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Assessing the Role of Community-Based Organisations' Activities on Women's Empowerment: A Case of African Evangelical Enterprise in Gasabo District, Rwanda

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Keywords:

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This study sought to assess the role of community-based organisations' activities on women's empowerment in rural communities using the case of AEE-Rwanda in Gasabo district, 2020-2023. The study used qualitative and quantitative approaches. Self-administered questionnaires are used as the main method of data collection. Nevertheless, interview, observation, and content analysis were used to complement, supplement and validate data collected through the questionnaire. In progressive study, the drawn conclusion is that AEE had contributed to the social economic development and women empowerment in rural community in Gasabo district and the researcher recommend the AEE Rwanda to focus on how beneficiaries can shift from farming activities to off farm activities, cooperate in data collection and interview activities and make stronger the collaboration between AEE Rwanda and local government authorities. The population of this study was 3050 from poor households in Bumbogo and Nduba sectors, where a purposive technique was used in order to get the desired respondents. The sample size was 354; it was obtained from the formula of Yamane. Data were analysed and interpreted using the SPSS tool to draw all tables and even indicate relationships. During this research, both primary and secondary data were used to achieve the set objectives. Training on micro-financing and group lending was very low, as 100% had no savings or investments. In other words, it was the best time for AEE to intervene in the Bumbogo and Nduba sectors. After working with AEE, 60.45% saved between 5,001 and 10,000 per year. The biggest part, 41.67% of respondents bought Animals (Livestock), 59.88% of respondents faced health insurance difficulties, and after working with AEE, 79.94% of the respondents paid for health insurance easily. The findings show that 100% of the respondents reported that it is very easy to pay school fees. 85.87% confirmed that they are able to pay their water and electricity bills. The result is $[-0.009 < 0.932 < 1.00]$, which means that there is no relationship between the contribution of AEE to the women's empowerment in those sectors because the correlation of -0.009.

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INTRODUCTION

Empowering women is crucial for the country's prosperity and development. Women's empowerment on a global scale is a novel idea. The topic of women's empowerment has been more important among university scholars and on national and international platforms during the second half of the 20th century. Key national priorities include promoting the culture of gender equality, ensuring equal opportunity for all Rwandans and supporting disadvantaged groups. Rwanda is globally leading in women's participation in decision-making positions, with 61.3% female members of Parliament and is ranked 9th globally. Women make up 50% of community mediation and conflict resolution committees (*Abunzi*). Rwanda adopted a National Action Plan 2009-2012 for the Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR), which aims to reinforce the capacity of women in peace and security processes (Miller B., 2014). In 2008, Rwanda became the first and only country in the world to have a majority female representation in its parliament at 56%. Rwanda was ranked 2nd out of 52 on the Gender Equality Index, 2015. Rwanda was ranked the best place to be a woman in Africa and 6th globally. Most of the services provided by

these CBOs are those often promised by the State to the people. To be more specific, these CBOs have continued to engage in a range of activities, from education and health to infrastructural development and environmental protection or conservation.

The involvement and participation of women in tertiary education is about 52% for men and 48% for women. The Imbutu Foundation, for example, has introduced programs aimed at supporting girls in order to raise their level of participation and performance, particularly in science and technology. Other CBOs working in the nation in support of their other potential beneficiaries of the current study are the corresponding donors and funders (Amy McDonough* and Daniela C. Rodríguez, 2020). By providing basic education, vocational training, training for self-employment, legal aid, protection for women, and self-awareness programs, CBOs and self-help groups (SHGs) play a crucial role in the empowerment of women. CBOs have many programs, functions and roles, which assist the community to become empowered, and eventually attain sustainable development.

Globally, women hold a disproportionately low percentage (under 12%) of national legislative seats despite making up 50% of the population. This inequality persists across continents, hindering their

access to equal opportunities in various spheres, including economic and political. In rural areas, women face barriers in accessing finance and land ownership due to cultural norms and insecure rights, limiting their economic independence and leading to social marginalisation. While some efforts exist to empower women, the lack of legal enforcement of gender equality in many African countries allows injustice to continue, with consequences like increased vulnerability to abuse and economic hardship for women and girls. This study will assess the role of community-based organisations on women's empowerment in rural communities

