

# The Effect of Women Empowerment on Community Development Projects Management in Rwanda: A Case of World Vision Rwanda, Byiringiro Area Program

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**Abstract:** *Women empowerment is instrumentally important for achieving positive development outcomes and well-being which lies in the doing and being what one values and have reason to value. Government initiatives alone are not sufficient to achieve the goal. Different agencies have their respective roles to play in this sphere. Besides, childbearing, childrearing and managing household chores on 24x7 basis, most women of middle and lower strata of the society now have to work outside to supplement the family income. Therefore, the need of women empowerment in community development projects can hardly be overemphasized. This study intended to analyze the effect of women political, economic and social empowerment on community development projects management and hence makes recommendations for areas of joint work that the working groups, government and Non governments Institutions could carry out in future, to improve the situation and promote sustainable welfare. The purpose of the research was to determine the effect of women empowerment on community development projects management in Rwanda. Specific objectives for this study were: to determine the effect of women economic empowerment on CDPM in Rwanda; to determine the effect of women political empowerment on CDPM in Rwanda and to determine the effect of women social empowerment on CDPM in Rwanda. The research used descriptive research design. The population of the study was 1,572 and a sample of 319 have been taken from the beneficiaries of World Vision Rwanda Projects using simple random sampling method. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire and interviews for key informants. Data was collected, analyzed and tested using descriptive statistics method and Pearson Coefficient Correlation method. The data revealed that there is a significance relationship between women's economic empowerment on community development projects with a significant of 0.732. The study also revealed that women's political empowerment on community development projects with a significant of 0.612. Women's social empowerment on community development projects had also a positive correlation with significant of 0.841. Hence the researcher recommended that, National and International Organizations promote initiatives that create a climate in which women have full opportunities of Self decision making and participating in the Social, Political and Economic life of the Country so as to improve community development projects, to avoid a reversal of the past decades' gains and build the human capital of the next generation.*

**Keywords:** Women, Women empowerment, Community development projects

## 1. Introduction

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, women empowerment has become a hot issue around the world. Modern women are seeking for equal opportunity with man and they are aggressively competing in various fields such as politics, economics and social sector. Many research also shows that women around the world are now standing equally with men in many perspectives and it is an undeniable fact to say sometimes women are far better than men when comes to certain issues. Developing countries upfront in empowered woman in many areas where their social background, culture and education level plays a vital role in getting women empowered. Empowered women are contributing towards the development of their country's economic, social and politics (Selvi and Bakialekshmi, 2017).

Women and girls constitute two-thirds of the world's poor and women account for two-thirds of the world's 792 million illiterate adults. Despite progress towards gender parity in education, 35 million girls of primary school age and 37 million girls of lower secondary school age are out of school. Women's voices are not heard in decision making or policy making processes. The levels of violence against women globally are unacceptable with 7 out of 10 women reporting having experienced violence in their lifetime

(UNESCO, 2014). In 1995, nearly two-thirds of countries (61.6%) had less than 10 per cent women in their single or lower houses of parliament. Nearly all (88.1%) had less than 20 per cent. A mere 2.8 per cent of parliaments had attained 30 per cent or more. By 2015, only 20 per cent of countries had less than 10 per cent women parliamentarians. A majority (53.2%) still have fewer than 20 per cent (IPU, 2015).

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Rwanda's poverty profile indicates that women are more affected by poverty than their male counterparts, with 47% of female headed households being poor compared to 44.9% of all households. Women represent 52% of the population, yet despite progress, they do not participate fully in socio-economic and political spheres of life. Women provide the bulk of labour in the crop sector, but function mainly at subsistence level with insufficient skills, access to markets and control over land and other agricultural facilities (EDPRS, 2013). At the national level, 28.7 % of private households are headed by women and 32.3% of private households in Karongi District are headed by women (NISR, 2015). Women comprise 53% of Rwanda's adult labor force, while 30 % of girls from ages 5 to 14 are engaged in child labor. Improving incomes for female entrepreneurs

