

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS ON ENHANCING POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN RWANDA. A CASE STUDY OF RUBAYA DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

The essence of this research was to assess the effect of the community empowerment projects on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project. The study objectives were to: determine the effect of access to finance on enhancing poverty alleviation, establish the effect of training & capacity development on enhancing poverty alleviation, find out the effect of project follow-ups on enhancing poverty alleviation and examine the effect of project infrastructure on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project. The study adopted a descriptive survey design that combined both quantitative and qualitative research designs, techniques and measures. The study covered a total of 139 respondents comprising of 131 project beneficiaries and 8 key informants. The key informants were drawn from the project stakeholders & officials. This study used three basic methods for collecting data which included a semi-structured questionnaire, an interview guide and a review of secondary data from the Rubaya, REMA and other sources. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered to the project beneficiaries while interview guides were administered to key project officials & stakeholders. Data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v20); questions in the research instruments were coded, variables defined and keyed into the computer after responses were entered. Descriptive statistics including frequency distribution tables & percentages and Pearson's coefficient correlation was used in data analysis. The results revealed that out of the four independent variables used to measure community empowerment project, at least three variables – access to finance, training & capacity development and project infrastructure - were statistically significant. Evidently, community empowerment project strategies such as access to finance, training & capacity development, project infrastructure among other attributes not set out in this study led to significant reduction in poverty levels among the Rubaya Demonstration project beneficiaries. This informed the conclusion that while some aspects of community empowerment project attributes were seen to be extremely effective or effective in enhancing poverty alleviation, the project implementers had not necessarily exhausted out all strategies to successfully enhance poverty alleviation. Finally, it was recommended that, for efforts in poverty alleviation to be sustained, implementers should not only focus on raising income alone but also focus on developing mutual learning activities where project direct and indirect beneficiaries would embrace a fully participatory approach in enhancement of poverty alleviation.

KEY WORDS: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Community empowerment practitioners have over many years developed a range of approaches for working within local communities and in particular with disadvantaged people. Since the nineteen sixties and seventies through the various anti-poverty programs in both developed and developing countries, community development practitioners have been influenced by structural analyses as to the causes of disadvantage and poverty i.e. inequalities in the distribution of wealth, income and land, especially political power and the need to mobilize people power to affect social change. There are a number of international organizations that support community development, for example, Oxfam, UNICEF, The Hunger Project and Freedom from Hunger, run community development programs based upon community development initiatives for relief and prevention of malnutrition (Mc Inshand Renard, 2010).

In the United States in the 1960s, the term community empowerment began to complement and generally replace the idea of urban renewal, which typically focused on physical development projects often at the expense of working-class communities. In the late 1960s, philanthropies such as the Ford Foundation and government officials took an interest in local nonprofit organizations National organizations (Rich & Stoker, 2009). In the UK Community empowerment has had two main traditions. The first was as an approach for preparing for the independence of countries from the former British Empire in the 1950s and 1960s.(Craig, 2014). Community development in Australia have often been focused upon Aboriginal Australian communities, and during the period of 21st century were funded through the Community Employment Development Program, where Aboriginal people could be employed in a work for a scheme, which gave the chance for non-government organizations to apply for a full or part-time worker funded by the Department for Social Security (Anu, and Pernille, 2011).

According to the statistical evidence available in 2014, It was indicated that 62% of the Zimbabwean population is reported to be living in households with income per person below a level sufficient to provide the basic needs like food, shelter, clothing, education, access to health and other social services(Pius & Mulwaini, 2014).The Community Empowerment Projects are funded by the World Bank administered Trust Fund for East Timor, the project's aims are to provide support for poverty alleviation and to strengthen the capacity of community institutions, Community empowerment drawing on the history of utopian movements became important in the 1920s and 1930s in East Africa, where community development proposals were seen as a way of helping local people improve their own lives with indirect assistance from colonial authorities(Amin, 2005). In Tanzania Community empowerment projects became a part of the Ujamaa Villages established by Julius Nyerere, where it had some success in assisting with the delivery of education services throughout rural areas, but has elsewhere met with mixed success (Dorothy,alison and Paula , 2010).

It is very important for poor people to participate in activities and take action in programs and projects offered to them. Poor people in local communities need to be organized to take care of themselves. Therefore, community empowerment through local organization enables people to work together, mobilize their resources, and organize themselves to help solve their problems (Ahmad, 2015). Rwanda has made good progress over the last two decades since the enormous challenges faced in the aftermath of a genocide that destroyed the entire social and economic fabric of this country and through differences of non-government organizations working in country, Rwandans have benefited from rapid economic growth,

reduced poverty, more equality and increased access to services including health and education. This has been possible only through the hard work and dedication of millions of Rwandans supported by friends of Rwanda. Our progress strengthens the belief that our development ambitions towards the Vision 2020 can be achieved with our concerted efforts by knowing through to community empowerment we always overcome (International Monetary Fund, 2013).

Rubaya demonstration project was designed and implemented by the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) with the primary objective of demonstrating or showcasing how integrated environmental management approaches can help realize poverty reduction and economic development in a sustainable way. The project launched in July/August 2008, established a “green” village of 43 households with a population of 200 people in Kabeza village, Nyamiyaga cell, Rubaya sector of Gicumbi district (Charles, & Alfred, 2014). The project was implemented in Kageyo village (*Umudugudu*) in Nyamiyaga cell of Rubaya sector, in the framework of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP) under the EDPRS I especially under pillar 2 Vision 2020 Umurenge Program (VUP), and the Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) phase II funded by UNEP/UNDP. The primary aim of the Rubaya Demonstration Project was intended to practically illustrate how livelihood and economic development activities that integrate sound environmental sustainability and climate resilience strategies can assist to realize rapid poverty reduction, equitable economic growth and sustainable livelihoods, and other development goals

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Inequity and power imbalances, adverse employment conditions and the lack of economic opportunities or control over assets are all manifestations of peoples’ disempowerment and contribute to their poverty, where at least 80% of humanity live on less than \$10 a day and 75% of the world’s poorest countries are located in Africa. The main problems faced by LDCs include, insufficient accountability, lack of managerial skills, lack of access to financial resources, and the main solution of this may be community empowerment (Hidayat, Takash& Ken, 2011).

