

**The United Republic of Tanzania**  
**President's Office – Planning and Privatization**



**The 2002/3 Tanzania Participatory Poverty Assessment**

**Site Report for:**

-----

**Iwungilo Village**  
**Njombe District, Iringa Region**

**March, 2002**

**Released by the**  
**Economic and Social Research Foundation**



## **DISCLAIMER**

This Site Report has been issued by the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) in its capacity as Lead Implementing Partner for the TzPPA.

The Report represents the views of local people engaged in the research process and PPA Research Team members. As such, the Report does not represent the official views of ESRF or the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania.

All reference should be acknowledged.

For clarification or further information about the TzPPA, please contact ESRF at:

51 Uporoto Street

P.O. Box 31226

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Phone: 022-2760260

Email: [ppa@esrf.or.tz](mailto:ppa@esrf.or.tz)

or search the TzPPA WebSite at:

<http://www.esrftz.org/ppa>

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>ACRONYMS.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE TANZANIA PPA PROCESS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 OBJECTIVES AND SUBJECT .....	2
1.3 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	3
1.3.1 <i>Ensuring Diversity</i> .....	4
1.3.2 <i>Positive Inquiry</i> .....	4
<b>2.0 THE RESEARCH SITE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 SITE SELECTION PROCESS.....	6
3.2 DATA COLLECTION.....	6
<b>4.0 KEY PRELIMINARY FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 THE CONCEPT OF VULNERABILITY .....	8
4.1.1 <i>Experiences and Perceptions on Poverty and Vulnerability</i> .....	8
4.1.2 <i>Perception on the relationship between poverty and vulnerability</i> .....	9
4.1.3 <i>Most vulnerable social groups</i> .....	10
4.2 CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF VULNERABILITY .....	11
4.2.1 <i>Environmental Causes and Consequences</i> .....	11
4.2.2 <i>Livelihoods and Vulnerability</i> .....	13
4.2.3 <i>Economic Reforms</i> .....	16
4.2.4 <i>Access to Quality Social Services</i> .....	18
4.2.5 <i>Good Governance</i> .....	18
4.2.6 <i>Social Power</i> .....	22
4.2.7 <i>HIV/AIDS</i> .....	22
<b>5.0 COPING MECHANISMS.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>6.0 COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>7.0 CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>30</b>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This report has been an output of concerted cooperation from various individuals and institutions. The research team finds it unkind if this report goes without acknowledging contribution rendered to it by staff of the Njombe District Executive Director in the whole process.

In particular, the team wishes to extend its appreciative acknowledgments to Mr. Haule (Community Development Officer) for his insightful facilitation; notwithstanding enthusiastic community member in Iwungilo Village for participating full in the process.

### Team Members

Patrick S. Ngowi

Fabia Shundi

Flora Protas

Amani Manyelezi

Justine Mdemu

Michael Haule – District Based Research Partner (CDD, Njombe)

## ACRONYMS

CAC	-	Calcium of Ammonia
DED	-	District Executive Director
FHHH	-	Female Headed Households
PPA	-	Participatory Poverty Assessment
TBA	-	Traditional Birth Attendant

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research site was selected by the Njombe district council staff, based on the following criteria: environmental stress, good accessibility, reliable rainfall, unimodal rainfall pattern and cash-crop growing. Iwungilo village in Iwungilo ward, Igominyi division was therefore identified for fieldwork.

Various Participatory methodology tools were used for data gathering. Triangulation and verification of contextual information was done through public meetings, discussions with key informants and review of secondary sources, particularly district official documents.

Sampling of the research population was done in line with the key categories of vulnerable people and livelihoods as outlined in the research agenda. However, out of the community demand, small-scale business people, rural-based formal employees and small-scale gold prospectors were added in the list of vulnerable groups.

The research found that villagers in Iwungilo perceive vulnerability as a condition which makes an individual and household belonging to a certain social group or livelihood susceptible to certain dangers more easily than others. Each social and livelihood group met indicated to be vulnerable in some ways. In general, vulnerability was perceived as a result of poor health, exclusion from decision-making, and limited access and control of means of production, market and technology. Elderly people, children and female headed household were considered to be particularly more vulnerable not only because of their very nature of being old, small and single but also the multiple roles currently undertaken by these groups like caring for grandchildren, child labour and inability to single-handedly take care of fatherless family. However, at Iwungilo setting, female-headed households considered themselves to be better off than households under polygamy where fathers'/husbands' dominance control labour and proceeds of wives and children.

The major environmental causes of vulnerability in this community are: declining soil fertility and moisture, late-starting rains as well as a few natural disasters including impact of locust infestation (1942), frost action (1975) and El Nino phenomenon (1998).

Although farming is the major economic and subsistent livelihood in the community, child labour, petty trading, gold mining, casual labour and domestic work are also exercised, as an alternative or supplementary activity to farming. Youths have wider options to engage in these livelihoods. However, female youths have limited options as they cannot acquire and own land. It was also found that, due to economic hardship, some community members engage in such hazardous and illegal livelihoods as prostitution, theft and marijuana cultivation.

On economic reforms, community members perceive removal of subsidies from agricultural inputs, social services and encouraging free market economy, as exposing them to vagaries of profit motives of private operators and much stronger bigger farmers. The collapse of cooperatives following retreat from socialist principles has also left farmers operating without a common front to safeguard their interests. In particular, the sick, the elderly, orphans, children and women are more vulnerable because of their limited engagement and access to expensive farming techniques / inputs and social services.

In terms of governance process, the community members find themselves vulnerable, especially when the local government enforces such policies and laws governing taxation, financing education and environmental conservation. Bad planning and excessive uses of cohesive forces to enforce the laws and policies, subject the people in physical abuse, deprivation of human dignity and livelihood as well as exploitation of the meager resources they have. Due to poverty, accepting to be put in custody and fleeing away have been common options among villagers in attempt to deal with this situation.

High prevalence of HIV/AIDS is a silent truth in the village, surrounded by myths, cover-ups and ignorance on causes, spread and symptoms of the epidemic. Exclusion is also a case leaving immediate relatives shouldering the burden of caring for the sick. Low education level and excessive drinking behaviour are the apparent factors that increase incidents of unprotected sex in the village. Provision of better economic environment, compulsory announcement of HIV/AIDS status of individuals and provision of support to affected families were cited as policy recommendations for the government.

In attempt to cope with natural and man-made shocks, the community has evolved through a set of mechanisms that stop, minimize or mitigate against the impact of such shocks. These include: wetland cultivation, communal 'mgowe' work, land fallowing and migrating away from the village.

There are many viable policy recommendations advanced by the community, which will reduce their vulnerability. They can be summarized as follows:

***Environment:***

- Undertaking adequate research on agricultural, forestry and veterinary innovations and inputs before releasing than to the market. This will minimize negative effects on human as well as indigenous flora and fauna.
- Harmonizing current wetland conservation efforts with indigenous environmental knowledge in order to sustain both wetland cultivation and water conservation in the area.

***Livelihoods:***

- Provision of small grants and loans for disabled and elderly that are easy to run and yield fast return to ensure them a livelihood.
- Streamlining and regulating recruitment of domestic services to avoid harassment and exploitation.
- Upholding remuneration packages of rural- based civil servants on account of their right to decision on deductions from their incomes and rightful income.
- Reviewing employment of village executives with a view of instituting reliable and remuneration system.