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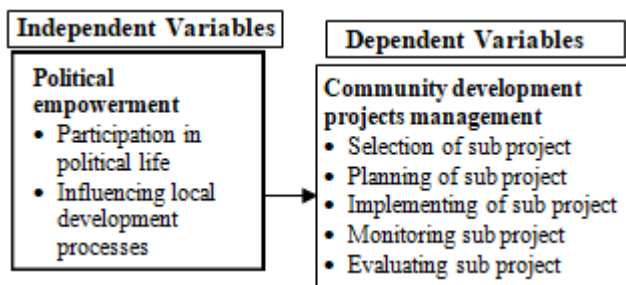
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tends to create more benefits for children, including improved nutrition and access to education (UNICEF, 2013). Women experience barriers in almost every aspect of work. Employment opportunities need to be improved. At the same time women perform the bulk of unpaid care work. This is an area for greater attention by development actors through increased recognition and valuing of the ways in which care work supports thriving economies (OECD, 2011). As Rwanda is progressing well in term of women’s empowerment, Women continue to experience challenges in term of family life issues, harder work, less pay, education and training issues, social and systemic issues etc. These are due to lower level of literacy, lower levels of access to and control over resources, lower levels of access to networks and people who can assist and support, greater vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse at the community level, if not the household level, lower level of access to the opportunity and benefit to socio economic aspects. Indeed, women’s caregiver responsibilities, women’s participation in political and public life can be significantly limited by patriarchal culture where women are not considered socially active in decision making. However, Efforts by the government are on to ensure women empowerment but Government initiatives alone would not be sufficient. National and International Organizations must take initiative to create a climate in which women have full opportunities of Self decision making and participating in the Social, Political and Economic life of the Country so as to avoid a reversal of the past decades' gains to build the human capital for the next generations.

**3. Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to analyze the effect of women’s empowerment on community development projects management in Rwanda. Its specific objective was to determine the effect of women’s political empowerment on community development projects management in Rwanda

**4. Conceptual Framework of the Study**



**5. Methodology**

- **Research Design:** A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.
- **Target Population:** This study targeted 1,572 women’s caregivers working with World Vision Rwanda, Byiringiro Area Program in Karongi district.
- **Sample size:** Approximately 319 questionnaires were distributed to 319 women’s caregivers

- **Data Collection Instruments:** Data was collected through two primary data collection methods: individual Interviews and key informant interviews and secondary data through reports, publications and other different documents related to the study.
- **Data Analysis:**Data collected were carefully compiled, sorted, edited, classified, coded and checked for accuracy and relevancy. Having clean data, the next step was to study the variables by aggregating them to obtain the solid variables of the community development projects management and women empowerment which was done with the help of SPSS program using statistical description. Descriptive statistics were used to compute the relative frequency distributions of all variables.

**6. Research Findings**

**6.1 The criteria and conditions followed to select beneficiaries of the World Vision project**

**Table 1:** Areas of intervention of World Vision

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Education and life skills	24	7.5	7.5	7.5
Livelihood and Resilience	70	21.9	21.9	29.5
Health and WASH	91	28.5	28.5	58
Resettlement and shelter improvement	42	13.2	13.2	71.2
Child protection and fighting against Gender Based violence	92	28.8	28.8	100
Total	319	100	100	

Source: **Primary data**

The findings in table above reveal that a high number of respondents 28.8% said that the area of intervention by the project was child protection and fighting against Gender based violence; 28.5% was Health and WASH; 21.9% was livelihood and Resilience; Resettlement and shelter improvement followed with 13.2% and 7.5% for education and life skills. Furthermore, the study discovered that World Vision projects in the study area are primarily engaged in interventions that will meet the immediate and long term needs of beneficiaries with respect of World Vision identity as child focused organization, working for transformational development and sustainability.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics of the effects of Political empowerment on CDDM after working with World Vision

Type	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
<b>Political empowerment</b>						
Participation and deciding in local government programs affect CDDM	0.6	3.1	8.8	41.7	45.8	4.3
Participation and deciding in community groups affect	0	1.9	0	29.8	68.3	4.6

CDPM						
Women's ability to set and influence the political discourse affect CDPM	0.6	1.2	7.5	26.7	64	4.5

Source: Primary data

From above table, Participation and deciding in community groups was reported at 98.1% (68.3% strongly agreed and 29.8% agreed) to have a high effect on community development project management with a mean of 4.3 and Only 1.9% of the respondents were disagreed. Women’s ability to set and influence the political discourse was seconded with 90.7% (64% strongly agreed and 26.7 agreed) and 4.5 as calculated mean. In contrast to this, 0.6 % of the respondents were strongly disagreed, 3.1 disagreed and 8.8% were not sure but their implication to change the effect of participation and deciding in community groups programs on CDPM is insignificant.

