

An Assessment of Collaborative Development Based Approach on Poverty Reduction in Kenya: Case of Kenya Government and Civil Society Organizations

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Abstract

The government of Kenya has initiated several national development plans and policies to generate wealth and ensure fast economic growth so as to reduce high poverty rates in the country. To achieve this, the government is working closely with several stakeholders, especially the Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in order to attain a broad based, sustainable development for the welfare of her population. It is strongly believed that poverty alleviation needs concerted efforts so that the escalating poverty rates can be tackled effectively. The state and non state actors have vital roles to play in confronting the challenges posed by escalating poverty levels in the country. The war against poverty, diseases and ignorance has not been won fifty years since independence. The government has put in place several measures on poverty reduction without much success. The civil society has also instituted poverty reduction strategies with minimal gains. It is crystal clear that about half of the total population in Kenya is poor. Efforts geared towards poverty reduction in the country have not been fruitful because of the rising poverty and inequality rates in parts of the country. In response the government has initiated new strategies of collaborating with non state stakeholders through broad based consultations and participation. It is therefore important to investigate and critically assess Kenya's claims of stakeholders' collaboration, inclusion and quality participation. To this end, it is important to know who participated, in what way did they participate, in whose term did they participate, at what levels did they participate and what has been the strategic results of these in poverty reduction process. The purpose of this paper therefore is to assess the performance of stakeholders' collaboration and participation in alleviating poverty in Kenya. The study seeks to provide an overview of the stakeholders' participation in poverty eradication programs and identify the achievements and challenges facing the partnership approach to poverty reduction process in Kenya.

Keywords: Poverty Reduction Strategy, Kenya Government & Civil Society

1.0 Background Information

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000), indicates that poverty remains to be the greatest challenge of the world today. About one billion people in the world live in extreme poverty (The World Bank Report, 2000/2001). The first goal of the MDGs is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. It has been targeted to reduce to half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015. If the target can be realized, there will be an opportunity to end extreme poverty by 2025 (Sach, 2005). It implies that poverty is a global concern that needs urgent interventions by all the stakeholders. Poverty is experienced in all parts of the world, including the developed economies (World Bank Report, 2010). It is estimated that 1.29 billion people were living in absolute poverty by 2008. From this figures, about 400 million people lived in India and 173 million people in China. In the USA, one in every five children lives in poverty. Sub Saharan Africa, at 47%, had the highest incidence poverty rates in 2008. The gap between the rich and the poor has grown in more than three quarters of rich countries since the mid-1980s (Organization for Economic and Co-operative Development (OECD), 2008). Today extreme poverty is the concern of the whole world (Baker & Dugger, 2009). Those living in poverty suffer lower life expectancy. Almost 90% of maternal deaths during child birth occur in Asia and sub Saharan Africa compared to less than 1% in the developed world (World Health Organization (WHO), 2010).

The government of Kenya has taken measures to restore and sustain poverty reduction. At independence the government identified poverty, diseases and ignorance as national tragedies. Most of the economic and social development policies pursued in Kenya have always focused on poverty, diseases and ignorance alleviation (Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965). Subsequent development plans and strategies have been designed to focus on poverty reduction and general wellbeing of the people (Social Dimension of Development, SDD, 1995; National Development Plans, 2002-2008; PRSP 2000-2003; National Poverty Eradication Plan, 1999-2015; ERS, 2003). Even though the government of Kenya has developed national development plans and policies to alleviate poverty, poverty has remained unchanged fifty years since independence (Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey, (KIHBS), 2006; PRSP, 2000; Society for International Development, SID, 2013; Kenya County Fact Sheets, 2013; Environmental Health Department, 2013). Kenya's long term development blue print, vision 2030, was launched in 2008. It aims to make Kenya a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality life by 2030. Vision 2030 of Kenya is designed to guide the nation towards meeting the MDGs by 2015 and

beyond. The nation seeks to achieve a prosperous new future with reduced poverty rates (Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS), 2003). About 49.5% of the Kenyans live in absolute poverty. The poor constitute more than half of the population of Kenya. Despite the achievements made in reviving the economic growth, majority of the Kenyans are still living in poverty; there is gender inequality; insecurity; poor infrastructure; inadequate housing; poor sanitation; lack of power (KIHBS, 2006; PRSP, 2000; SID, 2013; Kenya County Fact Sheets, 2013; Environmental Health Department, 2013). Most counties in Kenya, especially those along the Coast and Northern Kenya, remain the poorest in the country. Inequalities in education among the Kenyan counties are evident. Despite the government policies such as Free Primary Education, secondary schools bursaries and the Constituency Development Funds (CDF), levels of deprivations remain extremely high in the Arid and Semi Arid Lands (ASALs). Most people in Kenya lack access to basic amenities (SID, 2013).

