secondary sources however, she stresses the fact that in some cases it might be limited in the sense that, there are cultural products which might make it difficult to be adopted by a researcher or sometimes unsuitable for a particular topic within a different context. Sometimes it might be limited because it is poorly documented. In my case most of the journals and articles I had anticipated to help me much especially those from organizations on the ground where too old, they revealed information and statistics that were no longer pertaining in the camp, however though not so relevant to my study it gave me a picture of the past in relation to how things are carried out now, this was to some extent relevant in contrasting and helping me reflect on my study. These data sources were gathered through published books, articles, journals, government papers and newspapers, that all are in connection to my area of interest. Access to these has been through open access through the internet, while some of the private and public sources consent was attached.

Primary data is produced from empirical data obtained whilst in the field, this is first-hand information from the field as the researcher interacts with participants and the field to produce data pertaining to the research problem (R. Kitchin & N. Tate, 2000). There are several methods of qualitative research developed to produce primary data, these methods are sought to produce rich information as the methods allow investigation of phenomena in their natural settings. They provide data which is an 'enactment' of social behavior in its own social setting,

rather than a 'recounting' of it generated specifically for the research study(Ritchie et al., 2013). Bruce and Berg (2001), argues that qualitative procedures provides a means of accessing unquantifiable facts about the actual people researchers observe and talk to. As a result, qualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (ibid).

4.6 Research methods

Several actors and stakeholders were involved in my research, I triangulated qualitative tools to collect data within my setting to achieve my objectives. Triangulation according to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), is a practice of relying on multiple methods. This approach illuminates limitations and when what people say is inconsistent with what people do forms of triangulation such as observing action and interviewing respondents are useful, not to show that informants are lying or wrong but to reveal new dimensions of social reality where people do not always act consistently. Inconsistencies can help to reveal the complexity of a situation. I used face to face in-depth interviews, key informants interviews, Focus Group discussions, informal conversations, researcher's diary and observations to ensure my findings were as accurate as possible. I discussed all these below:

4.6.1 Interviews

Interviewing is one of the primary means in ethnographic research through which researchers attempt to grasp with the contexts and contents of different people's everyday social, cultural, political and economic lives. As a means of gleaning information from conversations within and between various research communities, interviews can range from the highly structured to the relatively unstructured (Crang & Cook, 2007). A qualitative interview is about listening to what people are saying and being non-judgmental. It allows a more thorough examination of experiences, feelings and opinions that quantitative closed questionnaire could never hope to capture. The difference is characterized such that questionnaire concerns numbers or facts and interviews concerns meanings and beliefs which better reflect a person's own thinking(R. Kitchin & N. Tate, 2000)

I used in-depth interviews because of what they are capable of achieving. Crang & Cook (2007) articulates that interviews can range from the highly structured (akin to questionnaire survey in which the researcher asks predetermined questions in a specific order), through the semi-structured (where the researcher and participant(s) set some broad parameters to a

discussion), to the relatively unstructured (akin to a friendly conversation with no predetermined focus). I used semi-structured and unstructured interviews with my primary informants. Keeping the interviews focused and aspiring to get much planned information as guided by interview guides, semi-structured interviews were useful. However, I did not restrict myself to my interview guides alone, the interviews were in some cases unstructured. Considering my personality having a crucial impact on my positionality in the field, I took up unstructured interviews (to build up the friendship) as this allowed my subjects to build more trust and reveal freely their experiences to me. Such arguments stands much in conformity with what Moser (2008) stipulates about personality as a main criteria by which a researcher is judged and perceived in his/her research setting.

However, it was very difficult to isolate the different methods in the field especially when conducting unstructured interviews. Some of my informal conversations (through unstructured interviews), turned out to be group interviews. This was so because of other outsiders nearby intruding in the conversations. Though disturbing, making me a bit off truck my research, I realized in the end that it was for my good because I collected rich information. In most instances, other refugees outside my intended targeted participants would find the discussions worthy adding their voice. It is in such instances that I grasped the various participatory practices within the camp, with the most uprising difficulties and challenges faced by most refugees because it was very unrealistic for one to give false information as others would counter object to it.

Most participants were actively participating in what I would call ‘open environment’-they found the atmosphere created interesting and free to share their experiences. This implies that some were generally free been interviewed alone in their homes through semi-structured interviews (see image 2) and others vis-a-vis unstructured interviews. However, there was also something unique about this audience. It is considered a great opportunity to be spotted out and talked to in the camp as many rarely get to have this chance especially from field staffs. Being attached to MCDMCH as already mentioned, presented to me both an opportunity and a challenge. They viewed



me as one of the field staff even when am on my own personal tasks of my research and so far even efforts in trying to make them aware of my position and intentions proved difficult. I could see through my lens issues of expectations and change they were glancing through my research.

Being a student coming from abroad and especially from Norway also presented another challenge. One of the grassroots Christian based organization operating in the camp, the Refugee Alliance its headquarters are in Kristiansand, Norway. A Norwegian based Christian ministry working to support, strengthen and give hope from God to refugees on their way to safety and restored life. Their aim is to empower and support refugees through the various projects they implement in the camp. The organization has been in operating in Meheba since 2009. Just from the onset into the camp one would picture how actively this organization is within the community. It has built clinics in most refugee's zones, ambulances, its symbols on most small scale entrepreneurs business it offers micro-finance and also education scholarships and sponsorship of most vulnerable children. Through my introductions little had I realized that it impacted greatly on the warm welcome I received from respondents and how many used to approach me when they see me just to be interviewed. Coming from Norway, they had thought am on a monitoring and evaluation task of Refugees Alliance programs and recruiting new beneficiaries. This greatly affected my responses as most of them were just giving me their grievances with the organization, and those benefiting from some programs it became evident that they were attempting to answer some questions about their experiences with participatory practices in a positive way.

To some participants it seemed that answering the questions in a negative way particularly their challenges and problems meant that they would jeopardize the chance of been included in some of the beneficial programs under RA. To deal with such a challenge, I assured my informants that whatever information availed to me would remain in confidence between me and them. I further informed them that no individual or household would be removed or reinstated from a project because my study was being conducted purely for academic purposes. Moreover, the use of participant observation partly helped to minimize this challenge due to the informal way of interacting with participants during several camp meetings, mobile home visits and counselling, since I was there in action (i.e. contributing my ideas during meetings) I was able to directly observe and picture how the whole process was been carried out respectively.

The length of the interviews varied depending on the respondents. They ranged from one hour to those as long as four hours. Initially the time taken was prolonged because in most of my interviews I had to rely on translation from my research assistants. Translation was done to those who could not fluently speak *luvale* and this was through my research assistant's help. In cases where respondents were fluent in *luvale* I personally took it up myself. These interviews were conducted in homes, meeting halls, markets and offices.

For my key informants I used semi-structured interviews. These interviews can be a problematic task, given the fact that key informants are well experienced and have developed experiences. Interviews then can tend to be intimidating and time restricted leading to 'panic interviews' in some cases (Crang & Cook, 2007). Coupled with that elites are hard to access, Yin (2012) suggests that important topics must be covered earlier in the interview and work-up to other topics. Hence, before undertaking such interviews it is lesson enough to have a good background on the topic, this will enable to ask the most important questions for making the most of the limited time available with informants. Also important to note is that contacts and appointments need to be made earlier in the study to get a chance of an interview with them, this is because, besides having busy schedules, their access is also restricted by institute gatekeepers (Crang & Cook, 2007; Yin, 2013). For organization's I followed them up in their offices and for field staffs I interacted with them on our many field outreach programs and later in their offices.

The greatest challenge with key informant's interviews I had found was bridging the gap between practice and theory. I am not too sure if this was ethically justifiable, however to some extent it played a role on how I was perceived all throughout my stay within the camp. Off course I approached the field with an open mind, eager to learn from them and not to be an all knowing scholar. However, some practices exhibited by some top officials were way beyond acceptable, actually outside their working mandate. During interviews when I get the chance to discuss with them we would debate much about such upfront. With such up-close information I would reflect back to my academic scholarly knowledge and this frustrated me much, in some instances I stood up against such practices as I could not just hold it and let it be silent.

This meant that even during my attachment to the ministry, my volunteer work was purely straight forward with their written down mandate which was a bit different from the actual practices. This I believed offended some within and the way I was treated and perceived was

different. Such uprising issues were basically issues with social capital when it came to choosing beneficiaries for some uprising projects or selecting final individuals for resettlement in a third world country as part of the durable solution for refugees. Officers committed a lot of injustice and selection was on account of bribes received, their harlots, close friends, and on many other beneficial account, this sidelined the true beneficiaries to such programs.

4.6.2 Participant Observation

Mason (2002), defines participant observation as a method of data collection that involves the researcher to engage wholly or deeply themselves in a research setting in order to observe and experience a range of dimensions of social phenomena in and out of that setting at first hand. Crang & Cook (2007) writes that participant observation in its basic form can be described as a three-stage process in which the researcher somehow; first, gains access to a particular community, second, lives and/works among the people under study in order to grasp their worldviews and ways of life and third, travels back to the academy to make sense of this through writing up an account of that community's culture. In particular, observation focuses upon people's behavior in an attempt to learn about the meanings behind and attached to actions (R. Kitchin & N. Tate, 2000).

Participant observations as one technique employed in my study helped me to take note of the patterns of refugee's everyday practices and experiences within the community. In this study I had the opportunity to work with MCDMCH that introduced me to many of their community services projects. I personally got close to some of the local meetings that were organized by refugees themselves through some of my close friends I made during my stay. I observed four of such locally organized meetings that are conducted once in a month in four blocks. Ethical conditions apply in using participant observation in geographical studies. Participant observation as a method makes less room for suspicion to the researcher, who can 'hide' the role as an observant. This is highly ethically discussable, as it exploits the, informants without their awareness of it and has not given their consent (Kitchin & Tate, 2000).

In this case, all research participants, meaning the members in all the four meetings, were aware of my presence in the observation. They were all informed about being observed, and it seemed they were happy to have me around as mostly they tried to keep me engaged in their

discussions, I felt to belong during the meetings. During the actual observation I placed my chair among the circle of members. As the meeting went on, I made notes of what I observed, in addition to drawing a chart of the meeting participants. I also tried to capture the directions of the dialogue by drawing lines between the participants in my notebook. I made notes of all the words I could grasp and make sense of, and the language they were using in all these four meetings I was very familiar too. Participant observation proved to me as one valuable method to watch, listen, reflect and engage with refugees in conversation and their everyday activities. Moreover this technique also helped me to build rapport and it was through this that I was able to identify some of the potential informants.

In most of our field work under the ministry I was attached to, I practiced what Kitchin & Tate (2000) calls covertly participant observation. This is where the community has no knowledge that they are being studied. This strategy presents ethical concerns, however it is usually justified by arguing that the group would not have agreed to take part otherwise or would have acted differently if they had known about the researcher's presence. In my previous encounters during observations of some sensitive issues I realized that if I needed to observe I was to be deceptive as a researcher and present my other role as a field staff, however taking note of everything happening during the discussions.

I acted deceptive in one of the mobile counselling meetings in block D which I remember I had been practically thrown out of the room from block C because of power relations, they considered me to be young and single. This played a crucial role in reducing the power differential between refugees and me as a researcher because there was no much direct contact with them. Also during some home visits in some blocks, I never wanted my presence to disrupt their usual conducts hence I supplemented arguments along with my fellow field staffs where necessary whilst assuming the role of a field staff. I used this approach in most but not all of the refugees meetings within the camp that are managed under MCDMCH-community services, in some where I knew I could easily be welcomed I made sure I was introduced as a researcher.

4.6.3 Focus group discussions

Initially I had planned out two FGDs consisting of eight participants each block represented by one participant, however it turned out the other way round. I had all together six FGDs with my primary informants, as some of the semi- structured interviews taken in participants

homes turned out to be group interviews. This despite unplanned provided me with much 'rich' information. Kitchin & Tate (2000) describe a focus group discussion as generally a group discussion consisting of three to ten individuals discussing a particular topic under the guidance of a moderator who promotes interaction and directs the conversation. The dynamics of the group often bring out feelings and experiences that might not have been articulated in a one-one interview. This method proved to be the most appropriate one for parents/guardians because they had tight time schedule which to some extent made individual interviews challenging to be conducted. This method enabled me to obtain a variety of responses that I feel would have not been obtained from individual persons.

Furthermore, FGDs was used to explore refugee's problems, challenges associated with the participatory practices and the unintended consequences it has particularly on those not affiliated to any. I think I managed to bring out the true reflection of my participants as the discussions proved to be fruitful and interesting with a lot of new emerging issues as they kept arguments flowing. My major role in this method was to facilitate the flow of discussions and keeping the discussion on track.

4.6.4 Informal conversations

Informal conversations were used in the process of collecting data, we shared light moments with my informants during and after individual interviews. The purpose was to create an open and conducive environment for both me as the researcher and my participants and this called for been close to them by creating friendship. This enabled me to get closer to them thus building rapport. This method was relevant as it helped me minimize the challenges I often used to encounter with individual interviews. Generally, we could spend much time selling merchants in the local markets and it was in such places refugees were open enough to tell their stories and in some issues of community participation were arose.

