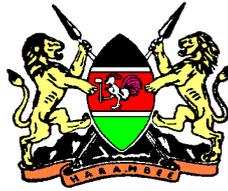


**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**



**THE PRESIDENCY  
MINISTRY OF DEVOLUTION AND PLANNING**

**PARTICIPATORY POVERTY ASSESSMENT V**

**MERU COUNTY SITE REPORT –CENTRAL  
WARD CLUSTER**

**OCTOBER 2014**

**KFNYA**   
**VISION 2030**  
**Towards a Globally Competitive and Prosperous Kenya**

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## **FOREWORD**

Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) V is a mechanism through which identified communities give their own definition and understanding of poverty. This PPA covered 47 counties unlike previous ones which covered selected districts.

The main objective of this exercise was to establish the impact of various Government policies, strategies, programmes and projects aimed at reducing poverty. It further sought to capture the voices of the poor in the communities with special focus on the impact of social protection initiatives. In particular the study covered the following broad issues: poverty dynamics and indicators, provisions of government services on; health, education, agriculture, housing, water and sanitation, pro-poor initiatives including devolved funds.

The definition of poverty varies from one community to the other. From their point of view, poverty was generally defined as inability to meet basic human needs such as food, shelter, clothing, education and health.

From the community perspective poverty level has been rising despite various pro-poor initiatives undertaken by the government over the years. It is worthy to note that many at the clusters visited did not understand how the pro-poor initiatives operate. The study further established that Cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS, drug and substance abuse, gender disparity on property ownership, environmental degradation, poor governance on devolved funds and pro-poor initiatives were on the rise.

The findings from the study will be used as lessons learnt in designing County based programmes. Communities for example, have come up with diverse coping mechanisms on poverty. Some of these include women merry-go-round and small scale business. These will be upgraded to other notable initiatives like Revolving loan, table banking concept and training Counties to benefit from other funding windows like UWEZO and other related funds. They will be a reference point in designing current and future interventions on reducing poverty and regional disparities. I call upon our internal and external stakeholders to utilize the respective PPA V county reports to inform policy and decision-making.

**Ann Waiguru, OGW**  
**Cabinet Secretary**  
**Ministry of Devolution and Planning**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Meru County Participatory Poverty Assessment Report is the first of its kind that has the County as the key reference point on poverty profiling since the promulgation of COK, 2010 and the formation of County Governments after the general elections of 2013.

Foremost, I take this opportunity to sincerely thank and acknowledge all individuals and institutions who collectively contributed their time and resources towards the production of this Report. In particular, valuable leadership and policy guidance was provided by Stephen Wainaina, the Economic Planning Secretary and Moses Ogola, the Director Social & Governance Department. The Department of S&G provided the secretariat that was charged with the responsibility of undertaking the exercise and finally the production of both the National Report and the County specific Reports covering the 47 Counties,

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**ENGINEER PETER O. MANGITI**

**PRINCIPAL SECRETARY-PLANNING  
MINISTRY OF DEVOLUTION AND PLANNING**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) is a mechanism through which identified groups of people give their own definition and understanding of poverty based on their own perspectives. The government conducted PPA-I in 1994, PPA-II in 1996, PPA-III in 2001 and PPA-4 in 2005/06.

Between November 2012 and February 2014, the National Government conducted PPA-V whose overall objective is to contribute to Kenya's poverty reduction strategy by providing a richer and more informative database on the living standards, aspirations and needs of the poorer sections of the population. In particular, the survey sought the community perspectives on poverty dynamic diagnostics; and the provision and impact of selected wellbeing services including agriculture, education, health, social protection and devolved funds. Perspectives of the community were sought on the awareness of the availability of these services, accessibility and affordability.

This report presents the findings of the PPA-V survey in **Central Ward cluster** of Meru County which was conducted in November/December 2012. The Central Ward is an urban community in Ntima Division, Imenti North sub-county. Information from the cluster was provided by the community members through Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and household questionnaire and was complemented by the information from key informants who were mainly sub-county technical experts in the subject areas of the survey.

Meru County covers an area of 6,936.2 km<sup>2</sup> out of which 1,776.1 km<sup>2</sup> is gazetted forest. The county population was projected at 1,443,555 consisting of 713,801 males and 729,754 females in 2012. The population is projected to increase to 1,536,422 in 2015 and to 1,601,629 in 2017. The growth in population will strain the available resources such as land.

Some of the causes of poverty in Central Ward include unemployment, lack of land for farming, low level of education, security problems, and low awareness on the availability of devolved funds.

Generally, health services are available, though not accessible and affordable to the community. The distance to the nearest health facilities is a major constraint since community members travel up to 5km and others up to 20km. Notable infrastructure development has led to some improvements in access to healthcare.

Education services particularly primary and secondary schools are generally accessible although the additional charges in primary schools are a hindrance to access. The community noted that the status of education facilities had improved due to construction of classes, laboratories and purchase of desks by government, CDF, LATF and other development partners.

The community is not aware of the available agricultural services given since this was an urban cluster. However, they recommended that the Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture Programme (UPAP), which promotes technologies that assist urban dwellers to improve food

security through technologies like greenhouse, drip irrigation, hanging gardens and multi-storey gardens should be introduced.

The community felt that water availability has improved over time through various interventions by the government through the Ministry of Water, CDF, LATF and other development partners such as JICA, ADB and Meru Water and Sewerage Company (MEWAS). The company has distributed water to a large part of the county and households are billed on a monthly basis. Those who cannot afford to pay for the water relies on perennial rivers, springs and wells dug by development partners. The sanitation facilities available include pit latrines and pits for disposing waste.

There is awareness of the existence of several pro-poor initiatives and devolved funds in this community including cash transfers, YEDF, WEF and CDF. However, procedures for accessing these funds and general negative attitude towards loans limit the uptake of the funds.

HIV/AIDS, PWDs and gender inequality were identified as major crosscutting issues of concern. The community noted that high HIV/AIDS incidence was expected to have a negative impact on their livelihoods. They also noted that PWDs were more affected by poverty and had to depend on well-wishers and relatives for survival. Women were also said to have been affected as they could not make any decisions pertaining to asset disposal at the household level.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AI	Artificial Insemination
AFC	Agricultural Finance Corporation
AMREF	Africa Medical Research Foundation
ATDC	Agricultural Technological Development Centre
CBO	Community Based organization
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CHW	Community Health Worker
CT	Cash Transfers
DDO	District Development officer
DEB	District Education Board
DSO	District Statistics Officer
ECDE	Early Childhood Development Education
ESP	Economic Stimulus Programme
FBO	Faith Based organization
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FPE	Free Primary Education
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KESP	Kenya Education Support Programme
KIs	Key Informants
KIHBS	Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey
KKV	KaziKwaVijana
LATF	Local Authority Transfer Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NAAIAP	National Accelerated Agriculture Input Access Programme
NACC	National AIDS Control Council
NALEP	National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme
NASSEP	National Sample Survey and Evaluation Programme
NCPB	National Cereals and Produce Board
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NHIF	National Hospital Insurance Fund
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PEC	Poverty Eradication Commission
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PTA	Parents-Teachers Association
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RA	Research Assistant
SSE	Subsidized Secondary Education
STI	Sexually Committed Infection
TOWA	Total War against AIDS
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund
YED	Youth Enterprise Development Fund

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) is a mechanism through which identified communities give their own definition and understanding of poverty based on their own discourse. Hence PPAs are aimed at understanding poverty from the perspectives of poor people including gaining a clearer notion of what their priorities are for improving their livelihoods. There is therefore need to conduct regular PPAs in order to inform policy makers on decision making process regarding various interventions that help to get the poor out of poverty. Participatory approaches add value in policy formulation and planning by enriching understanding of the realities of poverty and formulation of policies which address the plight of the poor. They increase the confidence and 'voice' of the poor while also acting as a learning process for the non-poor and often resulting in the creation of new networks. In addition, participatory approaches influence the images of poverty and public debate.

The PPA V study was necessitated by the fact that inequality and poverty remain among key development challenges that the Government of Kenya continues to confront and address.

Further, whereas substantial attention has been placed on poverty alleviation, there exists a huge gap between the poor and non-poor in the entitlement to delivery of services. There also exists large disparities in incomes and access to education, health and to basic needs, including; clean water, adequate housing and sanitation.

In addition, there exist other remarkable intra and inter-regional and gender disparities in quality, accessibility, affordability and availability of services. These disparities become more pronounced among vulnerable groups such as people with disability, youth, people living with HIV and AIDS, orphans and the elderly.

### **1.2 History of Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPAs) in Kenya**

The first Participatory Poverty Study was carried out in 1994, and covered 8 districts (seven of the poorest districts and two low income areas in Nairobi). Its objectives were to understand poverty from the perspective of the poor and those providing service to the poor and start a process of dialogue between policy makers, district level service providers and the poor.

