



Community-based participatory research in informal settlements

TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK

Project report
February 2024

**International Centre
for Frugal Innovation**
Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Universities



**Universiteit
Leiden**

TU Delft

**Erasmus
University
Rotterdam**

Erasmus



MSPARC

CBPR Project Completion Report

Project Title	Towards a framework for community-based participatory research in informal settlements: a pilot in Mathare, Nairobi-Kenya
Location	Nairobi, Kenya
Project Cost	25,294.57 Euro
Sponsor	LDE Global Initiative
LDE-University Partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Erasmus University Rotterdam (<i>IHS, Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies</i>) 2. Leiden University College, The Hague 3. Delft University of Technology (<i>Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment</i>)
Local Partner(s) in Nairobi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nuvoni Centre for Innovation Research (Kenya Hub - International Centre for Frugal Innovation) ▪ Mathare Special Planning Area Research Collective (MSPARC)
Project Duration	2023-2024

1 Executive Summary

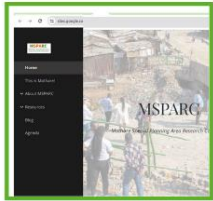
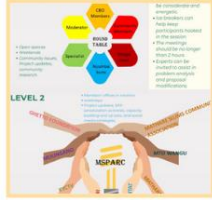
This report offers an overview of activities conducted throughout 2023 within the implementation framework of the “CBPR project” stated in full above, and the contribution of the project to the knowledge and empirical gaps upon which the project hinged.

The project spotlighted the ethos and practices of community-based participatory research (CBPR) within the informal settlements of Nairobi which present a compelling case of being over-researched with no/negligible impact. To wit, these informal settlements portray an array of development challenges, among them cyclic poverty, tenure insecurity, illicit governance including gangs, low quality housing, congestion, paltry services, inadequate infrastructure, fragile habitats, unemployment, and increasing climate and disaster vulnerability. These conditions continually fashion informal settlements as “attractive sites of study”, with an emergent fast-paced knowledge circus. In its design, this project supports research as a tool to inform policy and action but earnestly denounces research without impact. The LDE Global grant hereby enabled the project partners to **catalyse impactful community-based research in a tripartite iterative process**. First, a primary and secondary mapping of research conducted in the select settlement (Mathare) over the past 10 years with a resultant output being a robust data repository. Second, co-creation of a practical guide for conducting impactful community-based participatory research with a complete set of ‘the ten commandments of CBPR’ defined and a draft practical guide in its design stage. Thirdly, practically embed the co-created CBPR guide into the Mathare SPA (MSPARC) through a set of co-designed community engagement tools (in validation stage) and a work-in-progress funding proposal for an MSPARC community engagement model. Through this grant, the project has also yielded several unintended consequences such as formation of a community of practise on CBPR, a collaborative student atelier in Mathare, advancement and embeddedness of the theoretical frame “research waste”, and more stipulated in section 4 and 5 of this report.

KEY PROJECT MILESTONES FACILITATED BY THE LDE GLOBAL GRANT

Community Engagement tools by FI4SGD - 2023/2024

Between Oct.2023-Jan.2024, the project onboarded 2 students of the “Frugal Innovation for Sustainable Global Development -FI4SGD” minor program to join the Nuvoni’s Research assistants in further detailing out the data repository, and developing a community engagement strategy/tools for the SPA. The community engagement tools await a final round of validation.



Web Prototype(MSPARC)- Sept. 2023

As part of its support for the Mathare SPA Research Collective, the project partners co-developed a sample web page to facilitate organization, communication, and visibility in MSPARC. The webpage is also aimed to be one of the dissemination platforms of the data repository. This is to enhance access to already existing research.

Writeshop in Rotterdam - Aug. 2023

A international CBPR workshop conducted between 30th August – 1st September 2023 with a network extending beyond LDE and the project partners to include next-gen researchers e.g. IHS MSc cohort. The writeshop aimed at detailing out the CBPR practical guide, refining the data repository and its dissemination strategy, and activating a CBPR network..



