ASSESSMENT OF POVERTY REDUCTION PROJECTS AND THE PROJECT PERFORMANCE OF NYARUGENGE DISTRICT, KIGALI, RWANDA.

By

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ABSTRACT:

This research is entitled Assessment of Poverty Reduction Projects and the Project Performance of Nyarugenge District, Kigali, Rwanda. The objective of the project will be to assess the poverty reduction projects and performance of different projects that were introduced, exercised and implemented in the Nyarugenge District in the City of Kigali. The specific objectives were to assess the performance of poverty reduction projects, their impact on the community, and the challenges that might have been raised during the implementation of the projects and to recommend possible solutions that can be referred to in order to achieve success in those projects. The Nyarugenge District is one of the three districts in the City of Kigali, located in the North-West of the city. The district is made of ten (10) sectors and it is in this district that the city center located. Although the district is almost made up of the urban sectors, some of its sectors are partly made of ruler areas such as the Kanyinya, Kigali and Mageragere sectors.

The fact that the district is made up of some rural sectors, it is obvious that poverty is remarkably among the problems available among the residents of the district. It is therefore the fact that different projects have been implemented to reduce poverty. This research is a descriptive survey research design and the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The target population planned was 144 households with a sample size to be determined with the use of the Morgan Table. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used in this study. The tools used are mainly questionnaires as the data collection instrument, interview guide and focused group discussions (FGD) that were used to supplement the questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using MS Excel 2016. The study concluded that the assessed projects have been successfully implemented and are progressively achieving the goals. The projects are being monitored day to day monitoring team and the required resources have been availed to ensure that the project can transform the lives of beneficiaries.

Although the projects have performed well the study found that there are gaps and areas that need improvement in the implementation of the projects to achieve the desired goal of eradicating poverty from the Nyarugenge district.

The research concluded that the project team formation needs to be improved to ensure that implementation gets smoother and achieves the goal. The study found that the monitoring system is manual and which creates a lack of control of the project and may lead to project failure or delay.

1. INTRODUCTION

This article will help us to understand the background of the research which is to assess the poverty reduction projects and project performance in Nyarugenge District, Kigali, Rwanda. The chapter is made up of the following: Background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, research hypotheses, significance of the study, the scope of the study, and assumptions.

1.1 Background to the study

Across the world, more debates are on tables about poverty reduction projects but not so many have produced needed solutions to what is mostly meant by poverty reduction. Poverty reduction is often used to mean promoting economic growth which will permanently help as many as possible people to move from below to over the poverty line.

With poverty reduction, there are various objectives from which a choice must be made to either focus on eradicating current and future poverty by helping as many as poor people and focusing on those in chronic poverty or focusing on working on removing the causes of poverty and those which deal with symptoms.

Poverty means more than a lack of income and productive resources to sustain livelihoods. Poverty manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic needs, social discrimination and exclusion, as well as the lack of participation in decision-making. In 2015, more than 736 million people lived below the international poverty line. Around 10% of the world population (pre-pandemic) was living in extreme poverty and struggling to fulfil the primary basic needs such as health, education, and access to clean water and sanitation. There were 122 women aged between 25 to 34 living in poverty for every 100 men of the same age group and more than 160 million children were at risk of continuing to live in extreme poverty by 2030.

Poverty facts and figures

According to the most recent estimates, in 2015, 10% of the world's population or 734 million people lived on less than $1.9 a day. Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are expected to see the largest increases in extreme poverty, with an additional 32 million and 26 million people, respectively living below the international poverty line as a result of the pandemic, the share of the world's workers living in extreme poverty fell by half over the last decade: from 14.3 % in 2010 to 7.1% in 2019, even before COVID-19, baseline projections suggested that 6% of the global population would still be living in extreme poverty in 2030, missing the target of ending poverty. The fallout from the pandemic threatens to push over 70 million people into extreme poverty. one out of five children live in extreme poverty, and the negative effects of poverty and deprivation in the early years have ramifications that can last a lifetime, in 2016, 55% of the world's population; about 4 billion people did not benefit from any form of social protection.

Measuring poverty

There has been marked progress in reducing poverty over the past decades. According to the most recent estimates, in 2015, 10% of the world's population lived at or below $1.9 a day. That's from 16% in 2010 and 36% in 1990. This means that ending extreme poverty is within our reach.

However, the decline has slowed, in April 2013, the World Bank set a new goal to end extreme poverty in a generation. The new target is to have no more than 3% of the world's population living on just $1.9 a day by 2030. By measuring poverty, we learn which poverty reduction strategies work, and which ones do not. Poverty measurement also helps developing countries gauge program effectiveness and guide their development strategy in changing the economic environment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem:

Poverty has been a major problem for Rwanda for a long, especially after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi as almost everything has been wiped out hence many Rwandans were affected economically. Rwanda as a country has committed itself to support and transforming the lives of its citizens and initiated different programs and projects that were and are expected to fast-track the process of poverty reduction across the country. Although Rwanda has made its effort there is still an emerging problem of a low number of beneficiaries that graduate from poverty through the initiatives and projects implemented. This research will analyze the performance of exercised projects that were meant to reduce this problem in Nyarugenge District located in the City of Kigali in Rwanda.