***Good Governance:***

- Making tax collection process flexible to accommodate income seasonality and differentials in the community.
- Increasing efforts to curb corruption among civil servants especially in the government hospitals through increased salaries.
- Exempting disabled and orphaned heads of household from paying taxes.

***Economic reforms:***

- Restoration of subsidies on farm inputs, especially fertilizers and insecticides to enable farmers afford them.
- Streamlining crop marketing to stop exploitation of farmers through manipulated market information.



## **1.0 OVERVIEW OF THE TANZANIA PPA PROCESS**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Institutions committed to poverty reduction must have ideas about why it occurs, why it persists and how it can be overcome to guide their work. Indeed, they have always operated on the basis of specific theories about poverty that reflect their understanding of cultural, social and economic realities.

Since the second half of the 1980s, public institutions have developed increasingly sophisticated multi-topic surveys as their preferred means to measure, analyze and learn about poverty. In contrast with single-topic surveys (such as Employment, Income and Expenditure Surveys), these multi-topic Household Surveys are designed to generate information on a wide range of issues intimately linked to household welfare. At the same time, private development aid institutions and, to a lesser extent, academic institutions were rapidly pioneering a “participatory approach” to developing information and understanding about poverty.

In their current forms, both methodologies involve poor people in the production of data. The primary difference between participatory and survey-based research is that the former systematically involves poor people in the analysis of its findings. It is this analysis, as much as the raw data, which is then synthesized to inform pro-poor policies.

Some of the advantages to Participatory Policy Research are obvious. First, data analysis does not depend on speculation by urban elites about the conditions faced by poor people. Instead, it is the result of poor people – the “everyday experts on poverty” – reflecting on, theorising about, debating and explaining the world in which they live. Second, Participatory Policy Research contributes to social democratization by engaging poor people in policymaking processes.

On the basis of these characteristics, the Government of Tanzania has decided to make Participatory Policy Research, in the form of Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs), a routine part of its Poverty Monitoring System.

The 1<sup>st</sup> PPA Cycle began in January 2002 and will run through December 2003. A Consortium composed of the following fifteen institutions is implementing the PPA:

1. The President’s Office, Planning and Privatization (PO-PP)
2. The Ministry of Finance (MoF)
3. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)
4. Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC)
5. The Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)

6. Concern for Development Initiatives in Africa (forDIA)
7. The Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Dar es Salaam
8. Maarifa ni Ufunguo
9. Women's Research and Documentation Project (WRDP)
10. Action Aid, Tanzania
11. Pastoralists and Indigenous NGOs Forum (PINGOs)
12. African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF)
13. CARE International, Tanzania
14. Concern Worldwide, Tanzania
15. Save the Children, UK.

ESRF is the Lead Implementing Partner. As such, it is responsible for coordinating and facilitating the Consortium's activities.

The 2002/3 PPA is being conducted in thirty sites chosen through a rigorous process (involving numerous stakeholders) of "purposeful sampling." Sites are located in every Regions of mainland Tanzania, including:

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Bagamoyo District   | 16. Manyoni District   |
| 2. Chunya District     | 17. Mbulu District     |
| 3. Dodoma Rural        | 18. Meatu District     |
| 4. Handeni District    | 19. Muleba District    |
| 5. Igunga District     | 20. Mwanza District    |
| 6. Ilala District      | 21. Newala District    |
| 7. Iringa Urban        | 22. Njombe District    |
| 8. Kibondo District    | 23. Nkasi District     |
| 9. Kigoma Rural        | 24. Rufiji District    |
| 10. Kilosa District    | 25. Same District      |
| 11. Kinondoni District | 26. Simanjiro District |
| 12. Kyela District     | 27. Singida District   |
| 13. Lindi Rural        | 28. Songea Rural       |
| 14. Muheza District    | 29. Tanga Urban        |
| 15. Makete District    | 30. Tarime District    |

## **1.2 Objectives and Subject**

The first Stakeholders' Workshop for the PPA Process was held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2001 in the Courtyard Hotel, Dar es Salaam. Representatives from Government, donor institutions and civil society organizations attended, discussed and debated the shape to be taken by the PPA Process in Tanzania. Their conclusions, in combination with Government's prior expectations, led to the formation of specific goals. These are:

- Enhancing, through in-depth description and analysis, research participants and policymakers’ understanding of key poverty issues.
- Exploring the (a.) different and sometimes competing priority needs of poor people, (b.) likely impact of policies and (c.) tradeoffs and potential compromises between diverse interests in order to develop ‘best bet’ recommendations for poverty alleviation.
- Facilitating the constructive engagement of civil society in pro-poor policymaking processes.

Each PPA Cycle will focus on a particular subject, or “Research Theme,” strategically selected to contribute timely information to key policy debates. The 1<sup>st</sup> PPA Cycle focuses on “vulnerability” due, amongst other reasons, to its immense impact on people’s well-being and capacity to rapidly erode improvements made by the PRSP. The working definition adopted by the PPA (2002/3 cycle) understands vulnerability as – ‘the susceptibility of individuals, households and communities to becoming poor or poorer as a result of events or processes that occur around them’. More specifically, the study is concentrating on:

- The concept of “vulnerability” and who is vulnerable.
- The forces that make people vulnerable and lead to (further) impoverishment.
- “Coping mechanisms” at individual, household and community levels.

### **1.3 Methodological Considerations**

Many aspects of the 2002/3 PPA Methodology – including its core beliefs, principles and methods – are typical of participatory research. For example, the PPA’s methodology is founded upon:

- The belief that ordinary people are knowledgeable about, and are capable of particularly reliable and insightful analysis of their own life-circumstances.
- The principle that all people – irrespective of age, gender, level of formal education, etc. – have a fundamental right to participate in informing the decisions that shape their lives.
- The use of proven methods, such as Seasonal Calendars, Venn Diagrams, etc., to facilitate the meaningful involvement of people in the research process

Nonetheless, the 2002/3 PPA’s methodology is less than typical in:

- The number and nature of steps taken to ensure that a wide variety of people are aware of encouraged and supported to participate in the research process.
- Its focus on people’s “successes” and “strengths” rather than “problems” and “weaknesses”

These innovative directions are elaborated upon below:

### ***1.3.1 Ensuring Diversity***

Participatory Poverty Assessments and participatory planning processes (exemplified by PRA and PLA) are very different. Though they are practical expressions of the same beliefs and values, their respective roles in poverty alleviation imply distinct methodological necessities and forms. For example, the goal of PRA/PLA is to generate effective, locally owned action plans. As a result, the methodology places a lot of emphasis on Village Assembly-sized meetings in which a critical degree of consensus is fashioned around a specific plan of action. In the process of pursuing this worthwhile goal, marginal perspectives and agendas for change are frequently left behind.

PPAs do not need to develop “community consensus.” In order to fulfill their mandate and contribute to well-informed, effective policies, PPAs must learn about the range of conditions people face as well as their concerns, competing priorities, success stories, etc. Instead of determining a single course of action, PPAs can – on the basis of such rich information – recommend hundreds. This is an ideal outcome that would significantly undermine the likelihood of PRA or PLA exercises leading anywhere at all. Therefore, the 2002/3 PPA Methodology reflects many decisions and incorporates many techniques to access the breadth of circumstances, experiences and lessons learnt by ordinary people.