The second PPA was carried out in 1996 and covered 7 districts with the purpose of providing a deeper understanding of poverty from the perspective of the poor and fills the gaps quantitative studies could not readily explain.

The third PPA was carried out in 2001 and covered 10 districts with the objective of enriching the quantitative information collected country-wide for the preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

The fourth PPA was conducted in 2005/06 alongside quantitative Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey (KIHBS). The two were meant to complement each other and focused on three main policy areas; poverty diagnosis and dynamics; pro-poor policies regarding service delivery and wellbeing; and voices of the poor among the communities which included analysis of the impact of the various policies on the poor.

Since the fourth PPA, the government has initiated a number of programmes aimed at alleviating poverty, inequality and ameliorating the suffering of the vulnerable sections of the Kenyan citizens.

The Fifth Participatory Poverty Assessment mainly focused on the impact of the various pro-poor policies, strategies, programs and projects aimed at reducing poverty and improving welfare.

### **1.3 PPA V Objectives**

The overall objective of the study was to contribute to Kenya's poverty reduction strategy, by providing a richer and more informative database on the living standards, aspirations and needs of the poorer sections of the population. In this context, the fifth Participatory Poverty Study (PPAV) focused on two main areas:

- The impact of the various policies, strategies, programmes and projects aimed at reducing poverty and improving welfare; and
- Capture the voices of the poor among the communities with a special focus on social protection initiatives to inform policy planning and targeting.

More specifically, the participatory study sought:

- i. To gain a deeper understanding of the impact of the pro-poor initiatives based on the perceptions of the people themselves, especially the poor and vulnerable groups.
- ii. To broaden the process through which policies will be developed by engaging ordinary citizens in real debates to come up with the best ways of reducing poverty.
- iii. To identify and prioritize policies, strategies, programmes and projects which would support poor communities improve their wellbeing, focusing on pro-poor initiatives.
- iv. To integrate the respective contributions of participatory and qualitative approaches in the M&E strategy for Kenya.
- v. Monitoring impact to identify what outcomes are important to those affected by policy interventions to help untangle complex processes of individual and community change.
- vi. Enriching understanding of the lived realities of poverty and arriving at policies which make sense to those affected to ensure equity and improvement of wellbeing in a clean and secure environment.

## **1.4 Methodology**

### **1.4.1 Selection of the Cluster**

For the purpose of collecting information, one cluster, Central Ward was selected to represent the county. This was done using two-stage purposive sampling that was super-imposed on agro-ecological zones to cover common characteristics across similar zones. The aim was to capture as much variation as possible among the poor communities in the County. The Fourth National Sample Survey and Evaluation Programme (NASSEP IV) maps (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics) were used to demarcate the boundaries of each of the selected cluster.

### **1.4.2 Process, Study Instruments and Field work**

This study used PPA tools and instruments including semi-structured oral interview questionnaires, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and observations. Specific tools which were used included resource mapping, wealth ranking, Venn/chapatti diagrams and pair wise ranking. The Village Resource Map was introduced before the introduction of other PPA tools, and Wealth Ranking was used to establish how the community categorizes itself economically. Attempt was made to identify households benefiting from the cash transfers so that they could participate during the administration of the specific data collection check lists so that accurate information was received to inform the discussions.

The checklist was mainly used to elicit specific and vital information on selected policy areas from the community. It was divided into two sections namely Poverty Diagnostics and Assessment of the Impact of pro-poor initiatives. The trained RAs administered the tools/instruments under the guidance of the supervisors to ensure quality of the data collected. The data collection process was similar for all selected sample sites as well as the format for data recording and analysis. This standardization was critical for overall data analysis and report writing.

The Key informant provided technical information about their particular areas of operation. Those interviewed included officers responsible for Public Health/Medical Services, Water, Agriculture/Livestock, Gender and Social Development, Basic Education, opinion leaders, DDOs and the District Commissioner.

### **1.4.3 Field Logistics**

The PPA-V study was conducted in two phases; Phase was conducted between November and December 2012 while phase two (2) was conducted between November and December 2013. Information from the clusters was provided by the community members through Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and household questionnaire and was complemented by the information from key informants who are the technical experts in the subject areas of the survey. The main policy areas of focus were Health Care, Basic Education, Agricultural Services and Inputs, Water and Sanitation, Housing, Cash Transfer (CT), Roads 2000, Devolved Funds such as Constituencies Development Fund (CDF) and KaziKwaVijana (KKV).

In preparation for the Survey, the supervisors were introduced to the use of survey tools by the consultant. Advertisement for Research Assistants (RAs) was done one week prior to recruitment through the District Development Officer's (DDO) and District Statistics Officer's (DSO) office. The recruitment interviews were conducted for two days. Out of the applicants who were interviewed, six (6) research assistants per county were selected to assist in data collection in that specific county. RAs were deliberately recruited from the local community to

ensure that they clearly understood the local languages, culture, traditions and the lifestyle of the people.

The training for researchers ran for five (4) days and data collection and site report writing was done in four (4) days. During the training, RAs were taken through the introduction to Participatory Poverty Assessment and methodologies, guiding principles for participatory data collection and the data collection instruments.

To ensure the data collection instruments/tools were thoroughly understood, the research assistants conducted role plays. They were taken through the roles they were expected to play while in the field which included note taking, facilitating, observing and administration of the household questionnaires.

Other key areas covered during the training included data collection logistics, data storage, compilation of the site reports and the format of the cluster report. This report, therefore, presents the PPA V survey findings. It uses poverty perceptions as recorded from Central Ward cluster to draw inferences about the county.

## **1.5 COUNTY/CLUSTER PROFILE**

According to the Meru County Development Profile 2013-2017, the County lies to the east of Mt Kenya whose peak cuts through the southern border of the county. It borders Laikipia County to the west, Nyeri County to the southwest, TharakaNithi County to the east and Isiolo County to the north.

Meru Central has a poverty index of 41 percent while Meru North has a poverty index of 47.3 percent

The county population was projected at 1,443,555 (713,801 males and 729,754 females) in 2012, 1,536,422 in 2015 and 1,601,629 in 2017. The growth in population will strain the available resources such as land.

The county lies in the eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya and its position in the Equator has highly influenced its natural conditions. The wide range of altitude which varies between 300m (???) to 5,199m above sea level from the lowest point in the county to the peak of Mt Kenya has influenced the atmospheric conditions leading to a wide variety of microclimates and agro ecological zones.

The county receives moderate amounts of rainfall except for the lower parts of Buuri area bordering Isiolo County which is arid. The distribution of rainfall ranges from 300 mm per annum in the lower midlands in the north to 2500 mm per annum in the southeast. Other areas receive an average of 1250 mm of rainfall annually. There are two seasons with the long rains occurring from mid-March to May and short rains from October to December. Temperatures range from a low of 8<sup>0</sup>C to a high of 32<sup>0</sup>C during the cold and hot seasons, respectively. The economic activities include:

### **Farming**

Agriculture is a major economic activity in this county due to the volcanic soils in the high altitude areas. In the recent past, most farmers have been shifting from traditional cash and

food crops to horticultural production which fetches relatively high prices in the market. Coffee, tea, banana and *miraa*(khat) farming are the major cash crops in the county. The major food crops include maize, beans, sorghum, millet, yams, arrowroots and cassava among other foodstuffs. Majority of the population are employed in the agricultural sector which contributes to 80 percent of household income.

### **Trade**

Wholesale and retail trade plays an important role in the county's economy. The sector contributes 20 percent to the household income.

### **Timber Logging**

The county has an intense cover of forest and the volcanic soils favor the growing of trees which are used as the main source of building materials.

### **Tourism**

There are a number of national parks (e.g. Meru National Park) and conservancies that attract tourists to the region. These are served by numerous hotels and lodges. Opportunities however exist in further development of this sector. Visitors can also sample the local culture and traditions being showcased.

## **1.6 Study Limitations**

A major limitation in the PPAs design is the fact that they are not designed to collect quantitative information, and the qualitative information collected during the study in a cluster is not representative of the County or even the sub-county. However an aggregation of findings in a national report is expected to fairly represent the socio-economic problems, challenges and opportunities facing the Country

## **1.7 REPORT ORGANIZATION/OUTLINE**

The report is divided into six chapters including chapter 1 which covers introduction. Chapter 2 highlights the survey findings on poverty diagnostics while chapter 3 presents findings on provision of services in the selected policy areas (healthcare, basic education, agricultural services and inputs, water and sanitation and housing). Chapter 4 covers the findings on other pro-poor initiatives (policies and programmes) such as Cash Transfers (CT), KaziKwaVijana (KKV), Roads 2000, and devolved funds such as CDF, Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) etc. and any other pro-poor interventions. Chapter 5 covers crosscutting and emerging issues while chapter 6 outlines the recommendations and conclusions.