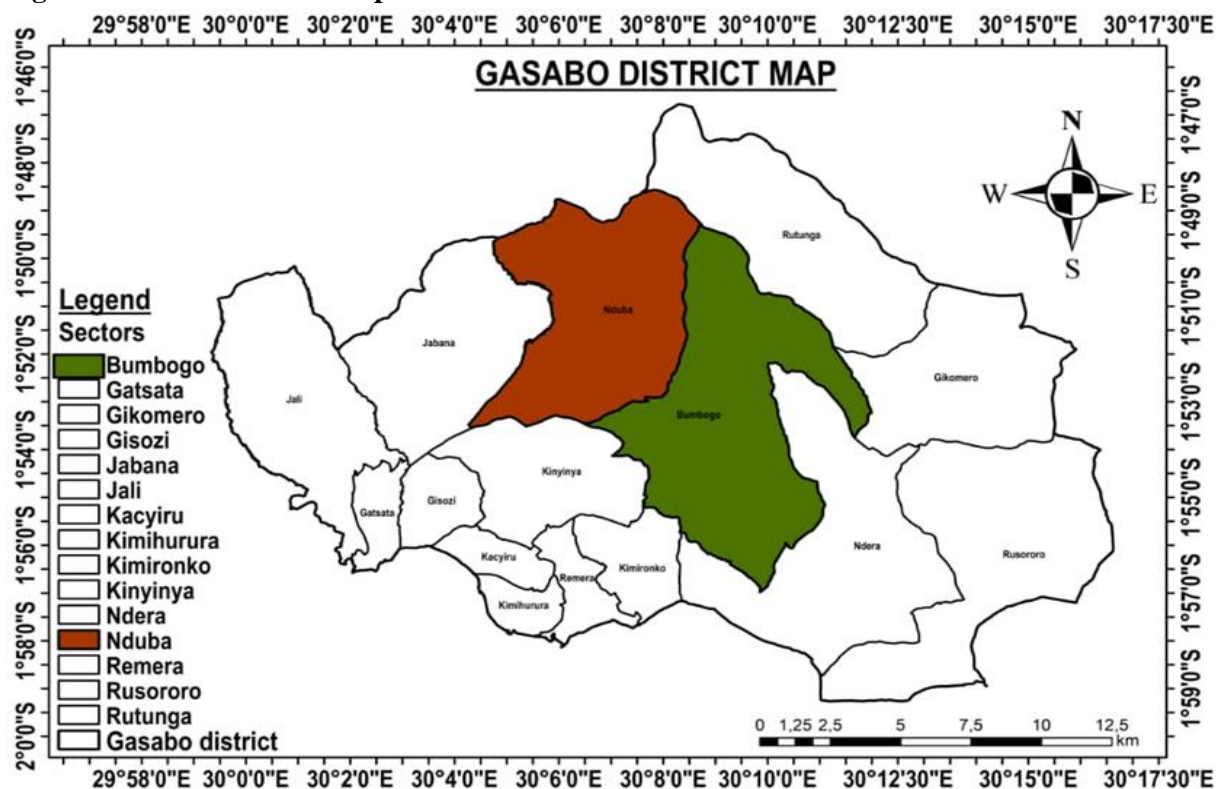
METHODS AND MATERIALS

Description of Study Area

Gasabo District is one of the three districts in Kigali City, comprised of 15 sectors, 73 cells, and 501 villages. Located in the northeast of Kigali, it shares

borders with Kicukiro, Nyarugenge, Rwamagana, Rulindo, and Gicumbi districts. Following the Rwandan genocide, the African Evangelical Enterprise (AEE) responded by revitalising existing programs and creating new ones, maintaining its "word and deed" mission. Over its 30+ years of operation, AEE has reportedly impacted thousands of Rwandan lives and spread Christianity throughout the nation. The organisation primarily focuses on children and youth development, aiming to help them reach their full potential. AEE implements programs that directly support children and youth, as well as initiatives that work with their families and communities, believing that the well-being of the latter is crucial for the flourishing of the former. Their programs and projects target the vulnerable, marginalised, and disadvantaged communities in both rural and urban areas of Rwanda.

Figure 1: Gasabo District Map



Source: *Gasabo DDSFY 2022-2023*

Data Collection and Analysis

This study adopted descriptive and exploratory approach, thus in this research the key methods for gathering information include surveys/questionnaires through google form to collect structured data on women empowerment and its impacts, interviews for in-depth insights from community-based organization, focus group discussions to gather community perspectives, field observations to directly assess the impacts of community-based organization activities on women empowerment. Therefore, the data of this study was analysed by using SPSS, which involves processing and interpreting data using methods aligned with the research question, data type

(qualitative/quantitative), and study design. Descriptive analysis uses measures of standard deviation to understand relationships, such as between post-harvest processing and environmental degradation. Statistical analysis, employing correlation and regression, examines relationships between both continuous variables. This study utilised a sample size of 354 respondents, determined using Yamane's Formula. $n = N / \{1 + N(e)^2\}$. Where n= sample size, N = size of the population

e= margin error or confidence level, ordinary equals to 5%

$$n = \frac{3050}{1 + 3050 (0.05)^2} = 354$$

Table 1: Sample Size

| Sector | Population size | $ni = \frac{Ni * n}{N}$ |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| | | Sample size |
| Bumbogo | 1800 | 203 |
| Nduba | 1250 | 144 |
| AEE staff | 2 | 2 |
| Local leaders | 4 | 4 |
| Total population | 3056 | 354 |

