

Social Aspects of Dynamic Poverty Traps: Cases from, Vihiga, Baringo and Marsabit Districts, Kenya

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SADPT Cases

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Case studies from individual households

Vihiga Case Studies

Case study 1a: Kaulenti Chisenga: Poor – poor (no change)

Kaulenti was born in 1947 and is separated from his wife. He has seven children, four sons and three daughters. All the three daughters are married though no bride wealth has been paid yet. He lives in a grass-thatched house and owns a three-quarter-acre piece of land. He relies mainly on farming for his subsistence. His friends helped him to plant napier grass, bananas and sugarcane. He exchanges napier grass for labor and sells bananas and sugarcane to meet his household needs. He receives remittances, though not regularly, from his sons who do casual jobs in Nairobi. To him, it is just sheer luck that he receives such remittances.

Twenty years ago he was poor, which he attributes to his low level of education. He attended primary school up to class three and then dropped out following the death of his father who had been paying his school fees. This was the main cause of his being poor. He left for Nairobi where he was doing casual jobs that were low paying (earning KShs 30.00 to KShs 50.00 per day). He could not make any savings. The other cause of poverty in Kaulenti's household is the small parcels of land he owns. Kaulenti had four brothers with whom he had to share his father's land. After land subdivision, they ended up with very small parcels of land. Kaulenti's ill health is another cause of poverty in his household. He has a back problem, which emanated from a dislocation of the backbone. Kaulenti worked as a loader in trucks when he was in Nairobi. One day he attempted to carry a 135 kg bag on his back and dislocated his backbone. He had to retire from this job. He spent all his benefits on treatment. Due to his poor health, his wife went to look for job in Nairobi ten years ago never to return. Kaulenti experiences labor constraint in his farm. He is unable to hire labor because a big portion of his money goes to medical expenses. He depends on handouts from his relatives to supplement his subsistence.

His family has remained in poverty due to low level of education among the children. None of them went beyond primary school. In this household, indicators of poverty as spelled by most people in this region are very much visible: poor conditions of the house, mud walls, which are not well maintained, leaking grass thatched roof and inside the house, the farmer has got old stools which need repair as seats. He does not own any livestock. The ones he had were sold out to meet medical expenses. He does not have sufficient food almost throughout the year. His land has been exhausted of nutrients as it has been tilled continuously for the last twenty years without nutrient replenishing techniques.

Diseases are very common in Kaulenti's household and its neighborhood. Malaria attacks Kaulenti regularly and this coupled with complication of his back has cast him into poverty. In the past three years the rainfall pattern has been fluctuating. This has caused loss of crops. Last year the rains started earlier than usual and after two weeks it disappeared. Most of the maize crop dried. He considers this a risk because if it recurs for two

consecutive years there will be major hunger. This year rains disappeared in mid June for three weeks, when the maize was tussling, thus leading to low yields of maize.

Twenty years ago, Kaulenti and his brothers were practicing monocropping, as the land was a bit big. But since land subdivision took place, Kaulenti mentions that he plants almost all crops (maize, beans, potatoes, bananas etc) in the same piece of land. He has changed his land use pattern because of his small piece of land. Though there are social welfare groups in his village, he is not a member of any due to his ill health and poor financial status.

Case study 2a: Musonda Kaloka: Poor – Poor (Decrease)

Musonda was born in 1937. He has a semi permanent house and grass-thatched kitchen. His farm is located close to the tarmac road and he owns two African zebu cattle. He went to primary school up to class three. He worked in Nairobi as a cook and driver until 1987 when he was diagnosed to have cancer. Since then he has been bed ridden on and off. He sold all his cattle to meet medical expenses. Nowadays he is so weak that he cannot farm or engage in any economic activity.

According to him poverty set in when he was diagnosed to have cancer. He was sick for a whole year and that is when he quit his driving job. For the past ten years he has been living in poverty. His wife died and the only son who was working also died. He says that people told him that his son could have succumbed to HIV/AIDS. When he went down with cancer, his late son was a major income earner for the family. He left behind three children. His sons' children and his own two daughters are living with him in his compound. The two daughters got married but later separated from their husbands. They all live with him. His other son has never been employed despite attending and completing secondary school. He does casual jobs. However he is an alcoholic and spends all his money on alcohol, leaving the family to starve. His daughters also do casual jobs to sustain him. He depends on the daughters to till his three-quarter acre farm.

From the household, indicators of poverty include begging for food and putting on tattered clothes. His household now has many dependants and he is sickly. For the past ten years poverty levels have been increasing in his household mainly due to unemployment. His son does casual jobs and earns between KShs 70.00 and KShs 120.00 depending on the type of the job. From this he has to buy maize, kerosene, vegetables, cooking oil and other family needs. Another major cause of poverty in his household is lack of land to practice proper farming. He owns a quarter piece of land and due to continuous cultivation; the soil fertility has gone down leading to low crop yields. From his quarter acre piece of land he harvests about 40 kg of maize.

Musonda mentioned that twenty years ago the major way of escaping poverty was through payment of bride wealth when a daughter was married. Cattle paid as bride wealth could then be used to educate sons who could then land a good job and help the family. This is how his brother educated his son by selling the cattle to pay school fees. He mentions also that another way of educating a child was through exchange of labor for school fees.

Mutoma worked for his area Member of Parliament who in turn paid school fees for his son who died. However he adds that education as a way of escaping poverty is changing because many people are unemployed and it is expensive to educate a child up to college level yet there are no jobs. Despite this, Mutoma mentions that people still believe that education is the key to escaping poverty.

Musonda does not have a pastureland of his own nor does he have an access to communal grazing grounds. The communal grazing grounds have disappeared and nowadays they are people's private plots. He practices stall-feeding (an enclosed unit) for his cattle. His grandsons cut grass from the roadside and bring to cattle at the stall. He planted napier grass on a public piece of land along the roadside, which his grandsons also harvest for the cattle.

Twenty years ago they were using animal manure plus other residues from the farm to be used as manure on the farm. This ensured long-term sustainability of soil fertility. They started making terraces in 1980s, terraces are the most common up to now, because they effectively control soil erosion, except that it requires a lot of energy to construct. Natural fallow is no longer common due to reduced land sizes due to increase in population.

One of Musonda's daughters is a member of merry-go-round, which was formed to help purchase utensils. She has already benefited from the first round and now they have enough cups and plates. The group was formed out of the need for women in their village to have well equipped houses. The clan group deals with funerals and other calamities. Members are men and women of Luvuka clan.

Musonda told us that there has been no group on soil conservation in their village. The only one that existed was in 1988. He was planting trees until 1987. Since he fell sick, he has not been planting trees nor does his son. This is because crops occupy all the land and there is no space for trees. The trees that were there are now being cut down for sale.

Case study 3a: Mutoma Etole: Nonpoor – Nonpoor (No change)

Etole is fifty-one years old. He is married and has eight children, five boys and three girls. He attained secondary school education up to form two, and then joined Rift Valley Technical Training Institute to train as a plumber. After college, he was employed by Kenya Breweries Company where he worked up to 1985 then resigned to start private business. He has also worked as a consultant at Mumias and Nzoia Sugar Companies. Currently he is a farmer.

He has a semi permanent house and three crossbreed dairy cattle in his farm. He has six acres of land he inherited from his father and four acres, which he bought in Lugari settlement scheme. Of the six acres, on two acres he has grown tea, one and half acres he has grown napier grass, and in another one and half acres he has grown maize.

He said that he has never been poor but he was also quick to point out that he has never been rich. His father was a pastor and paid for their education. After completing his education he was lucky to have gotten a job. From his job, he has managed to save money and bought land. He also opened a plumbing business in Nairobi where he got contracts to work for

different companies and individuals. He receives a constant supply of milk from his crossbred dairy cattle. He sells on average seven and a half liters of milk daily, which earns him KShs140.00. He uses the money to buy his household goods. He gets a regular income from tea and at the end of the year he earns a bonus from Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA). From the farm in the settlement scheme he harvests seventy to ninety bags of maize annually. He stores his maize harvest and sells only when the prices are very good. Whatever he earns from maize sale he uses to pay school fees. Apart from diversification he insists on hard work and discipline. *"I am always on the farm doing some work,"* he said.

He defines poverty as having shanty house, begging always and being lazy. He says that most poor people in his village have an 'I don't care' attitude, are rude and are thieves. According to Etole, there are differences among households in his community. Households that are organized and are hardworking do not lack food. Households that have income earners who are alcoholics lack food, clothes and do not educate their children. To him these households are different from the ones, who are disciplined; he strongly believes that alcohol is the major contributor of poverty in Madzuu.

Twenty years ago the time taken to escape poverty was shorter according to Etole. Farming was profitable, his parents educated him through the sale of maize harvests and many of his village mates were selling different types of crops i.e. (maize, beans, bananas, and tea) to get money. Business was easy to start. One required little capital, as low as KShs 100.00 to open a kiosk and customers were many because there were few shops in the community. Currently there are no crops to sell due to reduced land sizes and reduced soil fertility. Business is very competitive, as there are many traders within and outside the village selling the same type of goods. It takes along time to accumulate enough capital to enable one to invest more in order to move out of poverty.

The Major shock that has threatened him was the death of his brother's child and both of his parents. He had to foot all their hospital bills and funeral expenses. In the process he slaughtered two cattle. He survived all this because the previous year he had good maize harvests and had not sold the stock from the previous seasons harvest. Sometime Etole faces labor problems due to frequent malaria attack on his workers. He said that some of the people who work for him fall sick and they never come back to work. In order to keep them in his farm, he has resorted to taking them to hospital for treatment immediately they fall sick. He added that overcoming the effects of death is very difficult because it requires a lot of money to recover. If the deceased was the sole income earner, then it takes longer for the family to recover. For him he has the advantage of having a big land where he has grown tea and in some parts he grows maize. This has acted as a security to him whenever there is death in his family.

On natural resource management, he has been planting trees continuously for over twenty years. Part of his land is on a slope where he has practiced soil and water conservation by digging terraces.

He is a member of the Kenya Tea Development Authority Savings and Credit Cooperative Society (KTDA SACCO) an affiliate of Mudete tea factory that processes their tea. It belongs to registered tea farmers. They pay KShs 800.00 as membership fee. The SACCO gives farmers loans for farm inputs

that they recover from their proceeds when tea is delivered to the factory. The SACCO markets farmers' tea on their behalf. Etole said that it is beneficial because it has made tea delivery easy. His wife is a member of Mwangaza Women group, a merry-go-round group whereby members contribute KShs 500.00 every time they meet to one member. It was formed to enable them buy items that require a lot of money e.g. sofa sets, TV etc. Anybody who can afford to pay five hundred every month is free to join. His wife said that it is not easy to convince people to form a group that deal with natural resource management because they have other pressing problems. There are no immediate direct benefits from such a group.

Case study 4a: Richard Opatia Sianje: Nonpoor - Poor

Richard was born in 1939 in Madzuu. He went to primary school up to class seven. After school, he worked with the ministry of Agriculture as an office messenger. However due to regular attack by diseases, he opted for early retirement for fear of being sacked. He owns quarter an acre piece of land, a semi permanent house and a zebu cow.

One of the things that have cast him into poverty is a long running legal case with his brother, who altered the boundary of their farm. He has spent all his retirement benefits fighting for his land. Furthermore he suffers regular disease attack which requires that he be hospitalized. What he gets from his farm is only enough for subsistence. His household has so many dependants, three of his sons are staying with him and they are unemployed. He is also taking care of his elderly and ailing mother.

Richard compared his situation and other households in the village and said that there is a difference in poverty levels among families. He said that his household has so many dependants who are unemployed while some of his neighbors have fewer dependants and their children are employed and support them. Another factor that plunged his house into poverty is funeral expenses. It is a custom that when ones father dies he has to slaughter a bull to take care of mourners. When his father died, he had to borrow money to buy one.

According to Richard, today it takes longer for one to come out of poverty than it took twenty years ago. Because of their background, he says a child will take fifteen years to complete school and be employed or a good business takes same time to stabilize to enable one to escape poverty. He states that the best strategy for escaping poverty is education that leads to employment. It's after acquiring education that one is able to utilize improved farming methods and diversifies in business. The same strategy was used before to escape poverty but nowadays it's a matter of luck, as it depends on how one is able to get a job. Farming is no longer profitable without capital to invest in modern farming methods e.g. Zero grazing dairy cattle farming, tea farming etc.

The death of his father was a drawback to his household. He used a lot of his resources during his father's funeral that he has never recovered. Richard also associates his illness with some aspects of witchcraft. He has been hospitalized several times but the nature of his illness has never been diagnosed. Further more Malaria consumes a big portion of his money as

every month he has to use money on treating Malaria, when any of his household members is infected. This consumes the funds that could be used in farming.

Unreliable rainfall has also become a factor that affects farming in Madzuu and it affects everybody. The season begins too late or too early and the rains disappear before crops mature. Frequent crop failure is one problem Richard is yet to cope with. In 1997 there was very heavy hailstones that destroyed the entire crops in his village and this led to severe famine in early 1998. Richard had to beg from relatives as he waited for the long rainy season harvest of 1998.

About coping with death, he says it requires money; some family members support the bereaved to educate their children and buy food. If the whole family is poor there is nothing that can be done except to do casual jobs within the village to get food otherwise they pray to God.

Nowadays Richard has changed his land use pattern as compared to twenty years ago. He reduced the crops planted on one piece of land and now plants maize and beans only because the land is so small and the yields are low. Before he used to plant maize, beans sweet potatoes, cassava, and bananas. Since 1970s he has been digging terraces in his plot to conserve soil. When he was working he could plant trees because tree seedlings were being given free of charge. However now, people have to buy tree seedlings and he cannot afford.

Richard is not a member of any group. He believes this is a way of enriching other people. His wife is a member of a merry-go-round group. He has never been involved in any group that deals with natural resource management, as there has never been any in the area. Richard believes that natural resource management is an individual initiative and every family has its peculiar landscape, which they have to deal with on their own.

Case study 5a: Enane Lukose: Nonpoor - Nonpoor (Increase)

Enane is sixty-three years old. After his secondary school, he joined Kagumo teachers training college to train as a primary school teacher. He has worked in various stations and retired last year as the headmaster of Isiagalo primary school. He married in 1973, and they have six children, four girls and two boys. The wife is a former nominated councilor.

He defines poverty as regular attack by diseases in a family; laziness, unfavorable social background, and owning a small parcel of land that cannot produce enough food to sustain a family for one year. He says that households whose family members are always sick are likely to be poor, as their children don't get education.

He admitted not being poor but not very rich. His father was a church minister and managed to take him to school. In his teaching profession, he used to take loans to educate his children, bought land, and built a semi permanent house. He has invested in farming. Every year he harvests fifty to seventy bags of maize depending on rainfall availability. He sells maize to enable him pay fees for his children. Two of his children are taking their degree courses in private university. He has half an acre of tea plantation, and two crossbred cattle from which he gets milk that he sells to villagers. *"I have*

been able to do all these things because I am hardworking disciplined and pious”, he added.

According to him there are differences in poverty levels among households in the village. His household can afford food and pay fees for his children. While his immediate neighbor’s household cannot. The wife to his neighbor is ever working as a casual laborer in other people’s farms. His neighbor sometime begs for food from him and they have a grass-thatched house, which is not well maintained.

