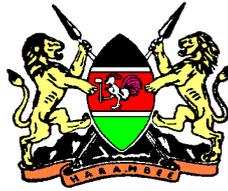


REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**THE PRESIDENCY
MINISTRY OF DEVOLUTION AND PLANNING**

PARTICIPATORY POVERTY ASSESSMENT V

**THARAKA NITHI COUNTY SITE REPORT
KANYARYUNI CLUSTER**

OCTOBER 2014

KFNYA 
VISION 2030
Towards a Globally Competitive and Prosperous

FOREWORD

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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 TharakaNithi 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,

The following team of officers without whose dedication and enthusiasm, the production of this Report would have been much more challenging deserve mention; Samuel Kiptorus (Chief Economist), James M. Kirigwi (Chief Economist), Leonard Obidha (Secretary, Poverty Eradication Commission), Cosmas Muia (Senior Economist), Joseph Njagi (Senior Economist), Micheal Mwangi (Senior Economist), Samuel Kimote (Senior Economist), Eric Kiilu (Senior Economist), Christatos Okioma (Economist) and Douglas Manyara (Economist).

The Ministry also recognizes varied support provided from time to time by the following officers; Zachary Mwangi (Ag. Director KNBS) for cluster sampling and identification, Florence Juma (Secretary), Matilda Anyango (Secretary), Florence Natse (Secretary), Everlyne Taalam (driver), Dequize Ong'wen (Driver) and Aphlin Onyango (Office Assistant).

The ministry is also indebted to the team of dedicated consultants comprising Mr. Munguti K. Katua, Mr. John T. Mukui and Mr. Goerge Mbate. Their experience and technical guidance was instrumental in the production of key documents and tools that were utilized during the field exercise as well as in the finalization of both the National Report and individual County Reports.

Finally, the Ministry is grateful to the respective County Governments and their staff, National Government staff in the Counties, communities and their leaders, as well key informants especially in their role in community mobilization and laying of logistics for a successful poverty assessment exercise within their areas of operation. Specifically, we thank targeted communities for turning up in large numbers and participating with enthusiasm during Focused Group Discussions (FGD) sometimes often late into the evenings thus making the work of our facilitators a success.

Engineer Peter O. Mangiti
Principal Secretary-Planning
Ministry of Devolution and Planning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall objective of PPA-V 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 poorer sections of the population especially with regard to social poverty and provision of selected wellbeing services including agriculture, education, health, social protection and social security. The survey sought the community perspective on poverty and provision of selected wellbeing services including agriculture, education, health, social protection and other devolved funds in particular, perspectives of the community were sought on the awareness of the availability of services, accessibility and affordability.

This report presents the findings of the PPA-V survey in **Kanguryuni** cluster in Tharaka 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 technical experts in subject areas of the survey.

It was revealed that poverty levels in the area have risen overtime, and this was attributed to: lack of employment even after educating the children, increased cost of living, subdivision of land to uneconomical sizes, and increase in population without corresponding growth in the economy.

The provision of health services has improved remarkably with the construction, equipping and expansion of health facilities within the county. This has considerably improved affordability and accessibility of basic health services. The services are now closer and other health services like family planning and maternal services are available to the people. Despite these achievements the area has rugged terrain, high illiteracy levels, shortage of qualified medical personnel, poverty, high population growth and inadequate funding which have posed a challenge to providing quality healthcare.

Majority of the county population is literate with only 17 percent unable to read and 13.2 percent unable to write. Those who cannot read or write are 16.9 percent. Adult education should be intensified through building adult literacy classes, hiring more teachers and encouraging adult learners to join. It also emerged that education has contributed to poverty levels especially for the big family sizes as the parents are forced to sell their assets term after term to pay school fees and other levies for education of their children.

An estimated 80 percent of the county population is engaged in agricultural activities. The provision of agricultural services has improved considerably overtime. The establishment of more districts has ensured that agricultural services are now nearer to the people. While efforts have been made through various programmes in crop farming and agriculture, more still needs to be done.

A number of households, mostly in the county's urban areas, have piped water. Over 50 percent of the county population takes 15 minutes to 1 hour to access water from the nearest

watersource, with over 23 percent spending over one hour. Availability and accessibility to good quality water is key in the development of the county. Given that most areas experience dry spells, availability of water will encourage the community to engage in irrigation agriculture hence ensuring high incomes from sale of farm produce and food security.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CF	Child Fund Organization
CFCA	Christian Foundation for Children and Aged
CHW	Community Health Worker
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CT	Cash Transfers
CWES	Constituency Women Enterprise Scheme
DDO	District development Officer
DSO	District Statistics Officer
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ESP	Economic Stimulus Programme
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FPE	Free Primary Education
GOK	Government of Kenya
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ITN	Insecticide Treated Nets
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
KIHBS	Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey
KKV	KaziKwaVijana
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KPHC	Kenya Population and Housing Census
KWFT	Kenya Women Finance Trust
LATF	Local Authority Transfer Fund
MKEPP	Mt. Kenya East Pilot Project
MOE	Ministry of Education
NALEP	National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme
NASSEP	National Sample Survey and Evaluation Programme
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OBA	Output Based Approach
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PWD	People Living With Disabilities
RA	Research Assistant
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperatives
SSDE	Subsidized Secondary Day education
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
URTI	Upper Respiratory Tract Infection
VIP	Very Important Person
WEF	Women Enterprise Fund

YEDF

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:

- i. The impact of the various policies, strategies, programmes and projects aimed at reducing poverty and improving welfare; and
- ii. 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, **Kanguryuni/OR** Karuguyuni 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 *Bulesa* to draw inferences about the county.

