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Assessing International Non-Governmental Organizations' Development Programs and Climate Change Adaptations in Empowering Women Socio-Economically in Makueni County, Kenya

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Abstract:

This study highlighted the interrelationship between the types of programs provided by International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) to empower women socio-economically and climate change. Climate change is accelerating very fast and affecting the more vulnerable women and girls. It is, therefore, important to ensure proper mechanisms are put in place by development actors by providing the right programs that lead to climate resilience. Globally, many people who are affected by climate change risks are women and girls. Although there are many Non-Governmental efforts that have focused on different entry points to empower women, there is still more room to align women's economic empowerment and climate change. It is, therefore, important to support women through programs with climate resilience programs for Sustainable Development. The research employed a mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative method) and descriptive research design in data collection. The study targeted women beneficiaries in Self Help Groups (SHGs) of World Vision and Action Aid programs and key informants such as project and government officials in Makueni County. The study dealt with INGOs that had operated within the study area for the last five years and above. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences software. The study revealed that the main programs included education and training, water and sanitation, disaster risk reduction management, support programs for HIV/AIDs, women and girls rights, leadership and governance, Cash for Assets and Food for Assets. The study concluded that the provision of such programs with climate adaptation initiatives led to a positive impact on the socio-economic empowerment of women and each type of program had a specific contribution. The study concludes that proper programs have to be adapted accordingly in line with climate change for better climate justice for the empowerment of women.

Keywords: Socio-economic empowerment, INGOs, climate change, development, resilience

1. Introduction

Women's socio-economic empowerment and gender equality are crucial in strengthening women's participation in decision-making and attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is also an important indicator of human development and a key player in global food production and this depends on how a nation treats its women (Bhat, A and Bhatt, M., 2017). It is, therefore, important for development actors to ensure proper programs that are sensitive to climate change, climate change adaptation and mitigation for proper transition to sustainable development (UNFCCC, 2019). Many INGOs have tried to empower women socio-economically but are not using the appropriate programs considering climate change adaptation and specific areas of empowerment. This study tried to assess the types of INGO development programs for the socio-economic empowerment of women in Makueni County. To achieve these, the study assessed development programs done by World Vision Kenya (WVK) and Action Aid International Kenya (AAIK) to empower women socially and economically. The different development projects implemented by the two INGOs: AAIK and WVK, have been active for almost the last ten years, giving different programs touching on specific areas of empowerment such as education, women's rights, leadership and awareness, food security, water and sanitation, disaster management and food diversification, HIV/AIDs support groups. This study noted that the majority of the people working with the two INGOs were women and they do work in Self Help Groups (SHGs). It is, therefore, essential to ensure proper climate change and adaptation measures are incorporated when implementing development project activities. This calls for the proper use of a gender lens that pays attention to women as a priority in development to enhance the rapid socio-economic empowerment of women. Evidence has shown that climate resilience can be enhanced by empowering women to have access to and control over economic assets such as land, technology, education, and social capital. The study also noted that some members were working in the two INGOs, which sometimes caused a conflict of interest among the members. It is evident that the two INGOs working in the same area should devise a better criterion during the selection of who is to be included in the development programs.

Studies carried out in different parts of the world have indicated diverse views regarding the contribution of INGO development programs towards the socio-economic empowerment of women. A report by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 2010 indicated that women's development projects have a significant impact on developing nations. These development programs have had a positive impact on trade and overall economic growth of many nations. This has, in turn, helped improve women's socio-economic empowerment and the global economy (UNDP, 2010). Further, Schincks (2010) states that INGOs have contributed immensely to the survival and sustainability of women's development projects to improve their overall development. According to World Economic Forum (2014), globally, women seem to lag in aspects of socio-economic empowerment, thus making it one of the key issues in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, it is important to understand the concept of socio-economic empowerment of women from different perspectives, as noted by Kabeer (2012).

Scholars and development practitioners have conceptualised women's socio-economic empowerment differently. Kabeer (2001, 2003, 2012) views the socio-economic empowerment of women as their sense of social identity, self-worth, ability and willingness to question their subordinate status and capacity to exercise strategic control over their own lives. It also involves their ability to participate on equal terms with men and has democratic distribution of power. Inter-American Development Bank (2010) explains the socio-economic empowerment of women as expanding their rights, resources, and ability to make decisions and work independently in economic, political, and social spheres.