Enane says that in the past twenty years, poverty level has increased due to low levels of education and unemployment. Education is very expensive and many children in his village are dropping out of school after attaining class eight primary education. Secondary schools charge a minimum of KShs 10,000.00 per year, which most families who only rely on casual jobs cannot afford. He observes that due to low levels of education most youth in his village cannot get well paying jobs. *“Poverty levels were low twenty years ago because anybody with secondary education was assured of a job; currently even university graduates are unemployed. High level of unemployment has resulted into unwanted pregnancies increasing dependency, theft and burglary and even continuous cutting down of trees,”* he says.

In the research area malaria is a common disease. At the time of interview, Enane had spent KShs 600.00 to treat his wife the previous day. His immediate neighbor’s wife had also just borrowed KShs 100.00 from him to buy drugs for her child the previous day. He said that she would work on his farm for two days to repay the money. According to him, laziness and ‘I don’t care’ attitude is common among the poor. Some poor people just idle, they don’t do anything to uplift themselves because they are poor. Another factor Enane observes to be responsible for pushing people into poverty is HIV/AIDS. He told us that there are many orphans in his village whose parents died out of AIDS scourge. Relatives of such children have to take care of them. However he adds that it is an extra burden because the relatives themselves are also poor. He has observed an increase in the number of young widows who are struggling to make ends meet. Their husbands have passed away and they have to take care of young families without any stable sources of income. Some are trying petty business and others work as casual laborers in other people’s farms.

Twenty years ago Enane mentions that poverty was a clan problem and people could pool resources to help the poor. Today individualism has cropped in and people are not as united as before. The recipient could reciprocate by working hard and giving community service e.g. help build a tent in case of function or funerals. He adds that twenty years ago people were hardworking. They were doing something on the farm not idling in the village. Right now there are so many idlers, partly because land sizes have reduced. He sees education as the only strategy for most parents. Educated parents who know the value of education will strive to educate their children. He advises children to emulate hardworking and honest people in the community.

According to him, the time it takes to escape poverty varies depending on the prevailing economic circumstances and rainfall reliability. Twenty years ago it took shorter time to escape from poverty because the cost of living was lower, land sizes were larger and more fertile. He says that he is sure for the

last ten years only one or two people in his village managed to escape poverty. The rest are stuck in poverty due to small land sizes, high costs of living, and lack of employment opportunities.

Enane's land use pattern has changed as compared to twenty years ago. He is nowadays using more of inorganic fertilizers than organic animal manure. He now plants fewer crops, maize, beans, and kales. Before he used to plant cassava, sorghum, and sweet potatoes. However, since 1999 cassava has been wiped out in the area due to cassava mosaic disease.

Soil and water conservation through terracing and afforestation have been part of his farming practices for a long time. He has dug terraces on all his plots to conserve soil and water. In his compound, he has planted a lot of trees to provide timber and act as a windbreak.

Enane is a member of Kisiyenya Teacher's Welfare Association (KITEWA). They contribute six hundred and fifty shillings every month to the associations account. Four hundred is for merry go round; two hundred is for shares, which they share at the end of the year. Fifty shillings is for welfare i.e. medical, funeral expenses.

Case study 6a: Mrs. Rhina Oyombe: Nonpoor - Nonpoor (Decrease)

Rhina is thirty-three years old and her husband, Moses Oyombe, is forty-one years old. They both completed primary education. Moses did not proceed to secondary school because his father, who could support his education, died. Rhina, his wife, got pregnant immediately after completing primary school. Moses is a driver of Kenya Bus Service. Previously he had worked for a white man where he learnt driving and later joined Nyayo taxi, which went under liquidation. Rhina has a semi permanent house, one zebu cow and half an acre piece of land that her husband inherited from his father. They have seven children, four boys and three girls, all of whom are at different levels of primary school education.

Ten years ago Rhina was not poor because her husband was working and she was operating a retail shop in the village. She also traded on second hand clothes at the nearest market. She owns a crossbred dairy cow and from it she gets sufficient milk for family consumption and surplus to sell daily. Furthermore by 1992 the land was not subdivided. She could till the whole land and the harvest was good enough to last a whole year. So she was not buying maize or vegetables.

Later the land was subdivided between her husband and her brothers-in-law. This led to Rhina and Moses owning very small parcel of land. Moses her husband got sacked where he had been working. Her mother in-law was very sick and they incurred a hospital bill of KShs 24,000.00. Her business collapsed after many of her customers refused to pay debts they owed her and she has also incurred many debts during the illness of her mother in-law. Last year she had a large flock of chicken, about forty, but a mysterious disease cleared them when she was planning to supply them to Mbale chain of hotels.

She defines poverty as lack of money and food. Lack of money is due to lack of sources of income e.g. employment or small unproductive land. She says that poor people are lazy and beggars. *"Compared to twenty years ago, there are more poor people now"*, she said. The majority of the poor now, were the

middle class twenty years ago. According to her, twenty years ago there was plenty of fertile land and the clan took responsibility of its members. From the 1990s the poverty level has risen because people have become more individualistic.

According to Rhina, the new strategies available for escaping poverty now are *boda boda* (bicycle transport) business, raising exotic dairy cattle through zero grazing, and tea farming. She told us that ten years ago, high yielding exotic dairy cattle were a preserve for the rich. However nowadays she is seeing many middle class people acquiring them. Another way of escaping from poverty that she mentions is through education. *"I am struggling to give my children the best education I can"*, she said.

Asked to comment on the length of time it took people to escape poverty ten to twenty years ago, she said it took a shorter time. Land was big and fertile, and the population density was low. However she maintains that time taken to escape poverty depend so much on what one is engaging in e.g. if one concentrates on maize and bean farming on a quarter an acre piece of land, it will take long to escape poverty. But one who invests in big business in towns like Kisumu, Kakamega and Nairobi escape from poverty faster. She said that it took her ten years to escape poverty but one and half years to fall into what she describes as partial poverty at the moment. Diversification is important to escape poverty. There are community members who combine their work, business and farming (tea and raising exotic breed of chicken).

Rhina has planted trees on her farm to stop soil erosion and to act as a windbreak. The trees also provide firewood. She has also constructed terraces on her farm to control soil erosion. Rhina is not a member of any group in their village.

Case study 7a: Abisai Oyengo: Nonpoor - Poor

Abisai is forty-three years old and married. He has four children, two girls and two boys from his first marriage. His second wife has got no child and his first wife separated from him because she felt he is an alcoholic and irresponsible. He inherited all the two acres of land of his father as the only brother he had died. Abisai attended primary school up to class seven after which he went to Muranga District in Central Province where he was employed as a casual worker in a coffee plantation. He came back home after continuous malaria attacks. He has a semi permanent house and no livestock. Twenty years ago he was not poor because he was depending on his father who was working in Nairobi. More so their land was giving high maize yields (twenty to thirty bags per season) because of regular and continuous application of animal manure. His father could sell surplus harvest to support him and his siblings. The father had seven cattle that produced surplus milk and manure.

Following the death of his father, mother and brother, he has been left poor as all the cattle were sold to meet their funeral and medical expenses. He is unemployed and depends on low paying casual jobs in the village. His land is unproductive because he no longer has cattle to provide him with manure that he can use to rejuvenate soil fertility and at the same time he cannot afford to buy fertilizer. His sister who supports him fell sick sometime in 2002 and has not yet recovered and can no longer provide him with farm

input. He rents out one and half acres of his land and works on half an acre, which yields half a bag of maize.

He recognizes the importance of education in escaping poverty. The help he used to get from his sister is because his sister gets remittances from her sons who acquired secondary education and are employed.

There are terraces in Abisai's farm that were constructed by his late father. However they are not well maintained because Abisai is busy with casual jobs on other people's farms. His late father planted the trees on his farm. Abisai has never planted trees on the farm himself as he claims that the tree seedlings are quite expensive.

Abisai has never been a member of any group as he claims that he does not have money to pay for the contribution. His current wife is member of Mwenyiliza women group. This is a merry-go-round group where members contribute ten shillings for another member when there is a problem like death.

Case study 8a: Okeny Lubete: Poor - Nonpoor

Okeny Lubete was born in 1955. After his secondary education, he trained as a primary school teacher. He is married and his wife is also a primary school teacher. They have six children, three sons and three daughters. They own a permanent house, one acre piece of land, and two crossbred dairy cattle. Twenty years ago he was poor. This was caused by family feud on land boundary and they had to flee from their home to Kitale in trans Nzoia district where they lived for several years. When they decided to return, his father was already burdened with school fee problems and feeding the family. His father's brothers had also grabbed the piece of land that could have been allocated to his father leaving him with a very small portion. While in Kitale his father was employed as a casual worker in a white man's dairy farm. He was being paid KShs 3.00 per month which was not enough to maintain the family. Life was tough for him when he was in primary school. He and other friends formed a work group, which used to dig for people and save the money to pay school fees. This is how he managed to go through his primary education.

He was admitted to a prestigious Maseno school due to his sterling performance in primary school, but due to lack of school fees he joined a cheaper Secondary School in his area. Okeny was a day scholar and he used to sell sugar cane in the evening to primary school students from which he earned money to pay for his own school fees. His father was working on people's farms to support him. He went up to form two and did Kenya Junior Secondary School Examination (KJSE). He then joined Siriba Teachers Training College and trained as a primary school teacher. Since then he has received several promotions on merit.

He managed to escape from poverty through education. *"Compared to twenty years ago I am better off,"* he says. Through taking loans from the Teachers Savings and Credit Cooperative Society, Okeny has managed to build a permanent house, bought a commercial plot and acquired another one acre piece of land in another village. He is now educating one of his children

in college, two in secondary school, and three in primary school. He said they take loans in turns. When he takes a loan this year, his wife takes a loan the following year. He also ventured into zero grazing dairy farming. He pulled out after realizing it was expensive to run. He was keeping exotic chicken, but they all died after they succumbed to fowl typhoid. He lost the chicken after spending twenty thousand shillings. The farmer said that these have been the major factors derailing his efforts to widen the gap between his current state of being non-poor and being poor.

Okeny has changed the land use pattern on his farm. His father used to plant many crops on different plots of the farm but for him, he plants several crops in one plot to maximize profit. Because his farm is located on a sloppy area, he has constructed several terraces to stop soil erosion. The trees he has are just planted along the fence, as he has no space in his farm to plant them.

His wife belongs to *hodi hodi* women group whose members are teachers from their village. Every month, each member contributes KShs 500.00, which is kept in the group account. In case of an emergency like death or school fees, a member can be loaned at an interest of 5%.

Case study 9a: Ateko Sibbo Lupalo: Poor – Poor (No change)

Ateko was born in 1956. He is married and they have got eight children. They own a semi permanent house, one-acre piece of land, which is located on a slope. His major sources of livelihood are casual jobs on people's farms and tea farming from which he earns KShs 200.00 per month. The casual jobs include working on people's farms. His son, who is a primary school drop out is in Nairobi doing casual jobs. His level of education cannot allow him to get a job from where he can derive a decent earning to help the family.

Lupalo's land is unproductive because it has been cultivated continuously for over fifty years without proper soil amendment practices. Furthermore it lies on a slope where erosion presents a problem. He has constructed terraces in his farm but due to over-commitment with casual jobs, he is unable to maintain them. He also faces serious problem of striga (witch weed) infestation in his maize plot. Sections of the plot where there is heavy striga infestation, gives very low maize yield. In such sections he now plants napier grass. Lupalo does not have cattle as the ones he had, he sold to pay school fees for his daughter who has completed her secondary education but is unemployed.

Given that he has a large family, coupled by his mother's ill health that requires regular medical attention, Lupalo does not see any hope of escaping from poverty. His earning from tea is too little. He does not know why, yet tea is well paying in his area. His land is less productive. He harvests less than a bag of maize from his farm. This lasts for less than a month. He has to buy food throughout the year. Moreover casual jobs have become very competitive and there are many unemployed people in the village. He said jobs are constant during the month of February to March and August-September, which are normally peak periods.

His late father planted the trees that are found in his farm. He says that he has harvested most of them for sale and firewood. He himself has no time to

plant more; furthermore the tree seedlings available are quite expensive. His father also dug the terraces and Lupalo has been maintaining them.

He is not a member of any group because groups require that you contribute money for membership. The money does not give returns as officials embezzle the funds and eventually the groups collapse. The wife belongs to *chama cha huruma*. It a group of mixed men and women from the their village. They pay a minimum of twenty shillings whenever a member has a problem especially when bereaved. She said funeral groups are common because they give direct support and there is no keeping of money that can stir conflict.

Case study 10a: Jomo Opatia: Nonpoor – Nonpoor (Increase)

Jomo is seventy-two years old and his wife Winnie is sixty-seven years old. Jomo was a registrar of the high court while his wife Winnie was a primary school teacher. They are all retired civil servants. They had six children, two died and the remaining four are all employed. He owns a permanent house. He said that twenty years ago he was not poor because he was already working and had bought four acres of land where he planted tea. He also inherited six acres from his father. Of the six acres of land he planted coffee on four acres. He also owns crossbred dairy cattle, which he keeps in a zero grazing unit. Another six acres of land, which he owns, is in the settlement schemes in Lugari district and he has settled his eldest son there.

He said that because of education, he has been able to think ahead not to fall into poverty. He performed well in secondary school and was offered a job in the civil service immediately. He attributes this to hard work and ambition. When they were working he was a member of Harambee Savings and Credit Cooperative, which was, by then, a cooperative group for all civil servants who were under the office of the president and the judiciary (currently the judiciary has its own cooperative). He severally took loans to finance his children's education and other development projects in the family. Before taking a loan they could discuss with the wife and agree on what to do. Above all he developed the culture of saving. He has been able to avoid poverty through diversification in various enterprises and by educating his children who are all working. He owns a commercial plot in Bukuga market where he has constructed a bar and a restaurant, which are both operating. He encourages his children to save and invest in business and farming. He rarely asks money from them, as he is comfortable with his retirement benefits and income from farming. *"Children need education to make informed decisions,"* he concludes.

His land use pattern has changed over time; earlier on he was planting maize and beans only. He planted coffee in the 1980s and started using hybrid maize in late 1980s. In early 1990s he started growing tea. From 1995 when the coffee cooperative started offering low prices, he converted the coffee farm into maize and beans farm. There are terraces on his farm, which he constructed in the 1970s. He has maintained them. Parts of his land lie in sloppy areas. He has planted napier grass on the embankment of the terraces to stabilize them.

He randomly spreads animal manure on the farm to help improve on soil fertility and reduce the amount of fertilizer use during planting time. He has a woodlot in his farm, which comprises of eucalyptus trees. On the boundary of his farm he has planted other trees such as grevillea, jacaranda and cypress trees to act as windbreak and stop soil erosion. From the trees he also gets firewood.

Jomo doesn't belong to any group. However his wife is a member of *Indulo* women, which is a welfare group that supports its members when they are in problems. Group members are women from Indulo village. His wife said that she couldn't join any formal group because she had a bad experience with the earlier groups she had joined. Most of them collapsed because the officials embezzled funds. This generated into bitter rivalry and hatred among the officials and members. She adds that there are many cases of defunct women groups due to leadership struggles and mismanagement of funds.

Case study 11a: Harrison Otari Agade: Poor – Nonpoor

Harrison was born in 1949, in Kisiyenya village, Kisiyenya Sub-location. He went to school up to standard eight and dropped out after his father died. His mother was not able to educate him and his other brothers and sisters. *“My father's death was a misfortune because it was so sudden and it left the whole family disoriented because he was the sole breadwinner,”* he said.

