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Improving Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment of Disadvantaged Communities Through Projects

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Abstract:

Economic empowerment is a prerequisite for achievement of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. The web of poverty and disability is tightly woven in such a way that disability may often lead to poverty and poverty can result into disability. The relationship is strong and it is clear that there is an urgent need to take action to address the impact of disability on the people, the families and the general population of Kenya. There are both aggravating factors and alleviating factors in the cycle of poverty and disability. The current support and existing bodies, policies, programmes and projects targeted towards this cause make an important difference to the quality of life of the persons with disabilities, in terms of empowerment and increased awareness creation and acceptance by society. Failure to address these issues puts at risk the development agenda of the country as the disabled persons constitute the population of Kenyans gravely affected by poverty and lack of empowerment opportunities. The disabled persons must have more equitable access to products and services, as well as have equal opportunities to participate in all development oriented goals in the same way as the rest of the Kenyan society. Achieving of economic empowerment requires a holistic approach and a long term commitment from various sectors.

Keywords: persons with disabilities, poverty eradication, projects and programmes, economic development, community empowerment

1. Introduction

Development, a post-World War II phenomenon involves progressing from a much simpler to more complex and sophisticated phase; a low-technology towards modern high-technology, and a substantial increase in income levels and purchasing power of a people. Kenya as a nation is experiencing a rapid increase in population, which coupled with a poor economic environment has resulted in close to 46% of Kenyans currently living in absolute poverty. A percentage of Kenyan people not only face a deteriorating quality of life but also lack of purchasing power to demand basic services (Oyaya & Rifkin, 2003). However, social resources and projects can play an important role in enhancing household lives as well as other financial crises (Bebbington, 1999). According to the World Bank and Republic of Kenya(1996), there were an estimated 5–17 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in every village and an estimated 300,000 in rural Kenya, in the 1990s.

1.1. The purpose of this review

This paper will make a case for the importance of projects and their contribution towards improving the livelihoods of the Kenyans that live with disabilities. The review is based on information obtained from a desk top review and study of available documentation. The scope of the assignment did not involve collection of data sources and research on the ground. However the findings presented here have sufficient information to address the review's main purpose, and can form a basis for a more detailed research study for addressing the socio-economic impact of projects on the livelihoods of the persons living with disability in Kenya.

1.2. Background of the Kenyan Economy

Colonialism has ensured the predominance of agriculture in most of the African countries, including Kenya. This has been carried out at the expense of industrialization for a long time (Legovini, 2002). As time progresses, the structure of the Kenyan economy has been changing hand in hand with the global economic trends. An introduction of sectors like transportation, mining, real estate, financial services, telecommunication and engineering, have seen the Kenyan economy diversify year by year. Initially the economy relied heavily on agriculture, manufacturing and fishing which are still current contributors to the national economy, though the introduction of the other sectors supplement on the reliance of a purely agricultural economy. After independence, Kenya experienced rapid economic growth through public investment encouragement of agricultural production and incentives for private and even foreign industrial investment. This continued until the beginning of the 1970's and 1980's where the economic performance began to decline and in the early 1990's, Kenya had its worst economic performance since independence. Growth in

the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stagnated and agricultural production drastically reduced. Inflation reached record levels and the Kenya government's budget deficit was enormous.

1.3. Development Levels and Strategies

The Kenyan post-independence economic history is divided into two periods; from 1963 to the beginning of the 1980's characterized by strong economic performance and gains in social outcomes. The second period from the 1980's to present, characterized by slow and sometimes negative growth, macroeconomic imbalances and significant loss in social welfare, rising poverty levels and falling life expectancy. Currently many development strategies focus revolves around the Vision 2030 and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS).