## **CHAPTER TWO: POVERTY DYNAMICS AND INDICATORS**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to the Meru County Development Profile, over 80 percent of the county population depends highly on agriculture as the major source of household income. Agriculture has however been greatly affected by the erratic weather patterns which have seen rainfall become unreliable and hence resulting to crop failure. This has led to reduced income in many households and increase in poverty levels. A reported 43.5 percent of the county population is living in absolute poverty while 29.6 percent of those living in the rural areas are poor. It should be noted that out of the total population, 21.1 percent are food poor.

### **2.2 DEFINITION OF POVERTY**

*Mwendantu* community in the Central Ward in Meru County defined poverty (*ukia*) as the state where one is unable to cater for the basic needs e.g. food, clothes and shelter. They added that poverty is a situation where one cannot attain set goals and targets. They said the poor lack assets e.g. goats and cows. To them, poverty can be described as lack of employment.

The key informant described poverty as a situation where a person is living below the poverty line. Such individuals cannot afford basic needs like food and shelter and these individuals are referred to as '*nkia*' in the local language. In summary, poverty can be said to be a situation where someone has no hope in life, their family live in streets and slums, and relies on casual jobs e.g. brewing and selling of local brews.

### **2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF WEALTH GROUPS**

The community classified themselves into the rich, the poor and the very poor. As perceived by the community, the rich households were 5 percent, 50 percent were poor and 45 percent very poor.

### **2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF WEALTH GROUPS**

According to the community, the rich own permanent shelter, have permanent jobs, have access to clean water, owns a vehicle(s), and their children have access to higher education levels like colleges and universities.

The poor were characterized as those who can afford basic needs like food, shelter and clothing, take their children to public schools, either build wooden houses or pay rent ranging from Kshs. 500-700 per month, own small businesses, and cannot afford to eat balanced diets.

The very poor (*nkiamukeu*) struggle to get basic needs like food, shelter and clothing, cannot afford to pay rent and most of the time are thrown out of the houses by landlords and end up in streets, and some engage in alcoholism and drug abuse (mostly men) or prostitution (women) so as to earn some income.

## **2.5 CAUSES OF POVERTY**

According to the key informants, the main cause of poverty in the area is unemployment because the youth, who are the majority, are unemployed and cannot access loans due to lack of security required by banks and other financial institutions to start any income generating activities. They also lack training to empower them with skills that can assist them in self-employment.

The community noted that the main causes of poverty in the area include:

### **Unemployment**

They noted that both the educated and the uneducated people in Mwendantu community lack employment opportunities in the formal and informal sector. For instance, some youths in the community had studied up to the university/college level and could not secure employment, and sometimes even internship was a problem due to corruption issues in some companies. The informal sector is also flooded and competitive thus forcing some people to bribe for the low skill jobs such as carpentry, masonry, road construction and KaziKwaVijana (KKV). Majority of the community also lack capital to start their own businesses so as to create self-employment.

### **Lack of land for farming**

The growing population has caused pressure on land which has resulted to further subdivision into small uneconomic units. This has resulted to minimal agricultural practices as the small portions of land can only be occupied by residential houses. Some members of the community have no land at all and live in rental houses which at times they cannot afford. Sometimes, community members lease small portions of land for subsistence farming.

### **Sickness and disabilities**

Sickness has consumed much of their income in specialized medical care such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and mental illness. While administering the questionnaires, a mother to a mentally disabled child and also a beneficiary of Cash Transfer (CT) programme, said that she spends about Kshs 20,000 on monthly basis to treat her epileptic child. She is a single mother and meeting such a huge medical bill is a problem to her since she spends most of her time in the house. This has constrained her in participating in income generating activities and has rendered her a poor woman who cannot meet her basic needs and relies on the Kshs 2,000 provided for by the Government through the CT Programme.

### **Lack of education**

Some residents of Mwendantu community happened to be brought up by poor parents who could not afford to meet their basic education hence most of them are school dropouts. Others who happened to complete their secondary level education could not afford tertiary education and thus can only depend on casual jobs which are not reliable.

### **Housing problems**

Majority of the people in Mwendantu community live in rented houses since they lack land and money to develop their own houses. Expenditure on rental houses is increasing and consumes a lot from the little they get. The rental houses have poor sanitation and poor garbage disposal making them prone to diseases.

### **Security issues**

Due to the increased cost of living within the town, a few residents of Mwendantu community and street children practice pick-pocketing and theft during the night and thus get away with the little that one has accrued from job. The area has no security lights and is therefore an easy target area for criminals.

## **2.6 IMPACT OF POVERTY**

The community noted that poverty has impacted on them through various ways, such as small girls and single mothers engaging in prostitution, poor health and sanitation, illiteracy, untidiness, stealing, and also creates enmity among neighbors due to failure to pay debts.

Through the Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), it was noted that the persons with disabilities and orphans and vulnerable children were mostly affected by poverty since in most cases they are dependent and are constrained in meeting their basic needs. Sometimes caregivers have to meet expenses while undertaking special medical care such as HIV/AIDS treatment, mental care and surgeries/operations which are not affordable.

## **2.7 Coping Mechanisms**

The key informants asserted that the poverty coping mechanisms vary between men and women. Mostly, women establish small businesses like selling *sukuma wiki*, tomatoes, potatoes, etc., so as to sustain their basic needs. They also involve themselves in cleaning clothes for other people who are in most circumstances the rich. Few practice prostitution. On the other hand, men seek temporary jobs like car washing and other manual jobs.

The community noted that they cope with poverty through various ways such as doing casual jobs (*vibarua*) like washing clothes, start small enterprises, beg on the streets, pick-pocketing by street boys, borrowing from neighbors, collecting scrap metals and merry-go-rounds by women.

## **2.8 ASSET OWNERSHIP, ACCESS AND DECISION MAKING IN THE HOUSEHOLD**

The communities identified furniture (sofa set, tables, beddings and wall unit), locomotives (bicycles, motorbike), electronics (radio, camera, TV) and utensils as the main assets in their households. They also noted that some community members (landlords) possess land (plots).

In Mwendantu community, which is a metropolitan community, everyone has equal rights of owning, accessing and deciding on when and how to dispose the asset provided he or she had procured the property. Whoever has money decides on when to procure the property and that he or she has the sole right to decide on when and how to do it. However, some women

said that sometimes their husbands may decide to dispose a property procured by women, especially if their husbands are under the influence of alcohol.

Consequently, both make consultations regarding the decision to own, access and dispose of a property. Children are not involved in making these decisions.

However, it was noted that men were regarded as owners of majority of the assets such as electronics since they have greater opportunities to engage in income generating activities unlike women who are mostly caregivers and homemakers. One of the respondents noted that women nowadays have greater opportunities in life since his wife earns a high and a steady income than him.

From the daily schedule, it was observed that women were overburdened with activities all geared towards providing for their families as compared to men.

## **2.9 POVERTY AND GENDER**

The community noted that poverty has negatively impacted on majority of the people regardless of their gender. The community noted that they live in an urban setup where money is everything. If one has no money, then he or she is constrained from meeting the basic needs.

In conclusion, some women from Mwendantu community felt overburdened and neglected as they support the family. They sometimes singlehandedly deal with family issues such as providing basic education, healthcare, enough food, shelter and proper clothing to their children.

### **2.10 POVERTY TRENDS OVER TIME**

The community was of the opinion that poverty has risen over time. They noted that prices of basic commodities such as food, sugar and cooking fat have increased over time due to inflation. They also said that fees have been increased, especially for university and other tertiary institutions and is thus a big burden to parents. The community also noted that the value of land has risen over time thus constraining them from practicing agriculture or constructing their own houses. The landlords have increased rents thus making their lives even worse than ten years ago.

### **2.11 INTERVENTIONS TARGETING THE POOR IN THE COMMUNITY**

Following the FGD and interviews with key informants, the following were noted as some of the major interventions targeting the poor community:

#### **Bursaries**

Children from poor families who perform well in school are given bursaries to enable them to complete their education. Bursaries are given by government through CDF, LATF and the Ministry of Education. Other well-wishers include churches like Methodist Church and

Catholic Church etc. However, the number of needy children/student is high in Meru County thus a need for other donors/well-wishers to intervene.

### **Cash Transfers**

This intervention has targeted the elderly, PWDs and OVCs. While conducting the questionnaires, the interviewers noted that some members within the *Kaagavillage* and Mwendantu area of Meru County had benefited from the programme. However, this intervention has only assisted a few people and need to be up-scaled.

### **Devolved funds**

The community has benefited from CDF and LATF which have facilitated the construction of classrooms, laboratories and procurement of desks in various schools. The funds have also facilitated other projects such as road construction, bridges, police post, solar fences for forest, dispensaries and water projects.