After his father's death, life became very tough for him that he decided to go and look for a job in Naivasha, in the Rift Valley Province. He felt that there was a need to support his brothers and sisters to continue with education. His uncle who was working in Naivasha by then helped him get a job at Pana Foods Company as a loader. In early 1970s to late 1980s he was very poor. This was because as the eldest son in his father's family, he had to take charge of caring for his sisters and brothers after his father's death. What he earned from his job as a loader, (KShs 200.00) was so little to meet his family obligations. *“I was always in debts because the little money I earned, I had to remit home and then look for alternative ways of surviving in town”* he added.

His father had three acres of land. In 1984 this piece of land was subdivided between him and his three brothers. He ended with a very small parcel, which was being cultivated every season. Because fertilizer was not being used in the farm, it became quite infertile and produced very low crop yield. In 1985 he left Pana Foods Company and joined Kenya Breweries Company, packaging department still as a loader. In Kenya Breweries, he earned far much better pay. At this time he was already married and they had two children. This increased his responsibilities, as he had to take care of his own family as well as his father's family. His last-born brother was in secondary school and Agade was paying school fees for him. Whatever little he was left with was enough to buy food and clothes only. Agade's cousin had a petrol station in Kisumu and he asked Agade to manage it on his behalf. *“My cousin understood my problems and thought it wise to help me. The petrol station job was a turning point in my life because while at the garage, I learnt how to drive and got driving license”*, he said. Its while in Kisumu and working in his cousin's petrol station that he managed to build a semi-permanent house. Through his own networks he managed to get a driving job with Cooperative Bank, Kisumu branch. According to him, this was a well paying job that he

had to leave working at his cousin's petrol station. He worked in the bank for eleven years. *"In the bank my life was better off because I was being paid well and I also received many allowances"*, he added. It is during this time when he was working in the bank that he managed to educate his children, built a small permanent house and bought two cross bred dairy cattle. He also used to lease land from neighbors and plant maize, as his family had grown larger. He was now growing hybrid maize that is high yielding and he was also using farm inputs such as fertilizer as he could now afford to buy. In 2001, he was retrenched from the bank. He says that he is neither poor nor rich. Though he has four of his children in secondary school and one in a teachers' training college, he can afford to pay their school fees with his retrenchment benefits. *"Were it not for school fees I would be a very rich man now"*, he laments. His eldest son is an office messenger in the Central Bank of Kenya and he helps him in paying school fees. The eldest son was helped to get a job through a former Member of Parliament. A part from education good rapport with friends and relatives helped him move out of poverty.

Currently he concentrates on farming. Apart from crop farming, he also owns two crossbreed dairy cattle, which gives him milk on a daily basis that he sells to villagers. Every day he earns KShs 140.00 per day from milk sale. He has several local chicken, two turkeys and two pigs. The turkeys and pigs are sold when there is an emergency like school fees, and disease attack on a family member. From his retirement benefits, he has been able to build a shop in Bukuga market. The shop is not operational yet.

On natural resource management there isn't much change on his farm for the past twenty years. He planted trees long time ago in his farm and now they are mature. He sells some for firewood. He has constructed terraces in his farm to prevent soil erosion. The terraces, he said, are now ten years old.

Harrison does not belong to any group in the village. However his wife belongs to a merry-go-round group.

Case study 12a: Nifa Akoya Saulo: Poor-Poor (No change)

Nifa was born in 1948 in north Maragoli. She is a widow and never went to school because her parents were very ignorant about education. They used to argue that it was a white man's idea and it was going to spoil their girls. She has always been poor. Her late husband Mr. Saulo, used to work in tea estates in Kericho as a casual worker. He left and went to work in Nairobi as a watchman. He left this job too when he was attacked by thugs when on duty. Since then, her late husband came back home and settled into farming. He had 1 ½ acre plot which he inherited from the father and out of this, Nifa has planted tea on half an acre.

Nifa was lucky to have one of her daughters educated for her by Nifa's brother in-law. Her daughter is now a primary school teacher and has helped in educating her children up to secondary school level. Her daughter is married and her husband paid bride wealth of four cattle. Two were sold when Mr. Saulo was very sick to pay for his medical bills. Mr. Saulo later died of what people suspect was severe malaria.

All of Saulo's sons are working in Nairobi as casual laborers. They abandoned him before his death because he decided to marry a second wife.

The second wife came with three other children from her first marriage. Mr. Saulo then decided to abandon the house of his first wife. This also did not go well with Nifa who also had to contend with rivalry from her co-wife. Mr. Saulo, after marrying a second wife, turned to be an alcoholic, plunging the family further into poverty. The little money he got he spent in alcohol. By the time of his death, he had grown to be very weak and was not working in the farm.

From 1995 Nifa decided that she was going to be self-dependent. Her younger son gave her KShs 2000.00, which she used to start petty business in the village. She buys vegetables, fish and other goods in Luanda market and comes to sell them in the village. Though still poor, Nifa expressed confidence that she will one day come out of poverty God willing. Nifa is very bitter because she has to share the proceeds from tea farming with her co-wife, who was not there when she was planting the tea.

Nifa appreciates the help she got from her brother in-law who educated her daughter. Her daughter has been quite supportive. She now wishes that her sons could get a better job so that they can live a better life than hers. She approached the area member of parliament to help her sons join the military this year.

There has been no change on land use in Nifa's farm since she got married. She still plant, maize, beans and vegetables on the same piece of land. On crop choice there has been some changes because she uses hybrid maize variety for planting. She realized that hybrid maize variety yield more than the local maize varieties. On half an acre of land where she used to harvest one bag of maize, she currently harvests 1½ bags of maize if she applies fertilizer mixed with animal manure.

Nifa belongs to Kisienya clan group whose members are from the Bamabi clan. They make monthly contributions, which are normally used to solve problems, that crop up in the clan or if a member of the clan dies. Sometime they lend money to a clan member to solve a pressing problem.

Case study 13a: Mark Andagi Anyasi: Nonpoor – Nonpoor (Decrease)

Mark was born in 1932. He went to primary school up to class two and dropped out due to family problems. His father died and there was nobody willing to pay his school fees. He has six children, four sons and two daughters. He started working at the age of ten years due to financial problems at home. He joined his uncle who was working in a tea estate in Kericho where, he learned how to pick tea. After one year he moved to Kitale at the age of eleven years to work as house help on white man's farm. When the independence struggle began he moved to Nairobi because they were told there were more job opportunities there. He started working as a turn boy at the age of thirteen in a transport company. He went to Sagana to work in a fish farm owned by Asians and after five years in Sagana he went back to Nairobi to work as a mason at Kahawa Garrison. Later he moved to East African Tanning Company in Eldoret where he rose through ranks to become a foreman and senior driver until 1992 when he retired.

He said by 1985 he had moved out of poverty because he had bought land where he settled his brothers. He used to take loans from the company. *"Because I knew what problems are, I used to work very hard and made sure*

*that I earned respect from the factory. I never used to arrive late on duty and I always asked my seniors where I was not sure. Despite the fact that there were educated people behind me the management recommended me for a promotion to the level of a foreman. While working at the tanning factory I bought another three and half acres of land where I have settled,"*he said.

The Company took them for a tour in Uganda and Burundi. He told us that during this time, he saved his allowances as he used to spend sparingly. When they came back from the tour, he bought a piece of land from his savings. In 1998 he started a shop for his wife in Kitulu shopping centre. From this business he could pay school fees to his children. In 1990 he bought two crossbred dairy cattle and started dairy farming. Savings from the shop business and milk sale was used to buy a plot in Eldoret. He then took a loan and constructed rental houses on the plot he had bought. From the rental houses, he earns KShs 4000.00 every month.

In 1992 Mark retired and that is when his life changed because all his children were now in secondary school and he was paying school fees. At the time of retirement he had not cleared his loan and quarter of his benefits were deducted to recover the loan. Back at home he concentrated on his shop business while educating his children. His first-born son was already working as a driver in Nairobi. He spent a bigger part of his retirement benefits educating his children but they are unemployed and they are at home farming. From 1995 the profits from the shop started declining. There were so many kiosks that were mushrooming in the village, which were selling the same goods but at smaller packages that suits most buyers in the low-income category. Household expenditure had risen and income reduced after he retired. School fees and other households needs depended on sales from the shop. He was not able to invest more in the business. He has also sold three out of the five of his dairy cattle to clear school fees balance. The remaining two still give surplus milk that can be sold. He gets three and half liters of milk from his two cows daily. Of this he sells 2 liters at Kitulu or Bukuga Market. *"My cows lack enough because I cannot afford to buy commercial feed. I depend on banana stems and napier grass that grow wild down the river,"* he said. The maize harvest started reducing in 1998 because he used to plant using artificial fertilizer but now he does not apply enough fertilizer. By the year 2000 he had started buying maize because the farm could not produce enough. The same year, his shop collapsed, as he was not having enough stock.

He states that his early retirement and school fees are some of the factors that have pulled him down. He is very bitter as all his children have secondary education and apart from his eldest son, the rest are unemployed. They still seek support from him. He had expected that the children would take care of him at old age. His daughters are married but no bride wealth has been paid. Death has robbed him of all his brothers who could have helped him because they were in well paying jobs. He was hoping that they were going to help his sons get employment. Nowadays he depends on his rental houses and farming. His eldest son can no longer assist him as he has established his own family. According to Mark, education is no longer an effective way of moving out of poverty now as compared to twenty years ago. He gives an example of his children and many more in the neighborhood. Poor people used to invest in education. It was cheap and once the child succeeds in his

or her education then he could support the family. He laments that education has become so expensive and yet there are no jobs. Many people have been rendered poor after investing heavily on education and finally their children have remained unemployed and are still depending on them.

Mark says that it took him over forty years to come out of poverty, but it has taken him five years to make a drastic decline towards poverty.

Mark's wife is a member of Kitulu women group. It was started last year after the area Member of Parliament encouraged them to form groups so that he could help them start businesses. Since he lost in the elections they have never seen him again and the group has not done any project. He has dug terraces on his farm to prevent soil erosion; some parts of the farm are sloppy. He has planted Eucalyptus trees on his compound. From these trees, he gets firewood and timber, which he sells. He is not aware of any natural resource management group in his village.

Case study 14a: Zablon Kuyabi: Poor–Poor (Increase)

Zablon admitted that he is a poor man. He went to primary school up to class two. In 1972 he was working as a houseboy in Nairobi. One day when he was traveling from Nairobi to attend a funeral at home, the bus they were traveling in was involved in an accident and his spinal cord got injured. He was hospitalized in Nakuru general hospital for seven months. He cannot normally walk upright and is disabled. His efforts to seek court redress for compensation were frustrated by the police.

He retired at home and started farming. In 1983 he lost his first-born son, then twin daughters at birth in 1985. By then his wife was still strong and she used to sell fish from the market for their survival. He had two cows, which used to give him milk that was enough for family consumption and surplus for sale. However one-night thieves stole them. This year his brother-in-law gave him another cow to rear but he will have to give him back the first two calves before he retains the cow as his own.

Zablon's household has been plagued by a series of deaths. In 1987 lost a son due to malaria. In 1994 he lost another son who was living in Nairobi. His sickness was not known. In 1995 the second last-born son died while in prison. He had been jailed for five years for robbery with violence. In 1999 he lost his fourth born son to unknown disease. In the year 2000 his daughter who was staying in Kisumu died leaving behind two children. He suspects she was suffering from AIDS. From 1996, his wife has been very sick and she is too weak to farm. He has only two sons left. One is serving a jail sentence for assaulting him and a neighbor. The other son ran away from home and for the last ten years he has not been seen. He suspects he must have died as nobody hears from him. The remaining daughter is married and his son-in-law volunteered to pay some one who planted tea for him on his half an acre plot. He is unable to raise eight hundred shillings to be registered by the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA). For the past twenty years he has been depending on his daughter and son-in-law to give him food. His land experiences serious erosion because it lies on a steep slope.

The death of his children has made him become poorer. One of the grand daughters he is living with is epileptic and cannot work in the farm. Twenty

years ago people were good. They could donate food and clothes to the poor in the village. Nowadays people have become quite individualistic and mean. The neighbors tell him that they are equally poor. One day when we visited Mr. Kuyabi, he made the following remarks:

"I am a very unfortunate man. I have been requesting the government to release my son so that he can help us with casual jobs at home but in vain".

His brothers have abandoned him and have made him a laughing stock. They say that he is a pretender and likes free things instead of working hard. There are more poor people like him in the village. However Kuyabi thinks that he is the poorest. He has not put any strategy in place to escape from poverty because of his family status and the misfortunes that befell his family. *"If I had registered with KTDA then I could be a bit better,"* he lamented.

To cope with lack of food especially during the months of May to June he has always trained himself to eat once in a day so that when there is no food it's not surprising to him. Most of the people in the community with a similar situation like his might never move out of poverty. He now lives with two grandsons and granddaughter who is sick. He has requested the chief to help him find children's home where he can take his grand children. He is afraid his grandchildren will suffer after their grandmother who takes care of them dies. We don't know the father of the children and we suspect he could long be dead as his daughter was suspected to have died of AIDS.

Since he got an accident, land use in his farm has not changed so much a part from the tea his son-in-law planted for him. He has been planting crops that are easy for him to maintain for example maize and beans. Due to his health status, he cannot construct soil and water conservation structures in his farm as they demand a lot of labor. There are trees on his farm that were planted long time ago by his late father. He cuts them for sale as timber. Luckily, the trees are eucalyptus variety that regenerates, hence they have been there for some time since 1975.

Kuyabi does not belong to any group in the village as his health does not allow him to make many movements out of his home. His wife is a strong member of Salvation Army church.

Case study 15a: Isaya Anzeste: Poor-Poor (Increase)

Isaya is sixty-two years old while his wife, Jane, is fifty-seven years old. He has seven children, two sons and five daughters. Isaya was working in Uganda as a workshop manager in an Asian firm. He had learnt carpentry at Sigalagala Technical Training Institute. He ran away from Uganda in 1976 after Iddi Amin gave an ultimatum to Asians to leave the country. He felt his life was in danger and left all the property he had acquired in Uganda.

In 1983, Isaya's both parents died and he had to spend a lot of money in meeting their funeral expenses. The cattle they had were all sold to meet his parents' medical expenses and in taking care of mourners during their funerals. Isaya was left with the responsibility of taking care of his three brothers who were still in primary school at the time of the death of their parents. Isaya was already having five children by 1987. Two of them were from another marriage. When he left Uganda he stayed at home for five years doing casual jobs. Whatever money he earned from the casual jobs, was

used in buying food for the family. In 1985 his first-born son was admitted in secondary school. Because he was not having money by then, he leased out a big portion of his land to pay for his son's school fees. Isaya said that: *"at this point I had to think. I went to Nairobi and teamed up with one of my former classmates and started a carpentry workshop. The business was good and we had many clients. From the business I bought another one acre piece of land and managed to educate my three children to secondary school. My elder son is now a primary school teacher"*.

However in 1992 his workshop business started dwindling. The cost of timber increased and they had to charge more for their products. Most of their clients could no longer afford to buy their furniture. He decided to come back home and relocate in Bukuga market. The advantage he had at home is that there were no qualified carpenters. At home his business picked up very fast, as timber was cheap. At the same time his wife, Jane, started petty trade on vegetables. She was buying them cheaply in Luanda and Kapsabet and bringing them to the village. Since he was at home, he also concentrated on farming. He used proceeds from his carpentry business to buy farm inputs such as fertilizer and hybrid maize seeds. This improved his maize yield. He also bought two crossbred dairy cows, which is now on milk.