Although community empowering projects are increasing in Least Developed Countries (LDC), Most Least Developed Countries are characterized by the large number of poor people, identified as those living on less than US\$ 2 a day. For instance, in the period 1995-1999, for the group of LDCs for which data is available, 81 per cent of the population lived on less than US\$ 2 a day, while 50 per cent lived in extreme poverty, such as less than US\$ 1 a day(Binger, 2004). Even though, several studies suggested different mechanisms that should be used for poverty alleviation, the rate of population under poverty line is still high especially in rural areas.

Therefore, this study wanted to assess the effect of community empowerment projects on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rwanda, a case study of the Rubaya Demonstration Project. The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (2011) place Gicumbi district – the location of the Rubaya Demostration Project – as registering the highest percentage of extremely poor population at 33.90%.. This is despite the fact that Gicumbi District is littered with a number of community empowerment projects, compared to other districts within the Northern Province. While some important strides have been achieved owing to the implementation of Community Empowerment projects, it remains unclear how effective these projects have been including researching on the links between empowerment and poverty reduction. Gicumbi population has made some considerable achievements in the local initiatives implemented, but these have neither been evaluated nor linked to clearly map out specific achievements and factors responsible, and draw key

challenges that can inform future work; Republic of Rwanda (2008). It is against this backdrop that the researcher is seeking to establish the effectiveness of community empowerment projects on enhancing poverty alleviation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the effect of community empowerment projects on enhancing poverty alleviation, a case study of Rubaya demonstration project.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

It was also guided by following specific objectives:

1. To determine the effect of access to finance on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project
2. To establish the effect of training & capacity development on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project
3. To find out the effect of project follow-ups on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project
4. To examine the effect of project infrastructure on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews necessary literature related to community empowerment and poverty alleviation. This chapter consists of introduction to the chapter, theoretical review, conceptual framework, empirical review, Critique of existing literature relevant to the Study and Summary.

2.2 Review of Theoretical Literature

2.2.1 Theories of Community Empowerment

According to Anu and Pernille (2011) the models of the parallel tracks 'program planning elaborated by Laverack (1999) confirming that empowerment evaluation was explained as the use of concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and self-poverty alleviation.

Theories of intergenerational poverty claim that behavioral preferences highlighted in classical theories are passed across generations within dynastic families, due either to a genetic component or upbringing. so as children growing up in dysfunctional families feed from the deviant behavior of their progenitors, who tend to act as role models (Blank, 2010). Contributions arising from this perspective assert that the intergenerational transmission of attitudes relating to poverty can be perpetuated via a persisting "culture of poverty" may help poor families cope with low economic means. The behavioral view was also pervasive during the 19th century, when it was generally believed that "poverty was necessary because otherwise the laborers would not be motivated to work (Townsend, 1979).

The study also turns to the analysis of the main economic theories of poverty, with particular attention given to their relevance. This analysis is divided into sections describing the broad economic frameworks to which each of the theories belong. It begins with the treatment of poverty by the neoclassical theory, or the so-called "orthodox" approaches, which initiated the formal analysis of poverty in the 19th century.

Accordingly, poverty is mainly seen as a consequence of poor individual choices (e.g. the poor lack of "self-control") that affect productivity negatively, although it is also acknowledged that pure differences in underlying genetic abilities are also potential causes of poverty. The wrong choices made by individuals may lead them to find themselves in a poverty or welfare trap. Beyond a minimum level to prevent destitution, state intervention is generally viewed adversely as a source of economic inefficiency; by generating incentives that are misaligned between poor individuals and society as a whole, welfare programs are perceived as potential causes for reinforcement of poverty.

2.2.2 Theory on Community participation

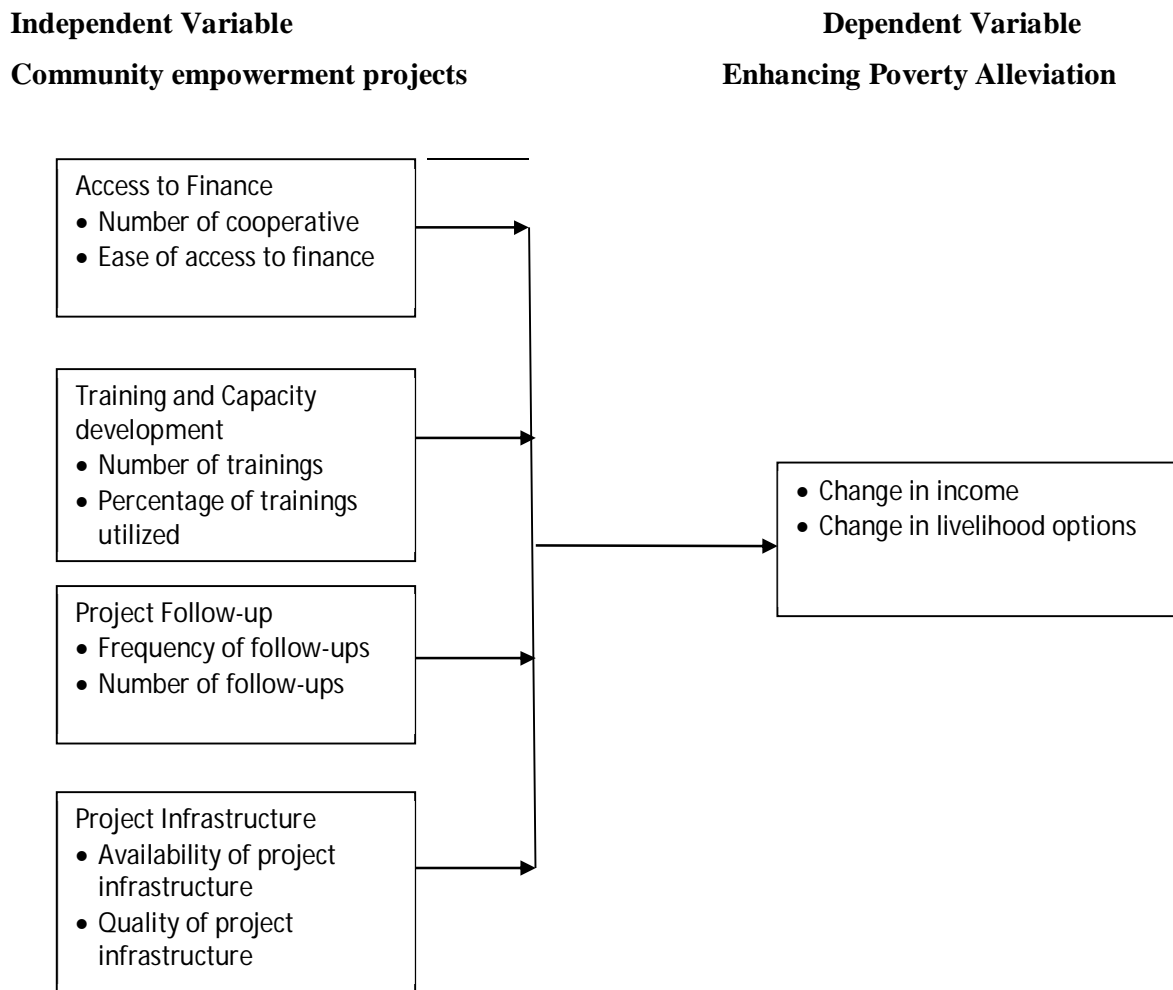
Community participation theory was launched, beginning in the 1950s (Day 1997), with the underlying assumption that if citizens became actively involved as participants in their democracy, the governance that emerged from this process would be more effective. Citizen participation is a process which provides private individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process. The roots of community participation were traced to ancient Greece and Colonial New England. Before the 1960s, governmental processes and procedures were designed to facilitate community participation. Public involvement is means to ensure that citizens have a direct voice in public decisions.