1.4. Vision 2030 and the Millennium Development Goals

1.4.1. Vision 2030

This is an economic development plan by the Kenyan government to develop several different economic zones in various parts of the country with the aim of producing annual economic growth rates of at least 10%. As recent as 2007, Kenya has had a GDP growth of 4.9%. The Vision 2030 plan is in a series of five-year development plans known as Medium Term Plans (MTPs), with the first one having started in 2008-2012. The on-going development policies of the government are currently driven by the key objective of achieving Vision 2030. The vision further aims at making Kenya an industrialized, middle-income country providing high quality life for all its citizens by the year 2030. It is based on three pillars: The economic pillar – this aims at providing economic prosperity to all Kenyans through economic development programmes and achieving an average GDP growth of 10% per annum in the next 25 years. The social pillar – this seeks to build a cohesive society, ensure justice and social equity in a clean and secure environment. This focuses on education and training, the health sector, water and sanitation, the environment, housing and sanitation, science, technology and innovation, gender-youth and vulnerable groups, together with equity and poverty elimination. The political pillar – this intends to realize a democratic political system founded on issue-based politics that respects the rule of law and protects the rights and freedom of every individual in Kenya. The political pillar vision for 2030 is '*a democratic political system that is issue-based, people-centered, result-oriented and accountable to the public*'. It is guided by nine principles ; constitutional supremacy, sovereignty of the people, equality of citizens, the bill of rights, a viable political party system, national values, goals and ideology, public participation in governance, separation of powers, and decentralization. (Source:(Vision 2030, 2008) As Kenya moves towards achieving her Vision 2030, the involvement of the disabled community in development activities will be critical for the country.

1.4.2. Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that all 193 United Nations member states and at least 23 International organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. The aim of the MDGs is to encourage development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries. They are derived from earlier international development targets, and were officially established following the Millennium Summit in 2000, where all world leaders present adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Declaration asserts that every individual has the right to dignity, freedom, equality, a basic standard of living that includes freedom from hunger and violence, and encourages tolerance and solidarity. MDGs were made to operationalize these ideas by setting targets and indicators for poverty reduction in order to achieve the rights set forth in the Declaration on a set fifteen-year timeline. The goals are as follows:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development

(Source: UN Millennium Project(2000)

Kenya is yet to achieve most of the set out millennium goals but has nevertheless made progress. It is achieving improved progress in the fight against poverty, the provision of universal primary education, and is well advancing towards combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

2. Poverty in Kenya

The concept of poverty includes different dimensions of deprivation but it generally refers to the inability of people to meet economic, social and other standards of well-being. Furthermore, chronic poverty exists among people who remain poor for much of their life course, and who may pass on their poverty to subsequent generations (Hulme & Shepherd, 2003). The multidimensional aspect of poverty is now widely accepted and it is based on research that includes major participatory studies of what poor people mean by and understand of poverty. According to Narayan (2000), poverty is hunger, not knowing where the next meal will come from. It is lack of shelter and having nowhere to go. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not being able to read and being able to go to school, poverty is being unemployed and having little chance of getting a

job even if there are jobs because you have no training. Poverty is living one day at a time and fear for the future and it is characterized by deprivation, vulnerability, and powerlessness.

Some of the dimensions that help understand the meaning of poverty include economic, human, political, and socio-cultural capabilities. By economic capabilities, it focuses on the ability to earn an income, to consume and to have assets, which are married closely to food security, material well-being and social status. These aspects are often raised by poor people, along with secure access to productive financial and physical resources and factors of production, e.g. land, implements and animals, forests and fishing waters, credit and decent employment. On the other hand, human capabilities are based on health, education, nutrition, clean water and shelter. These are core elements of well-being as well as crucial means to improving livelihoods since for instance, disease and illiteracy are barriers to labour efficiency, and thus to other capabilities for poverty reduction. Reading and writing facilitate communication with others, which is crucial in participatory approach to social and political life. Conversely, political capabilities include human rights, a voice and some influence over public policies and political priorities. This implies that deprivation of basic political freedoms or human rights like arbitrary, unjust and even violent action by the police or other public authorities is a foremost aspect of poverty. Powerlessness aggravates other dimensions of poverty because the politically weak have neither the voice in policy reforms nor secure access to resources required to rise out of poverty. Equally, socio-cultural capabilities concern the ability to participate as a valued member of a community, referring to social status, dignity and other cultural conditions for belonging to a society which are highly valued by the poor themselves. Participatory poverty assessments indicate that geographic and social isolation is the main meaning of poverty for people in many local societies; other dimensions are seen as contributing factors. In the 1970s the International Labour Organization (ILO) broadened the focus, and poverty came to be seen as the inability to meet basic needs. In the 1980s and 1990s, the concept underwent further change by considering non-monetary aspects such as isolation, powerlessness, vulnerability and lack of security, as well as an individual's capacity and capability to experience well being. Nolan and Whelan (1996) conceive a narrower definition of poverty on the grounds that too broad a definition runs the danger of losing sight of the distinctive core nature of poverty. They define poverty as "exclusion arising from a lack of resources" Despite the difficulty of precise poverty level measurement, knowledge from different sources can often be used to identify the poor. Social categories known for severe poverty in several dimensions are indigenous, minority and socially excluded groups, refugees or displaced persons, persons with disabilities and HIV/AIDS victims. Women, the disabled and children are especially vulnerable, for example elderly widows and unsupported female and child-headed households, and street children. In many societies, these groups are the poorest of the poor and require special attention in policy action for poverty reduction.

