

Assessment of Community Empowerment Activities in Longido and Kiteto Districts, Tanzania

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Abstract: Tanzania, like other developing countries, strives to empower its people. However, the achievement of empowerment goals at individual and community is still a challenge in some areas. The purpose of this study was to assess community empowerment activities in Longido and Kiteto

districts, Tanzania. The study involved 282 respondents (184 male and 98 female) aged 23 years and above. The study adopted a qualitative approach, and a case study design was used. Data were collected through focused group discussions, in-depth interviews, documentary review and non-participant observation. Content analysis was used to analyse data. The findings showed that the empowerment activities targeted social and economic aspects were gender-sensitive. The activities were effective, and they brought real changes in people's lives at individual and community levels. The study concluded that there is a need for more training on the management of empowerment activities to ensure the efficiency and sustainability of the activities. The study, therefore, recommends capacity building through training, gender sensitivity in access to and control over the resources and improvement in health services.

Keywords: Community, economic empowerment, Social empowerment, effectiveness, Tanzania.

Introduction

Tanzania, like other developing countries, strives to empower its people. United Republic of Tanzania (2019) showed that the population living in poverty was reduced and poverty gap decreased from 10.6 percent from 2007-2018. However, poverty is still prevalent and is higher in rural areas (33.3%) than in urban areas (15.8%). Besides, poverty among women is increasing compared to that of men. Hence, empowerment aims to achieve gender equality, poverty reduction and sustainable development through the promotion of equity (URT 2017; URT, 2018a). The 2030 global agenda, among other issues, are targeted on the eradication of poverty for equitable and inclusive societies. It emphasises empowerment through economic, social and political advancement (United Nations Women, 2016). Empowerment can be possible and sustainable if there are changes at different levels; within the individual (capability, knowledge and self-esteem) and in communities and institutions (including norms and behaviour); in markets and value chains; and the wider political and legal environment (Balcazar & Suarez, 2017).

In community psychology, empowerment is conceptualised as a process in which people learn to relate their goals and the ways to achieve them. That is, the relationship between individual effort and their impacts in life. It allows people to gain competencies and apply them to achieve their goals and potentials (Zimmerman, 2000). Empowerment can be at both individual and community levels. At the individual level, empowerment refers to personal strength that increases one's ability to act in situations where powerlessness is experienced. It is achieved through training, studying, access and utilisation of resources and opportunities available in the community. Hence it increases self-efficacy and a

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sense of control (Drury, et al., 2015). At the community level, empowerment is conceptualised as the possession of resources and the ability to manage them, control and influence significant others within and outside the community to develop empowered people and community at large. However, empowerment at individual or community is not achieved easily. There can be challenges in achieving empowerment goals (Balcazar & Suarez, 2017; Drury, et al., 2015). This study, therefore, focuses on social and economic empowerment at both individual and community levels.

Economic empowerment aims to encourage entrepreneurship, create jobs and promote sustainability. It helps community members to generate solutions to their community's economic problems. It, therefore, build sustainable community capacity and lead to economic and social development (Ndaguba & Hanyane, 2019). Hence, community-based economic empowerment intends to improve the economy and overcome poverty by developing the potential within the community. Therefore, the community became economically independent through their potential (Andriani, Wibawa & Wihartanti, 2019).

Moreover, social empowerment involves investment in health and education, and it shapes the ability of men and women to reach their full potential in society. Health and education sector has been the key aspects of measuring empowerment. For example, education enables one to acquire knowledge and awareness that help to solve various problems (Kushandajani, 2019). However, despite efforts to empower community members, the achievement of social empowerment is hindered by health systems and educational status for example; inadequate health care facilities, inadequate teaching and learning resources and opportunities (Brenyah, 2018).

