

## Abstract

Makueni district has experienced food insecurity over the years due to a combination of physical and human factors. The problems of food insecurity in the district and its implication have profound effects on the livelihoods among the rural households particularly in terms of economic and social status of the inhabitants. This paper has analyzed the status and the effects of food insecurity on the rural livelihood opportunities in Makueni District. The paper has also addressed options for sustainable food security such as income generating activities and resource management systems. The paper is based on a research carried out in the district between 2003 and 2008. A questionnaire was administered to 200 households for collecting information on food insecurity status at household level and effects on rural livelihoods. The findings of the investigation indicate that over 35% of the households are at food risk and only 6.5% are food secure. The high risk of food insecurity has contributed to collapse of agro-pastoral systems which have been used for economic sustainability by the indigenous Akamba community for years. In addition, food insecurity has reduced rural employment opportunities and other income generating activities thus eroding purchasing power of the rural households. The paper examines various options available to promote food security and increase rural opportunities including adaptive coping strategies applied by households during food shortages, improving water harvesting techniques and adopting new approaches in economic empowerment and less vulnerable for the inhabitants.