### ***1.3.2 Positive Inquiry***

During the PPA Training Programme, researchers discussed the pros and cons of various approaches to participatory research and concluded that they needed to make something new something that meets Tanzania’s needs, answers Tanzanians’ concerns and belongs to them. This methodology-in-the-making includes:

- Focusing on uncovering people’s “success stories” rather than producing lists of urgent problems to be solved by Government. With regards to the 2002/3 PPA, this implies (a.) learning about effective coping strategies employed (now and in the past) at individual, household and community levels and (b.) exploring how Government can encourage, facilitate, buttress and complement grassroots initiatives to diminish vulnerability.
- Helping research participants see themselves as key actors in poverty alleviation rather than dependent upon the action of others.
- Helping research participants develop a better understanding of the circumstances they and their neighbours face.
- Creating useful information for policymakers operating at village, district, national and international levels.
- Avoiding the creation of false expectations by using methods better suited to the participatory production of local action plans

## 2.0 THE RESEARCH SITE

Njombe district is located on the Southern highlands between 8.8° and 9.8° south of Equator, and between 34.5° and 35.8° longitudes. To the south, Njombe is bordered by Ludewa district and Ruvuma region while Morogoro region borders the district to the east. Makete district and Mbeya region border the district to the west and northwest respectively. Mufindi district is the north-most neighbour of Njombe district.

The district has a land area covering 10,242 square kilometers, which is equivalent to 1,024,100 hectares. Out of this area, 768,074 hectares are utilized for crop cultivation and animal grazing. The land area of this district lies between 1000 and 2000 meters above sea level. Its topography can be divided into two main zones, namely, the high and lower lands. The highlands are the continuation of the Livingstone Ranges, with undulating hills and plateaus while the lower lands borders the Great Rift Valley.

The highland zone experiences reliable rainfall between 100 – 1000 and humid temperatures. Evergreen plantations of timber forests, fruit trees, grasslands and non-timber trees, also cover most of the land. The lower zone is hot, dry and experiences unreliable rainfall. Its vegetation is mainly thorny bush used for firewood and building purposes.

Major ethnic groups in the district are the Wabena, Wakinga and Wahehe. In 1988, the total number of district population was 315,976. At the estimated growth rate of 2.7%, by 1996 the population was 384,835, out of which 176,888 were males and 205,947 were females. This population is served by 205 primary schools (one being a special school for the deaf), 12 secondary schools and 63 health facilities out of which three are hospitals.

On the other hand, Iwungilo village is located some 37km southwest of Njombe town. The village is bordered by such Uliwa and Ngalanga villages to the south, Utengule to the east and Igoma to the north. It has a population of 1,827, out of which 505 are children under five years. Agriculture is the main livelihood engaging almost all the villagers. Other livelihood strategies include petty trading, casual labour and paid employment.

Maize and Irish potatoes are the main food crops grown. Irish potatoes, wheat, peas, beans, pyrethrum, coffee, tea and timber are also sold out as cash crops.

## **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Site Selection Process**

Prior to the arrival of the team, different departmental staff in the district, namely the Community Development, Agriculture and the office of the District Executive Director (DED) were involved in the site selection process. Iwungilo ward, Igominyi Division was selected, then the Ward officials were requested to select a village that tallies with the criteria that were set for Njombe district, namely:

- (i) Environmental stress
- (ii) Good access (accessibility)
- (iii) Reliable rainfall
- (iv) Unimodal rainfall pattern
- (v) Cash crop growing area.

Governed by the above criteria, Iwungilo village was selected as site No. 1 for the PPA 2002 Farming-based Livelihood Group 1.

### **3.2 Data Collection**

Participatory methodology was mainly used during data collection process, adapting different tools depending on circumstances. Some of the frequently used tools were: focus group discussions, transect walk, diagrammatic analyses, community meetings, observations, trend-line analyses, community calendars, unit analyses and reviewing secondary information. Some of the data collection and analysis methods and tools were not used due to circumstances such as frequent rainfalls, large turn-up of participants vs. small venues to accommodate them. Use of vernacular language also made it difficult to use participatory diagrammatic tools as would mean a lot of time for translation.

Apart from information collection some of the above mentioned tools were used to facilitate probing, discussion and analysis in line with concepts in the research agenda. Also issues of advocacy and influence rose during discussions.

Triangulation and verification of contextual information was done through village and district feedback meetings. Sampling was done based on the key categories of vulnerable people and livelihoods as outlined in the research agenda. In particular, the following livelihoods and social groups were met:

- Small scale farmers
- Elderly people
- People with disabilities

- Female heads of household
- Youths and school children
- Children heads of household
- HIV affected people and orphans
- Small scale business people
- Formal employees, and
- Small scale gold prospectors.

In total, about 900 people were met in 19 meetings conducted at regional, district and village levels during the 13 days of research

## **4.0 KEY PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

### **4.1 The Concept of Vulnerability**

#### ***4.1.1 Experiences and Perceptions on Poverty and Vulnerability***

According to villagers' perceptions, vulnerability is the condition, which makes individuals and communities susceptible to certain dangers more easily than others. As to the relationship between poverty and vulnerability, individuals and groups, Iwungilo villagers had various experiences and perceptions. Generally factors surrounding people's livelihoods and circumstances were seen to be dependent on factors, which were uncertain, or beyond individual/community control, thus making people's lives doubtful.

Vulnerability was generally perceived to be a result of:

#### **➤ Poor Health**

This limits one's ability to work in a sustained manner so that livelihood activities and outputs declined leading to lower social-economic position and poverty. The community also pointed out that disabilities, incapacity and decline of physical well being and advanced chronological age are associated with this category.

#### **➤ Limited access to means of production**

Under this factor came issue of land as caused by population pressure, unequal distribution among individuals and families, power relations between generations and between men and women.

#### **➤ Exclusion from decision making**

This affects women and children in particular, and the general village in such issues of family resources and governance, respectively. There was general feeling of lack of democracy and transparency in the manner decisions and resources are made and allocated across people based on their age and sex. This leads to disempowerment and therefore difficulty in advancing oneself.



#### ***4.1.2 Perception on the relationship between poverty and vulnerability***

##### **➤ The Regional Commissioner of Iringa**

In a courtesy, call at the Regional Commissioner's office, he generally considered that local communities primary concern over low food production is on account of unaffordable farm inputs. This made them vulnerable to food insecurity and low-income poverty. According to him, people's concerns are currently based on basic needs and can not listen to any other campaigns like HIV/AIDS and other more "advanced" activities; otherwise they remain at the same level with a livelihood of sliding more into poverty.

##### **➤ Youths**

This social group experience is both vulnerability and prone to becoming poor when their chance for education is jeopardized, and they do not have much say over land used for production. At the same time they are required to pay development levy at a time when they have no money and are required to work in their farms. So they undertake casual labour thus dividing their attention. This leads to more poverty.

##### **➤ Female youths**

This category include both girls and single-mothers. They are vulnerable and prone to becoming even poorer because they cannot be allowed to own family land. Even adult female youths with children cannot have the right to be given family land to farm independently. They get treated like children, parents (especially fathers) appropriate their labour and time. They do not have the opportunity to consolidate their economic position for their own well-being. If they want to get away from this situation, they have to move away from home and start from scratch. This needs more effort and time, thus limiting their chances for uplifting their position. In most cases they become poorer.

##### **➤ School children**

School children perceived their primary responsibility as that of going to school and developing themselves for future life. Practically, instead, school children find themselves faced with other responsibilities that drive them to engaging in casual labour and petty trade to augment family income. School children also lack essential items for their schooling and so spend more time on petty trading to get cash for school items.