Source: African Evangelical Enterprise report, 2023

RESULTS

The Services Offered by African Evangelical Enterprise

Table 2: The Services Offered by African Evangelical Enterprise

| Service offered by African Evangelical Enterprise | Frequency | Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|
| Livestock (Animals) bought for me | 14 | 3.88 |
| Training on income-generating | 340 | 94.44 |
| Training on micro-financing and group lending | 274 | 76.11 |
| Organising cooperatives and women's groups | 213 | 59.17 |
| Facilitating change of attitudes | 197 | 54.72 |
| Training on Career Guidance | 97 | 26.94 |
| Job creation | 18 | 5 |
| Training on Freedom from Violence | 301 | 83.61 |
| Education support | 111 | 30.83 |
| Training on Gender Equality | 298 | 82.78 |

Source: Primary data (February, 2023)

The table above shows that respondents ticked more than one service according to the time scope of my

research and according to the Vision 2050 plan of the Rwandan government for eradicating poverty

sustainably. Training on Gender equality, freedom from violence and income generation is more dominant according to the mentioned table. The majority of respondents offered more than one training, which helps to empower women economically and socially, enabling them to participate more fully in their communities and

contribute to the overall development of the country, and the percentage is more than 100 because people were reached by more than one service.

The Annual Income of Respondents Before Working with African Evangelical Enterprise.

Table 3: The Annual Income of Respondents Before Working with African Evangelical Enterprise.

| Annual income before and after working with AEE | Frequency Before AEE | Percent Before AEE | Frequency After AEE | Percent after AEE |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Bellow 30,000 | 210 | 59.32 | 9 | 2.54 |
| 30,001-50,000 | 89 | 24.72 | 196 | 55.37 |
| 50,001-100,000 | 51 | 14.16 | 122 | 34.46 |
| 100,001-150,000 | 4 | 1.11 | 27 | 7.63 |
| Total | 354 | 100.0 | 354 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary data (February, 2023)

Table 3 demonstrates that the biggest number of respondents, 59.32% earned the income below 30,000Frw, 24.72% earn 30,001-50,000Frw, 1.11% earn 100,001-150,000Frw, this signifies that the annual income of respondents in Bumbogo and Nduba sectors have not stabilized and after working with AEE their standard of living is changed

according to the feedback from local leaders of those sectors.

Annual Savings of Respondents After Working with African Evangelical Enterprise.

Savings are only practised where there is profit because savings are equal to income minus either consumption or investment.

Table 4: Annual Savings of Respondents After Working with African Evangelical Enterprise.

| Annual savings level | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|
| Bellow 13,000 | 2 | 0.56 |
| 3,001-5,000 | 109 | 30.79 |
| 5,001-10,000 | 214 | 60.45 |
| 10,001-15,000 | 22 | 6.11 |
| 15,001-20,000 | 7 | 1.94 |
| Total | 354 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary data (February, 2023)

Table 4 shows that after working with AEE, 60.45% saving between 5,001 and 10,000 per year, 30.79% saving between 3,001 and 5000, 6.11% saving between 10,001 and 15,000, 1.94% saving between 15,001 and 20,000, and only 0.55% saving below 3000 Rwandan francs. This can provide women with more opportunities to invest in their education, start businesses or access credit, which can enhance

their economic independence and decision-making power.

Investments of Respondents After Working with the African Evangelical Enterprise.

Investment is made where people experience savings. Hence, investment is made where people have profits from their daily activities.

Table 5: The Investments After Benefiting the African Evangelical Enterprise.

| Investment | Frequency | Percent |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Construction of buildings | 4 | 1.13 |
| Expanding the business | 12 | 3.39 |
| Buying land | 2 | 0.55 |
| Buying farm equipment | 186 | 51.67 |
| Buying Animals (Livestock) | 150 | 41.67 |
| Total | 354 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary data (February, 2023)

Table 5 shows that 4.44% of the respondents expanded their business, 51.67% of them bought farm equipment, 41.67% bought Animals (Livestock), 1.13% constructed buildings, 0.55% bought land, and 3.39% expanded their business. Expanding businesses can be linked to women's empowerment as they can provide women with economic opportunities, financial independence and the ability to make decisions about their own lives.

Women can gain access to resources, markets and networks that can help them achieve their goals and improve their overall well-being.