1.5 County/Cluster Profile

TharakaNithi County has four sub-counties, namely, Meru South, Tharaka North, Tharaka South and Maara. It has two parliamentary constituencies, namely, Nithi Constituency which is shared by MeruSouth and Maara sub-counties and Tharaka Constituency shared by two sub-counties of Tharaka South and Tharaka North.

The County shares borders with several counties which include Embu to the south, Kirinyaga and Nyeri to the west, Meru to the north and Kitui to the southeast. The total area of the County is 2,662.1 km², including Mt Kenya forest which is estimated at 360km² which is a major tourist attraction and main catchment of River Tana.

TharakaNithi had a population of 365,330 persons in 2009. This is estimated to have grown to 399,734 in 2012. According to the 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census, the total labor force is 116,985 persons whereas the number of people employed in different sectors in the county is 62,785. This indicates that only 53.7% of the workforce is gainfully engaged.

An estimated 85 percent of the county population is engaged in agricultural activities, including crop farming, livestock keeping and horticulture, and hence agriculture remains the major source of employment and incomes. Other agricultural activities include forestry and wildlife, and fisheries.

The county has a bi-modal rainfall pattern with the rains falling during the months of March to May and October to December. The highest amount of rainfall ranges from 2200mm in Chogoria forest to 500mm in the lower areas of the county. The rainfall is favourable for cultivation of tea, coffee, maize, cowpeas, pigeon peas, tobacco and a variety of other food crops. Temperatures range between 14 0^c to 17 0^c in the highland areas, and between 22 0^c to 36 0^c in the lowland areas.

Karuguyuni cluster lies in arid and semi-arid ecological zone. The cluster has 104 households. The cluster selection was based on the national sampling frame maintained by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

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 (6) chapters including chapter one (1) which covers introduction. Chapter two (2) highlights the survey findings on poverty diagnostics while chapter three (3) presents findings on provision of services in the selected policy areas (health care, basic education, agricultural services and inputs, water and sanitation and housing). Chapter four (4) covers the findings other pro-poor initiatives (policies and programmes) such as Cash Transfers (CT), KaziKwaVijana (KKV), Roads 2000, devolved funds such as CDF, Women Enterprise Fund (WEF), Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) e.t.c and any other pro-poor interventions. Chapter five (5) covers cross-cutting and emerging issues while chapter (6) outlines the recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO: POVERTY DYNAMICS AND INDICATORS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to TharakaNithi County Development Profile, 35 percent of the county residents live in absolute poverty contributes 0.6 percent to the national poverty. They also have no resources to invest in the other sectors that can enhance their capability to generate income. Majority of those who degrade land and water catchment areas are poor farmers whose livelihoods depend entirely on direct exploitation of natural resources. Such farmers encroach into wetlands, river basins, water catchments and mountain slopes in search of water, pasture and suitable land for subsistence farming which tend to be their own way of survival. This puts pressure on the environment and water resources.

2.2 DEFINITION OF POVERTY

The community in Karuguyuni cluster defined a poor person as one who lacks basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter, has no livestock, lacks knowledge on how to get something for sustainability, is disabled and cannot work for himself/herself, and lacks water.

2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF WEALTH GROUPS

The community members classified the wealth groups into three classes, namely, the very poor (*nkiamukeu, nkiayambere*), the poor (*nkiayarunjinamwanki*) and the rich. The area has a high number of poor people, followed by very poor and a few rich individuals.

2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF WEALTH GROUPS

The community members described a very poor person as one without land, food, livestock and agricultural inputs. A poor person was described as one who has been assisted with land to farm, lives on government land but is not capable of getting much food from that land due to lack of some inputs, does not work due to laziness and ignorance, lacks ideas on how to manage the little resources that he/she possess for his/her betterment, owns a small piece of land, and has a large family.

The rich were described as those who can afford food consistently, have a business, have at least 50 goats, have at least 10 cows, and have parcels of land.

2.5 CAUSES OF POVERTY

The community members discussed some of the causes of poverty in the area as being misuse of money/resources by men and women (*mipangoyakando/ndogondogo*), bad weather patterns leading to lack of enough rains and therefore poor yields, lack of employment, lack of enough land for farming activities, ignorance/lack of knowledge, lack of money for educating children, poverty inheritance (poverty is hereditary since poor parents give little opportunities to their children for the betterment of life), heavy spending and getting wasted on traditional brew by most men, lack of trained personnel due to low levels of education (the entire cluster has produced one student in University, one employed P1 teacher, and one unemployed Diploma holder), poor road network, lack of capital for investment, lack of electricity in the area, human-wildlife conflicts leading to destruction of farms and property and lack of appropriate market infrastructure for farm produce.

The members felt that the Government contributed to the poverty levels in the county during the land adjudication process as the size of the household was not a factor during allocation of land which has been further reduced to uneconomical sizes through inheritance. The residents also lack title deeds for the parcels of land thus limiting their economic activities.

2.6 IMPACT OF POVERTY

The community reported that sometimes men run away from their responsibilities due to pressure from family to provide, while others turn to crime. Women on the other hand separate with their husbands and go back to their homes of origin to seek a better and simple/satisfying life leaving the children with the husband. Poverty has also necessitated early marriages to both girls and boys, school dropouts due to lack of school fees, mental trauma to children in cases where parents separate, and uncontrolled birth rates (according to them poor people find solace in sex).

Although it was reported that poverty affects every member of the community in one way or another, the most affected are the elderly, the PWDs, young children and women. Most PWDs and OVCs end up being employed as casual workers, some are not paid and parents or guardians sometimes receive their wages.

2.7 COPING MECHANISMS/STRATEGIES

The community members reported that they have devised ways of catering for their needs despite the high poverty levels. Some of the strategies are keeping livestock, charcoal burning, basket and mats weaving, selling honey, selling livestock products, tailoring and carpentry services, selling of tamarinds (wild fruit called in local language *'futhithi'*), mining and selling sand, selling manure, and working as casuals in cities/towns.

