

## **Concepts of Democracy in Rural Kenya:**

Concepts of democracy and the potential for democratic development in rural Kenya: voters' perspectives

A qualitative survey

Survey commissioned by the local initiative Peace From The Soil

Reporting for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Nairobi

In-depth qualitative interviews with 56 voters in Marafa Ward, Kilifi County

Conducted by QMR – Qualitative Mind Research

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## Executive summary

After the outcome of Kenyan General Elections 2017, in which systematic election manipulation and voter bribery were again identified, the non-partisan initiative “Peace from the Soil” was founded in Marafa Ward, Kilifi County.

The founders of PFTS are convinced that political change in their area is only possible if citizens are more aware of their democratic rights. PFTS' objective is to make the local people aware of the consequences that, in their view, result from electoral mal-practice. Furthermore, it is their mission to work together with the local population to explore possibilities for increased democratic participation in Marafa Ward. Their vision reaches beyond simply casting votes, towards the participatory design of a more democratic system.

In order to gain a better understanding of what people in their region think and feel about these topics, Peace from the Soil decided to have a qualitative study carried out. Topics such as attitudes, moods, expectations and hopes in connection with politics and living together in their community should be examined and discussed, as well as background about resources, roles and communication structures in the community.

Based on these results, further measures to increase democratic awareness, to participate in politics and to reduce poverty among the population should be developed and implemented.

Peace from the Soil commissioned QMR – Qualitative Mind Research as research and consulting partner to implement this study, which was carried out in March 2019 at five different locations in Marafa Ward.

In-depth interviews (“paired IDIs”) were carried out with 56 people, each lasting 90-150 minutes. An open questionnaire, projection techniques and systemic constellation work were used in the sense of survey technique to crystallize the subjective perspective of the interviewees. The recruitment of the respondents considered the widest possible range with regard to age, level of education, gender, profession and political attitude.

The data recorded on video were prepared by category creation and processed in terms of content analysis.

This report focuses on the subjective views of the population in Marafa Ward. It is about letting the local people have their say in order to better understand the actions, behavior and attitudes of the people in Marafa Ward from their own perspectives. By finding out about and acknowledging the implicit beliefs, subjective truths and experiences of the population, we may identify possibilities for political change.

### Key findings are:

#### **Perception of life situation in Marafa Ward**

The living situation of the people in the rural Marafa Ward in Kilifi County is characterized by many, partly existential challenges. In particular, the lack of water, the dependence on the increasingly

unreliable rainy season and the daily fight against hunger and poverty influence quality of life strongly.

Respondents report little opportunity to generate any income, which is necessary, e.g. to be able to send the children to school.

Consequently, paying children's school fees is a continuous stress factor for many families. Pressures and uncertainties mean that people are unable to make long-term plans or invest in new business models.

Interviewees report on corruption in their everyday life (e.g. by the police, administration) and how it is closely interwoven with all areas of life. They emphasize how corruption undermines economic activity. Election promises to invest in infrastructural changes in the ward (road construction, water supply), school building construction and health care have not been implemented or only half-heartedly for many years and project budgets "seep somewhere" or "into the pockets of corrupt politicians", the respondents complained.

Despite this, the inhabitants of the Ward report positive aspects of their lives, e.g. the enjoyment of good health, community and peaceful coexistence and spirituality.

### **Review of the 2017 elections and politics as a topic in everyday life**

Looking back at General Elections 2017, respondents report that political candidates spent money during the campaign and on the evening before the election. In particular, ignorance of the voters about the contexts and intimidation and massive harassment of the voters by election agents even in close proximity to the ballot box take part in this voting practice.

During the interviews it became clear that almost all of the interviewees had perceived these manipulative activities and were partially affected by them. So far, however, among the citizens little has been said about what happened during and since the past elections. Even people who voted oppositely and are consequently excluded from contributions or development programs by the incumbent MCA report that political issues are excluded from everyday community discussions and are sometimes taboo. It emerged that there is definitely a need and openness to talk and discuss political issues with one another.

### **Implicit beliefs**

A large number of implicit beliefs on the subject of politics have been crystallized out, some of which make it easier for people in the community to accept the existing situation and system, but also manifest the existing electoral practice and the framework conditions for the development of the community and region in a massive way. These beliefs vary from "politicians have to be rich so he can effort the necessary infrastructural projects" to "voting is a deal in which the voter has to be paid for his vote und then he is no longer entitled to the implementation of campaign promises" to "If project funds disappear, the population cannot do anything about it" up to "Politics is a community issue only every 5-years, just before the elections".

### **Democracy**

The term "democracy" is not a common expression for many in the target group surveyed - especially those who have not attended school for long time.

Nevertheless, the respondents formulated their individual understanding of what they experience as a political ideal for their community.

The focus is on the aspects of freedom of the individual, good leadership by politicians and solidarity and participation in the pursuit of the common good.

It becomes clear that dimensions such as the availability of basic political rights in civil society, participation as a possible influence of the population on political decision-making processes, practical control of political decision-makers or the right to responsiveness in the sense of taking up issues that are important for the population, are definitely not consciously anchored as democratic rights and accordingly not actively requested.

Nevertheless, precisely these aspects are formulated by parts of the interviewees as ideal and wish for their community.

### **Social roles and structures in Marafa Ward**

Respondents report a dense network of family, neighborhood, religious, interest-based and administrative relationships in Marafa Ward.

Mentioned were: administrative structures (with Chief, Sub Chief and Nyumba Kumi (also called "Cluster Heads"), village community with Village Elders, family associations (clan, tribal affiliation with family elders) and churches/religious communities (with pastor and spiritual elders).

In addition, there are special interest groups, such as women's groups, youth groups, savings groups, church groups and pastor groups.

The direction of flow of information and instructions within administration structures is mainly from top to bottom. However, the respondents also report that they communicate concerns from the clusters of 10 houses to the next level up (Nyumba Kumi). This structure is "hybrid", so to speak.

Parallel to the state structures, there are numerous indigenous or "organic" structures in the community through which responsibility is delegated upwards from below, i.e. the level of the individual families. Here the concerns of individuals or groups (e.g. neighbours or spouses), which cannot be solved in a small circle, are escalated one level further up, until sufficient support can be found in the community to overcome the problem.

On the level of groups and networks that have come together because of a common interest (e.g. 'Merry-Go-Round' or 'SILK' savings groups, youth clubs, farming groups) are organized in a more egalitarian way.

### **Nyumba Kumi**

There is a significant development in the role of the Nyumba Kumi within the community regarding their function, role and responsibilities.

Originally installed in 2013 by the government as a control system for terror prevention and to supplement police work, it has undergone a change in which the Nyumba Kumi in person have taken on a very changed and expanded function, role and responsibilities.

On the one hand, the control functions of Nyumba Kumi have been expanded in the self-image of the community by regulating and controlling other aspects of social life far beyond terror prevention, e.g. the school attendance of the children in their 10 houses, processes and arrangements of everyday life. They are also the mouthpiece through which information is passed "from above" into the community and vice versa from "bottom up". In many cases, however, they are also an important person of trust within their 10 houses, who promote and shape discussion and exchange of views.

There were isolated reports that in the run-up to the elections, Nyumba Kumi not only stimulated the discussion about who should be elected, but also what role bribes play in the elections.

While women's paths to traditional leadership positions in the community are often blocked by patriarchal and gerontocratic traditions, many of them gladly accept the opportunity to get involved and make a difference for the community through the newly created Nyumba Kumi structure – and are obviously respected in that role.

Thus, the role of Nyumba Kumi has developed into an integrating and interactive body within the community.

### **Elders**

While the Clan Elder takes care of the family's affairs, the Village Elder takes responsibility for the well-being of the village and its community. Village Elders are deserving and recognized persons (often, but not necessarily, seniors) who work as mediators for administration, as mediators for conflicts and as contact people for individuals who cannot manage an issue alone.

Village Elders are chosen from the base and are an enormously important role as spiritual and organizational leadership in their villages.

By some of the younger ones Elders are criticized and their authority circumvented when they are perceived as backward-looking inhibitors rather than actors for the interests of the community.

Chief and Sub-Chief are no Elders in the original meaning, but act as "civil servants" to represent the central government at the lower administrative level. They are responsible for order in all local affairs. The interviewees point out how important they consider the function of the chief for the development of the community, but that they can also be "all-powerful" or at least act as a bottleneck for the region. Many processes in the village are controlled by the chief, who can issue permits for a wide variety of concerns. Payments for these activities are common.

