4 Description of Nakuru Municipality

In an exhibition in Leuven, Belgium, in 1998, Nakuru town was described as Kenya in a nutshell. The percentage of all ethnic groups in Nakuru is almost the same as that of the country. All 42 ethnic groups are represented in Nakuru, with the Gikuyu as the majority and the largest tribe in Kenya. In Nakuru, people with diverse ethnic backgrounds, languages, religions and customs, both Kenyan and foreign, co-exist in one way or another (De Meulder, 1998). There are no exclusive neighbourhoods of particular ethnic groups. In this respect, there is need to emphasise the important role that church groups play both as a cohesive force and an important agent of change. As the large majority of Kenyans are Christians, the church is not merely another foreign implant, but has adapted to local cultures and lifestyles and developed deeper roots into the society (ibid.). In general terms, the larger Nakuru district is one of the most urbanised districts in Kenya and it is endowed with scenic sites, four beautiful lakes, a variety of hot springs and two dormant volcanoes. This makes Nakuru district a veritable tourist destination.

The quality of the urban environment is influenced by a number of factors related to the geographical setting and the physical environment in which a town is located (cf. the natural system of Bossel, 1999). Other factors are related to the size, growth and distribution of the population of the town (cf. the human system). The scale and nature of human activities and the settlement structures also affect the quality of the urban environment (cf. the support system). The waste and emissions into the environment disrupt the ecosystems and affect the quality of the town’s environment. Finally, the competence, capacity and accountability of the institutions elected, appointed or delegated to manage the town have a lot of influence on the quality of life and environment in any urban centre (Nunan and Satterthwaite, 1999). In the following sections, we will examine the factors and issues that affect the quality of environment, paying attention to the physical and natural environment, the population and economic activities and the settlement structure. The part of the infrastructure system that is designed for water supply, sanitation and solid waste management and the actors involved in the provision of these services will be discussed in the next chapter. We finalise this chapter with a brief introduction to the LA 21 process.
4.1 Historical background

Pastoral communities, mainly the Maasai, used the area which today constitutes Nakuru as grazing land until the arrival of the railway in the beginning of the 20th century (MCN, 1999). They named the place Nakurro, the Maasai word meaning ‘a dusty place’. Like Nairobi and Kisumu, Nakuru originated as a railway station on the great East African Railway between the city-port of Mombasa on the In-
dian Ocean coast and Port Florence, presently Kisumu, on the Lake Victoria shore. Being located in the so-called ‘White Highlands’, Nakuru soon developed into an important regional trading and market centre and became the capital of the district with the same name and of Kenya’s largest province, Rift Valley Province. Nakuru was a very much planned settlement during the colonial period with a square grid cut in two by the railway (De Meulder 1998; MCN 1999; Foeken and Owour, 2000). The street pattern was as simple as it was efficient: with streets in an east-west direction called ‘avenues’ and streets with a north-south orientation called ‘roads’. In the zoning plan of 1929, Nakuru’s further expansion was laid down in accordance with the then generally accepted principles of functional zoning, i.e. with an industrial quarter, residential districts for the various social classes, a suitable location for a hospital and cemetery, recreational facilities, a site for the airport, etc. One of the special residential quarters, located to the southeast of the original grid, was Bondeni, meant for the Asian community (ibid.).

After independence, Nakuru municipality has undergone major extensions of its boundaries, namely in 1963, 1972 and 1992. The 1992 extension included the Lake Nakuru National Park within the municipality’s boundaries and a stretch of agricultural land to the northwest and north-eastern boundary of the Park. Due to the subdivision of former farms into small plots for residential use, this stretch is now largely a sub-urban area (Foeken and Owour, 2000). The total area of the municipality is about 292 km$^2$, of which the lake covers 44 km$^2$.