Arguments for enhanced community participation often rest on the merits of the process and the belief that an engaged citizenry is better than a passive citizenry. With citizen participation, formulated policies might be more realistically grounded in citizen preferences, the public might become more sympathetic evaluators of the tough decisions that government administrators have to make, and the improved support from the public might create a less divisive, combative populace to govern and regulate the project (Jephias and Muyengwa, 2014).

2.3 Conceptual framework

This demonstrates the opportunities and activities Community Empowerment projects offer that have bearing on poverty alleviation. It is expected that Community Empowerment project and its associated activities mentioned as independent variables, will allow community members to actively get involved in project approval which will adversely promotes effectiveness in project management. It should be noted however that, Community Empowerment project aims at creating an environment in which community members will increase involvement in the development project, which would ultimately lead to project sustainability after the withdraw of external stakeholders. It is hoped that Community Empowerment will bring closer community members in the project activities which will ultimately lead to sustainable transfer of resources to community ownership and control thereby alleviating poverty.

Figure 2.16: Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher (2016)

Figure 1 The above conceptual model has been developed to show the relationship between community empowerment projects and enhancing poverty alleviation.

From the above conceptual framework, Community empowerment project attributes form the independent variable while enhancing poverty alleviation form the dependent variable. The independent variables include; access to finance, training & capacity development, project follow-up and project infrastructure.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter points out the research methodology and gives a brief overview about the research design; description of the research population and sampling procedures with inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as, the research instruments. It also shows how data was gathered, managed and analyzed.

3.2 Research Design

Creswell (1994) defined a research design as a detailed outline of how investigation takes place. A research design typically elaborates how data is to be collected, what instruments have been employed, how the instruments has been used and the intended means for analyzing data collected. According to Burns and Grove (2003), descriptive research “is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens”. It may be used to justify current practice and make judgment and also to develop theories.

This study adopted descriptive design to get results expected from this study. This design is not only quick and inexpensive but is also descriptive in nature (Kothari, 2004). Kothari goes on to note that a design which yields maximum information is considered most appropriate and efficient design.

3.3 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Rubaya. This area was chosen because the knowledge scheme for productive activities of citizens who borrow knowledge from the demonstration. All village citizens were included in the study.

3.4 Target Population

Kothari (2004) asserts that population refers to elements that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a study. Rubaya Demonstration project beneficiary community members including men, women and children formed the target population for the research study. Moreover, to enrich the data gathered for the study, Rubaya Demonstration project officials and key stakeholders were also targeted.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Area	Population
Gicumbi District	397871
Rubaya sector	10509
Rubaya Demonstration	200

Source: Rwanda national statistics Report, 2013

3.5 Sampling Techniques

As the number of population was finite, the sample size was calculated using Cochran’s formula. Cochran (1963) quoted by Neerchal, Lacayo & Nussbaum, (2007), the sample size determination using Cochran’s formulas assumes alpha level at 0.05, acceptable error at 5%, and estimates the standard deviation 0.5. Using

the formula;

$$n = \frac{t^2 Pq}{d^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384.16$$

Where;

n= the desired sample size

t= the standard normal deviate set at 1.96 corresponding to 95% confidence level

P= the proportion in the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured

q= 1-P or (1-0.5) hence equals 0.5

d= the level of statistical significance usually set at 0.05

$$n \text{ adjusted} = \frac{n N}{n + N} = \frac{384 \times 200}{384 + 200} = \sim 131.406384$$

Calculating our n adjusted as shown above, the researcher obtained a sample of 131 respondents.

3.6 Sampling design

Concerning the components of the sample, the researcher used probability sampling for the Rubaya Demonstration Project beneficiaries; grouping them into clusters as shown in Table 3.2. Rubaya demonstration beneficiaries were proportionately pooled into households depending on the location of their houses. However, the researcher picked simple random sampling to select Rubaya Demonstration project officials and stakeholders; 30% of the population formed the sample size as shown in Table 3.2. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), note that a sample size of 10% – 30% is statistically significant in a study that is dealing with a considerably small population size.