In 1998 he fell sick and was admitted in Kisumu district hospital for three weeks. This was a major drawback to his efforts to move out of poverty because the carpentry shop was mismanaged by his workmates. Currently he concentrates on farming and taking care of his two crossbred dairy cattle. He is not very poor compared to twenty years ago because he acquired another piece of land, built a semi permanent house and all his children have got secondary education. However apart from his first-born son, the rest are still looking for jobs. His hope was that they could get jobs and help him at old age. He has approached the area Member of Parliament to help his children get jobs.

There has been a slight change in the way he uses his land. He abandoned growing of cassava, millet and sorghum because they are low yielding. He believes that they reduce soil fertility. After attending a meeting at Bukuga market he changed from using indigenous maize variety to hybrid maize variety, which is high yielding. From 1995 he has been practicing semi-zero grazing dairy farming.

In his farm he has preserved a section which he has planted trees. These trees have been useful as they provide him with timber and fuel wood, which he sometimes sells. Since his farm neighbors a stream, the lower part is marshy. He has reclaimed the marshy part through drainage and planted vegetables and trees. During dry season, he gets a lot of money from his vegetables, as he is always able to irrigate.

He used to hire people to construct for him terraces on his farm. However for the last three years these terraces have not been maintained because he cannot pay for the labor. His children are unwilling to work on them because they feel it is tedious job that requires strong men. The terraces have controlled water erosion since he constructed them in 1987.

Isaya does not belong to any group. His wife Jane is a member of a women's group that deals in petty trade such as selling vegetables and other foodstuff. They make contributions of fifty shillings every week, which is kept

by a trusted treasurer. The money is used to help a member that might get into problems. A member can borrow incase he has incurred heavy losses.

Case study 16a: Painito Amboko: Nonpoor - Nonpoor (No change)

Painito is sixty years old. After his secondary school he joined Kagumo Teachers Training College to train as a primary school teacher. He is married and has ten children, six sons and four girls. Twenty years ago he was not poor because he was already a teacher. His father had a big piece of land and he was able to educate his younger brothers and sisters without any help. His father retired as a chief chef at a hotel in Mombasa. Because his father was a staunch Salvation Army follower, he laid emphasis on Christianity and education. The teacher's service commission in 1970 employed Painito and it is during the same year that he married. His wife was a nursery school teacher until 1999 when she retired.

In 1982, their father subdivided his land between him and his brothers. They ended up owning 0.32 hectares each after subdivision. Painito was lucky because the part of his father's land that was given to him was already having coffee planted on it. His father insisted that he had to pay for the coffee trees so that he does not have an advantage over the rest of his brothers. He did not mind this and he had to take a loan in order to pay his father for the coffee trees. In the 1970s he could harvest up to a 100 kilograms of coffee berries per month. From this he could earn up to KShs 350.00 per month. This was considered to be a lot of money at that time because the cost of living was very low. However by 1985, the Coffee Cooperative Society started delaying farmers' payment for a very long period for coffee berries delivered. In 1990 the cooperative collapsed and many people started leaving their coffee bushes unattended and started concentrating on growing maize. However they could not uproot the coffee trees as it was against the law.

Despite this drawback, tea farming was picking up more or less at the same period and villagers were really enthusiastic about it. He applied for a loan and bought 0.32 hectares of land from one of his brothers who had bought land in another village and decided to migrate. He converted one acre of the inherited farm into tea plantation. To help establish the farm, he went for farm-input loan (tea seedlings, fertilizer, and insecticides) from Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA)

Currently he harvests 100 kg per month for which he earns KShs 750.00 from KTDA and a bonus of KShs 11, 160.00 at the end of the year. He said the tea price keeps on changing depending on climate and world market prices. He does not understand what the world market prices means but the KTDA clerks tell them that whenever they pay low prices. When it's too cold, the kilograms produced reduce. In the year 2000 the price per kilogram was four shillings and twenty cents the lowest they have ever been paid. A part from his retirement benefits, earnings from the farm help him make ends meet. He also owns two crossbred dairy cattle and one zebu cattle. They are both on milk and he earns KShs 150.00 per day from milk sales.

He is not poor today because most of his children have gone through school and he has got little school fees to pay. Two of his children are already working. His eldest son is a teacher at Kabarak High School and his second-born daughter is a nurse at Kenyatta National Hospital. The rest of the children are in Nairobi looking for jobs. Sometimes they get casual jobs, which he feels is good enough as this can sustain them. He mentions that educated people are exposed and with hard work plus intelligence they cannot be poor. *“Its education that made me avoid poverty and be able to educate my children”*, he commented.

He practices crop rotation in his farm in order not to exhaust nutrients in his farm. He learnt this in school. He also sometime receives visits from the ministry of agriculture extension agents who teach him of what to do in his farm. Researchers from Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) sometimes carry out on-farm research with some farmers in his village and from them he learns a lot about farming. One day in company of some farmers from his village, he was taken to Bukura Agriculture Training College where they learnt a lot about different farming technologies.

He keeps his crossbred dairy cattle in a zero grazing unit. From the zero grazing unit he gets a lot of manure that he uses to improve his farming. He uses the manure to grow vegetables. He spreads the manure on the farm before planting. He says that manure helps to increase soil fertility.

With the help of school children he dug terraces on his farm, they were using his farm as a demonstration site for digging *fanya juu* and *fanya chini* terraces. He annually maintains them himself. The terraces have reduced soil erosion on his farm since he dug them. In his compound he has planted cypress and eucalyptus trees, which provide him with firewood and timber. They also act as a windbreak thus preventing soil erosion by wind.

Painito and his wife are members of Mwenyeliza group. This is a group that is composed of both men and women and their aim is to improve the welfare of its members. They pay five hundred shillings per month as merry go round and two hundred and fifty shillings as shares. The money for shares is lent out to a member who has an emergency, which he or she pays back with interest.

Baringo Case studies

Case 1b. Monica Kararayo: Nonpoor-Nonpoor (Increase)

Monica Kararayo remembers the late 1970,s and early 1980,s with a spat on the ground and a curse. Her household had only three children but life was a nightmare. The family had no iota of wealth (livestock) and the children knew misery in detail. Their main source of food then was *ndorok* (a water lily from Lake Baringo producing millet-like grains) and the family relied on herbs to maintain their health. This was supplemented by begging from clan members and other relatives. Now, with more children, life is paradoxically bearable. It took the family about ten years to break completely from the grips of poverty. Kararayo’s household currently owns in excess of 20 head of cattle and more than 100 small stock. Her household is one of the wealthiest in the region, yet she is the only wife to her husband.

The Perkerra Irrigation Scheme was the saviour for her household. The family entered the production of pepper, which had a market by then. She also

planted maize for food and onions for sale though pepper provided the bulk of the income. With income from sale of the first crop, she bought 1 cow and 2 goats. With the next crop, she bought more goats. The household allocated some money to take children to school since educated people (the chief and councilor by then) at the time were recognized in society. The children are now assisting with the education of the others. Out of a total of 9 children (3 girls and 6 boys), only two are still in primary school and they have no problem with school fees. For the rest, 2 are working while the others are in secondary school. Kararayo's household has an iron walled house that is considered permanent. Within the same homestead, the sons also have similar houses.

She attributes her current economic stability to farming in the irrigation scheme, remittances from children and a large herd of livestock, which is a regular source of milk and occasionally meat.

According to Kararayo, it takes people a shorter time to come out of poverty now unlike in the past. She attributes this to the presence of the livestock auction at Marigat shopping center, which attracts buyers from far with better price deals. In fact, Kararayo thinks that lack of an organized livestock marketing system in the past was the root cause of rampant poverty. At the onset of the 1999/2000 drought Kararayo's household disposed off much of the livestock and retained just a few. Though some of them died, the impact was not as great as what some of her neighbors experienced. By 2003, Kararayo's household had acquired more livestock than it had before the drought. The floods of 2002 did not affect her household because the homestead is on elevated ground.

A part from water conservation through water pans, Kararayo feels that there is totally no natural resource management activity within the community. As a person, she has been called upon in the past to de-silt a water pan in Sintaan area. She belongs to one group; *Saruni Women Group*. The group collectively hires land in the Irrigation Scheme after which it is distributed equally among the members for planting Kenya Seed Company Maize. She chose Saruni Women Group over the famous *Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Women group* because the latter relied on external support from politicians and was only active during elections.

Case 2b. Joyce Lebene : Nonpoor-Nonpoor (Decrease)

Joyce comes from Loropil village of Ng'ambo location. She cannot remember the year she was born or got married. She married into a poor family. She lived a life of poverty up to the time she had the 4th born son (who was born around 1967). By 1970, she had been allocated land in the Irrigation Scheme and was an established farmer. Joyce's household enjoyed a life of wealth from 1969 to 1973 when drought destroyed all the household's animals. However, they were not exclusively depended on livestock. The household used to produce pepper and onion in Perkerra Irrigation Scheme. There was market for these products and after a time the family acquired another lot of livestock through purchases and breeding. The accumulated wealth prompted them to sideline crop farming since they felt contented. Her farm in the Irrigation Scheme was given out to somebody else because she neglected it. Now after the 1999/2000 drought and death of their livestock, the family was forced to hire land in the irrigation scheme and re-engage in crop farming. She now produces Kenya Seed Company Maize from the Irrigation Scheme. In addition, she brews chang'aa, one of the local distilled brews with high alcohol content. Though it is against the law, she says that it was one of the activities that made her household withstand the negative impacts of the 1999/2000 drought. In fact, Joyce considers herself the pioneer of chang'aa brewing in the area. The amount of wealth the family has grew from zero after the drought of 1999/2000, to cows in excess of 10, more than 30 goats and about 20 sheep.

Joyce is the only wife to her man. Mr. Lekarariyo, the husband, used to work as a casual in canal construction, road works and tree planting (with the forestry department) just before and after the birth of the 4th child. This used to supplement the income from crop farming. He also stopped engaging in casual employment when their wealth grew substantially. He is now too old to acquire any form of employment. Joyce feels strong enough to work and provide for him.

Joyce says that they had no real trouble with school fees and they managed to educate their children and now two of them are teachers. She is happy that the sons' households are richer than her household. The sons however remit some of their income to parents. One of the sons owns a posho mill at Loropil Centre where Joyce spends most of her time. Three other sons are good farmers within the Irrigation Scheme and one of them engages in carpentry. They get enough to sustain them in addition to giving her something small. She harvests a lot of maize in the Irrigation Scheme. This represents the largest source of income at any one time in her life though it comes only once per year. Chang'aa can account for the current wealth status of the family. Though she is rich by the local standards, she does not own as much livestock as she did before the drought of 1999/2000. She has lost many goats to caprine diseases. She brews chang'aa but she does not drink, and does not allow people to drink from her home. They only order deliveries made to their homes.

According to Joyce, a poor person is one who has less than 10 small stock and less than 4 cows. In the past, the rich in the community unlike cared for the poor now. There is so much work especially with Kenya Seed Company maize and it does not feel good for her to sweat it out alone only to share it

with those who did not help her, even if they are poor. Some people are poor simply because they spent most of their time in drinking places forgetting that they have to work to acquire wealth.

Joyce belongs to *Naya Nkare* women group. The group organizes merry-go-round fundraising activities where money is raised and items bought for each member on a rotational basis. This has helped her acquire household property, especially utensils. In addition, the group operates like a bank where people deposit their money for safekeeping. She has no problems getting and depositing 1000 Kenya shillings monthly, only to receive it later in December of every year. When it comes to soil and water conservation, she attributes little to her household's effort. Soils within the Ilchamus flats are under no threat of erosion and there has been no recognizable decline in soil fertility within the region. The National Irrigation Board programs water for irrigation and there is no misuse by any one individual.

Case 3b. Paul Lengusoranga: Poor – Nonpoor

Paul is a man who has known the faces of poverty and wealth through the years. He was born in a poor family and therefore had to struggle for survival from an early age. In the 1970s while a bachelor and staying with the mother (father passed away earlier on in life), Paul was out daily doing casual menial jobs. He used to work in the Irrigation Scheme for very little wages. He only managed to raise enough money to buy livestock when he got short stints at KARI – Perkerra and KETRI offices in Marigat. By the time he was marrying his first wife in the early 1980s, he had a few livestock to himself. Later on he began dry land farming and farming under irrigation. By 1990, Paul's household was considered among the wealthy households in the community. However, he had no child (wife was barren). The drought of 1991 forced him into poverty once again. He was left with very few animals. He was lucky to find help from one of his *Ilparsaina* clan members who lent him a cow to milk. He finally managed to build a herd and flock from the animals and by mid 1990s, his household was wealthy again. He took a second wife.

The 1999/2000 drought forced his household into poverty again. Paul tried to overcome the drought effects by selling off most of his animals with a hope of buying them after the drought. However, the drought came together with human diseases. He spent nearly all he had obtained from animal sales on medical care for himself and other family members. Relief food was available but at the bare minimum. As if that was not enough, the floods of 2002/2003 carried nearly all he had to Lake Baringo.

He is trying his hand at farming. Paul owns land under irrigation and hires more. He plants Kenya Seed Company maize and some horticultural crops (melons, tomatoes and onionjs). The income from the 2003 harvest was used to purchase 3 head of cattle. The remaining goats have multiplied and together with a few purchases had a total of 30 by the close of November 2003. Asked to name the causes of poverty in his household, the man from Sintaan village, in Ng'ambo location assumes a distant look and says, "I would be somebody if it was not for droughts, diseases and the floods". However, Paul says life has improved for him and considers himself better off than he was immediately after the drought of 1999/2000 and the floods of 2002/2003. His family is still young and he hopes that by educating his children the future looks bright.

Paul believes that poor people find it easier now than in the past. In the past, people died because of poverty unlike now where it is possible to access external help from the government and relief organizations. He argues that the well off are more willing currently to help the poor unlike in the past because of the advent of Christianity.

Case 4b. Fiona Lakwena: Poor – poor (Increase)

Fiona is married to Lepariyo Lakwena. She is the only wife to her man. She was born of the clan *Ilkapis* and the husband is an *Ilmurtanat*. They stay in Loropil village, Ng'ambo location of Marigat division.

Fiona remembers the 1980s as the years of prosperity for her household members. The household had more than 100 head of cattle, 300 sheep and approximately 1000 goats. Her parents gave her livestock when she was getting married and they multiplied to increase the herd within the boma. Fiona actually had more livestock than her husband, but quickly adds, "The man owns all the livestock in the boma". Those were the days she took eating good food for granted. There was plenty of food, which she could access through sale of livestock. Likewise, medicine and clothing were easy to access. This was the state until the year 1991 when the drought came. All the animals died and she was left with nothing to rely on. The family was left destitute and she remembers begging from neighbors and relatives for survival. Occasionally, the husband would team up with her to work in the Irrigation Scheme on casual basis. The income from the casual jobs was not enough to provide the whole family with food. Her parents and husband's clan members helped them occasionally, but it was not like the days when they had their own wealth.

Some farming around the homestead during the rainy period enabled the family to harvest some sorghum and maize. She exchanged these for small stock and by the late 1990s had some few goats and sheep. When the drought of 1999/2000 came, it cleared everything the family had and left them with nothing. Currently Fiona and the husband have no job. GEF Lake Baringo wetlands project helped the household with water pipes, which they connected to the main water supply from Chemeron water dam to Ng'ambo Secondary School. She currently uses the water to grow vegetables, maize, beans and sorghum. Fiona belongs to a women group that has organized a merry-go-round where each of the members receives cash once a year to use for any project of choice. It was not a lot of money (refused to disclose the amount!) but it helped her to acquire food for the family where relief food from the government and non-governmental organizations was not sufficient.