4.2 The natural system: the physical environment

As shown in Map 4.1, Nakuru town is located 160 km north-west of Nairobi and is the fourth largest urban centre in Kenya after Nairobi, Mombassa and Kisumu. It is situated at an altitude of 1,859 m above sea level and located in the region of the Great Rift Valley whose formation gave rise to a unique natural structure.

The town is located in an environmentally sensitive area. As shown in Map 4.2, the town is sandwiched between Lake Nakuru National Park in the south and the Menengai crater and its associated volcanic landscapes in the north. Further to the north-east of the town is the Bahati Escarpment, forming the western fridge of the Aberdares Escarpment. Unstable geological zones experiencing frequent local geological faulting characterise the western zone of the town. The most affected area of the municipality is on the western side of the Central Commercial District around Ngata, Kiamunyi and the Rift Valley Institute of Science and Technology.
Soils in these areas are young, poorly developed, porous, light and poorly structured. The area is characterised by very low run-off due to the porous nature of the soils. Lake Nakuru is the lowest point in the region rising to 1,758 metres above sea level. All rivers in the region therefore drain into the lake. As a result of the geological instabilities and the associated faulting, the Nakuru area and the Rift Valley region as a whole are highly vulnerable to earthquakes, land subsidence and land sliding. The
area west of Nakuru has already been identified with frequent land subsidence. Similar hazards could be expected in areas of the central part of the town where there is evidence of ground depressions and the disappearance of surface water into fissures.³¹

Map 4.3. The Physical Environment (showing Landscape Units)

³¹ Buildings are known to vibrate when heavy commercial vehicles pass nearby, indicating the presence of underground cavities.
4.2.1 Landscape units

There are four major landscape units in Nakuru. A landscape unit in this case constitutes a set of visible physical factors in the formation of land, which presents opportunities and/or constraints for urban development. The landscape units identified indicate the basis for urban development considering the slope characteristics and the ease of drainage.

(i) The Menengai Crater Hilltop: 2,490 metres above sea level
This landscape unit constitutes all land and land-based resources on the Menengai Crater at and above 1,960 metres above sea level.

(ii) The Menengai Crater Slope and other environmentally sensitive slopes
This constitutes land that rises from 1,880 to 1,960 metres within a distance of about 1-2 km around the Menengai Crater. This landscape unit is more pronounced in the south-eastern slopes facing the central commercial district and the Kiamaina-Ngachura and Karunga-Bahati peri-urban areas, respectively. This landscape unit also consists of four main landforms that abruptly rise above the general ground.

(iii) The Lake Nakuru Basin, the Lower Njoro Channel and the Bottom of the Crater (1,760-1,780 metres above the sea level)
This landscape unit consists of the lake itself, the lakeshore and the section of the Njoro river channel in the Ronda-Kaptembwo and Baruti residential zones. In recent years, this landscape unit has suffered from pollution with solid waste from the surrounding residential areas, from industrial effluents discharged from the main industrial areas and siltation from storm water in the form of surface run-off originating at the slopes of the Menengai Crater, the Central Business District (CBD), and the industrial zone and East Njoro.

(iv) The Flat High Ground and well-drained landscape unit (1,800-1,860 metres)
This is the area of the present CBD and the industrial and residential sites. This landscape unit attains the highest prices in the market because the area is well drained. The residential areas covering Racecourse Estate, Langa Langa, Shabab and Freehold are all within this landscape unit.

4.2.2 The Lake Nakuru National Park
The Lake Nakuru National Park (LNNP) was gazetted in 1968, but since 1961 there was a bird sanctuary in the lake’s south sector. With support of the World
Description of Nakuru Municipality

Wildlife Fund, the Kenyan government started a plan to purchase the adjacent grounds in order to expand the protected areas. The park currently covers an area of 188 km² on the floor of the Rift Valley. The lake, situated at the centre of the park, occupies an area of 44 km² at an altitude of 1,759 metres above sea level. The lake is one of a series of alkaline-saline lakes in the eastern Rift Valley (Thampy, 1998). It is one of the main national parks of Kenya and famous worldwide for its birdlife and for spectacular assemblages of lesser flamingos that congregate on the lake. Beyond the lakeshore, 350 terrestrial bird species inhabit nine ecological niches within the national park. The park’s birdlife, together with 50 species of mammals, including the endangered black rhinoceros and the Rothschild giraffe and 500 species of flora make LNNP one of the most exciting and frequently visited concentrations of wildlife.