1.3 Justification of the Study

The significance of the study lies in the fact that though a number of projects have been initiated there is still an issue of poverty among citizens located in Nyarugenge District, Kigali City in Rwanda. The findings of the research are intended to be useful for different groups that are involved in projects such as the government of Rwanda and its stakeholders, local leaders and project managers and other researchers that are expected to play a role in poverty eradication and development in the Nyarugenge District in Kigali in Rwanda.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The following are the specific objectives:

i.   To assess poverty reduction projects exercised in the Nyarugenge District in Kigali in Rwanda.
ii. To assess poverty reduction projects' performance in the Nyarugenge District in Kigali in Rwanda.
iii. To assess the impact of skills and competencies of staff in monitoring and evaluating poverty reduction projects' performance.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The research will be mainly centered on the following hypothesizes:

H0: Projects initiated and implemented in an area play an important role in poverty reduction in that area.

H1: Projects initiated and implemented in an area do not play an important role in poverty reduction in that area.

H0: Monitoring and evaluation process impact performance of poverty reduction projects.

H1: Monitoring and evaluation process does not impact performance of poverty reduction projects.

H0: Competent and skilled project managers influence the project performance.

H1: Competent and skilled project managers do not influence the project performance.

H0: Availability of the 4M (man, money, materials and machinery) contribute to poverty reduction.

H1: Availability of the 4M (man, money, materials and machinery) does not contribute to poverty reduction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theories of poverty
Classical and neoclassical
This theory views individuals in classical traditions as largely responsible for choosing their destiny whereby individuals choose to become poor. This goes along with the concept of "sub-cultures of poverty that involves a logical implication that deficiencies may continue from time to time", insisting that lack of self-earned role models who already made it to break through and that the support from the government should only be meant to changing the attitude and capabilities of individuals.

Keynesian/Neoliberal
This theory is considered the "demand-side" theory that focuses on the changes n in the economy within a short-term period. This theory for the first time was regarded to separate the context of economic behaviour and market on the basis of individual incentivisation from the context of broad national economic aggregate variables and constructs.

Marxian/radical
The suggestion of a radical change in the socio-economic system, Marxian economists and other radical theorists exposed the possibility that economic growth may not suffice to drive poor people from poverty because some of the poor people may not adopt or grasp the benefits of the overall income growth. The prioritization of the concept of classes provides a shift in perception by focusing on the characteristics of a given group rather than individuals as individual status is looked at as dependent on the respective socio-economic environment.

Social exclusion and social capital
Another aspect of the literature highlights the interrelation between social exclusion, social capital and the occurrence of poverty and the recognition of the importance of structural characteristics of society and the situation of certain groups.
Social exclusion and Social capital theories are, among all the reviewed approaches and it is debatable that they are the ones that insist on the understanding of the essential processes that allow deprivation to arise and persist. However, the broad definition of poverty considered in these theories comes at the cost of being less exactly estimated and more complex to quantify and address the policy.

2.2 Empirical Review
The government of Rwanda has established Economic Development & Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) in its three editions I and II the NST1 as the program that would help to reduce poverty among Rwandans. These strategies proposed different programto boost citizens to improve their livelihood and r well-being. Those projects were to be exercised in the entirety of the country and in this research we will assess how those projects were performed in Nyarugenge District in Kigali in Rwanda.

The government of Rwanda strived to make the country a success story at the international and regional levels (Vision 2020, 2000). The government to achieve this the following six goals were

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set: comprising governance and a well-organized state, building an expertized human capital, mobilization of the strengthened private sector, agriculture and modernized livestock by 2020 vision 2020 was the result of the national consultation of 1997 – 2000.

The Economic Development & Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) was broken into two and was sectioned to tackle different issues that were at stake as drawbacks to the economic development of the nation. The two sections were to respectively define and clarify the national economy and design how things in Rwanda could be done. It is in this way that the role of the private sector was highlighted in contributing to poverty reduction (EDPRS, 2007).

Kircher, P. T. (2002). In the study entitled Poverty Reduction Strategies, he recommended that the creation of economic opportunities would contribute to poverty reduction with an economic inventive system based on well-organized and regulated competitive markets as the starting point to achieve economic growth.