4.6.5 Researcher's diary

I used my diary every day when am alone in a private space, I could write down field notes on what I observe and try to relate that to the theoretical world. Nearly every day presented issues that puzzled and I reflected much upon at the end of the day. Sometimes I observed scenarios that were hard to digitally record or picture because there were just happening without my expectations. On such occasions my research diary was helpful as I wrote down such events and reflected upon to give it some meaning.

4.7 Field relations and experiences

4.7.1 Attachment to the ministry

Attachment to the ministry presented both an opportunity and a challenge. It proved so helpful in identifying relevant programs and gaining access to the meetings and interacting with beneficiaries although it also presented a methodology dilemma. The presence of my research assistants during our interactions with some of the beneficiaries presented a challenge. Balancing the role of a translator and as a field staff became problematic, because during interviews there were some issues concerning the ministry that popped up and she wanted to address the issues there and then. I also sensed that the beneficiaries perceived this as an opportunity to express their grievances. The key challenge in such a setting of having both officials and beneficiaries is a tendency of exaggerating or understating of some information in anticipation of assistance. I overcame this challenge with the use of participant observation as a cross-checking strategy.

On the overall I was often dependent on the ministry for their insights as well as access. However we collaborated well together through reciprocity modes. There were times we carried out several vulnerability exercise for the ministry and during our outreach there were some challenges that were arising of my research interest. The field officers made the interviews so flexible to allow me to pursue the arising matters, consequently during my research visits such cases emerged were I had to make my interviews flexible to allow my research assistants follow up the matters promptly. This facilitated a smooth dialogue between the researcher and the practitioners.

4.7.2 Building rapport

Building rapport has become so ideal in qualitative inquiry, rapport is the relation characterized by harmony and conformity. It refers to the confidence of a subject in willingness to cooperate. A researcher establishes or builds on rapport so that participants can feel sufficiently comfortable to disclose information; their intent is to attain ends shaped primarily by their own needs(Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). It enables the researcher to develop cordial relationships with the research participants. During my study, I spent my first two weeks in an effort to get to know and create friendship with the refugees and also allowing them to know me better. I was actively involved in various activities that refugees engaged in, both in homes and in the community.

Some of the activities included group fishing, un-shelling groundnuts, community works such as the working together venture in constructing a meeting hall, I participated in helping to bring some building materials closer to the main builders, community rice cultivation and selling of rice at the nearest copper mine industry residential housing in Manyama. Profits realized were kept in the village bank for assistance of some uprising problems within its shared community members. This was done in block H with refugees mostly from Burundi and Rwanda which I found to be one of the blocks where they cooperate very well as a community in caring for each other. We prepared and exchanged various cooking recipes with the available local ingredients with some refugee's households. Some of those lucky Saturday's were RA would stage a community evening cinema outside the camp we could dash out to watch and these were preferred by the refugees themselves. Whilst watching we would share and eat together some snacks. It was through such activities that helped foster friendship with refugees and further enhanced by interaction.

4.7.3 Emotion cases

Box 1: Researchers reflections on refugees lived realities with psychosocial effects

It is not a camp it is a community where one could expect lived realities not to be all that perfect but at least normal, in a way that its members are happy and have something to live for tomorrow, a life where ones heart is at peace and wishes best for the future generation. This is far reached Meheba, it is a place where though people have lived there for many years, still feel insecure, not with security matters but it's a battle with the 'emotion self', it's a place where people are still living like they are waiting for the last train to take them home, but when is this going to ever happen? This is sought of contradictory as they seem to appear settled at a distance but when you come close to them you discover this insecurity. They live a life where the truth becomes so hard to unravel, some can have money and flourishing so well but as per custom you don't need to show it as no one will not treat you like a member of the community, it is a community that has become too reluctant on assistance, vulnerable to assistance from grassroots organization's and people are living on this slogan "a refugee is forever poor" the struggle for everyone to be included on the vulnerability list is so appearing (field notes. 2015).

In my encounters with research participants I encountered a lot of difficult and emotionally stressful situations. During one of the focus group I struggled not to show my tears as the stories and experiences that were coming up were so emotionally touching, I failed to contain it and I cried most throughout, my research assistants assisted in moderating at some instances. One respondent shared her ordeal to the group how she was so helpless to an extent of sleeping with some unnamed top leaders just to be included on the vulnerability list to keep her family going through food transfers. Several case encounters of how hard it is to be included on vulnerability lists and other beneficial projects heads up came up emotionally touching as it proved so hard as they claimed top official used too much favoritisms and in support of their social networks. “It was all about who you know”, so they claimed.

The other woman further narrated how her eleven year old daughter was raped by some field officers and though she had the money to take the case to court, she initially had no supporting powers. She was warned by the same people of been thrown out of the community if the matter is reported to the security wing. Issues of how hard it is to obtain a visa stamp and the reparations’ of being found travelling without it is huge. An elderly man shared his experience of how he was found in Solwezi town selling his merchandise without a visa stamp and thrown into prison. With no one to push for him on his behalf he spent and served two years in prison. Issues of how hard it is to get a decent job and how they have no meaningful unions to stand up for their rights were raised with eminent displeasures. Initially refugees in Zambia are not allowed to move outside without a visa stamp and are not allowed to work in Zambia.

Whilst in the camp and especially during my office time I could meet traumatized mothers seeking assistance on our door steps, children crying of hunger and assistance with finances at school. It was nearly a day routine of such cases and I questioned myself most of the instances the missing link between community services programs and refuges within the camp. This experience of seeing and interacting with people affected with community confrontations was very emotionally stressful and transformed the way I was thinking and writing about the whole situation. Although emotions greatly impact on our theoretical and analytical lens, it does enhance our analysis and provides better insights that can inform policy (Lund, 2011).

Before approaching the field I knew how emotionally stressful it could be researching post war crisis settings however little did I consider it’s much impact on me as a researcher and

throughout the entire process. Lund (2012) in her experience with emotional encounters in Sri Lanka, points out the risk of making one not see clearly and be biased about what people inform particularly when guilt is felt. I felt this challenge in many instances during field work and my analysis phase. Whilst in the field I encountered several emotional cases in the intercourse with my several research partnerships I had initiated (with research participants and various stakeholders). It presented several dilemmas, at many instances I questioned my moral obligation of been there, was I exploiting my participants? What were they gaining or benefiting in answering my questions? Was it provoking any meaningful change or it was just taking advantage of them? I felt vulnerable, reduced to an empty vessel so to say with no legal power to initiate change, and I could see it in their glimpse that they were expecting some positive change, the task seemed huge to me with barely any meaningful insight given to my presence from stakeholders.

From my personal observation grassroots organization's operating on the ground did not take any of my experiences of my participants lived realities with consideration. It appeared to me that what seemed to matter was their mandate in meeting their mission in collaboration with their major donors. With such a partnership initiated it leaves much room for doubt if the other side (Stakeholders) took any lessons that could inform policy and lead to a positive change. On my side I felt I collaborated well with all my participants, with my research participants we shared empathy and hence the knowledge production. It was a frustrating process knowing that I was there not to help directly but to produce knowledge that could help only indirectly. On the other side, I came in conclusion that it was worthy being there as I had a new perception when dealing with crisis related research. It provoked critical reflections during my empathy with my research participants and in some ways I believe they also learnt something through our interactions that might influence them to think and act positively of their own situation.

4.7.4 Researcher's positionality, personality and reflexivity

Geographical research is very unpredictable, it throws up different unique relations. Relations enacted by one researcher in the same field space can be differently indulged by the other researcher. This is so because of the geographical nature of social research, feminist geographers argue that the sort of knowledge produced entirely depends on who its makers are, hence situating knowledge-that is avoiding overgeneralized, universalizing claims made by previous generations of supposedly 'all-seeing and all-knowing' scholars(Rose, 1997).

Jackson(2000) cited in Moser (2008) argues that if researchers are subjective beings who carry their individual biographies, the knowledge produced are necessarily affected, thus all forms of knowledge produced are situated.

Feminist geographers in particular constantly employ the concept of *critical reflexivity* as a strategy for situating knowledge. Reflexivity as defined by Kim England (1994) in Dowling (2000, p. 28) "...is a process of constant, self-conscious, scrutiny of the self as a researcher and of the research process..." Being a reflexive researcher implies relating to our own power and the relations we have to those being studied. Indirectly, these power relations and statuses (positions) which come between researchers and their subjects may affect the information and data collected in the field (Dowling, 2000). Glesne and Peshkin (1992), asserts that researchers cannot control positionality it is determined in relation with others however they can make other certain choices that affect those relationships. For example entering into research with a mindset of openness, curiosity and willingness to interact in collaborative ways is likely to result in a different positionality than one in which the researcher maintains a mindset of self-centeredness and control. Positionality may affect the way responses are given out in the research process.

Despite engaging myself wholly in most of their activities within the community and the way of life of my respondents, it nevertheless gave me an 'insider' status as my position continued to swing between 'insider' and 'outsider'. In a way our spaces were constituted in what Katz (1994) call *spaces of betweenness*- a position that is neither inside nor outside. Acknowledging this, attempts were made not to alter people's lived experiences and perceptions in order to access the information needed. I constantly assessed my position so that I do not intimidate my respondents. In some instances I flexibly created positional spaces in claiming an insider position, whether this was unethical remains debatable as it was so justifiable in my case. In the field I was presented with many dilemmas that I felt might have influenced strongly the way my respondents behaved. Coming from abroad and specifically Norway, the countries headquarters of the most active Christian grassroots organization in the camp-RA my participants falsely took me as one representative of RA. I felt that my constant reminding them of my research objectives proved elusive as respondents continued to answer questions in a positive way, answering in a negative manner to them meant that they could risk the chances of continued support from RA. I dealt with this particular challenge by covertly covering where I was pursuing my studies from.

My shared positionality with participants; being black, Zambian and an originally inhabitant of the area, as I could also speak in the area local language also played a significant role in positioning my partial insider position. I felt deeply immersed in the community, we could speak so freely, mingle very often and carry out a lot of day-to-day activities together with my subjects. This position is one that I didn't precisely negotiate but I felt it particularly when we exchanged conversations together. One of my Burundian female participant I took note stated that:

You are more like our sister, you have been here before, and you understand the way of life in our African setting. Our been open to you is attested to the fact that we treat you as our own, in this way we trust you, we don't joke with anyone neither are we straight forward with everyone, you have earned our trust and we entrust you with this task we know you will deliver only but the truth, maybe in future this way of life can be the thing of the past, for the benefit of our future generation.

Mullings (1999) also experienced the above partial insider status in her research in Jamaica, being black and African presented to her a sought of shared positionality with local black managers as she felt that black managers reciprocated politely well in grieving their difficulties as compared to white foreigners in the free zones. This was not basing much on issues of race but it came out to be one appearing instance. However, while we were positioned similarly, as a master's student coming from abroad, respondents felt that I was very powerful and much knowledgeable. To address this I continuously reminded and made them aware that they are knowledgeable and are key experts in the issues been discussed than I do and that is why I'm here to learn from them.

My position I discovered was not only based on biographies, my unique individual social and emotional qualities-*personality* played a major role. "In practicing reflexivity we would benefit from a more thorough evaluation of aspects of ourselves that are most relevant to our own research context... I would like to suggest adding another dimension to this exploration of the self to include our individual personalities"(Moser, 2008, p. 389). Crang & Cook (2007), recognize qualitative research as an unbiased business, never free from subjectivity. The knowledge being produced are affected by the researchers individuality and particularities, like experience and culture, makes it impossible for a researcher to get rid of his identity to become objective and neutral (Crang & Cook, 2007). Descriptions like the researcher status, skin color and socio-economic background gives no information about the

researcher's personal abilities, like being extrovert or introvert. Such personal qualities may have much more influence in the research process and in the field.

During the initial design phase whilst in Norway I reflected through my own personality that I might not be suitable to do research at all. I am not a very outgoing but at the same time am always eager to learn about new things. Trying to imagining myself in the field was difficult, but I gathered courage to take up the new task. Entering the field, the fact that I acted according to local customs of respect, lived and ate in the village homes with them, and kept a smiling open attitude made me feel that the field was open to my presence and that my personality helped me to become a better researcher and an insider in some instances.

4.8 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis and interpretation was an ongoing process throughout the research. It started in the field as I took field notes, held informal dialogue, made observation and reflected on the collected raw data. During fieldwork the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed precisely and exactly as recorded in their original verbatim without editing them. Each day at night I read the interviews in order to gain an overview about the nature of issues that the different individuals were raising. I made interpretative summaries and did the coding on the basis of emerging themes, themes that were prominent and of interest for the study were identified and used for analysis and interpretation.