### **Irrigation projects**

The county has benefited from irrigation projects such as Kioru-Giaki, Thuura-Giaki and Nkabuni-Igoki irrigation schemes. The irrigation projects have been financed by the Ministry of Water, IFAD and other donors. The irrigation projects have enabled a continuous and a reliable farming practice rather than reliance on rain-fed farming hence high yields from agriculture. However, this initiative needs to be up-scaled so as to cover a larger area.

### **KaziKwaVijana**

This programme has benefited the youth within the area through labour intensive activities such as tree planting, road construction, clean up in town, etc. The youth have been able to receive income which has enabled them to initiate projects such as dairy farming, kiosks and *bodaboda* businesses which has empowered them financially.

### **School feeding programmes**

It was noted that the school feeding programme has been introduced in a few schools, which has enabled children from poor families to continue with their primary education. Before the introduction of this initiative, children from poor families especially from slum areas would go for lunch and never come back for the afternoon classes.

## **2.12 Recommendations**

The following are some of the recommendations given by the community:

- i. Resettlement:** Mwendantu community recommended that the government should resettle them since they have no land. This will provide them with land for housing and be able to practice agricultural farming activities.
- ii. Training/ equipping them with modern skills:** The community felt that the government needed to train them with necessary skills through polytechnics to equip them with necessary skills such as carpentry, hairdressing and masonry. They also recommended that the Ministry responsible for agriculture should train them on urban/Peri-urban skills so that they can practice small-scale agriculture e.g. rabbit

- keeping, chicken and vegetable growing (vegetable growing using a sack rather than land) within the residential houses.
- iii. **Transparency and accountability:**Mwendantu community recommended that that the government should put tight measures to fight corruption and mismanagement of public funds.
  - iv. **Adherence to equity/equality:** The community recommended that the government should be strict in adherence to equity as contained in the Constitution. They recommended that all public institutions/authorities and ministries should ensure that they adhere to equity while employing their staff.They also recommended that the management of devolved funds such as CDF, LATF and Roads 2000 should distribute their projects equitably among the needy areas as currently there is political influence which seems to develop some areas than others.
  - v. **Education:**The community proposed that the government should introduce programmes to target the dropouts to go back to school. The government should also ensure that Free Primary Education (FPE) is fully funded to avoid extra charges to parents.
  - vi. **Creation of employment:**The community recommended that the government should come up with various interventions so as to absorb the large number of youth from the county into the job market. For instance, the government can upscale the KKV and should assist the youths to come up with cottage industries through grants.

## CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS ON PROVISION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

### 3.1 HEALTHCARE

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

Health and nutrition play a major role in development through ensuring a healthy population. Prevention of diseases and health promotion ensures a healthy environment for the public. This should be of high quality, affordable and accessible to the general population.

The PPA-V aimed at generating information on availability of health facilities and where they are located in the community, management of the facilities, awareness of the kind of services offered, affordability and other health interventions which have led to improvement in the health standards of the community. It also sought to establish the trend of health services for the past ten years and recommendations for improvement.

Meru County has a total of five Level 5 hospitals, six Level 4 hospitals, 23 health centers, 102 dispensaries, 158 private medical clinics, 5 nursing homes and 3 maternity homes. Due to high population growth the number of health facilities need to be up-scaled to cater for the increasing populace.

#### 3.1.2 Major Health Concerns in the Community

The major diseases affecting the county are malaria, skin diseases, intestinal worms, HIV/AIDS and respiratory diseases. The prevalence rate of malaria stands at 15 percent. HIV/AIDS is a major challenge in the county with a prevalence rate of 6.3 percent, compared to the national average of 5.6 percent. This has led to increase in child-headed households, low labour productivity and poverty due to high medication costs.

In Mwendantu, the major health concerns are malaria, skin diseases, amoebiosis, diarrhea, typhoid, intestinal worms, HIV/AIDS and respiratory diseases. Other concerns in the health sector include:

- **Maternity Services:**The distance from the community to the health centers hinders access. However, in some areas, this has improved due to interventions like building of dispensaries with maternity wards through CDF.
- **Quality of water supplied for human use:** The major health issues are water related i.e. amoebiosis, diarrhea, typhoid and intestinal worms.
- **Availability of essential drugs:**The government health facilities only stocks cheap medicines. Patients are directed to buy drugs from expensive chemists suspected to be owned by the government medical officers.
- **Population and environment:** A major cause of concern in the district is encroachment of the wetlands and catchment areas by farmers that may lead to water sources drying up, poor waste disposal, pollution due to pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers, effluents from industries, and deforestation.

- **High unemployment rate and drug abuse:** High unemployment rate has exposed the youth to drug abuse.
- **Poor health facilities:** Some health facilities lack vital diagnosis and laboratory equipment, and thus patients are forced to seek alternatives at private hospitals which are very expensive.

### **3.1.3 Provision of Health Services**

The KIs noted that health services are provided by the government through the dispensaries, district and sub-district health centers and referral hospitals. Other providers include private hospitals, faith-based organizations and nongovernmental organizations.

The KIs felt that the health centers are available to the community, although distance is a major constraint since community travel distances of 5km to 20km. However, notable infrastructure development has been made in improving access to health facilities. According to the community, there are only two private hospitals in the community and those unable to afford their services seek medical care at Meru level 5 hospital which is about 2km away.

The supply of drugs has improved such that they now receive drugs via a pull system i.e. they request drugs that are relevant and there is therefore no wastage, expiry or returns. Previously, they used to use push system whereby the KEMSA used to decide what to give and therefore they ended up getting unnecessary drugs which ended being returned.

The community noted that health access has improved, for instance, there is increase in the number of CHWs and that the treatment of under-fives has also improved.

The KI noted affordability is not an issue since the registration fee per attendant is Kshs 20, which is mainly used to cater for watchmen's salary. However the community remarked that the government hospitals still face a challenge e.g. Meru level 5 hospital lack drugs, there are delays in treatment, and there are corruption issues where one is referred to go and buy drugs in the chemists owned by those practitioners. Expectant women are charged between Kshs 1,200 and 1,500 for quality maternity services.

### **3.1.4 Interventions towards Improvement of Health Services in the Community**

Intervention that have facilitated the improvements of health standards in the community are high yields from agriculture which enables the community to afford healthcare services, good education and hence awareness on health issues, services by NGOs (such as treatments, vaccinations, education and provision of basic needs to OVC such as Ripples International), CDF support in construction of dispensaries and laboratories, nutritional supplements to people with HIV/AIDS, and CT-elderly where the aged are helped with some money to improve their living standards. Others include tetanus vaccinations, antenatal clinics, prevention of malaria through free mosquito nets, and postnatal services e.g. free child vaccinations and education training on how to take care of the young baby.

### **3.1.5 Decision Making on Health Issues in the Family/Community**

The community noted that decisions regarding health issues are determined by the couple since each of them has a right of making decisions pertaining health.

### **3.1.6 Ideal Family Size**

Majority of community members were of the opinion that the ideal family size should be 2-3 children. However, one community member suggested that they should have five children so that they are left with some children in case of any misfortunes like death (which may occur due to poor health/accidents).

### **3.1.7 Relationship between Household Size and Poverty**

The KI was of the opinion that the household size is related to poverty because a high population growth rate leads to poverty. He explained further that more children will require more provision of healthcare services and thus constrain on the limited resources. The community did not deviate from the assertions of the KI and argued that though a large family size provides cheap labour and takes care of parents at old age, it was detrimental to development since it entailed utilizing every income for upkeep, thus leaving nothing for development and emergencies.

### **3.1.8 Access and Decision Making on Family Planning Services**

Access to family planning services is optional and only those willing access them. On decision making, the couple jointly decides on when and how to access the family planning services.

### **3.1.9 Opinion on Status of Health Services overtime**

The status of health services has improved in the last 10 years. This is because there is improvement in infrastructure, availability of necessary drugs due to pull system by KEMSA, and awareness on health issues, counseling of HIV/AIDS patient and thus reducing stigma, formation of groups of HIV/AIDS patients thus enabling interactions, and provision of free TB drugs and ARV as well as nutritious food, which have led to improving the status of those living with HIV/AIDS.

### **3.1.10 Recommendations**

According to the community, the government should:

- i. Construct dispensaries in every location and supply them with clean water;
- ii. Conduct more health education/sensitization through forums, peer education and seminars;

- iii. Be more close to the community in provision of health services than the NGOs since the latter only serves their personal interest rather than the interest of the entire public;
- iv. Stock all hospitals with drugs;
- v. Improve maternity services and have courteous nurses to attend to the community.

## **3.2 BASIC EDUCATION**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

According to the Meru County Development Profile, the county has 647 public primary schools with a total enrolment of 335,879 pupils and 5,520 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:60 which is higher than the recommended ratio of 1:40. In addition, there are some private schools in the county. The introduction of CDF has resulted to growth in the number of schools and improvement of school facilities and infrastructure.