After the drought of 1991, Fiona says that the clan members and other neighbors helped her family. However, after the drought of 1999/2000 people became different. They could not give her household anything for free. After sometime she tried her hand at chang'aa brewing. That saved her household from extinction. Together with small-scale farming, she has been able to brew and sell chang'aa to ensure food for her family members. In 2002, she got a loan from LDK and bought some goats. She hopes to breed them and exchange with cattle. Though the drought rendered her household poor, Fiona believes that the family is picking up.

Case study 5b: Jacob Laboso: Poor-poor (Increase)

Jacob traces all his poverty problems to two droughts. He had a well-off family until the drought of 1984 led to the death of all his livestock. It was after this, when reduced to a beggar, that he started working as a casual laborer in the Perkerra Irrigation Scheme. He raised enough capital to buy and sell green vegetables on a very small scale. Money from the petty business was not enough to care for his family's needs. He supplemented it by borrowing from his *Ilmurtanat* clan members and friends. By 1997 he had a few goats and sheep. When the drought of 1999/2000 came, it cleared them and he was left with totally nothing. His mother (a widow) saw the suffering he was undergoing with his family and she gave him a calf, which he has been rearing since then.

His main benefactors after the last drought were the government of Kenya, non-governmental organizations and his clan members. Their help to his household was in terms of food, money for paying for medical services and some materials for clothing.

Jacob has no farm in the Irrigation Scheme. He only goes there to work as a casual laborer. He has two wives and his children are still very young. He has a piece of land for dry land farming. This only comes in handy when the rains are available. He can then plant maize, beans and sorghum. The floods of 2002 washed away his crop for that year when he had great hopes of a bounty harvest given the rains. The floods also carried away his one goat and its kid. He currently owns one cow and 4 sheep, rewards from the marriage of his daughter who was given away at the age of 15 years in early 2003. With these, Jacob considers himself poor, but not to the point of destitution. He says, a poor person should have less than 5 head of cattle and 5 small stock. To be rich, one should have in excess of 50 head of cattle and 100 small stock. Asked whether he hopes to own such magnitude of wealth, Jacob's hopes lie with his children. He hopes to educate his children to a point where they will get employed to earn enough to assist him to get out poverty.

Jacob was not alone in facing the ravages of the two droughts. There are those who managed to escape the poverty grip while others still face the same poverty conditions with him. Those who managed to escape did not do it overnight. They either had working children whose remittances were crucial to their wealth creation. Others had capital to engage in crop farming within the Irrigation Scheme. Still, others were able to acquire wealth using the income from crop farming. Those like him who had nothing to begin from still suffer the problems of poverty but hope to survive.

In the past, droughts were not as severe as now. People were fewer and grazing grounds were larger. Floods were not there to destroy property. In times of drought and hunger, morans could move with livestock to as far as Rugus hills where they could access pasture. One of them could bring back milk and meat for the other family members to use as food. Things have changed these days. With the advent of education, money meant for buying food and livestock is used for fees payment. Currently, the rich do not extend services beyond the hired laborer. As such, it used to be easier to escape from poverty to riches than it is now. Jacob blames everything on education. Because of education, nobody is concerned with his neighbor: they concentrate only on their immediate families. That is why the poor find it harder now than in the past. However, his children go to school.

In the past, Jacob found it easier to cultivate anywhere and plant crops for his family members. Now settlements have increased and people have started demarcating areas as their own. As such, Jacob does not realize much from dry land crop farming. He has no money to purchase a water pump and therefore cannot utilize water from Perkerra River for irrigated farming.

A part from being a member of an age set, Jacob does not belong to any group whether formal or informal. The groups he has heard have are for women.

Case study 6b: Amos Taparakwe: Poor – poor (decrease)

Amos's boma has totally no livestock. This was not always the case for the 1943-born *Loborkishu* clan man. He did not know what poverty was until the drought of 1999/2002. At the onset of the drought, he had 20 head of cattle, 35 goats and 40 sheep. At the end of the drought, there was nothing to "mark his *boma*" with even a small drop of dung. The animals died from starvation and livestock diseases. He had been used to hiring people to work on his farm where he practiced dry land farming for maize, beans and sorghum. There was no problem accessing basic needs like food, clothing and medical care since he had an income stream from his livestock. But after 2000, he was reduced to a 'nobody'. He had to depend on relief at the start, but this is no longer available.

Now Amos says that a visitor who knew him before the drought would not believe that he is the one and same person he knew by then. He has aged drastically in the recent past. This has been compounded by sickness and lack of enough food. He tries to do casual jobs in the Irrigation Scheme but he is not consistent in reporting for duty because of his condition. In addition, the money paid as wages is too small to buy a meal (gets about US\$ 0.60 per day he has worked) for a large family. He has been reduced to begging from people he would never have dreamed of begging from in the past. His children are young and strong. They work as casuals and make some remittances to him. However, the jobs are not available always. On several occasions the whole family has gone without food.

Amos would like to cultivate his land for farming but the rains are not predictable as they were in the past. He would be happy to practice irrigated agriculture, but he has no land in the Irrigation Scheme and neither does he have a water pump for pumping water to his piece of land outside the Scheme.

By observing how people are living these days, Amos believes that if he had educated his children, he would not have sunk to such a low level of poverty. Those who educated their children in the past receive something from them in a form of money, food, clothing, medical care and even better housing. He has children in school and hopes they will have a better life in future.

In the past, poor people could escape poverty through borrowing and receiving donations from their clan members. Now, things have changed. People have become mean and merciless. One could farm outside the Irrigation Scheme and build up wealth from the farm proceeds. Now, the rains have become scarce and unreliable. He has seen people who were affected by the drought in similar manner escape poverty through engaging in businesses either of selling vegetables or having a kiosk for selling basic

items like bread, sugar salt etc. But they had capital for all these activities, which he did not have.

The only natural resource his household can lay a claim to is the portion of land where he used to cultivate crops. Since settling in this area from Missouri, he had leverage in terms of increasing the area under crop production since the whole area was open to him and anybody who wanted to practice farming unhindered. Now, the population has increased. There are settlements everywhere and he is hedged in from all sides. He sees himself hopeless in his condition.

Case study 7b Mwangi Kegode: Poor-poor (decrease)

Mr. Kegode's household has been poor for very many years. His position was aggravated by the drought of 1999/2000. Before then, life was fair to him. He could not compare himself to the rich people in the region by then. He had 4 heads of cattle, and over 80 shoats. Prior to the drought, he used to farm on the outskirts of the Irrigation Scheme and was producing maize, beans, pumpkin and some sweet potatoes. He had enough food from crop farming and his livestock. Now, he has nothing, the rains are no longer there and one cannot predict when they would be coming.

Most of the people who were in similar situation broke out of it and are now wealthy. Very few still struggle like him. However, they are better off than he is. Kegode found it hard to come out of poverty probably because of his historical background in the area. He is a foreigner. He came to Marigat as a *Mau Mau* convict to serve his term in the concentration camp around. While in prison, he gained skills as a mason and helped construct the chief's house in Ng'ambo. The chief was so impressed with his work that he persuaded him to stay around after his release. He was given a wife from the community and he even got absorbed in the *Ilmae* clan. Belonging to a clan by naturalization is different from belonging to one by blood. While other members of the community could borrow from their clan members, he could not since they were not his relatives. During and immediately after the drought, he got help from the government and other relief agencies working in the region.

Before the drought, Kegode's *boma* had livestock. However, they all belonged to the wife. She was given some goats by her mother and they multiplied. He however had control over the animals. Kegode has 2 mature sons. One is a carpenter while the other is serving a jail sentence for assault. The son gained carpentry and joinery skills at Marigat Youth Polytechnic. He makes remittances to Kegode, his father at those times when business is good. Mr. Kegode could have educated his son beyond what he achieved. However, lack of school fees was the main cause for the son not going beyond primary school. Mr. Kegode believes that educating children is a sure way of escaping poverty in the long run. The free primary school education program will help those children still in primary school to finish.

The primary risks threatening to sink his household deeper into poverty include crop failure in addition to human and livestock diseases and drought. These risks are not new. Their intensity is what worries Mr. Kegode most. In the past, he could move livestock to the hills on the east when drought set in. The most recent drought covered a wider geographical area and therefore

there was no place anybody could have moved his livestock. Strange and more complicated livestock and human diseases have emerged and they create a burden on the limited financial resources available. Meanwhile Mr. Kegode plants his crop very early in the season to ensure that they escape the dry season while utilizing the little amount of rainfall. He has lost much of crop on many occasions by doing this because rain does not come at the expected times.

The little land that Mr. Kegode cultivates is now under the threat of *Prosopis spp.* This threatens to choke any other plant material in its wake. He has tried to control it by uprooting without success. The whole of his land under is in danger of the plant. Kegode only hopes that his children will have a better future. He does not see himself coming out of his present state because “I am too old for anything”.

Case study 8b: Alice Lenasieku: (Poor-Nonpoor)

Alice is a widow living in Sintaan village of Ng’ambo location. She is a Kalenjin but married to a Ilchamus of the *Ilkapis* clan. She remembers only one time when her household was rich. That was before 1972. Her husband was a civil servant. Later on the livestock (mostly goats) died from Caprine Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia (CBPP). From that time, life took a downward trend. The time the household had sunk to the lowest levels of poverty was after the drought of 1984. There was totally nothing for the family and the drought was very severe. This was the time she remembers going to stay with her parents until conditions improved and stabilized. By the time the 1999/2000 drought came, her household did not have a lot of wealth but were contented to have food in their stomachs at the end of the day.

Unlike the rest, Alice managed to survive the 1999/2000 drought. It was bad but she pulled through. She lost most of her animals but it was the time when the son was working as a teacher. His remittances helped cushion the household from starvation and medical commitments. She also got some funds from a local women group, *Letboi Women group*. In addition, relief food was available and the family did not go without food for even a single day.

Alice is currently a small-scale trader in vegetables and fruits. She started buying and selling vegetables within Longewan area, before she was given a tender to supply vegetables to a local secondary school. This was when she begun buying vegetables from the irrigation scheme where there was a larger supply. She now supplies the school with half a sack of vegetables daily and sells the rest in the open-air market at Marigat shopping centre. Things have taken an upward trend for her because in 2002, another of her sons was employed as a prison warder improving the income to her household.

Other members of the community who were affected by the drought managed to get out of poverty through caring for breeding the livestock that remained and by following up on debts they had with people before the drought. Some people have managed to pull through by brewing the local beer for sale. Others have sunk deeper into poverty since the drought. They have nothing and depend on borrowing most of the time. In addition, they send their children to work as casuals even on Sundays.

According to Alice, it was easier to escape poverty in the past than now for most households, unless there is a family member working. The poor used to depend on the generosity of the rich. The rich were more merciful and one

person's problem was everyone's problem. Nowadays everything has changed because people love money more than anything else.

Alice is a member of Letboi Women Group. The group is involved in making gourds for sale, fundraising for each of the members and general farming. The group may hire land within the Irrigation Scheme collectively, but distribute it to each of the members for farming. Alternatively, if the land is too small, they grow Kenya Seed company maize collectively then share the returns to each of the individuals. Through this Alice is involved in farming. Otherwise she has no individual piece of land upon which she does farming. She hopes to upscale her business and thereby acquire wealth for the household. As of now, she believes life is fairer than it was in 2002. *"I have been poor, but I am no longer poor"*, she finishes.

Case study 9b: Lechapan Nachuru: Poor - poor (decrease)

Lechapan is the wife to Mr. Lejason Nachuru. They live in Sintaan village of Ng'ambo location. According to her, the household has sunk to the lowest point ever in her lifetime. Before the 2002 floods, they were living a poor life but not to the current point. Their daughter got married sometimes in 2001 and they were given 12 goats as bride price. Before then, they had only 2 goats. When the floods of 2002 came, their low-lying homestead was in the direct line of the fast waters. Everything they had was carried away to Lake Baringo and they were lucky to escape with their lives. Now her household is left with only one goat and nothing else.

Lechapan's family is a young one. Apart from the daughter who is married, the rest are young children. All of them apart from the youngest are in primary school. Her motivation for taking children to school was the good life for those with educated working children. This coupled with the free primary education program were reasons enough to have all her children in school. Her husband does casual jobs in the Irrigation Scheme to enable them eat. At times there is total lack of casual work and the family has to depend on *ndorok* for food. *In fact, at the time of the interview she had finished removing the ndorok from where she had spread it to dry in the sun.* She also joins the husband occasionally to work in the Irrigation Scheme if there is a lot of work. However, the young children require her attention at home most of the time.

After the floods, her husband's *Itomal* clan members gave her shelter, clothes and food, besides that from the relief program. She depends on traditional herbs for health unless the children are so sick that she can spare something from what was earned as casual wage. She also begs from relatives to enable her solve emergencies. Now his relatives offered her husband a higher ground and they managed to construct a temporal structure where they are now putting up.

Lechapan sees life to have changed for the worst from 1999 up to the present. The drought and the floods following each other in succession were too much for poor households like hers to bear. This has reduced more households into poverty unlike in the past. The people have also become very mean, probably because things are expensive.

Lechapan does not belong to any group, whether informal or formal. According to her, you need money to pay for the many subscriptions groups demand for. She only hopes that the son-in-law will be faithful enough to pay

next installment of bride price as he had promised. That may change her household's wealth status, otherwise God alone knows what will happen to us if things continue like this.

Case study 10b: Lopokoit Kamakil: Nonpoor – poor

Kamakil considers his household to be poor. He says he has only 6 goats. His poverty stemmed from the drought in early 1990s (most probably 1991). Before then, he had 30 goats, 20 sheep and 30 head of cattle. His relatives, mainly from the *Ilkapis* clan helped him with 2 goats, which he bred and built a flock within 5 years. Occasionally he could hire land in the Irrigation Scheme to grow Kenya Seed Company maize. He had even acquired some cattle before the 1999/2000 drought, in addition to the goats. All the animals died from the drought and he was left with nothing.

He has no money to hire land in the Irrigation Scheme and only relies on the portion outside the Scheme to grow maize, beans and vegetables for food. This however happens only when the rains are available. His crop for the year 2003 died because the rains did not come as expected.

Kamakil has 3 children in school. He hopes that they will learn, finish and get jobs and assist him in future. His hopes are however unachievable because his children are too young and he is too old to see even one of the go beyond secondary school. He believes that if he had land in the Irrigation Scheme, he would easily acquire wealth. He has seen his neighbors who were affected by drought getting enough money from maize in the Scheme to buy livestock.

Kamakil only goes to Irrigation Scheme to offer his services as a casual laborer. The jobs are not always available. There are times when a week can go by without him getting anything to do within the Scheme. This are the times when the wife has to go begging from relatives.

Mr. Kamakil does not belong to any group. He has heard of them within Ng'ambo location but they are all women groups. His one wife does not belong to any group because she has no money to pay and there is none close to her household.

Case study 11b: Hezekiah Kipirich: Nonpoor - poor

Hezekiah is a young man who finished school in 1996 (class eight). He considers his household to be poor. He has 7 goats, 4 sheep and 2 head of cattle. According to him, he would be rich if he had 60 shoats and 15 head of cattle.

According to Hezekiah, it wasn't until after the year 2000 that life became a bit bearable. The drought of 1999/2000 left his family very poor. His mother was widowed and by then Joseph was barely an adult. They were so poor that they could go in search of the solid filtrates from the local brew, *busaa*, to eat as food. Healthcare was by herbs and he was borrowing clothing and bedding from his relatives. The mother received some relief food which was very little.

