Self-Help Groups and Empowerment of Rural Women.
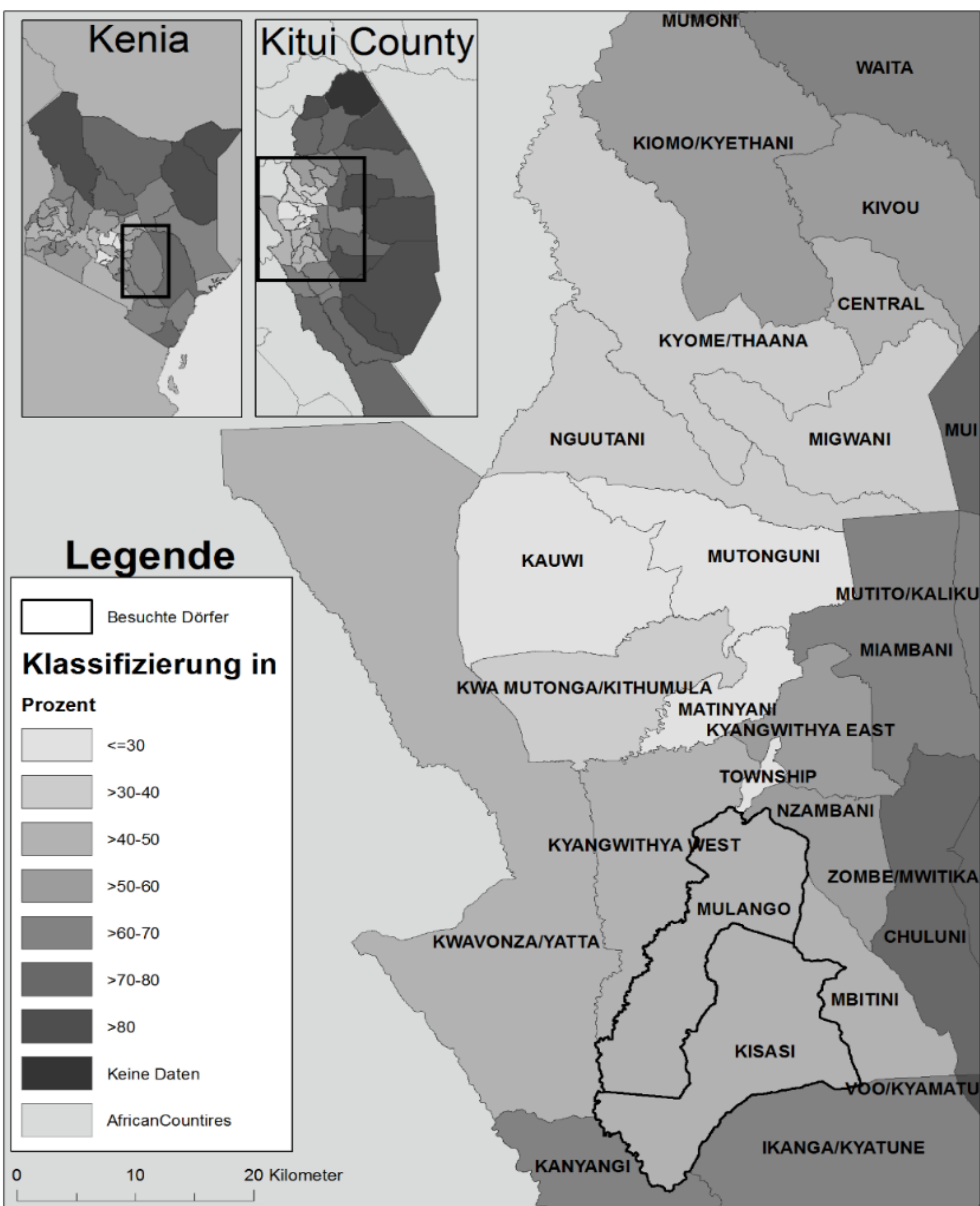# Evidence against poverty from Kitui, Kenya

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Background

Kitui County Features

➢ One of the 47 counties of Kenya
➢ Arid/semi-arid climate
➢ Structurally weak (infrastructure, education etc.)
➢ Main income source: agriculture & livestock
➢ Very low alphabetization rate (18%)
➢ Poverty level of 60% ➔ 12th poorest county in Kenya
➢ Average household size 6.9 persons (Kenya: 4.4)
➢ Challenges: Food insecurity, drought, vulnerability to crisis, scarcity of water & high population growth