Also family well-being differences influence children's perception of vulnerability. Some times children go to school with poor quality clothes. They feel inferior and lack confidence. Sometimes they do not go to school at all because they do not have shoes and sweaters of the

right colour (which is the part of the uniform), etc. This then reduce their concentration, leading to poor performance.

Such school children therefore, can not advance in education because of hard economic conditions. Those who do well, fail to continue because parents cannot afford to pay for them, thus their poverty is perpetuated and worsened.

#### ➤ **Farmers**

Small-scale farmers generally feel vulnerable because of factors influencing their economic well-being, and are beyond their control, for example;

- They cannot afford fertilizers.
- They cannot control prices, which are often low and uncertain.
- Some of their crops fail to get markets e.g. fruits.
- They have little knowledge of farm inputs or their side effects.

Generally, farmers get low yields, cannot store maize or sometimes they sell staple foods for cash. This leads to seasonal shocks for food and cash. Without any support mechanisms such other shocks as delayed rains or natural disasters are likely to make the community even poorer.

#### ➤ **Mineral Prospectors**

These are basically small-scale prospectors. They experience vulnerability in terms of low business circle and their business is considered illegal. Working tools are also poor and the extraction method is obsolete. Small-scale miners consist mainly of immigrant people from outside the area, with people from such ethnic groups as Wakinga, Sukuma, Chaga, Hehe and Wabena making the bigger number.

#### ➤ **Female-headed households**

This social group is overburdened because of multiple roles that they have to play. This make their lives hard leaving no chance for advancement for themselves or their children.

### **4.1.3 Most vulnerable social groups**

Although all groups considered themselves vulnerable, consistency in information sharing supported the notion that the following groups are particularly more vulnerable:

## **The elderly**

In addition to their weak and deteriorating physical condition they have limited capacity to pursue agriculture and other livelihoods requiring strength and application of new technologies (e.g., application of fertilizers). Among other responsibilities, these elderly engage in the following:

- Looking after grand children, some of them being HIV/AIDS orphaned.
- Cultivating in the wetlands (*vinyungu*), although now this alternative is being threatened by reduced soil moisture and regulations restricting cultivation in such areas.

### ➤ **Children**

Some parents, especial fathers, do not take development of children as a human capital seriously. Nurturing of children for responsible adulthood life and responsibilities through education is not considered paramount for their development. As such, poor family-care and environment reduces children's competence and morale to participate in education. So children who generally lack conducive atmosphere will continue to exist in the circle of poverty.

### ➤ **Female-headed households (FHHH)**

These were considered vulnerable because of multiple roles they normally have. But at Iwungilo setting, FHHH were considered to be better than younger wives of polygamous men and their children. While the FHHH could make decisions on their lives, younger wives of polygamous men and their children could not. Male relatives and husbands still could control FHHH labour and proceeds and so make them poorer.

## **4.2 Causes and Consequences of Vulnerability**

### **4.2.1 Environmental Causes and Consequences**

#### **(i) Poor soils**

There has been a concern over poor soils that force people to resort to industrial fertilizers for good crop yields. Ironically, the continued use of the same fertilizers is attributed to damaging soil fertility in the area, due to bad management and application. However, poverty level of the community restricts majority from accessing this agricultural input, and therefore makes this livelihood to be below subsistence level. As such this makes the community to experience food shortages, with little or no cash for other essential needs like education and health services. To them, use of industrial fertilizers is poverty's necessary evil.

**(ii) Declining soil moisture**

Planting of exotic, fast growing tree species and clearance of indigenous tree species has reduced soil moisture/water, both on hinterlands and wetland cultivation areas. This has resulted into increased food shortages and lack of off-season crops, which normally fills the food gap and provides cash. This results in more poverty.

**(iii) Delayed/Erratic Rains**

Rains are expected to start in November/December. But the community has witnessed a rising incidence of delayed rains. This increases the length of the crop maturity period during which people have to wait before harvests are gathered for food and sale for cash. During times of shortage community members, including school children, engage in casual labour, which interfere with normal activities. Children start performing poorly in school and getting affected physically and psychologically. Poor nutrition is common and it affects people's lives, especially children and expecting women.

**(iv) Natural Disasters**

Natural disasters like droughts and floods are rare in the area. The community recalled a few disasters, which occurred:

1942 – locusts, which ate up all crops in fields

1975 – frost, which dried up all green plants

1978 – El Nino rains which made fields very wet and maize turned stunted.

These natural disasters resulted in food shortage especially maize. Villagers coped by eating tubers like sweet and round potatoes, which were not affected by these disasters..

**(v) People Perceptions Regarding Government's Response**

People perceive that the government does not respond to their needs during shocks, because:

(a) Taxes are collected during January – March when communities have no food, money and workload on farmers is highest.

(b) The introduction of regulations restricting cultivation in the wetlands does not enhance people's productivity rather leads to further impoverishment.

**(vi) Seasonality of Vulnerability**

Vulnerability in this community is seasonal in many aspects, but the following aspect is very notable: As people are desperate for money, they are forced to sell the little yields they harvest and therefore subject them to food shortage shortly thereafter. Even when they opt to store the food, a major constraint is lack of storage facilities at village levels. As a coping

strategy, they turn the cereals into local brew for sale. An apparent risk is that communities experience seasonal fluctuations of food availability and prices.

#### **4.2.2 Livelihoods and Vulnerability**

Iwungilo village has different forms of livelihoods, however no specialization was noted, as one individual villager can be involved in more than two livelihoods, one can be a farmer, a prospecting miner and a livestock keeper. Livelihoods in Iwungilo village include: farming/livestock keeping, small businesses, gold prospecting, paid employment, casual labour, lumbering and child labour. Villagers involved in those forms of livelihoods were interviewed and all expressed their concern that they are vulnerable in one way or another and that the degree varies per livelihood and per social group.

##### **(i) Farming Livelihood**

Farming is the major economic and subsistent livelihood in the village. About 99% of villagers are small-scale farmers, owning between 1 and 7 acres of land. Farming as livelihood is affected by a declining trend in production from one crop, season to another due to many factors: The major one being “poor soil” caused by three decades of industrial fertilizers’ use. However, the prices of the same fertilizers have gone up and become unaffordable to small-scale farmers. One 30kg bag of CAC or urea fertilizers is sold at Tsh12,000 in Njombe town. In the village, prices differ depending on transport costs.

Population growth, unequal land distribution and steep slopes have decreased good arable land and put more pressure on the village land. Current efforts to conserve water sources interfere with local wetland cultivators who do not have water rights. This limits them from irrigating and building infrastructures for irrigation.

The generalized legal framework for water sources conservation i.e. demarcating 50 meters from water source and 20 meters from riverbank are not practically realistic. This does not apply to V shaped valleys, as it is difficult to go up to 50 meters from the riverbank, and find the land still suitable for water-fed cultivation.

Inadequate agricultural extension services lead farmers to use old-fashioned farming skills that cause soil erosion, increased loss of soil nutrients and uncontrolled plant diseases.

“We do not know the signs of plant diseases. We just plant by an intuition going by experience, selection of good seeds and farming practices. We cultivate as our ancestors did”, commented one villager.

“In this village there is ‘*HIV/AIDS*’ [unknown potato disease] for our irish potatoes we don’t know how to treat or to deal with it. No market for farm produces, prices are low for maize and irish potatoes”, added another.