Today, participation strategy is embraced and brings together the stakeholders including the government and the NGOs in all development activities. The government has developed relatively positive perception towards the NGOs and other segment of the civil society in development process (Alila, 2005). The governments of Kenya and the civil society have made several attempts to alleviate poverty without much success. It is therefore important to mention that it is proving challenging for the state and non state actors to reduce extreme poverty by half by 2015, a year away from now, to meet the MDGs. This study seeks to assess the influence of stakeholders' collaborations on poverty reduction with specific reference to state and non state participation in Kenya. This survey also sets out to evaluate the effectiveness of PRSP (especially on the claim of inclusivity, multi-sectoral consultation of efforts) in addressing poverty and the strategic implication of these measures.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 introductions

The primary motive of the government of Kenya is to achieve broad based, sustainable improvements for the high standards of living of the people. The fight against poverty has been of great concern in the country since the post colonial period. This struggle requires a collaborative, concerted and participatory approach of all the stakeholders in order to tackle the high poverty rates that affect about half of the population. The government and the civil society have crucial roles to play in poverty alleviation. In Kenya, poverty manifests itself through poor health, illiteracy, insecurity, uncertain access to justice, isolation from social economic development and disempowerment. This situation demands strategic partnering so that a lasting solution can be sought (PRSP, 2000; Renard & Molenaers, 2003; Godfrey & Sheehy, 2000).

There is need to promote economic growth to cope with population increase. The economy of Kenya has not been stable in the recent past. There are poor standards of living caused by low levels of capita income resulting to high poverty rates in the country. This has opened channels for consultations among the stakeholders, especially the NGOs, as an approach towards cracking down poverty. The introduction of poverty strategies such as SDD, NDP, PRSP, and ERS, has brought many players together to respond to the challenges posed by poverty and hunger. Despite these strategies fifty years since independence, Kenya remains a poor nation that cannot provide her people with basic necessities of life (Commission on Revenue Collection Report, (CRC), 2013; GOK, 1995; Government of Kenya, 1999).

In the last two decades, there has been a great increase in number and scope of CSOs in the social economic development arena in Kenya. The civil society has enjoyed massive support and loyalty from all over the world facilitated by the MDGs (Okwiri, 2012). NGOs play essential roles in alleviating poverty, complementary to the government, both in terms of resources and in making the government more effective (Riddell & Robinson, 1995). NGOs have taken a leading role in the development of Kenya. Several NGOs with both local and international funding have been in the forefront in fighting poverty, ignorance and diseases. These organizations operate at various levels right from the grassroots, where they have close contact with the local communities, to the international level where they represent the interests of the nation. Kenyan NGOs gather their membership from the international, regional, and national levels. This partner is very active across all sectors of the economy including agriculture, water, gender, education, environment, poverty alleviation, human rights, development, peace, sanitation, health, population, training and counseling, small scale enterprises and disabilities. The NGO council provides overall leadership to the NGO sector. The council champions key values on poverty, transparency, accountability, justice and good governance. It enhances the self regulatory of its members and assists them to realize their potential in improving services that promote the social economic status of the Kenya society in pursuit of sustainable development (Jammah, Sharp, 2010; Community Aid International; www.communityaid.org).

The state and non state actors are fundamental elements in the fight against poverty reduction in Kenya. The duo partners play significant complimentary roles in which the CSOs supplement the effort of the government. This is evident in cases whereby the NGOs execute projects initiated by the government. Some of the NGOs are pivotal in providing information that is important in legislation while others manage funds from the donors to implement various projects and poverty programs (Wainaina, Thuo, 2013). The growth of the NGOs has been

promoted by the comparative advantage witnessed in their ability to deliver timely relief and development service cost effectively to those in need. These organizations are better positioned to reach the people than other stakeholders. Past development strategies have also given the NGO sector legitimacy to act on behalf of the poor.

2.3 An overview of stakeholder's participation in poverty reduction process in Kenya

There are several National Development Plans (NDPs) that the government of Kenya has initiated since independence. Most of these plans have been formulated on a 5 years period. The national development plans contain policies that are meant to improve the social economic welfare of Kenyans. They are intended to: promote liberalization, raise the capital income, improve the role of government in social and economic development, control prices of essential services, provide self employment opportunities promote the formal education system, and provide free medical development, promote private domestic savings, expand rural development, increase health facilities, ensure equal distribution of wealth, develop urban housing and community developments, family planning and maternal child health, district planning and rural development (Kenya Government, 2002). The government of Kenya has made various attempts to alleviate poverty so as to improve the living standard of the people. To this end, the government has established partnership with other stakeholder including NGOs to counter the widespread of poverty in the country. Some of these interventions are discussed below.