ECAS “African Futures”- June 2023



The project partners contributed to the European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) 2023. In Particular, the team tabled a timely discussion on ‘research waste’, through a presentation of their draft paper on “Transformative Research Collectives for Impactful Science: Collaborative research clean-up in Mathare”

Co-creation in Nairobi- June 2023

A multi-actor CBPR workshop conducted from 12-14 June 2023 at two sites; conference hall and inside Mathare (as in the image).

Agenda: presentation and discussion of the data repository, co-creation of CBPR ethos and ethics, deliberate on the project’s support for the SPA.



Data Repository - April 2023

Secondary and primary mapping of research conducted in Mathare over the past 10years (2012-2022) 297 data points mapped Existing data spread across 20 themes with high research volumes in *crime and violence, basic infrastructure and services, health, economy and livelihoods* respectively.

Towards a framework for community-based participatory research in informal settlements: a pilot in Mathare, Nairobi-Kenya

2 Achievement of project purpose

This project aimed at co-creating inclusive frameworks and partnerships for engaging in community-based participatory research in a more impactful way in ‘over-researched’ communities. Mathare, the 3rd largest informal settlement in Nairobi was selected as the most-fitting case study due to the unique convergence of the research gaps in this settlement and its socio-political relevance as an earmarked Special Planning Area (SPA). As asserted in section 1, the project largely has met its set objectives in the following ways:

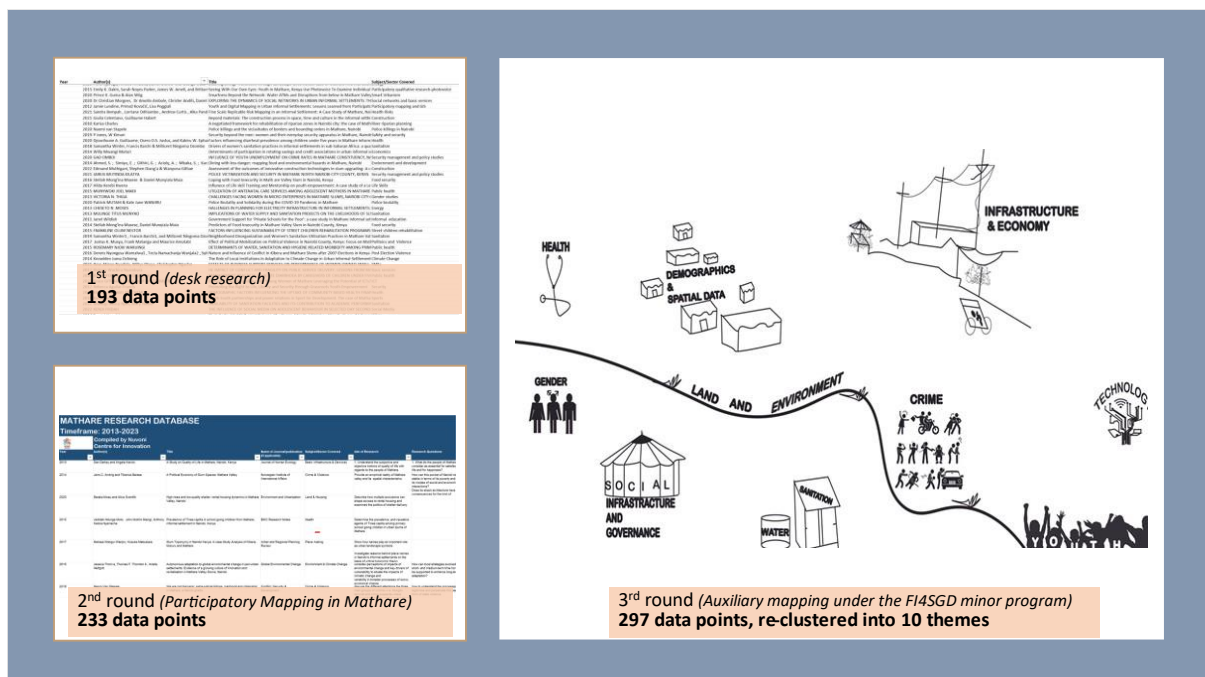
Table 1: overview of project objectives and achievements

