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**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN FOOD SECURITY IN MAKAROR LOCATION IN
WAJIR EAST DISTRICT, KENYA**

**BY
AHMED HAITHAR SOMO**

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ABSTRACT

Though community participation in development projects has been identified as one of the solutions to the food security issues in the world, residents of Makaror have been sidelined in the process. In some projects, they are only tasked with passive participation in food security projects and their opinions do not count as much. The purpose of this study was to examine community participation in food security in Makaror location. The objectives the study investigated were: Identifying the extent to which community members are involved in enhancing food security; establishing the appropriate strategies for community participation in food security; assessing the effect of community participation in food security; and identifying the challenges to community participation in food security in Makaror location. The study used mixed methods design and targeted a population comprising 8 professionals/project managers of projects in Makaror and 5836 locals aged over 18 years. The researcher chose a sample size of 107 respondents (8 professionals and 99 locals). The professionals/project managers were sampled using census while the locals were sampled purposively. Data was collected using structured questionnaires, interviews, and FGD. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data while content analysis used to analyse qualitative data and charts, tables and direct quotes used to present it. The study found that relief food was the most popular feeding program in Makaror. Majority (85%) of the residents of Makaror do not understand community participation. Most of those involved in community projects were elders and all willing community members who had potential to participate. Strategies used to influence community participation include provision of farming inputs and irrigation water, informing the public of the importance of community participation, and creating policy that allows people's participation. The effects of community participation include reduced pastoralism and increased farming and trading; increased food production; enhanced people's awareness and enhanced women representation. Pastoralism, illiteracy, and lack of awareness challenged community participation in food security. The study recommends that people of Makaror location adopt crop farming largely to enhance food production and reduce dependence on relief food. The government should also take a bigger role in promoting community participation in food security projects to enhance locally driven solutions for local problems. Residents of Makaror location should be educated and informed on the importance of community participation in food security projects.