Mensah, S.N.A; Benedict, E. (2009). On Entrepreneurship training and poverty alleviation: Empowering the poor in the eastern Free state of South Africa. Indicated that access to entrepreneurial training could play a role in poverty reduction in a poor region of southern Africa. The research's findings indicated that handouts by the government to reduce poverty, with their unintended consequences of protection and demonstrations, may help a small group of poor people for a short-term period. It indicated that as well training on entrepreneurship and the provision of other facilities may help poor owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) opportunities to grow their businesses and graduate from poverty.
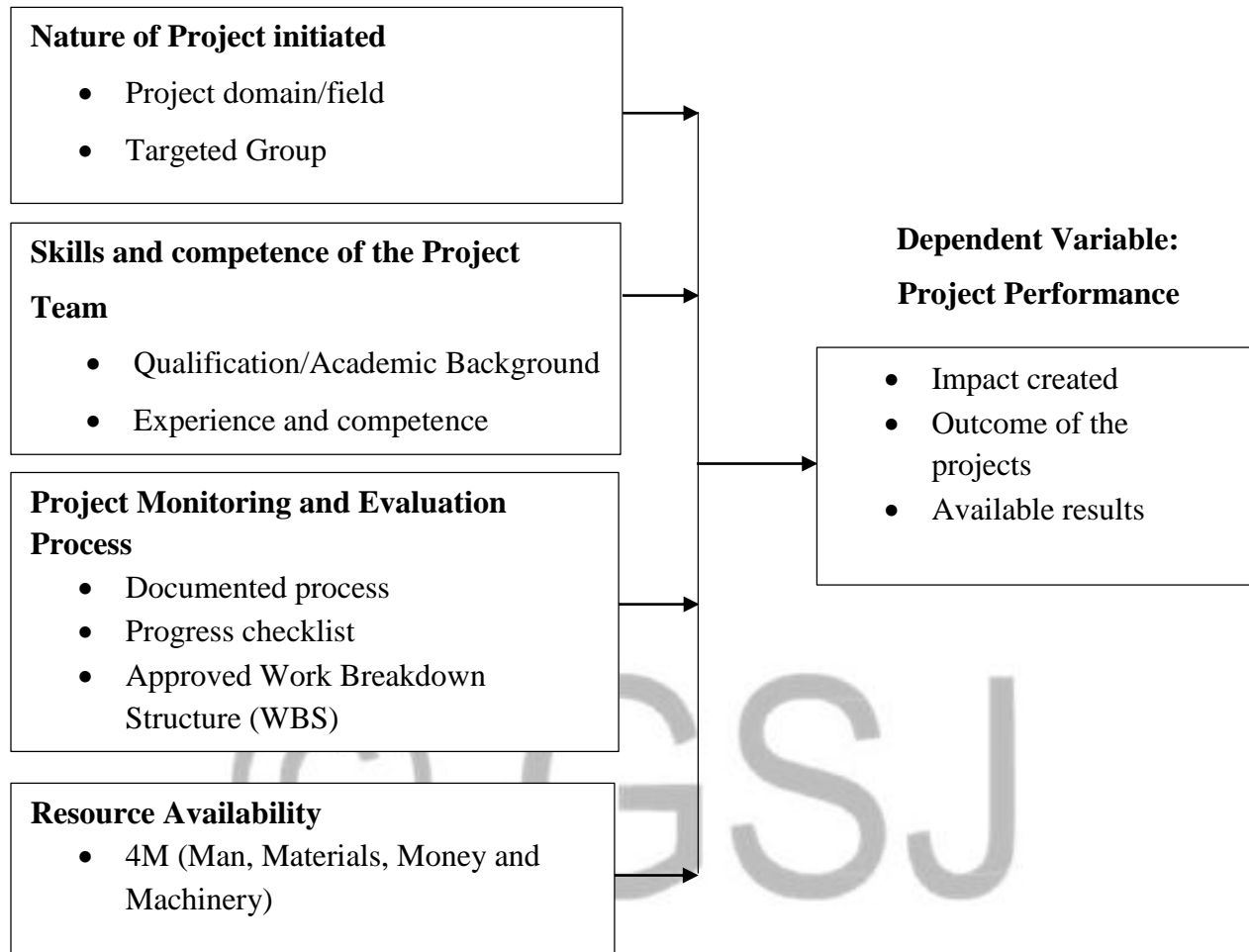
2.3 Conceptual review

This conceptual review is conceptualized from the view of the researcher based on what was hypothesized and to be tested for this study. The following four categories of the nature of the project, skills and competence of the project team, monitoring and evaluation plan and process and the availability of resources; of independent variables will be tested to prove the dependent variable which is the project performance.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The below conceptual framework displays how the independent variables will contribute to or affect the independent variable which is the project performance assessed from the poverty reduction projects s that have been initiated in Nyarugenge District, in Kigali, in Rwanda.

Independent Variables:

Assessment of poverty reduction projects

Nature of Project initiated

- Project domain/field
- Targeted Group

Skills and competence of the Project

Team

- Qualification/Academic Background
- Experience and competence

Project Monitoring and Evaluation Process

- Documented process
- Progress checklist
- Approved Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

Resource Availability

- 4M (Man, Materials, Money and Machinery)

Dependent Variable:

Project Performance

- Impact created
- Outcome of the projects
- Available results

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Research conceptualization 2022

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy

In this research, the researcher considered different aspects in a form of independent variables that will be benchmarked as the key drivers of the main dependent variables referred to as the performance of poverty reduction projects. In this research the impact on the community, the challenges that might have been raised during the implementation of the projects and recommended possible solutions that can be referred to in order to achieve success in those projects will be given important consideration as well.

3.2 Research Design (Research methodology 2022)

The research adopted the descriptive research design. Kassu Jilcha Sileyew, (2019), in research entitled "Research Design and Methodology" described a research design with its intention to provide an appropriate framework for a study. A descriptive design portrays an accurate profile of the situation and offers the researcher a description of the relevant aspect of the phenomena of interest from individual, organizational, and industry-oriented perspectives, which will offer the

researcher to gather data from a wide range of respondents on the impact of poverty reduction projects exercised in Nyarugenge District.

3.3 The population of the study

Casteel, A., & Bridier, N. L. (2021) the target population is a specific, conceptually bounded group of potential participants to whom research may be extended and this group represent the population of interest.