4.9 Research ethics

Research ethics are concerned with the conduct of researchers, their responsibilities and their obligations to those involved in the research including the general public and the subjects of the research. Researchers ought to be sincere with informants about the aims of the research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). This study upheld ethical standards. Questions were phrased in such a way that they did not pose any emotional or psychological harm on the respondent. I explained the aims of the research to the multiple gatekeepers involved who facilitated my access and permission for my research was granted in a specified period. Since purposive sampling was employed, respondents were first asked if they may be possibly be included in the sample for academic purpose those who felt that they could not be interviewed for various reasons were left out. Thus informed consent was taken into consideration. Dowling (2000), argues that when conducting research, qualitative methods often involve an invasion of someone's privacy. Asking informants sensitive questions, which might concern I

respected the anonymity of my informants by not using their names in the written version of the study. In some cases I used fictitious names to protect my informants and masking other distinguishing features (such as countries of origin especially those I interviewed represented in some board meetings, stating their countries could have exposed them easily to be identified). In instances where I put their pictures was on account of consent. With my key informants, were their names have been used is on account of informed consent. I asked permission from the key informants whether to use their names or not in the written version of the research.

I assured the research independent and impartial as well as no harm will follow the research participants because of their involvement in the research process. This means that the study did not pose any psychological damage to the researched and the researcher as well (Dowling 2010). In upholding this, questions were phrased in a way that they did not pose any harm on my informants. I constantly considered all the above ethical issues all throughout the research process.

5 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, REFUGEES UNDERSTANDING OF PARTICIPATION

Zambian Luvale proverbs:

“Hasushila vavavulu hazova”-Where many people urinate, it becomes wet

“Njamba afwila makunga kuvula”-An elephant dies because of many spears

English saying *“Many hands make light work”*

5.1 Introduction

The above proverbs describe the concept of community participation, in a refugee community where there are some extreme stressful memories and challenged livelihoods, a sense of belonging to a place becomes of crucial importance. To belong to a caring community gives stability, restores refugees dignity and the right to influence their own situation, supportive communities are thus crucial. Participation in community activities empower people and give a sense of control (even though it is to some extent limited in a refugee situation), in the absence of social support from the community the refugee becomes vulnerable. In my two months field experiences, I depicted the spirit of togetherness among refugees, the dynamics varied across zones. Refugees acknowledge the difficult economic circumstances they encounter on a daily base and are much determined to organize themselves within the community to collectively help each other either through self-mobilization or public committed activities ranging from organized village banks, Safe Haven Homes, Gender Based Violence (GBV) committees, Women affairs committee, Income Generating Activities (IGA), neighborhood watch, and many other I shall discuss in some chapters to follow. How then do refugees understand participation, becomes the focus of this chapter.

I shall present my findings drawn from FGDs, field notes, informal dialogue, in-depth interviews and participant observation on community ideas and understanding of what constitutes participation in the context of Meheba refugee settlement. I will highlight refugee’s perceptions and understanding of participation to depict how participation is locally conceptualized. By so doing, I shall be well able to place a rung from the ladder of participation where participation in practice falls on in the case of Meheba. The discussion

will particularly shed more light on participation in theory and in practice as this is the main essence of this chapter as it attempts to answer research question number one and two: **a. *How refugees define participation? And, b. Are there any similarities or contrast between the local construction of participation and the global discourse of participation?*** This shall be clarified from the analytical perspectives of the alternative development theories on the discourse of participation.

5.2 Global discourse of participation

Community based approach permeate all humanitarian, states and other actors operating in protracted situations. It is now internationally acknowledged that policies that contribute to the socio-economic activities of the host communities must be promoted and thereby refugees as members of these communities ought to be treated as potential “agents of development”(UNHCR, 2007). UNHCR states in its mandates the essence of partnership with affected populations as one potential gateway in developing individual capacities, reducing patterns of dependence⁶ among refugees and permits refugees to maintain the sense of dignity, purpose and promotes self-reliance (ibid). Simpson, Wood, and Daws (2003), argue in line with the popular argument in community development that if communities are to survive economic and social crises, they can best do so by becoming empowered, by building their existing capacity and by using the skills they have to make their own futures. Broad-based community participation is seen to facilitate this process, drawing extensively on the resource created by rural traditions of volunteerism and self-sufficiency.

Participatory techniques are common and are becoming increasingly common in the developing world as cities and spaces are becoming democratized. Participatory approaches to decision making through use of public spaces are becoming more important and more commonplace. In policy, participation entails popular involvement of the self and organized groups within the community to actively take part in influencing the formulated policies. In essence individuals are the real experts to remedy crises in their areas of setting. World Bank defines participation as a process through which primary stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them(Chambers, 2004).

⁶ In emergencies, refugees are often regarded as helpless and passive recipient of external assistance. In the long-run such an approach increases patterns of dependency(UNHCR, 2007)

5.3 Local perspectives and understanding of participation: a case of Meheba refugee settlement

Preliminary themes emerged from the data on the first question asked on refugees perspectives and understanding of participation. Refugees all discussed their experiences in line with processes of *powerlessness* to influence policy and *no legitimate voice* accorded to effect change. I take up the three levels from the ladder of participation (non-participation, Tokenism and Citizen Power) in discussing these uprising matters and accessing the level of participation in Meheba.

5.4 Non-Participation

The bottom level of the ladder constitutes non-participatory rungs of manipulation and therapy. It is sought to substitute genuine participation. Manipulation as the lowest rung is where the public is influenced into thinking that public participation is in progress meanwhile the opposite is prevailing. This kind of participation can be present in meetings where the officials influence people and not the other way round. Therapy progresses a step ahead of manipulation, however it still falls under non-participatory levels where people have no power to act on anything, it assumes that people are mentally ill, people are put to work to change circumstances but initially have no say in procedures (Arnstein, 1969). There are various ways officials shush people in public meetings and several other privately arranged activities. I analyze emerging findings of manipulation and therapy based on major sub-heading of powerlessness:

5.4.1 Powerlessness

More than half of the refugees shared their lack of power to initiate change in the community, they perceived participation as a much emphasized process by top officials that must be undertaken because of their status and their showing respect and appreciation to the Zambian community for accepting them and taking them in as Zambians to maintain peace and sanity in the community. In a way participation is viewed as an obligatory process where outcomes are arrived at from top officials and on the overall as a means to implemented programs.

“They (Zambians) received us and we have lived here for many years in harmony together, we are no longer refugees, Zambia is home. We are often times called for meetings and dialogues...well, we accept that because meetings are created for us. If we don’t attend who shall know we are suffering and need help.” (Angolan 56 years old woman).

When dealing with refugees it becomes important to acknowledge that these are people who at one point lost everything (physical, social and financial capital). Some have endured through psychological trauma, recovery becomes one hard process to achieve. Much efforts to assist them are merely viewed and preconceived as a fundamental humanitarian duty regarding their helpless situations. However, when assistance is entirely entrusted among themselves to help themselves, that is let change be driven by themselves and be the key experts in drafting solutions, participation can simply amount to change. It so seems something, somewhere misses when refugees perceive participation as a means and not as an end. One senior refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who has stayed in the settlement for more than ten years, at the time of interviews gave me particular impressions, very thoroughly and thoughtful:

“We have lived here for years and we will end up living here but instead of seeing us as people it simply seems they view us as numbers and statistics on their attendance lists or access to the much needed funds they share among themselves. The truth is that we refugees do not have the same rights as others when it comes to deciding how we will live and raise our kids it isn’t our decision. Is this how you treat refugees? I had thought we were the ones who knew what’s best for us, the ones to make the decisions about how to feed, shelter and raise our kids.”

There is a lot in the above quote, it is a very strong reminder of how so much refugee’s assistance relies so much on policy and makes decisions that side-line and disempowers refugees themselves and in doing so disregard and weakens their capabilities to take action. The ability to act and take influence is much dependent on power, if refugees are to be accorded a conducive open environment change could definitely prevail, however the feeling of powerlessness hinders them most from taking any action, they leave everything in the hands of top officials, some for fear of been forcefully repatriated or excluded from beneficial ongoing projects, the only option left to such hopeless refugees is the play of dependability. Similar to such findings Kreitzer (2002), revealed also how Liberian women refugees in Ghana where hindered from active engagement in planning within the camp, the women disclosed that management discouraged them, as they were not availed an open space to take opportunity in planning for the camp.

5.5 Tokenism

Informing, consultation and placation rungs proceed to levels of tokenism. This is perhaps the level most practiced in Meheba. Tokenism allows the have-nots to hear and to have a voice: Informing and creating awareness is a very important step towards true participation, this has to be a two way process not only do citizens learn from officials, officials also learn from citizens by obtaining first-hand information as constructed from lived realities on the ground (Arnstein, 1969). It is important that the public is informed about projects and plans at an early stage because if they do not know about projects and plans on time, it makes it harder to truly get involved and exercise influence. At this level Arnstein identifies low quality of information as one drawback to true participation, in most cases communication is one way through the media, pamphlets, posters, responses to inquiries and in some cases the internet. Findings of this study also showed a varying degree of one sided information limiting participation within the community, to this participation was viewed as of no value to the public. Going through the camp especially the capital zone D, it is filled with relevant notices stuck on notice boards informing refugees of upcoming projects and arising matters, but the question is does this reach the community evenly? Taking into consideration; the long distance apart the zones, difficulties in accessing transport and the community knowledge base.

How do they expect me to know when I cannot even construct or read a sentence in English, am getting old now I rarely walk to Zone D to check on what is happening? The truth is we in zone H are side-lined, we are never told in good time (Burundian 45 years old woman).

*My daughter in luvale we say “**Linoka asumina wina kukuma**” A snake bites because the hole has ended...There is a limit to every person’s patience or endurance. We have suffered a lot and we will take it upon ourselves one day to go to the counter public and mobilize ourselves for our own movement. We have refused to be used as mere objects in projects that either we are never aware of or sometimes we participate but the outcomes are always contrary to what we agree on (54 years old Angolan man, Zone F).*

To this participation is taken in varying types, the public organized invited spaces are viewed as going through empty vessels where it exploits the participants. It is biased as it avails information only in English and as backed all throughout FGDs beneficial projects are always on account of social networks. Officials try by all means to hide such from the public and

only avail to their social networks, self-exclusion therefore becomes apparent. Respondents defined true participation in locally organized activities like the women's village bank program active in zones D,C and H, community home visits where some refugees have organized themselves by carrying out various self-projects for self-help of its members, such projects include gardening, knitting, craft making and rendering many services to some. They felt participation amounts to something meaningful in such avenues because they are well capable to take control and influence outcomes and are never intimidated in the entire process. To them what seem to matter is the self-worthy and positive outcomes at the end of the day.

Consultation and placation all fall under tokenism level. Consultation rung to Arnstein (1969) is easiest described as "inviting citizens' opinions and therefore "consulting" the citizen in the decision making or planning process. This is, just like informing, a valid step towards full participation but when not combined with other forms of participation it is simply not enough. Just by consulting the public, there is no guarantee that citizen concerns and ideas will be taken into account (Arnstein, 1969). Means of consultation are attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings and public hearings. Consultation to this therefore cannot form a baseline for judging full participation. Placation is the highest rung of tokenism, Arnstein writes about it as the level where citizens actually begin to have some influence, though usually in far from optimal situations. One of the examples Arnstein uses to illustrate placation is participation in Model Cities advisory and planning committees. Here the citizens get to advise and even to plan a great deal but it is the power holder that finally gets to decide whether to even take these ideas into account or not. This is exactly what most of my respondents attested to, in the emerging sub-heading of having no legitimate voice to influence social change:

5.5.1 No legitimate voice

Respondents view participation on basis of voice,they claim participation to be a frustrating process where their voices are never listened to, respected and heard in the community.

"We once had some external survey under the ministry of Health. They(practitioners) called and asked us of the major problems we face with healthcare (as always the case). By that time we only had one nurse and no doctor in our zone clinic. We explained how difficult it was for one nurse to attend to all of our patients,this in a way we made it clear, made her(nurse) to have much pride and acted so rudely and disrespectful in delivering health care to the public.

We had instances where pregnant women were dying. To our surprise, the following morning the same nurse protested and called for a meeting where she blamed us for been so ungrateful and abandoned her work for three days or so. We don't know what happened afterwards to her and the management but they returned the same nurse back. Do you think this nurse can treat us well after such an instance?"(35 year old DRC male respondent).

Inviting people to platforms is one essential way to meaningful participation, however if limited to vices of consultation and informing only, participation amounts to nothing. Final decision arrived at ought to be laid in a horizontal way that respects and take up participants concerns into consideration. Meaningful participation as acknowledged by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) takes into consideration primary stakeholders participation as a human right, with the primary objective of empowering refugees to realize their rights and improve social equity within the framework of the Agency's mandate, values, and other UN principles(Rempel, 2009). Projects or surveys ought to recognizes the right of people to be involved in, and empowered to, express their needs and to be part of the decisions which affect their lives and part of the process to decide their own future in a way that contributes to their empowerment(ibid).