In their effort to address the socio-economic issues of women in developing countries, INGOs in development have adopted various approaches and innovative interventions sensitive to the needs of the host country (Yu & Leung, 2015). In India, INGOs do enhance self-reliance within the communities rather than relying on external support through the collective use of local ideas and labor (Lewis & Kanji, 2009). In Bangladesh, there are many INGOs whose aim is to alleviate rural poverty and empower women. However, the incidence of poverty in Bangladesh is much higher compared to the South and East Asian countries. Findings from a study by Grameen Bank (2009) revealed that 98% of women borrowers are in community organizations and that the GB programs have had a positive impact on the relations between the family and community (GB, 2009).

However, some scholars have argued that not all economic empowerment from micro-credit services to women translates into women's socio-economic empowerment since the repayment interest may sometimes be too high for individuals (Schincks, (2010; Spade & Valentine, 2011). In Pakistan, women are more than 52% of the total population and 50% of them lag in terms of empowerment. Thus, women take up lowly positions in public offices despite the adoption of the country's 1973 constitution, which supports the full participation of men and women in national development (Mehta, Mishra & Singh, 2011). Lewis and Kanji (2009) observed that these INGOs design programs that are made to empower the society and invest a lot of funds in improving the welfare of every individual in all development aspects. For example, WVK and AAIK help empower women to access education and operate in many parts of the world, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, and Kenya (WVK, 2014). Although the contribution of these INGOs' development programs towards the empowerment of women is expected to yield significant results in many parts of the world, most of them do not. There is a need to ensure that they are implementing proper programs for women (Abby, 2008).

In Kenya, even more than 50 years after gaining independence, more than 50% of women in its 40 million people still experience limited access to resources and high poverty levels (Government of Kenya [GOK], 2010). Further, these numbers continue to escalate every year as more people fall below the poverty line annually. The main aim of this goal is to guarantee equality of opportunity to both men and women in accessing all resources (GOK, 2010). The same is recognized in SDGs no.5 on gender equality, hence the socio-economic empowerment of women. The INGOs do actualise their mission through an integrated, holistic commitment to transformational development. A good example is a study conducted by Adhola (2010) in Kisumu, where the INGOs have empowered women by promoting skills and investment enterprise for the benefit of local communities (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2008-2012). The Gender Action Plan (GAP) places socio-economic empowerment as central to climate policy and action. Gender equality is the key and it can be achieved by allowing women to actively participate in decision-making and leadership at all levels of development (UNFCCC, 2019). The socio-economic empowerment of women also depends on the approaches used by the INGOs while implementing development programs. In Makueni county, World Vision Kenya (WVK) and Action Aid International Kenya (AAIK) have carried out development programs to empower women socially and economically.

2. Research Method

2.1. Participants

The targeted population was women beneficiaries in Self Help Groups (SHGs) of World Vision and ActionAid programs. The study participants included men (spouses) who are also involved in SHGs and project staff officials from the two INGOs, SHG leaders, and key informants from Makueni County Headquarters. The sampling techniques included multistage, purposive, snowball and random sampling and the total sample size was 162 members.

2.2. Instruments

Questionnaires, interviews Guides and Focus Group Discussion Guides were used to collect data from the 162 respondents because the area covered was vast. The researcher distributed a total of 114 copies of the questionnaire to the women beneficiaries and interviewed the rest. Out of the 114 copies distributed, more than 80% were returned. The questionnaires were administered to the women beneficiaries from the two INGOs, namely WVK and AAIK, at three places, namely: Kanzokea, Kalawa and Kithuki. The interviews, which were semi-structured with open- and closed-headed

questions, were used for key informants, WVK and AAIK officials. The FGDs comprised twenty-four women leaders from the four locations from each of the sampled SHGs. The FGD guide had open- and closed-ended questions on the study objectives to allow in-depth discussions and explore aspects of concern in the study with the beneficiaries. Data were also obtained from secondary sources, which included books, WVK and AAIK reports, journals, theses, and dissertations.

2.3. Data Analysis

The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21. Qualitative data were processed and analyzed by identifying the main themes from the in-depth interviews as per the study objective. The next step was the classification of responses according to the study objective, which was then integrated into the themes and presented in narrative and verbatim form.