### **Women**

Women in Marafa Ward are traditionally responsible for the daily struggle for the survival of their families, and at the same time they often lack sufficient support - also financially - from the male world. Rights and power are unequally distributed and so it is often the case that women can only tolerate and try to compensate for inadequate male behavior.

In social groups (e.g. saving groups) women gain more financial autonomy and also develop a growing awareness of their responsibility and potential in the community through the exchange with each other.

Especially younger women explore their rights and options within the community and increasingly exercise their right to have a say in public - especially in facilitated groups.

### **Youth**

The younger generation in Marafa Ward (officially aged up to 34 years) grow up highly motivated, with the promise that they can make it on their own if they only do well at school or work hard on the farm or in the city.

However, the lack of possibilities to generate income leads to despair, crises of meaning and depression among many younger people.

Different alternative approaches of generating income are reported, such as DJing at parties, working as teachers or assistant teachers or as trainers or translators for NGO's. But these are the exception. Nevertheless, a number of mainly young men meet in youth clubs or football associations to support each other, generate ideas or encourage younger people. Some of them also discuss politics and the bad situation and to plan action in this context.

### **Conditions and potential for change**

A particularly impressive result of this study is that the "call for action" with regard to change and democratization is formulated so clearly, concisely and with a view to sustainability from civil society - even if the term "democracy" as such is not frequently used.

A spirit of optimism coupled with great hope for political change is present at the grassroots level, with the majority aware that this is dependent on attitude and behavior change in the community.

Many interviewees clearly expressed their willingness to participate in the mobilization of their community. They consider working on the basic attitude of the people in Marafa Ward to be central. Thus, we see that changes are not only demanded, but can happen from within.

The interviewees consider civic education within their own ranks to be indispensable for the development of an autonomous political opinion and for escaping both economic and political stagnation: Democracy requires educated citizens.

At the same time, respondents advocate the initiation of joint, cooperative projects for economic improvement and profit which will encourage participants in their cooperative actions in the long term. It is expected that such joint action will also motivate more co-determination and participation in political contexts and thus the practical application of civil rights.

### **Change "from above" vs "from below"**

One group of respondents hopes for help 'from above' and demands financial support from politicians, considering the economic stagnation they have experienced.

A second group of respondents advocates change from within the community instead of relying on promises made by politicians, "passively" hoping and waiting for them to be implemented. Their desire is for local people to influence political processes and drive economic development in their community.

Individuals say they can imagine actively standing up for a political change and against the passivity of the population - or already do so.

Evidently, the majority of the interviewees found it motivating to articulate the various challenges they face, to talk about their perceptions and expectations of politics in their county, and to reflect on ways in which changes could be achieved in their community. Obviously, forums for political and social exchange are welcomed, if not requested.

For most of those surveyed, it has so far remained unclear who could assume the role of creating these forums.

Peace from the Soil as the initiator of the interviews has received positive feedback to open up these possibilities. The hope was expressed that PFTS will not only shed light on the topics discussed in the interviews, but will also actively contribute to political change in Marafa Ward. Many people expressed the intention to take a closer look at the goals of PFTS and to participate in this initiative.

So, how can mobilization in the population and a change in basic attitudes be encouraged?

Recommendations are:

Living in extreme poverty is almost certainly an impediment to sustainable development. Resources and options for action remain limited - for the people of Marafa Ward it is important that their situation be seen and their needs heard. The vulnerability to bribery is obvious. But at the same time, it is clear that people are often unaware of the connections between how money flows and the stagnation in their region.

Interviewees are interested in jointly exploring possibilities for influence and control, such as demanding proof of the whereabouts of project budgets or unfulfilled election promises. In fact, many inhabitants of Marafa Ward are not even aware of the existence of democratic rights, let alone what they might look like.

After the implicit beliefs have been identified - and these are to be assessed as extraordinarily powerful - there are various ways in which they can be discussed together and critically questioned. Implicit beliefs and convictions in the population cannot be changed over-night. It is important that these beliefs are taken into account in the work in the community, and beliefs will sustainably develop as people's knowledge and awareness increases.

The more people understand that democratic rights exist and feel encouraged to demand them and understand the connections between voting, politics and their individual situation, the better they assess the prospects for political change and economic development in their ward.

For example, in the context of workshops, such as those the interviewees had in mind under the term "Civic Education". They would promote understanding of democratic procedures, show possibilities for action during the legislative period, with a view to preparing for transparent and fairer elections in 2022.

Street theatre and short films can present personal narratives and experiences as they impact people's lives, and act as a springboard for more abstract discussion.

The yearning for political change and the momentum of a new start in the community can be taken up.

The people in Marafa Ward are often suspicious of external influence, for example from NGOs, according to those interviewed. There is significantly more trust in PFTS, an interest-led group from the community itself. Respondents proactively ascribed the role of a multiplier and bridge-builder to contribute to democratization and political change in their community to this organization.

In view of the existing social roles and organisational structures in society, respondents describe it as advisable for PFTS to form alliances and establish contacts with the various groups and networks and their leaders. They can have a great influence on the acceptance of participatory co-determination if they are adequately considered in communication.

The advocacy of an Elder / Elders would make it clear that the workshops and trainings are not just another short-term action brought to the community from outside, but that the group is embarking together on a journey. The direction may be clearly defined but the steps towards it are planned by the community.

The work of PFTS can also help the role of elder to regain popularity among the youth.

A program outside of or in addition to the elders' traditional societal responsibilities would allow them both to apply their traditional leadership skills and to experiment with new forms of group work. For example, it is reported that the elder council itself is calling for the strong women behind the strong men to have more say themselves, or to take on responsibility for the community as elder couples, thus complementing the strongly patriarchal structures.

The chief's support for the activities could further increase acceptance among the population and in his function he could act as a door opener instead of a bottle neck.

The potential of the Nyumba Kumi should not be underestimated, as they are ideally networked in the 10-house structure and have a strong influence on their cluster members. As the survey showed, the Nyumba Kumi are not only controllers and transmitters of top-down information - and thus the chief's extended arm - but they can also have an awareness-raising and socially formative effect in their cluster. Thus, they can be seen as important multipliers for the democratization efforts of PFTS - and possibly similar initiatives.

Civic education in the form of interactive and facilitated workshops and the initiation of cooperative projects, through which the participants can directly experience profitable opportunities for community action, appear to be effective measures to optimally accompany the population in exercising their rights and make fairer elections more likely in 2022. As part of these workshops, women – who have to bear the brunt of the current situation and thus express a particularly strong interest in political and economic developments - can be encouraged to stand up for their position in public with the aim of sustainably strengthening women's rights.

The younger generation can be strengthened by participating projects such as reforestation of the area or cooperative agriculture and trade, if these are launched together with or through the non-partisan initiative. This can counteract the emigration of the young generation to urban cities.

PFTS would strongly benefit from financial support, and assistance to plan and implement projects in the field, since all participants and members belong to the same environment as their addressees and therefore also live in a scarce resource environment.

### Looking ahead

Marafa Ward is located in Kilifi County, Kenya, in the rural area. The intensive look into the life and processes in Marafa Ward can serve as an example for other Wards in rural areas of Kilifi County. It is here that voters have their say.

Similarly, Peace From The Soil and their success factors in terms of grassroots democratisation can be considered a model of self-initiatives that want to bring about political change from within their community. It can serve as a basis for the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Nairobi to look at the

potential and limits of self-initiatives in rural Kenya, of which PFTS is an example, and to analyse their success factors in terms of grassroots democratization ("democracy lab").

Together with *Peace from the Soil* and other potential partners, it is possible to implement a program focused on empowerment and co-creative project development in the villages which promotes concrete forms of co-determination and participatory involvement under the given formal and informal political and administrative structures.

Taking into account the perspectives of the population is considered particularly important for the success of initiatives towards political change.

QMR has been continuously documenting the activities in Marafa Ward since the beginning of 2017. Moving forward, QMR are available as a partner to support program conception and implementation, to act as a link between *Peace from the Soil* and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Nairobi, to document project progress and processes and to evaluate measures and activities on site.

## A Introduction

### Background

On the 8th of August 2017, general elections were held in Kenya to elect the president, deputies and decentralized leadership. A total of six votes were cast for the Presidency, Senate, National Assembly, Women's Representative, County Governor and a local representative in the County Parliament, the MCA.

