

# Factors Influencing Youth Participation in Empowerment Projects in Embakasi East Sub-County

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**Abstract;** Ideally the study is meant to find out answers to four objectives; accessibility to opportunities, awareness strategies, livelihood skills and the government strategies on youth participation in empowerment projects in Embakasi East Sub-county. The researcher's aim was that Youth Empowerment Project was to support the Government of Kenya's efforts to increase access to youth-targeted temporary employment projects and to improve youth empowerment and employability. The labor-intensive works and social services project component was to support the GoK in reducing the vulnerability of unemployed youth by expanding and enhancing the effectiveness of the Kazi Kwa Vijana (KKV) projects. The study adopted a descriptive research design which was able to ascertain and describe the characteristics of the variables of interest in this situation. The target population of the study was of 60 youth group officials and 290 registered Youth making a total of 350 respondents. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 60 youth respondents. Questionnaires were the main data collection tool. Data analysis was done using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data was collected edited, coded and then analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools Correlation analysis to establish the relationship between the study variables. Youth participation in groups in terms of membership, decision making and involvement in youth participation projects was found to positively correlate with youth participation in empowerment projects at a correlation coefficient of 0.874. A correlation coefficient of 0.139 was established between accessibility to opportunities for youth and participation in empowerment projects. In livelihood skills there was a weak negative correlation between participation and their role in the implementation of empowerment projects. This showed a weak negative correlation value of 0.197. Government strategies and youth participation in empowerment projects was found to correlate at a positive correlation coefficient of 0.992. The researcher found and indicated a positive correlation between youth accessibility to opportunities, awareness strategies, livelihood skills and government strategies as far as participation in youth empowerment activities are concerned. In this study it was recommended that youth should be provided with training and made aware on projects idea conceptualization, planning, implementation and monitoring so that they improve their livelihoods and the government to develop strategies to curb the challenges faced by Youth and also have their voices heard.

**Key words;** Youth, Participation, Empowerment, Projects, Embakasi East Sub-County.

## 1.0. Introduction

In Mercy Corps' (2009) Nepal program, Youth participation is a way of approaching our work, of looking at the ways in which society functions, of perceiving a desirable construction of young youth within that society. The youth designed community projects for which they raised money and subsequently built and helped maintain these community development projects [1]

Youth empowerment is about facilitating the youth to forge partnerships with other groups in society; instilling a sense of ownership in the efforts to improve their well-being; and building their capacity to realize their aspirations and boost self-motivation. The youth are empowered when they acknowledge that they can make free choices in life, take action based on their

decisions and accept responsibility for the action. Empowering the youth requires an economic and social base; political will; adequate resources and a supportive legal and administrative framework; a stable environment of equality, peace and democracy; access to knowledge, information and skills and a positive value system. (Maguire, 2007). [2]

According to Ketch (2010), Youth are young people between the ages of 15-24 years of age. The youth are both tomorrow's leaders, parents, professionals and workers and today's assets. Properly supported and given the right opportunities, girls and boys, young women and young men can play a significant part in lifting themselves, their families and communities out of poverty. [3]

According to Bell (2011), youth support and participate in projects that account for their needs. Youth participate collectively to take initiative for their own socio-economic development which results in empowerment through asset and capacity building. Youth participation can be based on the fact that they have the ability to carry out activities suited to their needs by becoming empowered to develop themselves in a collective effort to improve living conditions in the community. [4]

Chelasani, (2013) described youth participation as the real influence of young youth in situations and not presence as subjects or service recipients. The study raised issues with the way youth participation in development issues was addressed through percentages or frequencies of youth who participated without looking at the real influence and effects. [5]

## 2.0.METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Study Design

A descriptive survey design was suitable in this study owing to the fact that several youth and empowerment projects were sampled.