He mentioned that the recent marriage of his sister was godsend. He was given 1 cow, 3 goats and 3 sheep as part of the bride price. Of the 3 sheep, the mothers to celebrate the marriage of "their daughter" ate one. He slaughtered 2 of the goats, and in 2003, was given another by the uncles from his *Ilkesiani* clan. Some of his neighbors have escaped poverty while others have sunk even deeper in poverty. The main cause for the latter case was

livestock and human diseases, school fees (from sale of livestock) and over-reliance on livestock instead of diversification.

Currently, Hezekiah depends mostly on casual work to sustain his family. He works in the Scheme when there are jobs and occasionally gets something to do at KARI Marigat. Farming would have helped improve the economic position of the household but he has no land in the Irrigation Scheme. His land on the outskirts does not receive water unless it rains. In the past, when the weir on Perkerra River was intact, water could spill over on farms on the outskirts and he could benefit.

Hezekiah believes that poor people were treated better in the past than now. The wealthier were merciful to the poor and could give them something when in need. But because the economy is bad, there is little money even for the rich and it cannot support people outside their immediate families. Joseph says there is a popular saying among the well to do that goes "*Mimi nimejitafutia*" (I have struggled for myself).

Hezekiah has children in school. He went to school and appreciates the value of education. In fact he believes that with education, his children will not be poor. He however cautions that education has contributed to some people's poverty where they had to sell all the animals they had for fees only for the child to finish and lack employment.

The greatest risks threatening to plunge his household into utter poverty are lack of employment and livestock diseases.

Joseph does not belong to any group 'just like most of us men'. Only women groups are available. He would still find it hard to belong to a group because of time constraints. He is always out looking for work to do or doing work.

In the meantime, Joseph hopes to breed his few animals into a herd and flock.

Case studies from Marsabit

Case study 1c: Boru Halake: Poor-poor (decrease)

Boru was born in 1951 at Sololo. When he was born, his family was rich having a good number of livestock, some 70 heads of cattle. In 1962 their area was raided and the animals taken away by bandits and the family became poor. When Boru moved to Marsabit in 1982 he had nothing; he has been here for 21 years. After he reached Marsabit he started working as a casual at a wage of KShs 5.00 per day. He worked as a casual for 15 years in which he was able to save some money and bought one cow, which he kept for several years. He had never been to school. He married his wife and they started working together. Boru is a farmer and now owns five cows and 2 calves. They have six children (2 girls and 4 boys) and one male adopted from his brother. Three children are in primary school, one of his daughters is married, and the adopted male is also married. The two youngest children are at home as they have not yet reached school-going age. He is one of the community guards equipped with a gun to provide security in the area, which enables him to draw a salary and this has improved his welfare.

On land productivity Boru says that when he started farming there was enough rainfall and the land was productive and they used to get a good harvest of maize and beans. But now he says that this has declined due to frequent droughts making them shift from maize and beans only, to include sorghum and peas, which can better withstand drought. Moreover people treated one another with sympathy and could support one another with food, which is not the case today. He says that life is becoming more difficult. There is increased drought, soil erosion, and crop failure almost every year and people increasingly depend on relief food. When he compares the present and the past, life was completely different. He participates in collective action activities by working together with other villagers to dig wells and now belongs to a group (Nagaya Gombo men and women) that is collectively digging terraces, planting and selling vegetables during the rain season. This benefits them by providing nutrition in the house and some income and also eases the labor demands. He experienced poverty when their animals were taken away by raiders; most of his clan members and neighbors were in a similar situation but there were a few rich people. He also says that it has been difficult to get out of poverty because he no longer has as much energy to work like when he was young and this is compounded by drought.

To Boru poverty means having many children that one cannot feed, clothe and educate, lack of animals, no job, failure to get a harvest from the farm, no land and lack of close relatives who can help in times of distress. If one depends only on livestock then they need at least 50 to 60 cows. Poverty first strikes the children and their mother. Many people are poor today having lost means of livelihood to drought and tribal clashes. Help for poor people is not forthcoming today as it used to be those days which makes it more difficult for people to escape from poverty. Droughts, raiding by enemies and disease outbreak are the main culprits. One can hope to get out of poverty if they have a

job and other mechanisms include educating children for future security and keeping animals that can produce more. In terms of land preparation practices there is more use of ox-ploughing than before and those without oxen can borrow from friends or neighbors. People can also help one another to work jointly to open the land or plant. Boru reported that he was one of the villagers that had participated in the food-for-work programme supported by the World Food Programme through supervision by CIFA but this support was to run for only one month for the whole community.

Case study 2c: Zainabu Arero: Poor – poor (decrease)

Zainabu was born in 1965 in Uran, Sololo where her parents were living. Her parents were rich in terms of livestock (cows, goats, and sheep). She married when she was 15 years of age. The husband was rich as he had about 130 heads of cattle. They have 6 children, 3 boys and 3 girls; first-born girl 15 years, second born 12 years, third-born 8 years, fourth-born 6 years, fifth-born 3 years and last-born 1 year. Among the six children 3 are in primary school. None have employment. The piece of land where they have settled for the last 12 years is about 3 acres. They have eight cows and practice farming when the season allows. She does not belong to a group, however she had joined one, but it did not take off due to lack of commitment by members to attend meetings.

Zainabu experienced poverty after their 33 heads of cattle were stolen. To her a poor person is one who does not own land, lacks sufficient food, is orphaned, or disabled. Poverty can also vary within a household if all do not have support of the livelihood earner. It is possible for the mother and children to go hungry if the father does not provide. When poverty strikes it affects children and the mother first - the man is strong and he can go elsewhere or he can go and work in a big town like Nairobi and survive while mother and children starve at home. She adds that in the past the number of poor people was smaller compared to the present. Some of the reasons she cites include prolonged drought and effects of tribal clashes, which made life difficult. The poor were also taken care of better than now; people had plenty of food and there were good pastures for their livestock. As time goes by, drought impoverishes people even further. Those days, poor and weak people were taken care of by elders and clan members would make contributions to help. These social support systems are no longer operational because in addition to poverty, which has made people less sympathetic, they are adapting other cultures and their traditional practices are dying out. Educating children will not make parents and their children escape poverty unless they are able to get good opportunities in employment where they can earn good money; jobs are very difficult to come by nowadays and even educated people are idle and poor. Also when there is no progress in the country people have no hope of escaping poverty. The main factors that contribute to poverty in this area are cattle raiding and ethnic clashes which resulted in deaths, droughts, crops failure, and/or poor harvest while coping strategies have become less effective.

Land use patterns have changed. In some of the villages maize production is no longer feasible due to shortage of rain, bananas have disappeared due to destruction by wild animals (elephants), which also destroy trees in the forest. Crops that have emerged are sorghum, teff, barley, and pigeon peas, which the present state of the land can support. There are also changes in livestock species. Since cattle die due to drought or reduce milk production people have turned to keeping camels for milk. The most important natural resources are soils, water points, pastures, and trees. However the availability and access to these resources has declined over the years as population increases and the climate changes for the worse. Prolonged droughts are the major cause of food shortages; in the past every household had enough milk and women processed milk into ghee during the rainy season and stored enough fat for the use during the dry season. This food security strategy is no longer applicable today because of deteriorating production conditions. Other practices like slaughtering cows, camels, or rams for own consumption have also disappeared because people do not have enough animals.

Some groups exist in the community since some people recognize that it is beneficial to work together. Such include village men groups that collectively dig wells for watering livestock and as a source of water for domestic use especially in the drier areas where people do not have access to other sources of water like the borehole. An example of a group is Nagayo Gombo men and women who collectively dig terraces for soil conservation in their *shambas*⁵ and plant kales for both home consumption and sale. However Zainabu is not a member of this particular group but she is hoping that they can start a women group to undertake some income generating activities to improve their status.

Case study 3c: Luka Tadi: Nonpoor – Nonpoor (decrease)

Luka was born in 1940 at Karare in Marsabit central division. His parents were very rich in terms of livestock when he was born; they had about 100 cattle and 150 goats. During those days droughts and wars among tribes were rare; though a Borana they lived harmoniously with Rendille. Their diet consisted mainly of milk and meat only. Every year there were enough rains. In 1968 cattle raiders from the Somali Ogaden clan stole their 40 heads of cattle and one camel that was being used for transportation. In 1973 they faced a serious drought that decimated many cows and the whole lot of goats and only 15 cows survived. He married in 1975 and unfortunately in the same year his father and mother died. With his wife and a few cows Luka migrated from Karare to Dirib Gombo where he now lives. He then married a second wife. Later he was employed as an operator for the Dirib Gombo borehole where he worked for 11 years earning 2000 Kenya shillings a month. He now owns 12 acres of land and $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of a plot where he has put up his living quarters; a house made of mud walls and iron sheet roofing. He has stayed in this plot for 33 years. Luka has six children from his second wife, four of whom are going to primary school and the rest 2 are not yet of school age. Presently he owns 4 cows and 18 goats and he also plants crops. He has no other source

⁵ *Shamba* is Swahili word for garden or farm

of external support. He says that insufficient rains and droughts have affected his living standard by reducing the amount of maize and beans harvested and pastures and water available for livestock. According to him, his situation was similar with his neighbors' and the entire community as they were affected equally by droughts and loss of soil fertility. He says working hard and being serious in what one is doing is the only way to get out of poverty; when there is enough rain he plants more crops. One needs to use all their skills and knowledge, invest in labor for land preparation and plant a variety of crops including those that can earn an income like kales, and take good care of livestock. But it is not easy because one mainly relies on rain. Luka does not belong to any groups.

To Luka poverty means lack of animals, no ownership of land, poor housing which is poorly thatched. The indicators of poverty therefore include the condition of clothing, lack of land and livestock, poor condition of shelter and household utensils, the type of food one eats and its condition. A person who depends on hunting of wild animals and gathering of wild fruits is poor. The poverty line lies between 30-40 heads of cattle and 3-6 acres of land. Poverty levels in a household may not differ much because traditionally when the head of the family is rich, he will cater for the family's needs and it would be unfair if the head is rich and his family is poor. Between the father and the son it depends on whether they are in the same *boma*⁶ or not. If they are in the same *boma* and in good terms the father can support the son and vice versa.

According to Luka a greater number of people live in poverty today because the population of people is now high and people have insufficient food and livestock. Soil fertility has declined and productivity has drastically gone down; sometimes there is no harvest. Rainfall does not support enough grass for livestock and fewer animals are kept. Cows produce less and droughts decimate livestock herds. Today the poor are not given the same consideration as before. Those days people had sympathy for others and the poor were taken care of among the communities by the clan elders, when one was poor elders gathered together and discussed among themselves how to help; they contributed cows to that poor person. Today there is drought almost every year and people depend on government relief. In terms of wealth people were better off than today; there are fewer wealthy people. Droughts were less frequent and people had good numbers of livestock; climate was better and every time there were enough rains.

In the past people were able to escape poverty because relatives and clan members contributed livestock to the poor; today there is less sympathy for the poor and those strategies are no longer available. People are more concerned about looking for money for their own use. The only option is to work hard while those in employment may assist their parents and siblings. When people become poor today it takes more time to come out of that poverty. The risk and impact of drought is higher and clashes have occurred among the tribes thereby destroying goodwill.

⁶ *Boma is Swahili word for homestead*

Patterns of land use have changed; soils have become loose because of livestock coming to the farms and they are easily taken away when it rains. There is more cutting of trees. Agriculturally some crops like bananas disappeared through destruction by elephants, some pyrethrum had been introduced but there were no skills to manage the crop and it also disappeared. Those that emerged are kales, which some people are now growing. They got skills from different tribes that came from other areas e.g. *Sidama* and *Burji*. Milk productivity has gone down. Camels are now being kept, as they are able to do better in the current climate. Soils and water are the most important natural resources-soils support trees that attract rainfall and are used for planting crops. Excessive farming and cutting of trees for charcoal burning have affected the soils. People do not migrate any more.

Case study 4c: Meso Galmagar: Nonpoor – Nonpoor (no change)

He was born in 1951 at Sololo Mado-Adhi now in Moyale district. His parents were not rich in terms of livestock, they had 20 heads of cows and they did not practice farming. In 1973 a severe drought killed the few animals they had, and the family left Sololo and came to Marsabit. They had nothing by this time and they started working as casual farm laborers on other (rich) people's farms at Kenya shillings 3 per day. Marsabit was better than Sololo because there was more rain and soils were fertile. By then a kilo of maize went for KShs 0.25 and a bull would cost KShs. 200.00. Things were cheap and one could live comfortably. He married in 1976. Thereafter Meso got a job as a government forest caretaker, working in a tree nursery in Dirib Gombo at KShs. 4,000 per month. He has a house that is in good condition (iron sheet) and his family dresses reasonably. Meso says he improved economically. He has six children, four boys and two girls. One boy and one girl are in primary school. His first-born is working with a security company in Mombasa as a factory guard; one daughter is married and 2 boys were assisting him in farming and looking after animals. He has 7 heads of cows and 5 goats. He has lived for 15 years on his 10-acre farm. He depends on farming, keeping livestock and his salary. Groups are not popular here and he does not belong to any group.

Meso experienced poverty when he had no livestock. The major problem is drought, which has severely decimated his animals and reduced production from the farm. The soil also has also lost its fertility worsening the situation. He said that the clan members and neighbors were in a similar situation because of the factors mentioned above. He says that for one to get out of poverty they need to work hard, use improved skills in managing livestock and growing crops, and should save to invest in some income generating activity. *“And one also needs to be in good health, in good terms with their family, and should pray for God’s blessings”*, he adds.

Poverty (*dega* in *Boran* language) means a state of having no livestock, no land, poor condition of the house, poor condition of the utensils, and malnutrition among the children. Poor condition of clothing, being physically disabled, few or no livestock, lack of access to/ownership of land, and being an orphan are indicators of poverty. One who has 2-3 livestock and $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ acre

of is considered to be poor. Poverty may not differ within a household if the family members support one another if they have the means to do so but if they do not agree then it is possible for poverty to differ. When poverty strikes it affects the children first then the mother; the father can risk his life and steal to survive while the children may not have an option. The mother may also steal or beg food for her children. There are more people living in poverty compared to 10 or even 20 years ago. This is a result of increasing population which has created pressure on land and water resources, soil fertility has deteriorated and people cannot get as much as they used to from their farms, droughts are more frequent occurring almost every year, while the rains have become less frequent. The quality of pastures is low and the amount of water available for livestock has also gone down, so people cannot keep as many animals as they used to. Cattle raiding increased in the last few years and it appears that politicians were involved and the government was not doing enough to control this menace. Because of different political orientations people hate one another more making it difficult for them to unite and find a common solution to the problem. People are also less sympathetic to one another.

Today poor people are treated worse than before; there is less sympathy from the clan members and relatives but in the past they were treated better. In the past, if one had a problem of having no livestock, clan elders came together and discussed how to help. They would contribute livestock to the poor. Each person from the clan of that poor person was required to make some contribution if they had enough livestock and it was sinful for one not to contribute. One factor that affected the way people used to help one another is the frequent droughts, which have reduced the number of livestock. There are also fewer rich men today as the per capita number of livestock has gone down. The high population has created poverty due to loss of soil fertility and lack of enough pastures and water for the animals; people cannot keep as many animals like before. The institution of the headman and elders was very important in tackling poverty among clan members. These strategies are no longer accessible today; people have less or no sympathy and the social control mechanisms have broken down and there is less effort to solve problems for individuals collectively. All these make it hard to come up with new strategies to escape poverty. To escape poverty one needs to work hard, employ good skills in farming, forge links with others to fight poverty together. Those lucky to get jobs can assist their parents or children. When people get poor today it takes more time to get out of that poverty because they do not get any help; the social norms and regulations that bound people together have collapsed and they are now more individualistic.