2.1. Current Poverty levels in Kenya

Poverty has various manifestations, including lack of food and productive resources sufficient to ensure a sustainable livelihood; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services. It is also characterized by increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness, and inadequate housing. Today, Kenya's poverty rate is estimated to be in the range of between 34% and 42%. Kenya's poverty has probably declined slowly (at about 1% point per year), but remains at very high absolute levels, about 42% in 2009 (World Bank, 2013). Like many other developing countries, poverty in Kenya is much deeper and much more pronounced in rural and remote regions. Poverty rates are highest in the arid and semi-arid regions in the north and north east (World Bank, 2013). Geographically, areas with very little annual rainfall, and thus, low agricultural potential have acute poverty. These regions have also been historically neglected, reflecting Kenya's unbalanced geographical development. In 2005, poverty rates in arid regions (78%) were nearly double the poverty rates in medium and high potential agricultural areas (with a poverty rate of 41%).

2.2. Causes of Poverty in Kenya

There are significant differences in poverty and welfare levels between communities living in different geographical areas. Some of these differences are caused by differences in geographic and agro-climatic conditions (such as rainfall, soil fertility, and altitude), infrastructural access to markets and public facilities (e.g. hospitals and schools), the presence or absence of natural resources such as forests or water bodies, as well as political and historical factors. Even though these factors have been identified as major contributors to differences in standards of living of populations in different areas, there has been little empirical work to ascertain the exact relationship between welfare levels and these factors. In Kenya, especially in rural areas, poverty, income inequality and natural resource degradation are severe problems. Poverty can be described as a vicious cycle. People in absolute poverty face the difficulty of breaking this vicious cycle if there are no enabling measures. Children who are born to poor families are victims of vicious cycle and will always be trapped within this cycle unless there are some external interventions. The poor constitute more than half of the population of Kenya; at least one in every two Kenyans is poor. The Republic of Kenya (2001), through the Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (2001 – 2004) identifies several causes of poverty in Kenya as lack of basic socio-economic services like health and education coupled with inadequate credit facilities. Similarly, land issues, inadequate roads, cost of social services and education, gender imbalance and disability are known to accelerate poverty levels. Lack of access to safe drinking water coupled with inadequate provision of sanitary disposal systems have also been major causes of poverty. Hunger, malnutrition and disease particularly the HIV/AIDS pandemic have aggravated this decline. The increasing number of widows and orphans resulting from the high number of HIV/AIDS cases has significantly increased both women's workload and their financial responsibilities, rendering them vulnerable to the poverty cycle. Many researchers have documented that unemployment, poor infrastructure, and lack of land, education and credit facilities cause poverty. They also add that high insecurity, corruption, and poor governance are some of the causes of poverty. The World Bank (2006), states that women in Kenya are poorer than men,

with 54% of rural and 63% of urban women and girls living below the poverty line. It adds that women in Kenya are more likely to be poor and vulnerable to adverse shocks than men. This is due to limited ability to own land and property which negatively affects their ability to participate in economic growth.

2.3. Disability in Kenya

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines disability not as something that a person has but, instead, something that occurs outside of the person—the person has a functional limitation. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) defines disability to include any physical or sensory, mental, psychological or other impairment, condition or illness that has or is perceived by significant sectors of the community to have a substantial or long-term effect on an individual's ability to carry out ordinary day – to – day activities. Further, the Persons with Disabilities Act 2003 defines as a physical, sensory, mental or other impairments, including any visual, hearing, learning or physical incapability, which impacts adversely on social, economic or environmental participation. On the other hand, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) does not explicitly define disability. However, it states that persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Applying the WHO recommended 10 per cent to today's Kenyan population of approximately 42 million; it would indicate that there may close to 4 million disabled people in Kenya. The Kenya National Survey of Persons with Disability (2008) indicates that the prevalence of disability in Kenya is 4.6% and the most prevalent forms of disability are visual (30%) and physical (30%), followed by hearing (12%) and mental disabilities (11%).