3. Results and Discussions

The results and findings of the study are analyzed below.

Type of Program	Development Activities	INGO	
		WVK	AAK
Education (child sponsorship)	Child sponsorship (school fees payment, Girls Forums (child protection and care Training women on entrepreneurship skills.	✓	✓
Water and Sanitation	Improving access to water for both human and livestock consumption Provision of piped water and water harvesting tanks Treatment of water to ensure safe drinking water Creation of water pans, Water dams/water ponds	✓	✓
Livelihood and resilience	Dry-Dev activities (long-term measures of food security Production of drought tolerant crops, e.g., cassava, sorghum, millet horticultural farming.	✓	✓
Women and girls' rights	Creating awareness of the rights of women and girls		✓
DRRM	Terracing, tree planting, reducing effects of floods and HIV/AIDs Food preservation and storage mechanisms Livestock fodder and pasture growing Reducing land degradation.	✓	
Leadership and Governance	Training women on leadership and governance		✓
CFA/FFA	VSLGs (table banking, saving and lending money)Environmental protection through tree nursery establishments and management and tree planting Diversification of food sources through the application of water harvesting technologies and agronomic practices, e.g., making terraces, / Zai pits/water ponds/seedbeds, and small-scale irrigation projects.	✓	
Support Group/HIV/AIDs	Creating awareness of HIV/AIDs Capacity building		✓

Table 1: Types of Programs Provided by INGOs

Key - ✓ Means the Program Is Implemented by the Specific INGO
Source: Author's Notes

3.1. Discussion Section

The study findings on the types of development programs are discussed as per each development program and its impact on the socio-economic empowerment of women.

3.1.1. Education

The two INGOs operating in the study area provided child sponsorship programs, targeting orphans and vulnerable children in the community and educating women beneficiaries through training on entrepreneurship. Literature has shown that most of these sponsored children come from homes that are mainly vulnerable and supported by women. The AAIK uses fundraising mechanisms through child sponsorship, which involves linking a child with a

sponsor and the child acts as an ambassador between the community and the sponsor. Funds raised by sponsors are used to facilitate community-identified projects in the three wards and benefit all children to avoid the stigma of the sponsored children and empower all children in education (AA, 2015). The program acts as a great relief to women and children and has helped many of the children to complete schooling. This is echoed by the Theory of Change, which states that to see good end results, one must work on the mid-step goals of the development initiatives (Clark & Taplin, 2012). Thus, by educating children in schools, the INGOs are aiming at getting more empowered women in the long run and achieving SDG number 4 on quality education. However, the number of children benefiting from these programs is few and the support is not largely felt by the recipients. This is because the help does not go directly to the specific child, but it is made to be felt by the entire community, such as the construction of classrooms and engagement in IGAs.

Action Aid Kenya has also supported education by constructing ECDE classes and dormitories in primary schools. For example, in 2014, AAIK partnered with parents of Yikiuuku Primary School to rehabilitate two classrooms whose roofs had been blown off by strong winds. They constructed a classroom for 62 pre-school pupils who were learning under trees and a school hall (AA, 2014). In addition, AAIK has come up with the idea of supporting the establishment of boarding schools, which are made to minimize sexual harassment of girls and early pregnancies. This has enabled many girls to complete secondary education.

According to AA (2014), the child sponsorship program has also provided water harvesting tanks both in schools and in the villages to reduce household responsibilities for the women, and especially the girl child. It has also created awareness of the effects of substance abuse and HIV/AIDs within the schools, advocated for education for the girl child, and sensitized people on the effects of early marriages and teenage pregnancies among the community members. To achieve the above, AAIK, in collaboration with the county government, formed 'girls' forums' in primary and secondary schools where they visited some selected schools and created awareness of life skills. They do model the school government/ children assembly and initiate nutritional clubs such as poultry keeping, animal husbandry and preparing tree seedlings (AA, 2014).