Legende

Besuchte Dörfer

Klassifizierung in Prozent

<=30
>30-40
>40-50
>50-60
>60-70
>70-80
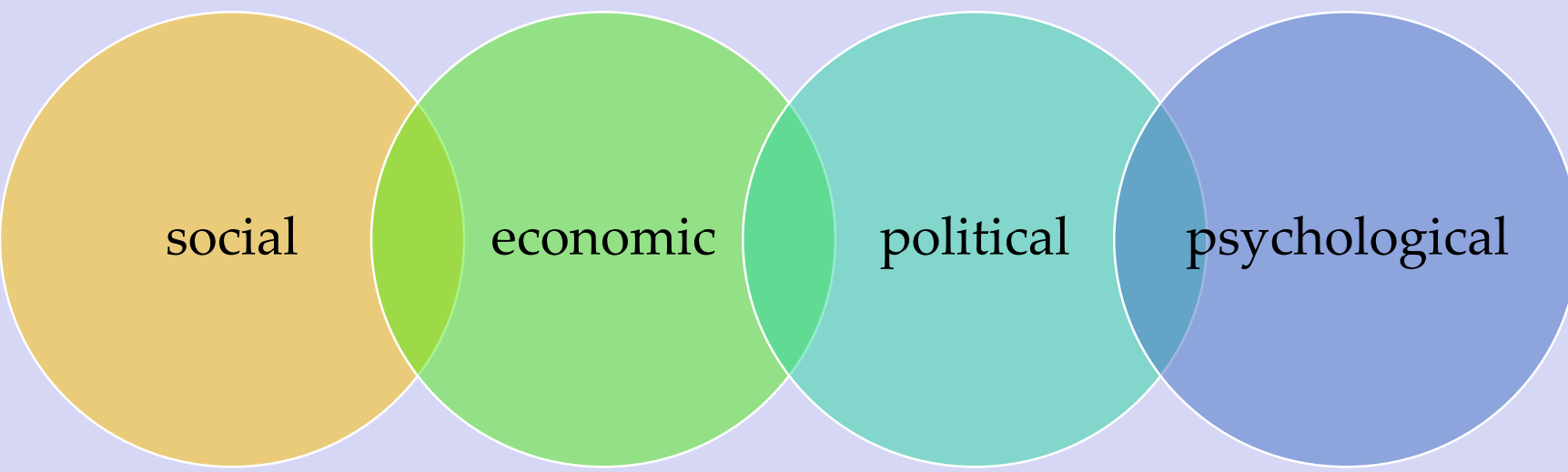>80
Keine Daten
AfricanCountires

Research Approach

➢ *Question:* Is the Self-Help Group approach an example of good practice for the reduction of poverty and food insecurity? What can we learn from the project?
➢ *Methods:* Focus Group Discussions, Income & Expenditure Ranking, Expert Interviews, Household Questionnaire Survey (n=405)