UNRWA operations in Syria among palestine refugees offers the best lessons the agency learnt with participatory activities among refugees. Rempel (2009), reports that the failure of the agency in its many operations in retaining a top-down approach to development led to a massive popular refugee movement that witnessed a growing number of refugee demonstrations, petitions, and the rejuvenation of annual commemorations of the Palestinian *Nakba*. Its operations left many refugees feeling vulnerable to the balance of power with no say in the determination of their future process thus Refugee demands for representation and participation eventually found expression in the form of a popular refugee movement. This movement went massive when it declared the Agency's school in Deheishe refugee camp as a "non-UNRWA" site in order to facilitate the convening of the first popular refugee conference in the West Bank. UNRWA now operates much with meaningful stakeholder participation, of which it defines as an active, free and meaningful participatory partnership between UNRWA and its stakeholders, and in particular, [the Agency's] primary stakeholders, the Palestine refugees(Rempel, 2009).

Meheba public participatory activities of refugees are of no much deviant from UNRWA operations in Syria. Refugees in Meheba have lost the trust and confidence of participation

especially those arranged by UNHCR in partnership with the government. This is attributed to the fact that participation was not living up to its promises. However the major issue at hand is that participatory activities in Meheba, those invited spaces arranged by UNHCR are still under tokenism with the rungs of consultation and informing. The problem seen is that refugees compare UNHCR activities with RA participatory activities and from their expectations, UNHCR being the biggest humanitarian organisation its activities were supposedly to be more of placation as compared to RA. However this is not the case, RA operates hand in hand with refugees of which some are hired as staffs decisions once made in Meheba are implemented there and then there is no need of taking them to outside meheba top offices for final decisions like what UNHCR currently does. Failing to understand the different humanitarian operational understanding of participation among refugees thus presents a problem.

Others claimed that they had sufficient evidence that their voices had no impact on policies, whatever might be discussed in meetings ended in Meheba and in offices of field staffs right there in Meheba. The views that reached to implementation phase are mere false information. In instances where evidence through refugees representatives was required the very field staffs organised refugees representatives in exchange of bribes.

“We know there is something fishy about how projects are carried out here. Why is it that if we have external funders we are always warned of speaking anything negative.” (36 years old Angolan woman).

“There were at some point some external funders that requested to meet with refugees representative to confirm the reports they had received. I was personally called to the office in Meheba and they (practitioners) gave me something not to say the truth but to rather agree to fake reports that they had produced. Well I needed the money but I know it was wrong but that’s how we survive here in Meheba. We are a very big resource, officials are making money on us and if such opportunities present to you to be part who I am I to resent or act against, with which powers do I have anyways that if I may try to be against who can believe me.” (57 year old DRC male respondent).

A lack of power renders their voice to be illegitimate in decision making, in such a setting decisions are made from the top authority and participation is reduced to levels of consultation and informing where members of the community are not accorded the powers to give feedback on final decisions reached. In the other way round there is no comprehensive

engagement with the community to policy development. Such empirical findings are similar to what Goodkind and Foster-Fishman (2002) study in the United States on refugees participation in the multi-ethnic communities where they attested that refugees understood participation based on the global conceptualisation however the practices were so diverse from the global discourse. Refugees defined participation based on practical experience as a discriminatory process where their voices were never heard in the community, they had no control or influence on final decision reached. On a similar account Mazunda (2008), study on refugees in Meheba revealed that although refugees take part in decision making, they are usually informed of what donors want to do and not refugees deciding what they want.

Together these findings suggests that refugees both on the global North and South socially contextualise participation on basis of lack of power and voice to influence decision. It then therefore becomes evident that policies are still retaining a legacy of top-down view of social change opposite to what alternative development discourses advocate for. Moreover, with such empirical findings it leaves much room for doubt if participation is living up to its promises of empowerment and vulnerability reduction as prescribed in the alternative development discourse.

5.6 Citizen Power

Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout. Citizens can enter into a Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. At the topmost rungs, Delegated Power and Citizen Control, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power (Arnstein, 1969). No one has the absolute control so citizens do not either. However, to Arnstein, this is the highest form of authority that citizens may achieve and it means that they are in full charge of a policy or plan and that they are able to negotiate the conditions under which 'outsiders' may change them.

A very common example is a neighbourhood corporation without intermediaries and its own source of finances. This level of participation again requires citizens that are very willing to engage themselves and spend much time and efforts in such activities. There are several drawbacks to full citizen control: it might support separatism and hostility against public services, it costs more money and is usually less efficient and it might enable the wrong people to have too much power. Besides all those arguments, citizen control is not a

professional way of dealing with things but in some cases it might work and it is the only way to give full power to the “powerless”.

Findings of this study revealed the above arguments, while refugees were able to come up with self-help activities it accorded more power to the few who felt superior to others. Constrained agency therefore was as a result as many felt the village bank for instance was on account of social relations of networking. Participation was perceived as a way to change their unfortunate situations as they took full charge and control of decisions. However, in the process others were constrained from exercising their agency. Even the spaces refugees created themselves, membership in some was strictly on ethnic groupings. Thus, participatory processes are very diverse and even hard to categorise. Arnstein writes that even the eight rungs are not enough to accurately differentiate between the levels of participation because there are many more distinctions between the way people participate in policy and programmes. All the eight rungs for instance can be found in one programme, the rungs are interwoven and practised differently across geographical spaces. This is to say that participation in its natural setting is a socially constructed concept, Meheba provides its own unique practices this could be attributed to the geographical, social and economic position of the area. These social structures set how participation is understood by host communities.

6 REFUGEES COMMUNITY PARTICIPATORY SPACES

6.1 Introduction

Around the globe, the gradual shift of development based on economic growth to a people driven development has put individuals at the center of development. Participation is now often characterized as a human right and a leeway for the realization of all other rights. The 1986 UN Declaration on the Right to Development, for example, affirms the right of every human person and all peoples to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development (Rempel, 2009). Whether in budgeting, policy dialogue, planning, project appraisal, poverty assessment, monitoring or evaluation, community self-help, participatory approaches have gained ground. Using the concept of *space* as a lens through which to view practices of participation, this chapter seeks to identify refugee's community participatory spaces. I achieve this by answering the subsequent research questions of my second research objective.

6.2 Invited/Provided Spaces

Identifying refugee's spaces of participation categorizes these spaces into invited/provided and claimed/counter public spaces. Although the analysis is separating between the two, the study is not meant to be a comparison, but merely an enlightenment of their different or similar situations within the same area. As indicated earlier on in chapter three, invited or provided spaces are platforms created by community workers or public officials where membership or participation is on account of been invited to, this simply maintains that ownership is entirely in the hands of experts and as Cornwall (2002), notes the fact that these are often structured and owned by those who provide them, no matter how participatory they may seek to be, transferring that ownership to those who come to fill them is far from easy. In most instances such spaces are often viewed by those who come to fill them as means to gain access to benefits or to improve their own access to services (ibid). I take invited/provided spaces as specifically those arranged for by private or public organizations to help uplift the livelihood challenged communities like Meheba, thus refugees as beneficiaries fill such spaces. I discuss such spaces as follows:

6.2.1 Child Protection center

The government of the republic of Zambia through MCDMCH under the auspices of UNHCR formed the child protection initiative. As a way of giving refugees a voice in its

Box 2: Researchers personal reflection on the links of knowledge and participation

They say knowledge is power-The more one knows, the more one will be able to control events. However in some circumstances especially where a balance has to be laid down, such statement opts to lay loose. In as much as the child protection center was trying to create an open atmosphere conducive for refugees as well, the power dynamics prevailing were imbalanced. In most of my observations refugees representatives had no much say in most arising debates, in fact community based workers in what I would call it used much of technical or professional jargon's that confused refugees, in a way experts did not accept to listen to the indigenous knowledge and I believe this made them to shun away in the discussions and opted to keep silent all throughout the two board meeting I observed (field notes, 2015).

implementation and planning, incorporates some refugees who act as representatives to its board meeting. The center is responsible for the general welfare of children in the settlement with specific attention on separated children (USACs) and other vulnerable children. The board through its community visits identifies children with specific needs and tries to find the best solution to their needs.

Spaces of participation as emphasized much by Gaventa (2004) are shaped through the exercise of *agency* in which different actors, *knowledge* and interest interact in which room can be made for alternatives. The unwillingness of experts to legitimately accept and take in the situated/ indigenous knowledge in final decisions is one limiting factor for refugee's full exercise of agency under the child protection center. Moreover, this study revealed that participatory spaces owned by institutions are not decision making forums with any real power over the allocation of resources, implementation and planning of programs. Rather, they are forums for consultation where refugee representatives are given a voice or an avenue to express their views and concerns to the sole owners of the programs in this case humanitarian organizations.

However, final decisions still retain from the top authorities-the sole owners of the program. Such participatory spaces are promoted and designed to respond to the humanitarian community needs to address problems of efficiency and information sharing and not to give refugees influence over humanitarian delivery(Olivius, 2014). Superior knowledge thus could be spotted as one limiting factor for refugee's full exercise of agency under the child protection center.

Imbutushi-a beggar, can never understand technical aid assessment so they claim. What is the point of trying to force others into accepting your opinion even though that is not prevailing in the community, it means they know it all right? They always come out smart and strong on certain matters, they defend and justify so eloquent on their viewpoint and are never willing to listen and take into consideration our own. It is then better for us to attend and have free lunch and leave them to discuss among themselves, what is the point of them inviting us anyway. Seriously! We don't see our much impact (personal interview, anonymous refugee board representative).

The center intended outcome is to offer education support to identified vulnerable children and raise awareness in communities on child protection issues with the full assistance of refugees themselves. Drawing my findings from informal dialogues, FGDs and observations during its one week vulnerability exercise of which I volunteered, its actual outcomes are divert from what it stipulates to achieve. Children education support is on account of the parents approved social relationship with community based workers. “If you are close friends or relate well, your children are guaranteed a lifelong educational support” heads nodded in agreement with a 55 year old Angolan man as he reinforced his thoughts about children sponsorship during a FGD. To this man, he said so often children who get these sponsorships are those children of staffs and their close acquaintances who are well able to fund themselves, only a small percentage goes to refugees.

When carrying out the vulnerability exercise the questionnaire as a guide for identifying vulnerable children is often drafted together with refugee's representatives, they agree on major circumstances to qualify as vulnerable. One shockingly and surprising findings during the exercise was when a widow was denied children support of his children basing it on the fact that her house was in a good condition and that she was keeping ducks and goats thus identified as one major aspect of a sustainable livelihood strategy(see image 3 and 4 below). Evidently this was a woman who was really struggling with her six children of which three had good results but dropped out of school because she couldn't manage to afford paying for their tertiary education. One would question why completely leave out such a case, this puts the questionnaire as a wrong reflector of lived realities on the ground.



Image 3: Widows ducks and goats



Image 4: Widow's house

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

Following up cases of those who were included, the results were so apparent. One Burundian man who is believed to be so committed and working side by side with MCDMCH as an assistant community based officer had all his children under the child protection education support. This is a well-known man in almost every zones and runs most of the successful small scale retail shops specifically in zone D, C and A.

On the contrary, during one of my personal interview with one official from MCDMCH, he strongly affirmed how refugees have a say in whatever is been decided upon. “We draft the questionnaire together and selection is precisely followed on that”, he alluded. One of its successful outcome, is the **Safe Haven Home**, which is the initiative under the child protection center. The aim of the initiative is providing shelter, food and clothing to USACs and other vulnerable children. However, the study revealed that in as much as refugees were been represented on the board meeting, their ideas where never taken into account in final decisions. The final list of selected children under the vulnerability list was been altered by top officials.

This according to Chambers (2013) is because professionals treat indigenous people as primitive, backwards and people who only have themselves to blame. It then therefore becomes difficult to assume that the primitive knowledge could be taken seriously, but what these practitioners seems so ignorant about is that the indigenous knowledge offers practical basis because it is constructed from *lived experiences*. A 40 years old refugee representative to the board stated “*when community officers speak, its final. We cannot do much to influence*

their decisions because they must be trusted no matter the situation, as they are well trained than us". The factors are thus way beyond refugee's knowledge base, other factors as discussed in the next chapter are worth considering in order to get a clear picture of these dynamics at hand.

6.2.2 The Income Generating Activities (IGA) center

The IGA center is sponsored by UNHCR, in a collaborative venture with MCDMCH which is responsible for its day to day activities in the community. The center is responsible for empowering vulnerable but viable groups with basic business knowledge and soft loans in order to promote self-reliance. Basically, the center's main goal is to pull human and financial base to ensure that refugees improve their livelihoods. It works hand in hand with the refugees themselves, identified viable groups are taught about entrepreneurship skill respective of their different sectors, especially agriculture such as what to do to promote agriculture.

The aim of this group was to get a higher income and to exchange experience. Each person in the group has their own experience and development to bring in this community. The success we have had until now has been significant. I had no house but now I built one and others too, they have built and we continue farming, we are selling, we are getting money and we are educating our children (Member of LETEMO group, Angolan 42 years old woman).