2.3.1 The Social Dimensions of Development (SDD) Program

The program was initiated in 1994 to curtail the declining economic trends in the country. The SDD strategy was adopted to protect the poor against poor economic conditions. To implement this program, the government of Kenya allocated a significant amount of money (Ksh. 5.58 m) in the budget but did not provide meaningful results and therefore poverty rates remained high. The country continued to suffer from unemployment and lack of government subsidies on essential services among other economic problems (GOK, SSD, 1995).

2.3.2 The National Poverty Eradication Plan (NPEP) 1999-2015

This program was introduced by the government to reduce rural and urban poverty rates to 50% by 2015 to fulfill the MDGs. It was initiated by the government of Kenya to strengthen the war against poverty on specific programs. NPEP policy is aimed to provide a national policy and institutional framework to combat poverty rates in the country. This strategy was formulated through broad consultation and participation involving the civil society (GOK, 1999).

2.3.3 The Mid-Term Expenditure Frame Work

This is a 3 years based development plan aimed to link policies, planning and budgeting. Following this strategy the government of Kenya formulated a budget through extensive consultation and inclusion of all the stakeholders (ERS, 2003). This strategy is based on 15 years plan. The government of Kenya, under the NARC administration, formulated ERS as a blue print to guide the government's economic policies over a 5 year period. The government started strategic measures of reforming the economy in order to attain high, sustainable growth. The main objective of ERS is to harmonize strategies for accelerated economic growth with the country's poverty reduction strategies and the ideals spelled out in the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) 2002 Manifesto. The NARC government had prioritized economic recovery on top of development agenda in order to raise the quality of life of Kenyans. ERS proposed to meet several poverty programs covering: The Social Action Fund, Arid and Semi arid lands, Slum Upgrading and Low Costing Housing, Vulnerability Program, and Investment program (Kenyan Government, 2004). The NGOs and other stakeholders contributed significantly towards the economic recovery and poverty reduction campaigns (Gondi, 2005).

The second Medium Term Plan (MTP) is a five year implementation plan that runs between 2013 and 2017. Through this strategy the government of Kenya is urging county governments to align their development priorities to vision 2030 under the theme: Transforming Kenya: Pathway to Devolution, Social-Economic Development, Equity and National Unity. MTP prioritizes devolution to ensure rapid social economic development with equity as a tool for building national unity. The second MTP aims to build on the successes of the first MTP of 2008-2012, particularly in increasing the scale and pace of economic transformation through infrastructure development and emphasize on priority sectors under the economic and social pillars of vision 2030. Under this MTP, transformation of the economy is pegged on rapid economic growth on a stable macro-economic environment, modernization, of the infrastructure, diversification and commercialization of agriculture, food security, a higher contribution of manufacturing to our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and wider access to African and global markets. MTP also seeks to increase access to quality education and health and job creation targeting unemployed youth (The Standard, April 25, 2014 pp.12)

2.3.4 The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs 2000 – 2015)

The MDGs outlines strategic actions countries are intended to pursue in order to attain peace, security and development by the year 2015. The MDGs targets include; halving extreme poverty and hunger; promoting gender equality; reducing under five mortality by rates two thirds; reducing maternal mortality by three quarters; reducing the HIV/AIDs trend , Malaria and TB; ensuring environmental sustainability; developing global partnership for development. The MDGs are guided by the principles of national ownership, development of

capacity for monitoring and use of data informed programming of activities and making of policies. The MDGs have linked together the government, NGOs and other stakeholders to meet the target and significant framework and initiatives have been put in place to address poverty by involving key stakeholders (United Nations Development Program, 2003).

2.3.5 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)

PRSP approach places explicit emphasis on the issue of participation because it provides room for interaction and encourages partnerships and shared efforts vital for alleviating poverty in Kenya. The society inputs are required in the formulation and implementation of these documents (World Bank, 2004). This comes after the realization by donors that government ownership of PRSP is crucial in poverty reduction (Renard & Molenaers, 2003; Godfrey & Sheehy, 2000). The national ownership is boosted with the involvement of the civil society particularly the NGOs. Research indicates that NGOs are close to people at the grassroots level and therefore they are in a better position to understand the nature of poverty in the country. It has also become common for the donors to use NGOs in monitoring and evaluating funds and the implementation of PRSPs and to hold the government into account in a way that have impact for their political stay in power. Participation of the NGOs is aimed at meeting the interests of the poor (Roddell and Robinson, 1995).

This policy was adopted by the government of Kenya to fight down poverty and supplement other poverty reduction efforts that the government has put in place. The objective of PRSP is to facilitate sustained rapid economic growth, improve government and security, increase the ability of the poor to raise their incomes and improve the quality of life of the poor Kenyans. This poverty reduction policy employs participation and consultation approach to formulation. The consultations include the stakeholders within and outside the government. The NGOs, Working Groups on the World Bank through the NGO council provide significant inputs into the PRSP process and documentation (Hughes, 2002; PRSP, 2000). The goal of PRSP is to raise the economic growth of the nation and reduce poverty levels in the country. To attain this PRSP helps to link policy, planning and budgeting; identifying national development objectives and priorities improving the quality of expenditure leading to efficiency gains, harmonization of financing framework; and monitoring and evaluation. PRSP is a product of broad and in-depth consultancy of the stakeholders including the civil society. The process was intended to allow wide participation and inclusion of all stakeholders as a reflection of Kenyans unique circumstance of social economic and political characteristic (Owina, 2003).