The park is located within MCN’s jurisdictional boundary, but the council does not get any of the revenue generated from tourism in the park. All the revenues generated from the park are managed by the central government through the Kenya Wildlife Service. This has implications because urban development within the town has a direct impact on the very survival of the lake ecology. It also means that Nakuru town’s residents do not gain directly from the tourism associated with Lake Nakuru. The lake ecology is constantly under environmental threat from pollution emanating from industrial and other urban development activities within the municipality. Agricultural activities and deforestation in the Lake’s catchment areas will have impacts on the ecosystem of Lake Nakuru National park. The urban and peri-urban population is increasing and this is accompanied by unplanned industrial, commercial, transportation, residential and agricultural development.

4.3 The human system: population growth and dynamics

Nakuru town has a population of nearly 300,000 people and the 1999 population census interim report puts it at 289,385, with a growth rate of over 5% per annum (Table 4.1). From a population of 38,181 in 1962, the population reached 163,927 in 1989. Nowadays, Nakuru is the fourth largest town in Kenya after Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. By the year 2015, the population is projected to rise to 760,000 (MCN, 1999). The population growth has been influenced by the birth rates, rural-urban migration and boundary extensions. There is rapid ‘urban’ development at the periphery of the town because many people take refuge in those areas as a result of shortage of housing in the town centre. Most of these settlements originate from former farming lands as a result of subdivision. This makes planning complex, especially since residents demand inclusion in the municipal
boundaries (see Map 4.2 on the evolution of municipal boundaries) and benefit from urban services, which are being overstretched beyond their limits.

Table 4.1 Nakuru municipality population projections per administrative area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>49,301</td>
<td>87,003</td>
<td>92,088</td>
<td>122,333</td>
<td>162,511</td>
<td>215,885</td>
<td>286,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>22,826</td>
<td>40,282</td>
<td>42,636</td>
<td>56,639</td>
<td>68,574</td>
<td>99,953</td>
<td>132,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanet</td>
<td>30,097</td>
<td>53,113</td>
<td>56,217</td>
<td>74,681</td>
<td>99,209</td>
<td>131,792</td>
<td>175,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baruti</td>
<td>61,300</td>
<td>108,178</td>
<td>14,501</td>
<td>152,106</td>
<td>202,063</td>
<td>268,427</td>
<td>356,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNNP</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>1,136</td>
<td>1,510</td>
<td>2,006</td>
<td>2,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>163,982</td>
<td>289,385</td>
<td>306,297</td>
<td>406,896</td>
<td>540,534</td>
<td>718,063</td>
<td>953,898</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Calculations based on a growth rate of 5.68% per annum


Currently, the population is concentrated within the old municipal boundaries, with the highest densities being found in the residential areas and the CBD. The other high population density is located close to Nakuru industries in the east and includes the Kiratina and Free areas. These areas have numerous informal housing units and small business outlets, often located at walking distance from residences.