This implies that self-organized groups determined to change their situations are well capable of responding well to the IGA intended outcomes. According to the field coordinator under the department of community development responsible for IGA group selection during a personal interview with him, he explained how the program has benefited over 45,000 refugees mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola (who have stayed for long and are the largest in numbers) for the past 10 years of its running. *"We work together with them but initially they are the sole proprietors of their own business collaboratively, we believe in their own created groups they can freely exchange ideas and positively impact their lives"*. Most informants during personal interviews and FGDs affirmed this positive collaborative venture and stated some of the established small scale industries several groups have managed to sustain including; Art Design, Knitting machines, Agro crop trading, Black Smiting, Retailing, Bakery, Tailoring, Recreation, Hammer mill, Butchery, Restaurant, Semi-Boutiques and many others.

However, informants together with the field coordinator acknowledges financial base as one of the limiting factor to approving all group proposals. To some informants they held that selection was based on social capital. Responding to this, issues of favoritism and social networks manifests as pointed out by Chambers (2004) as one limiting factor to equitable development. *“To some of us it is has always been the **lolela system**- ever on waiting system”* (36 years old Somalian man). *“For our group, the proposal they say is not convincing, it has been bouncing back for the past 5 years now”* (40 years old Angolan woman). *“Serious! the IGA is working but we can safely say out of a thousand request one or two successfully pulls through per year”*(45 years old Angolan man). This they say has led to extreme poverty in

Box 3: Researchers description of the general outlook of Meheba

Farming is the most pursued venture in the settlement but unfortunately zone C and F offers a different story, the lands are dry and look like wild forests. Children are malnourished, there is no access to electricity, the local businesses that are running are merely poor in standards as the stocks are mostly that of low quality goods like bush berries, sugar canes, and locally brewed beer. Roads are poorly developed with no concrete base, see image 5 and 6 below (Field work notes, 2015).

the area, as development is never balanced. The gap between the rich and the poor is very big, the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting even richer.

Thus this study revealed that refugees are willing to exercise their agency in changing their situation, however this is hampered by limited finances and uneven development trends prevailing in the area. Policies sideline the real beneficiaries, as a result it promotes unequal



Image 6: Dry deserted land in Zone F



Image 5: Zone C community market stores; with locally brewed beer outside the first store

development trends in the community.

6.2.3 The Women's Affairs center

Also sponsored by UNHCR under cooperative ventures with MCDMCH as an implementing partner, the women's affairs center is responsible for empowering women in the settlement with survival skills, promote household food security through food processing and preservation trainings as well as raise awareness on gender issues such as women's participation in Leadership. The center offers psychosocial counselling and temporal shelter for Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) survivors at MCDMCH Health Information Centre. As well as raise awareness in communities on issues concerning SGBV. The center also distributes sanitary wear to women between the ages 12 and 50 in the settlement.

The women's health project for instance has different educational activities. The two activities provided are sensitization and seminars. The seminars are structured to be six weeks long, the activities that are running are reproductive health, family planning, SGBV, HIV/AIDS, mental health and nutrition. Many refugee women including the host national women gain a lot from these activities. *"In the camp many women do not control their rate of birth. When we started the family planning and sensitization seminars, they (refugee women) begun to see the importance of it"* (District HIV/AIDS Coordination Advisor, Meheba).

School authorities are key holders in making sure that under age marriages and teenage pregnancies are minimized in Meheba. The women's center also works hand in hand with school authorities in achieving this. *Here in Meheba we are facing a lot of problems most especially teenage pregnancies. Most girls fell pregnant at ages of 15 and this could be attributed to the fact that they lack many active ongoing activities in the community, thus the resulting ends are indulging in premarital affairs* (District Health Coordinator, Meheba). The women's center comprising of mostly refugee women, share their experiences and comfort each other. These organized groups also do reach out to the community through sensitization in schools especially to girls.

6.2.4 Grass Root Soccer (GRS)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an inter- Governmental Organization that aims to ensure that migration benefits both migrants and the wider society. Its beneficiaries include refugees, displaced persons and labor migrants. One of the IMOs

programs in Zambia aims to achieve the HIV/AIDS vulnerability reduction among refugees(International Organisation for Migration, 2016). IOM target different age groups in its activities, in Meheba it has been working with refugees between the ages of 15 to 35 through the popular Grass Root Soccer (GRS) program. GRS is a designed behavior change curriculum that focuses on providing basic life skills to help refugees adopt health behaviors.

Through series of interactive games activities and discussions lasting nearly 12 hours in total, youth refugees gain considerable understanding of HIV/AIDS prevention messages and develop skills necessary for sustainable behavior change. Young people are also given tools to become peer educators allowing them to share knowledge between friends and families and the community at large. In partnership with Breakthrough Sports (BS), GRS has managed to train and graduate over 200 sports facilitators in the community as reported by the Sports Officer in Meheba. Building life skills and capacity in the community is the key goal of IMO through its GRS. For the participants involved in these games it's a win-win situation they are able to play the games they love in a funny, safe and competitive environment and they learn about HIV/AIDS living practices giving them valuable life skills.

GRS has helped me much especially in the refugee camp because here we do not have entertainment. GRS has presented to us a very reliable platform where we can interact with the younger ones and share our knowledge as elderly persons in the camp. After school's most youths do not do anything, games help in keeping them active and on my part as a trainer it has also helped me to learn most things that I also didn't know, am now well able to teach others too(GRS trainer).

Such alternative activities like the GRS in the community has helped an equivalent good number of refugees within the camp, as they get engaged in health activities and share vital knowledge. Most parents during FGDs conquered with such findings and appreciated the initiative. They said youth's return home in the evenings exhausted and stay home to rest rather than going out. Weekends are spent in the competitions, time and energy is spent participating in the soccer programs which reduce their vulnerability to misbehavior, even children and adults not directly engaged in the soccer programs come to cheer-up and watch the interesting energetic games and also sharing information between friends and families. In this way the GRS reaches out to a greater number of people in the community. Life skills such as time management, organization, dedication and commitment will also prepare them for

further future prospective. One very catchy and interesting results of this community initiative has been the formation of a refugee young youth campaign called **IMAGINE**.

This is a young youth campaign that collaborates with other refugees and Zambian nationals that are standing up for their rights and hope to see better communities in their prospective communities. Such visions projects a very sustaining and productive 10 years to come Meheba will be. These young refugees are exposed and well knowledgeable and determined to record some changes. During my fieldwork period the group had started the Zone-Zone tree plantation and teaching their elderly on the negative ways of agricultural farming of cutting trees. This is in the actual sense a claimed or counter public space however I decided

Box 4: IMAGINE young refugees goals

I IMAGINE a better Meheba

I IMAGINE a community where people would hold hands and work together for the a better world

I IMAGINE of this Meheba where nature is highly appreciated, we want to see a very green world and a very clean world as well

I IMAGINE a place where we help the poor and the elderly

I IMAGINE a Zambia free from discrimination

I IMAGINE a place where children are free to express themselves and give opinions

We IMAGINE of a better tomorrow (IMAGINE members chanting their goals, field work 2015).

to briefly outline it here because it came into existence through the enlightenment of the invited GRS initiative space.

6.2.5 Refugee Alliance (RA) community reach-outs

Vital participatory spaces for refugees are opened up by several organizations. As already mentioned in briefly in chapter 3, one of the most active grassroots organization operating in Meheba is the Refugee Alliance (RA). Refugee Alliance is a Norwegian based Christian ministry working to support, strengthen and give hope from God to refugees on their way to safety and a restored life. They have developed according to Thorsen (2016, p. 4) the following:

- *Peace and trauma care program in Block G, including outreach groups for raped and traumatized women, peace & conflict resolution and leadership workshops with*

refugees from various blocks. This is their initial activity where they have reached out to and gained the trust from Rwandan refugees where others have failed.

- **Health services** in Block G, including the building and running of the new “Hope Clinic” (registered as a GRZ clinic), two ambulances (has transported patients from the whole settlement to hospitals), and health outreach once a week to Blocks B and F.
- **Business**, entrepreneurship, microfinance and mentoring for women. Currently about 70 women from various blocks have pending loans of around USD 100 each. Since beginning of the project, around 500 women have received loans and follow up. Repayment rate is above 90%. In a few months, one lady in Block B increased her income from ZMW 200/250 per month to approximately ZMW 800 per month thanks to a loan of USD 100 which enabled her to buy additional products for her tuck shop such as cooking oil, sugar and soap.
- **Education**, including sponsorships for orphans and teaching for adults and dropouts. In 2015, 221 orphans and vulnerable children from various blocks were sponsored in primary day school and secondary boarding school. The number is increasing in 2016.
- **Children’s home** in Block B as a support activity to the trauma and health projects. Currently seven children, mainly from Block G, are taken care of at St. Marys sisters ground inside the settlement with employees and support from RA.
- **Music projects** in Blocks D and G, and a mobile project led by a music teacher and refugee from Congo. He offers music lessons and choirs, and aims at doing music therapy.
- **Outdoor cinema**: every Saturday and Sunday night in Block D, occasionally mobile in other blocks.

Working together with refugees RA has gained the much trust needed from refugees within the community. It is well able to initiate in its limited budget simple but achieves much actual outcomes that has impacted many lives of refugees. Refugees opt for RA offered participatory spaces as amounting to change, they take participation within RA programs as offering a very trustworthy platform that take in their viewpoints in many decisions, thus the outcomes are much substantial, sustainable and acceptable. “*The beauty about RA is that it respects and gives much authority to us because we are one, its local staffs are our fellow refugees*”, (40 years old Congolese woman).

The main challenge as mentioned by the RA refugee leader in a personal interview concerns issues of coordination in the settlement. UNHCR and GRZ have an established platform for stakeholder coordination. It is unfortunate that the fact that RA's local team leader is a refugee means that RA cannot access this coordination mechanism in the settlement. The refugee leader called for a reassessing or an additional dialogue platform developed, where all stakeholders can participate. "It is our impression that RA could possibly be a useful additional information and communication channel to refugees that are difficult to reach or convince"(Thorsen, 2016, p. 2).

6.3 Claimed/Counter public Spaces

Development as a field (and as a social construct) is permeated by formal and informal institutions, from government institutions, international organizations to the local authority. Communities, equally, have their institutions. The problem as noted by Cornwall (2002), is that when the formal institutions of development seek to engage with the institutions of communities in order to encourage their participation in development processes, this engagement tends invariably to happen on the institutional terrain of the former. Thus, not only are experts seen as holding all the relevant knowledge for development; but they are also *de facto* owners of the institutional terrain. This study revealed that because of such impediments to real participation (professionals not willing to accept the situated or rather the indigenous knowledge and where consultation is widely used, as a means of legitimating already-taken decisions), refugees always shun away from such spaces, self-strategic exclusion is as a result. They may participate just as a means to have access to project benefits or continued access to social basic amenities, it is not something that can amount to social change.

The shared cultural terrain of development professionals are the institutional structures of *invited spaces/provided spaces* and managed projects. Even in best-case scenarios, where these formal institutions seek to become more inclusive and participation is 'designed in' (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004, p. 67 cited in Cornwall, 2002), these are still basically different from what Cornwall terms 'spaces that people create for themselves'-*claimed/counter public spaces*: the institutions through which communities work. These may easily seem 'informal' and 'chaotic' from the perspectives of professionals and their organizations, however several literature on rural development have shown that community social change result from such self-mobilized community groupings (Chambers, 2004, 2013; Cornwall, 2002). I take

claimed/counter public spaces as those spaces refugees initiate themselves to bring about social change in the community. I discuss such findings below:

6.3.1 The Women Saving Circle

The women saving circle is a community initiative started by women in Zone A, B and C. These women realized the hardship they undergo to access business loans from locally formalized institutions that normally request for some sought of collateral. They thus through their informal interactions in the community spotted those who are willing to join, membership still remains open for several more new members. It operates as a circle where everyone in the group contributes a specific amount weekly, and together they circle the four members each month to be given the loan. In a way it is some kind of savings without any interests on it, the main purpose is to help members with simple loans.

We started the saving circle because it helps us to save some money so that it helps us for our future plans. It is not easy to keep in our homes so we decided to form a group and then save every week a one kwacha (1ZMK=\$0.25USD), which sounds to be so small but it is relatively accumulating and this time we are able to give loans to each member of the group. We have only one season of cultivation and then sometimes we are so stuck that we don't have some money. The women are happy to start saving because they find life to be so difficult for them, so it is really something that will help them to have food for the whole year round instead of having only some seasons and these other seasons not, otherwise we are happy for we are also people who are vulnerable and that from the little we have, we are also well able to save and improve our lives and standard of living (48 year old women circle Chairlady from Angola).

Women are determined to mobilize themselves as agents of development with the zeal of changing their vulnerability context, in this manner they are able to participate in a way that brings out their full space of agency. In such a participatory space the women refugees have a significant negotiating power and control over the initiative, in such avenues where programs are entirely owned and managed by refugees themselves the outcomes are at maximum in that every member recognizes their self-earned efforts and are much willing to achieve something positive.