Indeed, 87.5% of the respondents in which 41.7 strongly agreed and 45.8 agreed that Participation and deciding in local government programs in local government affect community development project management” and this tailed with a mean of 4.3. A small number of respondent contrasted; whereby 0.6 strongly disagreed, 3,1 disagreed and 8.8 reported to be not sure. Considering political empowerment sub contents as testified by respondents, women’s ability to set and influence the political discourse is very crucial on community development project management in Karongi district where Byiringiro AP is located. These views are similar to what had earlier been established in the literature by Gale (2004). The community participation helps to achieve greater citizen’s satisfaction with their communities and development at large. Therefore, the active community participation is a key for building an empowered and responsible community.

**Table 3:** Correlation between political empowerment on CDPM

		Political empowerment	Community Development projects management
Political empowerment	Pearson Correlation	1	.612**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.055
	N	319	319
Community Development projects	Pearson Correlation	.612**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	
	N	319	319

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above shows that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient value is ( $r=.612$ ). According to critical values of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, when using the critical value table, the absolute value of  $r=.612$  indicates a positive relationship, strong relationship and significant relationship ( $.055>.05$ ) between political empowerment and community development project. Therefore, it can be established that political empowerment has positive influence on community

development project in Karongi district of Rwanda. This would thus mean that if political empowerment is well-thought-out may improve the community development project management.

**Table 4:** Coefficient results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.360	.299		4.548	.000
	Economic empowerment	.365	.074	.325	4.952	.000
	Political empowerment	.147	.059	.134	2.495	.013
	Social empowerment	.188	.063	.179	2.962	.003

From the data in the above table the established regression equation was

$$Y = 1.360 + 0.365 X_1 + 0.147 X_2 + 0.188 X_3$$

From the above regression equation, it was revealed that Economic empowerment, Political empowerment and Social empowerment. to a constant zero, Community development project would be at 1.360. A unit increase on Economic empowerment would lead to increase in Community development project by a factor of 0.365, a unit increase in Political empowerment would lead to increase in Community development project by a factor of 0.147 and a unit increase in Social empowerment would lead to increase in Community development project by a factor of 0.188. During the study, researcher acquired evidences from a conversation with the majority of key informants showed that women’s well being has been improved with the interventions of World Vision Rwanda Project whereby women were highly considered during interventions related to participation in decision making; capacity building, project selection, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation as well. This implies that there is a positive effect between women empowerment and CDPM and that the model is a good fit for the data.

## 7. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 7.1 Conclusions

The result indicated that, women’s political empowerment Pearson Correlation Coefficient value is ( $r=.612$ ). According to critical values of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, when using the critical value table, the absolute value of  $r=.612$  shows a positive relationship, strong relationship and significant relationship ( $.056>.05$ ) between political empowerment and community development projects. Therefore, it can be established that political empowerment has positive influence on community development project in Karongi district of Rwanda. This would thus mean that if political empowerment is well-thought-out may improve the community development project.

### 7.2 Recommendations

World Vision should adapt existing training programs and setup new ones in response to women’ needs. With respect



to introductory training, transparency and full understanding of selection modalities must be ensured. The government of Rwanda should sensitize decision makers on the importance of women empowerment, urge local government and women's representatives at the grass root levels to advocate for women's right; train women on family conflict management and income generating projects.

Further, Global Vision Project should expand its services in rural areas to facilitate poor women in village because rural women are the ones who are vulnerable to poverty, economic exclusion, and unemployment, uneducated and having no collateral.

An internal communication and decision-making structure between the projects actors at all levels should be put in place. These structures should be participatory and provide ample space for all actors, especially beneficiaries and service provider, to include their ideas and practical experiences and discuss what assistance they need to successfully support women's empowerment.

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