There are 347 public secondary schools in the county which absorbs students from both public and private primary schools. These schools have a total enrolment of 54,682 students with 1,825 teachers. The proportion of those enrolled in secondary school is low compared to the population aged 14-17 years as only 45 percent are in school. The number of boys in secondary schools is 25,625 compared to 29,057 girls. The low number of boys could be attributed to child employment in miraa business.

According to the KI, most of the schools are under the management of the Board of Governors (BOG) who runs the public schools on behalf of the ministry. Parts of the BOG are representatives from the community. The community participates in the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) and school management committee.

The provincial administration, through the chief/village elders, distributes relief food to the needy schools, assist in curbing school dropouts, curbs drug abuse, maintain security and helps in the management of schools basically on disciplinary issues.

### **3.2.2 Status of the Education Facilities**

The KI noted that the status of the education facilities has slightly improved overtime through interventions such as CDF, LATF and other donor projects. He however noted that although the status has slightly improved, some schools lack vital equipments and infrastructure such as laboratories, classrooms, stores and libraries.

The community noted that the status of education facilities has improved due to construction of classes, laboratories and purchase of desks by Government, CDF, LATF and other development donors.

### **3.2.3 Provision of Education Services**

The KI noted that access to education has improved through provision of FPE and SSE which has enabled children from poor families to enroll in school since education is now affordable. However, it was pointed out that in some instances, an additional fee is charged to the parent to cater for watchmen's salary, feeding programme, examinations, additional teachers, and for infrastructure development. Such additional charges constrain poor parents who are subjected to what they cannot afford.

The community noted that there is only one private primary school, three public primary schools and three day secondary schools within the community where they educate their children. They noted that despite FPE, they pay additional money to cater for watchman fee, cooks and examination fees. New parents are also required to pay money for desks and PTA teachers. Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) kids are required to pay for teachers, porridge and cooks. They noted that the community is not involved in the management of the schools.

### **3.2.4 Status of Education Services**

It was noted that the status of education services has improved over time due to interventions such as the implementation of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All and FPE. However, several challenges had been noted in the quality of education due to factors such as overcrowding in classes, few number of teachers, and dropouts due to lack of fees and food.

### **3.2.5 Interventions towards Improvement of Education Standards in the Community**

Some of the interventions noted in the community include the school feeding programmes, although parents pay little money, construction of classrooms and laboratories by CDF, and provision of bursaries by African Development Bank (ADB), Methodist Church of Kenya (MCK) and LATF from the Municipal Council.

Other interventions targeting the poor include provision of assistance by Ripples International, Red Cross and Equity Bank. During the allocation of bursaries, priority is given to the total orphans, then partial orphans. Money is given from the Ministry to buy uniforms and shoes for children from the poor communities.

### **3.2.6 Relationship between Education and Poverty**

Education is greatly related to poverty and school dropouts are mostly recorded from poor households. School dropouts are as a result of casual work by students, lack of food since they cannot go to school hungry, and lack of fees. Generally, education is strongly related to poverty since if one is not educated, then he or she has no chance in life and only relies on well-wishers.

### **3.2.7 Opinion on Status of Education Overtime**

According to the KI, the quality of education has improved over the past ten years. There have been high retention, enrolment and transition rates over time in both primary and secondary schools. Further, interventions provided by the government and non-state actors have greatly led to improvement in the education sector. Notably, the government's introduction of FPE has led to more children enrolling.

According to one community member, only the education status of the rich is improving since they can afford parallel degree programme for their children as well as facilitate them for overseas studies. On the other hand, the status of education for the poor has even worsened due to overcrowding in schools due to FPE. Devolved funds like CDF and LATF have increased the number of children accessing free primary education and transiting due to provision of bursaries.

### **3.2.8 Recommendations**

To improve the education sector, the KI recommended that:

- i. The government should provide the relevant facilities such as dormitories, laboratories, class and libraries to reduce overcrowding;
- ii. The government should upscale the school feeding programmes;
- iii. The government should employ adequate teachers;
- iv. The government should increase bursary education to poor students;
- v. There is need to up-scale adult education programmes so as to target more adults;
- vi. The government should facilitate the acquisition of skills by coming up with programmes to encourage dropouts get skills for their development;
- vii. The government should promote specialization from early age;
- viii. The government should mitigate against child labour to reduce high dropout rates;
- ix. The government should promote and support talents identified at an early age.

## **3.3 WATER AND SANITATION**

### **3.3.1 Introduction**

According to the KI, the county has several sources of water such as wells, springs, boreholes, rivers, rain harvesting (water tanks) as well as water piped into the homestead. This water is used for both domestic and livestock and to some extent small scale irrigation such as kitchen gardening. There is a great challenge in the treatment of water especially the open ones such as wells and rivers which are prone to pollution.

The County Development Profile points out that the county has good water supply in the urban centers, mainly from rivers originating from Mt. Kenya and Nyambene Hills. Water sector reforms being implemented have resulted in the establishment of the Tana Water Service Board, formation of Water Users Associations and the licensing of water service

providers with Meru Water and Sewerage Company providing water service in Meru Municipality, while Imetha Water Services serves the rest of the county.

### **3.3.2 Types of Water Programmes in the Community**

The KI noted that there are over 100 water projects in the sub-county. Most of them are community based water projects which are funded by NGOs, Buuri water project which is funded by the Catholic Church and Kathita water project funded by Methodist Church. Other projects are funded by government and CDF.

He noted that the above named projects are located within the community and community members are involved in management by being consulted in the design and implementation of these programmes.

The community is also expected to contribute 30 percent of the initial contribution to show commitment before they are funded. The community is also involved in decision-making by being trained before the commitment of the project and on how to raise revenue to cater for maintenance e.g. breakage of pipes. The community selects the project committee among the community members to represent them in implementation and management of these projects.

### **3.3.3 Types of Sanitation Facilities in the Community**

Following the FGD and field observations, it was noted that the community has various sanitation facilities such as toilets, latrines taps (for washing hands), sewerage services and compost pits. Within the urban area, the Municipal Council has constructed toilets especially in market areas. Other private enterprises such as *Iko toilets* have dug toilets within the town and charge Kshs 10 per person.

The KI noted that latrines are found within the homestead, Chief's camps and in churches/school (temporary built). Waste disposal is done by the Municipal Council in urban area. In rural setups, they dig up compost pits and burn the waste when full.

The community, however, pointed out that the Council has not established a sewerage system in their rental houses and they use pit latrines which are not clean.

### **3.3.4 Relationship between Environmental Degradation and Water Availability**

The relationship between environmental degradation and water availability is strong since environmental degradation through various forms such as deforestation and burning of charcoal have led to declining water availability over time.

### **3.3.5 Relationship between Water and Sanitation and Poverty**

The KI noted that there is a positive relationship between water, sanitation and poverty since availability of water has led to introduction of irrigation schemes which helps in

enhancing food security and hence mitigating against poverty. Water projects reduce the time community members use to search for water, and hence have more time to engage in economic activities. Water availability also helps to maintain cleanliness and reduces waterborne diseases.

The community also pointed out that there is a strong relationship between water, sanitation and poverty since poor people lack education and money and can drink water from any source (including untreated water) provided that it is free. If one lacks water, he or she cannot take advantage of irrigation farming thus constraining him or her from realizing gains from irrigation. He also noted that majority of the poor do not bathe hence exposing themselves to diseases caused by dirt.

### **3.3.6 Opinion on Status of Water and Sanitation overtime**

The Meru Water and Sewerage Company have distributed water to a larger part of the county and households are billed on a monthly basis. Those who cannot afford to pay for the water rely on perennial rivers, springs and wells dug by development partners.

To the Mwendantu community, water availability has improved over time through various interventions by the government through the ministry, CDF, LATF and other development partners such as JICA, ADB and Meru Water and Sewerage Company (MEWAS). The community has been facilitated with various water/sanitation projects. He also said that a number of residents have piped water into their homesteads which is improving the water availability and access. In the residential houses, especially for the middle class and the extreme poor, the landlords are not concerned with the hygiene of the poor and many residential plots are not cleaned regularly. Waste disposal is also not properly done leading to bad odor within the buildings and emergence of rats and cockroaches.

### **3.3.7 Recommendations**

It was recommended that the government should:

1. Facilitate capacity building and training of community on dangers of environmental degradation, water pollution, water treatment and management of water projects;
2. Setup community water tanks to enable them access clean drinking water;
3. Enforce by-laws on cleanliness, water harvesting and lighting in the urban areas.