6.3.2 Community Village Bank

Several organizations owned programs have lifted the spirit of community and self-management in the area. Refugees acknowledge their lack of power to influence final decisions and are much determined to continue adhering to humanitarian organization requests for the benefit of what they decide to achieve later on. They now treat invited spaces as a stepping stone or rather a gateway to their future plans, in such a manner participation under invited/provided spaces amount to means and not ends. The IGA program for instance has assisted many refugees to form groups, some of which have fallen down and several others are successfully running to now. Among these groups refugees are able to identify their pressing needs and form programs that could assist run their business sustainably. Among such initiated is the commonly announced community village bank. This is an initiative of several refugee groups in business, almost each zone has a member represented.

Cassava cultivation is the main agro-crop farming practiced here, because of its less input requirements and the soil compatibility we are able to produce a lot all year round. However the main challenge is that we do not have cassava modern processing machines in this area. Due to our restricted movements we cannot guarantee also a successful outside Meheba sale. We sale it dry as it is, if we could have modern processing machines our profits could double the actual sales. We are looking for modern processing machines so that we could sell cassava flour and not the raw cassava. This inspired us across all zones to start the village bank, it is a community savings and credit scheme which we started ourselves and the community also benefits. Those trainings we received from the IGA we have been able to give to the community. The aim of this community village bank is to try and enable groups to get capital themselves, but we need to train ourselves to increase production and add value. Each group contributes something monthly, we are able to give out loans according to the order on our lists. Before the IGA we had many challenges we were unable to keep accounting books, management of service was not good because we did not have this knowledge (Congolese chairman of the village bank).

From the above quote it is evident that the community is self-oriented and has the much zeal to exercise their agency to change circumstances. However, this study revealed that a restrictive government policy on the free movement of refugees hinders positive outcomes of these self-oriented programs in the area. The businesses are running but still a good number of refugees are still harrowing in poverty.

6.3.3 Women for Hope

The women for hope group consists of refugees from Angola, Rwanda, Congo DRC and Burundi, together they formed an association devoted to defend the rights of women and children affected by the civil war. They counsel some women and if they are facing any challenges concerning SGBV they help them because a lot of women and girls do not know their rights and where to go to when they are victimized. It came to their realization that despite the establishment of Victim Support Units (VSU) the prevalence rate on violence against women in the area is still high. Women in the community still lack information and the protection of basic human rights which expose them to violence. The inspiration to do even more for the community came after undergoing trainings on SGBV by UNCHR. *“What we teach sometimes is drawn from our own life experiences we have passed through. Our friends have been raped and forced into marriages that are the main reason we are even more interested in sensitizing women on GBV”*(Association Chairlady from Angola) .

These women all have something in common they are all familiar with the plight of war and all of them have been victims of abuse not only from their war torn countries but including Meheba, a place they now call home. *“I was traumatized and had no hope for my life, I was helped by the women for hope. Counselling really helped me because I was just like a mad person they even helped me financially and that is when I started selling tomatoes and vegetables”* (38 years old DRC woman). These women are traumatized they pass through a lot of unfortunate ordeals that they cannot report to anyone, they live a life in fear of their tomorrow. *“One evening on my way to the market I was raped by a gang of five men, some passer-by rescued me I would have died. The women for hope stood with me ever since. I do not have any relatives here am been helped by the association; they buy food, clothes and also pay for my rentals”* (43 year old Burundian woman).

The women for hope are pushing forward in spite of all odds to re-establish and re-heal their own society. These women serve as role models for the one hundred and fifty young girls they teach in their girls club, many have lost their mothers to HIV/AIDS. Meheba is home to thousands of these girls, abandoned by the virus they do not know about. The women for hope is the symbol for change, these women are sparking hopes for a better future. During their weekly activities, these girls learn confidence and achieves to lead, an opportunity they don't get in schools. According to a report released by National AIDS Council, 42% of girls in Zambia are married before the age of 18 (NAC, 2013). This is a sobering percentage for one

of the most vulnerable part of the refugee population in Zambia (child-brides). In an effort to reduce child marriage in the settlement the MCDMCH introduced the social cash transfers to support vulnerable parents to ensure that the girl child remains at school.

Programs planned work well when the information is from the ground, these are people who are expertise in determining which program works well simply because they live it through all day. Meheba offers a different picture, refugees are only consulted, and programs are drafted by UNHCR top officials, reaching through MCDMCH on the ground as one of its implementing partner in the area. The results are never at it, child marriages continue to be high in the area. Through my informal interactions, child marriage is high especially among girls as young as under the age of 15. Women for hope are developing interactive activities among the many young girls to help them build networking channels as a means to learn and share experiences. These women are in time and again knocking at the doors of MCDMCH for financial assistance and partnership with UNHCR on their many projects they come up with. Unfortunately, MCDMCH do not have the capacity or space to accommodate new programs rather than the ones already been carried out in the area. *“The soul is willing to assist but the outreach is limited, we do not have mostly the financial capital to make our ideas pull through otherwise we generate good ones”* (40 years old Congolese women). Ideally one might presuppose that UNHCR and its implementing partners solely believe they are the best actors in solving the many community problems. In a follow-up interview the



Image 7: Women for Hope during their project construction in Zone C

project coordinator under MCDMCH mentioned collaborative ventures of all actors as one gateway to reducing child marriages.

“In Zambia there is no such a thing that the best place to do this work is the civil society or the best place are the young people, the best place is government. All of us together as a collective entity will solve this problem”.

Notwithstanding, these women in their limited financial base have well managed to implement attractive and interesting seminar’s, where the girl’s are taught about peer pressure and among them they do get locally work contracts as a group in boosting their finances. Their main project at the moment is to build a young girls center hall that will be offering trainings and productive skills to the many young refugees children. This is the project that they have started building in block C (see image 7).

These women may not look like it but they are tough as nails, they are oppressed, seen as inferior, often uneducated, and on top of that burdened with HIV/AIDS. They bear a lot of responsibilities and as the saying goes are the backbone of every fruitful community. For the benefit of the community and a family they have formed in Meheba, these women continue the good spirit of educating their young future generation. The aim is to see a better community tomorrow. The English idiom *“Rome wasn’t built in a day”* describes the most brilliant ideas of these women to eventually achieve greater things with some more time to come.

7 Enabling or constraining factors and opportunities for enhanced participation

7.1 Introduction

This chapter brings out factors which enable or constrain refugees from participating across invited and claimed spaces. This has been answered through subsequent research question by studying elements of exclusion and inclusion, configuration of power and seeking local opportunities for change. The previous chapter introduced how the several participatory spaces are formed, their intended and actual outcomes, it however did not address the most crucial element; who is included, or excluded or perhaps exclude themselves in these spaces. This becomes the main focal point of this chapter as it strives to identify factors enabling or constraining refugee's participation beyond power.

7.2 What are the factors of exclusion and inclusion?

It is not uncommon to read in reports or policy statement, that there has been or ought to be 'full participation' and all stakeholders involved. In humanitarian service delivery this has become a normative frame of conduct, however in practice this is a cumbersome process as it is near impossible to include everyone in many platforms. Inclusion or exclusion matters are complex across forms of participation. Cornwall (2008, p. 274) offers two distinctive forms of participation that either one of them or both concurrently are present in the participatory spaces formed in Meheba; participation as a means, often equated with '*instrumental*'⁷ participation, and participation as an end in itself, what has come to be regarded as '*transformative*'⁸ participation.

In Meheba most but not all of the invited/provided spaces formed are treated as means to the continuous delivery of UNHCR community services, others like the IGA are both means to accessing loans and an end as it empowers some groups through owning and starting up small to medium scale businesses. Counter/claimed spaces are entirely transformative as refugees are the sole initiators of such initiatives hence they are self-driven. In such settings they are willing to go an extra mile in sacrificing their time for the good of themselves and the community at large. At one instant during one of my FGDs, one Angolan woman turned to

⁷ Participation seen as a means to achieving cost-effectiveness and local facilities. What participation means to the implementing agency is solely on efficiency basis- to limit funders' input, draw on community contributions and make projects more cost-effective(Cornwall, 2008).

⁸ Participation as both a means and an end, a continuing dynamic. Participation of such is often taken by its initiators as a transformative process that leads to empowerment. It enables people to make their own decisions, work out what to do and take action(Cornwall, 2008)

me after a long pause in the discussion, she cited a Iuvale proverb solemnly “*Wakola mujimo ikhiye oalwa nachijilo*”- He who has stomach-ache is the one who struggles with the door⁹. The proverb translates the actions of refugees faced with unfortunate circumstances in faraway strange places they have come to call home. They are the ones to bring about positive change to their predicaments instead of simply waiting for external assistance and this is a phrase that is keeping the community holding on to greater heights in the future to come.

Whether through invited or claimed spaces inclusion of entirely every refugee in the community is difficult to achieve. Thus it suffices to think in terms of ‘*optimum participation*’ unlike ‘*full participation*’. As Cornwall emphasizes *optimum participation* takes into consideration issues of exclusion and inclusion as a right for the purpose at hand (2008). However in some instances the level of optimality is likely to go down the benchmark due to the many barriers. In many instances refugees had the opportunity of been invited for consultation and information sharing platforms. Men felt they were given less attention, they felt side-lined in most programs, in some cases men had the opportunity to be invited or form self-organized groups, but for several others, issues of self-exclusion were evident. The enthusiasm was marred by the many factors described below.

7.2.1 Traumatic experiences

Many are classified as mad persons, but why is this area full of mad people? I often questioned myself in time and again. Some are ever in tears, knocking and crying outside MCDMCH offices seeking for assistance. These are taken to be lazy and mentally disordered, but my encounter with some of them revealed that they lack the inner peace this has in effect affected their physical, emotional and mental state. They long to communicate their stories to a listening ear but often times these do not get the opportunity

Box 5: Researcher reflections on traumatic experience of refugees in the study area

⁹ A person in need or difficulty should take up the initiative towards remedying his position, in order to encourage others to come to his aid.

It is important to acknowledge the fact that refugees are in their status not by choice, it is an unfortunate shocking life changing scenario they just wake up to it and expect to live it for a life course. This has tremendous outcomes, they are traumatized individuals, some have witnessed their families been killed, raped, their homes destroyed and so many other traumatic experiences. Not giving a listening ear to such has had many repercussions on them. Often times participatory spaces of planning and implementation have side-lined such deeply traumatized persons in the area. They are seen not to be serious with their own lives hence they are never invited. Worse off in their state, claiming their own space is something they cannot manage. The refugee leader for RA confirmed this exclusion criteria in the area, he further alluded how their organization through their traumatic and healing workshops have managed to include and help such cases:

“We have had a lot of Rwandese whom the community perceived as mad persons, by God’s grace and through sharing comfort we have turned these into successful business men and women in the area”

It is not something I planned so as to seek for assistance from UNHCR. This is like hell to me, we had a better and comfortable life in Congo, and my parents were successful in our area. What pained me was the fact that I lost all of them and the hardest thing to live for was the fact that I will never get to see and talk to them all through my entire life (47 years old DRC man).

This shows how participatory spaces especially in a refugee setting are not responding to the area settings. Participation in a refugee settlement ought to be a little bit different from normal areas, patience and time need to be devoted for meaningful participation to take place. If anything voices of deeply traumatized persons, strictly following development from below need to be listened to and nurtured, in such a manner people may have confidence and trust in what participation can achieve. If it is ever sidelining, listening and never nurturing the voices in their decisions people may eventually shun such spaces and participation reduces to an ‘empty vessel’.

7.2.2 Frustrations

One common response from respondents was that they had participated in the past, but because of frustrations, no longer were involved in the community:

“I used to attend workshops in the past, but now I don’t because it was worthless. We used to spend the whole day discussing things that not even a single suggestion has come true. So what did we achieve, free lunch and a bottle of mineral water. I can use that time cultivating my land” (41 year old Angolan man).

“During meetings officials (local officers) segregated and intimidated others. If you have a question, they don’t let you say. I raise my hand, but others raise their hands and talk first. Other responses are accepted easily, whatever I contributed remains debatable and sometimes they would call me bad names for been so ungrateful in my response. So for me it didn’t help me” (39 years old Congolese man).

Although spaces are provided self-exclusion is seen to be dominant among refugees this is attributed to the previous experiences they have had with participation. Failing to acknowledge respondents views in their (external agencies) agendas and also the inability to exercise inclusive participation (as some among the group are prioritized) sends a strong signal to people that their priorities do not count. This deters effective participation as people often shun away from such spaces.

7.2.3 Culture and Ethnicity Identity

This study revealed that aspects of culture and ethnic identity have an influence on participation, it may include or exclude others. Culture has been mainly documented in literature as the values, norms and institutions that guide society, these can be socially transmitted from one generation to the other. Such aspects shapes behavior and categorizes individuals through language(Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001; Pumariega, Rothe, & Pumariega, 2005) . Hughes (1993) defines cultural process as a mechanism for conveying values across the generations. Ethnic identity refers to an individual sense of self in terms of membership in a particular ethnic group, it embraces aspects of self-identification, feeling of belongings and commitment to a group and a sense of shared values. It is one sub component under the large umbrella such as a nation that claims a common ancestry and share elements of culture, language, kinship, religion and place of origin(Phinney et al., 2001).