The population of the study consisted of 144 respondents including citizens and residents of the Nyarugenge district, opinion leaders and authorities from the local government clusters (Sectors, Cells, Villages) referred as to project managers. The selection of representatives was done with a random selection.

3.4 Instruments

The study intended to use different instruments to collect data including Questionnaires, Interviews and observation.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure was planned such that different methods were used and focused on the following techniques including primary and secondary data collection with a focus on both qualitative and quantitative data. The data collection mechanisms are devised and prepared in respective appropriate procedures.

Primary data collection methods

Primary data sources are qualitative and quantitative whereby the qualitative source are field observation and interview while the quantitative data sources are questionnaires and interview questions.

Secondary data collection methods

The secondary data is considered to be data collected by someone other than the researcher. This data provides insights into the research area. It as well helps in identifying the research gap that may need to be filled by the researcher. The secondary data sources could be either internal or external data sources of information that may cover a wide range of areas.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is an important key to be taken care of in research if this one is missing it can lead to the failure of the researcher.

Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2007) "Business Research Methods", different aspects have to be taken into consideration and in this study the following have been given a higher priority;

The voluntary participation of respondents in the research was important as they were granted the right to withdraw from the study at any stage if they wished so, participants were informed about the consent to get involved and were assured that they shall be no negative impact if they participated. During the research there was no use of offensive, discriminatory or other unacceptable language was used and the privacy and anonymity of respondents were of paramount value. Authors whose work was used in any part of the dissertation have been acknowledged with references as well data protection according to law No 058/2022 in Rwanda was considered.

4. DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Assessed projects

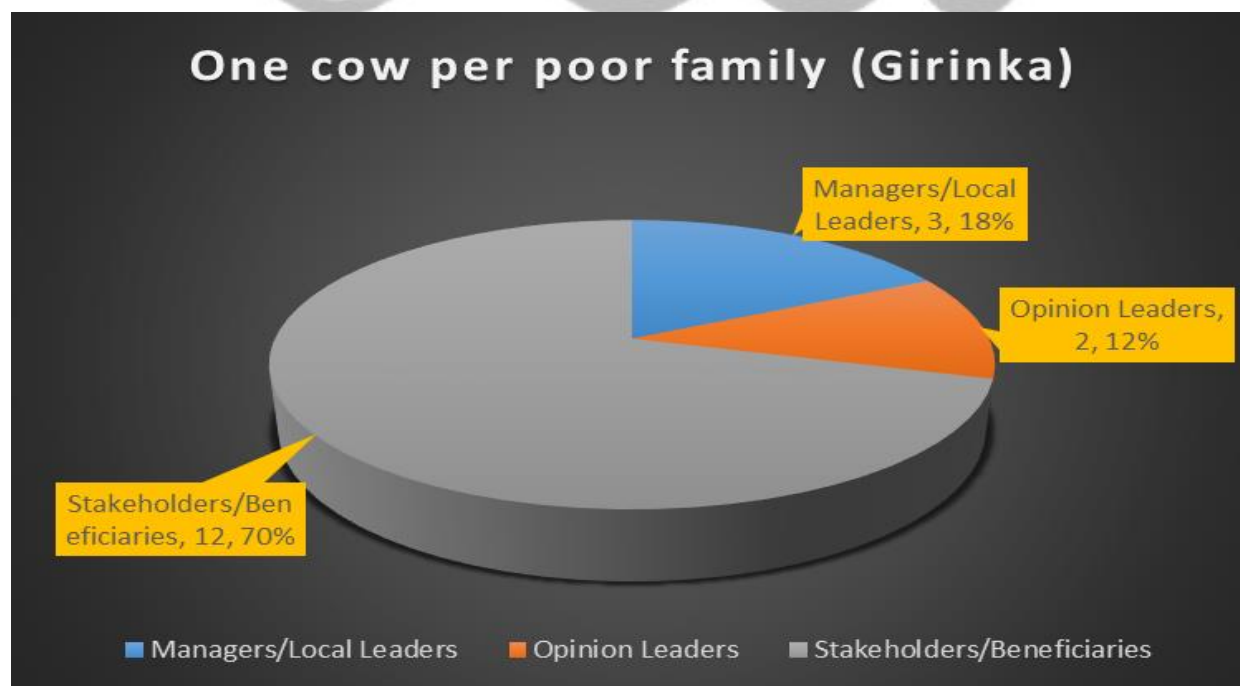### 4.1.1 One cow per poor family (Girinka)

The Girinka program has been initiated to purposely reduce poverty through dairy cattle farming which was expected to improve the livelihoods through the improved milk consumption that generates income. The program is expected to enable beneficiaries to participate in decision-making, environment protection, agricultural productivity improvement through the use of manure fertilizer and promoting unit and reconciliation among Rwandans based on the cultural principle that if one cow is given from one person to another, it establishes trust between the giver and the beneficiary.