Table 3.2: Sample Size for Respondents

Description	Population Size	Sample Size	Remarks
Rubaya Demonstration Project Beneficiaries	200	131	Cluster Sampling
Rubaya Project Officials & Stakeholders	26	8	30%
Total	226	139	

3.7 Sources of Data

A source is one of the materials the researcher uses for collecting information during the investigation. While defining sources of data, Berman defined a source as a base upon which things or ideas are drawn. The sources of data are both primary and secondary (Berman, 1995).

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the research study. The statistical techniques involved in this study include means, frequencies, and percentages, coefficient of variation, correlation and regression tests. The findings presented under the sections were guided by the following research questions: How does access to finance enhance poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project? To what extent does training & capacity development enhance poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project? Do project follow-ups enhance poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project? How does project infrastructure enhance poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration Project?

Finally, the last section reveals detailed findings of qualitative review on the interview guides administered to a sample of Rubaya Demonstration Project key stakeholders.

4.2 General Information

This section includes the general information about the research study respondents including the demographic information of the respondents.

4.2.1 Response Rate

The response rate indicates the number of respondents who took part in the study. The total sample size for this study was set at 131 respondents, that is, the beneficiaries of the Rubaya Demonstration Project. Out of the questionnaires distributed, fully filled 131 questionnaires had relevant information that could be entered and analyzed. This represents a response rate of 100%.

4.2.2 Gender of the Respondents

This was not purposive or pre-planned but occurred randomly. Table 4.1 shows the composition of gender among the respondents. Females formed the larger percentage of the respondents interviewed at 55.7% followed by males at 44.3%. These findings imply that there were more females than males in the sample population.

Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	73	55.70%
Male	58	44.30%
Total	131	100%

4.2.3 Age of the Respondents

Thirty four percent of the respondents aged between 35 years to 44 years formed the larger part of the respondents while the least represented age group was 65 years and above. The rest of the respondents' age

group was represented as follows; aged between 25 years and 34 years was 25.2%, aged between 15 years and 24 years was 16.8%, aged between 45 years to 54 years was 15.3% and 55 years to 64 years was 7.6%.

As at the time of this data collection, the oldest respondent was 65 years while the youngest was 17 years. Approximately 76% of the respondents were aged below 45 years thus were in a better place to realize accrued & indicated long-term benefits of the Rubaya Demonstration Project estimated to last for about 20 years from the initial project investments.

Table 4.2: Age Groups of the Respondents

Grouped Ages of the Respondents	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
15yrs - 24yrs	22	16.8	16.8
25yrs - 34yrs	33	25.2	42.0
35yrs - 44yrs	45	34.3	76.3
45yrs - 54yrs	20	15.3	91.6
55yrs - 64yrs	10	7.6	99.2
65yrs & above	1	.8	100.0
Total	131	100.0	

4.2.4 Household Heads among Respondents

Most of the households were headed by males (69.5%) with female-headed households at 30.5%. Even though in households that were female-headed, it was found that most of their decision-making was still made by men who were either brother, father of the house head or a non-relative whom the house head cohabited with.

Table 4.3 shows the frequency and percentages of the house heads within the households in Rubaya Demonstration project.

Table 4.3: Households Heads among the Respondents

Description	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male-Headed	91	69.5	69.5
Female-Headed	40	30.5	100.0
Total	131	100.0	

4.2.5 Level of Education of Respondents

The respondents were asked to specify their completed level of education. The findings are as shown in Table 4.4. The responses show that most of the respondents have completed both tertiary (44.3%) and secondary (38.1%) education followed by primary education at 9.2% and lastly university education at only 4.6%.

Table 4.4: Level of Education

Level of education of the respondent	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary	12	9.2	9.2
Secondary	50	38.1	47.3
Tertiary	58	44.3	91.6
University	6	4.6	96.2
Other	5	3.8	100.0
Total	131	100.0	

4.3 Effectiveness of Community Empowerment Projects

This study sought to assess the effectiveness of community empowerment projects on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration project. The four independent variables include; access to finance, training & capacity development, project follow-up and project infrastructure. The results are discussed below:

4.3.1 Access to finance and Enhancing Poverty Alleviation

Table 4.5 presents findings on the perceptions of effectiveness of access to finance on enhancing poverty alleviation. A more detailed discussion is presented later.

Table 4.5: Access to Finance and Enhancing Poverty Alleviation

Statement	Response	Freq.	%	Mean
Formation & existence of cooperative societies related to Rubaya Demo project to enhance poverty alleviation are	Extremely	54	41.20%	3.96
	Quite Effective	45	34.40%	
	Effective	15	11.50%	
	Not Quite Effective	7	5.30%	
	Extremely Ineffective	10	7.60%	
	Total	131	100%	
Processes & time taken to access finance related to Demonstration project are	Extremely	24	18.30%	3
	Quite Effective	31	23.70%	
	Effective	26	19.80%	
	Not Quite Effective	21	16.00%	
	Extremely Ineffective	29	22.10%	
	Total	131	100%	
The sources of financing provided as part of Demonstration project are	Extremely	43	32.80%	3.67
	Quite Effective	34	26.00%	
	Effective	33	25.20%	
	Not Quite Effective	10	7.60%	
	Extremely Ineffective	11	8.40%	
	Total	131	100%	
Other loan sources not related to Rubaya Demo project are	Extremely	28	21.40%	3.01
	Quite Effective	21	16.00%	
	Effective	30	22.90%	
	Not Quite Effective	29	22.10%	
	Extremely Ineffective	23	17.60%	
	Total	131	100%	

Table 4.5 shows the summarized responses to the four statements concerning the effectiveness of access to finance. In the first statement, a majority of the respondents (41.20%) felt that formation and existence of cooperative societies to enhance poverty alleviation was extremely effectively. Conversely, 5.30% of the respondents felt that it was not quite effective.

Responses regarding the second statement were spread among the options with 47 of the respondents having the view that the processes and time taken to access finance was either not quite effective or extremely ineffective. Only 18.30% of the respondents felt the processes and time taken to access finance was extremely effective.