As shown in Table 4.2, the population structure reveals a young and growing population with a low level of ageing population. This calls for the application of appropriate planning interventions aimed at meeting the needs of such population groups. Population distribution is influenced by factors such as the accessibility to basic infrastructure facilities and services like roads, public transport, water, sewerage and electricity. It also depends on the type of land tenure and the availability of opportunities for economic advancement. High population densities greatly compromise the principles of health, safety and environmental quality (MCN/ Republic of Kenya/ UNCHS/ABOS-BADC, 1999). We note that only a fraction of the labour force is actually employed in the formal sector. The implication is that there is a high dependency ratio, increasing unemployment and urban poverty. The rate of household formation and household sizes are also high, hence also the need for provision of shelter and other services.
Table 4.2  Nakuru town population structure by sex and five-year age group (1989-2020 based on a growth rate of 5.68% per annum)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age cohort</th>
<th>1989</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>31,520</td>
<td>32,208</td>
<td>55,624</td>
<td>56,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-29</td>
<td>32,057</td>
<td>31,138</td>
<td>56,572</td>
<td>53,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>17,683</td>
<td>10,064</td>
<td>31,382</td>
<td>17,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>5,425</td>
<td>2,325</td>
<td>9,574</td>
<td>4,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-74</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>1,593</td>
<td>1,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88,042</td>
<td>75,885</td>
<td>155,371</td>
<td>133,917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Nakuru

The enormous population increase implies an increased demand of urban services such as water, sanitation, housing, garbage collection, health, recreation facilities and other forms of infrastructure. This further strains the existing facilities. Currently, the population is concentrated within the municipal boundaries, with highest densities in the public housing triangle of Langa Langa, Freehold, Shaabab, Kenlands, Racecourse, Pangani and the Central Business District. These are well-established, serviced and accessible housing estates. Most community facilities are in these areas and they continue to attract more population. The population of the peri-urban areas of Ngata, Engashura, Mbaruk, Workers, Kiamunyeki, Wanyororo and Kiambogo will continuously increase. These areas presently lack essential community and infrastructure facilities. A huge proportion of the population is also concentrated in the low-income settlements around Kwaronda, Kaptembwo, Mwariki, Lakeview, Bondeni, Kivumbini and Freearea (MCN/Republic of Kenya/UNCHS/ABOS-BADC, 1999). These areas do not have adequate basic services and households have formed community-based groups to assist in the provision of some services.

4.4  The support system

4.4.1  The economic structure

It is important to examine the economic structure within the municipality as it affects the way of life of the residents. The major economic sectors of the Nakuru urban economy are commerce, industry, tourism, agriculture and tertiary services. The most dominant forms of business in the Nakuru economy include retail in hardware, general wholesale, outlets for agro-industrial machinery, motor
vehicle trade and spare parts, and servicing the agro-chemical retail and wholesale outlets. There is a significant network of financial institutions providing banking, insurance and credit services to the business community (MCN/Republic of Kenya/UNCHS/ABOS-BADC, 1999).

Currently, there are well over 100 industrial establishments in town, including grain milling and storage, processing of cooking oil from agricultural raw materials, agro-chemical production, soaps, blankets and dairying. There is currently a decline in locally produced goods, but growth in the industrial retailing of finished products. The economy largely depends on the rich agricultural hinterland. There is an increasing growth in small-scale agricultural activities within the metropolitan area, mostly located in the peri-urban areas of Bahati, Kiamunyi, Engashura, Kiamunyekei and Mwariki where the sub-division of large farms into smaller holder portions is rampant. The presence of key natural features such as Lake Nakuru, the Menengai Crater and archaeological sites like Sirikwa holes and Hyrax Hill gives the town some tourism potential. Employment increased from about 24,000 in 1986 to 41,000 in 1995 (MCN/Republic of Kenya/UNCHS/ABOS-BADC, 1999). The trend in earnings also changed from 43 million pounds (68 million USD) to 113 million pounds (178 million USD) in the same period.

