

## Abstract

The study was commissioned by the Kenya Water Towers Agency (KWTA) to provide information that would guide the agency in achieving one of its key strategic objectives of providing community livelihood support for sustainable management of water towers. The focus of the study was to provide information on how the neighbouring community benefits from Chyulu hills water tower and also provide suggestions of the community on livelihood activities that can be undertaken to ease pressure on the hills. The study was done at Chyulu hills water tower and the neighbouring community.

Questionnaires, key informant interviews, field observations, photography and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) data collection methods were used to collect data. Focused group discussions with representatives of 10 key stakeholders involved in Chyulu hills conservation and interviews through structured questionnaires to 12 randomly selected community members residing within 10 Km from the boundary of the water tower were undertaken.

Resident's mainly apportioned their land for crop; livestock farming or both but had no land ownership documents. The main three livelihood options were livestock keeping, crop farming and poultry rearing while main crop preferences were green grams, maize and cowpeas farming. Main benefits from the forest were medicinal herbs, rain, grazing and recreation facilities. The main development options were provision of water, bee keeping, goat farming, poultry rearing, capacity building, dairy & fish farming and tree farming in the order which they are listed.

A development action plan was recommended to ease pressure and prevent destruction of the water tower. Those who benefit from the water tower could contribute towards the community development actions. The information gathered gives insights into ways of protecting water towers in Kenya and elsewhere in the world.