Effectiveness on the sources of finance provided by the Rubaya Demonstration project recorded a mean of 3.67 indicating the sources were regarded as effective. Majority of the respondents (32.80%) viewed the sources of finance provided as extremely effective while only 7.60% felt the sources of finance provided were not quite effective.

On the fourth statement, when asked how they perceived other sources of finance that were not related to Rubaya Demonstration project, 30 respondents were of the view that these other sources were effective whereas 21 respondents (the least number) recorded other sources of finance as quite effective.

According to the study findings, it is evident that a majority of the Rubaya demonstration project beneficiaries welcomed the formation of cooperative societies as a way of enhancing poverty alleviation. However, respondents wanted the cooperative societies to do more in terms of improving on their loan processes and fast-tracking time taken to service the same.

4.3.2 Training & Capacity Development and Enhancing Poverty Alleviation

Table 4.6 presents findings on the perceptions of effectiveness of training & capacity development on enhancing poverty alleviation. A more detailed discussion is presented later.

Table 4.6: Training & Capacity Development and enhancing poverty alleviation

Statement	Response	Freq.	%	Mean
Trainings undertaken in the Rubaya projects to beneficiaries are	Extremely Effective	53	40.50%	3.95
	Quite Effective	37	28.20%	
	Effective	26	19.80%	
	Not Quite Effective	12	9.20%	
	Extremely Ineffective	3	2.30%	
	Total	131	100%	
Rubaya project implementers training to equip beneficiaries with capacity to create opportunities, sustain & maintain project successes are	Extremely Effective	59	45.00%	4.02
	Quite Effective	42	32.10%	
	Effective	15	11.50%	
	Not Quite Effective	4	3.10%	
	Extremely Ineffective	11	8.40%	
	Total	131	100%	
Training & capacity development activities to increase awareness on importance of sustainable environmental management to poverty alleviation is	Extremely Effective	50	38.20%	3.74
	Quite Effective	33	25.20%	
	Effective	24	18.30%	
	Not Quite Effective	12	9.20%	
	Extremely Ineffective	12	9.20%	
	Total	131	100%	

On the first statement poised to the elements, 40.50% of the respondent perceived training provided to the beneficiaries as extremely effective. Only 3 respondents (2.30%) perceived trainings undertaken by the Rubaya Demonstration project implementers as extremely ineffective. Some beneficiaries interviewed cited the following as some of the trainings offered to them, these include; Trainings on Fuel use with respect to biogas, solar lamp, importance of green energy use & energy saving tips and also trainings on handling & maintaining water facilities like reservoirs, filters & tanks to encourage clean water use.

45.00% of the respondents viewed trainings offered by Rubaya project implementers as extremely effective in equipping beneficiaries with the necessary skills & capacity to create opportunities, sustain and maintain project successes. 4 of the respondents at 3.10% disagreed with this view recorded it as not quite effective. Most respondents valued this aspect of training & capacity development recording the highest mean at 4.02. Asked whether training & capacity development activities increased awareness on importance of sustainable environmental management to poverty alleviation, majority of the respondents were of the view these trainings efforts were effective recording a mean of 3.74.

4.3.3 Project Follow-up and Enhancing Poverty Alleviation

Table 4.7 presents findings on the perceptions of effectiveness of project follow-up on enhancing poverty alleviation. A more detailed discussion is presented later.

Table 4.7: Project Follow-up and enhancing poverty alleviation

Statement	Response	Freq.	%	Mean
Follow-up activities in Rubaya demonstration project meant to increase citizen participation & enhancing poverty alleviation are	Extremely Effective	23	17.60%	2.96
	Quite Effective	29	22.10%	
	Effective	29	22.10%	
	Not Quite Effective	21	16.00%	
	Extremely Ineffective	29	22.10%	
	Total	131	100%	
Donor engagement & Rubaya project implementers follow-up activities are	Extremely Effective	18	13.70%	2.4
	Quite Effective	10	7.60%	
	Effective	20	15.30%	
	Not Quite Effective	42	32.10%	
	Extremely Ineffective	41	31.30%	
	Total	131	100%	
Follow-up activities meant to improve & strengthen the capacity of the devolved Rubaya district authorities are	Extremely Effective	28	21.40%	3.05
	Quite Effective	23	17.60%	
	Effective	30	22.90%	
	Not Quite Effective	28	21.40%	
	Extremely Ineffective	22	16.80%	
	Total	131	100%	

To better understand the effectiveness of project follow-ups, participants were asked to record their views on the three statements shown above on Table 4.7.

From the above findings, when beneficiaries were asked whether follow-up activities in Rubaya demonstration project meant to increase citizen participation & enhance poverty alleviation were effective; the respondents recorded quite divergent views with an equal number (22.10%) of the opinions follow-up activities were quite effective and on the other hand, also extremely ineffective (22.10%). Such a split was also evident between the respondents who felt follow-up activities in this regard were extremely effective at 17.60% and the respondents who were of the view follow-up activities were not quite effective at 16.00%.

With regards to the second statement, the findings showed that a great number of the respondents were dissatisfied with donor engagement and Rubaya Demonstration project implementers' follow-up activities recording a low mean of 2.4. Some respondents attributed this to the lack of effective follow-up by the project financiers & donors especially at instances of project activities stalling either due to breakdown of equipment, insufficient funds or disagreements. This in their views derailed the project's goal of enhancing poverty alleviation greatly.

On the third statement investigating if follow-up activities meant to improve & strengthen the capacity of the devolved Rubaya district authorities were effective, findings revealed divergent views among respondents with their responses spread among the five options as follows; 28 elements recorded 'Extremely Effective', 23 elements recorded 'Quite Effective', 30 elements recorded 'Effective', 28 elements recorded 'Not Quite Effective' and 22 elements recorded 'Extremely Ineffective'.

4.3.4 Project Infrastructure and Enhancing Poverty Alleviation

Table 4.8 presents findings on the perceptions of effectiveness of project infrastructure on enhancing poverty alleviation. A more detailed discussion is presented later.