Limited formal employment opportunities have resulted in the rapid increase of informal trading activities in the central business district, where every corner of town has been taken up by petty traders, food sellers and jua kali mechanics. Conflict in land use is especially felt at the bus and Matatu Park area, which encompasses the bus and Matatu Park, retail market, wholesale market, public garden and innumerable informal trading activities (MCN/Republic of Kenya/UNCHS/ABOS-BADC, 1999). Coupled with poor infrastructure this creates great concern. We need to note that the informal sector in Nakuru plays a very important role in generating employment to a large proportion of the population. The informal sector is also involved in the provision of services in the residential areas, like waste collection, water supply and the maintenance of sewerage systems. There are, however, a lot of conflicts between the informal workers and the municipal authorities since their activities are not licensed, they do not pay taxes and tend to operate anywhere in town. The MCN, assisted by the local police, has recently been demolishing what they term as “illegal business premises” and chased hawkers out of the CBD. Such actions will not achieve the desired objectives and they tend to create tension between the informal operators on the one side, and the municipal officers on the other. There is need to designate areas where the informal workers are al-

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32 ‘Jua kali’ is a Swahili word meaning ‘hot sun’ and it refers to small-scale informal activities (usually in the open air).
lowed to operate freely as their role in generating incomes for the low-income population is very important.

4.4.2 Land tenure and land use

Most of the land within Nakuru municipality is either public or government/council leases, while the peri-urban zones are characterised by freehold land without development control. This makes it easy to subdivide and transfer the land in the peri-urban zones for speculative and development purposes without proper urban management. The various land uses within the municipality have developed over time on land allocated for urban use by the central government, local authority and cooperative initiatives (MCN/ Republic of Kenya/UNCHS /ABOS-BADC, 1999). This has led to the existing patterns as shown in Table 4.3.

In Nakuru, public land constitutes public purpose and utility, while private land is either leasehold or freehold. Company and cooperative land in Kwaronda and Mwariki is in the process of being titled. Private ownership is pronounced. Apart from the land for rental council houses, offices, Kenya Industrial Estates, government houses, offices and schools, the rest of the land is private.

Table 4.3 Land use in Nakuru municipality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of land</th>
<th>Main estate</th>
<th>Area (km²)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>Racecourse, Langa Langa, Shaabab, Milman, Kaptembwo, Kwaronda</td>
<td>35.73</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>CBD, KANU Street, Section 58 etc.</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>Blankets and west of the CBD</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Hospitals (PGH), government and council offices, schools, etc.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total built up area</td>
<td></td>
<td>51.33</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lands office Nakuru, 1997

4.5 The settlement structure

The housing sector in the municipality can be said to have taken much of the space. From the provider perspective, there are two categories of housing: public and private. The former comprises the housing stock of the government, its corporations and municipal authorities for staff accommodation and council rental housing. The latter

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33 The settlement structure is part of the city's infrastructure system, which also encompasses the provisions for water supply, sanitation and solid waste management. We will deal with the latter part of the infrastructure system in the next chapter.
Challenges of Urban Environmental Governance

comprises the housing stock of individuals for rental purposes or their own habitation. There are at least 6,956 public housing units in town, 5,434\(^\text{34}\) of which are owned by the MCN and 1,522 by the central government departments and corporations (MCN/Republic of Kenya/UNCHS/ABOS-BADC, 1999). The rate of growth in the public housing sector is minimal. The private sector is the largest provider of housing in Nakuru. Apart from government leases, the sub-division of large farms (owned by cooperatives and land-buying companies) avails land for formal and informal private housing development. The rate of house formation in this sector is high, but has been declining in the recent past.

The type of housing in town includes flats or other high-rise type housing, maisonettes, bungalows, semi-detached housing, terrace housing, row housing and informal housing. Private housing offers a wide range of such types. The spatial structure

\(^{34}\) Each of these units was designed to house one household, but they have so far been expanded without the necessary council’s approval and are very congested.
of housing and settlements in Nakuru has evolved from racially based differentiation to a zoning based on socio-economic status. This status tends to correspond with the income levels of the neighbourhoods, with high-income areas generally having low densities, and low-income areas having high densities (MCN/Republic of Kenya/UNCHS/ABOS-BADC, 1999). High income-low density is found in the north and northwest: Kiamunyi, Milimani, Sita centre and Section 58. Middle income, medium density neighbourhoods are found south of the A104 road: Racecourse, Shaabab, Koinange, Langa Langa, and the north-east neighbourhoods of Kiti and Workers. Low-income high-density neighbourhoods are found mainly in the south and southwest: Bondeni, Flamingo, Kaptembwo and Mwariki. This differentiation also corresponds with the level and quality of infrastructure facilities within each zone. Public housing areas are generally well planned with provision made for wider roads, open spaces and space for public utilities. Most private housing areas, especially those in low-income neighbourhoods, are poorly planned and have inadequate physical infrastructure and services. Since quite a large proportion of private housing is developed in the rural-urban interface areas, the municipality does not provide services there, and thus private initiatives are the only hope for servicing the areas.