Land use patterns have changed a lot. There is more cultivation with no time to rest the land, there are more livestock on the farms because the old grazing areas have been encroached, and people are clearing more trees to grow crops and burn charcoal. Crops like bananas and pyrethrum have completely disappeared while maize and beans are declining. Lower rainfall and declining soil fertility have contributed to this. Crops that have emerged are miraa, kales, onions, tomatoes, carrots, pepper, cassava, and sweet potatoes. People have acquired new farming skills from communities coming into the

area like the *Burji* and *Sidama* who came from Ethiopia and live in the neighboring settlement of Badassa where they practice a lot of farming. Some grasses have disappeared and there is less water and pastures for livestock, which has negatively affected milk production. People now keep camels because they tolerate drought and they need to drink water only 2 times in a month.

The most popular natural resources are water, soils, and trees. People use water for irrigating vegetables and trees, for domestic use and for livestock. Good soils support growth of crops and pastures. Trees attract rainfall but these are fast disappearing as people cut them down for charcoal burning.

Case study 5c: Diida Nega: Poor – poor (no change)

Diida Nega was born in 1968 at a place called Mega in Ethiopia. Some of the information is recollected from what his parents used to tell him when he grew up. When he was growing up his parents were rich in terms of livestock numbers; they had 50 heads of cattle and 20 shoats. A few years later his parents lost their wealth of cows and shoats through a severe drought, which killed many animals. This seems to coincide with the severe drought of 1973, which is associated with eclipse of the sun (*ola adun dote*) as reported in the community workshop. Due to hunger caused by poverty, Diida's parents left Ethiopia for Kenya when he was 10 years old in 1978. They had only one cow, which they sold (at 70 birr) to get money to travel to Marsabit. This was equivalent to KShs. 700.00. They were six in the family, each paid KShs. 30 (total KShs 180.00) the balance of KShs 520.00 was to be spent on food once they arrived in Marsabit. When they got to Marsabit their father sought help from his brother-in-law who accommodated them in the village. However one month later he chased them away and they became stranded in the area. His father (Nega Adi) went to the next village and requested one Halake Gurguro who belonged to his clan if he could accommodate them on his farm and the latter agreed. He showed them a portion of land, which they could use (no fee) and this is where they have lived since then. He also gave them 20kg of maize meal, 100gm of salt and ½kg of oil for their consumption at home. The father then got employed as a casual laborer where he earned 150/- per month. Diida himself was engaged to look after cattle at 50/- per month and was provided with food rations by his employer's family. One of his sisters worked in Marsabit town as a maid at KShs100.00 per month part of which she also brought home to assist the family. They started keeping poultry and with his salary, Diida's father bought 2 goats. After sometime Diida's father approached one Osman Halima who lived next door for assistance. The latter sympathized with their situation and allocated them a 4-acre piece of land where they have ploughed and grown crops without having to pay for it. In the first season they got 5 bags of maize and kept progressing. Diida's eldest sister got married and the bridegroom paid 1 cow as bride price and this was the first cow they owned since coming to Marsabit. They later acquired another 2 cows, 10 shoats and 15 hens. Diida mentioned that their major problem was water and people (mainly women) have to walk for 9Km to and

fro to get 20 litres of water. Washing clothes, children, and utensils is very taxing.

Diida married his wife 10 years ago (1993). They have two children, a 3-year old boy and a 7-year old girl. He said that their culture requires that since he is the first-born man in the family he has to share every thing with his parents and siblings. In addition when problems are overwhelming then they work together to fight poverty. He practices both farming and has livestock but does not belong to groups.

Diida experienced poverty since he was born and growing up in Ethiopia. He says that drought is one of the factors that has brought poverty to them since previously they had 50 heads of cattle all of which except 1 perished. He adds that they were in a situation different from his neighbors with respect to land since they did not have land of their own and they continue living on someone else's land. This makes it difficult for them to climb out of poverty. To him poverty means someone without properties or his or her own land or plot to live on. Others are: no livestock, poor clothing, lack of sufficient or no food, and malnutrition in children due to lack of a good meal. One with less than 20 cows may be considered to be poor if they have many children to feed.

In the Boran culture hunting wild animals, gathering of wild crops (e.g. *aroresa*, *ogomdi*, *deka*, *bururi* (tubers), *charana* (vegetable), *madera* (fruits), being disabled, orphaned, or widowed are indicators of poverty. It is possible for poverty levels to differ within a household if well to do people do not support one another like they used to do. When poverty strikes the children suffer first, then the mothers because they do not have means to support themselves but have to depend on head of the household. Today a greater number of people were in poverty compared to and 20 years ago. This because in the past there was plenty of rain and good soils which supported crops and livestock for a smaller population then. Today there is less rainfall, soils are not as productive, and population has gone up. People used to assist each other (sympathy) and culturally elders were responsible for intervening when a clan member was confronted with difficult circumstances. A Boran proverb says: *mili demu ratha ka tau jibich* (one who works for something is likely to be productive--equated to a female cow, compared to one who does not--equated to a bull). He remembers that when they arrived in Marsabit villagers came together and used to supply them with maize and milk for the children and elders used to investigate who had failed to assist Nega Adhi's family. There was a lot of respect then. Today it is difficult to get assistance from the neighbors and one may just not ask for it. One factor that brings this disunity is that the community has abandoned their culture; elders can no longer decide what action to take as people argue that it is the government and not the elders to control people's behavior. The traditional institutions have therefore been weakened and there is less empathy. Today a mother and her daughter can give birth in the same house and the question is who will cater for the daughter's child. Every year there is drought and soil loses fertility.

In the past if one did not have livestock but grew maize, they used to exchange maize for livestock with those who had them. For example Boran farmers and Gabra herders would exchange at the rate of 1 bag of maize to 1-5 goats depending on food needs of the Gabra while the Rendille would exchange 1 bag for a calf. This barter trade no longer exists because there is less food, fewer livestock, and high population; due to idleness a man now reproduces a child every year. It is possible to escape poverty if one has a good brother, good relative, clan, and community that empathizes and supports him/her like used to happen in the past. A rich man would accommodate a poor person's family within his *boma* and provide them with food. In return, if that family had a mature boy, he would look after the wealthy man's livestock and the rich man would give them one animal after another if they were working well. In that way the poor family was able to start building a herd of their own. And a point to note is that according to the culture the wealthy man earned prestige and became famous when he thus assisted a poor family within his *boma*. Today the number of rich men are very few compared to the poor and there is no accessibility because today many people are poor and no one is really much better off than the other. Today life has become difficult because of the high population, climate changes, and poor soil textures. Soils are eroded due to intense cultivation and poor people cut down trees for charcoal burning leaving the soil bare. It is hard to stop the poor from burning charcoal since they have no alternative. Educating children is a way out of poverty but only if they get employment in which case they can assist their parents and pay school fees for their brothers/sisters and educate other members of the community. But in general it takes more time to get out of poverty; there is a high population, which has narrowed opportunities and it is not easy to get employment.

The major risks that cause poverty include drought, pests and parasites, outbreak of disease, cattle raids, banditry, house fires, and vehicle accidents. For many of these there is little people can do, as they do not know when they are going to happen.

Patterns of land use have changed. People are cutting more trees to build houses, access land for cultivation and for charcoal burning. Crops that have disappeared include bananas, which are destroyed by elephants while production of maize and beans is declining due to poor rainfall. Sunflower and *miraa* are crops that have emerged. Livestock have reduced milk and meat because of drought every year and young animals grow poorly because their mothers do not get good pastures and water. People are now keeping camels because the camel is tolerant to drought and can stay for 2 weeks without being watered. Water is the most natural resource they have because water is life. Even animals depend on water. "*Even if one has food, when there is no water you cannot cook or wash*" says Diida.

There are number of activities that people do collectively e.g. young men cooperate together in the village to do farm activities e.g. weeding, harvesting and ploughing. They also help in building thatch houses, helping the poor or disabled persons and the old men and women.

Case study 6c: Dub Galma: Nonpoor – poor

Dub was born in 1947 at Liban in Ethiopia. His parents had a good number of livestock, 70 heads of cattle and 100 goats. In 1973 Somalis raiders took away their animals. Later in the year the community (clan) contributed cattle to assist them build a new herd. Dub then married and they have 2 children (a boy and a girl). First-born is a male who is 30 years and the second a female who is 10 years old, the latter is in primary school with the support of F.H.I. Due to poverty and lack of land they left Ethiopia for Kenya and by the time they reached Marsabit in 1982, they had only 20 goats since most had perished on the way. They live in a grass-thatched house and they don't have land to farm. None of the members of the HH belongs to a group. Dub's father has been sick for 4 years, his mother is aged and his son got "lost" in Nairobi where he went to look for casual work. Their HH has been in a situation similar to their neighbors. Poverty means: no land, no livestock, being disabled, and living in a house that is about to fall and leaks when it rains. The HH head is the one responsible for meeting the needs of the HH so when poverty strikes the entire HH suffers although children and women are most vulnerable because they do not have means of supporting themselves. The number of poor people has gone up compared to the past because there is a higher population struggling to live on poorer land with soils that are not producing as much, and people do not assist one another as they used to do. The climate has also changed and drought kills livestock making some rich people to become poor hence there are fewer rich people today. The major coping strategy was the support that people got from the community with the intervention of elders; these strategies are no longer available and it is harder for people to cope and it takes more time to get out of poverty. However parents hope that if they educate their children and they get a job then they can assist them. Droughts and raids have caused people to be poor especially due to ethnic clashes. Bananas are the major crop that has disappeared because of destruction by elephants while poor rainfall has reduced the production of maize and beans. Miraa is now an important cash-earning crop and more people are growing it. People have reduced the frequency and distance moved with their animals. Water is the most important natural resource for everything depends on it--it is life

Case study 7c: Waqo Berhanu: Poor – poor (no change)

Waqo was born in 1947 in Kalacha area of North Horr division. His parents had about 80 cows and 250 shoats so they were rich. They did not practice any farming then. In 1967 there was a drought that killed almost all the cattle but the shoats survived. In 1972 the shoats were taken away by *Shangilla*⁷ raiders and they were left with nothing thus falling into poverty. Waqo left Kalacha immediately and came to Marsabit where he worked as casual farmhand at KShs.15 per month. He worked for several years and later went to Nairobi to look for employment. Here he got a job and later married then came back to Marsabit and bought the 8-acre *shamba* where he has lived for

⁷ Also known as *Dasanetch*, an ethnic group living in the north-western corner of Marsabit district nears the border with Ethiopia.

18 years. They have six children; the first-born is 15 years and the last is 1 year 3 months old. Out of the six children 3 are in primary school and the rest 3 are not yet of school going age. They own 2 cows and 2 goats. He does not belong to any group.

Waqo says he has been poor for many years and finds no improvement in his situation adding that many of his clan members and neighbors are in a similar situation. He blames his condition on droughts, ethnic clashes, and his age and condition saying that he is weak to perform any productive work. To him one is poor if they do not have livestock, if they are orphaned, disabled and aged, and lack other necessities like land for farming, money, clothing, and shelter. Being a widow may also make one poor for relatives may take the property left behind by the husband away.

Those who have 20 to 30 animals are considered well off and poverty levels are likely to be the same in the household if the household head is poor. When poverty strikes women and men suffer first because they give out the little food available to the children while they remain hungry. They have to go looking for work so that they can get some little money. The number of people living in poverty is higher today compared to the past because they are losing out to drought, wars, and an increase in population which increases the demand for food and other needs. Also the poor were treated better in the past and those with the means would help the poor at least with food. The rains were good, soils were more fertile, and people had good numbers of livestock. In addition the community/clan had a good tradition of taking care of the weak people in the community. Today once somebody is poor it is very difficult to get out of that poverty. In the past people could escape poverty because the clan would contribute livestock to help. Such strategies are only available to a very small extent, if at all and then only among people who are very close. Educating children, though a potential way to fight poverty, will not make people to escape poverty because there is a lot of competition in getting jobs and people have become very corrupt so that it is only those that have the means to bribe who can get these jobs when they are available so the poor continue being left out to suffer. It is difficult to follow the example of somebody else because one may not have the same ability. It takes more time for people to come out of poverty because of droughts and lack of alternative ways of getting support.

The risks that make people poor today include drought, ethnic clashes, and outbreak of pests and disease and these have increased compared to the past. The risks have become higher and coping mechanisms have decreased and become less effective. Only those with many sources of income (e.g. livestock, farming, business, and jobs) can have access to coping mechanisms. In terms of land use patterns there have been many changes; methods of cultivation have changed as people are now using animals and even tractors to cultivate the land. A lot of people now do both farming and keeping livestock although the numbers of animals per household have decreased. Bananas and mangoes are crops that have disappeared due to destruction by elephants while production of maize and beans has gone down due to droughts, lack of sufficient rain, and pests. Those that have emerged

include sorghum and pigeon peas, and teff, which do better in the short rains. Livestock also produced better in the past, as there were more pastures and water. The most important natural resources are soils, watering points, trees, and pastures; soil is necessary for farming, water is used for domestic purposes and watering animals, supporting growth of trees which are used for building, fencing and firewood while pastures support the livestock.

A lot of changes have taken place compared to 10 and 20 years ago. The droughts are more prolonged affecting everything else. There are fewer animals to be offered for sacrifices and this has affected the culture.

Growing kales is becoming a common practice and men, women, and the youth do it. The main group is Dirib Gombo water users association. Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) initiated it and they have a committee, which sells water using the money to service and maintain the machines. Both men and women work together and people who are not members cannot interfere with the work of the committee.

Case study 8c: Halima Girma: Nonpoor - poor

Halima was born in 1973 in Sagante location of Gadamoji division, Marsabit. She got married to Girma when she was 15 years old. Her parents were rich in terms of livestock and had 8 acres of land but her husband was poor when he married her. The only piece of land he owned was the $\frac{1}{4}$ acre plot where Halima lives with her children. Halima's husband became sick and died while in Nairobi. When he was alive he used to send money to them every month and she and her children lived comfortably. After her husband's death life has never been the same again, she had nothing except the plot. She has four children, the first born is a boy aged 14 years and the last born is a girl aged 2 years. Three of her children are going to primary school thanks to the free primary education. Due to the difficulties she was facing in raising her children alone, Halima approached the community elders for assistance. They allocated her a small plot next to the community borehole where she plants kales, which she sells to support her children. She pays no rent on the plot but she has to pay for the water used. She sells her kales at Marsabit market and she makes 1 trip per week with average sales of KShs. 600 per trip. She says that though she works alone on the plot she is increasing the output of the crop. Halima belongs to Dirib Gombo women group and she is one of the founder and committee members. The group grows kales and buys iron sheets to roof members' houses. The group members assist one another in times of distress and sickness by contributing some money and advancing modest loans.

Halima says that when a person does not have land and livestock then they are poor. One is considered better off if they have 8-10 acres of land and 15 - 20 heads of cattle. When poverty strikes it first affects the mother first because children are much closer to the mother and she has to fend for them. She thinks that people are better off today because they have more knowledge and they can improve their living standards if they got the right opportunities. In addition communities get assistance from projects (NGOs)

that could give goats, cows, and oxen for ploughing. After the animals give birth one gets milk, which they can sell if they have a problem of money. However only very few people are likely to benefit from such donations and if they do not work for themselves they are not likely to get out of poverty. It is important for people to use the knowledge they have acquired if they want to benefit individually. They can use the skills and knowledge to grow crops like miraa, kales, or burn charcoal. In the past people could escape poverty if the clan or relatives supported them but they did not have knowledge and skills to enable them remain out of poverty. Today if somebody is faced with hunger they will go to a big town to look for bread rather than depend on support of relatives, which is not forthcoming as it used to be. To escape poverty both parents and children have to work hard and contribute to household welfare through collective effort. Educating children is a way of getting out of poverty but only if the child gets employment so that s/he could assist other family members. But it is important for the parents to meet the basic needs of the family.