The PRSP is a national strategy that integrates poverty reduction programs. It attempts to provide state ownership and legitimacy of poverty reduction interventions through broad and in depth participation of the state and non state actors in the formulation, implementation of M&E. This approach was primarily designed to promote a bottom up holistic approach that includes each person, including the poor. This was intended to create room for consensus on poverty reduction strategies in policy making in order to attain sustainability in poverty reduction. NGOs participation in PRSP ranges from tokenism to meaningful. The NGOs inclusion of participation in government policy matters is an important step. The NGOs are involved in the collection of data on poverty assessment on local and national levels using participatory approaches to poverty. The sharing of information is useful to effective poverty monitoring and feedback. Consultation between NGOs and other stakeholders on poverty eradication are held at both local and national levels. Consultations don't imply incorporation of perspectives expressed into final policies. Consultations are mostly held on general or specific themes (Chrisantsen, 2003).

NGOs have played key roles in facilitating the process of defining the objectives of engagements and methodology to be used formulating the PRSP. This is because the NGOs have been able to utilize their experience of designing and implementing participatory processes with several stakeholders in the country. Policy formulation of PRSP documents has witnessed the involvement of NGO specialists representing diverse groups from among the poor, government technocrats, and independent analysts. NGOs have played a central role in securing public endorsement of the final PRSP product. Advocacy NGOs further help to facilitate debate at all levels of the proposed options.

PRSP are required by donors and lenders for aid assistance. The IMF requires that the PRSP should be country driven to ensure broad based participation of the civil society; result oriented by focusing on the outcomes that benefit the poor; comprehensive in exploring and understanding the multi dimensional nature of poverty; and partnership-oriented by involving development partners; and based on a long term perspective geared towards alleviating poverty (Fact Sheets, 2011; Dijkstra, 2011). The PRSP process adopted by the Kenyan government promotes broad consultations between the government and the civil society organizations. The PRSP process encourages more participation of the civil society as they increase the influence of the poor in policy creation, program implementation, resource allocation and priority setting hence creating a PRS that is more representative of stakeholders' interests. The resultant product is the PRSP that is owned by the people and sustainable because it suits the needs and capacities of the country (Lazarus, 2008). In Kenya the PRSP has been adopted mainly to promote sustainable rapid economic growth; improve governance and security; increase ability of the poor to raise their own incomes and improve the quality of Kenyan citizens. The NGOs provide

useful information in the formulation of the PRSP process (Hughes, 2000).

2.4 The effectiveness of stakeholders' participation in poverty reduction in Kenya

The participation of the state and non state actors in poverty eradication has witnessed significant achievement in Kenya:

- I. The civil society is an active partner in poverty reduction efforts in Kenya especially rural poverty. The NGOs mobilize resources and empower local organizations to strengthen their capacity and influence the direction of peoples' lives. The NGOs are also active in monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction strategies. They participate, for example, in the implementation and progress report of international conventions such as World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the MDGs. These civil society organizations are involved in the preparation of WSSD, Assessment Report, and MDGs Progress Report, 2003 (Kenya Government, SSD, 1995). The government of Kenya has established structures to ensure successful implementation of poverty reduction strategies through ownership and broad based support from the public (Fact sheet 2013). The civil society has been involved in PRSP process as one way of considering the voice of the people while advocating and implementing poverty reduction strategies. The Civil societies have therefore supported community based livelihood recovery programs and vocational training, capacity building and land and agricultural development in Kenya (Owina, 2003).
- II. The PRSP process in Kenya has ensured that consultations are participatory by bringing on board stakeholders including the CSO and the poor. For many years, people had a notion that problems require experts and technocrats to solve. The preparation of PRSP has attracted wide ranging dialogue among the stakeholders in order to build a consensus on poverty actions and activities necessary for the economic growth and poverty reduction in Kenya. Consultations between the local communities, civil society and government have proved quite necessary. The PRSP documents in Kenya have shown some degree of inclusion at all levels of formulation of poverty reduction strategies. There have also been attempts to create proper consultations mechanisms involving several players from top to the bottom particularly in conducting Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) (ERS, 2003-2007).
- III. The government of Kenya has set up mechanisms on designing monitoring and evaluation system that is inclusive of the NGOs. The NGOs are involved in the monitoring and evaluation process so as to facilitate policy implementation. There appears to be some potential in Kenya Impact Monitoring (KIM) and the Participatory Methodologies Forum of Kenya (PMFK) committee members has been nominated to the monitoring and evaluation task force that inspires NGOs input and involvement in the process. A monitoring and evaluation arrangement in PRSP was designed to provide a continuous tracking and feedback mechanisms to all the stakeholders in the process, including the poor (ERS, 2003). The PRSP in Kenya adopts the principles of participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) by a broad range of stakeholders including the public, private sector and the civil society. The M & E strategy seeks to assess efficiency in the implementation of the budget; utilization of resources towards poverty reduction and effective participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of the PRSP process; and carryout periodic impact assessment of various projects initiatives and programs undertaken by the stakeholders in the PRSP process (PRSP, 2001). The monitoring and evaluation of PRSP strategy implementation is carried out at two levels: the national level and the district level. The national level incorporates the national policy making organs of government; National Stakeholders Forum, Thematic Group, Sector Working Groups and Development Partners and the implementing agencies that include the ministries, civil society, private sector and local authorities. At the district level, the district administration government departments, NGOs, religious organization and other stakeholders are involved while the community level incorporates CBO, households and other stakeholders (ERS, 2003).
- IV. The civil society participation in PRSP is encouraged in Kenya. The inclusion of NGOs in poverty reduction efforts has been favored because of their long term policy intervention capacities developed over the years through their policy advocacy interaction with donor. The NGOs have the capacity to mobilize and strengthen local communities' participation for social development. They promote greater self reliance on the primary stakeholder (Kanyinga, 1993). The PRSP process has shown that the participation of civil society has the potential to mobilize and organize grassroots for focused and proper guided input policy making in collaboration with government if well coordinated.
- V. Countrywide consultations on poverty reduction in Kenya reveal that local people and communities are aware of their poverty needs, and the interventions needed to address them. This came clear when the local people's priorities, needs, choices and wants collected from the PPA differed significantly from the priorities identified by the technocrats in the government ministries at the national level. At the national level the technocrats identified issues like corruption, governance, rural access roads, marketing infrastructure for crops and animals, high costs of agricultural inputs and small scale credits. These issues did not feature as a major consideration in PR but rather important priorities for communities in most parts of country. Poverty reduction process indicates that given proper support and participation mechanisms,

- local communities at the grass roots can contribute valuable information for policy formulation and development measures that affects people's livelihood.
- VI. The value of stakeholders' partnership in policy development of poverty reduction strategies is an essential segment of multi-stakeholder partnerships in formulating strategic national development policies. Partnership between the government and the civil society is an important linkage for the success of poverty reduction process. By integrating other stakeholders, the government endowed the PRS formulation exercise with much needed social legitimacy and a sense of national ownership that was initially not present during the initial stages of I-PRSP (2000).
- VII. Collaboration between the government and non- state stakeholders in development process provides fertile ground for propagating a culture of transparency and accountability. The participation of the civil society at all levels of decision making during the PRSP process signifies social accountability by the government to the local people of the business community. The fact that the civil society managed funds created confidence among the people and shows the seriousness of the PRSP due to proper management of the funds.

2.5 Challenges facing stakeholders' participation in poverty reduction process

They are:

- I. The participation of the government and CSOs in poverty eradication has been faced by several bottlenecks. Even though participation in PRSP process has been facilitated by the NGOs in Kenya, there is no clear framework for consultations with the masses, nor a clear definition of participation. It is organized and conducted to suit the government in whichever way it decides. This often leads to the government coordinating selective participation and employing other tactics aimed at diluting public influence over government objectives (Hughes, 2002).
- II. The government has also been unclear on how to incorporate the opinions of the poor into the PRSP, while also trying to appease the donors. There is no clear criterion on which to judge whether or not participation aspect has been fulfilled in the PRSP. This could imply that the PRSP might be approved by the lenders regardless of the lack of true civil society participation in its making (Kamruzzman, 2009).
- III. A clear definition of what civil participation means has not been laid down by the WB and IMF. This tends to create a problem when evaluating the participatory approach in strategy formulation. It is strongly argued that participation that involves population working with the government to develop specific strategies does not exist in any developing country- Kenya included. This seems to suggest that the WB and IMF approve PRSPs regardless of the fulfillment of this condition (Kamruzzman, 2009).
- IV. It is further observed that PRSP is process conditionality and not a content conditionality. Donors monitor if countries have made a PRSP in a participatory manner. They are not able to impose content effectively in their client country's policies hence unable to impose process standards (Dijisktra, 2011).
- V. There is the problem of ownership in implementing PRSP in Kenya. In ownership, Kenya has developed PRSP documents alongside other national development plans, some of which have not been incorporated into one document. These documents remain separate. The fact that these documents have not been harmonized indicates that there is no ownership of the policy program hence a major implication for implementation in terms of which program to be given first priority to implement. In this situation where the PRSP run parallel with other documents, their role in government decision making is often unclear. On this note the government of Kenya has devised several national poverty strategies that operate parallel to PRSP. These include the Social Dimensions of Development (SDD,1994) program that was initiated in to protect the poor against the adverse economic reforms of 1980s; the National Poverty Eradication Plan (NPEP, 1999-2015) launched by the government of Kenya to reduce rural and urban poverty by 50% by the year 2015 in line with the MDGs; the Mid Term Expenditure Framework that was established to link policies, planning and budgeting therefore enabling the government to formulate a budget through extensive and inclusive process of all the stakeholders.
- VI. Poor economic conditions in Kenya compelled the government to formulate the Economic Recovery Strategy (2003) as a blue print to guide the economic policies over the period of 5 years. The main objective of ERS was to harmonize strategies and ideals outlined in the NARC manifesto in which the government had given priority to economic recovery of its development agenda so as to promote economic growth and raise the quality of life of Kenyans (Government of Kenya, 2004). The NARC government went ahead to initiate the Youth Enterprise Fund, Women Economic Empowerment Fund, Kazi kwa Vijana and most recently Uwezo Fund (2013) by the Jubilee government that is not yet to be operationalised. It is argued that the Uwezo Fund may not provide a lasting solution to the youth and women problems where the predecessors have failed. There is also concern on the democratic and all inclusion process in the selection of managers of these funds (Daily Nation, 2013, pp.33). How Uwezo