Table 4.8: Project Infrastructure and enhancing poverty alleviation

Statement	Response	Freq.	%	Mean
Rubaya project infrastructure has led to increased access to clean water	Extremely Effective	58	44.30%	4.22
	Quite Effective	52	39.70%	
	Effective	18	13.70%	
	Not Effective	Quite 3	2.30%	
	Extremely Ineffective	0	0.00%	
	Total	131	100%	
Rubaya project infrastructure has led to increased access to proper sanitation	Extremely Effective	67	51.10%	4.32
	Quite Effective	50	38.20%	
	Effective	9	6.90%	
	Not Effective	Quite 0	0.00%	
	Extremely Ineffective	5	3.80%	
	Total	131	100%	
Rubaya project infrastructure has led to increased access to cleaner & cheaper energy options	Extremely Effective	47	35.90%	3.57
	Quite Effective	36	27.50%	
	Effective	19	14.50%	
	Not Effective	Quite 3	2.30%	
	Extremely Ineffective	26	19.80%	
	Total	131	100%	
Rubaya project administration, coordination, financial management & monitoring are	Extremely Effective	43	32.80%	3.57
	Quite Effective	39	29.80%	
	Effective	23	17.60%	
	Not Effective	Quite 2	1.50%	
	Extremely Ineffective	24	18.30%	
	Total	131	100%	
Rubaya project infrastructure has led to improved income generation (e.g. revenue realized on construction of houses & schools, house rent value)	Extremely Effective	42	32.10%	2.92
	Quite Effective	17	13.00%	
	Effective	9	6.90%	
	Not Effective	Quite 23	17.60%	
	Extremely Ineffective	40	30.50%	
	Total	131	100%	

Table 4.8 depicts the findings on project infrastructure including the project system infrastructure. On the first statement, a great number of respondents were of the opinion Rubaya Demonstration project has led to increased access to clean water registering a mean score of 4.22. Similar high mean score (4.32) was recorded for the second statement regarding Rubaya project infrastructure leading to increased access to proper sanitation. This implies water and proper sanitation as important essentials among most of the project beneficiaries and equally, as the most successful initiatives of the Rubaya demonstration project.

The respondents agreed that both project infrastructure relating to increasing access to cleaner & cheaper energy options and project administration, coordination, financial management & monitoring were effective registering mean of 3.57 for each of the two statements.

Next, the study sought to establish whether implementation of Rubaya demonstration project infrastructure had led to improved income generation, there were varied views with strong leanings towards both extremely effective (32.10%) and extremely ineffective (30.50%).

4.3.5 Enhancing Poverty Alleviation

This study also sought to make known the effects associated with enhancing poverty alleviation as shown in Table 4.9. A question regarding training on poverty alleviation was posed to the respondents.

Table 4.9: Training on Poverty Alleviation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	109	83.20%
No	22	16.80%
Total	131	100%

Table 4.9 reveals that majority of the respondents (83.20%) had received some training on how to alleviate themselves out of poverty. This implies that majority of the respondents were able to make informed decisions regarding changes in income levels experienced within their households. Ogundele et al (2012) findings revealed that effective technical education coupled with training and youth empowerment would act as a great catalyst for poverty alleviation.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

4.4.1 Correlation Matrix

Table 4.10 shows the correlation matrix analysis. Further details on the analysis are explained below the table.

Table 4.10: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables		Access to Finance	to Training & Capacity development	Project Follow-up	Project Infrastructure
Enhancing Poverty alleviation	Pearson Correlation	.124	.277*	-.039	.445*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.004	.004	.004
	N	131	131	131	131

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Pearson's correlations analysis conducted at 95% confidence interval and $p < 0.05$ two-tailed found that there was a positive correlation between enhancing poverty alleviation and Project infrastructure with a correlation value of 0.45 as shown by Table 4.10. Based on the obtained data the quality of project infrastructure has an effect on enhancing poverty alleviation. Brennenman (2002) noted that increased access to infrastructure services can effectively help raise the GDP, productivity and employment, all of which create a positive environment for reducing poverty.

Similarly, Table 4.6 showed that training and capacity development have an effect on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rubaya demonstration project. Pearson's correlation analysis conducted at 95% confidence interval and $p < 0.05$ two-tailed also found that there was a positive correlation between training & capacity development and enhancing poverty alleviation as shown by the correlation figure of 0.28 on Table 4.10.

However, Pearson correlation analysis on independent variables namely; access to finance and project follow up conducted at 95% confidence level and $p < 0.05$ two-tailed found that there was no significant correlation. The researcher attributes this to the skewed data collected from the respondents thereby raising concerns over normality of the data; various elements registered scattered opinions on the different statements regarding access to finance and project follow-up variables.

To justify the above results, the researcher carried out a test to determine the significance of the Pearson correlation coefficient test. To carry out the significance test, the researcher used a confidence level of 95%, two-tailed t-test and calculated the degrees of freedom to be $129 = 131 - 2$. Using the t-table the researcher obtained the reading of the critical t-value, $t_{crit} = 1.9785$. Using the formula below, the researcher obtains the t-value, t

$$t = \frac{r\sqrt{n-2}}{\sqrt{1-r^2}}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{t-value (Access to Finance)} &= \frac{0.124 * \sqrt{(131-2)}}{\sqrt{1-(0.124^2)}} \\ t &= 1.43036 \end{aligned}$$

Since $r > 0$ (0.124) AND $t < 1.9785$ (t_{crit}) then the Pearson correlation coefficient is not significant, that is, r (129) = 0.124, $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed), where 0.124 is the calculated Pearson correlation coefficient and t $1.43036 < t_{crit}$ 1.9785. Therefore the Pearson correlation value is not significant as indicated in Table 4.10.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{t-value (Training & Capacity development)} &= \frac{0.277 * \sqrt{(131-2)}}{\sqrt{1-(0.277^2)}} \\ t &= 3.2742 \end{aligned}$$