## **(ii) Child Labour**

Apart from household-based activity, children engage in farming and cattle keeping as socialization process to “make them future farmers”. Moreover children are engaged in small businesses i.e. selling burns, fruits and casual labour to earn some cash to cater for school and personal needs. In this regard, children travel long distances up to 50km from Iwungilo to Nundu (Njombe-Songea highway) to sell burns and fruits.

Children also work as casual labourers for farm and off farm activities and sometimes during classroom hours. According to them, these activities make them miss classroom session. Also due to life difficulties at home some opt to drop out from school and those who stay on perform poorly and get discouraged. Some statements by teachers are also discouraging:

“It is not my concern whether you fail or you pass. After all, at the end of the month I will get my salary”, lamented some pupils in a group discussion.

Even when they walk long distances to sell fruits, things do not go well all the time. As one pupils sadly said:

“At the market customers normally victimize children by taking their fruits for less amount and sometimes do not pay at all, and we can not do anything”

Children expressed their concern that some of their parent neglect them because either the father is using money for alcohol or marrying second wife thus putting low priority to school needs. Even in household budget, school budget ranks last compared to other household needs. All those above make children vulnerable to becoming illiterate and ultimately becoming poorer.

## **(iii) Small Businesses**

The most common small businesses in the village are maize mills, kiosks and crops middlemen. Villagers involved in this sector complained over high tax rates, poor transport and corruption. They also complained that before starting a business one has to pay for license, income tax, stamp duty and many others and procedures for getting those are so bureaucratic and corrupt.

“Corruption is a silent secret and invisible enemy, it becomes visible if disagreements occurs between the giver and receiver and the picture displayed by the authorities is different: a defaulter...” commented one petty trader.

#### **(iv) Formal Employment**

This involves a small group in the village such as primary school teachers, government employees and religious workers. All of them sighted out some setbacks that make them feel vulnerable and unable to excel in life:

- Heavy workload with low/inadequate salaries
- Difficult working environment
- Frequent compulsory deductions from salaries without their consent, like health insurance
- Working without clear and formal contracts.

Teachers in particular see deductions from salary as affecting their income seriously because they do not see how realistically they can benefit from this medical scheme. They complain that the design of the scheme does not appreciate the fact that not all teachers can access this service at the District Hospital, as most of their workstations are located many kilometers away from the district headquarters. As a teacher at Iwungilo primary school put it:

“If you catch a mild fever, for instance, and you need to utilize the scheme for your treatment, you are supposed to travel 37km to the Kibena district hospital in Njombe. This can cost up to Tsh3500, which could be enough to get a better service at Uwemba catholic hospital, not very far from the village. On top of that you need to spend a full day seeking treatment for such a small problem at Kibena. This makes pupils miss lessons and teacher’s work load increases”.

On the other hand, local village officials indicated that the district authority recruits them with the understanding that the village government’s revenues will be able to raise their salaries. However, in practical sense village income levels do not suffice remunerating them. A Meeting with employed people in the village established clearly that no one has ever received a formal salary in the past two years, notwithstanding their role in collecting hundreds of thousands of shillings from the community as taxes. It was generally agreed that this situation tend to aggravate corrupt practices and mismanagement of funds collected from communities. To be precise one official questioned:

“How can you handle millions of money while your pockets are empty and children are hungry? These contracts are just a sweet-talk. Without proper remunerations, it is difficult to stop corruption and thefts”

#### **(v) Other Forms of Livelihood**

These include gold mining, casual laborers, lumbering, and domestic work (house girls/boys). Although people are engaged in these livelihoods, there was a general agreement that one cannot adequately sustain his/herself using such livelihoods because of the following susceptible conditions:

- Poor measurement for gold.
- Unreliable markets.
- Poor skills (for gold mining).
- Working without contracts.
- Intimidation and discrimination (especially for house-girls/boys).
- Poor security and
- sexual harassment.

#### **(vi) Youth-related Livelihood**

Most of the youth in the village are involved in farming, gold prospecting and mining, casual labour, and small business. Youths as a social group among others, experiences different vulnerable conditions as opposed to other social groups in the village. In particular, most of them do not have enough land for cultivation, the situation is even worse for girls who according to traditions and customs, are not entitled to own lands.

Many other circumstances in the village affect the youths adversely. As most of them lack financial capital and because there is no credit facility for farm inputs, youth opt to engage in gold prospecting and casual labour and moving to town to look for temporary employment.

Also youth are subjected to pay Development Levy. According to the Development Levy Act, the eligible age for paying tax is 18 years old. However, majority of youths at this age are still dependent on their parents. This becomes parental burden when youths fail to meet this public obligation. To avoid such harassment as being locked up, youths decides to escape to towns.

#### **(vii) Illegal Livelihoods**

Villagers revealed that there are people involved in illegal livelihoods, including prostitution, theft and marijuana cultivation. It was argued some people engage in such activities as an alternative means of survival. Generally villagers highlighted that poverty is a major cause and major force for people to engage in illegal livelihoods. People involved in illegal livelihoods are highly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, imprisonment and mental disabilities. This cuts back the community workforce and therefore increases vulnerability to more poverty.

#### **4.2.3 Economic Reforms**

Of recent economic reforms, by way of removal of subsidies from agricultural inputs, social services and open market have been criticized by the community members in Iwungilo as not protecting them. The abrupt decision by the government to liberalize crop market has affected the small – scale farmers who were not prepared for such economic reforms. The indigenous farmers being poor, having no access to market information and not belonging to strong



agriculture cooperatives are exploited by the middlemen who take chance to dominate the marketing process. They feel exposed to vagaries of profit motives of farm-input operators and unfair competition with bigger farmers. As such, the reforms have had more adverse effects than positive impact on the people's lives, making them more vulnerable than ever before.

Unlike the past experiences when the cooperatives used to issue farm inputs on credit, the current practice forces a poor peasant to raise cash to buy expensive fertilizers and insecticides at a time when that cash is highly needed to buy food and school requirements. And when the crops are ready for sale, private buyers, through their middlemen, exploit the farmers by colluding and setting prices themselves. For instance, when Irish potatoes are ripe one common trick used by such businessmen involve supplying gunny bags to the farmers and agree on a price per bag, promising to come with the money some days later. Knowing that the farmer have already harvested and bagged the crop, the businessmen come and pretend not to buy at the old price "because the market prices have gone down". As an old farmer pointed out:

"I spent Tsh.120000 to pay casual labourers, potato seeds, fertilizers and fungicides, but when these businessmen came with their prices, I hardly got Tsh. 100,000. This will never allow me to develop"

Crops that are in low demand e.g. fruits rot on trees because they lack market and processing facilities in the area. Pears and apples are sold at Tsh500 and 1,000 per tin.

The situation is worsened by lack of a farmers association or Cooperatives, thus individual farmers remain powerless and voiceless. The low price of cash crops, the limited and unreliable markets demoralize people from increasing production. Despite of all the problems faced by individual farmers, they are reluctant to engage in re-establishing cooperative unions simply because of the past experiences where the old ones collapsed from mid 1970's due to the following reasons:

- Untrustworthy leaders who engaged in corruption and fraud.
- Farmers not receiving their payments in time or sometimes not paid at all
- Following collapse of socialism

In this regard, the groups most affected are female heads of household and elderly who because of low income and other family responsibilities they find themselves with nothing left to buy costly farm inputs leading to vicious circles of low income and poverty. No application of agriculture inputs results into low yields and low income, thus becoming more vulnerable and poor. The opposite is true for rich farmer and businessmen.