- Fund will prevail where women and youth funds have failed remains a challenge that stands to be solved. All these separate documents hinder ownership of the poverty reduction programs. Full ownership of the PRSP is further made ineffective through interference by Boards of WB and IMF that continue to play a role in endorsing what good or bad PRSP should look like or be hence undermining full ownership of these strategies (PRSP, 2006; Daily Nation, 2013).
- VII. The participation mechanism in the formulation of the PRSP incorporates different civil society actors, with varying degrees of success, to participate in discussion or committees responsible for formulating poverty reduction programs. However it has been observed that there is failure to maintain the civil society participation in implementation. NGOs in Kenya continue to provide a role of being the supplier of information and watchdogs in monitoring efforts of government to live up to their PRSP commitments. Despite this, some NGOs lack basic budget skills which limit effective engagement in public expenditure monitoring; some lack reliable and useful fiscal data. NGOs are asked to react to existing programs rather than contribute to overall rethink of the government programs. Additionally, some policies which underpin the PRSP especially macroeconomic frameworks are not sufficiently open to the public debate (PRSP, 2006).
- VIII. The nature of civil society participation in PRSP process has not been exhaustively defined. The government of Kenya-for instance- initiated the PRSP in 2001 as a major step towards participatory approach in strategy formulation whereby almost all the stakeholders, notably, the poor and marginalized, civil society, private sector and the government linked to consult in writing a policy paper. Even though the methodology was participatory, many in the civil society observed the process as mere consultation to meet the donor conditions but not active participation to provide sustainable solutions to poverty (Hughes, 2002). The independent reviews of the participatory process initiated by PRSP claim that NGO inputs into the PRSP process are at times evidently filtered. This incident has necessitated the WB to request for specific PRSPs. (Catholic Relief Services, 2007).
- IX. The government of Kenya has initiated mechanisms on designing monitoring and evaluation system that is inclusive of the CSOs. The NGOs need to be involved at the monitoring and evaluation process so as to facilitate policy translation and implementation into practice. There is much skepticism regarding government leadership in the monitoring, however, due to the signs that consultation and feedback appear to be failing (Hughes 2002).
- X. Even though some elaborate participation was witnessed in the full PRSP process with the ministries of finance and economic planning providing leadership and linkage roles, the civil society still feels that there have been two parallel systems: one dealing with social issues and allowing CSO participation and the other addressing macro-economic issues in the context of Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) excluding the civil society participation. This indicates absence of CSO active participation in PRSP implementation. Specialized state owned research agencies like Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research (KIPPRA), Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI) were given priority to participate on policy matters (GOK, PRSP, 2001). Studies show deficiency in linkage between the social policy practice and macroeconomic policy dispensation in the context of PRSP. Social issues discussed with majority population participation are not given the required mutual strategic reinforcement with macroeconomic issues discussed in the context of PRGF with minimal participation of non- state actors. This is an indication of lack of integration between economic policy framework and the subsequent social policy action that should follow. It emerges that in preparing PRSP there is lack of clear distinction between mere consultations whereby the ideas of the civil society and other stakeholders are solicited often after drafts have been drawn-up, may be to meet the donor conditions of CSO participation. There are also concerns on full participation where the views of the CSO and other stakeholders are used to draw and shape up the final policy document. The Kenyan experience seems to lie between these two extreme. In the initial stages of the PRSP rubber stamp consultations (mere) were made at the advance stages of participatory work on PRSP. This exclusion of the civil society from the macro level discourses resulted to undermining the CSO ownership and ideological commitment to the PRSP process. Further research indicates the alienation of the poor at the grassroots on PRSP process by the preparation of PRSP document in English language (Owina, 2003).
- XI. PRSP consultations have been conducted with a lot of suspicion by the government and political class whereby it is believed that PRSP is a donor driven agenda to control the government hence compromising natural sovereignty. Politicians resisted PRSP process at the initial stages because it had nothing new concerning poverty. They proposed the 140m shillings given by the donors to support PRSP process in the early stages to be used to provide water, roads and medicine. Constant reshuffles in the government sector negatively impact the PRSP process. This is seen as a tactic to derail PRSP effort by government officials who for long have opposed this strategy.
- XII. PRSP process in Kenya indicates a weakness of the civil society to effectively organize to influence and