It became clear that systematic voter manipulation had taken place not only at the national level, where the elections were annulled, but also on the ground in Marafa Ward. This has been the customary practice in Kenya for many years. The local non-partisan alliance *Peace from the Soil* (PFTS) was founded to better understand and address this situation.

PFTS believes that political change in their country is only possible if citizens are more aware of their democratic rights. This is crucial in a region where extreme poverty and low levels of formal education make the local population particularly susceptible to electoral corruption.

PFTS' objective is to make the local people aware of the consequences that, in their view, result from electoral mal-practice. Furthermore, it is their mission to work together with the local population to explore possibilities for increased democratic participation in Marafa Ward. Their vision reaches beyond simply casting votes, towards the participatory design of a more democratic system.

### The initial study: what local people think

In March 2019, Peace from the Soil (PFTS) commissioned the Munich social research institute QMR - *Qualitative Mind Research* with a qualitative survey in their region. The aim of this initial study was to better understand how people in their region think and feel about the issues involved. The survey focused on the following questions:

- o What is the mood among people living in rural Kenya?
- o What expectations and hopes do they have for politicians and politics?
- o What were their impressions of the campaigns leading up to the General Elections and what is their attitude towards the manipulation and bribery of voters that is widely known to be practiced in Kenya?
- o What effects do these electoral practices have on the citizens' views of themselves and their region?
- o Do they wish for changes and if so, in which areas?
- o What possibilities do they see for shaping political processes and how willing are individuals to take part?
- o What conditions would be necessary for this to happen?

In March 2019, initial results of the survey were presented to Peace from the Soil and others interested in feedback from the field, followed by a discussion.

### [Current study: comprehensive analysis](#)

In January 2020, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Nairobi, commissioned QMR - Qualitative Mind Research to conduct a more comprehensive analysis of the collected data. The results of this second study, entitled "Concepts of Democracy in Rural Kenya", are presented in this report.

The list below shows the dimensions that were included in the survey:

- Beliefs, subjective convictions and expectations regarding politics, politicians and democracy
- Experiences, hopes and fears regarding political changes and oppositional voting behaviour
- Culturally shaped positions on cooperative action
- Communicative and organisational structures as resources for the development of democracy in Marafa Ward
- The roles, positions and potential of women in Marafa Ward
- The roles, positions and potential of the "Elders" in Marafa Ward
- The roles, positions and potentials of young people in Marafa Ward

### [Methodology and methods](#)

This qualitative study, aims to illuminate the perceptions and experiences of research participants in their own words. The study does not aim for quantifiable or statistically generalizable findings.

Nevertheless, the insights of the people of Marafa ward gathered during this study are likely to be of relevance to other rural locations in Kenya.

Data were collected using a qualitative survey with of a total of 56 people at five different locations in Marafa Ward, Kilifi County. Sampling was purposive, and aimed at achieving a diverse range of age, gender, educational level, professions and political preference (a list of participant profiles is included on page 37). The interviewees were asked the key question: "What can democracy do for me and my life situation?" This was followed by in-depth psychological questioning, where participants were asked to consider if and how they would make an active contribution to the development of democracy in their context.

The in-depth interviews were conducted as "paired-IDIs" i.e. two respondents who know each other conduct the interview together with the interviewer. Interviews lasted between 90 and 150 minutes and were characterised by a particularly open, stimulated and focused discussion atmosphere. In addition to the classic qualitative survey and discussion modules, projection techniques and systemic constellation figures were used. The interviews were simultaneously translated by interpreters, who also took on the role of cultural mediators in what was for many an unfamiliar situation.

**Data** The data recorded on video were prepared by category creation and processed in terms of content analysis.

In order to protect the respondents and anyone referred to during interviews, all names of people were anonymized.

## Limitations of the study

The results of this study are not necessarily a generalizable picture of the attitudes and opinions of the population in rural Kenya, but rather reflect the subjective perspectives of the respondents.

Despite attempts to include a diverse range of respondents, people who took part in this survey to some extent ‘self-selected’ by their willingness to cooperate.

The research team, led by Europeans, may have lacked in-depth understanding of the local, regional and national context in Kenya. That said, the researchers brought valuable ‘outsider’ perspectives, expertise in the field of democratic social development and as qualitative researchers to the study. Local researchers and translators were invaluable in helping to mitigate gaps in local understanding.



Conducting surveys during the study

## Report structure

This report is explicitly intended to present the perspectives of the population in Marafa Ward on these issues and to provide opportunity for people to speak. The report is structured into three parts, A- introduction, B- findings and C- conclusions and recommendations

Findings are organized under five main sections:

1. Existential challenges-the living situation in Marafa;
2. Implicit beliefs about politics, politicians and democracy;
3. Review of the 2017 general elections;
4. Social roles and structures in Marafa Ward; and
5. The conditions and potential for change.

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→ Note: The sentences marked with an arrow below do not represent real, individual quotations, but summarise statements made by the respondents. Real quotations, on the other hand, are identified by italics in grey and the name of the person speaking.

## B Findings

### 1 Existential challenges - the living situation in Marafa

#### **The quality of life is dominated by water scarcity**

- The living situation of the people in the rural Marafa Ward in Kilifi County is characterized by many, partly existential challenges. In particular, the lack of water and the dependence on the increasingly unreliable rainy season have a strong influence on quality of life. The longed-for rainy seasons are described as increasingly extreme, so that large parts of the harvest and plantations are repeatedly destroyed.
- *"Most of the villagers are farmers. They grow pineapples and corn. But everyone needs the rain and is waiting for it. The season is late. And then everything goes on. Now we already have to buy the water for 50 KES, which we get with the Pikipiki. But as soon as this waterhole has dried up, we'll have to cover even more distances." female, 40 (25ak)*



Long dry periods undermine agriculture

#### **There is little opportunity to for income generation, outside agriculture**

- In addition, the majority of the population has little opportunity to generate income. They try to earn a living from the Shamba, their own field of arable land, or - if they do not have their own piece of land (or not anymore) -through casual labour. Paying children's school fees is a continuous stress factor for many families.
- *"Our biggest challenge is that we have to walk around all the time to find something to eat. Sometimes you can make some coal or sell some pineapples, or our women help out around the house." Male, 39 (45ak)*

### **Education is an expensive commodity**

- The education of the next generation is regarded by the people of Marafa Ward as a particularly important. Parents want to enable their children to attend school, and this is also strictly controlled by the community. However, parents are often unable send their children to school, either because the school fees cannot be met or due to water shortages. Children often take part in fetching water, and journey and waiting times are longer in times of scarcity. In times of water scarcity, cooking food even basic hygiene are only possible to a limited extent.
- *"You have no income, but the children want to go to school, it takes tuition. The children are sad, they complain. It's a big burden." Man, 40 (14ak)*



Stalled renovations and limited funding for schools

### **Long-term planning is impossible due to economic challenges**

- People have a range of coping strategies to manage the challenges they face in the village. However, the pressures and uncertainties mean that people are unable to make long-term plans or invest in new business models. In more remote villages this situation is more acute than in the vaguely prosperous 'centre' Marafa Village.
- *"People in Mulunguni have bone jobs, they have to work in the garden, remove bushes and burn coal." Male, 26 (12ak)*

### **Life is liveable life in Marafa: Between fulfilment and longed-for quality of life**

- Despite this, the inhabitants of the Ward report positive aspects of their lives. For example, the enjoyment of good health, community and peaceful coexistence and spirituality. However, people long for autonomy through food security and financial independence which they consider the pillars of a happy life.
- *"Peace in the village and happiness in the family. If the people in the house are hungry, there can be no happiness." Male, 48 (45ak)*



Houses and water point in Marafa Ward

## 2 Implicit beliefs regarding politics, politicians and democracy

### 2.1 Corruption is an integral dimension of society

#### **Corruption sets the structure of interaction**

- Corruption is closely interwoven with all areas of life that determines interaction within society, defines roles and consolidates power structures at central and local level. Interviewees report on corruption in their everyday life (e.g. by the police) and emphasize how corruption undermines economic activity. It is the expected form of interaction in certain contexts e.g. during the campaign period when voters expect bribes. Politicians who oppose this principle have no chance of success.

➔ "My vote gets the candidate's his lucrative job; he must repay me."

#### **Corruption is seen as legitimate**

- There is also the assumption that buying votes is a legitimate way to obtain and maintain power. This is because it shows that the politician has gone to financial expense.