Health insurance in Rwanda was mainly emphasised by the introduction of mutual insurance, where every Rwandan citizen should be integrated in order to be treated in case one falls sick.

Table 6: Health Insurance of Respondents Before African Evangelical Enterprise.

| Health insurance level | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Difficult | 212 | 59.88 |
| Very difficult | 142 | 40.12 |
| Total | 354 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary data (February, 2023)

Table 6 shows that 59.88% of respondents found paying for health insurance difficult, and 40.12% of respondents found paying for health insurance very difficult, which suggests that a substantial portion of respondents are facing financial challenges in

accessing and maintaining health insurance coverage.

Health Insurance of Respondents After the African Evangelical Enterprise.

Table 7: Health Insurance of Respondents After African Evangelical Enterprise.

| Health insurance | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------|------------|--------------|
| Very easy | 71 | 20.06 |
| Easy | 283 | 79.94 |
| Total | 354 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary data (February, 2023)

Table 7 shows that 20.06% of respondents paid for health insurance very easily, and 79.94% of respondents paid for health insurance easily.

Paying School Fees for Respondent's Family Members Before the African Evangelical Enterprise.

Education is one of the important capitals that people need very much in their lives. Human capital enables people to acquire knowledge and skills, which will help them to create and innovate for the sake of getting off-farm jobs. The table below shows paying school fees for respondents' family members before CBOs.

Table 8: Paying School Fees for Respondent's Family Members Before African Evangelical Enterprise.

| School fees paying level | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Difficult | 153 | 43.22 |
| Very Difficult | 201 | 56.78 |
| Total | 354 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary data (February, 2023)

Table 8 shows that 56.78% of respondents could pay school fees for their family members without much difficulty, and 43.22% found it to be very difficult. This demonstrates that many respondents could hardly pay school fees for their family members, especially in secondary schools.

Paying School Fees for Respondent's Family Members After African Evangelical Enterprise.

Education is one of the important capitals that people need very much in their lives. Human capital enables people to acquire knowledge and skills, which will help them to create and innovate for the sake of getting off-farm jobs. All respondents, after

working with AEE Rwanda, found it very easy to pay school fees for their family members. The implication of school fees payment is that it can help improve access to educational attainment, leading to better economic outcomes for individuals and their families.

Paying Bills for Water and Electricity

When a family gets an affordable income which can sustain them, it will be easy for the family to pay bills for water and electricity. The table below shows paying bills for water and electricity in a family.

Table 9: Paying Bills for Water and Electricity After African Evangelical Enterprise

| Water bills and the ability to pay for electricity | Frequency | Percent |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Yes | 304 | 85.87 |
| No | 50 | 14.13 |
| Total | 354 | 100.0 |

Source: Primary data (February, 2023)

Table 9 shows that 85.87% of respondents confirmed that they are able to pay bills of water and electricity and only 14.13% answered “no”, meaning incapable of paying bills for water and electricity in relation to women's empowerment, the ability to pay bills can also empower women to make informed decisions about their household needs and priorities by having control over their finances and allocate resources effectively and managing expenses and maintaining financial stability.

Correlation between African Evangelical Enterprises and Women's Empowerment.

A statistical relationship or association between two or more variables is referred to as correlation. It shows how much the variables change in connection with one another. To put it another way, when one variable changes, the other variable could rise, fall, or stay the same. There are three types of correlation: Positive correlation: When one variable increases, the other also increases. Negative correlation: When one variable increases, the other decreases. No correlation: There is no relationship between the variables. Two variables are strongly correlated; one may be used to predict the behaviour

of the other. For instance, if there's a strong positive correlation between temperature and ice cream sales, researchers might predict higher sales on warmer days. In summary, correlation is a useful

statistical tool for understanding relationships between variables and is integral in many areas of research to make predictions, analyse trends, and guide further investigation.

Table 10: Correlations between AEE's Activities and Women's Empowerment.

| Correlation | | What service did the CBO offer you/your family? | Savings after Joining CBO |
|---|---------------------|---|---------------------------|
| What service did AEE offer you/your family? | Pearson Correlation | 1 | -.009 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .932 |
| | N | 354 | 354 |
| Annual Savings after Joining AEE | Pearson Correlation | -.009 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.932 | |
| | N | 354 | 354 |

Source: Primary data (February, 2023)

From Table 10, the result of the correlation of the services offered by AEE to the community and their annual savings after working with it for empowering them, and the result is $[-0.009 < 0.932 < 1.00]$, which means that there is no relationship between the contribution of AEE to the women's empowerment at Bumbogo and Nduba sectors because the correlation of -0.009 indicates virtually no relationship between the services offered by AEE to the community and their annual savings after working it for empowering them.

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