The members said they try very hard to educate children to empower them to eliminate poverty especially that which they say they inherited from their parents. In other instances they get support from various projects such CDF, Christian Foundation for Children and Aged (CFCA), Child fund (CF), Plan International (sponsors), CBOs who give them relief food, school bursaries, build houses for the locals, fund construction of classrooms, and purchase water tanks for harvesting rainwater.

2.8 ASSET OWNERSHIP, ACCESS AND DECISION MAKING IN THE HOUSEHOLD

According to the community, most assets in the household are owned by men, and most decisions regarding the disposal of these assets are made by men. It was noted that at times women help in making decisions. Women were said to be able to make decisions in cases where they were left at home alone but must report to their men later. In case of death of household head, the family property/properties are inherited by the wife who later distributes the properties to the children.

Men own livestock, houses, farms, dogs and cats, mobile phones, wheelbarrows, motorbikes, bicycle, arrows and bows, stationery and children while women own poultry and utensils.

2.9 POVERTY AND GENDER

The community members argued that poverty affects women most because women have the responsibility of taking care of their children and keeping the home, and are hence unable to engage in any meaningful activity that earns them income.

Women do not own key assets and are hence unable to get credit from financial institutions due to lack of collateral. They are also not able to dispose of assets to buy other needs unless they get authority from men.

2.10 POVERTY TRENDS OVER TIME

It was revealed that poverty levels had risen over time. This was attributed to lack of employment even after educating the children, increased costs of living, subdivision of land to uneconomical sizes, and increase in population size without corresponding growth in the economy. However, some members felt that poverty is reducing because more children are now receiving education especially after the introduction of FPE and subsidized secondary education.

2.11 INTERVENTIONS TARGETING THE POOR

Several programmes targeting the poor were identified that are being implemented by the Government, NGOs and CBOs. The programmes include:

- Christian Foundation for Children and Aged (CFCA) which provides food to the needy and bursaries to needy students;
- Child Fund organization (CF) which has installed water tanks in schools and undertaken construction of classroom at a local primary school;
- AphiaPlusKamili gives out bursaries to needy students;
- Mt. Kenya East Pilot project (MKEPP)
- Plan International provides relief food and undertakes construction of classrooms;
- NJaaMarufuku Kenya, a programme by the Kenyan government, that provides farm inputs and extension services;
- Catholic Relief Service (CRS) assists in giving out relief food;
- World Food Programme (WFP) assist in giving out food and providing modern farming practices;
- Constituency Development Fund (CDF) builds structures for schools, gives bursaries to needy students, and constructs/repairs roads;
- Adoptin (Sponsor) project gives relief food and bursaries for school fees;
- Individual/self donors (*Matauka*) who provides school fees and construction of houses;
- Arid Lands Resource Management Project installs water tanks;
- Government Cash Transfers to the Elderly, PWD and OVCs;
- National Agriculture and Livestock Development Programme (NALEP) that provides agricultural extension services.

It emerged that very few households benefit despite the number of programmes targeting the community being many. Some community members claimed that they had no idea of the existence of some of these projects.

2.12 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following were recommendations made by the community for improvement of their livelihoods:

- Increase awareness creation as some most people have no knowledge of the existing government/donor programmes being implemented in their area;
- Increased community participation in designing and implementing some of the pro-poor initiatives targeting them;
- Encourage collaboration between different development partners working within the county to avoid duplication;
- Most government services do not reach the community on time due to poor road infrastructure, and the government should therefore improve on the road infrastructure;
- Address the negative attitude some individual harbour towards some of the government financial initiatives like the Women and Youth development funds due to the past experiences with the KWFT loans. No application was received from Chiakariga area;

- Come up with programmes that integrate all the members of the community. The middle aged men have been left out in many of these initiatives;
- Introduce and upscale agricultural extension services.

CHAPTER THREE: FINDINGS ON PROVISION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

3.1 HEALTHCARE

3.1.1 Introduction

According to TharakaNithi County Integrated Development Profile, majority of the population access health services from level 2 hospitals as well as mission hospitals. However, there are only two sub-county hospitals. In the last ten years, the county has seen construction of more health facilities where at least six level 2 hospitals were established and one hospital upgraded to sub-county status. Private clinics have also been established in the county. The latest improvement in providing health services has been the construction of a model health centre under the economic stimulus programme.

The leading five common diseases in the county are malaria (33.8 percent), headache (13.1 percent), respiratory tract infections (9.5 percent), diarrhoea (4.9 percent) and stomach-ache (4.9 percent).

The county is in need of at least two level 4 and 2 hospitals to serve the sparsely populated areas in the lower parts of the county. Opportunities lie in providing quality healthcare including pharmacies. Urgent action includes equipping the available health facilities with better medical equipment including maternity services as well as improving the medical college in Chogoria to enhance training of health workers.

3.1.2 Major Health Concerns in the Community

According to the community members, diseases such malaria and upper respiratory tract infections are their major health concerns. Further, shortage of qualified medical personnel and lack of enough drugs in the hospitals is another concern.

3.1.3 Provision of Health Services

The residents of the area access healthcare from three public health facilities that are near the area and can be reached with ease. The charges of services in the government health facilities are subsidized hence people pay only user charges. At times the health facilities lack enough drugs hence patients have to buy them from private pharmacies at expensive prices. It was reported that the time taken in seeking medical services is long as there is shortage of medical staff at the hospitals.

3.1.4 Interventions towards Improvement of Health Services

The county has seen construction of more health facilities where at least six level 2 hospitals were established and one hospital upgraded to sub-county status. Creation of awareness on the benefits of good hygiene has been enhanced by the public health officers and CHWs through media, home visits and civic education. This has enabled most homesteads to improve on human waste disposal through construction and restoration of pit latrines and hand washing. Family planning services are provided free of charge at the public health facilities. Other interventions include immunization, free maternity services, free under-five services and provision of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs).