Since $r > 0$ (0.277) AND $t > 1.9785$ (t_{crit}) then the Pearson correlation coefficient is significantly positive, that is, $r(129) = 0.277$, $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed), where 0.277 is the calculated Pearson correlation coefficient and $t 3.2742 > t_{crit} 1.9785$. Therefore the Pearson correlation value is significantly positive as indicated in Table 4.10.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{t-value (Project Follow-up)} &= \frac{-0.039 * \sqrt{(131-2)}}{\sqrt{1-(-0.039)^2}} \\ t &= -0.44262 \end{aligned}$$

Since $r < 0$ (-0.039) AND $ABS t < 1.9785$ (t_{crit}) then the Pearson correlation coefficient is not significant on either end, that is, $r(129) = -0.039$, $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed), where -0.039 is the calculated Pearson correlation coefficient and $ABS t -0.44262 < t_{crit} 1.9785$. Therefore the Pearson correlation value is not significant as indicated in Table 4.10.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{t-value (Project Infrastructure)} &= \frac{0.445 * \sqrt{(131-2)}}{\sqrt{1-(0.445)^2}} \\ t &= 5.6438 \end{aligned}$$

Since $r > 0$ (0.445) AND $t > 1.9785$ (t_{crit}) then the Pearson correlation coefficient is significantly positive, that is, $r(129) = 0.445$, $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed), where 0.445 is the calculated Pearson correlation coefficient and $t 5.26438 > t_{crit} 1.9785$. Therefore the Pearson correlation value is significantly positive as indicated in Table 4.10.

4.4.2 Multiple Regression

A multiple regression analysis was further conducted to test the influence among predictor variables on enhancing poverty alleviation at Rubaya Demonstration project using the SPSS v20.0 to code, enter and compute the measurements of the multiple regressions. The multiple regressions between enhancing poverty alleviation and the combined effect of the selected predictors were as detailed in the results showed by Table 4.10;

Table 4.11: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.797	0.639	0.626	0.0614

a. Predictors: (Constants), Access to Finance, Training & Capacity development, Project Infrastructure

The analysis returned an R-Square (coefficient of determination) of 62.6%. The study therefore finds that the level of changes in the enhancement of poverty alleviation could be attributed to the combined effect of access to finance, training & capacity development and project infrastructure.

4.5 Responses from the Rubaya Demonstration Project Officials & Stakeholders

Content analysis from the interview guides administered to the Rubaya Demonstration project officials and key stakeholders were captured and analyzed. In order to comprehensively study the raw data collected the researcher also implied thematic approach to a cross-section of the data.

The findings revealed that most of the respondents welcomed and had faith in the Rubaya Demonstration project, with most of them expressing relatively high satisfaction with regards to the benefits and achievements of the project. Some of the factors that the respondents attributed to effective alleviation of poverty with regards to the Rubaya Demonstration project included; access to finance, positive perception towards project, effective training & demonstration on how to utilize project assets, access to education, community business & investment promotion, provision of one cow per household, regular follow-ups and support from project implementers. Moreover, the respondents cited that the demonstration project and its activities ensured most of the local community members remained engaged productively in income generating activities thus realizing improved household incomes. A section of the respondents also reported on improved agricultural yield, a fact they credited to follow-ups, trainings and capacity building among the farmers

However, the key officials and stakeholders also highlighted on some of the challenges that they felt derailed poverty alleviation. These included; lack of sufficient human resource personnel with one of the respondents citing a situation in 2009 when the project lacked a project coordinator for a very long time; delays in implementing a number of project activities also meant that some project infrastructure had to be destroyed or diverted to other use – “A number of trees planted had to be destroyed during construction of houses and roads as they were planted in plots before other on-ground activities”. Another respondent noted that most of the water from the reservoir was not being used within the households but had to be diverted into building blocks to serve other project construction activities therefore forcing the locals to access water at high prices.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of discussions on the analysis of the findings and results focusing on the research questions, recommendations and suggests areas for further research.

5.2 Discussion

The aim of the research was to assess the effectiveness of community empowerment projects on enhancing poverty alleviation in Rubaya Demonstration project using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Results from the data analysis confirm the link between effectiveness of community empowerment projects and enhancing poverty alleviation.

Training & Capacity development and project infrastructure components of independent variable recorded some of the highest means (3.5 and above) implying respondents high perception of effectiveness with regards to enhancing poverty alleviation. Similar results were also indicated by Mensah & Benedict (2010) on their study of empowering the poor in the Eastern Free State of South Africa. Their findings concluded that Training of survivalist entrepreneurs and other poor persons with potential could open their eyes to opportunities around them which they could take advantage of to improve their economic situation and that of other poor persons in the area through job creation and diversification of livelihood options. Additionally, Seetannah et al (2009) findings on whether infrastructure alleviates poverty in developing countries can be summarized as follows; less poverty implied more government funds for infrastructural development which is essentially a public good in Africa. Moreover, poverty was also found to have a negative impact on GDP of the country thus signaling the existence of a vicious circle. These results ascertain the evidence of positive effects of project infrastructure on enhancing poverty alleviation. It should also be noted that even though the Rubaya community may be able to solve their housing, water and sanitation issues themselves, collective efforts in providing solutions & addressing empowerment constraints are far much effective and affordable in the long run.

Contrary to popular belief that this project has benefitted both men and women in equal measure, it was revealed that men were much more appreciative of the economic opportunities provided by this demonstration project in form of access to finance, assets like cows, compared to women. On the flip side, women found other project activities and attributes related to project infrastructure like water reservoirs, solar energy options more attractive compared to men. This reveals an important aspect of gender dynamics in the Rubaya Demonstration project, a key characteristic the researcher sought partly in demographic analysis. For instance, Nimpuno (2014) in his paper indicated that women in general and women heads of household in particular are the most stable group in the community. Nimpuno further goes on to note that women participation is crucial for the successful implementation of projects, and discriminatory practices against them, both in the area of credit within the conventional finance mechanisms and in the area of skills, must be removed.

5.3 Conclusions

Drawing on the results and findings in chapter four including views obtained from the key stakeholders of Rubaya Demonstration project, the research study drew four important conclusions. These conclusions are categorized into four key areas in line with the study objectives. These include access to finance, training and capacity development, project follow-ups and project infrastructure.