#### ***4.2.4 Access to Quality Social Services***

Iwungilo village lacks health facility. People find themselves spending much of their time and resources going to health facilities in neighboring villages, as far as Uwemba Mission Hospital, about 10km, and Kibena District Hospital in Njombe township (37km). This reduces the time otherwise would have been used for productive work. Also walking long distance endangers people's lives especial pregnant women and elderly. In this regard, sick people become more vulnerable to more sickness when they cannot access such facilities.

Orphans, and especially those without both parents are more vulnerable to becoming more ill, as there is no safety net mechanisms to support them. An alternative medical attention for them is to visit local herbalist or witch-doctors than going to hospital.

Though the cost of treatment in government health facilities is relatively low compared to private facilities, the quality of services provided is extremely low. Corruption precludes poor people from accessing good services.

#### ***4.2.5 Good Governance***

In an ideal situation, good governance constitutes a key component in public decisions and plans. Decision and plans of such issues as taxation, financing education, legal procedures and environmental protection have direct impact on the livelihoods and rights of individuals, social groups and community in general. Critical in this regard is the implementation process, where the principal of transparency, equity and equality become indispensable. Contrary to adherence to this, the eminent possibility is contravention of basic rights of the beneficiaries and abuse of powers vested in the disposal of civil servant.

In the research site, the role of tax, education and environment protection is clearly paramount for the development of individuals and the community at large. During various discussions with different social groups, this was confirmed as people showed concern about the state of social service provision in the area. People are thirsty for good education and healthy environment that can support people's livelihoods. In order to enhance access and availability to such conditions, the role of taxation cannot be overemphasized. However, good governance is paramount to all these.

The research noted serious governance processes that, instead of enhancing community development, subject them to becoming more susceptible to poverty. Actually, laws and by-laws governing taxation, development levy, environment conservation, land, education and crime are used knowingly and sometimes unknowingly, by ward and village leaders in a manner that individuals and the wider community feels terrorized, unprotected and disempowered. The following presentations outline the manner and context in which vulnerability is pronounced.

## **(i) Taxation and Other Revenue Sources**

Development levy is the main direct taxation that individuals contribute to the district revenues. However, all social groups met except schoolchildren raised strong concern over the cohesive and militant process used to collect it. The District council has set March 31st as the deadline for paying the Tshs.3,000 of which delay result into addition of 50%. In the community, the period covering January to March is very difficult in terms of income and food availability. Most households commit every financial income into buying such farm inputs as fertilizers and agro-chemicals.

The farmers see this timing as wrong and exploitative because it does not take cognizance of people's income regime. It becomes more difficult when the deadline is not adhered to and arbitrary arrests become part of the levy collection process. As such young men opt to run away, abandon their farms and families to temporary escape the harassment, as the same will happen when they come back without settling their dues. The District Authority is clear and strict about the deadline, as the DED indicate.

“The Principal Law is very clear, the deadline to pay Development Levy is March 31. This is not negotiable. Those who go contrary to this are law breakers”

In another scenario, ward and village authorities allow one-year grace period from the time of finishing primary school to starting paying development levy. Since majority of children normally begin schooling and finish at age 7 and 14 years respectively, they become eligible to pay the levy at age 16 and 17 contrary to the Principle Law that sets eligibility at the age of 18 years. Elders expressed how it affects them in turn.

“These boys are still so young to make their own income. Instead we are forced to pay for them. If we do not, they get remanded or run away to town”.

Village authorities admitted to use this as a mechanism to control school dropouts but this was refuted in a general community meeting. Discussion with youth also confirmed the use of this mechanism for both school dropouts and school leavers. A community representative to the District feedback workshop surprised the District officials when he said:

“You are happy about the tax collection boom, but you need also to know how it has been collected”

Similar setbacks face small-scales business operators in the area because of multiple taxes and unchecked intimidating behaviors of trade inspections from District Trade Office. Temporary and arbitrary closure and confiscation of business licenses point to the widespread allegation on corruption.

## **(ii) Financing Primary and Secondary Education**

The District council has set an education funding mechanism that supports development of education from nursery to secondary school. The innovation has inspired about 20 other district councils all over Tanzania to “come and learn” about this achievement.

But the research learnt of some improper processes that manifest into what is termed exemplary performance. As one teacher ironically put it:

“The cause is hidden, but the result is known”.

In order to finance this innovation, all eligible taxpayers including women are required to contribute Tsh1,500 annually. For men, the contribution is paid at the same time as development levy. Although there is no deadline for women, the collection process is not different from that of tax collection – arrest and remand. Once remanded at the ward remand, one has to pay for (i) the arrest the fee (Tsh.2000), (ii) night watchman (Tsh.2000 per night) and (iii) bail (Tsh.5000), all without receipts. With the meager and unpredictable income the poor villagers lose precious time and become more vulnerable to abject poverty, and especially those orphans who also take care of fellow orphaned siblings.

Another area of concern in financing education is on school uniform. The District position in this regard requires school to maintain the blue skirt/shorts and white blouse/shirt for boys and girls respectively. In addition, a school committee can decide on a colour of a sweater. A pair of shoes is mandatory but open to any colour. This is a center of confusion, especially when a school committee fails to make informed and participatory decision regarding school uniform for its school.

During various discussions, the concern was not on having a specific uniform, rather the time and mode in which the decision are implemented. For instance when a decision was made in January to have a V – shaped sweater and black shoes, parents had already bought just red sweater and shoes of any type and colour. Adherence to this decision means incurring extra cost, which cost exorbitantly. Failure to meet these cost also results into arbitrary arrest and remand (with the additional costs). As a matter of coping with the situation, a father of many school-going children opt to temporary run away until he gets the required uniform for all children. The Elderly and widows get the same treatment as ordinary people.

## **(iii) Environmental Conservation**

There is a general agreement in the community that over years, there is obvious environmental degradation, marked by low soil productivity and reduced soil water. The past public campaigns to plant trees in the district, emphasized on planting exotic, fast-growing pine trees. Many people complied with this policy, but after twenty years it has been

discovered that the trees suppress growth of indigenous tree species as well as consuming too much soil water. Now the decision has been made by the district to clear the pine trees and plant the indigenous species, namely *Mivengi* and *Midobole*.

The farmers question the implementation of this decision because it does not consider compensation of the loss that they will suffer when they clear immature trees. More over, the farmers see the government decision inconsistent and disempowering. Participation in forms of involving the indigenous knowledge systems was ignored in the past and now the same mistake is also taking place.

#### **(iv) Physical Abuse and Corruption**

The issues of corruption are specifically sensitive as it needs clear evidence that both parties engage in giving and receiving. But discussions with women registered numerous complaints, especially regarding health service provision in the government-owned facilities. The women noted that when a patient is admitted the District Hospital, one must identify a nurse and give some money (between Tshs2,000 and 5,000) so that a patient can get medical attention.

Arbitrary arrest and remanding is another form of physical abuse where corruption is said to dominate. The ward remand, located in the village, is said to bring a lot of discomfort and terror among villagers. small offences such as inability to pay tax on time, drinking during night, inability to buy school uniform and land disputes can result into unspecified remanding time. For instance the research team witnessed 3 boys getting remanded up to three days on alleged attempt to seduce a schoolgirl. Also the ward officials, without medical examination, used to administer whipping to offenders. All these are against the law and the general community links it to gross corruption. One old female head of household told about her experience about that remand cell:

“I failed to meet school requirement for my grand children. I was then summoned to the ward offices. When I arrived they immediately remanded me for one day. The following morning I was asked to pay Tsh5,000, which I paid but no receipt was issued”.