Table of Analysis

Poverty reduction projects	Managers/ Local Leaders	Opinion Leaders	Stakeholders/ Beneficiaries	Total
One cow per poor family (Girinka)	3	2	12	**17**
Umurenge Direct Support Program	5	3	17	**25**
Vision 2020 Umurenge Program	6	4	23	**33**
Total	**14**	**9**	**52**	**75**

Table 1: Position of respondents
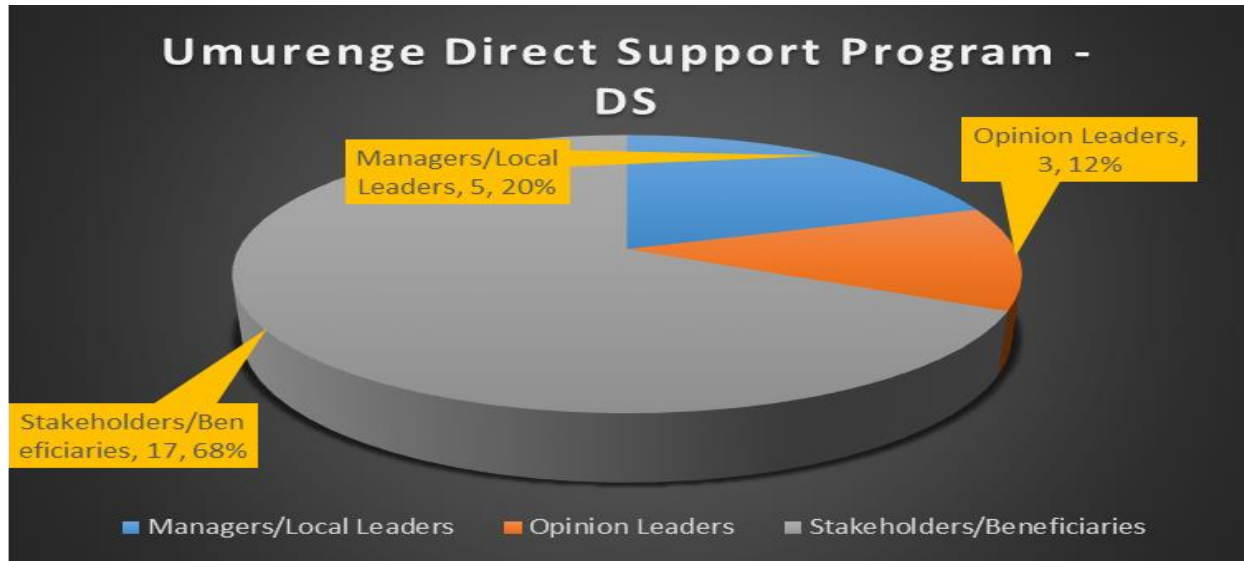
Source: Research data 2022

Fig 5: Respondents on the Girinka program

Source: Research data 2022

4.1.2 Umurenge Direct Support Program

The Direct Support program has been implemented in all districts of the country including Nyarugenge District in Kigali in Rwanda with the objective to lift the households living in extreme poverty at the village level whereby they have no land and none from the family is able to work for the family. Direct support is offered in cash or exceptionally in kind to improve the living conditions and give the possibility of empowering the beneficiaries with applicable skills in handcraft work or social service activities.
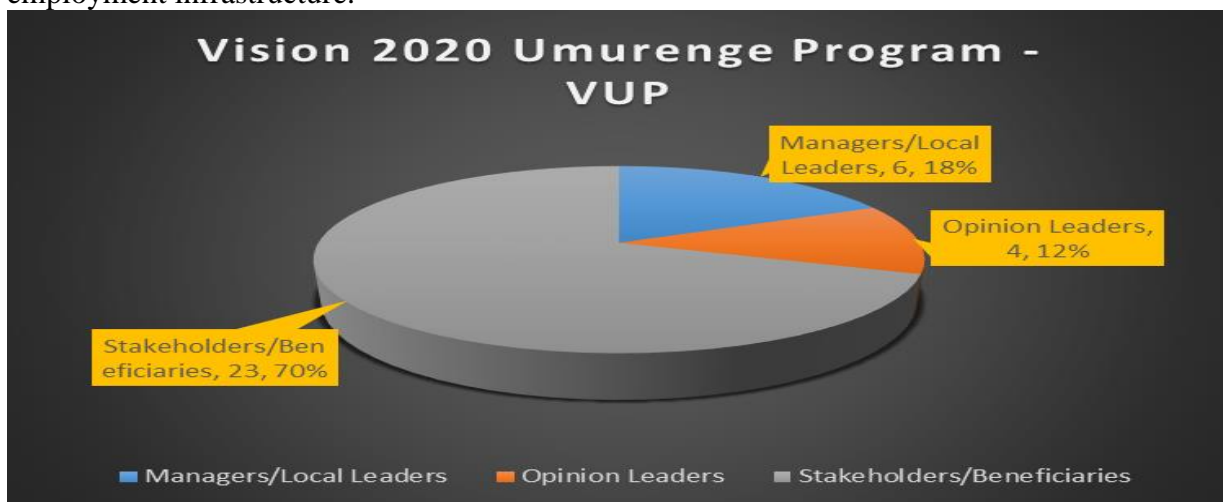

Fig 6: Respondents to the Direct Support program

Source: Research data 2022

4.1.3 Vision 2020 Umurenge Program

The VUP (Vision 2020 Umurenge Program) is built to foster and empower the community based on the ubudehe social classes. The program has different components but in this research, we considered the component that deals with involving the participation in the public works planned using community-based approaches to build community assets and creation of off-farm employment infrastructure.