PROJECT GOALS	TARGETED OUTPUTS	STATUS Green –Achieved. Yellow – ongoing Red – Not achieved	FUTURE PLANS	WHO
Co-create a repository of past research done in Mathare	Data repository	297 data points	Data translation into visual artistic abstracts.	Leiden-Erasmus (IHS) through a student atelier
	(non) digital platform for dissemination	Data platform and website developed	Embed the repository platform in the MSPARC webpage	MSPARC Research consortium Web developer in the CBPR network Government partners
Three-day Strategy Workshop in Nairobi, Kenya.	Research needs for the Mathare SPA	Major gaps in 4 planning sectors	“This is Mathare” landing page with a situational analysis, research needs	MSPARC Research consortium

	Guidelines of ethical CBPR	"10 commandments" of CBPR	and the 10 commandments
	Community knowledge/data Café	Deemed a low-priority solution	
Three-day strategy write-shop in Rotterdam, Netherlands	CBPR practical guide		Final copy circulated in the CBPR Network/CoP <i>Nuvoni Research (NCIR)</i>
	CBPR living network/CoP		Joint Panel at the ASAUK and special issue on 'Research Waste' <i>Leiden University</i>
	MSPARC action plan	3 consortia SPA set up, each with a champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Consortia • Research Consortia • Community engagement <i>SDI – Kenya</i> <i>Nuvoni Research</i> <i>Ghetto Foundation</i>
Co-create a generic research agenda for community-based participatory research	Research agenda		Academic article on the "Research Waste" Agenda <i>Nuvoni Research</i> <i>ISS (PhD)</i> <i>IHS</i> Mathare-based student atelier <i>Leiden University</i> <i>University of Nairobi</i>
Joint proposal in support of the Mathare SPA	Funding proposal		Submit a proposal for an action-research of the SPA community engagement model <i>Ghetto Foundation</i> <i>Nuvoni Research</i>

2.1 Co-create a repository of past research done in Mathare

A repository of 297 data points has been created through an iterative process of desk research done by research assistants at Nuvoni (NCIR), complemented by participatory research mapping conducted with Mathare residents in 2023, and auxiliary mapping done by students of the FI4SGD minor program of the LDE Universities. The FI4SGD was designed around the 2 key targets of the CBPR project: *data repository, and support for Mathare SPA planning process.*



The repository is presently in the form of an excel database hosted at Nuvoni. Future plans include translation of the data points into visual abstracts which are interpretable and useable at the community level and for the Mathare SPA. This is to be done through a *master's research atelier* which

has been co-designed between IHS-Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (Erasmus), University of Nairobi, and Leiden University. The organizers are part of the CBPR network formed and activated under this project.

2.2 Two inter-country CBPR writeshops

Each of the workshops co-organized in Nairobi (hosted by Nuvoni) and Rotterdam (hosted by HIS) brought together 30-40 participants from different CBPR spheres i.e., **community researchers** from Mathare, Nairobi (MSPARC, Ghetto Foundation) and from Zuid Holland (BOTU); **government actors** represented by Nairobi City County government and Rotterdam municipality; **academia** represented by IHS-Erasmus, University of Nairobi, ISS-Erasmus, Leiden-Delft Universities, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, De Haagse Hogeschool; and **firms/NGOs** represented by ICFI, Nuvoni, Slum Dwellers International (SDI).