Aspects of ethnic identity align specific individuals to be tied together and form associations, the few without such elements suffer the feeling of loneliness and are never included in such spaces no matter how open the spaces may tend to be. Meheba is a multi-ethnic community

that is host to refugees from great lake regions, Congo and Angola being the highest in number. Somalians and Ugandans are few and though having stayed in the area for many years some of over 30 years these still feel like they do not have a common place they could identify themselves with their culture; come together and form associations that take into considerations their specific needs as well. To these two countries, participation in the already set up spaces is never fulfilling of their needs as it lacks to address some of their cultural traits, they feel lost because their ethnic identity is not passing to their future generation. To some, according to one Somali man I interviewed he never allows his wife to attend any of the community programs as he fears that he might lose his dignity *“I don’t want my wife to become Angolan or like those Swahili women, we are different and that is it! People will laugh at me if she starts disrespecting me”*. For the Ugandan man he also does not allow his wife to be engaging in any of the women’s grouping for fear of her coming into terms with her rights as a woman. *“I hear gender can change your wife! I don’t want that. My wife should always be like my mother”*

7.2.4 Social Capital

Social capital comes out as the most important factor that deters effective participation, as people have lost trust in the spaces provided hence some opt to stay away from such forums. It has become common among local resident council officers to consider issues of social ties as one aspect of selection criteria. Social capital commands coordination and relationships in a given society as Rigg (2007, p. 51) puts it *“is the social ‘glue’ or ‘fabric’ that holds or knits people together and, in so doing, creates societies”*. In the absence of social networks been included on the vulnerability list, or final resettlement in a third country as one durable solution for example, is a life time struggle for many as they go as far as doing other shameful acts just in securing the chance of been included.

“Here everything works well if you know someone; for me to be on the final settlement list. Hmh it’s a struggle, girls go as far as sleeping with those officials. Once you have someone to stand for you in those offices you are secured so why should I waste my time attending those resettlement meetings when they know already the final people they will pick” (36 years old Burundian man).

“Even the so called IGA we know what other groups are doing, they go through the back door of their close acquaintances right there at the main office in zone D. For me I don’t attend those IGA workshops there are not beneficial to me” (35 years old Angolan woman).

A loss of trust in these participatory spaces of the invited and provided spaces renders them empty. People lose confidence in what they are capable of achieving as equally representing their needs voiced out during such forums hence many opt to exclude themselves and term them time wasting ventures. Social capital is coming out thus as one important aspect protruding participation however in such a setting resources are not redistributed equally as per the demand of development from below this translate into unequal development trends in the area.

7.2.5 UNHCR and Government Operations on the ground

UNHCR is the main humanitarian international organization funding most programs in the area, off course these are the agencies initiatives which ought to be result based in line with its stipulated agenda. As a facilitator of bottom-up development, UNHCR does not operate in the area, it has transferred all its implementation processes in the hands of the government of the republic of Zambia through the several ministries in the community. All of the UNHCR programs are thus implemented by the state, its main role is to monitor to ensure transparency and accountability. The state is well capable of providing the public good such as roads that promotes the exchange of goods and facilitates growth in the society. As Mitlin, Hickey, and Bebbington (2007) argue, the state has unparalleled geographical centralization, monopoly of power and administrative capacity, enabling the implementation of cross sector, holistic strategies based on unique national structures and assets.

However, it is worth noting that such operations through state bureaucracies undermines the programs been carried out most often lack the trust among its followers. Initially African states lack funds, capacity or legitimacy to implement effective social services reforms, in most cases corruptions and issues of red tape undermines its successful outreach to the grassroots level. Mitlin et al. (2007), reports that an estimation of between 30% and 70% of aid funded drugs go missing in Uganda as corrupt officials sell them on black markets (Easterly, 2006: 320). Such issues leaves little trust in the hopeless refugees, hence most often refrain from such provided participatory need assessment spaces.

In Meheba this is also referring, taking a comparison of a Norwegian NGO the Refugee Alliance (RA) programs and those under the state. Nearly more than half of my respondents pointed out the efficiency and proper management of RA as one motivating factor to work closely with them as they perceive RA to be representing them properly. RA's local staff shows an impressive capacity and ability to create trust and engagement among the refugees. This seems to be a success factor for creating results. For example, the building of RA's new clinic in Block G was managed by RA's local staff and built using local resources (all beds, ladders etc. are built locally and many in the community in Block G show proudly that they have contributed to the building process). The staff at the clinic consists mainly of refugees, RA's methods of creating trust and engagement seem to depend on a clear profile of treating refugees with respect and dignity, presence in the camp, close monitoring, and recruitment of refugees as staff(Refugee Alliance, 2014). In the same area UNHCR through the government is building a local clinic, zone G is the planned area for the ongoing local integration resettlement plan of former refugees. As at my time during my fieldwork, there seems to be no engaged community involved in the building process. Patients were already waiting at the unfinished clinic with no qualified personnel attending to them. This prudently explains why refugees opt to participate in effective result oriented projects that respect and engage them unlike the public invited/provided spaces.

7.2.6 Indigenous knowledge

Indigenous or local knowledge is the new relevant ingredient for development, proponent of development from below advocate for the reach out of this kind of situated knowledge through participatory spaces. Inclusion is therefore on account of understanding the lived realities of the locals in that particular geographical setting. However been invited itself brings out several dilemmas especially in situations where participants suggestions are not taken into final decisions; firstly, it results in a lack of interest and confidence in the spaces intended outcomes which leads to self-exclusion among participants, if they do accept the opportunity mostly it is for the benefits attached to it and nothing of any sought of influence. Secondly, it is also important to consider how those who initiate these spaces define participation as this might be where the confusion comes in. This study generally revealed that local experts are not willing to accept and take in this situated knowledge in the final decisions reached at. There are several factors that hinder authorities from taking up refugees recommendations into final decisions, I discuss these as follows:

7.2.6.1 A lack of ‘clarity through specificity’

Experts actions might be well in line with what it intends to achieve at the end of the process, however the buzzword of participation presents its own challenges simply because it has been taken and defined differently among institutions, hence participation undertaken by Refugee Alliance for example might be far from that pronounced under UNHCR. This as I argue is the main challenge in Meheba; a *lack of clarity through specificity* as termed by Cohen and Uphoff manifest. The baseline behind this is that since institutions have come to practice participation differently, stating clearly the purpose of people participation, who is to be included and excluded can help the locals in justifying this deviant practices on the ground. However, UNHCR in Meheba through MCDMCH lacks this point. In most of its invited/provided spaces refugees are ignorant about the sole purpose of the meetings initiated. On a contrary RA has managed to bring the people close and state clearly its mandate and in all of its participatory spaces. RA has managed to pull out the sole purpose of inviting refugees to their spaces, in turn this has helped RA gain the trust and confidence in their spaces and on the overall it has pulled some loss of trust in whatever UNHCR calls participation, hence rendering UNHCR spaces as going through ‘empty ritual’s’.

7.2.6.2 Main funder’s mandate/agenda

Findings of this study showed that all participatory spaces provided by UNHCR are not decision making platforms, they are all in fact information and consultation forums main decisions are drafted through its headquarters, off course they claim that everything obtained from the ground is taken into consideration in drafting final decisions however this remain questionable as most refugees attested to the fact that their concerns and suggestions are never acted upon on.

“The building of that USACs Safe Heaven Home; they called us in the meeting, as usual a refuge is often called for meetings. We discussed and agreed we needed a skills center and in turn we can support our vulnerable children. Am sure they had said: “No ways! You want to get rich on our money, we will do things according to what we think is best for you”... See there, it is the building and they have been providing support and food to those children they keep there. It simply means we have no any power right? Power to initiate or plan on the way we want to raise our kids. It’s a shame!” (56 year old Angolan man).

My volunteer work and some of the personal interviews I conducted with local residence officers under MCDMCH confirmed this contention. Officers stressed out this point as one of the most impeding factor to make participation transformative as refugees lack power to influence. They claimed the fact that they do not own these initiatives, taking up recommendations on the ground that are direct opposite from what UNHCR is advocating for is something hard to achieve. This has thus resulted from taking and acting upon suggestions that come from the top. In such settings therefore participation of the locals is reduced to nothing as it remain doubtful if such interventions do take in inputs from the grassroots.

7.2.6.3 Knowledge base

Knowledge is socially constructed and it is one major element that determines behavior and influence. In Meheba, more than half of my respondents have not attained secondary or higher education, none have reached tertiary education. In such a setting traditional or indigenous knowledge dominates in the area. Knowledge is something strong, what the locals have come to convince themselves to be the correct way of perceiving things is not something one can change overnight, this is a lifelong process so to say. Hence, what is protruding in the area is the conflict between the indigenous and the professional knowledge. How to meet in between becomes a challenge. Ethnicity plays a role in such multi-ethnic communities. Meheba is an area where different individuals coming with different culture, values and norms have come to live in one community. Even the knowledge constructed thus is very enormous, people perceive things differently according to religions and traditions of their home lands. Experts are also faced with dilemmas as they find it really hard to understand these people way of thinking and acting hence they cannot or are not willing to take up whatever they say as absolute truth without evidence.

Taking up what they say requires further scrutiny as some are prone of exaggerating things. This was one thing that I observed, my respondents, most of them complained bitterly how they are never told in good time about upcoming programs and schedules. This was clarified during my day to day informal walks and talks in the area as I came across one notice in Zone H informing refugees, up about a good seven months in advance of the scheduled interview to come and all the arrangement procedures (see the image below):

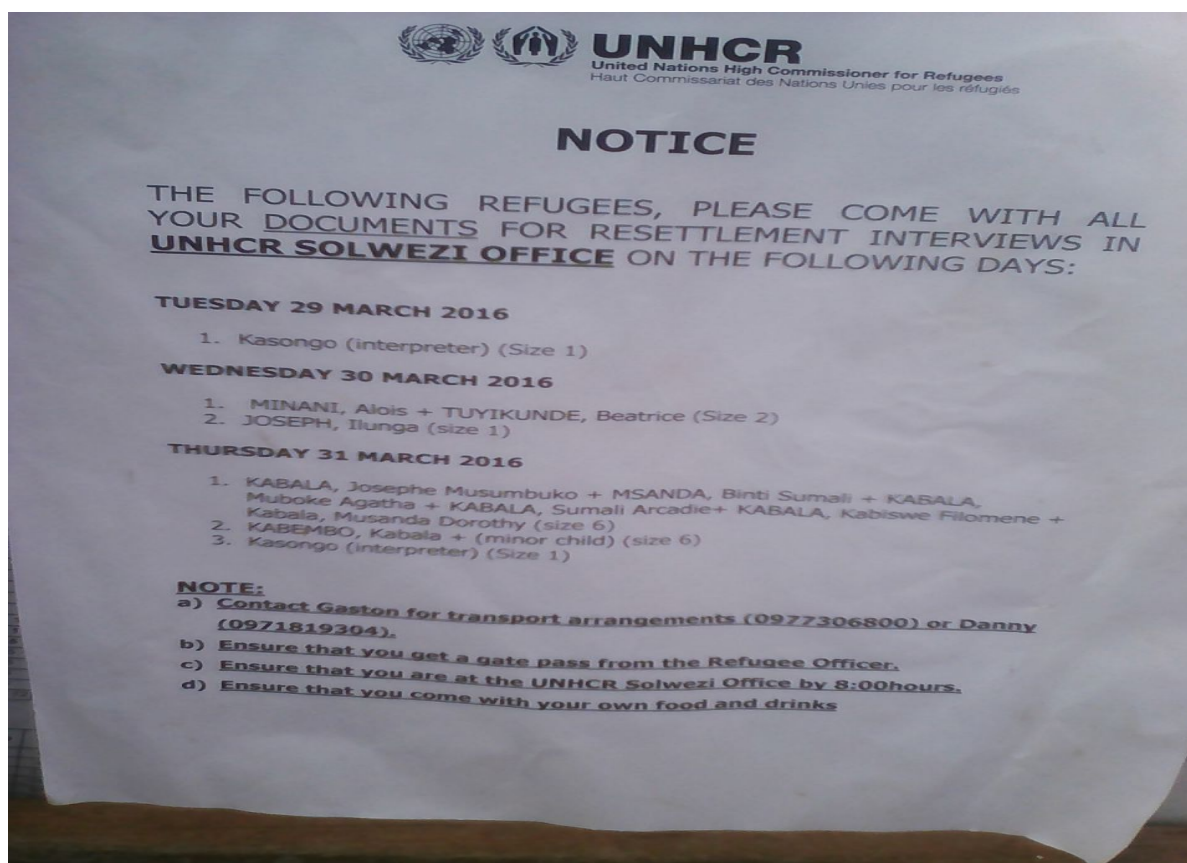


Image 8: UNHCR notice call on refugees. Source: Fieldwork, 2015

Therefore trusting refugees among officers on the ground is a major problem as they always as mentioned by the majority of the local residence officers I interacted with “*Refugees are good at complaining and will never see or say anything good we do here*”. This was a commonly prominent phrase, already from the onset such iniquities has an impact on refugee’s recommendation assessments even during meetings and several other participatory spaces. On another outlook, the fact that most of these refugees have not acquired even the minimal education level, language could be another barrier to their claims. Well on point, notices are stuck in good time however how many are well able to read these in English?