The National Strategy for reduction of poverty (2005-2010) MKUKUTA and the Vision 2025 for Tanzania Mainland emphasise sustainable development and the improvement of the quality of life among people. The same was stipulated in the Tanzania Constitution and the five-year development plan. This is thorough access to resources, understanding of the environment and awareness of the opportunities and to ensure equality between men and women. These may assist in changing and improving the standard of living (URT, 2005; URT, 1999). Therefore, community empowerment intends to help men and women to transform their impoverishment through participation in various activities. It enables them to engage in multiple social and economic activities and earn for their families and contribute to the country's economy. Hence, they become active and independent members of organisations formed at various levels (Car, 2018). The communities in Kiteto and Longido, where this study was conducted, experience various socio-economic challenges that affect their lives. The study assumes that there is inadequacy in economic and social aspects that affect community members, particularly females. Therefore, the study aimed to assess community empowerment activities implemented in the study area for the past five years.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study, thus, were first;

- To examine community empowerment activities in Longido and Kiteto districts of Tanzania.

- To investigate the effectiveness of empowerment activities in improving the lives of community members.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

- How do community members engage in empowerment activities?
- How effective are the social and economic empowerment activities in the study areas?

Theoretical Framework

Empowerment originated from the civil rights movements between the 1960s and 1970s. It began with social movements that were adopted by the community and non-government organisations (Calan, 2018). In Community psychology field, empowerment theory originated from Rappaport's (1981) ideas, and it was later expanded by Zimmerman (2000). According to Rappaport (1987 p. 139), "the theory assumes that empowerment is a multilevel construct. It can be at individual, family, organisation and even at the community. Also, organisations with an empowerment ideology are better at finding and developing resources. (Jason, Stevens, Ram, Miller, Beasley & Gleason, 2016).

The theory focuses on human problems in a holistic way. It involves both processes and outcomes. The process includes structures, actions and activities that empower people to develop skills and obtain resources that help to solve problems. Therefore, it is a necessary tool in shaping the person, develop critical consciousness and thinking. (Moran, Gibbs & Mernin, 2017). The theory also emphasises participation with others to achieve goals and effort to gain access to resources. According to empowerment theory, collaboration leads to an environment of empowerment through people's involvement in decision making, designing activities and encouraging a sense of empowerment among people (Zimmerman, 2000). This study used this theory to explain how community empowerment develops commitment, a sense of responsibility, sharing of knowledge and skills among community members. It was also used to show how empowerment changes and improves the quality of people's lives and help to solve problems and challenges. The theory, therefore, shows how community members can work with others, use their capabilities and take initiatives in changing their lives.

Methodology

Based on the 2012 census report, the total population in Longido was 123,153, where male and female were 60,199 and 62,954 respectively. Kiteto district was slightly densely populated compared to Longido. The population in Kiteto was 244,669 whereas male were 120,233 and female were 124,436. The average household size was 5.0 and 4.8 in Longido and Manyara, respectively. The major occupation for the two districts is livestock keeping and agriculture (URT, 2013). The study used a qualitative approach, and it adopted a case study design. It involved 282 respondents. The study specifically targeted men and women aged 23 years and above involved in empowerment activities in ten villages namely Kiserian, Mairowa, Eworendeke, Orbomba and Elerai in Longido District and Orpopong'i, Namelok, Lempapuli, Makame and Ndedo in Kiteto District. The

study used random sampling and purposive sampling techniques to determine respondents to be involved in the study. Random sampling was used to select the respondents engaged in the focus group discussion. Purposive sampling technique was used to obtain key informants from those who had relevant information based on their respective positions and age cohorts. Data sources were both primary and secondary.