Self-Help Group Approach in Kitui, Kenya

Goals

Poverty Reduction and Empowerment of Women

social | economic | political | psychological

How the women achieve the rise out of extreme poverty:
➢ Opening shops
➢ Establishing vegetable gardens
➢ Chicken farms
➢ Food banks and meeting halls
➢ Solar light
➢ The above was achieved through resources mobilized from the Self-Help (locally known as *muvengei*) groups
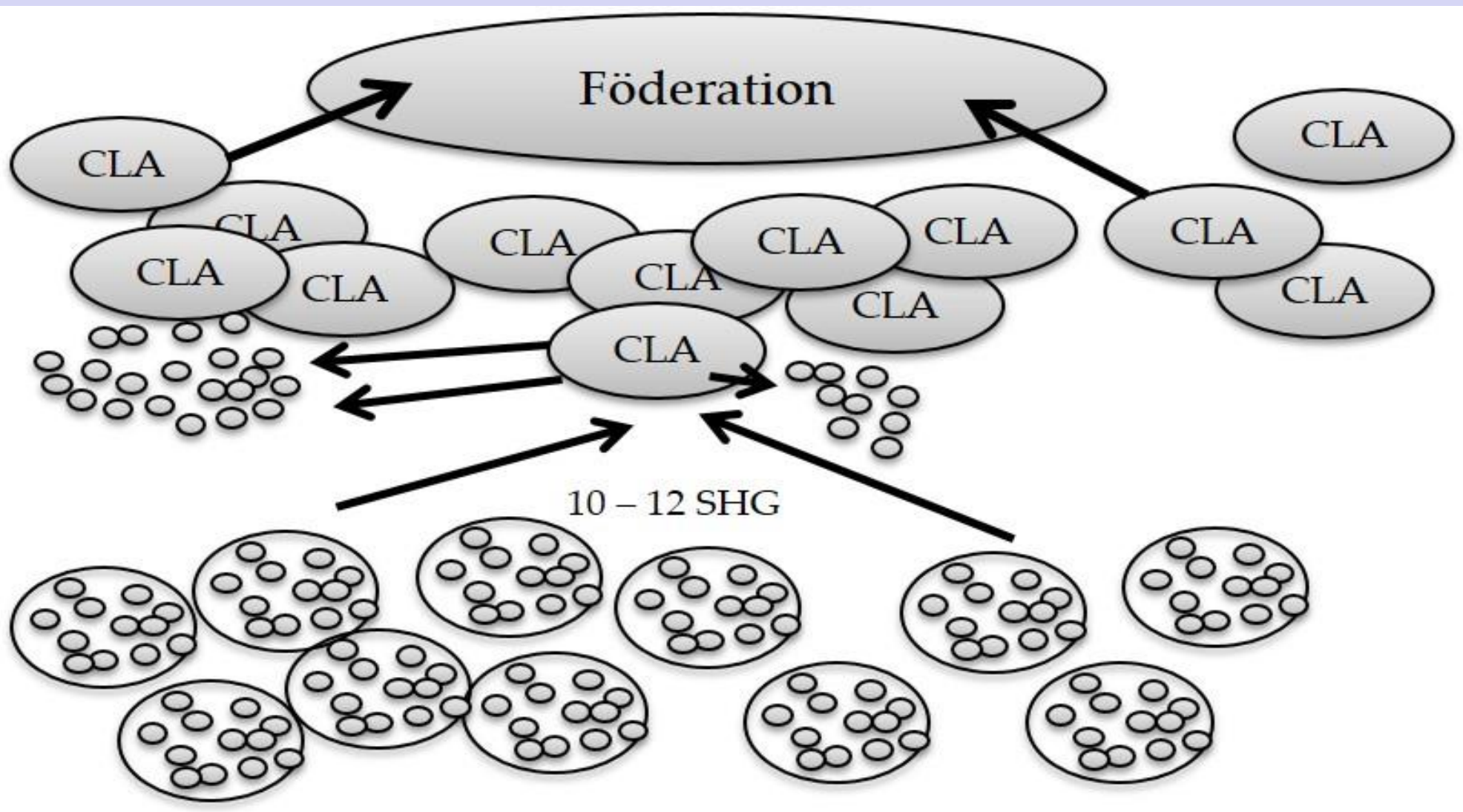

Activities

➢ Identifying the poorest of the poor
➢ Forming Self-Help Groups
➢ Introucing savings and credit in groups
➢ Training for organisation and income generation

Criteria for classifying the poor	Class 1 ("wealthier")	Class 2 (poor)	Class 3 (extremely poor)
Income	1000 KSH/day regular income	Ca. 500 KSH/day "wage labour"	< 100 KSH/day
Education of children without external support	To university level	Secondary school	To end of primary school
Land and harvest	> 2 acres 6-30 bags of maize harvest	approx. 2 acres 3-6 bags of maize harvest	< 1 acre < 3 bags of maize harvest
Livestock	>100 goats or cattle Assistance for tending livestock	2-3 goats 1 cow	No cows 1 goat / few chicken
Housing conditions	>5 rooms, corrugated iron roof, plastered walls inside and outside, furniture, perhaps electricity, TV	peaked roof, plastered walls on the inside, not outside; floor from stamped clay, perhaps no windows	House completely out of clay, flat roof, clay floor

Conclusion

Outcomes

➢ A solid structure of well organised, active, empowered women on 3 levels: Self-Help Group, Cluster Level Association (CLA) and Federation
➢ Participants rise out of extreme poverty from "class 3" to "class 2"
➢ Communities benefit from group activities like food banks, solar light, fight against female genital mutilation and child marriage, investments in infrastructure etc.

Success factors

➢ Participation and ownership

➢ Groups decide about their own activities

➢ Women have strong support from husbands and communities (project well embedded)

➢ Homogenous neighbourhood based groups

Lessons learnt for poverty reduction

➢ Approach facilitates sustainable escape from extreme poverty

➢ Self-Help Group structures can serve as an entry point for other activities, such as trainings, coaching, solid base for political influence

➢ Group savings are not sufficient for big investments

➢ Cooperation between NGO and bi- and multilateral organisations required for infrastructure development, promotion of value chains (e.g. tomatoes and other vegetables), provision of credits for agricultural production etc.