3.1.5 Decision Making on Health Issues in the Family/Community

Most decisions on health in the community are made by men as the heads of the households. In case of sickness, the husband has to be contacted before health services can be sought for purposes of raising the hospital fee.

3.1.6 Ideal Family Size among the Households in the Community

On average the size of a given household is at least seven members. This can be attributed to:

- Low practice of family planning;
- High fertility resulting from good nutrition as food is in plenty in the area;
- Low levels of sensitization on good family planning practices;
- Availability of FP services at the health facilities only and not at the village level, and people only visit these facilities to seek medical services when sick;
- Improved health status hence high quality of life and reduced child and maternal mortality.

3.1.7 Relationship between Household Size and Poverty

The large number of children has increased the poverty levels leading to lack of money to take the children to school, which leads to early marriages and increased population and eventual increase of poverty.

3.1.8 Access and Decision Making on Family Planning Services

Decision making on FP is normally left to the women. Most men are reluctant to embrace FP.

3.1.9 Opinion on Status of Health Services overtime

Over the years, the provision of health services has improved remarkably with the construction, equipping and expansion of health facilities within the county. This has considerably improved affordability and accessibility of basic health services. The services are now closer and other health

services like family planning, antenatal services and various vaccines are sometimes availed to the people.

3.1.10 Recommendations

Despite the achievements recorded in the provision of health services in Tharaka, the rugged terrain, illiteracy, shortage of qualified medical personnel, poverty, high population growth and inadequate funding have posed a challenge to providing quality healthcare. Thus we recommend for the allocation of more resources to the sector to enable the personnel on the ground deliver quality health services.

3.2 BASIC EDUCATION

3.2.1 Introduction

There are over 24,000 children in pre-school education in Tharaka Nithi County. The ratio of boys to girls is 1:1. A total of 451 preschool centres have been established in the county with a total of 561 teachers. Private preschools are also coming up. There is need to establish more ECD centres in the county to cater for the growing number of children.

The county has 470 primary schools. The number of children attending primary schools is 30,550 (15,363 female and 15,187 male). There are 2,548 primary school teachers in the county. This calls for an increase in the number of primary schools as well as equipping the existing ones. The transition rate to secondary school should also be addressed.

Majority of the county population is literate with only 17 percent unable to read and 13.2 percent unable to write. Those who cannot read or write are 16.9 percent. Adult education should be intensified through building adult literacy classes, hiring more teachers and encouraging adult learners to join.

The county has 111 secondary schools with 17,353 students (8,532 female and 8,821 male). The number of secondary school teachers in the county is 970. Compared to the number of primary schools and the number of students completing primary education, there is a serious need to expand secondary education in the county. Funds should be channeled to the establishment of secondary boarding schools.

The sector plays a crucial role of discovering and unlocking the potentials of the large population of Tharaka County. This is a key sector that will be relied on for the attainment of the Vision 2030 aspirations of the Tharaka people. The sector has grown immensely in the last 10 years from deliberate government efforts to unlock its potential. Such programmes as Free Primary Education,

Subsidized Secondary Education, and education bursaries from the CDF and other development partners have raised educational standards in the county.

In order to improve literacy levels, there is need to channel more funds to this sector to ensure the establishment of more boarding secondary schools, tertiary institutions and improving the conditions of the primary schools. There is need to sensitize the community especially in the southern part of the county to take their children to school, as the enrollment level especially in secondary education is very low. Employment of more teaching staff, provision of quality learning materials and up-scaling the schools feeding programmes are necessary interventions to improve the learning environment.

3.2.2 Status of Education Facilities

The sector has made remarkable progress in terms of providing quality education to the people of Tharaka. The county has put up physical infrastructure for its people right from ECD to tertiary level. There are 451 public ECD centres, 470 primary schools, 111 secondary schools and 5 polytechnics and one university campus. Due to budget constraints, the ministry has been unable to equip and fund them well hence other parents have opted to take their children to private schools.

3.2.3 Provision of Education Services

The county boasts of a relatively high literacy level, with 83.1% of the population able to read and write. The education sector has enjoyed a relatively high standard especially with the implementation of the Free Primary Education, Subsidized Secondary Education and education bursary programmes.

While the County enjoys a fair distribution of educational facilities with the teacher/pupil ratio comparing well with the national average at all levels, accessibility in terms of distance is a problem since on average over 60% of the pupils in primary and secondary schools travel 5 km or more to reach the educational facilities. In addition, even with free primary and subsidized secondary education, transition rates are fairly low at 85% from ECD to primary and at 70% from primary to secondary. Thus efforts have to be made to ensure that the issues affecting transition rates from one level to the next are addressed.

During the administration of the questionnaires, it emerged that the parents are actually footing other levies imposed by the school administrations even up to the tune of Kshs 1,230 per term which may be quite high given that the average number of children per household is not less than four.

3.2.4 Status of Education Services

Educational facilities are fairly distributed within the county. There are 451 ECD centres, with 561 trained teachers and, and a transition rate of 85%, meaning that over 15% of the enrolled pupils do not proceed to secondary education. There are 470 primary schools with 2,548 teachers and enrollment of 89,651 pupils giving .There are 111 secondary schools with 976 teachers and enrolment of 24,437 pupils, giving a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:25 and a completion rate of 65%. In tertiary level, there is one campus and five polytechnics.

3.2.5 Interventions towards Improvement of Education Standards

The key interventions in improving the standard of education in the county include:

- Issuance of CDF funds to the needy in secondary education;
- Expansion, construction and rehabilitation of educational facilities by CDF and ministries of Education and Finance under the schools improvement and Economic Stimulus Programmes;
- Supply of equipment and learning materials by CDF, Ministry of Education and various development partners.