When people become poor today it takes them more time to come out of poverty because the cost of living is very high and what one can earn is low. For example if one works as a farm hand it is difficult to eradicate poverty. Drought and cattle raiding are the primary risks that drive people into poverty, for the latter there has been some improvement due to security provided by the government. There are limited mechanisms to cope with shock, in the past people depended on the goodwill of others but now one can only do this by putting more effort in farming to ensure they have enough food to eat and something to sell to get some money. Usually it is the parents who have access to these risk coping strategies.

Land use patterns have changed over the last ten years and people are using different cultivation methods and growing crops that they have learnt from others. Bananas have disappeared due to destruction by elephants while for pyrethrum it is due to lack of skills and unsuitable weather. Miraa and kales have emerged as income generating crops. For livestock the cows have reduced the milk because there are not enough grasses because of little rainfall. People are now keeping camels because they are less expensive; they need little water and grass, and can feed on trees (browse) unlike cattle, which depend on grass.

The watering point is the most important natural resource; water is life, she depends on it to grow kales and miraa, which she sells to make a living. Soils are also important because that is where crops, grass, and trees are grown. However the soils have become poorer because of higher population, which leads to more frequent use while animals and cutting of trees for charcoal burning lead to increased soil erosion.

There are groups that are registered such as the water users association, which manages the borehole, women and youth groups that are growing vegetables for income generation. Another group of women operates a maize mill. Informal groups include those that are based on clans or families/friends who support one another when there is a calamity e.g. sickness or death.

Case study 9c: Fatuma Abata: poor – poor (increase)

She was born in 1961 at Sagante location of Gadamoji division in Marsabit district. She said that when she grew up her parents had 30 heads of cattle and 7 acres of land and they lived a better life. When Fatuma got married to Abata in 1980 they got 2 cows from her parents and these increased to 5 after 6 years. Thereafter 3 of the cattle died during a severe drought. Of the two cows that remained one was sold so that the family could buy food while the other was sold to meet school fees expenses for Abata's brother. After the drought there was a good rain season and their crop of maize and beans performed very well. They sold part of the harvest and with the proceeds bought oxen for ploughing. However life turned around when Fatuma's husband turned into a drunkard. Later he sold the oxen and the land, left her with the children and disappeared to Nairobi. Fatuma and her children were left homeless and the state of her poverty worsened. She had no land. She has six children, first is a girl aged 16 years, and the last also a girl aged 5 years. Out of these, 2 are in nursery school and 3 in primary school. The second born girl who is 13 years old is not in school. She assists her mother to look after the younger children, cook, fetch water, and firewood when the latter is away. Since she had no land or livestock Fatuma started burning and selling charcoal to cater for her children. She sacrificed a lot and after a tough struggle she made some savings from charcoal trade and bought a small ($\frac{1}{4}$ -acre) plot in Boru Haro village where she built a mud and thatch house and has stayed here for 6 years. Since she had no land to cultivate she approached one of the elder family members who allowed her to plant crops without having to pay for the land. Because of drought and poor soils she was only able to get 2-3 bags of maize, sometimes none.

By default Fatuma is now the head of the household playing the role of both the father and mother, it is very difficult for her. She would like to educate all her children but the level of her poverty does not allow and she says her progress in life is negative. She says that in the past livestock produced more meat and milk because of good pastures and water, as there was plenty of rainfall all the year. The land produced enough maize and beans because the soils were good and fertile soil and rains came every season.

Fatuma belonged to two groups: 1. Catholic women group which brings women to pray together, clean the church and assist one another and the needy or disabled. 2. Dirib Gombo livestock group which Community Education Concern (CEC) an NGO initiated. Their activities include assisting one another with oxen for ploughing. During drought the project would buy weaker animals, slaughter them and distribute the meat to members of the group. The project also organized workshops to teach people about development. As at the time of the interview the project had stopped its interventions.

Fatuma has experienced poverty, which she blames on her husband who sold their land and had them chased away. Though she felt discouraged and demoralized she is determined to go on with her difficult life. Most of her clan

members were in a similar poverty situation. To her, poverty means being an orphaned child, being single or widowed, and having no land or livestock. Indicators of poverty include poor body health, poor condition of the house (sleeping on cartons on the floor). One can be considered better off if they have at least 10 cows. Within a household where everybody depends on the household head, poverty does not differ because when the father is poor likewise the children and the mother will also be poor. The head of the household has to provide for the family and if poverty strikes he is thus affected most, a father can steal or beg to feed his family.

Today more people are in poverty because the population increases over the years. The droughts are more prolonged reducing the wealth status of the community. Lack of enough rain causes hunger and shortage of water. 20 years ago life was very successful compared to today. The land was more productive, there was enough rain, and food was abundant compared to today. The poor were well treated in the past because elders were very strict in their concern and help for poor within the community. People had more sympathy and there was plenty of food to share with those not having enough. The number of wealthy people is fewer compared to the past. Life was easier in the past because there was plenty of food and livestock produced more milk, there was enough meat and blood for consumption. There was good pasture for animals and plenty of rain every season but today the land is exhausted. Elders would intervene to see that the poor were taken care of by the community. Today such interventions are not there and it is hard for the poor get out of poverty. To get out of poverty it is necessary to work hard, have some job, and foster good understanding and cooperation within the family. Educating children is a way out of poverty for if they secure employment they can contribute to family welfare by supporting the parents. Nowadays it takes more time to get out of poverty because it needs a lot of effort and also money, which is not easy to make. The risks that get people to poverty include drought, which kills livestock, cattle raiding, and banditry. It is very difficult to cope with these kinds of shocks.

Changes that have occurred include the disappearance of crops like bananas and pyrethrum while production of maize and beans goes down due to lower rainfall and loss of soil fertility. Miraa, kales, onions, and cassava are crops that are now being grown, the first three for income and the last for food security. Because of drought there is less pasture and water available and this reduces livestock productivity. Calves do not grow as fast. People now keep camels because they are tolerant to drought.

Water and soils are the most important natural resources. The changes that have occurred have been caused by drought and increase in population. People are cutting trees for charcoal burning. In the past people used to move from one place to another but now they don't.

Case study 10c: Solomon Fiseha: Nonpoor – Nonpoor (increase)

Solomon was born 1961 in Sagante location of Marsabit district. He has 8 acres of land that he inherited from his father and he has lived here since 1970. His parents had a good number of cows but one day they lost 200 heads of cattle to Somali raiders leaving them poor. Solomon is married and has 5 children, 4 girls and 1 boy all of who are attending primary school. He keeps livestock and grows crops on his farm. As a government employee he earns a salary, which enables him meet the family needs. They used to live in a grass-thatched house but now he has an iron roof over their head. He is a member of the community health workers, environmental group, and Dirib Gombo farmers group. The health group teaches other community members about hygiene and HIV/AIDS. The farmer group members participate in teaching new knowledge about new farming systems especially on kales and they also construct terraces for control of soil and water conservation on their farms. He sees poverty as lack water for both animals and human use, lack of farming land, being an orphan, being disabled, being a widow or widower, suffering from a long term disease such as HIV/AIDS, and giving birth before marriage (for girls who may be outcasted). To be considered better off one need to have at least 10 -15 cows. But majority are poor, as they have no cattle. Poverty may differ within a household because of preferential treatment based on gender; males are treated better than females in education and inheriting property. When poverty strikes children and women are affected most.

There is more poverty today compared to the past due to changes in climate, changes in life style (e.g. girls giving birth before marriage), and increase population. In the past the weather was good, there was plenty of rainfall, and prices of goods were good compared to the cost of living. In the past the community treated the poor better and they would get support but today nobody cares for them. There also were more rich people and life was easier. Many things have changed: climate is worse, population has gone up, and there is less water. In the past the poor would get support from the community but that is no longer accessible because more people are poor and there are more natural calamities like drought that affect people in the same way. To escape poverty one has to cultivate a large portion of the farm so that when the weather is friendly they can harvest enough to eat, sell, and store for future use. New technologies and enough water supplies can change the living standards of people. Digging water pans, dams, and conserving soil and water can make life better. Education can make one to escape poverty because an educated person gets knowledge, which makes life easily when s/he gets job. If the parents are successful it would be good for children to follow their strategies. Nowadays it takes more time for people to get out of poverty because of changes in weather, changes the lifestyles, which increase cost of living, and a poor economy.

The primary risks that push people to poverty include disease, drought, banditry, and lack of modern technologies. Although there are more technologies available, the risks of drought and disease are higher and the cost of some of those technologies is beyond the reach of many poor people. Before, the soil was rich in fertility, there was good vegetation cover and enough rainfall, and land was not under intensive cultivation. Bananas have

disappeared due to lower rainfall and destruction by wildlife. Crops that have emerged include *miraa*, kales, and sorghum. The per capita number of livestock has gone down and camels are now part of the production system. Water is the most important natural resource but due to population increase the water situation has worsened. There are several formal and informal groups engaged in different activities such as growing and selling of vegetables, digging water pans, practicing soil conservation and running a nursery, managing water resources, and running merry-go-round activities. Membership to these groups is dependent on the by-laws and constitution guiding their establishment and management.

Case study 11c: Worku Tessema: Poor – poor (increase)

Worku was born in 1946 (57 years old) at Chalbi, in Maikona division of Marsabit district. His parents had about 70 cows, 200 shoats, and 30 camels. He says that they lived a happier life compared to today. In 1973 there was a serious drought (*ola adun dote=eclipse of the sun*) and most of the animals perished. The few that survived were taken away by bandits during what was referred to as *olki roboi* clashes. Since almost everybody was affected there was no support forthcoming from clan members. Such support is known as *hirba busa gonofa* in Boran and is applicable to one when they lose animals to drought, wars, flood, or disease. In 1974, Worku left for Nairobi to look for a job. He got one as a night watchman but he says life was very miserable as he was getting a small pay. To supplement his meager earnings he had to do other casual work during the day. In 1977 he met a girl who had also left Chalbi to look for a job in Nairobi and they got married. In 1980 they moved back to Marsabit and came to where they live today. They wanted to do some farming to see if they could better their lives. They approached one Qonchoro Gurra, who is a relative, to allocate them a piece of land where they could settle. Qonchoro kindly allowed them to settle and in addition gave them food and a milking cow (such a gift is referred to as *loni amesa*). They have lived in this compound up to now, as he has been unable to buy land of his own.

Worku has 9 children, 7 girls and 2 boys. Only one of these has gone to school and none has a job. The first 4 girls are married and he got some cows as bride price (known as *qarat*). He also gave out a gift of a cow to each of his daughters when they got married (known as *loni siqe abaa*). This exchange of gifts helps to cement the relationship between affines. Worku belongs to a group of people who had planned to start growing kales collectively. However due to breakdown of the borehole that was going to be the source of the water and lack of financial capacity, they have been unable to take off. Except this group that he belongs to, and which is inactive, he is not aware of other groups in the area. He has not benefited from any external support. His poverty was caused by loss of animals during the 1965-68 clashes when Somali people and the 1973 drought raided them. It was in 1973 that the Boran people first received relief food from the government in form of maize and precooked porridge. Other clan members were in a similar situation. He is unable to climb out of poverty because of droughts, ethnic clashes, pests, and disease outbreaks (*thadi tachi oyalle*) all of which result to livestock deaths/losses and crop failure. A person who does not own land like him,

livestock, good shelter, and has no reliable food security is a poor one. When poverty strikes it mostly affects the women and children; the man can move elsewhere to look for means of survival and some people do abandon their families.

The number of people living in poverty is higher today compared to the past. In the past the population was low, there were good rains and there was enough food for all. The culture was much respected and the poor received help from the able ones. Today lifestyles have changed; education, religion, and modern day living have destroyed the good things that people used to do to others. The social mechanisms that helped people escape poverty have disappeared and it is therefore more difficult for poor people to get out of poverty. Education can only help one get out of poverty if they have money to bribe to get a job or if they have a godfather. If one has few livestock they cannot meet the expenses for education. He hopes the government effort to provide free education can be extended to all school levels.

Some of the severe problems that have affected people's capacity to live a good life include more frequent droughts such as occurred in 1980, 1992, 1994, and 2000, the clashes between Boran and Burji communities, and the 1997/98 *El Nino* rains which swept away livestock and crops. Wars bring about shocks that are difficult to cope with. Men lose their lives when defending their property. The land is exhausted due to erosion and some crops like bananas have disappeared while kales, sorghum, and miraa have emerged. There are few farmers that are interested in getting better breeds of livestock but the knowledge is limited. For people with livestock, pastures and water are very important natural resources while soils are important for growing crops and trees.

Case study 12c: Tesfaye Abate: Nonpoor – Nonpoor (increase)

Tesfaye was born in 1965 during the worst period of war known as *olki roboi*. Salo Sabelo, who led Somali raiders in invading the Boran, led the war. Tesfaye's family had about 10 cows and 1 donkey and they were all taken. Many people were killed and livestock taken away. A lot of people were left poor and some had to live in the bush to save their lives. Tesfaye has gone to school up to form 4. He is married and they have 3 children; only the first-born is going to nursery school. Tesfaye is an employee of the government in the general service police unit. He has no land of his own and still lives in his father's compound. He has 5 cows and 10 shoats; he bought 2 of the cows and his father gave the other 3. He belongs to Dirib Gombo livestock group, which was initiated by CEC. Their activities include trading in livestock and they contribute KShs. 100 each per month, which they save. This money is used to help members when they are in need and they can borrow small loans. He knows of only 1 other organized group (Malka Lakose women group) but people work collectively during weeding, harvesting, and shelling maize. His family has gone through a period of poverty after they lost their livestock in 1973 drought and most of his clan members were in a similar situation. His salary has helped him to climb out of a worse state of poverty and he says that majority of the people in the community are poor.

For Tesfaye, poverty means having no property and being in an unhealthy state of mind. Some indicators of poverty are poor shelter, lack of sufficient food, poor clothing, no livestock, and no land. When poverty strikes, women are most affected; men can migrate to urban centers to look for other alternatives while mothers and children remain at home with little to do to make a living. In the past, people were relatively better off because they used to support one another. Poverty is increasing and the poor get treated worse than in the past. New strategies include sending children to school so that they can get an education and hopefully get a job or be able to make informed decisions on their lives. But educating children has been a struggle because of the high expenses. If the father is successful it would be good for children to follow his example but then children can become rebellious against their parents. When one becomes poor it takes more time to get out of that poverty because people do not help as they used to do. Risks that push people into poverty are ethnic clashes like those that occurred between Boran and Burji communities in 1994 and raids such as those between Boran and Rendille. Due to drought many Borans moved from Marsabit to Isiolo district and some to Ethiopia. As they moved to Isiolo the Rendille and their livestock stolen also raided them.

Cropping patterns have changed with bananas and sweet potatoes disappearing. People who live near water points (borehole) can grow kales and *miraa* (*Khat*). Wildlife, especially elephants, destroys crops and there is no compensation so this contributes to poverty. New adaptations include keeping camels and poultry. Soils are important for supporting crops, pasture, and trees but due to continuous cropping they are exhausted. There is little or no addition of manure or fertilizers to improve soil fertility so productivity is declining. Lifestyles are changing and many good aspects of culture have been abandoned in favor of religion.