Another young man was remanded for questioning the tax collection process, and then charged at the Magistrate Court. After 18 months of hearing, the case was dropped for lack of evidence.

Such abuses deprive the people of their dignity and important time that is necessary for production.

#### **4.2.6 Social Power**

Women and children noted with concern, exclusion from making decisions about their labour and income at home and in school. Women in polygamous marriage said to be more prone as husbands dictate on the use of household's labour and income without consultation with the wives concerned.

Old people also complained about lack of recognition of their role in moral teaching to the young generation. The young simply referred to them as "old fashioned". However in a general community feedback meeting, there was a general agreement that the role of old people in the community is still very important.

#### **4.2.7 HIV/AIDS**

High prevalence HIV/AIDS is a silent truth in the community. There have been many deaths linked to HIV/AIDS in the village, but no one has ever come out and declared AIDS as a causative source of such deaths. Of course, such symptomatic signs as frequent malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhea, losing weight and mental breakdowns tend to be cited by community members as caused by HIV. There is also a common myth linking outsiders (those coming into the community from distant locations like towns/cities, tea estates and gold mines) as the main carriers of the deadly virus and a "wa muredio" phenomenon, depicting HIV/AIDS as "a disease being talked about on radio". This minimizes the appreciation that the disease stays and spreads within the community, and therefore little protection is taken against further spread.

Stigmatization and exclusion is often a case when there is a suspicion over HIV/AIDS. Except for such small support as relaying information to distant relatives, bringing firewood, offering prayers and little food, the community refrain from the actual care of the sick, leaving the burden on the immediate relatives. The suspected sick people are regarded as "sinners" as the disease is strongly linked with prostitution. As such a visit to a witchdoctor is commonly opted to justify bewitchment in place of HIV/AIDS infections.

When a patient's condition becomes critical, the family again resorts to taking him/her to hospital, but no diagnosis is given out to declare the HIV/AIDS status of the patient. Although there is agreement in the community about some HIV/AIDS-related sick persons in the community, there was no evidence to justify this, and no one could dare face an individual for such information. This was a biggest challenge for the research team. The research, decided to find some information from a few affected individuals who volunteered to share their experiences regarding caring and losing relatives on HIV/AIDS. Some three elderly people volunteered personal accounts, which confirmed the problem a bigger than ordinarily known in the village. For example, Mzee Justin Simime, a former village government leader outlined sicknesses and finally deaths of eleven close relatives, including

own daughter, ex-wife and younger brother's family. Similar stories from the other key informants confirmed the following vulnerability issues:

- households are mostly affected, especially economically because before realizing that the patient is positive they have already used a lot of family's money trying to treat him/her;
- care takers spend significant amount of time in hospital and home, nursing the sick instead of involving themselves in economic activities;
- some of the patients used to provide support for their families in terms of remittances, which is now cut off by the sickness or death;
- some of them also had children so they leave orphans (sometimes already infected) or with other sick parents unable to nurture them;
- HIV/AIDS is not discussed openly in the community and it is still associated with witchcraft;
- doctors, health workers and the community do not reveal the victims of HIV/AIDS (when they are still sick or after their death);
- traditionally, old women men do wash corpses of HIV/AIDS person without any protective gear;
- old traditional birth attendants (TBAs) who support women on labour do it without proper protective gears;
- protective facilities such as condoms are not available even in local shops;
- alcohol consumption habit among villagers increases the risk contracting HIV due to risky sexual behaviour while under influence of alcohol.

In response to some of these situations, the ward authority organizes night patrols to arrest and charge local bar operators and drinkers who engaged in selling and drinking alcohol until late night. Much as this response is positive to combat HIV/AIDS spread in the community, there is also a call by the community for a change in sexual behaviour among the same leaders. As one elder put it: "even the same leaders are sexually immoral".

During the first community meeting, and in the focus group meetings that follow, there was a consistent outcry to publicize those infected with HIV/AIDS and to make compulsory to all the people to have their blood screened in order to prevent further infections. This is very

contrary to the position set by the National AIDS control Policy, where human right considerations need to prevail beforehand. Findings from other sites will be very interesting to compare the Iwungilo position.

The key informants linked HIV/AIDS infections with poverty and insisted that the government play its role of providing better economic environment for youth to stay and engage in the rural sector. This should also go in line with provision of emergency material and financial support to household and neighborhoods caring for HIV/AIDS victims.



## 5.0 COPING MECHANISMS

Inhabitants of Iwungilo village, like other rural communities, have evolved through a process of coping up with diversities of natural and man-made disasters that seem to have negative impact on their conditions – be it gender, social group or livelihood engaged in. Some of the coping mechanisms seem to be highly calculated and sustainable, while others seem simplistic and short-term by nature.

Based on the key findings outlined in the previous chapters, the following description shades some light into the understanding of the ways in which the Iwungilo community tends to prepare, prevent and mitigate against the vagaries of nature and actions of man.

- Although natural disasters are not common in this area, in the event of weather/natural calamities like frost, drought and floods villagers opt for crops suitable for wetlands (*vinyunngu*) cultivation, especially along riverbanks. Most of these crops include vegetables and tubers. The same option is a mainstay of elders because it is easy to cultivate and irrigate. However, old and young alike scramble for the little wetlands in order to compensate for the low productivity in the hinterlands.
- Despite abundant fuel wood in the area, most of the houses are built using mud bricks. This is due to the fact that the soils turn brittle when burnt up and therefore not durable. However as for, grass-thatched roofing for about 70% of the village houses, it is attributable to low income that makes it impossible for villagers to buy corrugated iron sheets.
- In order to increase little human and financial capital, community has a form of bank in the local social networking to increase labour and farm size. The communal *mgowe* work for food/drink practice is very popular and beneficial for those without adequate labour force and money to hire casual labourers.
- Farm fallowing is also a common practice in the area as a mechanism to restore soil fertility. However, pressure on land has forced the use of industrial fertilizers instead of fallowing.
- Lack of health service in the village has led some social groups especially elders to seek treatment from local herbalists, and when this option is not available, they tend to *endure* the sickness.

- Due to shortage of teachers and teaching facilities in the village school, teachers take up lessons sessions or, take many pupils in one classroom and work longer hours. This affects quality of teaching and learning as well as increase fatigue and low morale on the teachers.
  
- When unfavorable methods of tax collection are employed, young people opt to flee the villages to the district. The same happens when small-scale businessmen realize that they cannot cope with multiple taxes and bad conducts of trade inspectors. Possible implications here are for the district to lose revenues, while the speculation to flee may land someone to more crises. There are also some cases of child labour exploitation to cope up with timely settlement of both taxes and school dues.

## 6.0 COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Environmental issues*

- In order to prevent environmental degradation and long – term effect of chemicals on humans, there should be thorough research on agricultural and veterinary inputs before they are imported and used in the country. It was also recommended tests and instructions directions on how to use agricultural and veterinary chemicals should be in Kiswahili to facilitate correct application by users.
- In order to safeguard suppression of indigenous flora, it was recommended that introduction of exotic species should only be advocated and done after thorough research to establish their long-term effects.
- Cultivation on valley wetlands is an important livelihood activity for Iwungilo community. It was recommended that efforts should be made to reconcile and harmonize the practice alongside current legal/environmental preservation efforts.