3.2.6 Relationship between Education and Poverty

There is a clear relationship between poverty and education in the county. In particular, the chiakariga village (cluster area) has only one Diploma graduate and a one student in University in an area of 104 households, and the majority are therefore not competitive as prospective employees in formal employment. It was difficult to recruit research assistants from the village even after lowering the qualifications required to that of diploma hence the team ended up recruiting from the county head office.

It also emerged that education has contributed to poverty levels especially for the big families as parents are forced to sell their livestock term after term to pay school fees and other levies, and hence have no more livestock left.

3.2.7 Opinion on Status of Education overtime

The status of education has improved considerably. The distance to the primary school has been reduced considerably given that Karuguyuni primary is within the cluster. In addition, free primary education has boosted enrolment rates. However, the school management has introduced various levies, hence making it not very affordable especially for the large households and those of single-mothers.

3.2.8 Recommendations

There were no recommendations made.

3.3 AGRICULTURAL SERVICES AND INPUTS

3.3.1 Introduction

The main occupation of the people in TharakaNithicounty is agriculture, which includes crop and livestock production. The main food crops include maize, beans, cowpeas, sorghum, green grams, millet and black beans. The cash crops include tea and coffee which are grown in Maara and Chuka/Igambang'ombe constituencies. However, farmers from Tharaka grow some food crops as cash crop especially green grams.

There are 43,799 ha of food crops and 14,839 ha under cash crops. Crop farming is characterized by frequent crop failures especially in Tharaka. An estimated 80 percent of the county population is engaged in agricultural activities. Good infrastructural support services are required to increase agricultural output, among them the provision of subsidized agricultural inputs and provision of high yielding drought-tolerant crops. The main storage facilities are granaries, farmhouses and market stalls. It is important to educate and empower the households on how to establish and maintain proper storage facilities and upgrade the traditional granaries at the community level.

The main livestock in the county include dairy and Zebu cattle, sheep, goats and chicken. Livestock keeping is among the main sources of livelihood for the residents, especially the indigenous breeds. The development of dairy farming is on the increase, thus the expansion of their market across the border and their value addition is crucial for the farmers to reap maximum benefit from these proceeds.

Fish farming is also becoming popular since the start of the economic stimulus programme where farmers are being motivated to adopt fish farming. The presence of many rivers in the county promotes fishing activities. The Ministry of Fisheries has been supporting farmers in the county to establish fish ponds, and over 1,000 farmers have benefited. The main types of fish produced are catfish, crabs, trout and tilapia.

Many of the government and donor programmes in the county are agriculture-based. These include NjaaMarufuku, National Agriculture and Livestock Programme (NALEP), Mt. Kenya East pilot Projects which are promoting the sector through establishment of irrigation schemes, provision of farm inputs and high breed livestock, establishment of fish ponds, construction of water ponds, and extension services.

Some of the benefits accruing from the above programmes include improved agricultural and livestock yields and hence incomes and general nutrition levels within the county. Others include

adoption of modern techniques of farming, reduced levels of soil erosion, and reduced dependence on rain-fed agriculture.

3.3.2 Provision of Agricultural Services and Inputs

The provision of agricultural services has improved considerably overtime in the county. The establishment of more districts has ensured that agricultural services are now nearer to the people than before. Reliable farm input stockists are available in the towns of Marimanti, Nkondi, Chiakariga and Kithino. In addition, the government provides relief seeds thus promoting those without cash to purchase certified seeds. The National Cereals and Produce Board is also accessible for the provision of government subsidized fertilizer.

The services being offered under livestock include pasture production for use during dry spells, goat upgrading for milking purposes, and poultry upgrading. At the same time, artificial insemination services and tsetse control under the trypanosomiasis eradication campaign have been enhanced.

3.3.3 Impact of Poverty on Agriculture

The area sometimes experiences postharvest losses due to poor storage facilities which make the farmers lose income due to early disposal/reduced quality of the stored produce. Lack of money to purchase farm inputs and livestock supplements affects the quality of farm produce and livestock.

3.3.4 Interventions towards Improvement of Agricultural Standards

Most of the projects implemented in the county are focused on capacity building of farmers, provision of farm inputs, increased water harvesting for use during dry spells, linking up farmers with reliable farm input stockists, management of relief seeds, sensitization on improved storage of farm harvest, and strengthening the management of farmers groups.

Livestock programmes target the vulnerable members of the community e.g. women through women groups, association of people with disabilities, and 4K clubs. Other programmes do not discriminate between men, women, individual or group as long as one is a farmer.

3.3.5 Relationship between Agriculture and Poverty

Over 80% of the people of TharakaNithi County are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. If the lives of this people have to change, agriculture must be improved so as to sustain them. While efforts have been made through various agricultural programmes, more still needs to be done. There is a direct relationship between agriculture and poverty since low agricultural production leads to increase in levels of poverty.

3.3.6 Recommendations

While the county has recorded remarkable improvements in both quality and quantity of the agriculture and livestock yield, the sector is still faced with many challenges which must be dealt with in order to make it the engine of growth for the county. Some of these recommendations include:

- Deployment of more frontline staff to the subv-county;
- Empowerment of farmers and staff e.g. through enhanced training and capacity building;
- Construction of soil conservation structures and other environment-friendly farming techniques especially on the hilly areas;
- Continuous demonstration and training on use of fertilizers;
- Encourage more financial partners to operate in the sub-county;
- Sensitization of community to view and undertake farming as any other business;
- Enhanced surveillance and timely control of pests and diseases;
- Create awareness and encourage VCG
- Devolving cooperative movements and group marketing
- Encourage the use of appropriate certified seeds and pesticides; and
- Installation of irrigation facilities.