The INGOs do empower the target women groups economically by training them on how to start IGAs. The beneficiaries are trained on different skills of IGA, such as poultry, goat and dairy keeping, welding, sewing, and how to operate small shops, which are mostly home-based. The intended results of such economic activities are to ensure continued income, which can sustain the needs of the family, especially the education of the girl child. This is supported by Tavershima (2012), who viewed women's education as an essential tool for rural development. Similarly, Mitra and Singh (2008) established that the socio-economic background of parents in developing countries determines the enrolment and retention of girls and women at every level of education. Mbatiah (2010) perceived education as the bedrock for empowerment and the only panacea to women's empowerment and gender equality. This is so because, without education, it will be difficult to become genuinely economically empowered and relevant in the society and the world (Mbatiah, 2010). Despite the efforts made by the two INGOs in Makueni county, education for girls is still below that of boys. According to Tavershima (2012), education is the most effective strategy for promoting women's empowerment. However, in this study, education level did not limit women in being involved in INGO development programs; their challenge was the low level of understanding of entrepreneurship concepts and how to make good use of the loans obtained and having only one source of income. One of the INGOs' officials indicated the following:

Low levels of education, especially for women within this county, have affected development programs. If the majority of the educated population are women, there will be reduced poverty levels. Most women are not able to have formal jobs, and the majority do rely on agriculture to get income, which has its own predicaments. OI, 21/7/2018.

As a result, it is essential for INGOs' development programs to aim at improving the educational levels of women and girls for proper actualization of socio-economic empowerment. The level of education will help women have a better understanding of entrepreneurship skills in savings and loan borrowing. Education enhances the participation of women in development agendas, an aspect key to socio-economic empowerment, as it gives confidence, assertiveness, and self-esteem when they can discuss the development issues affecting them as women.

3.2. Water and Sanitation Programs

The study established that the INGOs provide a water and sanitation program, which is also called Water and Sanitation Hygiene Program (WASH). This program is provided by both WVK and AAIK in the same areas, although it is not a major program in AAIK. Action Aid Kenya provides water as per need identification, so the program is not a well-structured one. Water-related issues are addressed as they arise, and so it is not a structured program as in WVK. World Vision Kenya focuses on improving access to water for both human and livestock consumption, provision of piped water, and water harvesting tanks in the community and in primary and secondary schools. The INGO also does treatment of water to ensure the safety of drinking water. Further, they also help create water pans or, water ponds, and sand dams.

The program by AAIK is specific to providing water tanks, constructing toilets, and providing small hand washing tanks, especially in primary schools. Hand washing tanks are provided by AAIK to ensure proper hygiene in schools and minimise the spread of diseases, as revealed by the INGOs' officials. The findings of this study suggest that women in Makueni County had difficult moments when it came to fetching water, which is not readily available. Through the water and sanitation programs, the INGOs ensured the provision of water tanks in the schools and in the community. The tanks are placed at specific points where all community members can access them (AA, 2014; WV, 2015). The program aims at increasing the availability of water in the household, which would, in turn, improve school attendance and retention of

children at schools. One of the program field officers from AAIK expressed that although the program was a long-term plan, it was key in alleviating poverty and improving the socio-economic status of women in the region.

The water program is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and ensures the provision of safe drinking water. Consequently, many women do not get water from River Athi as before, for the River is highly contaminated. The WVK also ensures the treatment of water in all specific sources before it is used (World Vision, 2015). During the interview with a key informant from the county government, it was revealed that the provision of water in the county was a major step in empowering women socio-economically. This is because improved access to water by women is considered an enhancement to women's socio-economic empowerment. However, much needs to be done for this program to be largely felt because the water provision is benefiting a few women who are near the water points; otherwise, some women are still covering long distances to fetch water.

3.3. Awareness of Women's and Girls' Rights

The findings pointed out that women and girls programs involved sensitizing and creating community awareness of the rights of women and girls. This was geared towards empowering them to know their rights on issues of SGBV, child abuse and defilement, early marriages, wife battering, incest and teenage pregnancy. The program also deals with enlightening women and men on attitude change regarding the distribution and utilization of family resources and public funds. The program is mainly implemented by AAIK for both schoolgirls and women in the community, but they do not discriminate between men and boys. One of the INGOs shared the following during the oral interviews:

The forms of SGBV include physical, economic, and psychological torture of women. The program deals with sexually abused victims, teenage marriages and early pregnancies, women battering, social and economic restrictions on women, incest, and child defilement. OI, 21/7/2018.