2.4. Disability and Poverty

Many disabled people in Kenya, as in most developing countries in the world, live in poverty, have limited opportunities for accessing education, health, suitable housing and employment opportunities. While not all disabled people are poor, many of them live in chronic poverty, and have potential to undisputedly be amongst the poorest of the poor. Attitudinal and environmental barriers, not just the physical impairment, prevent people with disabilities from enjoying full human rights, e.g. employment, education, recreation and social wellbeing. For deaf people for instance, the major barrier is lack of recognition, acceptance and use of sign language in all areas of life, and lack of respect for deaf people's cultural and linguistic identity. They mingle less with the remaining society, participating less in social activities and family events as well as take an active role in decisive family matters. In terms of interrelationships, they marry among themselves and rarely does a PWD find a life partner out of their own circle of people. Categories of disabled people that also face different challenges and greater exclusion are; women with disabilities, children with disabilities, people with severe mental and intellectual disabilities, the youth/teenagers with disabilities, elderly people with disabilities, and people with multiple disabilities.

2.5. Disability and Education in Kenya

The disabled persons in Kenya face big challenges in the education front, which is the basic right for a growing child to transform him or her to a well-rounded and independent person. According to the Kenya National Survey of Persons with Disabilities (2008), the percentage of persons with disabilities (PWDs) who have attained primary education lies at 67% while a mere 19% attained secondary education, with only 2% having attained university level. PWDs are challenged and discriminated against as a result of their condition. This has led to some of them being denied enrolment at any educational institution at any level because of their disabilities. Approximately 7% reported having been denied enrolment at any level of education and about 3% had been denied entry to regular pre and primary schools. A bigger proportion of PWDs who attended adult literacy classes did so through informal schools (42%), followed by 34% in the mainstream/regular system and 16% who attended integrated programme classes. Other than being denied the services and opportunities, the PWDs have had large drop-out rates, mainly due to the lack of enough money to continue with an education.

Name of Institution	Location
Ol' Kalou School for the Disabled	Nyandarua, Kenya
Port Reitz School for the Disabled	Mombasa, Kenya
Masaku School for the Physically Handicapped	Machakos, Kenya
Kenya Institute of Special Education	Nairobi, Kenya
Garissa Special School for the Mentally Handicapped	Garissa, Kenya
Joyland School for the Disabled	Kisumu, Kenya
Kabarnet School for the Deaf and Blind	Baringo, Kenya

Table 1: Sample Schools and Educational Service Centers for the PWDs around Kenya

2.6. Disability and the Kenyan Labour Market

The Kenyan economy has been sluggish in creating employment, particularly in the formal sector. According to the Republic of Kenya (2011), a total of 445,900 new jobs were created with 12.6 per cent (56,300) being in the formal sector in 2009. It follows that the new jobs created in 2009 could only absorb 26.7% of the youths at the entry point of the labour market. At the same time, the unemployment problem is cumulative in nature with new jobs attracting jobseekers in the entire continuum of the labour force. The labour market is not able to absorb the many Kenyan job-seekers, and this places PWDs in a more disadvantaged situation. According to the Kenya National Survey of Persons with Disability (2008), Western Kenya had the highest number of PWDs with severe difficulties and activity limitation. In the labour force, 16% of PWDs are employed and earn a living through this

employment, 33% are self employed and 24% do not work. In the urban areas, employed PWDs averaged at 32% for Nairobi, 15% for the Coast, 13% for Central Kenya, while Western and North Eastern report 6% and 3% respectively. The financial support received the PWDs in terms of old age pension is 15%, this may be due to the fact that not many of them are employed and pensionable. Approximately 13% of PWDs stop working because of their disabilities, 9% due to illness, 8% from dismissal and 8% from retrenchment. The disability grant received is a mere 6%, private insurance at 4% and social security at 2%. In Kenya, a current ILO technical cooperation project on disability is "Promoting Decent Work for Persons with Disabilities through a Disability Inclusion Support Service" (INCLUDE). The project builds capacity at regional and national levels to effectively support the full participation of women entrepreneurs with disabilities in entrepreneurship development activities conducted under the ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE) programme. INCLUDE also involves advocacy and awareness-raising activities to promote decent work for persons with disabilities. Further, the primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for everyone, including people with disabilities, to obtain decent and productive work, based on the principles of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. This goes a long way in advancing poverty reduction for people with disability.