➔ "If someone has spent a lot of money, they should get a lot of votes. Otherwise, it's unfair."

- In addition, by accepting the bribe or trading paid votes, the politician is released from his political responsibility. People feel they have less right to expect the fulfillment of election promises.

➔ "The deal is done with the payment for the vote. After that, I have no right to expect anything "extra" from the politician."

## 2.2 The perception of politicians

### 1 The ideal of the good leader

- On one hand, a good leader is portrayed as reliable, eloquent and politically experienced. On the other, they should have enough money to hold office and finance themselves, assuming that the politician pays bribes personally.
  - ➔ "Bribes are paid from the candidate's own pocket."
- The assumption is that a rich politician has less need for personal financial gain while in office than a destitute politician.
  - ➔ -"A good politician must be rich, because then they already have enough money (is "full up") and will therefore not put anything more in their own pocket. A poor politician will first help themselves to relieve their personal situation."
- And that they have to pay for projects, initiatives etc. from their own pocket during their term of office instead of using a designated budget.
  - ➔ "The projects are paid for out of the politician's own pocket. They can only pay for the necessary projects if he's rich."
- Moreover, financial prosperity has the connotation of a blessing from God for the respondents.
  - ➔ "*A good politician should be rich. For that shows that God wishes him well and that he is successful.*"
- On the other hand, the politician is also perceived as someone who is close to the people and should act more or at least as much for individuals and kin as on for the common good.
  - ➔ "A good politician solves my personal problems immediately e.g. paying my child's school fees."

### **The lived political reality**

- In perceptions of lived reality, politicians are characterized by absence, disinterest in the concerns of the population and a focus on retaining power.
- The desire for political participation is a recurrent theme in respondents' statements.

### 2 How the population deals with election bribery

### Awareness of guilt - and innocence

Respondents' sense of guilt for participating in this form of corruption is reflected in different ways:

- On the one hand, some of those questioned legitimize participation in bribery due to their lack of means – their awareness of injustice is therefore partial.
  - ➔ "The one who gives money is wrong. The taker is innocent or their behaviour is excusable due to financial hardship."
- On the other hand, while active participation in corruption seems to be a conscious way of dealing with powerlessness and lack of influence, participating in the corrupt system is perceived as shameful and people don't talk openly about it.
- People largely avoid collective accusations against politicians or these are only vaguely formulated. The lack of legal-regulatory structures may be one reason, and the concern that participation in the corrupt system removes the right to accuse others.

## 2.3 Democracy - Concept

### The ideal of democracy

- The term “democracy” is not a common expression for many in the target group surveyed - especially those who have not attended school for long time.
- Nevertheless, the respondents formulated their individual understanding of what they experience as a political ideal for their community.
- The focus is on three essential aspects as ideal and wish for their community.:  
  - 1) Freedom of the individual (freedom of expression, freedom of religion, freedom of travel),
  - 2) Quality of leadership,
  - 3) Solidarity and participation for the common good
- It becomes clear that dimensions such as the availability of basic political rights in civil society, participation as a possible influence of the population on political decision-making processes, practical control of political decision-makers or the right to responsiveness in the sense of taking up issues that are important for the population, are definitely not consciously anchored as democratic rights and accordingly not actively requested.
- Their assessment of the current political leadership in terms of their basic understanding of democracy was poor, except for the Nyumba Kumi Initiative, which has opened up spaces for participatory democracy.

### Coping strategies: Cooperative action

- The absence of democratic participatory structures forces the people of Marafa Ward to develop their own forms of community participation. Some of these are anchored by altruistic beliefs ("You must not be selfish!") and put the well-being of the community at the centre. The community assists individuals through self-help groups, and people receive community support for special challenges (e.g. funerals). The biggest limiting factors are members' economic hardships and the selfishness of individuals, which fuels distrust.
  - *"It is important to serve the community."* Woman, 51 (11bk)
  - *"In our village we once tilled a field together. But the harvest was secretly gathered and sold. The others had no yield."* Man, 42 (42ak)

### Dealing with offences in the Community

#### Punishment of offences is restrained

- There is great reluctance to take public action against offences committed within the Community. The lack of formal legal structures outside and inside the community (e.g. police, judiciary, elders) creates spaces for self-justice. People value peace in the community highly,

and avoid endangering peace through conflict. As a consequence, offenders are not publicly called to account, but are instead shunned by the community.

- "And the most important thing is that we don't blame each other." Male, 48 (45ak)

### 3 Review of the 2017 General Elections

#### 3.1 Before the election – the campaign period

##### **The campaign period was an exceptional situation**

- The respondents describe the campaign period as lively, with joint discussions, exuberant gatherings, visits by political functionaries to the communities and constant election events (meetings), in which the candidates presented their election programs (manifestos) and tried to win over the voters. This led to a constant change in people's opinions of the candidates and heated up the mood in the community.
  - "*It was a bit chaotic, because there were a lot of events. Everyone attended these events of the many candidates. There was a lot going on.*" Man, 40 (14ak)
  - "*I remember the time with lots of noise, loud microphones in the evenings. Yes, we enjoyed it, it was like a party, we enjoyed the music.*" Man, 21 (43bk)
  - "*There were so many promotions... sometimes three meetings in one day. You could see it: there were so many changes in people's positions.*" Woman, 40 (25ak)
- Potential voters were paid so-called "expense allowances" in various amounts (from 30 KES to 500 KES) for participation in election events. Interestingly, the respondents describe the acceptance of these funds as a justified payment which they actively asked for. Accordingly, people are interested in participating in more "paid" election events. At the same time, the candidate with the best bribery payments is considered the most suitable for office.
  - "*And then there is the influence of the money spent, especially now that the economy is down - people take what they are offered and that influences their choice.*" Male, 46 (51ak)

##### **Increased possibilities to get money:**

- For many residents of Marafa Ward, the time of the election campaign represents a welcome opportunity to earn a living through odd jobs (e.g. as a member of a campaign team or by participating in election events). Some respondents even give up their other work in the hope of obtaining a long-term position in the office of an MCA (Member of the County Assembly).
  - "*We call the agents dogs - there are big ones and small ones, and they drive around during the campaign period, have big cars and spend money and gifts.*" Male, 48 (42ak)

**Political discussions cut to the heart of the community, waking the possibility of real participation and the ability to shape it:**

- Interviewees describe the election campaign as a time of carefree communal reflection and discussion of the various candidates and their election programs; conversation about politics dominated everyday life. In addition, the respondents describe the positive feeling of finally being the centre of the politicians' attention and being asked for their opinion. The atmosphere in the community was warmed through active political participation and looking to the future.

- *"It was the talk of the town. On the street, among friends, at work, almost everywhere."*  
*Male, 26 (12ak)*

### 3.2 Community reflection and money - how decisions are made

#### **Discussions and exchanges take place only in the run-up to the election**

- Before decisions are made, joint talks, discussions and reflections occur in the various social groups (family, self-help groups, church groups, Nyumba Kumi, etc.) but only in the run-up to the elections.
  - *"We sit together and look at the manifesto of the candidates, the "cera" is decisive. How did he present it, how convincing is it? And this is how we make our joint decision."* Woman, 56 (44ak)
- One of the most important and "comprehensive" bodies in the community is the Nyumba Kumi Association. The Cluster Head convenes the 10 houses of a Nyumba Kumi in regular general meetings. During the election campaign period, this committee also discuss the campaign with each other and compares the different candidates to the concerns of their own group or the village community. In many Nyumba Kumis a common decision is then made about which candidate to vote for. Some Nyumba Kumi see this collective decision as a strict, almost binding guideline for the members. Other Nyumba Kumis see this decision for a candidate more as a recommendation for action, or helpful orientation.
  - *"When two politicians run for office, we sit down together in our Nyumba Kumi, then we have to decide together which of the two we want to elect. If we have a common opinion, we'll vote for them."* Woman, 65 (44ak)

#### **There is growing resistance to accepting bribes**

- The majority of respondents see accepting bribes as separate from the overall election process. However, a small but growing proportion of people are aware that voter bribery corrupts the entire Kenyan political system and blocks political and economic change.
- At the level of the Nyumba Kumi Association, there is initial resistance to election bribery practices in some groups. Individual Nyumba Kumi members are especially important as the topics that are discussed and attitudes that are promoted are down to individuals. According to reports, critical reflection and awareness of the consequences of accepting bribery has been discussed between members.
  - *"As a Nyumba Kumi, I see it as my job, I like to advise others in my Nyumba Kumi not to take bribes."* Woman, 56 (44ak)

#### **Bribes undermine community structures and cohesion**

- The corrupt political system has a community-destroying component. Through the acceptance of bribes, customary consensus and decision-making processes are undermined. In addition, established social structures and rules, important pillars of community cohesion, are eroded.