Different methods were used to collect data from the respondents. Firstly, an in-depth interview was done with key informants, including both formal and informal leaders. It, therefore, helped to obtain relevant information from community residents, Government Officials and community leaders. Secondly, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used to obtain information on management and maintenance of grinding mills, re-stocking and literacy-building. Separate FGDs were formed for men and women to ensure effective participation during the discussion. Thirdly, review of various documents was done from both written and electronic materials such as policy documents, Government publications. Fourth, the non-participant observation methods were used to watch various activities and the environment in the targeted areas. Case studies were used to capture specific cases such as women and men empowerment through income generation activities and re-stocking to needy families. Data was analysed through content analysis. Information obtained from the study was coded and organised into themes. Descriptive summary of the information obtained from the respondents was then interpreted to get the findings and general study conclusions.

Results and Discussions

Description of Community Empowerment Activities

The study findings revealed that there were different community empowerment activities in the study areas. Table 1 gives the details.

Table 1: Description of Community Empowerment Activities

Type of Activities	District		
	Longido	Kiteto	Key Participants
Education and Training	Mairowa Kiserian Orbomba	Orpopong'i Namelok	Men & Women
Women Empowerment	Elerai Eworendeke Kiserian Mairowa	Orpopong'i Makame Lempapuli	Women
Health Services	Mairowa	Makame Lempapuli	Men & Women
Income Generation Activities (Community)	Elerai Eworendeke Kiserian Mairowa Orbomba	Orpopong'i Namelok Ndedo Lempapuli	Men & Women

The results also show that community empowerment activities focused on a holistic approach as they targeted different aspects; social, economic and were gender-sensitive. They targeted to empower both men and women.

Characteristics of the respondents

The results show that more than half of the respondents aged between 41 to 50 years, suggesting that the majority of participants involved in community empowerment activities were in middle adulthood. Also, males were more than fifty percent, while females were less than fifty percent. This reflected the nature of the division of activities in a pastoral community where females are involved in various household activities such as to fetch water and firewood. Hence it was difficult to participate in the study as it was expected. Furthermore, three-quarters of the respondents were involved in animal keeping while less than ten percent were involved in farming and petty business.

The findings further show that more than half of the respondents had primary school education, and on average, about 20% had secondary education. This shows that the majority of the residents had a moderate level of education. Education of respondents has implication in the ability to engage in different socio-economic activities and to make important decisions regarding their life. Education is one of the major drivers of human development. It plays a key role in building human capital and developing skills (URT, 2018b). Hence, the demographic characteristics such as education, age and sex explain the nature of participants involved in community empowerment activities. Table 2 gives the profile of the respondents.

Table 2: Socio-Economic Characteristics of respondents (n=282)

Characteristics	Longido (n=123)		Kiteto (n=159)		
	n	%	n	%	
Age	21 - 40	33	26.8	37	23.3
	41 - 50	78	63.4	109	68.6
	51 - 70+	12	9.8	13	8.1
Sex	Male	82	67	102	64
	Female	41	33	57	36
Education level	Never attended school	10	8	6	4
	Primary school Education	86	70	102	64
	Secondary school Education and above	27	22	51	32
Marital Status	Married or living together	119	97	152	96
	Widow	4	3	7	4
Occupation	Pastoralist	97	79	125	78.6
	Farming	8	6.5	11	6.9
	Petty business	7	5.7	9	5.7
	Government Official	6	4.8	5	3.1
	NGO's - social worker	5	4	9	5.7

Community Empowerment activities

According to data from key informants, community empowerment in the study areas was achieved through various activities including education and training for community members, women empowerment activities, health services programme, and income generation activities. Firstly, education and

training for community members aimed to provide knowledge and awareness on various issues, including land-related issues and natural resources management, land policies and village land legislation. It also involves education project, through donor funds and collaboration with the government. The project contributed to improving the functions of school management committees, governance issues, girl child focus, and through the Schools and teachers' housing component, teacher's houses and classes were also built. There was also a literacy-building programme (targeting basic literacy and numeracy skills) and training on voting and leadership skills. An Education Official in Longido district council, aged 47 had this to say:

"The activities that target education helped in literacy-building ... a number of adults can now read and write. On formal education, the government in collaboration with NGO's such as CORDS, MWEDO supported over 100 girls in secondary level....." (January 2016).