7.2.7 Mainstream gender imbalance: Male actor’s role constrained

The male actors view the well documented mainstream gender promotion of equal rights as neglecting their expected role. This to them acts as one barrier to their participation, they feel their efforts in community works as a sheer waste of time and never acknowledged by many in the community including available institutions. One Angolan man lamented during FGDs and all men were strongly in agreement with his argument “*We normally lack support, but*

everything concerning the women, all organizations could come to the fore, maybe it is also about time we also become women to be noticed as well”. This was so seemingly as not even one self-mobilized or institution provided space for men exist. All the famous one included the women’s affairs, Women of hope and women against GBV campaigns. Expectation of gender roles thus acts as one intruding factor that leads to an increase in gender inequalities in the community, and in this specific rare case, men stand out as victims of such constrained roles.

7.3 How are the dynamics of power across spaces of participation?

Box 6: Researchers reflections on dynamics of power across the invited and claimed spaces

The room is quiet no one is making any sound of whatsoever, it is like we are all frightened of something about to come. Waiting for over an hour late an officer approaches the meeting room and everyone stands as a sign of welcome, he grabs his chair and position himself on the middle, reads out the agenda for the day and opens up his hand book for minutes. The following day in a different space, people socialize even before the meeting, everyone seems at ease just in a short while among them the chairperson appears and starts the briefing (Field notes, 2015).

The following sections will outline the power relations across spaces of participation.

7.3.1 Power relations across invited/provided spaces

Relations of power are asymmetrical in as far as these platform are not entirely owned and controlled by refugees themselves. Refugees have no control and influence on outcomes. At most, such spaces are not decision making forums, information and consultation characterize them. Activities being carried out in these spaces could lead to empowerment of the refugees, however their agency is constrained. It becomes more of an imposed capability to take action, and for as far as decisions are not engendered by the refugees themselves, self-commitment and a drive towards positive social change is unattainable. Spaces such as the women affairs discussed in the previous chapter, refugee women felt that attending meeting was an

obligatory thing for one being a refugee women and a member of the community and as a sign to let society know of their challenges.

Such vices therefore shows that authorities have the ultimate power in these initiatives and this has resulted to refugees with little or no control on the outcomes to treat such spaces as means to their continuous service delivery. Development thus follows a top-down approach where refugees are enclosed in humanitarian agendas, they are continuously supervised and strictly monitored on their activities as funds continue to flow in. Power therefore as a transformative capacity influence refugees action. In some space like the IGA for example, where power is re-distributed, refugees are empowered to take full control of their own businesses, refugees are all heartedly aiming high for success.

7.3.2 Power relations across claimed/counter spaces

Power is relational in that in different contexts different people can actually take power so that it is shifting. Taking refugees and authorities for example in invited spaces, authorities undoubtedly tend to have more power than refugees. But there are situations and contexts in which refugees switch that for instance in their self-owned and controlled claimed spaces refugees know that authorities can't entirely influence their decisions; they are free to say something or get back at authorities because they are aware that in their own spaces authorities cannot possibly retaliate to that. Refugees in this context have a lot of power, it is contextual, situated, it is not everywhere and at all times but it means power is not absolute.

Refugees connect and feel comforted as they interact among themselves, it is through such spaces that they can relate as they share mostly or equally the same experiences and most of my respondents claim that it is through their own initiated spaces that they feel they can relate well make a minimal difference to the community and themselves personally. This totally explains the power reciprocity attained by Refugee Alliance, the fact that RA staffs are refugees, their provided spaces are to some extent equal in terms of power.

1.6 Local opportunities for change?

The final question remaining to be answered based on finding from this study is whether these refugees can have local opportunities for change in the long term perspective. Encircled with top-down humanitarian approaches, red tape, low levels of education, corruption and bribes refugees are at a limbo with community participation. Refugees have no say in the

implementation, planning and decision making of authorities action and for as long as this does not change, it may inhibit or continue on the same pace as no local change could be recorded. Certain measures have to be loosely amended to incorporate refugees in the community as by doing so it brings them closer to self-actualization and empowerment can actually manifest. One step ahead could be coming up with a global definition of participation that could be taken and practiced the same way among different institutions and organizations.

8 CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to understand what constitutes community participation with reference to experiences of refugees and the practice of humanitarian agencies and state institutions regarding participation. It is a part of the academic research that seeks to develop knowledge that contributes to poverty reduction through empowerment induced by the buzz word of participation. I particularly focused on how spaces of participations were formed, the power dynamics enacted and their overall influence in the community. I specifically choose to dwell on this to add some lessons to policy especially of particular relevance to Meheba as newly communities are been planned under the ongoing local integration program. It thus presents relevant practical knowledge for practitioners and refugees themselves to consider for a more sustainable and prosperous community in the near future.

On a general outlook, contemporary wars, conflicts, natural disasters and human rights abuse are taking greater heights in human history. Refugees are increasingly becoming a talk of each passing day, it is now not even surprising to see and hear their new headlines in international news and almost all online media publications. The challenge is seen in that the numbers are way beyond humanitarian assistance, this has seen a number of state institutions and other organizations come on board to finding lasting solutions for these victims. In Zambia, the local integration program is one durable solution for refugees who have been in protracted situations for many years. This presents to them an opportunity to enjoying lasting freedoms like any other free human being. In Meheba these refugees are struggling to live a normal life worth human standards of living benchmark. They lack the necessary basic needs, even the public goods such as roads are in very bad state, it is a community that is challenged in terms of livelihood. There are many factors explaining their vulnerability however community cohesion and unity in a refugee setting comes out most relevant. Thus an examination of the dynamics of participation is of relevance at such a point.

This study was conducted in Meheba, Zambia. The study relied on the alternative development discourse as the main theoretical position underpinning the study. Relevant concepts used for interpreting of the empirical data such as knowledge, power, agency and social capital were also helpful in the interpretation of the data. Qualitative research approach was applied in that the study aimed at getting a clear picture of the practices of participation on the ground. This requires an up-close confrontation with participants by penetrating in their life-worlds to understand what they do and the behavior and actions taken. Through

informal dialogues, researchers notes, FGDs, interviews and observations the study generated finding discussed below:

8.1 Summary of findings

This study revealed that participation is practiced differently by institutions and humanitarian organizations, mostly it is in line with their mandates. The major challenge as expected is that this mismatch of practices is never understood by refugees. Refugees anticipate practices that nurture their voices all the way from planning to implementation, however this is far impossible in some agencies as these participatory spaces formed are mere consultation and informing platforms. This problem results in a loss of confidence and trust in spaces formed especially the invited spaces of institutions. Refugees exclude themselves from participation and opt to take in those which as they claim respect and value them. Among the two categorized participatory spaces; invited/claimed spaces, this study showed that refugees were free and active to exercise their agency in claimed spaces this was attributed to the fact that these spaces have minimal power differentials. The space respects and treats everyone equal and all work together towards the common good. On the other side, unequal power relations, agencies mandates, social relations and professional knowledge were spotted as one limiting factors of effective participation under institutions/organization invited spaces. Therefore based on such findings there is an urgent need for one agreed global definition of participation in practice that organizations ought to adapt to minimize such tensions and challenges. This study directs few suggestions to refugees, the government and humanitarian institutions on effective participation in Meheba as follows:

8.2 Suggestions

8.2.1 Humanitarian institutions

Some agencies must be operating on the grassroots direct with the refugees themselves. Having implementing partners is not that it is not logical or justifiable but the fact that mixing agendas with several organization to form one becomes a major challenge. UNHCR through government institutions expect these state ministries to carry out their many initiated activities in a most prudent and efficient manner, however issues of red tape come on play and these deter effective participation. Most governments of the global south lack financial base to foster many of its proposed plans therefore it is not surprising that once funds are made available by some external funders it is likely that it could be channeled to other programs. Leaving a small percentage to the intended activities, this at most results in the competitive

allocation of the few available resources. Most likely social acquaintances to those in management's get to have an opportunity to benefit from such.

If these humanitarian agencies opt to operate from the top then at least there is a need to decentralize their decisions, let decisions be locally generated. Knowledge is situated, generalizing of programs based on proposed ideas working in one area to the other is the wrong way of assisting the victims.

8.2.2 State/government institutions

Strict adherence to rules, customs and norms of conducts by officers occupying these managerial positions ought to be taken into ultimate consideration. The powers vested in some staffs are way too much to take in. In Meheba for instance under MCDMCH the overall project coordinator has the right and power to alter the vulnerability list, this is however not written down in any of the state regulations but it is just the working culture that is dominant in the area. No one has the capacity to alter or go against whatever the project coordinator decides on. Changing this is however far reached but alterations need to be put in place as this deters practices of effective participation among refugees. Tight measures on accountability need to be put in place, for development to be balanced in the area.

8.2.3 Refugees

Refugees also need to stand up for their rights. It is something hard to achieve but through unity they can definitely achieve something. As a refugee acknowledging and accepting the new status one has come in term with is one important gateway to escape the sense of self-pity. As such a feeling is likely to hinder the spirit of progress and always be dependent on others for one's survival. There are the ones in the best capacity to change their own predicament.

8.3 Concluding thought and future research

It has been one interesting long process to understand the dynamics of participation in a refugee setting. At some point I got confused and lacked further interpretations and meanings to what was observed. Little did I acknowledge that I was actually going beyond what I initially had intended to study. Thus some further research is needed to this interesting particular topic of refugee participation, issues of power and social capital for instance is broad.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview guides for refugees

Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social Science and Technology Management
Department of Geography

INTERVIEW GUIDES

Topic: Refugees spaces of participation. The case of refugees community participation in Meheba refugee settlement, Solwezi, Zambia.

Interview guides for refugees

Background Information

- Age
- Place of Origin.....
- Sex.....
- Level of Education.....
- Time duration in the camp.....
- Responsibilities within the community.....
- How many children do you have?
- Do you have any dependents?
- How many are you living in your home?
- Are they all in school?
- What grade level are they in?

Participation

- What do you do for a living?
- How much do you earn in a month?
- Does this income sustain you?

Do you have any other extra income generating ventures?

What do you do in your free time?

Refugee's spaces of participation

Do you take part in any community based meetings?

Is it open for all?

In a case where you feel your needs are not met or if you have a pressing problem that cannot be solved within your household, where do you take such a matter to be addressed to?

Is the situation always handled on time or are there any irregularities that you have witnessed or observed?

If you witness some irregularities in the way services are delivered within the camp, to whom or where do you take your problems to be solved?

How is it handled?

Are you aware of any community services that are there for your assistance within the camp?

Are you a beneficiary of any community initiative within the camp?

If yes could you please account how it has helped you or changed your life?

If No, is it that you are not aware of the offered services or what, please account?

What do you lack access to? Why?

Constraints in participation

Do you think attending community meetings are beneficial?

What do you think hinders people from attending?

What could be the best way to increase the attendance?

Thank you for your response and time

Appendix II Interview guides for key informants

Interview guides for key informants

Background Information

Name of organization.....

Nature of work within the camp.....

Key informants Views of refugee participation within the community

What are some of the community initiatives that you do implement?

How do you implement these activities?

What are the aims of your initiatives?

Are these activities inclusive and open for everyone?

How do you select refugees' representatives to your board meetings?

What is the purpose of having refugees in your board meetings?

How would you describe the willingness of refugees to take part across the different activities you do undertake?

How do you carry out awareness within the community on the initiatives that you normally undertake and in your views is it sufficient, are refugees aware of these services?

What are some of the challenges you face with your initiatives?

What is your mandate in this camp? Is it centered much on development in the long run or humanitarian relief in the immediate emergency phase?

Focusing on community based approaches to refugee assistance how do you ensure that relief aid is linked with long term sustainable human development?

What are some of your major challenges with long term development projects?

Based on your past experience with refugees in the several projects that you do undertake, how would you then define participation?

Is there anything you would want to add besides what you have said?

Thank you for your response and time

Appendix III: Introductory letter



To whom it may concern

Our consultant: Anette Knutsen
Telephone no.: + 47 73 59 16 36
E-mail: anette.knutsen@svt.ntnu.no

Dated: 5th June 2015

Our ref.:

Your letter dated:

Your ref.:

Letter of introduction

We hereby confirm that **Kalumbu Chinyama** is a student on the master programme *Master of Philosophy in Development Studies, specialising in Geography* at the Department of Geography, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU).

She will undertake her fieldwork and data collection during June - August of 2015 in Solwezi district, Zambia on the topic:

Refugees' spaces of participation in community service delivery, an assessment for the lived experiences of refugees in community engagement dialogue in Maheba refugee camp, Solwezi - Zambia.

We would be grateful for any assistance given to her during this process. This includes granting interviews, assisting her in making appointments, handing out materials and making information accessible to her.

Yours sincerely,

Anette Knutsen
Senior Consultant
MPhil in Development Studies



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Appendix IV: Access letter