3. Community based Self-help Initiatives

Lack of employment has driven most local communities in Kenya to find other creative ways to sustain themselves. In the context of developing countries, the cooperative movement and Gandhian (Gandhi, 1962) notions of village self reliance and small-scale development are clearly significant for socio-economic growth. Community self-help groups (CSHG) are set up by collective efforts of indigenous people of homogeneous and heterogeneous attributes but working within the same environment. Their formation creates conditions which broaden the base of self governance, participation and diffusion of power. They can also be defined as voluntary, non profit, non governmental and highly localized or neighbourhood institutions whose membership is placed on equal level and whose main goal is the improvement of the social, political and economical well being of every member. They are concerned with development problems as well as development programmes or projects in their areas. They respond to community felt needs rather than market demand or pressure. CSHGs can be described as nonprofit groups that operate within a single local community to deal with issues or problems that are pressing to that community. Mayo, (2000) writes about empowerment in communities and takes the position that this is achieved through a thorough understanding of how each community is made up culturally. The World Bank supports community empowerment as a means to alleviate poverty as shown in its publication, *Empowerment and poverty reduction*. The empowering process needs to be taken on a case by case basis. Community participation is supported by Swallow, (2005) who uses participation case studies to address community priorities in Kenya. In addition, an empowering approach to development puts economically disadvantaged groups at the centre of development and views them as the most important resource rather than as the problem (Narayan, 2002); by expanding the capabilities of the poor to undertake future self-help development initiatives through participation as it is a people-orientated approach of community development. Further, community empowerment could be viewed as the expansion of assets and capabilities of the economically disadvantaged people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives (Narayan, 2002). Thus the potential gains of Community-driven development (CDD) are undoubtedly large. It has the objective of creating a voice for the poor, while allowing the poor to have more control over development assistance. It is expected that this will result in the allocation of development funds in a manner that is more responsive to the needs of the poor, better targeting of poverty programs, more responsive government and better delivery of public goods and services, better maintained community assets, and a more informed and involved citizens that are capable of undertaking self-initiated development activities. The World Bank's lending for CDD projects has been growing over time, with much of the rationale for this massive expansion being expressed in the CDD chapter in the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Sourcebook (Dongier, et al., 2003) which helps guide the Bank's work on the matter. Here, CDD is viewed as a mechanism which can among other things: enhance sustainability; improve efficiency and effectiveness; allow poverty reduction efforts; make development more inclusive; empower poor people, build social capital, and strengthen governance; and complement market and public sector activities. This is the case since CDD projects allow target communities to identify projects as well as eligible recipients of private benefits, like welfare or relief. Also, CDD projects expand the resources available to the poor, via credit, social funds, capacity building and occupational training. Further, they strengthen the civic capacities of communities by nurturing organizations which represent them, and by enabling them to acquire skills and organizational abilities that strengthen their capacity for collective action. CSHGs in Kenya can be broadly categorized as: Welfare Groups; whose interest is to improve the standards of living of the members. These groups run projects and programmes target to the social and psychological empowerment of the group members. Income generation groups; whose agenda is to engage in some form of economic enterprise for the purpose of wealth creation for their members. These are groups who design projects that target the economic empowerment of the group members. The other forms of community based organizations deal with issues that exist within the community such as health, environment etc. They are formed to deal with a single issue or problem at the community level. Each type of CBO has the single purpose to improve the status of their members and the members of their community. These design projects that can be social, economic, political, technological, environmental or psychological in nature, depending on the main objective of the CBO. CSHGs and the projects they run therefore serve various functions in Kenya, e.g. help to influence the government policies and political decisions in support of community development initiatives, filling the gap in service delivery e.g. in care for HIV/AIDS infected and affected, acts as activists and advocates for the rights of minority groups, do development work e.g. childhood development, and build and maintain trust relationships with opinion leaders in the community.

3.1. Disabled persons and community based initiatives in Kenya

Respect for differences, the right to preserve identities, and acceptance of people with disability as part of human diversity and humanity is first step towards lessening the burden of poverty for people with disability. Many organisations both CBOs and NGOs have taken it among themselves to establish project driven initiatives and campaigns to assist in ensuring they can sustain the PWDs both economically and socially. The establishments are designed to help cater to the most pressing needs the society is facing and are given support by government funding, donor funding together with individual and corporate funding. PWDs have for a long time been locked out of many opportunities due to their condition and have resorted to collaborating on running projects that can assist the communities achieve their objectives. These projects have played critical roles and given support that previously did not exist in these communities. As discussed earlier, the CBOs and NGOs design and model projects that can empower the communities on a socio-economic level. The main focus of many of the CBOs and NGOs for PWDs in Kenya include:

- Income generating and Entrepreneurial projects
- Policy and Advocacy Projects
- Community Rehabilitation Projects
- Vocational Training and Support Projects
- Educational Training and Support Projects
- Consultancy and Training Projects
- Support and Counseling Projects

Name of Organisation	Location	Field of disability	Target focus, activities and projects	Challenges
Shanzu Transitional Workshop	Mombasa	Physically handicapped Deaf and hard of hearing persons	-Vocational training -Income generating projects	-Marketing products -Lack of finances to run programs
Kenya Youth with Disability in Action	Mombasa	All disabilities	-Empowerment through microenterprise -Music -Sports	-Financial Constraints for operations
Shield Women Empowerment and Development (SHED)	Nairobi	Women with disabilities	-Awareness Creation -Advocacy -Sponsorship	-Lack of resources -Capacity Building
Kiambu United Disabled Persons Association	Kiambu	All disabilities	-Rights and awareness creation -Facilitation and advocacy for employment	-Funding -Marketing Products -Transport -Capacity to expand
Empowerment Resource Development Centre	Nairobi	All disabilities	-Research and Policy analysis -Consultancy and training on disability -Policy advocacy	-Inadequate capacity -Inadequate Resource base
Disabled child monitor	Nairobi and environs	All disabilities (children)	-Periodic disability assessments -Counseling to disabled children and their families -Physiotherapy	-Lack of sufficient funding
Walemavu Welfare Association	Kisii-Suneka	All disabilities	-Shoe making project -Financial management and contributions	-Lack of funding
Green Development Group	Kisumu and environs	All disabilities	-Advocacy and awareness -Income generating projects -Community based rehabilitation	-Lack of resources to expand operations

BegakwaBega Disabled Development Group	Bondo	All disabilities	-Revolving fund projects -Tailoring and shoe making projects -HIV/AIDS awareness -Support in education -Crop farming projects	-Lack of financial support -High poverty rates -High mortality rates due to HIV/AIDS and other health related issues.
Empowerment Development for the Education of the Disabled	Wajir	All disabilities	-Animal marketing -Shoe making -Tailoring	-Lack of funding -Lack of transport -Community rejection of the disabled and belief that they are a burden

Table 2: A table containing examples of the Kenyan community based and non-governmental organizations for the disabled communities in their environs that are currently established and operational.

The presence of the community based organizations are spread country wide and the objectives of many of these organizations are to provide a holistic solution to the disabled, in terms of educational assistance, income generating projects, community health care awareness and support, rehabilitation and counseling support, rights protection and advocacy. These organisations all face more or less the same challenges in the management and operational tasks they conduct; lack of funding, psychological challenges caused by stigmatization, lack of market for the products generated from their income generating projects, health challenges and lack of capacity.

3.3. Corporate Social Responsibility and Disability in Kenya

Corporate activities create both positive and negative externalities for both the society and the environment in which the corporations operate, with the social expectation that businesses should generate more positive externalities and minimize negative externalities. This social expectation has increased in the last few decades and businesses have responded with a set of activities given the generic name of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Both scholars and policy analysts have devoted much attention to the implications of CSR policies and initiatives as well as their relation to business strategy. It is noted that successful companies are able to transform social and environmental risks into opportunities, integrating them into their business strategies, allowing them to contribute to the society. The emergence of corporate giving can be traced back to the 1920s when large corporate bodies began purposely launching publicity campaigns to label themselves as trustees of the public. They sought to change the society's perception from moneymaking machinery to communal institutions for the purposes of gaining public endorsement (Marchand, 1998). Corporate responsibility involves economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibility whereas CSR is an integrated part of business strategy that creates value for both the business and society. Overall, CSR has a dominant goal to better the condition of various stakeholders e.g. the broader society, communities and the natural environment (Hopkins, 2003) and has been seen as a continuous process of engagement for the firm with the stakeholders.

3.4. CSR Projects for the Disabled Community

A number of Kenyan and International companies and corporate bodies have taken it among their CSR strategies to fund and support disability projects in a bid to give back to the community. This is mainly in institutional, operational and financial support.

