

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF SELF HELP GROUPS TO
HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY IN KAKAMEGA CENTRAL
DISTRICT, KENYA**

Wanjala Eric Wekesa

MMUST Library



1204 0475

040475

A thesis submitted in Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Science in Disaster Management and Sustainable Development of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.



JUNE 2012



MMUST LIBRARY

DECLARATION

This thesis is my own original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University or any other award.

Signature: Eric

Date: 4/07/2012

Eric Wekesa Wanjala

CDS/G/28/08

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology a thesis entitled “**The Contribution of Self Help Groups to Household Food Security in Kakamega Central District, Kenya**”.

Prof. Jacob W. Wakhungu

Date: 4/07/2012

Prof. Jacob W. Wakhungu,

Department of Disaster Management and Sustainable Development,

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

P.O. BOX 190-50100,

KAKAMEGA

040475

Dr. John F. Obiri

Date: 4/07/2012

Dr. John F. Obiri,

Department of Disaster Management and Sustainable Development,

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

P.O. BOX 190-50100,

KAKAMEGA



ABSTRACT

Food security is the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals, which seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by the year 2015. Despite Kakamega Central District having so many SHGs, studies have shown that food insecurity was on the rise. The study examined the contribution of SHGs to household food security by comparing the food security status between members and non members of SHGs. A survey was carried out to establish the factors that enhance the effectiveness of Self Help Groups, constraints faced by SHGs as well as opportunities available for SHGs in their efforts to enhance food security. The study was conducted amongst 150 Self Help Groups operating within Kakamega Central District. Purposive sampling was used in selecting Kakamega Central District and key informants while multistage and random sampling were used in selecting households of self help group members and non-members. The correlation and cross-sectional survey research designs were employed. Data on food among Self Help Group members and non members was collected using pre-tested semi-structured questionnaires. Focus Group Discussions were also used and involved members of the self help groups in order to understand the problems and opportunities faced by SHGs. Interview guides were used to collect data from key informants from the Social Services Department of Kakamega Central District. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used in the analysis of data with Analysis of Variance being used to test association of self help group membership and household food security. A Household Dietary Diversity Score, which is a proxy measure for food access was calculated for each household. The findings revealed that the factors that influence the effectiveness of SHGs were commitment and unity among members, transparency and good leadership, availability of funds and sound planning and managerial skills. The study established that members of Self Help Groups were more food secure as compared to non members. The study established that the constraints facing Self Help Groups were inadequate funds, lack of adequate knowledge and necessary skills to run Self Help Groups, lack of group cohesion as a setback to members' progress, lack of transparency and poor leadership. Opportunities for SHGs included availability of loans and grants from micro-finance institutions and Department of Gender and Social Development respectively, which were not fully utilized. The study recommends that there is need for the Department of Gender and Social Development to organise trainings to equip Self Help Groups members with adequate skills and knowledge necessary for running Self Help Groups. There is also need for the non members to be sensitized on the contributions of SHGs, so that they enroll and participate in SHGs activities to boost food security in Kakamega County. Factors that encourage Self Help Groups effectiveness like commitment and unity among members, transparency and good leadership, availability of funds, sound planning and managerial skills should be enhanced through capacity building of the members.