- "We sat together a lot in our different groups and talked a lot about politics and formed an opinion. I was then very surprised that the opinion changed when others came along with a lot of money. The Good Leader was excluded by buying the votes." Man, 36 (15ak)

### 3.3 The election

#### **The day before: gifts from the agents**

- According to the respondents, the day immediately before the election is used as the last chance to influence voters. There are reports of recent election campaign meetings where sums ranging from KES 100 to KES 1,000 were paid out. In addition, the party agents go from house to house to secure their votes for election day by raising expectations and through intimidation.
  - - "There were night watches. "They were active while the others slept. They gathered people in one place and there was money. Many were influenced that way. The money was spent during the vigils, yes. That changed the mind of many." Man, 38 (43bk)
  - - "That morning, the ODM people went from house to house. They knocked on the door, gave you 1,000 KES and said: That's clear: orange, orange. The women who haven't been to school, they say yes. They already paid me, so I have to choose orange." Woman, 28 (22ak)

#### **During the election**

- On election day, the respondents describe a stormy, offensive and intimidating atmosphere. On their way to the ballot box, voters are harshly reminded by agents of the "agreements" made the evening before or are aggressively handed banknotes.
  - "Before you go to the ballot box, someone stands at the polling station to talk to you about who you should vote for. And on the way back you meet the same person and he gives you "sugar"." Male, 69 (51ak)
  - "At the polling place, when you get there, you'll find someone at the entrance. Who are you going to vote for? Don't pick that one, pick this one. Who are you going to vote for? Oh no, vote for this one: here's the money." Woman, 56 (44ak)
- Even the situation at the ballot boxes is described as stressful. Beyond the agents' tactics, most respondents classify the election process itself as confusing and complex. As a consequence, many, especially old or illiterate people, are intimidated or even accept the "friendly" help of the party agents.
  - "Some people are uneducated and they only hear 'orange, orange, orange' and then they check orange without knowing what candidate it stands for." Male, 37 (52bk)

- - "The women were sure that '6 oranges' was the right choice. Especially since everything was so complex and there were so many decisions to be made in one day, the choice turned out that way." Woman, 51 (11bk)
- "I can't read, I tried to vote for the other candidate and all I heard was "orange. So I thought maybe this is the other candidate... I thought I had to check orange so he could be the next MCA." Woman, 42 (21bk)
- The police presence in the polling stations and their conspicuous and unequal treatment of the agents increases voter uncertainty.
  - "I would like to see less pressure being built up and everyone shouting so loudly, but rather to be able to make a decision quite calmly" Woman, 25 (53bk)
  - - "The next day, those who had made a promise to vote for money went to the polling station, and there was the policeman in the room ...". Woman, 40 (25ak)
- Some respondents also suspect manipulation of ballot papers and the ballot box.
  - "You were given a long list of names. The level of education in this area is very low. So you are not able to read. And maybe they could only see it with a picture. And maybe the person who's helping you asks, "Who do you want to vote for? But he shows another candidate, so the voter checks the wrong box." Woman, 40 (35ak)
  - - "I was an agent for ODM. The decision was: we must get these seats! There were already these books and they were already labeled...And yes...we won." Woman, 37 (22ak)
- The descriptions of the electoral situation make it clear how strongly the principle of secret ballot is undermined. It also seems that voters are not aware of it as an important democratic right. It is almost impossible to challenge the ruling power structure, because a secret ballot seems neither possible nor conceivable.

### 3.3 After the election - voter participation, reflection, insight

#### **Voter turnout declining**

- Many respondents describe the turnout for the 2017 election as weak. One reported barrier was the difficulty registering for voting papers as people lack ID cards, and/or cannot read and write. Other barriers include people's limited understanding of the value of political influence, their frustration and despondency with political processes, and their view that the effort of voting outweighs the benefits.
  - "You see nothing wrong with choosing this way. They think, 'I got paid that way, so I'll do it this way'." Woman, 56 (44ak)
  -

- *"Many voters have a political opinion and also a preference for a candidate, but they do not register in time or shy away from the effort of going to the ballot box. They have no "civic education" and do not bother to take the necessary steps, for example to get the election documents in order to be able to vote, or they reject elections on principle. Male, 72 (54ak)*

### **Summary - the first 18 months after the election**

- Looking back, there is collective agreement that despite the promises made not much has changed in the living situation in Marafa. Disappointment prevails over the half-finished projects in road construction, water supply, school construction and, overall, about the economic development in the Ward, which was experienced as stagnating.
- *"A father or a man can say: Whether I go to vote or not - nothing will change. If I go and vote for these candidates, I do so only to help these leaders fail to fulfill their election promises. Man, 25 (34bk)*

### **Frustration and mature insight:**

- Frustrated, many interviewees realized their vote was bought at the election rather than carefully chosen. There is a growing awareness of the need for increased civic education about voting, so that people can make an informed choice. Frustration inspires people to take control of their own fates, to become politically involved or even run for political office.
- *- "A water tank has been constructed and drilling has begun for a water point. But after almost two years, there is still no water." Woman, 51 (11bk)*
- *- "I really wasn't leaning towards any particular party. But none of the promises have been fulfilled to this day." Woman, 28 (22ak)*
- *- "Now people understand and many of them repent. And I pick them up: oh, you all ticked "orange" 6 times without looking at the personality of the candidates. Now they understand and repent. They even ask: Why did he win? Now they're beginning to understand." Woman, 37 (22ak)*
- *"We're tired of just having to wait five more years. We want to do something." female, 40 (25ak)*



Community Meeting during the campaign period

#### 4 Social roles and structures in Marafa Ward

##### 4.1 Organizational structures in the community

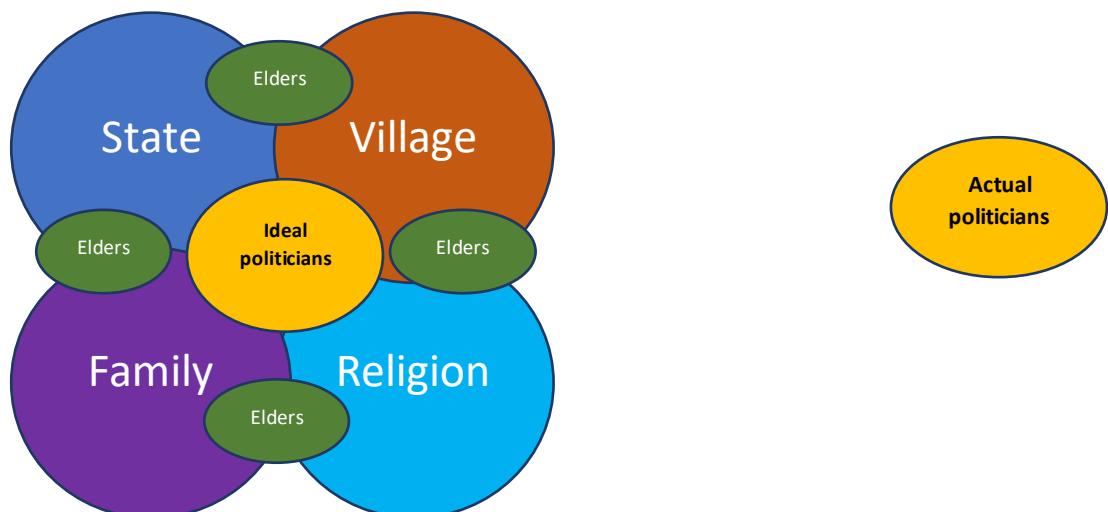
**There are complex organisational structures at various levels**

- Respondents report a dense network of family, neighbourhood, religious, interest-based and administrative relationships in Marafa Ward.
- Organizational structures of community life were mentioned:
  - Administrative structures with Chief, Sub Chief and Nyumba Kumi
  - Village community with Village Elders
  - Family association, clan, tribal affiliation with family elders
  - Churches/religious communities with pastor and spiritual elders
- In addition, there are special interest groups, such as women's groups, youth groups, savings groups, church groups and pastor groups.