## **3.4 AGRICULTURAL SERVICES AND INPUTS**

### **3.4.1 Introduction**

According to the Meru County Development Profile, agriculture is a major economic activity in this county due to the volcanic soils in the high altitude areas, with 80 percent of the population getting their livelihood from the sector. The average farm size is 1.8 ha. In the recent past, most farmers have been shifting from traditional cash and food crops to horticultural production which fetches relatively high prices in the market. Coffee, tea, banana

and *miraa* (khat) farming are the major cash crops in the county. The major food crops include maize, beans, sorghum, millet, yams, arrowroots and cassava among others.

The government, through the agriculture-related offices, has been creating agricultural awareness mainly through agricultural shows and field demonstrations. The government has also employed agricultural extension officers who guide farmers to practice good agricultural practices. The officers provide extension services at the divisional level hence the farmers can access these services whenever they demand. The extension services are free while other interventions like subsidized fertilizers to farmers are available.

### **3.4.2 Provision of Agricultural Services and Inputs**

According to the KI, agriculture services such as extension services are accessible to farmers but are demand-driven. The extension services are provided free of charge and they target farmers through field days, and ASK shows where the government facilitates their showcasing to farmers. Also showcased are modern farming technologies that are cost-effective.

The farmers get subsidized fertilizers through the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB). The price of fertilizer is relatively low compared to that from shops that deal with farm inputs. Farmers get fertilizer in bags according to the land acreage, while there are no other farm inputs given. The officers train farmers on how to carry out farming including planting, weeding, harvesting, storing and preserving their produce. The farmers have adopted the methods of using inputs. The officers also facilitate people who are living in the slums in small scale farming like rabbit rearing.

However, according to the community, extension services are not free and they pay for them in addition to the officers being unavailable most of the time.

### **3.4.3 Interventions towards Improvement of Agricultural Standards in the Community**

The following are the interventions in the county at large which are meant to improve agricultural standards:

- **Small holder horticultural & marketing programme:** This programme is funded jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries and IFAD. It has several components which include putting infrastructure for horticulture marketing for building small markets to facilitate the farmers.
- **Urban and Pre-urban Agriculture Programme (UPAP):** This involves promoting technologies that assist urban dwellers to improve food security through technologies like greenhouse, drip irrigation, hanging gardens and multi-storey gardens.
- **Njaa Marufuku:** This is a pro-poor programme that is implemented through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. Under the programme, community members form groups that comprises of 15-30 members and then come up with a proposal for funding. Once it is approved, the fund is disbursed in accordance with the

proposal and the saving that the group has. The programme started from 2005 and is in progress and its goal is to enhance food security.

- **Irrigation projects:** The County has three main irrigation schemes that are funded by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources and other donors. The Ministry conducts capacity building of farmers by training them on how to undertake irrigation through water harvesting for small-scale irrigation and drip irrigation.
- **Farming inputs/seeds:** During long periods of drought, for instance in 2008, the government distributed food, seeds and fertilizers to farmers to enhance food security.
- **Kilimo Biashara:** This is a government initiative in collaboration with various banks like Equity Bank, Family Bank and Cooperative Bank. The government issues Kshs 500,000 which the bank up-scales to Kshs 5 million to give loans to farmers to enable them to buy farm inputs. This initiative mostly benefits large scale farmers as they produce for commercial purposes. The farmers repay the loan but at a low interest rate.
- **Subsidized fertilizer programme:** Apart from the above programmes, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, through the NCPB, provides subsidized fertilizer to farmers within the county. Farmers are given a voucher by the Ministry to enable them buy fertilizers from NCPB at subsidized prices. However, this intervention targets farmers with large sizes of land hence majority of the farmers do not benefit from the programme and hence they buy fertilizers from shops.
- **Extension services and training:** The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries offer extension services to farmers through field demonstrations and agricultural shows. Farmers do not pay for these services but the services are demand-driven. The ministry also trains farmers on post-harvest management so as to assist them in ensuring good storage of their produce.

The Mwendantu community noted that they have neither heard nor have they benefited from the above programmes. They recommended that since they are tenants in an urban setting, they should be sensitized on some programmes like urban and Peri-urban programmes which will assist them in ensuring food security within the town.

#### **3.4.4 Target Group for Agricultural Services**

According to the KI, the services target all people regardless of their gender provided that one has land. In other interventions that require the community to form a group, the ministry requires a composition of at least 30 percent of either gender.

#### **3.4.5 Relationship between Agriculture and Poverty**

To the community, there is a direct relationship between agriculture and poverty in that, if one has no fertile agricultural land, he or she cannot benefit from revenues obtained from farming. In such cases, one is forced to depend on others or buying food despite the high food prices. If one cannot afford, then he or she cannot escape from being poor.

### **3.4.6 Opinion on Status of agricultural services overtime**

According to the KI, the agricultural sector has slightly improved over time. Following the government interventions advocating for modern farming technology and farmers willingness to adopt these technologies, the produce from agriculture has increased over time. The prices of major agricultural produce have increased thus earning the farmer high revenue. However, these benefits have been counteracted by the increasing cost of inputs and further subdivision of land.

The Mwendantu community noted that the status of agriculture in the past 10 years has not changed in any way due to lack of land for farming. They said that they are urban dwellers who live on rental houses hence lack land for farming. The community suggested that the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries should train and build their capacity on Urban/Peri-Urban farming technologies which would equip them with skills to practice small-scale farming to cater for their subsistence needs.

### **3.4.7 Recommendations**

It was recommended that:

1. The government should allocate more resources to the agriculture sector to allow the sector to build capacity of farmers on modern technology and to employ more extension officers;
2. The government should upscale irrigation projects within the county to ensure food security;
3. The government should build capacity of the community on Urban/Peri-Urban farming technologies to equip them with skills to practice small scale farming methods to cater for their subsistence needs;
4. The government should sensitize community members on programmes such as Peri-urban programmes.

## **3.5 HOUSING**

### **3.5.1 Introduction**

Housing forms a basic aspect in any given household. It gives both shelter and security to the household. The study sought to establish the sources of building materials, type, affordability and their availability in the communities. The study was also expected to bring out the type of housing depending on the household head, the status of housing for the last 10 years, and recommendations for improvement.

### **3.5.2 Types of Building Materials**

According to the County Development Profile, corrugated iron sheets accounts for 92.8 percent of the household's roofing materials with 3.1 percent using asbestos sheets, while 2.4 percent use grass. The county is characterized by inadequate, unaffordable and indecent

housing, particularly for low income earners in urban areas and in the rural sector. The county also faces the problem of low level of urban home ownership and extensive and inappropriate dwelling units including slums and squatter settlement. The quality of housing varies from one part of the county to another with Meru Town having decent housing ranging from permanent, semi-permanent and temporary houses.

In Central Ward, the common building materials are stones, timber, bricks and iron sheets. The building materials are sourced from Isiolo, Tharaka and Nkubu.

### **3.5.3 Types of Housing and Household Headship**

Most of the households are headed by men with a few headed by women. Most women in the communities who own houses are widowed, divorced or separated. There are also a few houses headed by elderly people. In Central Ward, where majority of the houses are rental, households are headed by either men or women, young or the elderly depending on the ability to pay.

#### **Male-Headed**

This is the most dominant type of household headship and it is commonly found in a complete nuclear family (father, mother and children). The type of the housing would differ with family income, such that a family with a high and steady income would afford to live in a permanent house while poor families live in semi-permanent houses.

#### **Female-Headed**

In the opinion of the community, female-headed households live in semi-permanent houses. Some still live in mud houses because of their limited sources of income that does not allow them to afford better kind of housing mainly because majority are widows or single mothers who have to support their households on their own. Another reason given by the community is that the women do not own major assets like land and cattle which on disposal can generate enough income to construct permanent structures.

#### **Elderly-Headed Households**

The community said that majority of the elderly live with their children or relatives. The few who live by themselves also live in semi-permanent houses which are poorly constructed. The reason for is because they did not have the energy and resources to repair their houses and were not earning any income. In Mwendantu community, timber shelters are common with the elderly since timber houses are cheap to construct in the area.

### **3.5.4 Opinion on Status of Housing Overtime**

To the community, the status of the housing has improved over time and people are currently constructing permanent houses. However, temporary houses are evident in slum areas within town and some rural areas.

### **3.5.6 Recommendations**

Given that Central Ward is a slum area, the community was of the opinion that the government should resettle them since they are very poor and have no land.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRO-POOR INITIATIVES**

### **4.1 PRO-POOR INITIATIVES**

The government initiated programmes to protect the vulnerable from extreme poverty and deprivation. The programmes include but not limited to cash transfers to the OVCs, PWD and the elderly, KaziKwaVijana, Road 2000, and the Devolved Funds. Below are the findings on the implementation and impact of these initiatives

#### **4.1.1 Cash Transfers**

The KI pointed out that the cash transfer programmes available within the county are for PWDs and that for the elderly who are above 65 years of age. They are given Kshs2000 every month where a committee comprising of the area chief, sub-chief, arepresentative from the community and another from the ministry responsible for social services are engaged. It is a seven member committee formed to determine who among the elderly and the disabled is to benefit. The community is aware of the CT programmes although they are not beneficiaries. After the committee identifies the beneficiaries, they fill forms which are sent to Nairobi for vetting. After the vetting process, the beneficiaries are paid their monthly benefit through a master payroll through the Postal Office.