Regarding schools and teachers houses component, a primary school teacher aged 35 years at Mairowa had this to say:

"Teachers' houses and classes built in our district helped a lot... we used to stay far away from school with no reliable transport..... The classes that were built improved learning environment and students' academic performance..." (January 2016).

The result showed that education and training activities have an imperative contribution to community members as the activities, developed skills and impacts from education are life-long. These results are in line with other studies that showed that community empowerment through education and training contribute to improving the quality of life and community life (Cavaliere & Almeida, 2018).

Secondly, the women empowerment activities targeted to reduce poverty through involvement and provision of opportunity for socio-economic improvement of community members. The activities aimed to boost Income Generation Activities (IGAs) through various small business activities. Women involved in these activities were provided with grinding mills, loans and were supported and encouraged to own land. Hence, they managed to assist their families. A woman aged 56 in Olpopong'i had this to say:

"I got a loan, and I used it to buy and sell maize. I can now assist my family by buying food, school uniform and exercise books." (January 2016).

Thirdly, the health services programme were provided in government health centres and through mobile clinic services for mothers and children in remote areas. The programmes were operated by the government in collaboration with donor funds. WHO (2018) showed that prevention and control of both chronic and communicable diseases help to improve health and quality of life. A village Official aged 49 years at Makame (Embong'it) had this to say:

"We had mobile clinic services for women and children. The services were provided by CORDS in collaboration with the government. The health services were useful and helpful....Mobile clinic services are currently not operating....." (January 2016).

The finding showed that there were efforts to ensure that health services were provided to community members despite their locations. However, there were

challenges in sustaining the services. For example, the villages like Makame and Lempapuli in Kiteto were in very remote areas with no health services.

Fourthly, income generation activities, including re-stocking to needy families and petty trade. The study showed through case studies that livestock re-stocking started a few years back. Needy families were provided with goats and cattle to assist them in earning a living. The village leaders identified households that were in need, and NGO's like CORDS provided livestock to those families. A woman aged 45 years at Eworendeke had this to say:

"I was given four goats three years ago.... Now I have more than 15 goats. I can buy clothes and food for my family. I am happy that I no longer ask anybody to help me on such aspects..." (January 2016).

Therefore, community members who previously had no hope and support improved their lives. They managed to get their basic needs and become independent economically.

Effectiveness of Empowerment Activities

The effectiveness of empowerment activities was examined through the benefits and outcomes obtained from the empowerment elements (economic and social empowerment) received by men and women, leading to improvement on people's lives in the community.

Economic Empowerment

The findings show that there were activities that targeted to empower women economically in Mairowa, Kiserian, Eworendeke, Orpopong'i, Makame, (Embong'it) and Lempapuli. Women in these villages were organised in groups of up to twenty women. The groups were registered and are supported by CORDS (Community Research and Development Services) in collaboration with government through village and District leadership. The groups were provided with grinding mills machines and soft loans that targeted to assist and empower families. The women testified that with the grinding mills and income generating activities, they were better placed to ensure there were improvements in their families. Women groups supported like *Nosotwa* and *Nasaru* in Longido have sustained the operations of their grinding mills and have bank accounts where they save their money. At the time of the study, they were in the process of buying additional grinding mills for other women in nearby villages (*Enengasurai*). Hence, community empowerment activities enabled people to do economic activities for themselves, and they managed to take control of issues that affect their lives and community. This lead to better outcomes for the community, including improving well-being, self-confidence, knowledge, skills and self-esteem among community members. A Woman aged 55 at Kiserian had this to say:-

"We feel empowered and quite pleased with our progress so far.... When we compare with the past five years there is a lot of improvements... we are now able to support our families... we have skills and knowledge that enable us to run and sustain our businesses...." (January 2016).