Based on the findings, it is evident that SGBV is real in Makueni County and that women have quietly suffered physically, emotionally, socially, and economically. According to the study findings, AAIK has organized women, especially in specific wards, on how to group themselves and work as groups and not as individuals in responding to SGBV. All SGBV issues are channeled through a representative. One of the AAK program officers said the following:

One of the human rights movements formed is called Kathonzweni Women Local Rights Program (KWLRP), which fights for the rights of the affected cases of SGBV. The above movement should empower the affected people by supporting them to articulate their issues without fear. OI, 22/7/18.

The findings also brought out that INGOs conduct awareness meetings, which are organized in schools under what they call 'girls' forums.' Through these forums, sensitization is done to girls in both primary and secondary schools. The girls get equipped with knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enable them to know their rights and protect themselves. Action Aid also intervenes with girls out-of-school who dropped out either due to pregnancy or being unable to pay the school fees by identifying them and empowering them through capacity building and entrepreneurship. Most of them do join County Technical Training Institutes (CTTI) and do dress-making, tailoring and hairdressing. The AAIK also trains paralegal officers who help the GBV victims by getting all the necessary documents and information.

3.4. Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM)

According to WVK bulletins and minute books, the DRRM program is meant to assist the community in the event of risks such as HIV/AIDs, floods, famine, drought, substance abuse, and family conflicts, as well as soil erosion, which mostly affect women and children. The study findings also revealed that the INGOs do conduct participatory disaster risk analysis on HIV/AIDs, rate of school dropout, family conflicts, and substance abuse.

The women beneficiaries expressed that the program helped them a lot in dealing with the above recurrent problems because it had enabled them to participate collectively as a group. In harmony with this finding, Kabeer (2012) highlighted that empowerment encompasses all aspects of development: economic, social, interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological. Kabeer added that it is not only the responsibility of individual women but also the government and other institutions to promote policies that increase empowerment and ensure gender equity through political and legal reforms. The following was shared by one OL during interviews.

As an area chief, I have seen awareness forums on HIV/AIDs, domestic violence, and substance abuse being conducted through WSHGs, barazas and school forums, mostly called girls' forums by AAIK. OL, 23/7/2018.

In its sensitization and awareness, AAIK does include everyone, even the boys, despite the name 'girls' forums' for the forum targeting girls in primary and secondary schools. The boys were included to ensure that they, too, could understand their role and rights in development and that women socio-economic empowerment was equally important. Tiessen (2005) maintained that advocacy by INGOs plays an essential role in fighting for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDs.

The WVK focuses on mitigating food insecurity. They, therefore, train farmers to dig terraces to reduce land degradation, plant livestock feeds, and plant drought-resistant crops to reduce food insecurity and alleviate poverty in the county. The program aims to mitigate hunger, one of the most widespread and recurrent challenges in Makueni County; it is tied to SDG number one, whose focus is to end poverty (SDG, 2015). The above findings concur with the findings of a study by Njuki (2009), which showed that women's empowerment through market participation ensures that communities have access to food. The program is also helping women farmers to improve livestock value chains and enhance ways of preserving crops during bumper harvest for better prices, as reported by WVK program officers.

3.5. Leadership and Governance

Leadership and governance is another program carried out by AAIK in Makueni County. The program is concerned with empowering women leaders by equipping them with the necessary skills, such as decision-making, confidence, and proper guidance on how to elect the right leaders (AA, 2014). This study established that training women in leadership was important in ensuring proper organization of the various WSHGs and minimizing conflicts within the groups. One of the INGOs' field program officers had the following to say.

The governance program is key as we train women to organize their work through proper record keeping, be accountable, and deal with group conflicts and loan defaulters to keep the group cohesiveness. The WSHGs are also trained on how to participate in decision-making forums at all levels of development OI, 21/7/2018.

The INGOs' officials shared that it was important to enhance leadership through having structures of participation within the women's groups. Through the support from AAIK, community forums have been facilitated where the members come together and prioritize projects as advised by various needs. They also advocate for good governance at the locational levels. They do this through the SHGs through capacity building, sensitization on accountability, transparency, public participation, and community organizing.

3.5.1. Cash for Assets (CFA)

According to WVK records, the CFA program was implemented through a programming model where the beneficiaries are compensated with cash after undertaking activities that create assets in the communities. The CFA projects are geared towards enabling the communities to meet their household dietary needs and income-generating activities. Women, therefore, identify foods from the local markets that are easily accessible and are in the right quantity and quality. The activities include:

- Doing terracing on their farms,
- Making water pans, water ponds, sunken beds and *zai pits* for vegetable growing and
- Planting of trees

The beneficiaries are also involved in the construction and repair of roads to enable them to access some of the market centers. World Vision Kenya compensates them with cash and, thus, the name CFA.