TheMwendantu community noted that they are not aware of the CT programmes and neither of them has benefited from the funds yet majority of them qualify for these funds, which contradicts what the KI said above.

The KI noted that the money transfer to the beneficiaries is not timely because at times there are delays e.g. when the money is not sent to post office in due time. Sometimes the beneficiaries may not be aware that the money has been sent to the postal office and it is returned back to the ministry when they delay in collecting it and get it in the subsequent month.

The committee selects two beneficiaries from each location. The number of beneficiaries to date stands at 23 elderly people from Buuri and Imenti North districts and 53 households with disabilities in the community. The caregivers receive the monies on behalf of the beneficiaries or the beneficiaries receive by themselves if in a position to do so.

According to the KI, the amount of money given does not help meet the basic minimum requirements *“but although it is little it is better than having none”*. He added that the beneficiaries have no other sources of livelihood because they depend on their caregivers, relatives and well-wishers.

The cash transfers have highly impacted on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries since they can now feed themselves and take care of their medical bills, and in some cases the caretakers have initiated income-generating activities such as dairy projects and small scale retail shops/kiosks.

To improve on the cash transfers programme, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need to upscale the funding so as to reach more beneficiaries since some elderly and PWDs think that they are being left out since only two beneficiaries are selected in each location;
2. There is need for the funds to be paid on timely basis so as to accrue regular benefits to the beneficiaries;
3. The community should be sensitized on all forms of CT available, the criteria of selecting the beneficiaries, and the aim of these funds since at times some families may hide their disabled members/children.

#### **4.1.2 KaziKwaVijana**

This is a program implemented by several ministries with the objective of providing employment for the youth through various labour intensive initiatives. The types of public works include road rehabilitation and construction, clearing bushes along the roads, tree planting and nurturing tree seedlings, digging water pans, clearing drainage, solid waste management, and other environment and sanitation works.

The beneficiaries are unemployed youths and those who have never attended school because most educated youth find the pay insufficient for them. In addition, men prefer these jobs whereas women do not even attempt because they are manual jobs that they feel are tailored so suit men. Members of Mwendantu community noted that they are aware of the KKV although it was a tribal affair whereby the local leaders engage the youths from their locality alone. They also said that the officers ask for bribes before they give the jobs and thus the youths from this community have not benefited from this program.

The youth engaged in the programme are selected using some set criteria and are paid Kshs 250 per day which is paid after the end of the contract. According to the KI, Kshs 250 is not sufficient for the youths to develop themselves financially. He pointed out that if this was a lump-sum amount they could use it to do something substantial, but it brings in tendencies to misuse the money through drinking alcohol if given in small portions.

The impact of KKV on the livelihood of casuals and community was minimal within the community, as only 60 youths were engaged. However, it was noted that some beneficiaries of KKV had managed to undertake income generating activities such as *bodaboda*, kiosks and poultry/dairy goat farming.

To engage the youth in other labour intensive techniques, the community recommended that:

1. The government should engage more youths and cover large areas for more impact to be recorded;
2. The programme should train the youth on entrepreneurial skills;
3. The programme should consider dry areas, where tree planting cannot survive, by undertaking projects with multiplier effects such as dam construction;

4. The government should embrace equity in employment and should avoid being skewed towards the tribal factor.

## **4.2 DEVOLVED FUNDS**

The following devolved funds were reported in the community:

### **4.2.1 Constituency Development Fund**

The community members are aware of CDF and have benefited through bursaries and construction of social facilities such as classrooms, hospital facilities and water projects.

### **4.2.2 Local Authority Transfer Fund**

Majority of the community members said that they are aware of the LATF and the fund has facilitated renovation of classes e.g. in DEB primary school. However they noted that the fund disbursement is not done in a fair manner and that some areas are facilitated with more projects than others. They added that sometimes there are incomplete projects initiated by the fund e.g. community street lighting project.

The community recommended on the need to ensure equity in the funding of these projects and to ensure that the projects are funded fully to avoid incomplete projects.

### **4.2.3 Women Enterprise Fund**

The KI noted that the Women Enterprises Fund (WEF) started in 2008 as a way of trying to empower women in terms of financial resources by encouraging them to venture into business. For the women to benefit from these funds, they should register a group of not less than 15 members and should comprise of 70 percent women and if need be 30 percent of men. The group should be registered. Once registered, the groups are funded to a tune of Kshs 50,000 although they are required to pay an admission fee of Kshs 2,500.

There are challenges of implementation of this programme in that some groups resist repaying the money thinking it is government money given for free. Also, the startup money is sometimes a challenge because the group might be large and the project they undertake might not generate much money.

According to the community, most of them have never benefited from WEF since they had never heard of the programme and hence could not access the funds. However, those who were aware of the funds noted that the money is given secretly without involving them. They also added that when the money is channeled through various banks, the banks take advantage of them by lending to them their own money so as to maximize profits, rather than issuing the WEF which has a lower interest rate compared to that of a normal loan. They also noted that the officers from the Ministry responsible for gender are unfriendly to the community whenever they visit their office to seek for the services.

To improve the implementation of the WEF, the KI noted that the government should monitor bank accounts of the various commercial banks engaged in issuing the loans since currently it is impossible to monitor the number of beneficiaries. The resident of Mwendantu community recommended that they should be sensitized on how to apply/access the loans.

#### **4.2.4 Youth Enterprise Development Fund**

The youth fund started in 2007 and was meant to empower the youth. Some of the challenges facing the youth include unemployment, lack of market space, lack of credit facilities and lack of market production. Some of the programmes initiated by the youth fund commenced in 2007 and they are still on progress. Programmes that are being carried on by the youth are like goat rearing, and passion fruit and French beans farming.

The youths are supposed to form a group of not less than 12 members. They are supposed to choose their leaders including the chairman, treasurer and the secretary who would be accountable for all activities that affect the group. They have to write a proposal which has to be assessed by the sub-county committee and if approved, they are given money.

Most of the youths are aware of these funds and ways and means of accessing them through various seminars organized by the ministry responsible for youth and gender issues. On accountability, the youth groups use suggestion boxes where they forward or post their suggestions, opinions on various matters, or even their grievances.

According to the youth, these funds have had little impact because the funds allocated are very little. Most of the groups qualify for the minimum amount of Kshs 50,000 while only few groups get Kshs 100,000 and above. With Kshs 50,000, groups are unable to initiate any project capable of helping them. Mostly youth groups made up of women benefit more from these funds because they are known to honor credit facilities more than men and the default rate for ladies is less than in men.

Based on the above, the community was of the opinion that:

1. The amount of funds accorded to youth groups should be increased so that they can be able to start big projects with high impact;
2. Rather than giving little amounts, the government should initiate huge projects that can sustain the youth. For example they can allocate 5 million shillings to start a banana processing industry.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CROSSCUTTING AND EMERGING ISSUES**

### **5.1 HIVANDAIDS**

Majority of the youth in Central Ward have been exposed to vices such as drinking *chang'aa*, early marriages and prostitution, which have resulted to them contracting HIV. According to the community, the government should upscale labour intensive activities such as KKV so as to engage the youth in income generation rather than being idle.

It was noted that interventions on HIV/AIDS have significantly reduced stigma among the infected people. HIV/AIDS counselors are very friendly to the people and provide the necessary advice to them as need arises e.g. on nutrition and drugs. The infected people can freely interact with other people thus allowing them to reduce the stigma.

### **5.2 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The community noted that there are many PWDs in the area who are highly impacted on by poverty and not benefitting from the government interventions such as cash transfers. The community recommended that the government should upscale CT for PWDs in order to benefit more of them. It was also reported that some parents hide some of their children with disabilities as they fear being isolated by community, and hence are not recruited and enrolled into the CT programme.

### **5.3 GENDER INEQUALITY**

It was noted that women in the area are highly disadvantaged in coping with poverty since most available casual jobs (car wash, KKV, constructions- 'mjengo') are labour intensive.