3.4 WATER AND SANITATION

3.4.1 Introduction

TharakaNithiCounty is well endowed with groundwater available through numerous rivers originating from Mt. Kenya. In the drier parts of the county, boreholes, water pans, earth dams and shallow wells provide water for the community. It is important to increase the availability of water to the community through sinking of more boreholes since it is economical for smaller concentration of population. During the dry months of the year there is a lot of water abstraction upstream, thus priority should be geared towards construction of water and soil conservation structures in the upper catchment areas of the rivers, otherwise the flow of the rivers downstream will be seriously curtailed.

The main water developers and suppliers schemes in the county are the Tana Water Service Board, water river users' association through the Mt Kenya East Pilot Project (MKEPP) and the Nithi Water and Sanitation Company. Most of the water projects are started through community initiative supported by donors and the government. There is a high demand for irrigation water due to unreliable rains.

Over 87.7 percent of the county population uses pit latrines. Most farmers use farm garden for waste disposal. Those in urban areas make use of garbage pits. The county requires measures to address sanitation issues.

3.4.2 Status of Provision of Water and Sanitation

The majority of the county population accesses water from rivers, wells, springs, dams and boreholes. A number of households, mostly in urban areas, have piped water. It takes 15 minutes to 1 hour to access water from the nearest water source for most of the residents of the community, with quite a number spending over one hour. This clearly shows that the population is at a minimum of 5 km away from water source and is calling for implementation of more water projects in order to address the needs of the marginalized areas.

The Nithi Water and Sanitation Company provide its services at affordable rates to the urban dwellers. In the rural areas, there are no sewerage services, and hence people construct pit latrines. The structures range from permanent to temporary ones. The material used depends on the level of poverty. The rich use stones to construct VIP latrines while the poor and very poor use mud walls while others use gunny bags or twigs and banana leaves.

3.4.3 Types of Water and Sanitation Facilities

There are several water schemes in the county implemented either by the community, the government or development partners. These include Kathita water project, Kibung'i water project and Nithi Water and Sanitation Company scheme among others. There are several irrigation schemes in the area including Karocho, Turima, Manyirani, Kithino and Kamatungu irrigation schemes. Most of these are funded in collaboration between the community, the government, CDF, religious organizations and the international development partners.

The major key player in the construction, maintenance and management of sewerage services is the Nithi Water and Sanitation Company. The company is mandated to ensure that there is access to sanitation facilities especially in the urban centres. Good hygiene is maintained by proper washing of hands and utensils, use of pit latrines especially in the rural areas, and digging compost pits for management of solid wastes.

3.4.4 Relationship between Environmental Degradation and Water Availability

The major water sources in the county include seasonal rivers originating from Mt. Kenya forest, dams, boreholes, and piped water schemes. Given that some other parts of the county experience dry spells followed by flooding, environmental management is key to sustained availability and accessibility of water.

The continued shrinking of the vegetation cover and cutting of trees in the Mt. Kenya water tower is a threat to the availability of adequate supply of water to the county. In addition, the continued piling of uncollected solid waste and improper disposal of the same in the major urban areas, increased use of agricultural pesticides and fertilizers especially along the major rivers, and lack of sanitation facilities in the rural areas has contributed greatly to water pollution. Most of the major water sources in the county are highly polluted hence most surface water is not safe for use. In addition, the water levels and annual rainfall patterns have changed, resulting in lack of potable water, high costs of water treatment, high incidences of waterborne diseases, and reduced volumes and distribution of rainwater available.

3.4.5 Relationship between Water and Sanitation and Poverty

It is important to note the community members who are hard hit by poverty do not see sanitation as a very important issue to them. In fact, most of them do not care about latrines hence have not constructed any in their homesteads. However, the situation is changing given the spirited campaigns being mounted through the media, home visits and civic awareness on the importance of constructing sanitation facilities and proper use of the same, and maintenance of high standards of hygiene.

The availability and accessibility of good quality water is a key in the development of the county. Given that most parts experience dry spells, availability of water will encourage the community to engage in irrigation agriculture hence ensuring high incomes from sale of farm produce and food security. In addition, it will ensure that women and children spend less time fetching water, and have ample time to engage in other income-generating activities. Poor sanitation and water pollution have increased the cost of treating water and increased waterborne diseases. Thus poor sanitation and lack of safe potable water have contributed to the levels of poverty while good hygiene and access to sanitation facilities will lead to reduced levels of poverty.

3.4.6 Opinion on Status of Water and Sanitation overtime

Water shortages have been experienced in the county over the last 10 years. This is attributed to the unpredictable rainfall patterns over the years. Most of the water sources are seasonal, and hence water sources like water pans, boreholes, dams and seasonal streams dry up during the dry spells and people have to trek for long in search of water. However, water quality, accessibility availability has improved overtime.

Major water projects have been implemented through the government, international donor community, and local community/church-based organizations. Pipe water schemes have been expanded, and major wells, dams and boreholes constructed throughout the county. In addition, improved management of Nithi Water and Sanitation Company has ensured the provision of adequate sanitation services in the major urban areas.

Increased levels of literacy, coupled with media campaigns on the importance of good hygiene and public health, has increased the health standards of the community and reduced the incidences of waterborne diseases and alleviated the high costs of water treatment. In addition, the community awareness and participation in community water projects and their management has greatly improved.

3.4.7 Recommendations

Availability, affordability and access to water are the key to the development of Tharaka County. It is important that key strategies to harness the major water sources are put in place to ensure that everybody has access to safe potable water. To achieve this, it was recommended that:

- Integration of the efforts of different players in the water and sanitation sector. The players include, sub-county water office, Nithi Water and Sanitation Company, MPH, the donor community and the local community;
- Expand the piped water schemes to benefit all those along the main pipelines in the rural areas;
- Allow community representation in the major water projects even when it is being implemented by public companies or government;
- Train the community on management of water resources;
- Increase funding for maintenance of existing water schemes;
- Adequate provision of funds and logistical support including vehicles to the sub-county water office.