Studies undertaken by DURP and HABRI in 1998 indicate that the majority (87%) of the residents are tenants, while a significant 13% occupy their own units. Owner-occupied housing has a lower plot coverage and tends to create relatively lower densities. Owner-occupied housing is minimal in low-income settlements. As will be seen later, this affects the tenants' participation in the improvement of the environment. Private housing offers a wide range of accommodation types, including formal and informal single rooms in the low-income settlements, bungalows like those found in Milimani, maisonettes especially in the Kiamunyi area, and flats. Formal private housing for high and middle incomes is well served with water, sewer and septic tanks and electricity. Private informal housing in the low-income settlements faces a number of problems such as poor planning, inadequate support infrastructure like roads, drainage, garbage collection, water, security and electricity. Our household survey was conducted in such neighbourhoods and the communities have organised themselves to take initiatives aimed at environmental management.

In the low-income neighbourhoods, environmental problems are increasing, especially those that affect human health. The area to the west has a geological fault line running through the estates of Kaptembwo and Kwaronda, causing soil subsidence in the rainy season, resulting in deep gullies. Apart from the poor private housing in Kaptembwo, Kwaronda and other areas, the council public housing is in dire need of attention as it is uneconomically managed and in condition of disrepair (MCN/Republic of Kenya/UNCHS/ABOS-BADC, 1999). The inter-linkage between urban activities and the need to protect the lake and the park further compli-
cate the planning of the town. There is need for an integrated approach to make any intervention meaningful and this calls for collaboration between different actors and increased coordination on the part of the municipal authorities.

4.6 Opportunities for urban development

There are several factors that create opportunities for urban sustainable development in Nakuru. Some of these are: (a) the natural sites for tourism development, such as the Menengai crater and Lake Nakuru; (b) a rich agricultural hinterland for both farming and livestock; (b) extensive community resourcefulness; (c) cultural interpretation and self-help capacity; (d) the dual role of Nakuru as a district and provincial headquarter; (e) the well-defined transportation network at the national and international levels and recognition of Nakuru as a regional service centre; (f) the transit position of Nakuru on the transport link to the west of Kenya and the central African countries; and (g) the location of Nakuru in the centre of the rift valley, itself a tourist attraction. We also note that the council has numerous resources which can be exploited, such as an informed community that is willing to participate and good under-utilised land for urban development. Furthermore, the town has been able to realise greater involvement of CBOs, NGOs and the private sector in urban planning and management. These civil society organisations have been involved in solid waste management, greening, water provision and housing with financial, technical and institutional support of the council and with participation of local communities. The MCN is confronted, however, with both planning and institutional problems and other challenges that affect urban management. These problems and challenges emanate from the national and district level and the policy-making environment of the MNC (see Chapter 5).

4.7 Current environmental management initiatives: the LA 21 in Nakuru

The LA 21 initiative started in 1995 with Belgian funding. The initial activities were sensitisation and awareness creation through workshops on urban environmental management, and the development and implementation of broad-based environmental action plans that focus on context-specific aspects of municipal planning and management. Much of the LA 21 work has been done in partnership with UNCHS, WWF and other NGO partners such as ITDG and ICLEI.