### Parallel systems - the political system and community-based organisational structures

- The political system with its representatives is not perceived as a connecting element of these four lifeworlds. None of the interviewees stated that they felt they belonged to a political party or group outside the election campaign period. Politicians are characterized by their absence in rural areas, outside the election campaign period. Nor are they expected to be regularly present on the ground, for example at a constituency office. Instead, they must be invited on a case-by-case basis.

### Ideal and actual roles of politicians in the Community



Source: QMR

- Certain organizational and communication structures in the community are predetermined by the administration. They are found at local, county and central government level and can be described as external or "exogenous" structures. They operate through government regulations and through their local representatives. These are the Chiefs, Sub- or Assistant Chiefs and the Nyumba Kumi (also called "Cluster Heads" or "Community Ambassadors").

#### The direction of the flow of information and instructions

- The direction of the flow of information and instructions is mainly from top to bottom. However, the respondents also report that they communicate concerns from the clusters of 10 houses to the next level up (Nyumba Kumi). This structure is "hybrid", so to speak.

- Parallel to the state structures, there are numerous indigenous or "organic" structures in the community through which responsibility is delegated upwards from below, i.e. the level of the individual families.
- Here the concerns of individuals or groups (e.g. neighbours or spouses), which cannot be solved in a small circle, are escalated one level further up, until sufficient support can be found in the community to overcome the problem.
- The way in which the leaders are appointed or elected, how long they remain in office and what belongs to their area of responsibility differs in the groups and is strongly influenced by culture and tradition.

### **Forms of organization identified within the community**

The following forms of organization were shown using the projective method of "constellations":

- o Families and clans with family and clan elders and Council of Elders
- o The village community with Village-elder(s)
- o Christian communities or indigenous denominations with church elders or nature-religion elders
- o Administrative meetings with Chief, Sub-Chief and Nyumba Kumi





Setting up symbolic figures to answer the impulse question: "How is your community organized? Please show us how you live together and make decisions that affect the community."

### Special interest organisations and forms of communication

- In addition, as a third form of organization and communication, there is a multitude of groups and networks that have come together because of a common interest and are organized in a more egalitarian way.
  - Examples of these networks the savings groups 'Merry-Go-Round' or 'SILK', youth clubs and farming groups.

### Leadership by Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs

- Chiefs and sub-chiefs act as "civil servants" to represent the central government at the lower administrative level. The tasks ascribed to them are diverse and range from conflict resolution to facilitating school scholarships, issuing certificates and permits, to the general understanding that chief and sub-chief are responsible for order in all local affairs.
  - "*It could be that someone steals your animals, that there is a dispute over land rights or that the Wazeze, the old people are killed and no one intervenes. In Marafa you can go to the Chief or Village Elder, in Kotajo or Chamari people take the initiative themselves to get rid of the person causing trouble.*" Man, 39 (52bk)
  - "*The chief announces that rain will soon be upon us and people should prepare their farms.*" Man, 42 (42ak)
- The interviewees point out how important they consider the function of the chief for the development of the community, but that they can also be "all-powerful" or at least act as a bottleneck for the region. Many processes in the village are controlled by the chief, who can issue permits for a wide variety of concerns. Payments for these activities are common.
  - "*The Chief talks to the Sub-Chief, he talks to the Elders, they talk to the Clusterheads, they talk to the Village people.*" Woman, 45 (55bk)

- *The Chief is the President's eye. If it's a bad chief, there'll be no development in the area.*  
*Man, 36 (45ak)*
  
- In the event of a chief's misconduct or abuse of power, there is a lack of transparent regulatory bodies or contact people to investigate and prosecute misconduct.
  - *"There is no way to control or vote him out. You can criticize him, but you cannot have him removed from office". Male, 39 (45ak)*

## 4.2 Nyumba Kumi: functions and further developments

### **Nyumba Kumi – The intention and local implementation**

- The "Nyumba Kumi" initiative, which was launched in 2013 by an administrative act of the central government and was originally intended to supplement police work and prevent terrorism, has undergone an interesting development, according to the description of the interviewees.
  
- Many interviewees in Marafa Ward describe the cooperation of ten households each under the leadership of a Cluster Head / Nyumba Kumi as a very important form of organization in their community. Top-down information is communicated via them, but also bottom-up. The Cluster Head is responsible for monitoring the legality of all processes within their cluster.

### **Local interpretation of the Nyumba Kumi principle**

- In Marafa Ward, the Nyumba Kumi are actively maintained in many places and have meanwhile taken on functions other than terror prevention alone. These include:
  - o the control of compulsory school attendance
  - o setting up rules for the community e.g. how long can music be played at weddings? How long may the children play outside in the evening?
  - o the top-down distribution of information (e.g. invitations or announcements of the chief)
  - o the bottom-up forwarding of applications and submissions to the administration
  - o being initiator for discussion topics and frequently respected personality in his / her cluster.

### **Nyumba Kumi enables women to participate in community-based politics**

- While women's paths to traditional leadership positions in the community are often blocked by patriarchal and gerontocratic traditions, many of them gladly accept the opportunity to get involved and make a difference for the community through the newly created Nyumba Kumi structure. Beyond the originally intended control function of the Nyumba Kumi, it has developed into an integrating and interactive body within the community.

- *"The cluster-head is responsible for getting children into school and works with the parents and the Chief to find a solution if it is not happening, and also mediates when it comes to getting funding for secondary school. If there is a dispute in the family, I will not resolve it myself, but contact the Village Elder and we will sit down together to resolve the conflict. We haven't received any special training, but the chief has trained us." Woman, 56 (44ak)*
  
- *"It is a voluntary activity and I enjoy it a lot - if I got money for it, it wouldn't be so joyful. I want my village to be safe and that the people are well and that we live together in harmony - it's not about money" Woman, 45 (55bk)*

## 4.3 Elders in the community

### **Family Association - Clan - Council of Elders**

- All respondents live in a family with children, which flows into the extended family where several generations share a property. The families, in turn, are embedded in so-called "clan structures", which include all those families that originate "from a common tribe" and sometimes bear the same surname. These networks often spread throughout Marafa Ward and beyond and are led by elders and a council of elders appointed according to the family's own rules and rituals.

### **Tasks of the family elders**

- The family elders have many responsibilities. Namely:
  - Convening family/clan meetings
  - Settle disputes (property, family matters, land ownership)
  - Negotiate marriages and organize weddings
  - Organise support for individual family members in the event of a stroke of fate, illness or death
  - Establish the family position in relation to issues or trends

### **Roles and responsibilities of the clan and village elder**

- Just as the clan elder takes care of the family's affairs, the village elder takes responsibility for the well-being of the village and its community. Village elders are deserving and recognized persons (often, but not necessarily, seniors) who work as mediators for administration, as mediators for conflicts and as contact people for individuals who cannot manage an issue alone.
- Clan elders - as well as village elders and church elders - play an important role in the campaign and opinion-forming phase before the election of a local representative. Elders appear as advocates or opponents at election events, bring in demands from their group and ask critical questions or praise the human qualities, lifestyle and agenda of the candidate.
- Once the decision has been made for a politician, the elders make a recommendation to the families, villages and religious communities assigned to them. In addition, the future politician of the election is often welcomed by the elders with a traditional ritual.

### **Organisation at household level**

- While the above-mentioned systems are all hierarchical, each household is also informally and horizontally networked in diverse ways within the village structure.
- First of all, there are many informal contacts: people meet to fetch water or collect wood, to take a taxi to the next larger town or to sell or shop in the markets and small shopping streets.

### 4.4 Women in the community

#### **Gender roles within the community**

- Many women in Marafa Ward lead the daily fight for the survival of their families. Since they are traditionally responsible for cooking and feeding the family, they feel the main responsibility when there is nothing to cook and eat - be it because there is no water, no food, no firewood or everything together.
- Men own the land and are entitled to custody of the children in case of separation. Due to this concentration of power in the male role, women are in a bad position in domestic conflicts. Often, they can only tolerate and try to compensate for inadequate male behaviour.

#### **Community savings groups help women achieve greater financial autonomy**

- The savings groups called "Merry-go-round" or SILK, in which the women take small steps towards future larger investments, are very popular among women. At the same time, however, women are becoming more aware of the burdens of their everyday life and of their role as family managers, where they often lack sufficient support from the male world.
- From growing financial autonomy and the resulting independence to plan and execute projects, for some women the step into responsibility for the community - a traditional male domain – is more conceivable and possible.