3.5 HOUSING

3.5.1 Introduction

In the Constitution of Kenya shelter has been classified as a basic need which the government should ensure that her citizens are able to access. While most of the households in Tharaka County have access to this basic need, the quality, durability and size of their dwellings is quite low. Given the standard of living of the community, most of the houses are constructed with wooden posts and mud for the wall and grass straw roofs. Very few households can afford to use either stone or bricks and iron sheets.

The state of housing in Tharaka Nithi County has been improving with many people using corrugated iron sheets for roofing. Many houses are mud-walled and wood, with earth and cement floors being the main type of floor. About 42.1 percent of the households have houses made of wood and mud while 13.4 percent of the households have stone houses.

The level of housing in the market centres and the main urban areas has recently improved owing to increased administrative areas i.e. sub-counties, increased level of business within and without the areas, and setting up of tertiary institutions where the new houses are able to accommodate the high number of students and lectures who need accommodation within the environs of the institutions. The readily available building materials in some parts of the county make the cost of construction relatively low.

3.5.2 Types of Building Materials

From the observations made, most of the community members used locally available materials in the construction of their houses e.g. wood, mud, grass straw, iron sheets and bricks.

3.5.3 Status of Provision of Housing

Houses are constructed from locally available materials which are relatively affordable to the community members. The housing units are mainly small in size, hence most households especially those of single mothers are congested with small rooms holding up to six people.

3.5.4 Types of Housing and Household Headship

The construction materials and type and size of houses constructed by the community depend on the wealth status of the individual. The very rich use bricks and cement for wall with iron sheet roofing. The poor use wooden posts and mud to put up the walls and iron sheet for roofing. The very poor construct walls using wooden post and mud and grass straws for roofs. In addition, female-headed households have small temporary structures with some settled on public land.

3.5.5 Opinion on Status of Housing overtime

Within the cluster, little progress has been made in terms of quality of housing. There is only a single brick walled house with iron sheet roofing observed in the whole cluster.

3.5.6 Recommendations

It is important that the government together with research institutions come up with technologies of improving on the quality of construction materials and reduce the regulation on cutting of trees to reduce its costs given that as it is the single most expensive material for the community.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS ON PRO-POOR INITIATIVES AND DEVOLVED FUNDS

4.1 PRO-POOR INITIATIVES

4.1.1 Cash Transfers

The cash transfer programmes includes monthly cash payments to the elderly, PWD and OVCs. The community indicated that some of them had benefited only for a short while and the cash transfers ceased.

4.1.2 KaziKwaVijana

The KaziKwaVijana (KKV), programme is national a programme launched by the Government in April 2009, and was aimed at the employment of youth in rural and urban areas in labor-intensive public works projects, focusing on smaller projects that can be implemented rapidly. Examples are road maintenance sub-projects, small-scale water supply and sanitation, water harvesting, afforestation and waste collection.

The community benefited through programmes managed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports which engaged them in tree planting; Ministry of Water engaged the youth in the area in digging trenches; Ministry of Roads provided jobs in bush clearing along the roads; and the Ministry of Local Government in de-trenching and clearing the bushes.

Youths aged between 18 and 35 years, PWDs and women especially the unemployed were engaged in digging trenches, bush clearing and planting trees along the boundaries and were paid allowances of Kshs 250 per day. The youths complained that KaziKwaVijana had only benefited them once and whereas some were paid for the work done others were not paid. They felt that recruitment was fair and not biased. In most cases the turnout was overwhelming, and hence balloting had to be used. Preference was also given to single mothers. Payments were made in cash and occasionally women sent their husbands to collect their pay on their behalf.

Some of the key challenges to the programme include:

- Low supervision, most implementing ministries had no vehicles for their staff at the district level;
- Vandalism of the materials and equipments used;
- Livestock menace especially to tree nurseries;
- Theft of seedlings from the nurseries.

To make the programme more beneficial, the community members recommended that there is need to:

- Improve on its monitoring and evaluation;
- Improve on its management and if possible delink it from provincial administration;
- Increase the daily allowances;
- The programme did not consult the locals to know what projects would have benefitted them most as the ESP was designed from Nairobi;
- Make it more permanent as it benefited them only once.

4.1.3 Roads 2000

This is a strategy developed in 1998 for the maintenance of the public road network using local resources and labour. It is aimed at improving accessibility in rural areas. The programme is designed to be labour-intensive, use simple and local tools, use locally available materials, create jobs for local communities, address gender parity (at least 30 percent women to be employed), and enhance local contracting capacity.

The community members had never heard of the programme. They therefore cannot attribute any of the recent road works in their area to the programme apart from Ministry of Roads provided jobs in bush clearing along the roads.

4.2 DEVOLVED FUNDS

4.2.1 Constituency Development Fund

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) was established in 2003 through the CDF Act in the Kenya Gazette Supplement No. 107 (Act No. 11) of January 9th, 2004 whose main objective was to fight poverty and shift planning/identification of projects to the local communities, hence a bottom-up planning approach to development.

The participants are aware of this fund and have seen several projects undertaken using the fund. However, they still refer to it as "*pesayamheshimiwa*". They have witnessed CDF funds being utilized in the construction of classrooms, social centre and construction of roadse.g.Nkarini-Karuguyuni road and some have benefited from education bursaries from the CDF kitty.The fund has also provided water tanks for health facilities and schools. The participants, however, expressed concern that:

- There is poor community participation and contribution to projects;
- Misuse of the CDF money;
- A number of unfinished projects;
- Poor workmanship of most of the construction projects.