The first conclusion reviews the effectiveness of access to finance on enhancing poverty alleviation. Most of the respondents welcomed the effectiveness of formation & existence of the cooperative in enhancing poverty alleviation. The research study findings has also shown that there is significant improvement in poverty alleviation through change on income levels and this can be attributed to increased access to finance by the demonstration project beneficiaries and the community at large. Through the cooperative society, beneficiaries have been covered by mutual insurance, paid through cooperative & the households that were too poor to afford health insurance now no longer depend on government support; Rwanda Cost Benefit Analysis report (2014). However, beneficiaries registered mixed responses regarding access to these finances. This is occasioned by the fact that the cooperative society herein IndahiraGusumbwa is yet to generate sufficient funds to enable more members access soft loans. As noted by Bello (2005), for cooperatives to be fully effective and successful, they must continuously achieve two inter-related goals: enhance viability and improve ability to service its members; and remain an economically viable, innovative and competitive enterprise.

The second conclusion highlights the effectiveness of training & capacity development on enhancing poverty alleviation. Results revealed that trainings offered to beneficiaries as part of Rubaya project implementation were generally perceived to be extremely effective with more than 60% of the respondents expressing positive feedback. This points to the need for project implementers to consistently maintain these gains while effectively linking its importance to enhancing poverty alleviation. For instance, the Sector Gap Analysis carried out by PEI (2010) underlined the need to integrate environmental education to poverty alleviation in the teaching curriculum and training programmes at all levels including adult education. This would not only ensure further success stories on Rubaya Demonstration project but also empower the members at community level with skills & abilities essential to navigate themselves out of poverty.

The study third conclusion deals with the effectiveness of project follow-up on enhancing poverty alleviation. The research study findings indicate relative ineffectiveness on matters regarding project follow-up. Donor engagement and consistent follow-up activities by Rubaya demonstration project implementers was cited by most respondents to have inhibited the process of poverty alleviation. Coupled with dwindling project funds and high-handedness by some project officials, follow-up activities have been put on the back drop thereby missing out on documenting and dissemination of good practices. The implication here is that follow-up activities do not go far enough to be effective. This calls for more resources both in terms of human capital and financial capacity as one way of addressing the ineffectiveness of project follow-up activities.

The fourth conclusion regards the effectiveness of project infrastructure on enhancing poverty alleviation. This study reveals that project infrastructures are quite effective in enhancing poverty alleviation. Increased access to proper and dignified sanitation, increased access to cheaper and clean energy and finally, Rubaya demonstration project administration, coordination, financial management & monitoring were perceived as the most attractive and effective components of the project. Similarly, these components have also played a

greater role in facilitating effective and efficient strategies in enhancing poverty alleviation. However, the beneficiaries recorded strong mixed feelings when asked if the availability of Rubaya Demonstration project infrastructure translated to improved income generation. Responses were equally split between extremely effective and extremely ineffective; pro-project elements noted improved income as a result lesser transport costs, reduced medical expenses, milk production, improved farm yields while the anti-project elements cited constraints such as breakdown of some equipment, slow or late payments, lack of follow-up among others. Rubaya demonstration project at this stage is regarded to be or almost breaking-even & thus explains the above sentiments.

Overall, this study revealed that poverty is more than a lack of adequate income but involves a combination of many forms of deprivation that if put together allow human capabilities to go unrealized. In essence, this study emphasizes that even though income is important, raising income alone is not a sufficient condition to sustain the enhancement of poverty alleviation through community empowerment projects. From the four combined conclusions, we can thus summarize that these four key areas in line with our objective have played a substantive role in effectively enhancing poverty alleviation among the Rubaya demonstration project beneficiaries.

5.4 Recommendations

In view of the study results and discussion of findings, the researcher came up with four recommendations in line with the research study objectives;

First, this study recommends that for the Rubaya district newly formed cooperatives and small microfinances to improve access to finance for its members; Successful and profitable banking institutions in Rwanda should be at the forefront to encourage & mentor cooperative management on best practices & banking systems. Linking the cooperatives and microfinances to such banking institutions could also enhance institutional arrangements where the banks could also offer credit to a wider number of members through their cooperatives.

To sustain the current achievements of the Rubaya Demonstration project, it is important to broaden training and capacity development activities especially among the beneficiaries. There is also need for increased focus on integrating cross cutting issues and challenges into part of the Demonstration project training and capacity development. Effectively highlighting & mainstreaming the benefits of the project will help create sharper better understanding and improved systematic linkages between effectiveness of community empowerment projects and poverty alleviation. This study also recommends that training and capacity development activities be developed into 'mutual learning' activities where case studies and other experiences would be closely examined & help form part of the key lessons & training curriculum.

Thirdly, this study recommends for follow-up activities to be effectively & timely carried out assessing on the various components of the demonstration project. One such challenge occasioned by lack of timely follow-up on the project includes breakdown of solar energy facilities as mentioned by most of key demonstration project stakeholders. It is therefore imperative to step up on follow up activities to ensure project facilities are maximally utilized by the beneficiaries in order to ensure longevity of the project goals in terms of optimum benefits.

Finally, the study recommends that the significance of project infrastructure way from administrative (project systems) infrastructure to physical infrastructure should be underlined right from the top so as to

support utilization by the beneficiaries and more importantly ensure the drive towards enhancing poverty alleviation is on maintained on full gear. A participatory approach including creating partnerships with the different local community levels will facilitate community buy-in and securing the health of overall physical project infrastructure; thus addressing poverty and providing diversified livelihood options.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

Since this study only focused on the effectiveness of four objectives with regards to enhancing poverty alleviation, it would be interesting to carry out further research studies that would incorporate all other factors and variables that might influence or impact on the effectiveness of community empowerment projects in relation to poverty alleviation.

It is also notable that the findings and results of this research study may only highlight majorly on the short-term to medium-term benefits of the Rubaya Demonstration project & hence the researcher recommends further comprehensive studies on; Factors influencing the success of community empowerment projects and Impacts of community empowerment projects in enhancing poverty alleviation.

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