#### **Chances of generational role change**

- While the older women stick to the patriarchal gerontocratic hierarchy and the younger women also like to call to order, the younger ones are more aggressive and increasingly exercise their right to speak - especially in facilitated groups.
- Nyumba Kumi, created in 2013, has created a new space for women to express their desire for change through community involvement.

## 4.5 Young people in the community

### Motivated young generation

- The younger generation in Marafa Ward (officially aged up to 34 years) is in the middle of life, planning families or already tasked with feeding their children. The younger ones are well educated compared to the older ones. Highly motivated, they have grown up with the promise that they can make it on their own if they only do well at school or work hard on the farm or in the city.



*Small businesses of the younger generation in Marafa Ward*

### Limited possibilities: Lack of work and the wait for university places, consequences of climate change

- In stark contrast to this optimism are the lack of available jobs and the corruption that taints all trade activities. Added to this are the uncertainties of agriculture in times of climate change and the resulting concern about daily income.
- The fact that there are no possibilities to generate income leads to despair, crises of meaning and depression among many younger people. It is equally demoralizing to wait years for a place at university after a good secondary school graduation, not knowing whether the application will be successful in the end.

### Alternative income-generating strategies:

- Some young people open up shops in addition to farming or earn their living, beyond the classic auxiliary job as a Pikipiki driver, by alternative services such as ironing, DJing at parties or as unskilled workers.

- Many work as teachers or assistant teachers, and a good source of income is also project work for NGOs, where they work as trainers or translators or are used to mobilise the community.

### **Engagement and forms of self-empowerment**

- Other young adults get involved in youth clubs and football associations to support each other, generate ideas or encourage younger people.
- A number of the mainly young men meet to discuss politics and the bad situation and to plan action.
- This can lead to constructive political impulses. For example, during the election campaign period many young people campaigned intensively for their respective candidates and brought democratic knowledge into their families.
- And even beyond the campaign period, many young people are among the founding members of Peace from the Soil and actively drive the work forward.

## 5 The conditions and potential for change

### **Lack of social space for an opposition**

- Opposition, in the sense defined roles and/or secure frameworks for opinions that contrast to the prevailing opinion and politics of the elected representatives, does not exist in Marafa ward.
- Those who voted for opposition candidates are seen as having lost their bet in the candidate race and liable to bear all the consequences, rather than simply having voted for a candidate who did not secure a majority.
- Whoever votes opposition is doubly punished: firstly, their political vision is not implemented and secondly, they are excluded from contributions or development programs by the incumbent MCA.

- "It's a high risk because you won't get any help for the next five years." Man, 33 (33ak)

### 5.1 Desire for change and transformation

- At the same time, the majority of the people interviewed in this study still wish for fundamental changes in Marafa Ward. "Politics" is widely criticized, and it seems irrelevant which party or which candidate people voted for in the last election.

### **Change "from above"**

- One group of respondents hopes for help 'from above'. They demand financial support from politicians, considering the economic stagnation they have experienced. This applies both to the personal challenges and to major infrastructure projects of the village community.
  - "We need money, we could start a women's club." Woman, 27 (34bk)
  - "This road here needs to be made. We need electricity. A secondary school. We need clean water. We don't have the means to do these things." woman, 28 (14ak)

### **Change "from below"**

- A second group of respondents advocates change from within the community instead of relying on promises made by politicians, "passively" hoping and waiting for them to be implemented. Their desire is for local people to influence political processes and drive economic development in their community.
  - "We must consider, what structures can we use to remind this person of his promises and his responsibility?" Man, 33 (33ak)
  - "Procuring drinking water costs money, which means there are three possible solutions: either we get a sponsor, or we come together as a group and find a solution to the problem, or someone teaches us new knowledge on how to tackle the water problem". Man, 36 (15ak)

### **Influence through the Nyumba Kumi structure**

- The Cluster / Nyumba Kumi structure, which includes everyone in the community, is cited as a possible framework for socio-political influence. In addition, farming groups, women's groups, youth groups, church groups and also savings groups could be occasions for discussing current and political topics. Critical thinking and the questioning of the acceptance of voter bribes already occurs, at least occasionally, in these contexts.
- "We have to solve this as a community by sitting down together and finding solutions as to how we can no longer accept money. If we accept money, the person who has access to the pot for projects has a justification to refinance himself because he has paid us. We can address that in our clusters when we see the problem." Male, 46 (51ak)

### **Action and commitment at personnel level**

- Individuals say they can imagine actively standing up for a political change and against the passivity of the population - or already do so.
  - "In meetings, I am the activist, along with another woman. Whenever there is a meeting, at the MCA house I am already "noted". I write my questions on a piece of paper and hand it forward so that the questions are answered. The problem is that although the MCA answers

*the questions, it does so with a certain aggressiveness. He mentally, "notes" who asked these questions." Woman, 37 (22ak)*

### **People are partly reluctant to request change**

- The will for change is clearly noticeable in all respondents, but there is a lack of concrete ideas and sometimes also a lack of self-confidence and courage to demand something "from the authorities". People are currently unaware that this could be part of their democratic rights and duties.

## 5.2 Education and Civic Education

- It is notable how often the respondents mention the value of education and many regret that their education was limited due to financial restrictions. The level of education in the community is considered to be low. This is a factor which, in the view of the interviewees, undermines people's ability to understand the many inter-connections in politics and a lack of awareness of opportunities for participation.
  - *"It is a question of education. What we really need is civic education. Then people will make more conscious decisions. As long as we don't have the knowledge, then everything can influence us. But with Civic Education, people will understand that whoever comes up with money doesn't have to influence our decision." Male, 21 (43bk)*
  - *"Civic education is important because it gives me the right to say no and ask critical questions." Woman, 37 (22ak)*
- Making politics a topic for discussion beyond the campaign period and making people aware that political participation is possible on election day - but not only - is seen as an important basis for development and change.
  - *"It is important that people talk about politics and understand how important a good politician is, so that they understand the connection between voting and politics". Man, 42 (42ak)*

### **Content for Civic Education:**

- The interview partners would like to see the following content for Civic Education:
  - o Knowledge about democracy and the associated rights and duties of citizens
  - o Understanding of the connections between bribery, retention of power, freedom of choice
  - o Knowledge of electoral procedures and handling of the ballot papers
  - o Providing basic literacy skills for people who have received little education
  - o Information on setting up a business and budgeting
  - o Advanced techniques for arable and livestock farming to respond optimally to changing climatic conditions

## 5.3 Community-based initiatives to facilitate change

### **Community basierte Maßnahmen**

- At the same time, practical action should be in the foreground. Respondents advocate the initiation of joint, cooperative projects for economic improvement and profit which will encourage participants in their cooperative actions in the long term. It is expected that such joint action will also motivate more co-determination and participation in political contexts and thus the practical application of civil rights.
  - *"Starting with a joint project would be a good idea. It would be the better way to enter into dialogue and to demand budgets when we come up with a project." Woman, 51 (11bk)*
  - *"If there's a project like this and people realize they're benefiting from it, they'll get involved." Woman, 27 (13bk)*

### **Forums for political and social exchange**

- Evidently, the majority of the interviewees found it motivating to articulate the various challenges they face, to talk about their perceptions and expectations of politics in their county, and to reflect on ways in which changes could be achieved in their community.
  - *"We should organise a meeting, explaining how bribery works and that it is not good. That the politician who bribes doesn't have that money for the projects anymore." Woman, 51 (11bk)*

### **Positive perception of the Peace from the Soil initiative**

- Peace from the Soil has received positive feedback for opening up these opportunities. The hope was expressed that PFTS will not only shed light on the topics discussed in interviews, but will actively contribute to political change in Marafa Ward. Many people expressed the intention to engage more intensively with the goals of PFTS and to become involved in this initiative themselves.
  - *"It could be about bringing politicians to account: to date there are no water holes. PFTS could help the people of Mulunguni to demand the promises. PFTS could give the people here a voice. That would be good. That would be a shame for this politician."* Woman, 34 (12ak)
- It is clear that the issues discussed in the interviews and the intention for political activity signalled by PFTS fall on fertile ground. Many of those interviewed are tired of waiting and want change - they see it as an opportunity to make it happen together with PFTS.
  - *"We would love to do this and to participate. Because we're tired of just having to wait 5 more years."* female, 40 (25ak)

### **Ideas for implementation from the community**

- Some people gave concrete ideas about how they can support PFTS activities with their own resources.
- The suggestions about what personal involvement and participation could look like range from the offer to act as a multiplier for the group and its activities, to the idea of providing physical care for the active participants, or even to guide and teach groups and people themselves.
  - *"I would like to get more information about PFTS, because then I could spread the information around my church."* Male, 44 (25ak)
  - *"I could imagine supporting it by contributing my ideas and my time."* Woman, 40 (21bk)
  - *"I could cook for people when there are meetings."* Woman, 42 (21bk)
- Special interest networks, Nyumba Kumi structures, local administration, church contexts, frameworks of elders and independent opinion leaders are all potential enablers, allies, mentors and multipliers of the programme.