In terms of effectiveness, grinding mills owned by women were the most highly effective with a good organisation compared to the ones that were owned by men and women. Women groups had saving bank accounts. Having grinding mills

within the village also improved household food security. They reduced walking distances for women and girls who used to trek 2-3 days to distant mills; often with significant risks on the way (e.g. attacks from wild animals). According to UNESCO (2017), women economic independence overcome poverty, improve their well-being and that of their families and communities.

The study finding shows further that in other areas, empowerment activities were not effective. For example, the women group in Elerai, in Longido was given loans and grinding mill several years back. However, group members failed to keep records on the amount of money obtained either monthly or weekly. When they were asked whether the group had any money in the bank, the women said the bank account had no balance. It was also noted that the grinding mill was not working and the group members had no money to buy the spares required for repair. Hence the group had serious accountability issues that undermine the sustainability of their economic empowerment activities.

Women reported that they even supplement their husbands' income by either giving them "soft family loans" or assisting them in buying livestock medicine, especially when there were sudden disease outbreaks. Therefore there is less dependence on men in areas where women were actively engaged in some kind of business. Hence, at the individual level, the impacts were insightful as reported by a woman aged at 45 at Mairowa.

"We no longer beg for money from our husbands. Instead, they borrow from us, and as a result, we are better respected. It is totally unlike before when we used to be disregarded and often beaten and abused. What's more, some of us have even managed to buy goats and cattle from the money we make and save." (January 2016).

At the time of the study, some women had already built modern houses using block bricks and Iron sheets. Some of their loans were used to run small businesses that empowered and made them be respected. This finding corroborates the argument of Markel (2014) that an increase in women's access and control over the resources, decision making and changes in responsibility indicates women's economic empowerment. Hence economic empowerment gives women the power to make and act on economic decisions.

The findings show that land ownership was a positive impact of empowerment activities targeted to women. For example, women in the study areas owned farms that range in size from 0.5-10 hectares, and they grow a variety of high-value crops that fetch good market prices. It was instructive to notice that in all study areas visited, women-owned farms except in Elerai. Besides, income from the women's farming activities was used to build new and improved houses as well as to start new businesses, e.g. livestock trade. It was also found that men owned large farm size areas compared to women showing that the differences in ownership of recourses existed in the study. However, the land is a source of women empowerment and a gateway for the enjoyment and realisation of various human rights such as the right to equality, food, health, housing, water, work and education (Magawa & Hansungule, 2018).

The findings obtained through in-depth - interview showed that the loans provided to women assisted them in running various income generation activities. A woman aged 50 (Chair Person of Nadupai group) and a mother of 8 children had this to say at Mairowa:

"I am a member of a women group known as Nadupai. I got TShs. 200,000 as a loan given through women group. I started to buy and sell maize. Once I finished repaying the loan, I went ahead to buy 2 goats and continued with the maize business. Now I can even buy food for my family and other important family needs. I feel much empowered" (January 2016)

The finding shows further that re-stocking brought lasting livelihood impacts on needy families. These families were able to improve their lives and place in society. For example they were able to meet their household requirements. Prior to that they were begging from relatives and viewed as burden. A widowed woman aged 51 years at Eworendeke had this to say:

"When my husband passed away, he left me with nine children. I had a very rough time. It was difficult to obtain food for my family as I did not have any income-generating activities, and my husband had no cattle, sheep or goats.... I even failed to send my children to school. I am thankful for the goats that were given to us... I can now feed my family and buy school uniforms for my children. I also own land and a 2-roomed house built of bricks and iron sheets..... I joined the local women group, and I involve myself in income-generating activities, e.g. making necklaces using beads and selling them to make income."(January 2016).

The finding shows that re-stocking had significant outcomes as it enabled people to feel empowered, valued, respected and appreciated. A number of them were even able to improve their living conditions and participated in other community activities. A man, aged 56 at Orpopong'i, said that:

"I am very thankful to CORDS project for their support. They gave me 5 goats and five sheep. The goats and sheep have increased, and I currently have 15 in total. The support enabled me to send my 4 children to school... My other children are grown up, and they live independently. However, they did not attend school". (January 2016).

