Assessment of the Participation Levels by Maasai Women Pastoralists in Local NGO Programmes and Projects, and its effect on their Empowerment: Case Study of Kajiado Central.

By

SENEIYA KAMOTHO

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the participation levels of women in Local NGOs and its effects on their empowerment; case study of Kajiado Central. The study is guided by the following specific objectives: To determine the levels of Maasai women pastoralists' participation in local NGO programmes and projects in Kajiado Central; to establish how Maasai women pastoralists are empowered as a result of their participation; to identify the constraints to Maasai women pastoralists' participation in local NGO programmes and projects; and to give policy recommendations that increase participation levels and empowerment. The study adopted a descriptive design in which data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire with 172 properly filled and 18 improperly filled. Maasai women who have participated, or continue to participate in local NGO projects and programmes were purposively selected from Kajiado Central to respond to the questionnaires (190). Two (2) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 11 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were also used as data collection methods for triangulation of information. The SPSS software and Microsoft Excel were used to analyze the quantitative data using descriptive statistics, especially frequencies and percentages. FGDs were recorded, transcribed, translated and qualitatively analyzed according to their content. Pictorially, tables were used to enhance clarity and understanding of the findings. As a mainly qualitative study, the questions were probing and explorative leading to the following findings: A majority of the respondents were illiterate with decreasing numbers having attained primary, secondary and university education; there is need for adult literacy training and use of the Maa language for Maasai women pastoralists to more meaningfully participate in local NGO programmes; pastoralist-based livestock management and livestock produce lead as sources of the main occupation as well as, to a small extent, charcoal production, beadwork and crafts to supplement income; Maasai women pastoralists are engaged in lower level participation (Health and humanitarian assistance and WASH), which have minimal empowerment effects, and a little more than a third of the women are engaged in higher level participation that empowers them (positive change in status, power relations and division of labour); most beneficiaries participated at lower levels (imposition, non-involvement) and a few of them in higher levels (local community governance, decision making and consultation); two thirds felt they now had skills that had empowered them with income to invest; most women faced logistical and socioeconomic problems regarding participate in local NGO projects and programmes, and limited accessibility to NGO services and information was also a constraint; more Maasai women want skills in economically empowering projects and programmes rather than participate at tokenistic levels of receiving humanitarian relief. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made: adult and other education needs to increase; income generating activities for empowerment (positive change in status, division of labour, power relations) needs to be increased; local NGOs to expand and access remote Maasai areas; include local beneficiaries int governance and resource allocation for knowledge sharing, accountability and empowerment; infrastructural development in remote Maasai areas and user

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friendly technology and programmes will augment empowerment through higher level participation.

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