### 2.2. Accessibility to opportunities and youth participation in empowerment projects

Accessibility to opportunities and participation in empowerment projects among the youth has been barred by corruption, nepotism and demand for experience by employers. Evidence on accessibility to opportunities among the Kenyan youth paints a dismal picture on the extent to which youth are able to participate in empowerment projects. [6]

### 2.3. Awareness strategies and youth participation in empowerment projects

According to Armitage (2010), participation is a process where the community acts in response to the concerns of the public, raise their opinions on the decisions that affects them and thus take responsibility for the changes that affects them and the entire community. Youth participation could be as a result of the traditional sense powerlessness felt by the community especially the youth when it comes to Youth awareness towards the opportunities that are available for them to make strategic decisions. There are various definitions for the youth therefore the definitions depend largely on the context and who is defining the term. [7]

### 2.4. Livelihood skills and youth participation in empowerment projects

Livelihood is described as a process of earning a living. It involves Youth capabilities, assets, income and activities

Category of Youth	Target population	Sample Size
Youth group members	290	58
Youth group officials	60	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>70</b>

required to secure the necessities of life. The sustainability of livelihood is experienced when youth are able to deal with and regain from devastations and traumas, coupled with enhancing their welfare and that of coming compeers without destroying the natural environment or resource base. [8]

### 2.5. Government Strategy and youth participation in empowerment projects

As much as there are empowerment projects, the level of youth participation may be influenced by the extent to which these opportunities are accessible to them through government strategies. Youth are faced not only by lack of adequate accessibility to basic services but also lack of clarity from the government in accessibility to participation in empowerment opportunities. Failure to have well defined empowerment projects is among the major challenges facing the youth to empowering strategies for participation in empowerment projects [9].

### 2.6. Target Population

According to the statistics from youth empowerment office, there were two hundred and ninety registered youth groups and sixty youth group officials. The target population for this study is for the entire three hundred and fifty respondents of Embakasi East Nairobi County. The population was divided into categories as indicated in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1 Target Population

Category of Youth	Target population	Percentages
Youth group members	290	82.86
Youth group officials	60	17.14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>100</b>

Source; Ministry of Youth Empowerment Database, Embakasi East Nairobi County, October 2019.

### 2.7. Sample size and sampling procedure

This section covers the sample size and sampling procedure that was used

### **2.7.1. Sample size**

The study targeted 60 Youth group officials and 290 Youth group members of all registered Youth groups in Embakasi East Nairobi County.

### **2.7.2. Sampling procedure**

The youth members and the officials were sampled using systematic random sampling. To conduct a systematic random sample, the researcher first prepared a comprehensive list all youth and group officials in Embakasi East Sub-County. From this list, the sample was drawn so that each member had an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study. Best and Khan (2003), [10] recommended a sample size of 20% to 30% ideal for providing reliable data when selected. This has been illustrated in table 2.2.

**Table 2.2. Sample Size**

### **2.8. Data Collection instruments**

The study used primary data sources for the purpose of collecting data. Structured questionnaires were used; the questionnaires were organized into four sections. First, it had a cover letter from the University of Nairobi; second question had the purpose of the study, third, the instructions that guided the respondent in filling the questionnaire, Section four contained questions meant to determine the general information of the respondent and the fifth section had open-end questions for the study. The use of questionnaires was preferred because the ease with which to collect information and ease of analysis as they were standardized. [11]

### **2.9 Validity of instruments**

The researcher assessed the content and constructed validity of the research instruments. Content validity depicted whether the questions and statements fully represented every element of the research questions and objectives of the study. Construct validity on the other hand ensured that the questions and statements in the questionnaire were correctly and clearly stated. [12]

### **2.10. Reliability of instruments**

The reliability of questionnaires was established through the test and retest procedure. The test and re-test technique was used to estimate the reliability of the instruments. This involved administering the same test twice to the same group of respondents who were identified for this purpose. A period of two weeks was allowed before the tools were retested. Sampled responses from the test and the retest was analyzed and computed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and ascertain the  $\alpha$  obtained to be  $\geq 0.7$ , which means it was more reliable. [13]

### **2.11. Data Collection Procedure**

An introductory letter was obtained from the University of Nairobi, and a research permit from NACOSTI. A consent letter was presented to the participants to seek their consent before administering the questionnaires. The researcher then administered the questionnaires within a period of two weeks. Completed questionnaires were collected, and the collected data processed using SPSS software.