Name of Organisation	Field of Disability	Projects	CSR Role
Kenya Airways	Children with autism and Mental disabilities	Educational Support Projects	Support of the Ikuu Special School for children with mental disabilities
Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK)	All disabilities	ICT Support Projects	Connect training institutions for PWDs with assistive ICT equipment to ensure digital inclusion
Adopt-a-light	Mature disabled persons	Community and environmental project	Employment of the disabled persons
Sollatek Kenya	Blind Children	Educational Support Project	Provision of Braille kits for the children and other operational assistance for the school

Kenol-Kobil Group	Children with disability	Educational Support Projects	Education Fund for Mama Ngina Children's Home and Light and Hope Academy.
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Table 3: A sample of organizations in the Kenyan corporate world that fund projects related to empowering the disabled as part of their CSR activities.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

As in many countries, an increasing number of NGOs and government policies in Kenya are recognizing the need to include the disabled people, especially with the target of both the Vision 2030 and achievement of the set MDGS. The partnership between the government and the NGOs is growing and there is an increase in the support from the corporate social responsibility front. There is an increased awareness and advocacy for this group of persons; nationally, internationally and among themselves; they are now finding the voice to advocate for their rights.

Lessons learned from this study are that:

There are proper policies and support systems established by the Government of Kenya and the international community in support of PWDs. There is as well a potential for institutional and operational support, from both private and public sectors of the economy. However, for successful development and sustainability of the projects, the enterprise must eventually be able to work independently of the supporting organization. It is also noted that given the opportunities to participate in these projects, the PWDs can derive important benefits from the socio-economic support they receive, including economic sustenance, personal empowerment, improved quality of life and increased social acceptance.

4.2. Challenges

Some of the many challenges faced with the population of disabled in Kenya as per the study that:

A big percentage of the community lacks the proper exposure to foundational knowledge. The numbers of schools that can cater to children from the disabled community fully are limited. The PWDs require basic formal education, higher education and provision of vocational skills that can allow them to gain employment and reduce their reliance on family and communal support. Another challenge even in the schools available is the need to develop training and teaching materials specifically designed for the disabled community, such as Braille for allowing the blind persons to read and understanding the Kenyan Sign Language that can be used to impart knowledge to the deaf community. Having experienced high levels of discrimination and rejection, being treated as second-class citizens, the community is close-knit and does not get an opportunity to socially and economically relate with the remaining population. Available project organizations, CBOs and NGOs dedicated to the support of the PWDs are attempting to ensure they achieve their objectives but are also facing funding and operational challenges. There is a lack of sufficient and affordable assistive devices and medical support equipment, most of the PWDs and their families are unable to afford them. Lack of ICT knowledge and exposure Economic barriers in terms of market for their produce from the income-generating projects.

4.3. Recommendations

It is important to begin accepting PWDs on all fronts, from education, work environments, business platforms, and even social arenas. Finding creative ways to unite the disabled community with the rest of the population, would be a significant step towards positive and concrete behavioural change and acceptance within both communities. There are critical issues to address and a need to incorporate all aspects of a holistic development programme for the PWDs with support from the government, donors and private sectors. This will cater to education, gender, health, technology, economic and social national programmes to enable PWDs live fulfilling lives. This will also reduce the stigma and social discrimination faced by the community and empowers the disabled to feel part and parcel of the rest of the society. Socio-economic support and projects can successfully address the needs of the PWDs. Identification of main issues and a strong local partner to enable the community gain on-going support is crucial in the success of this ventures. The main recommendations of this report is that support for activities to address the socio-economic impact of disabilities should continue, combined with efforts to identify the approaches that are most effective and sustainable.

Some general recommendations include:

- Increased advocacy for the rights of the PWDs
- The access to health care and health care information is also an absolute necessity to ascertain that they are able to make better and informed health decisions and lead healthier lives.
- Increase appropriate assistive and medical infrastructure to cater for PWDs and make them more affordable e.g. wheelchairs, hearing aids, and crutches
- Ensure infrastructure provision caters for the PWDs, e.g. health centre services and recreational facilities should be PWD friendly.
- Increased support for educational and vocational centres of the PWDs to allow them to get comprehensive education and vocational skills to allow them to sustain themselves.
- Strengthen and support the local disability projects and programmes countrywide through additional funding and institutional support.
- Set aside a well-operational disability fund in the national budget to cater to the development of the PWDs
- Economically empower the PWDs through training and availability of micro-credit and micro-financing to support existing projects.

- Increase the accessibility of ICT to the disabled community so as to increase their outreach both socially and business-wise.

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