Fig 7: Respondents to the VUP (Vision2020 Umurenge Program)
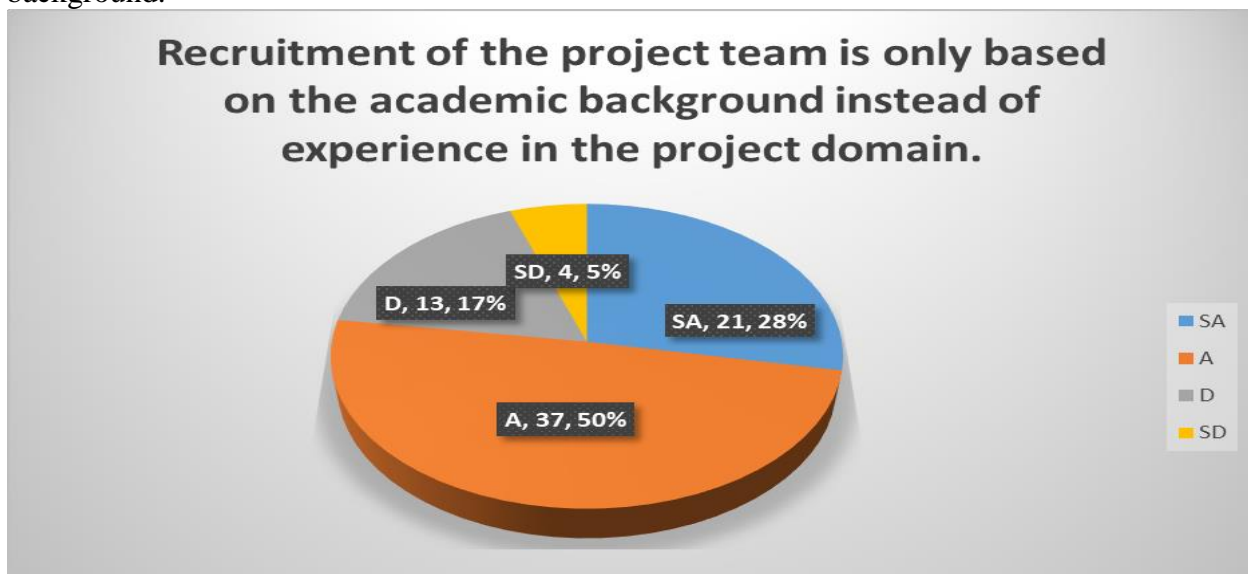
Source: Research data 2022

4.2 The project team

The research has been extended to the analysis of the competence and skills of the project team and the following are the findings of the descriptive analysis presented in frequencies and percentages.

4.2.1 Recruitment criteria

To properly understand the success of the poverty reduction projects exercised in the Nyarugenge district, it is of paramount value to understand the details of the project team. The project team to be efficiently formed; it is highly important to design the criteria that should be followed while recruiting the team.

This research has found that the project team recruitment has been done mainly based on academic background instead of on experience in the project domain. This analysis proved that 78% agree with this while only 22% disagree with the fact that recruitment is done based on academic background.
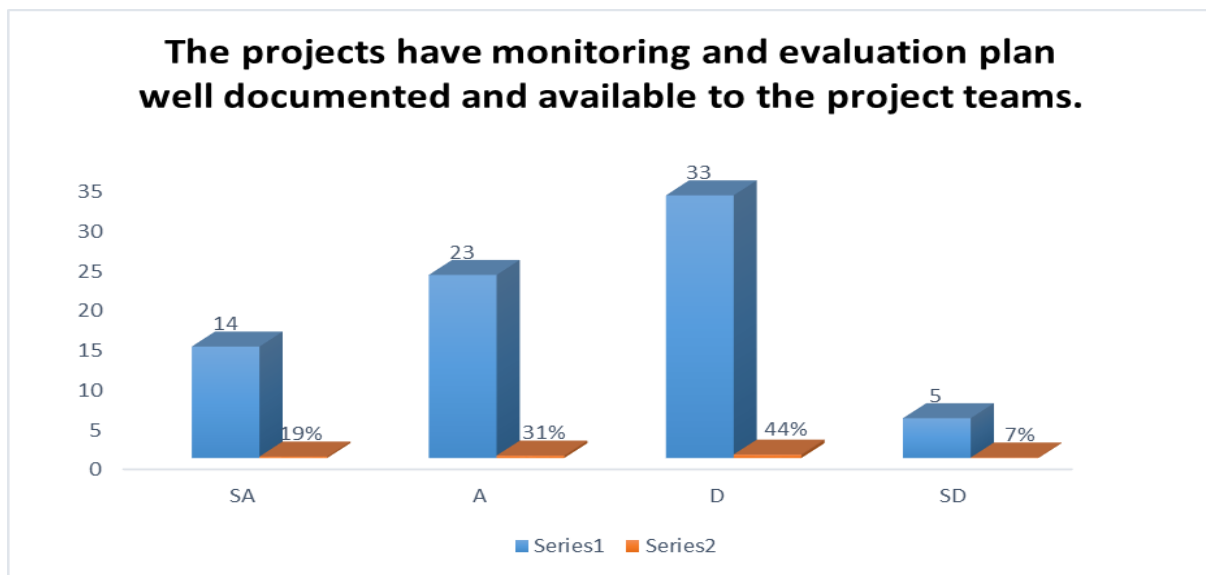

Fig 8: Recruitment criteria

Source: Research data 2022

4.3 Projects monitoring

The research in its descriptive analysis has proven that the monitoring process of the poverty reduction project exercised in Nyarugenge lacks key elements as presented in the following segment.