The community wants the fund to be managed in a transparent manner that will see them participating in decision-making, reduce misuse of the funds, and ensure completion of good quality projects.

4.2.2 Local Authority Transfer Fund

The Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) was established by the LATF Act (No. 8 of 1998) and came into effect on the 10th of June 1999. The Act provided the transfer of 5% of the national income tax to local authorities. LATF has facilitated the disbursement of funds to local authorities to assist them finance some of the services they are required to provide under the Local Government Act. The purpose of the Act was to improve service delivery to the public, improve financial management and accountability, and eliminate all outstanding debts by 2010.

Community members were not aware of its existence and have never participated in its activities. Many were shocked that such funds exist while services of the local authorities within the county are very poor.

4.2.3 Women Enterprise Fund

The Women Enterprise Fund was established in August 2007 to provide accessible and affordable credit to support women start and/or expand business for wealth and employment creation. The Fund also provides business support services such as capacity building, marketing, promotion of linkages and infrastructure support. The on-lending component of the Fund works through financial intermediaries such as banks, non-governmental organizations, savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs), faith-based organizations, and microfinance institutions. It operates through contracted financial intermediaries.

At the constituency level, women access funds directly either as individuals or women-owned enterprises or other organized entities such as women groups and women owned companies. While some of the members of the community are aware of the fund, none has benefited, and only two groups out of the registered 43 women groups within the county have benefitted from the fund. The reasons include:

- They fear loans from nasty experiences from the loans borrowed from the Kenya Women Finance Trust (KWFT) which they confused with the Women Enterprises Fund;
- They have not applied;
- They fear the loan recovery process might attach some of their assets on failure to pay back.

4.2.4 Youth Enterprise Development Fund

The fund was established in 2006 to provide financial support to the unemployed youths in accessing funds to set up their enterprises, hence becoming financially able to support themselves. It was targeting youths within the age brackets of 18-35 years. The main objectives of the fund include:

- Provide loans for on-lending to youth enterprises;
- Attract and facilitate investment in micro, small and medium enterprises oriented commercial infrastructure that will be beneficial to youth enterprises;
- Support youth oriented micro, small and medium enterprises to develop linkages with large enterprises;
- Facilitate marketing of products and services of youth enterprises both in the domestic and international markets;
- Provide business development services to youth enterprises;
- Facilitate employment of youth in the international labour market.

Information on the effectiveness of the fund was not discussed.

(Then remove this sentence)

CHAPTER FIVE: CROSS-CUTTING AND EMERGING ISSUES

5.1 PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

According to community members PWDS are among the most affected by poverty in the area. There are special programmes that cater for the persons with disabilities in the county and these include cash transfer with at least two persons from each location benefitting, receiving training in small enterprises like poultry keeping, payment of school fees for their children, receiving revolving fund, being given ploughs and sewing materials and livestock, and they are also given priority in the KaziKwaVijana light jobs such as watering nurseries.

5.2 GENDER

It is evident that women and female children are at a disadvantage in the community in decision-making and participation in developmental activities. Decisions concerning health, education and disposal of assets in the family are made by men thus limiting the woman's control of resources for betterment of the family. In addition, women are shouldered with the responsibility of taking care of the children and keeping the homes, and as such they cannot find time to engage in economic activities that can enable them earn money to raise their standards of living.

CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The community members gave the following recommendations:

- The government should provide them with enough water through initiating massive water projects for farming and domestic use;
- Education improvement and support;
- Create employment/job opportunities for the children who complete school;
- Construction of a workshop within public land to improve KaziKwaVijana;
- Construction of a health facility near the cluster;
- Undertake road infrastructure improvement;
- Government to provide them with land title deeds;
- The government should help the elderly, OVCs and PWDs to improve their livelihood through up-scaling cash transfers and other programmes which will benefit them;
- The Government should initiate the construction of special education/institutions to cater for disabled children;
- Government to support farmers to find better markets for farm produce e.g. green grams and millet;
- Government to offer civic education to adults so that they can improve knowledge and skills on how to utilize their resources well.

6.2 CONCLUSION

The cluster has been described as poor with their main concern being water. It is evident that the area lacks knowledge and skills which can help/support them improve their lifestyles. It was observed that most of the households have a minimum of five and a maximum of ten children which to a large extent is contributing to poverty within the cluster. FP efforts should be beefed up to control on the population size that is fast outgrowing the available resources in the region.

The health sector is considered key to every aspect of economic and social development of the county. The health sector will ensure that resources are utilised towards a healthy population, which will provide labour for production and generation of income and revenue. This will in turn provide market for consumer goods produced locally and outside. It will provide manpower to all sectors in the county economy while ensuring good health to individuals and society. Over the years, the provision of health services has improved remarkably with construction, equipping and expansion of health facilities within the county. This has considerably improved affordability and accessibility of basic health services.

Most of households have latrines and observe hygiene where they have gallons of water tied to the trees where they wash hands after visiting latrines.

While some members claimed that they are not aware of the various government efforts to develop the area, it emerged that most of the programmes like KaziKwaVijana benefited many although others claimed that they were not paid.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Tharaka-Nithi is faced by slow adjudication of land, boundary disputes and conflict over grazing land that has rendered some people landless. A number of Chuka residents live without proper housing due to landlessness. Several slums have been established within the county and especially in town centres. The county is facing repetitive poverty inheritance and for it to move forward more effort needs to be put in developing its economic factors.

Despite the enormous potential the county has, farmers are not able to get good returns due to marketing challenges they experience. The products do not fetch them good prices because they are not able to access markets in good time especially with the perishable commodities like milk and fruits. This is largely because of the poor transport network in the interior and the absence of good storage facilities. The farmers are exploited by the middlemen who buy their products at throw away prices and this discourages farmers from expanding their production capacity.