- engage with the central government in the complex policy making processes. This was evident in the Sector Working Groups' (SWG) deliberation where several NGOs were not able to articulate and consolidate their effort to provide alternative inputs into SWG consultation process. The civil society is incapacitated of providing the required professional capacity for the effective participation in technical and complex process that needs continuous monitoring over long period of time. However at the grassroots the civil society is able to engage and participate effectively by influencing resolutions of the district based consultations and processes (Owina, 2003).
- XIII. It is observed that consultations by the civil society on poverty reduction at the community level have been seriously affected by limited resources and logistics to consult beyond the district level. The implication of this scenario therefore is that the majority of the poor are unreached. This is a revelation that the biggest challenge of Kenya's planning process is the absence of the community voice in dealing with poverty at all level of society. Despite the public rhetoric on community involvement in decision making, little effort has been made to capture community views in the national development in the past. For many years national development plans generated from the district and line ministries have been developed without sufficient community input. The PRSP – MTEF consultations were therefore designed to include the voice of the poor and other stakeholders concerned with poverty matters in the country. Their views were to be considered in the national economic planning process.
- XIV. Dwindling financial resources is therefore a major problem for Kenyan NGOs. This has been necessitated by economic recession trends in the country. Competition for funds leads to duplication of roles as different NGOs position themselves strategically to receive resources from their allies. Rivalry, isolation and irregular subjective documentary are geared towards fundraising and not maximizing on the synergies between NGOs working in the same field (Daily Nation, 1999, P.6)
- XV. Kenya's NGOs lack autonomy because they often depend on their northern NGOs counter parts for aid. This dependency affects the NGOs autonomy and accountability to the public. While some NGOs claim autonomy in their operations basing them on their mission and objectives rather than any dictates from other stakeholders, the reality of the situation is that the donors influence is a factor to contend with (Fowler & Rick, 2000).
- XVI. The government's interference of the civil society is a big obstacle. The government believes that NGOs advocacy campaigns are against the government policies. The NGOs and Government are yet to perceive each other as partners in a practical sense though the government claims that it is committed to enhance social integration within the context of diversified political groups, local and international NGOs and pressure groups. There is government pressure on human rights and other policy advocacy. Some NGOs have been banned in the past and a number of meetings disrupted by the police, Kituo cha Sheria and Human Rights Commission harassed. There has been deregistration of Centre for Law and Research International on the grounds that it published anti government materials. For a long time the government has perceived the civil society as intruder which a national government can tolerate only in exchange for positive returns (Kibwana, 1997; Daily Nation 1999, p4.; Kibwana, 1995; Amnesty International, 1996). The provincial administration, in particular, resisted strongly appointments of the civil society to manage funds of PRSP projects at the inception of the PRSP process. This was a proposal by the donors' in order to ensure transparency and accountability and overcome bureaucracy that could derail the PRSP process. Constant conflicts were common between local administration and the civil society (Owina, 2003).
- XVII. Absence of internal democratic institution of the NGOs. There is a strong feeling among the people that the NGOs are not accountable to the beneficiaries. Other people argue that the NGOs should be directly answerable to the people they serve. Proper accountability structures should be upheld for proper management of poverty strategies (People Daily, 1999, p 11 and 13; Daily nation, 2000, p6).
- XVIII. It has been observed that NGOs contribution to poverty reduction is limited. Edward and Hulme (1995: 6) indicate that it is difficult to find general evidence that NGOs are close to the poor. There is growing evidence in terms of poverty reduction; NGOs don't perform effectively as had been usually assumed by many agencies. Roddell and Robinson (1995) found that while NGOs projects reach the poor people, they tend not to reach the poorest. NGOs projects also tend to be small scale. The total numbers assisted is also small. Also it is rare for NGO projects to be financially self sufficient. NGO execute a number of imaginative projects, many of them appear to be unwilling to innovate in certain areas or activities. Therefore because of these limitations, the roles of NGOs in alleviating poverty cannot be exaggerated. The civil society is seen to have done well at the grassroots but weak at the national level. This was necessitated by limited regional network to enable CSO to mobilize itself and reach a faster agreement due to its diversity. Lack of strong regional network to cover the entire country made it impossible for the civil society to crisscross the country while attending numerous meeting in Nairobi.
- XIX. The donors influence the PRSP process through funding, advisory and capacity building. There is direct