### **2.12. Data Analysis Techniques**

The raw data collected was sorted, edited, coded and tabulated for analysis, and quantitative analyses was used. The level of the data analysis involved inferential statistics where Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to establish the associations of the study variables. Using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21, the values of correlation and regression coefficients was obtained.

### **2.13. Ethical Considerations**

Prior to the beginning of the study, the researcher sought permission from the relevant authorities. A letter of introduction was provided by the University, which explained to the respondents the purpose of the study before engaging them.

## **3.0. DATA ANALYSIS**

### **3.1. Correlation Analysis**

This section presents the correlation analysis of the study variables. To establish the level of influence of accessibility to opportunities, awareness strategies, livelihood skills and government strategies on youth participation in empowerment projects, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated.

#### **3.1.1. Accessibility to opportunities and youth participation on empowerment projects**

To establish the accessibility to opportunities, influence on youth participation in empowerment projects, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated. The results are shown in the Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1. Correlation analysis on level of accessibility to opportunities**

Awareness strategies		1	2	3	4
Youth participation in county empowerment projects	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	1 57			
Training on projects Implementation	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.663 0.233 57	1 57		
Aware of opportunities available for Youth in projects	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.670 0.215 57	.874 0.053 57	1 57	
Effectiveness of awareness in promoting Youth participation	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.972** 0.006 57	.751 0.144 57	.73 0 0.1 61 57	1 57

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

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

A correlation analysis between youth participation in empowerment projects and level of accessibility revealed a significant positive relationship between participation in county empowerment projects and differences in level of accessibility to opportunities attained by Youth. This from the study finding showed a correlation coefficient value of 0.965. Another relationship established though not significant is that accessibility to opportunities encourages participation with a correlation coefficient value of 0.139. An analysis of the study findings on the relationship between youth participation in empowerment projects and improvement of project qualities through accessibility indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship.

These findings are in line with a study carried by Paul 2009 who noted that the higher level of accessibility to opportunities increases the level of participation of youth in empowerment projects. It is associated with the fact that accessibility and attainment of quality user-friendliness continues to serve as a catalyst of attaining further opportunities for upward social mobility and better social relations. [14]

### 3.1.2 Awareness strategies and youth participation on empowerment strategies

In order to establish the influence of awareness strategies on youth participation in empowerment projects, a Pearson

Accessibility		1	2	3	4
Youth empowerment projects are easily accessible	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	1 57			
Youth have access to youth empowerment training program	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.965** 0.00 8 57	1 57		
Accessibility encourages Youth participation in projects	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.139 0.24 57	.090 0.086 57	1 57	
Projects qualities can be improved through accessibility to opportunities.	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.937* 0.01 9 57	.996** 0.000 57	.166 0.790 57	1 5 7

Correlation Coefficient was calculated. The results are shown in the Table 3.2.

### Table 3.2. Correlation analysis on awareness strategies

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

An analysis of the study findings on the relationship between youth participation in empowerment projects and awareness strategies indicated that there was a relationship between participation and training on empowerment projects. This showed moderately strong positive correlation value of 0.663. Awareness of opportunities available for Youth in empowerment projects was found to strongly correlate with participation at a coefficient value of 0.874. There was also a significant correlation between effectiveness of awareness in promoting Youth participation and their participation in empowerment projects. From these study findings, it can be noted that awareness among Youth is a determining factor as far as youth participation in county empowerment projects is concerned. [15]

### 3.1.3. Livelihood skills and youth participation on empowerment projects.

In order to establish the influence of involvement in livelihood skills on youth participation in empowerment projects, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated. The results are shown in the Table 3.3.