4.3.1 Availability of monitoring and evaluation plan

The research has proven through the descriptive analysis of frequencies and percentages presented in the figure below that 51% disagree with the availability of the monitoring and evaluation plan while 49% agree that the monitoring and evaluation plan is available.
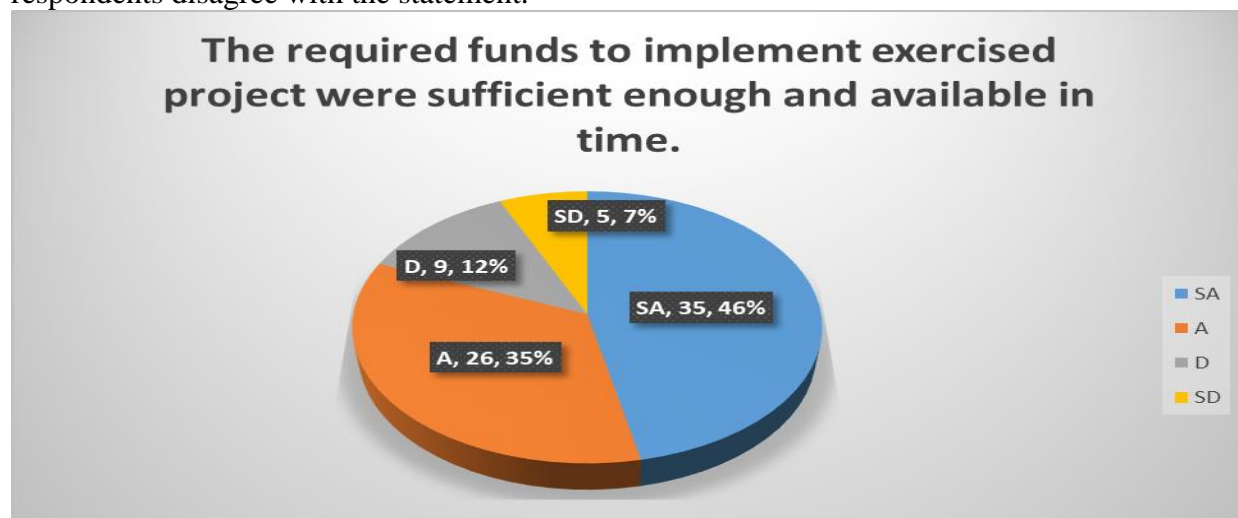
Fig 12: Monitoring and evaluation plan

Source: Research data 2022

4.4 Resource availability

4.4.1 Financial resource availability

The financial resources have been proven to be one of the key resources needed to implement the poverty reduction projects exercised in the Nyarugenge district. The descriptive analysis of frequencies and percentage presented below in the figure shows that 81% of the respondents agree that the required financial resources to implement the projects was available while 19% of the respondents disagree with the statement.
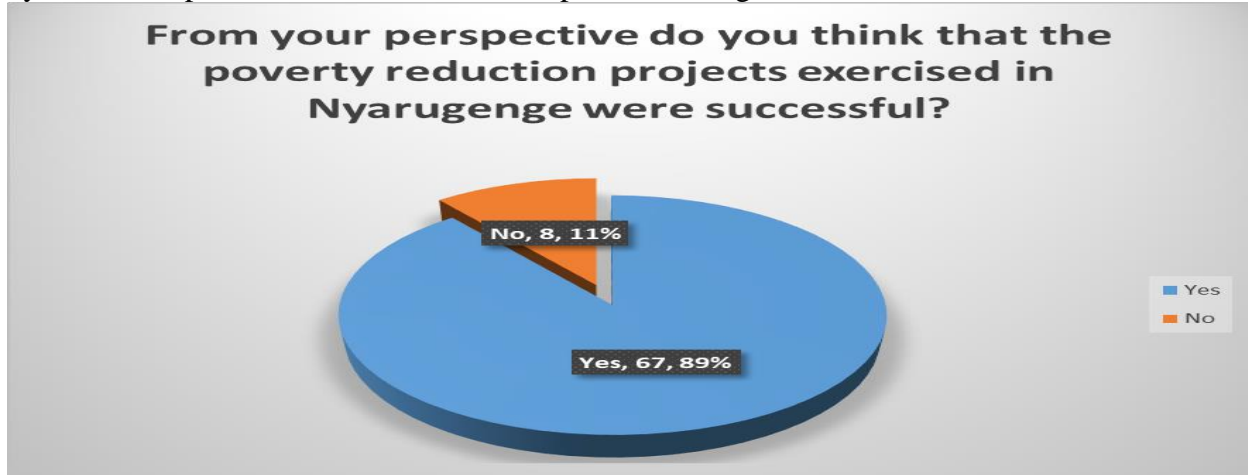

Fig 16: Financial resource availability

Source: Research data 2022

4.5 Project Performance

4.5.1 Project successfulness

The poverty reduction projects exercised in Nyarugenge have been successful based on the results of the research with a descriptive analysis with frequencies and percentages and that is was proven by 89% of respondents whereas 11% of respondents disagree.