Nakuru is one of the three secondary cities selected by the UNCHS (Habitat)’s Localising Agenda 21 programme for a case-study of the implementation of the LA 21 approach. The programme offers a multi-year support system for Nakuru (Kenya), Essaouira (Morocco) and Vihn City (Vietnam), where the programme provides con-

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35 A detailed analysis of LA 21 processes in Nakuru is presented in Chapter 7, detailing how the partnership principle has been utilised.
centrated capacity building and management support. It is hoped that the dissemination of lessons learned to other cities in these regions will further build the capacity of local authorities to formulate and implement LA 21 programmes for and with their communities. The programme enjoys core-funding from the Belgian Administration Development Coordination (BADC/DGIC) and technical support from UNCHS (Habitat), the government of Kenya and a consortium of Belgian universities, the private sector and professionals.

Local teams run the day-to-day project activities and are supported by local advisers. Team members represent different partners and thematic areas of the project. Numerous activities have been planned within the framework of the ‘Urban Pact’ and the broad guidelines and the priorities of the council. All these activities are structured to run on three parallel tracts: vision, action and communication. In each track, substantive activities have been implemented and planned for the future. The long-term visions are being addressed through the creation of a ‘Strategic Structure Plan’. Partnerships with many organisations, including WWF and the University of Nairobi, have been formed. This is an ongoing activity and central to the entire process of LA 21. LA 21, including an up-to-date mapping of Nakuru and the establishment of an MCN Planning team, has supported supplementary activities. We will discuss this process in more detail in Chapter 7.

It appears that whilst a great deal of efforts were put into the LA 21 initiative, there has been relatively little take-up and follow-up by the MCN. The objective was to engender civic pride and develop planning capacity. The reality is that this initiative has not had much impact on decision-making and environmental management initiatives in Nakuru, as will be discussed in Chapter 7.

4.8 Conclusions

Nakuru’s location in an environmentally fragile ecosystem offers several limitations to its physical expansion, while at the same time challenges make the urban developers and managers look for ways to ensure that management is done in a holistic way. Nakuru has grown into a large urban centre in a very short period of time. When looking at the town today it is difficult to imagine that the town is less than 80 years old. For a town to have grown from scratch—literally the scratch of the railway line on the landscape—into an urban centre of close to 300,000 people in such a compressed space of time implies consequences for the condition of the city (De Meulder, 1998). De Meulder further notes that, urban forms, institutions and mechanisms evolve over a long time adjusting to the changing aspirations and voices of its citizens. The compressed history of Nakuru does not provide enough of these reference points. At the same time, the absence of historical reference also becomes an advantage as it reduces the burden of his-
Challenges of Urban Environmental Governance

tory and impacts a sense of freedom for the interventions and visions, a freedom that many historically rooted cities in the world would vie for (ibid.)

The administrative boundaries of the town have continuously shifted outwards with the expansion of the town. It has been noted that the need for accommodating the ever-growing population into a more or less sustainable urban frame is overruled by political motives to jump to another, even more distant boundary line. The expanded municipal boundaries imply that there are more people to be catered for. As will be seen in the next chapter, the town faces many challenges in providing urban basic services in the entire municipality.

Some industrial enterprises generate wastes that eventually end up into Lake Nakuru, the lowest part in the municipality. The garages dotting the entire municipality neither dispose of their wastes adequately, which will eventually affect the quality of the environment in the Lake’s ecosystem. All these activities need to be coordinated in an organised way and the MCN needs to involve all actors whose cooperation is needed to ensure that the quality of the environment is improved.

In the Agenda 21, a historic blueprint for sustainable development, the main focus is on the need to improve the social, economic, and environmental quality of human settlements. In this regard the main challenge is to not only manage urban growth, but to develop a strategic vision on how to mobilise human, financial and technical resources for realising the needs mentioned above. Considering the limited effectiveness of current methods and approaches, innovative tools need to be devised, which are adaptable to society’s circumstances and which support the increased participation of all stakeholders. The following chapters examine the process of urban environmental management by examining the roles played by different actors and the partnerships that have been formed.