Achievements in Nairobi

1. Co-created a data repository for past and present research on Mathare.
2. Defined the key rules of community engagement in CBPR, dubbed the “10 commandments”.
3. Embeddedness of the “research waste” agenda
4. Identified research needs for Mathare SPA process



Achievements in Rotterdam

1. Draft practical guide for a 10-step impactful CBPR.
2. Prototype of digital platform for Mathare SPA (MSPARC website).
3. Master’s research atelier co-designed
4. Deeping ‘research waste’ agenda theoretically and empirically
5. Activated CBPR network/Community of Practice



2.3 Generic research agenda for community-based participatory research

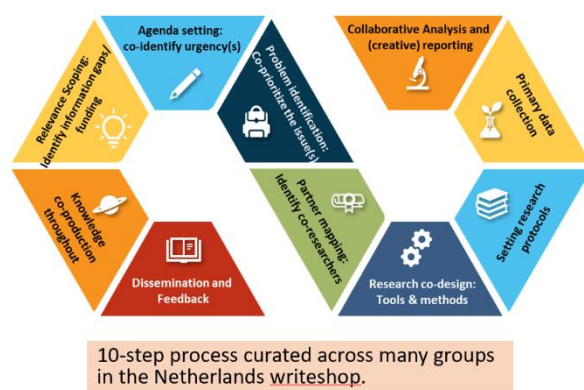
The project coined and further embedded the agenda of “Research waste” as well-fitting the over-researched context of informal settlements. While the concept ‘research waste’ takes root in the late 20th century in the medical field, the project established compelling relevance in community-based participatory research. Succinctly, the project defined **‘research waste as research which fails to yield gains of social and scientific value and is hence considered wasteful research’**. Research is wasteful if the rationale guiding the research is irrelevant, if questionable research designs are adopted, if results and methodologies are reported in a biased and deficient format, and if the outputs are unpublished or poorly published. Every stage in the research cycle is prone to waste, but about 85% of waste produced is avoidable (Chalmers and Glasziou, 2009).

The project partners confronted research waste more actively through creation of a repository of existing research in Mathare and stimulation of the debate at the European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) 2023 in the ‘past and futures of research ethics’ panel (*see snapshot below*). Further steps to confront research waste include the publication of the ‘10 commandments’ of CBPR, circulation of the CBPR practical guide, and a joint panel and special issue on research waste.



2.4 A CBPR practical guide

The inter-country workshops stimulated rigorous discussions on how to best undertake community-based research in a way that is not only impactful, but also ethical. A generic CBPR process was deliberated, accompanied by crucial rules of engagement. A guide consolidating these tenets is a work-in-progress. After validation by the CBPR network, the guide will be circulated to a wider global research community.