Fig 22: Project's success

Source: Research data 2022

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary
In this section, the summarized results of the research are presented herein. The frequencies and percentages were mainly used to describe all objectives that led to the final conclusions. With the support of the Nyarugenge District in Kigali, the research questionnaire has been attempted and completed by targeted respondents with a 100% of return rate.

5.1.1 Background information
Based on the nature of the projects that were being assessed, the respondents were aged between 18 years and above. The age group of 18 to 35 years was highly represented by a frequency of 24 with a percentage of 32% followed by the age group of 56 years and above with a frequency of 23 with a percentage of 31% then the age group of 46 to 55 years represented by the frequency 15 with a percentage of 20% and lastly the group of 36 to 45 represented by 13 as a frequency with a percentage of 17%.

5.1.2 Assessed projects
The study assessed projects that have been initiated to purposely eradicate poverty in Nyarugenge District and these are mainly in the national program referred to as VUP (Vision 2020 Umurenge Program). The program has three major components including a) one cow per family known as well as "GIRINKA", b) secondly the engagement of those living in poverty but with the ability to participate in the public works that create an employment infrastructure that is off-farm oriented and c) thirdly the Direct Support which is providing cash or in-kind support to the landless living in extreme poverty.

5.1.3 Competence and skills of the project team

This research has found that the project team recruitment has been done mainly based on academic background instead of on experience in the project domain. This analysis proved that 78% agree with this while only 22% disagree with the fact that recruitment is done based on academic background. The research has found that internal promotion is the main recruitment process of the project team to the level of 76% and interviews have been used at 17% whereas outsourcing is at 8%. With a percentage, 87% of respondents agree and strongly agree that the training time or the project team is enough and efficient whereas 14% of the respondent agree that the training time has not been enough.

5.1.4 Monitoring and evaluation

The research has proven that 51% think that there is no availability of the monitoring and evaluation plan while 49% agree that the monitoring and evaluation plan is available; 58% of respondents agree that the monitoring and evaluation activities were carried out during the implementation of the projects. The presented data shows that 64% of the respondents agree that the reports of monitoring and evaluation have been prepared and documented and shared with relevant stakeholders in real time whereas 36% of respondents disagree. It has been proven that the monitoring and evaluation system is not digitized with 85% of respondents disagreeing with that whereas 15% of respondents think that the monitoring and evaluation system is digitized.

5.1.5 Resource availability

The study revealed that 81% of the respondents agree that the required financial resources to implement the projects were available while 19% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. the required machinery based on the nature of the projects were available and enough during the implementation of the project with 95% of the respondents agreeing that the required machinery was available whereas 5% disagreed with the fact; 90% of the respondent agreed with the statement that the requires human resources were available in time whereas 10% of respondent disagree. 69% of respondents agree that the required materials and or supplies were available and contributed to the performance of the project, whereas 31% of the respondents disagree with the statement.

5.1.6 Project performance

The poverty reduction projects exercised in Nyarugenge have been successful based on the results of the research that was proven by 89% of respondents whereas 11% of respondents disagree. The results of this research have proved that the available resources will enable the project to meet its completion with a 75% of respondents agreeing with the statement while 25% of respondents agree. The project duration as proved by the research is opened ended as it will continue until the undefined time. 41% of respondents have been on the project for 2 to 3 years on the project while 31% have been 4 to 5 years on the project whereas 19% are above 5 years the project and 9% are new to the project with less than 2 years.

6 Conclusion

The study of assessment of the poverty reduction projects and project performance of the Nyarugenge District in Kigali Rwanda has been conducted with a success and supported by the district administration.

The study concluded that the assessed projects have been successfully implemented and are progressively achieving the goals. The projects are being monitored day to day monitoring team

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and the required resources have been availed to ensure that the project can transform the lives of beneficiaries.

Although the projects have performed well the study found that there are gaps and areas that need improvement in the implementation of the projects to achieve the desired goal of eradicating poverty from the Nyarugenge district.

The research concluded that the project team formation needs to be improved to ensure that implementation gets smoother and achieves the goal. The study found that the monitoring system is manual and which creates a lack of control of the project and may lead to project failure or delay.

7 Recommendations

With reference made to the findings of the study, there are a number of recommendations to relevant parties including the district administration and future researchers who may get interested in the field.

7.1 Recommendation to the district administration

To properly implement the projects that will efficiently achieve the goal, the district must recruit the project team based on merit and experience instead of relying on academic background and internal promotion. It is recommended to avail well-documented project monitoring plan and ensure that the monitoring report is created, shared and reviewed by relevant stakeholders. It is as well recommended that further research may be conducted in all sectors of the district to properly assess the performance of poverty reduction projects exercised in the district.

7.2 Recommendation to further researcher

This study is not conclusive; therefore, it is recommended to further research in this field should be conducted especially on the amount of funding injected into poverty reduction projects. With further research, it is recommended to assess the private sector's involvement in the implementation of the projects.

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