Kwale Field Visit Report

The second lot of the Ongoing Chartered mediators Course training had its planned field visit of Kwale County on 2nd September 2019. The visit targeted mining areas in the County with an intention of getting firsthand information from the miners through observations as well as holding consultative discussions with them. The places that were visited included the following.

(a) Matuga Sub-County

One of the areas visited was the Kaya Waa village in Waa Ward, which is located in Matuga Sub-county (see location in Figure 1). The village has an estimated population of 300 people residing in villages. The artisanal miners who are not permanent residents of the ward travel from various parts of Kwale county to excavate lime-stone building blocks in Matuga county but still return to their original homes. As a result, there is an increase in the informal settlements located around the mining sites.

While mining in the area is conducted in both large scale and small scale, the main focus is on the extraction of limestone blocks for construction which has attracted bigger mining companies and investors like the Bamburi Cement. In the mix of the miners, there are also the large scale investors...
involved in illegal mining activities in the area. Some of them engage in unlawful mining in the sense that they conduct their extractive operations on illegally acquired land.

Figure 2: Ongoing mining area for Coral rocks in Waa Matuga Sub CountySource: CRTP, HIPSIR

The Artisanal miners in Waa Ward include women and underage boys and girls who use crude weapons exposing themselves to pollutants that increase their risk of developing respiratory illness due to lack of protective gear and proper mining tools. On a good day, the level of income for artisanal miners in the area is as low as $5 per day because of the existing middle men in the sector. However, mining in Waa has created employment to the youth. In addition, the mining sector in the area is an important source of revenue for the county government of Kwale.

The major issues of concern in the mining sector in the area include: high rate of school dropouts due to the presence of quick money at the mining sector; low payments to miners; absence of social amenities such as hospitals, schools, and electricity; poor state of roads; and health issues. In order to address these issues of concern, artisanal miners established informing small groups that could help them to alleviate financial burdens through fundraising and merry-go-round. According to the miners, the Government has not played its role in providing the public services including social amenities that they require such as roads and hospitals.

(b) Msambweni Sub-County
Mwanduria Village, which is in Msambweni Sub-County, has a population of approximately 400 people. The major form of mining in the village is Pit sand harvesting. This mineral, which is largely available in the area, is used for construction across the county.

The major form of mining in Vidungeni village in the same sub-county is silica sand harvesting. The population of the area has been growing since the intensified mining started. The population there now stands at approximately 500 people. The area has large quantities of silica sand that is mostly harvested by artisanal miners who sell it to companies including EABL and Mili Glass Company. The sand which contains some minerals is used for manufacturing glasses while other companies extract the mineral and manufacture other products. The livelihoods of Vidungeni residents depend on this mineral which is harvested in over six mining sites.

Kwale county is well endowed with minerals and during the field visit of the of some two mining sites visited in the county where two products that is pit sand and Silica sand are mainly mined, it
was noted that the price scale offered to the artisanal miners is quite low as compared to what the middle men earn. In fact, the miners had almost similar problems witnessed in Waa Ward ranging from poor roads to lack of social amenities despite the fact that the county officials collect revenue from their activities in the area. Another major concern raised by the miners and the county ward administration present during the visit was the challenge of formation of groups by the miners, which had proven to be a hard task to tackle. The mining industry in Msambweni Sub-county comprises diverse age-groups and even employs minors. The presence of school going children in the mining area was a major concern as the rate of school dropout seems to be on the rise. Evidently, environment degradation is an issue of major concern in the area because several mining areas were left with no refills. Deforestation is rampant in mining sites (see Figure below).

![Environmental degradation from mines which were last used years ago (Waa Matuga Sub-County)](image.png)

*Source: CRTP, HIPSIR*
In order to deal with these challenges, the artisanal miners strongly advised on the need for greater empowerment in order for them to be able to negotiate for better pay and acquisition of protective gear. According to them, empowering them will make them change agents who will also empower other people who are either in mining or planning to join the mining sector.

*Figure 5: Artisanal Miners met during a visit to Silica Sand Harvesting in MsambweniVidungeni MinesSource: CRTP, HIPSIR*
Figure 6: Pit Sand Harvesting in Msambweni Sub-County MwanduriaKinondo Village
Source: CRTP, HIPSIR

Figure 7: Silica Sand Harvesting and Environment Degradation in Vidungeni Msambweni Sub-county
Source: CRTP, HIPSIR