ASSESSING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH: A STUDY OF GATUANYAGA FOCAL DEVELOPMENT AREA, THIKA EAST DISTRICT.

By

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess community participation in the community driven development approach in Gatuanyaga Focal Development Area, Thika East District. The study's broad objective was to assess community participation in the community driven development approach. The study questions were if beneficiary community make decisions, acts collectively, gets involved, if local institutions participate and what factors promote beneficiary community participation .The study design was an ex-post facto cross-sectional survey, which used non-random sampling technique, and both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Data was organised, processed and analysed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques, presented as text, tables, charts, and quotes. The study found out, and concludes that communities make decisions in some aspects, with evident 'representational' decision making process. Local institutions are involved in development but local governance structures are not necessarily used as channels for delivery of development. Although there is collective action, youth and individuals do not actively participate. Community involvement in development dwindles as the stages of development project cycle progress, with monitoring and evaluation recording the least level of participation, while implementation records the highest level of participation. Key factors that promote community participation in the community driven development approach are development need, development interest and wanting to belong. The study recommends that policy makers and development practitioners devise ways of giving beneficiary communities full control of decision making, recognition and strengthening of local development governance structures, need to entrench community involvement in all the stages of the project and more engagement of the youth in development processes.

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