Hence, re-stocking programmes empowered people as they were reaccepted to play frontline roles in their families and community affairs. The programme also improved indigenous cattle through cross-breeding in Eworendeke, Makame and Orpopong'i.

Social Empowerment

Social empowerment involved education and training activities targeted to Community members, literacy-building and health services provision. The findings show that the empowerment targeted providing community members with knowledge and awareness of village land use and planning. The study found through observation that there were practical activities that were implemented, such as official demarcation and clarification of village boundaries. High impact training was provided to village committees and community members. The training covered land-related issues and natural resources management. Also, training on conflict management and mitigation was provided effectively, as evidenced by reducing conflict incidences. Sanga (2019) argued that knowledge of land matters is relevant to conflict resolution. Hence increasing education and awareness of community members and their leaders on land issues is very crucial.

It also involved literacy Building. This involved providing formal education for girls' and adults and helped to build (basic literacy and numeracy). Moreover, there was an education project that supported over 100 girls through primary to secondary level. That is a significant contribution to area beneficiaries as the benefits and impacts of education are life-long. Moreover, through the teachers' housing component, teacher's houses were built in Kiserian and Mairowa. Regarding literacy building, a woman aged 49 years at Mairowa had this to say:

"When I joined our women group, I was not able to read, and it was very difficult for me to deal with the documents. I attended classes for adult's learners. I can now read and deal with the documents. I don't have to ask my children to help me." (January 2016)

Furthermore, the girl child can go to school comfortably without worries over school fees because several women own economic resources such as farms and grinding mills. A study conducted in Mtwara also showed that social - cultural and economic factors were among the reasons that limit girl's access to education (Mollel & Chong, 2017). Exchange visits were also used to facilitate the sharing of experience with other groups and thereby improve learning. Moreover, through skills transfer approach, training was provided. For example, training on the rights to resources ownership, management and utilisation which helped to increased efficiency.

Regarding health services, the findings show that the services enhanced efficiency by providing mobile clinics for mothers and children (e.g. in Kiserian in Longido and Makame & Lempapuli in Kiteto). The intention was to assist people, particularly women, to enjoy the same services nearer to their homes and thereby ease the burden of walking many kilometres. These areas were located in remote areas where health services were not available; thereby subjecting expecting mothers and their children to be at risks. However, the sustainability of mobile clinic services was a challenge. A woman aged 40 years at Kiserian had this to say:

"It was very difficult to get important services such as health and food for the family I used to go to other villages to get health services and food for the family. Now we have the services in our village." (January 2016).

Other studies also found that access to health facilities for birth care is influenced by external factors such as transportation challenges and distance from hospitals to home areas (Kohi et al., 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The empowerment activities targeted social and economic aspects, and they were gender-sensitive. Community members testified and appreciated all empowerment activities. Education and training provided knowledge and awareness on various issues, girl child education, improvements in the functions of school management, the building of teacher houses and classes and literacy-building. Women empowerment enabled women to managed and take control of the issues that affected their lives. Health services were not available in remote villages such as Makame and Lempapuli, which exposed mothers, and their children to risks. Moreover, the sustainability of mobile clinic services was a challenge. Economic empowerment leads to better outcomes for the community,

including improved well-being, knowledge, skills and self-esteem among community members. The empowerment activities brought real changes in people's lives at individual and community levels.

It is, therefore, recommended that there is a need for more training on management of empowerment activities to ensure the sustainability of activities. The President's Office- Regional Administration and Local Government (PO - RALG) through district and village authorities should oversee the implementation of community empowerment activities. They should ensure capacity building through training, gender sensitivity in access to and control over the resources. There is also a need for improvement of health services.

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