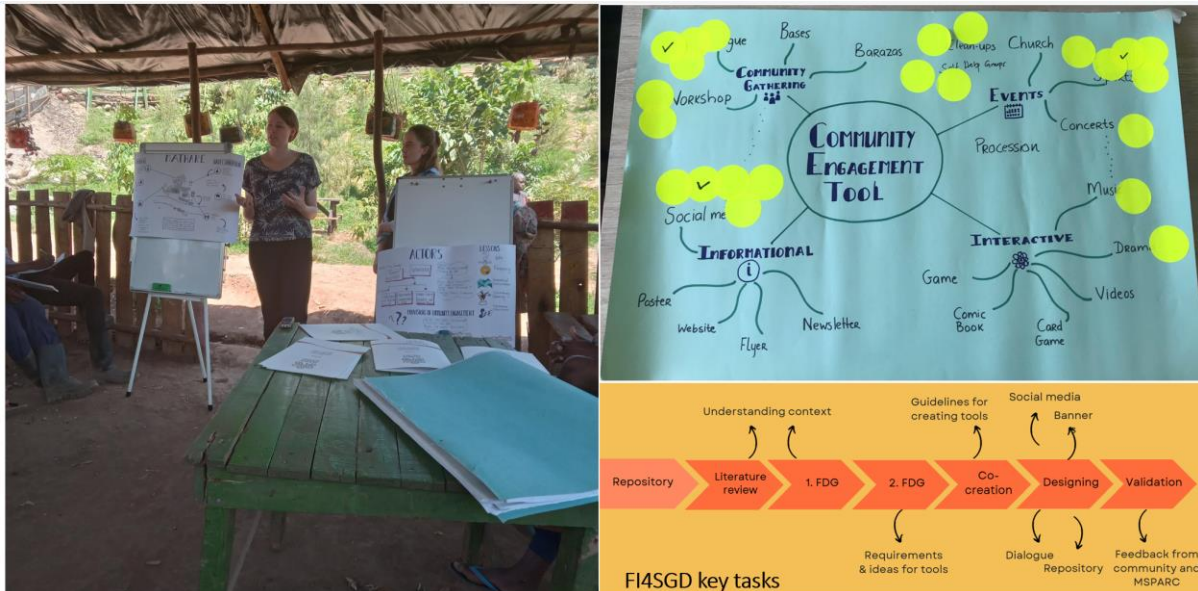


2.5 FI4SGD Minor assignment

In this 12-week field assignment 2 students from the Leiden and Delft Universities joined up with Nuvoni's intern from the University of Nairobi in Nairobi with a twin-objective:

- To co-design the digital facets of Mathare's data repository.
- To creatively design community engagement tools and strategy for the Mathare SPA.

The images below visualize community consultation sessions in Mathare, co-creation tools and key tasks undertaken by the FI4SGD students in support of the CBPR project.



3 Financial report

Below is a snapshot of the sponsored budget vs actual expenditure of the project. **Annexed to this report** are the detailed financial reports from the project partners.

Budget LDE Global Fund 2023				
Towards a framework for community-based participatory research in informal settlements: a pilot in Mathare, Nairobi-Kenya				
University	Activity	Sub-total	Total Budgeted in €	Amount Spent in €
Leiden University	Travel & Accomodation Nairobi workshop	1,500	1,500	1,500
Delft University	Travel & Accomodation Nairobi workshop	1,500	1,500	1,500
IHS, Erasmus University	Travel & Accomodation Nairobi workshop	1,500		
	CBPR Strategy writeshop in NL (host)	1,700		
	<i>Subtotal IHS EUR</i>		3,200	3,200
Nuvoni/ MSPARC Kenya	Workshop 1 in Nairobi	2,000		1,838
	Research Mapping: Fieldwork and RA/Intern	4,000		571
	Workshop 2 in NL: Flights for 6 people, NBI - AMS	5,300		14,442
	Accommodation for Nairobi team in NL	5,500		3,948
	Other overheads: Support, documentation, printin	2,294		6
	<i>Subtotal Nuvoni/MSPARC</i>		19,094	20,805
	TOTALS		25,294	27,005

4 Summary of the Project Impact

The project has met its objective and made a **tripartite contribution** i.e., a multifaceted academic advancement, practical and policy contribution to MSPARC, the CBPR community of practise and the Mathare community at large. Notably, we do not claim to have “made impact” considering the need for co-created metrics for measuring impact and the gradual nature through which ‘impact’ manifests. As such, we proud ourselves to have made a contribution which can be broken down as follows:

1. Academic contribution:
 - a. A practical guide for meaningful, impactful community-based research
 - b. Elevated the “research waste” debate into the social sciences research
 - c. Stimulated a debate on Research ethics in CBPR in an African context at ECAS
 - d. Draft academic article on “Transformative Research Collectives for Impactful Science: Collaborative Research Clean-up in Mathare”.
 - e. Panel contribution on “Community epistemic power: reframing ethical research in informal settlements”.
 - f. Co-created master research atelier
 - g. Embeddedness of Frugal solutions in CBPR practice through the FI4SDG
2. Practical/policy contribution:
 - a. Robust data repository to aid slum upgrading and guide future research.
 - b. Formation/structuring of 3 MSPARC Consortia
 - c. MSPARC website
 - d. Tools for community engagement developed to support the Mathare Special Planning Area (SPA)
 - e. Funding proposal to develop and implement a community engagement model for the Mathare SPA
 - f. Activation of a multinational CBPR Community of Practice/network
 - g. Community knowledge empowerment through discussions about research waste and engaging with the data repository.

5 Additional comments and recommendations

To supplement the project highlights spotlighted in this summary report, we attach the following documents:

- Detailed proceedings of the Nairobi CBPR project
- Proceedings of the Rotterdam workshop + Deliberations of the project
- [Short docufeature of the contributions of the FI4SDG assignment](#) to the CBPR project