participation of some donors while others enter the PRSP process through their NGO partners. The implication of this arrangement has made some Kenyans to view the participatory aspect of PRSP as mere cosmetic participation of the Kenyan CSO that is engaged to satisfy the donors' interests rather than new approach of addressing poverty.

XX. The process of MTEF/I-PRSP formation was only known to the secretariat, six sector working groups and politically influenced donor community in the county. It was only exposed to the public domain after the core fabric of the strategies had been finalized ready for civil society endorsement. The NGO working group demanded for the inclusion of the poor in the design of anti-poverty programs and projects. However the pace and management of the I-PRSP process within the Ministry of Finance and Planning denied that there were no provision for broad and more inclusive ownership of the paper. It therefore recommended a broad map for participation and consultation to include; local level consultations among communities and sector groups, districts levels consultation, provincial workshop, national seminars and parliamentary workshops. This indicates lack of state cooperation with other sectors in the planning of national strategies.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Partnership between the state and the civil society provide room for close interaction between the stakeholders. The poverty reduction efforts have been able to create a positive perception between the government and the civil society. Local based consultation creates space for the local people participation in decision making, planning and implementation of development projects. This relationship is key to the creation of good will and better working relationship between the government and the non-state actors including local communities. However in some cases the level and quality of participation seems to be affected by time schedules and timely information. The PRSP consultations seem not significant in linking macroeconomic and poverty issues. It is observed that the very poor did not participate in PRSP process as in most district participants were invited by the government. Poverty reduction strategy plans and policies including the PRSP document are available in foreign languages but not in local languages hence isolating the poor and illiterate communities from the process. There is observation that the government is concerned with Bretton Institution at the expense of local stakeholders.

The government has not been enthusiastic to involve the civil society in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction strategies. There is need to establish a reserve fund to fund poverty program; restructure government expenditure and earmark revenue for poverty reduction, enhance administrative capacity and strong political good will to implement poverty strategy (Kiringai and Manda 2002). The involvement of all stakeholders beyond government policy planning, implementation and monitoring remain critical ingredient in the fight against extreme inequalities and all forms of poverty in Kenya.

2.5 Recommendations

1. Dependency on Western NGOs for funds should be reduced. This can be done through merges or amalgamation of NGOs with similar visions, missions and or goals. Consider rationalization through staff reduction, shedding of programs and reduction of operational areas; -adapt more efficient methods of using scarce resources;-identify alternative source of funds e.g. mobilization of local resources, say through provision of consultancy in their areas of expertise to generate income; make use of volunteer services, involvement in industry, multi lateral finance.
2. On capacity building there is urgent need to pay due regard to professionalism; core competencies, experienced staff and institutional infrastructure; develop institutional synergy and partnerships for coordination and collaboration for better resource management. Parties must have also good skills to share and collaborate.
3. Poverty is not caused by a single factor at the local level. Many variable working at macro global context influence the persistent poverty in the world. In such a context of poverty, there is imperative need for NGOs in moving from development as a delivery to development leverage i.e. to expand their level of achievements. NGOs must strengthen local institutions and build linkages with development agencies at the supra level of the villages scale up program intervention; build synergy with the government and business sector and engage in policy advocacy. (Uphoff, 1986; Edward, 1999; Pettit, 2000; Howes, 1997);
4. In order to make a difference to livelihood and capacities among the poor people NGOs must foster autonomous grassroots institutions (Edwards 1999)
5. There is need to establish participatory approaches to test the effectiveness of policies by monitoring the changes experienced by the local level actors against the implementation of policy goals. Citizens can be directly involved in formulating and monitoring local budgets and in monitoring service delivery and holding service providers and local government to account..
6. The NGOs have a right to negotiate the process, content and outcomes of policies with the government institution in poverty reduction strategies. Participatory research should involve poor communities in analyzing the nature, cause and dynamic of poverty, and finding out what their priorities for public action are which institutions they see as effective. Poverty assessments usually involve intermediate actors such research institutes,

- local and national NGOs and local government personnel but not the direct beneficiaries.
7. Lack of autonomy within the CSOs can be avoided through well articulated principles; effective coordination and avoidance of unhealthy competition with the government for resources and attention.
 8. PRSP should capture fresh ideas generated through genuine consultations with Kenyans to domestic its ownership. Poverty reduction partnership should involve all the stakeholders' capabilities.

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