### Table 3.3. Correlation analysis on livelihood skills

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

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

An analysis of the study findings on the relationship between youth participation in county empowerment projects and their involvement in decision making to cater for their livelihood skills indicated that there was a weak negative correlation between participation and their role in the implementation of county empowerment projects. Integration of Youth ideas and suggestions in county empowerment plans was found to weakly correlate with participation at a coefficient value of 0.161.

The findings are in line with a study by Samad, (2002) who stated that Youth have very low utilization of services offered by empowerment projects due to lack of knowledge about these services, thus questioning the nature of communication strategies adopted by empowerment projects in low income areas, and to an extent, the level of awareness about empowerment projects to such Youth. [16]

### 3.1.4. Government strategies and youth participation on empowerment strategies

In order to establish the influence of government and institutional framework on youth participation in county development projects, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated. The results are shown in the Table 3.4

**Table 3.4. Correlation analysis on government strategies**

Livelihood skills		1	2	3	4
The youth representatives are given responsibilities based on their occupation	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	1 57			
Youth plays a greater role in shaping the decision that affects project implementation.	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	- .1970 750 57	1 57		
The group officials help the Youth in enhancing their health status through provision of welfare foods.	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.674 0.052 57	-.574 0.321 57	1 57	1 5 7
Youth empowerment ideas, suggestions are integrated in the county empowerment projects plans.	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.722** 0.163 57	-.304 0.618 57	-.731 0.161 57	1 5 7

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed)

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

An analysis of the study findings on the relationship between county government strategies and youth participation in empowerment projects indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between participation and county government strategies of (0.992). An analysis of the study findings indicated that there was a positively weak correlation (0.921) between youth awareness about government strategies and participation in county empowerment projects.

From these study findings, it can be noted that the county government needs to strengthen the involvement of Youth in decision making through organization of forums where Youth can give their suggestions which can be integrated in empowerment projects plans. Youth can be involved in core project activities such as implementation, monitoring and evaluation, giving youth leadership positions, and providing support. (Samah & Aref, 2009). [17]

## 4.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4. 1. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that accessibility encouraged the youth to participate in empowerment projects. Differences in accessibility levels hinders effective youth participation in empowerment projects which implied that the level of accessibility was a determinant of how youth

Government strategies		1	2	3
Idea conceptualization influence youth participation in the achievement of empowerment projects.	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	1 57		
The government strategies are effective when promoting youth participation in empowerment projects.	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.992** 0.001 57	1 57	
Youth are not aware of their participation in the implementation of empowerment projects	Pearson correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.992** 0.010 57	.921* 0.026 57	1 57

understand empowerment issues and which also motivates them to get involved. The study further concluded that accessibility to opportunities available for the youth were better empowered for participation in the empowerment projects.

On the influence of livelihood skills on youth participation in the empowerment of county projects, the study concluded that involvement of youth in decision making influenced youth participation in empowerment of county projects. The study concluded that youth involvement in decision making process results in better quality decisions of the projects as youth provided technical experts during the projects decision making process.

And on the influence of awareness strategies on Youth participation on empowerment projects, the study concludes that awareness encourages and motivates Youth to participate in empowerment of county projects. Awareness level had an influence on youth participation on empowerment projects.

It was further concluded that youth involvement in government strategies had an influence on the participation of Youth in projects implementation. The Youth are not aware of any government directive and policies that promotes youth participation in empowerment. The government policies did not affect the Youth significantly since Youth lacked awareness of any directives and government strategies that concerned them. When there is effective implementation of policies on Youth participation, it encourages and motivates Youth to participate actively in empowerment of county projects idea conceptualization, Planning, implementation and monitoring.

#### 4.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Project managers and communication stakeholders in empowerment projects use youth friendly awareness strategies such as media, sports, and through youth peers
- ii. Youth should be provided with training and made aware on projects idea conceptualization, planning, implementation and monitoring so that they improve their livelihoods.
- iii. The government should develop strategies to curb the challenges faced by Youth in trying to be part and parcel of the county empowerment projects and also have their voices heard.
- iv. The study recommends a further enforcement on policy implementation and projects sustainability by the government strategies.

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