## **CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Recommendations**

The community recommended that;

- i. The government needs to train them with necessary skills such as carpentry, hairdressing and masonry. They should also be trained on urban/peri-urban skills so that they can practice small-scale agriculture e.g. rabbit keeping, chicken and vegetable growing (vegetable growing using a sack rather than land) within the residential houses;
- ii. The government should put tight measures to fight corruption and mismanagement of public funds;
- iii. The government should be strict in adherence to equity as enshrined in the Constitution. They recommended that all public institutions/authorities and ministries should ensure that they adhere to equity while employing their staff;
- iv. The management of devolved funds such as CDF, LATF and Roads 2000 should distribute their projects equitably among the needy areas as currently there is political influence which seems to develop some areas than others;
- v. The government should introduce programmes to target the dropouts to go back to school;
- vi. The government should ensure that Free Primary Education (FPE) is fully funded to avoid extra charges to parents;
- vii. The government can upscale the KKV and assist youth to come up with cottage industries through grants. The programme should train the youth on entrepreneurial skills;
- viii. The government should construct dispensaries in every location and supply them with clean water and adequate drugs;
- ix. The government should conduct more health education/sensitization through forums, peer education and seminars;
- x. The government should improve maternity services and have courteous nurses to attend to the community;
- xi. The government should upscale the school feeding programmes;
- xii. The government should employ adequate teachers;
- xiii. The government should increase bursary education to poor students;
- xiv. There is need to up-scale adult education programmes so as to target more adults;
- xv. The government should facilitate the acquisition of skills by coming up with programmes to encourage dropouts get skills for their development;
- xvi. The government should promote specialization from early age;
- xvii. The government should promote and support talents identified at an early age.
- xviii. The government should facilitate capacity building and training of community on dangers of environmental degradation, water pollution, water treatment and management of water projects;
- xix. The government should enforce by-laws on cleanliness, water harvesting and lighting in urban areas.

- xx. The government should allocate more resources to agriculture to allow the sector to build capacity of farmers on modern technology and to employ more extension officers;
- xxi. The government should upscale irrigation projects within the county to ensure food security;
- xxii. There is need to upscale the funding for CTs so as to reach more beneficiaries;
- xxiii. There is need for CT beneficiaries to be paid on timely basis so as to accrue regular benefits;
- xxiv. The amount of funds accorded to youth groups under YEDF should be increased so that they can be able to start big projects with high impact;
- xxv. Rather than giving little amounts, the government should initiate huge projects that can sustain the youth. For example they can allocate 5 million shillings to start a banana processing industry

## **6.2 CONCLUSION**

The PPA-V field study demonstrated that although the government has implemented several pro-poor interventions much has not been realized. Majority of the community noted that they were not aware of some of the government pro-poor programmes such as cash transfers, Poverty Eradication Commission revolving funds, and agriculture programmes(urban and peri urban programme). This was attributed to lack of sensitization of the community on the available government pro-poor programmes.

The community noted that they are not aware of some of the devolved funds such as WEF and YEDF. The residents continue to face challenges such as housing problems, untreated water, poor security at night due to lack of security lighting, and lack of land to practice farming. Majority of the youth are unemployed and are thus idle and engage in vices such as drug and substance abuse, stealing and prostitution, among others.

Political influence on allocation of jobs and projects has also led to uneven growth within the area. Some areas, especially where local leaders come from, have more CDF and LATF projects than in other areas. Political leaders have also played a role in allocation of jobs especially as concerns KKV, whereby they ensure that only the youth from their locality secure the jobs.

The residents of Mwendantu community noted that some projects funded a long time ago have not been completed due to change of political leaders who come up with new promises and forget the past projects. For instance, the security lighting project in Mwendantu area was initiated a long time ago and has never been completed. The community recommended that projects should be fully funded up to their completion level.

## **CLOSING STATEMENT**

Over 80 per cent of the county population depends highly on agriculture as the major source of household income. Agriculture has however been greatly affected by the erratic weather patterns which have seen rainfall become unreliable and hence resulting to crop failure. This has led to reduced income in many households and hence increases in poverty levels.

Awareness of economic empowerment programmes and funding is on the negligible in Meru County. The county has many opportunities but youth and other target groups seem not to be aware of them. The PPA-V field study demonstrated that although the government has implemented several pro-poor interventions much has not been realized because the people were not aware of some of the government pro-poor programmes such as cash transfers, Poverty Eradication Commission revolving funds, and agriculture programmes. This was attributed to lack of sensitization of the community on the available government pro-poor programmes. They are also not aware of some of the devolved funds such as WEF and YEDF. For the county to improve the people must be sensitized and educated on its opportunities.

## ANNEXES

### Annex One. Pair-Wise Ranking Matrix

Mwendantu community of Meru County identified their main problems as:

1. Unemployment
2. Housing problems/permanent housing
3. Education
4. Land/farms
5. Healthcare
6. Water and sanitation problems
7. Security

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	score	Ranking
1		2	3	4	1	6	1	2	5
2			2	4	2	2	2	5	2
3				4	3	6	2	3	4
4					4	4	4	6	1
5						6	5	1	6
6								4	3
7								0	7

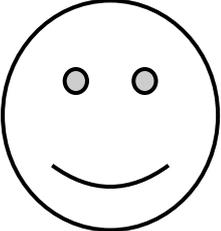
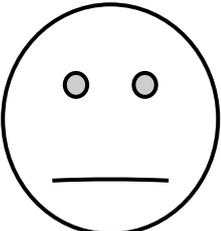
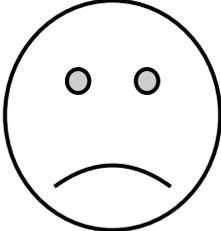
From the above pair-wise ranking matrix, the community problems ranked from the highest to the least are:

- 1. Lack of land/farms:** The community noted that they lack land which is a vital factor of production. Due to lack of land the community has been constrained in agricultural production since they currently purchase food. The community also lives in rental houses since they have no land for developing their houses.
- 2. Housing problems:** Due to lack of land, the community lives in rental houses which consumes a lot of their income from casual jobs. They noted that if they can afford to construct their own houses, they can be able to pipe treated water from MEWAS into their homes.
- 3. Water and sanitation problems:** The community noted that they live in rental houses which have poor sanitation facilities. Some of the rental houses have no reliable water hence they sometimes drink water from River Kathita which is polluted.
- 4. Education:** They noted that free primary education has attracted some additional payments which poor parents cannot afford. The university and college education is also very expensive and only rich parents can afford for the parallel degree programmes. Some residents of the community have not enrolled in tertiary education and some are dropouts hence cannot get any

formal employment. This has limited them to casual jobs which are not reliable.

- 5. Unemployment:**The community noted that some of the children who have completed university/college education have not secured any formal job. In addition, majority of the residents rely on casual jobs which are unreliable. Due to lack of jobs, a number of youths have been subjected to vices such as drug abuse, alcoholism, stealing and prostitution. However, this was not a major problem to the community since they noted that they can generate a lot of revenue from agriculture if the government can resettle them or buy them land for farming.
- 6. Healthcare:**Although access to healthcare has improved, the community noted that health facilities lack essential drugs, especially the most expensive ones and are hence forced to buy such drugs from chemists.
- 7. Security:**The community noted that the area has no security lighting hence thieves take advantage of darkness during the night. However, this was not a major problem since they have little or nothing to be stolen in that majority of them is poor. They recommended that the government should complete the earlier initiated community lighting project which will minimize injuries/attacks by thieves during the night.

## Annex Two:Mood barometer

Happy 	Neutral 	Sad/Unhappy 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDF</li> <li>• EDUCATION</li> <li>• ROADS</li> <li>• WATER AND SANITATION</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LATF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AGRICULTURAL SERVICES</li> <li>• KKV</li> <li>• HEALTH</li> </ul>

### Explanations

- **LATF.** The community had a neutral mood on LATF since the funds have facilitated renovations of classrooms of DEB primary school in Mwendantu community. However, there are incomplete LATF funded projects in the area e.g. a security lighting project was initiated long time ago which has never been completed. Only the posts were put up and the rest of the work is incomplete.
- **Health services.** The community was sad with health sector because the government hospital services are expensive, most of the times they lack drugs, there are delays in diagnosis due to long queues, and poor maternity services.
- **Agriculture services.** The community was not happy with the agricultural services because they do not have land and hence do not benefit from subsidized fertilizers and seeds. In addition, the community is not yet sensitized on urban and peri-urban programmes methods of farming.
- **KKV.** The community was not happy about KKV because youths from the community were not employed in the KKV jobs. Only youth from other areas especially where local leaders come from benefited from the programme.
- **CDF.** The community was happy on the implementation of CDF since they noted that the fund has facilitated several projects such as construction of classrooms and dispensaries.
- **Education services.** The residents of Mwendantu community were happy with the provision of education services such as FPE. They noted that primary education has been made affordable to everyone who cannot afford to take his/her children to private schools.
- **Roads.** The rural access roads were also not badly off.
- **Water and Sanitation.** Most of the community members noted that they have access to clean water supplied to their rental/residential houses by Meru Water and Sanitation and Sewerage Company (MEWASS). Only a few community members said that they sometimes drink untreated water from River Kathita.