*Community gathering and common farm work*

## C Conclusions and recommendations

This report focuses on the subjective views of the population in Marafa Ward. It is about letting the local people have their say in order to better understand the actions, behaviour and attitudes of the people in Marafa Ward from their own perspectives.

Living in extreme poverty is almost certainly an impediment to sustainable development. Resources and options for action remain limited - for the people of Marafa Ward it is important that their situation be seen and their needs heard. The vulnerability to bribery is obvious. But at the same time, it is clear that people are often unaware of the connections between how money flows and the stagnation in their region.

Interviewees are interested in jointly exploring possibilities for influence and control, such as demanding proof of the whereabouts of project budgets or unfulfilled election promises. In fact, many inhabitants of Marafa Ward are not even aware of the existence of democratic rights, let alone what they might look like.

After the implicit beliefs have been identified - and these are to be assessed as extraordinarily powerful - there are various ways in which they can be discussed together and critically questioned. Implicit beliefs and convictions in the population cannot be changed over-night. It is important that these beliefs are taken into account in the work in the community, and beliefs will sustainably develop as people's knowledge and awareness increases.

The more people understand that democratic rights exist and feel encouraged to demand them and understand the connections between voting, politics and their individual situation, the better they assess the prospects for political change and economic development in their ward.

For example, in the context of workshops, such as those the interviewees had in mind under the term "Civic Education". They would promote understanding of democratic procedures, show possibilities for action during the legislative period, with a view to preparing for transparent and fairer elections in 2022.

Street theatre and short films can present personal narratives and experiences as they impact people's lives, and act as a springboard for more abstract discussion.

The yearning for political change and the momentum of a new start in the community can be taken up.

The people in Marafa Ward are often suspicious of external influence, for example from NGOs, according to those interviewed. There is significantly more trust in PFTS, an interest-led group from the community itself. Respondents proactively ascribed the role of a multiplier and bridge-builder to contribute to democratization and political change in their community to this organization.

In view of the existing social roles and organisational structures in society, respondents describe it as advisable for PFTS to form alliances and establish contacts with the various groups and networks and their leaders. They can have a great influence on the acceptance of participatory co-determination if they are adequately considered in communication.

The advocacy of an Elder / Elders would make it clear that the workshops and trainings are not just another short-term action brought to the community from outside, but that the group is embarking together on a journey. The direction may be clearly defined but the steps towards it are planned by the community.

The work of PFTS can also help the role of Elders to regain popularity among the youth.

A program outside of or in addition to the elders' traditional societal responsibilities would allow them both to apply their traditional leadership skills and to experiment with new forms of group work. For example, it is reported that the elder council itself is calling for the strong women behind the strong men to have more say themselves, or to take on responsibility for the community as elder couples, thus complementing the strongly patriarchal structures.

The chief's support for the activities could further increase acceptance among the population and in his function he could act as a door opener instead of a bottle neck.

The potential of the Nyumba Kumi should not be underestimated, as they are ideally networked in the 10-house structure and have a strong influence on their cluster members. As the survey showed, the Nyumba Kumi are not only controllers and transmitters of top-down information - and thus the chief's extended arm - but they can also have an awareness-raising and socially formative effect in their cluster. Thus, they can be seen as important multipliers for the democratization efforts of PFTS - and possibly similar initiatives.

Civic education in the form of interactive and facilitated workshops and the initiation of cooperative projects, through which the participants can directly experience profitable opportunities for community action, appear to be effective measures to optimally accompany the population in exercising their rights and make fairer elections more likely in 2022. As part of these workshops, women – who have to bear the brunt of the current situation and thus express a particularly strong interest in political and economic developments - can be encouraged to stand up for their position in public with the aim of sustainably strengthening women's rights.

The younger generation can be strengthened by participating projects such as reforestation of the area or cooperative agriculture and trade, if these are launched together with or through the non-partisan initiative. This can counteract the emigration of the young generation to urban cities.

PFTS would strongly benefit from financial support, and assistance to plan and implement projects in the field, since all participants and members belong to the same environment as their addressees and therefore also live in a scarce resource environment.

The intensive look into the life and processes in Marafa Ward can serve as an example for other Wards in rural areas of Kilifi County. Similarly, Peace from the Soil can be considered a model of self-initiatives that want to bring about political change from within their community.

## Glossary

Block voting	All six votes were cast along ONE party line, the individual candidates for office take a back seat
Campaigner	Candidate supporter
CBF	Catholic Biblical Federation, as a sponsor for school buildings
Civic education	Civic Education is an educational model developed in the Anglo-American language area with the aim of practicing democratic action and thinking through lifelong social and multicultural learning and thereby ensuring that democracy and civil society work in practice
Clan	A community that derives a common origin from common ancestors
Cluster	Synonymous with "10 houses"
Community	Community in the sense of an organization or administrative unit
County Governor	Chairman of one of the 47 decentralized county parliaments that replaced the "districts" in the 2012 election. Counties are divided into sub-counties and wards.
Elder	It refers to a person who is valued for their wisdom and holds a position of responsibility and authority in a group. In a gerontocracy (rule of the elders) they have decision-making authority for a community and are organized by a council of the elders.
General Elections	General elections were held in Kenya on August 8, 2017 to elect the President, MPs and decentralized leadership. A total of six votes were cast for the Presidency, the Senate, the National Assembly, the women's representative, the county governor and a local representative in the county parliament, the MCA.

Government	The political system in Kenya is a presidential republic, while President-in-Office Uhuru Kenyatta is also the head of government. The president is elected for five years and is bound by certain power limits (by constitution or tradition). There is a bicameral parliament consisting of the National Assembly and the Senate.
Head Master	Campaign manager but also school director
IEBC	The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission is an independent regulator that was established by the Constitution of Kenya in 2011 and organized and monitored the elections in 2017.
KES	Kenyan shilling
Clientelism	Describes a system of personal, unequal dependency relationships in political apparatus, between influential people and their clients on the basis of performance and consideration.
Kumbu	Small fish
Manifesto	Election program of MCA candidates
Matatu	Shared taxi (minibus)
MCA	Member of the County Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament, one of 290 elected members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Kenya.
M-Pesa	System for the processing of money transfers via mobile phones without the need for a regular bank account
National Assembly	The National Assembly is the lower house of the Kenyan parliament. It faces the Senate as a second chamber. According to Article 95 of the Kenyan Constitution, the National Assembly consists of 349 deputies and a spokesman.

Nyumba Kumi	Swahili: nyumba = house; kumi = ten 10 houses are combined to form a cluster. This cluster is administratively managed and controlled by the Cluster Head, who is also called Nyumba Kumi. The Nyumba-Kumi Initiative was launched in 2013 by the Kenyan government to combat terrorism at the local level.
ODM	The Orange Democratic Movement is a party founded in Kenya in 2006. It emerged from opposition to the 2005 Kenyan constitutional referendum. Its chairman Raila Odinga challenged President Uhuru Kenyatta in 2017
Otewa	election program
Paired-IDIs	In-depth interview with 2 interview partners
Pikipiki	Motorbike taxi
Plot	Land ownership, partly allocated by the government
Primaries	Kenyan parties select their representatives for the General Elections.
Senate, Senator	The Senate is the upper house of the Kenyan parliament. Kenya's first Senate was established in 1963, but was abolished in 1966. It was only reinstated with the constitutional referendum in Kenya in 2010 and since then has been the first chamber to face the National Assembly.
Shamba	Small plot for the production of crops
Tribe	A social group that is closely linked through geographic and genealogical conditions and shares common cultural values.
Ugali-Mehl	Describes in the Swahili language, corn flour from which a corn pulp cooked to a relatively firm consistency.
Ward	1450 wards elected MPs for 47 county assemblies
Womens representative	A female representative has been elected to the National Assembly in each of the 47 counties since 2012 in order to increase the participation and visibility of women in parliament.



**Peace from the Soil**