### *Livelihoods*

- Physical status of certain groups in the community affects their ability to pursue certain livelihood activities especially cultivation. It was therefore recommended that disabled and orderly persons be given loans to assist them start light and fast-return livelihood activities, which would improve their economic position.
- Employment of youths in urban areas as domestic workers has been found to have some benefits to themselves and their families. However, since there is little paid employment in the village, it was recommended that the Government should ensure that:
  - (i) Recruitment of domestic workers is streamlined.
  - (ii) Domestic workers have work contracts, which safeguard their rights and prevent the ir victimization and harassment by unscrupulous employers.
- It was recommended that the community should fight against illegal and hazardous livelihood in order to prevent further deterioration of community values.
- Child labour for any reason whatsoever should not interfere with the prime aim of developing children through formal education. So it was recommended that child labour should, as much as possible, be limited chores, which cannot cause physical and psychological stress on children.
- Rights of paid employers e.g. civil servants, should be upheld. In that regard remuneration packages should take into account workload and other responsibilities. Also, deductions from their salary not should be made without their consent.

- It was also recommended that the Government should review the system of remunerating of village executives since the current system does not guarantee regular income, hence put their morale low and tempt them to engage in corruption.

### ***Economic reforms***

- The Government should restore subsidies on farm inputs to make them affordable.
- Marketing of villagers crops be streamlined to stop the current practice where by middlemen pay very low prices and communities obtain villagers crops fraudulently.
- Decisions on such matters as school uniform should be made in a participatory manner to include perspectives of the wider community and therefore reduce confusion and resistance from the parents. In that regard, it was recommended also that the structure of the school committee should include parents (especially women/mothers) and children so that decisions taken by the committee take into account local conditions and parents economic ability.

### ***Good governance***

- District council through the ward and villager's councils should seek the possibility of instituting a tax collection system that tallies with the income regime in communities.
- Efforts to stop corruption in government hospitals should focus on adequate remuneration for the medical staff.
- Disabled, and heads of household taking care of orphans should be exempted from paying development levy.
- The statutory provision, which sets 18years as the minimum age for payment of tax, should be observed.
- Orphans should given free treatment in Governmental Hospitals.
- Duties and responsibility of various ward and village officials should be streamlined and made public for the community to stop rumours, suspicion of corruption and harassment regarding actions taken by these officials.

### ***HIV/AIDS***

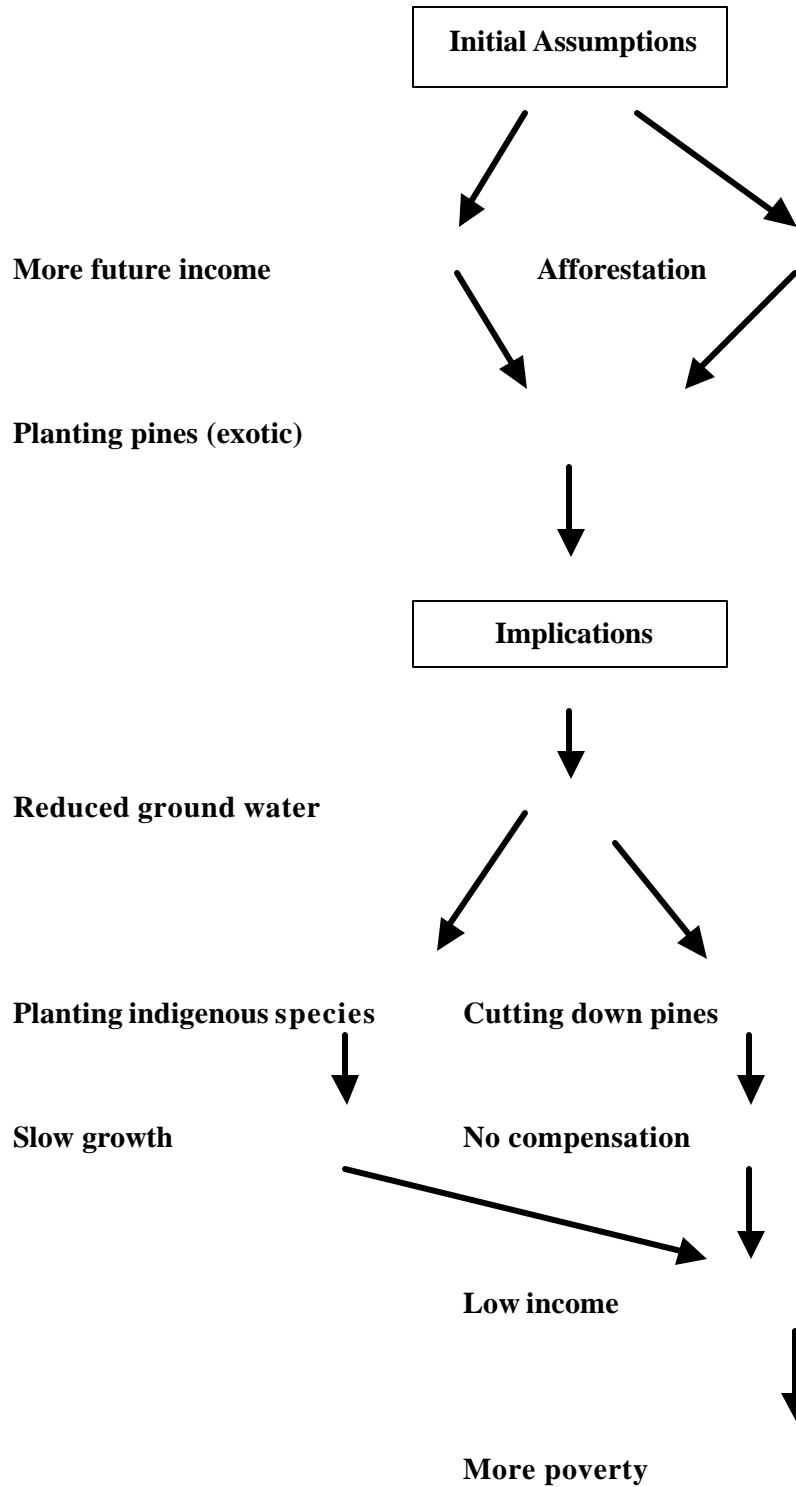
- The current HIV/AIDS policy should be reviewed to make HIV screening and declaration of status compulsory in order to enable those taking care of patients take extra care on protection.
- The government should put in place support mechanisms to assist households caring for HIV/AIDS patients in order to compensate on time and livelihood loss.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The analyses provided above help us conclude that individuals, households and the Iwungilo community in general are vulnerable to poverty in many ways. Not only that people get affected by the very nature of their social group in which they belong, but also due to various natural and man-made processes that directly and indirectly impinge on their livelihood efforts. However, natural processes seem to have negligible impact on their livelihoods. This entails that majority of causes for vulnerability is related to human decisions and actions. As such, the research concludes that vulnerability in Iwungilo is largely man-made and therefore, with concerted policy framework can be resolved and enhance people's efforts to decent life.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: The Dilemma of Pine -Tree Planting as Perceived by Iwungilo Community



**Appendix 2: Community Perceptions on HIV/AIDS Spread in Iwungilo Village**