The study noted that this program is implemented through women's participation in groups. Participation enhances self-esteem among women and promotes sustainable development. In line with this, Jan and Hayat (2011) posited that sustainable development is possible only if the beneficiaries of the development program participate in the process of development. The diagram below shows one of the water ponds that women are using for horticultural farming.



*Figure 1: Water Pan Constructed by WVK in Kanzokea
Source: Authors Work*

In Taita Taveta and Baringo counties, WVK has opened and expanded land and through this, the communities have graduated from reliance on food assistance. The CFA program has also contributed towards environmental protection (WV, 2014). One of the program officers stated the following:

Cash for Assets (CFA) has been enhanced through the efforts of microfinance resources in collaboration with the INGOs, thus improving the socio-economic empowerment of women in Makueni County. OI, 21/7/2018.

The INGOs' officials train women in SHGs on how to run the CFA and VSLGs. The women SHGs learn how to save money, which acts as a revolving fund where members can borrow and start businesses or help improve the living standards of the community members. This was confirmed by one of the key informants (area chief) who had this to say:

As an Area chief, I have noted that women have positively embraced the CFA program and are willing to avail themselves on a weekly basis as SHGs to implement the program. This has called for teamwork, which has made women more assertive and confident and has improved standards of living. OI, 23/7/2018.

The findings demonstrate some positive change in the attitude of the women in SHGs towards working together as groups, indicating that there is power when women work as a group.

3.5.2. Livelihoods and Resilience

World Vision Kenya and AAIK have implemented the livelihood and resilience program in Makueni County. This is a long-term mechanism to ensure sustainable mitigation measures for food security. Resilience is the ability to bounce back to life after a disaster such as drought, famine, or floods (WV, 2015). It is meant to prepare a community to mitigate, prevent, respond, cope, or recover from disaster (WV, 2015). The following was shared by a WVK program officer in Makueni County.

We train the women beneficiaries on how to make use of the zaipits horticultural farming by using water from the water pans. Women are also trained on how to make terraces as a way of preventing soil erosion and conserving soil erosion for better yields. OI, 21/7/2018.

The findings reveal that the livelihoods and resilience programs have helped women groups to do horticultural farming – for instance, to plant vegetables, mangoes, pawpaw, and orange fruits, which have enhanced the socio-economic empowerment of the women (WV, 2015). In line with this, FAO (2011) reported that food security is the ability of an individual or household to always meet all their food security needs; the food should be well-balanced, should be enough in quantities, and should be of the preferred types. Food security also refers to the ability to access food throughout the year (FAO, 2011). The study revealed that the program is currently referred to as Dry-Dev initiative, for it is about implementing development programs in dry areas, thus enabling women farmers to engage in long-term farming methods such as planting trees and fruit trees.

The AAIK trained women on how to do kitchen gardening and horticultural farming of vegetables, tree planting and flowers for selling. As a result, about half of the women within the network implemented the project (AA, 2015). Groups play a vital role in women's economic empowerment by encouraging women to save as a group and to start up IGAs that would enable them to have access to their own resources. This study observed that such activities helped women to have enough food for consumption and sell the surplus, therefore getting some extra income. To address the issue of crop failure due to failed rains, AAIK supported the community to form Nguumo irrigation project at Ivinga Nzia. The group has 30 active members, mostly women who cultivate a quarter of an acre. The project has been noticed by the County Government of Makueni as one of the success stories.

The above study findings agree with Buvinic (2010) and GOK (2011), who put forth that women produce most of the food that is consumed locally and are responsible for household food security in many rural areas. This enhanced their self-confidence and self-esteem and enabled them to gain control over factors of production on an equal basis with men (Kamau, 2014).

3.6. Support Groups/HIV/AIDs

Through the AAIK in Makueni, HIV/AIDs/ support groups were formed and supported the members by training them on skill development so that they could start IGAs. Such IGAs included goat keeping, where each member was given a goat, brick making, and making bead items such as necklaces and bracelets, which are sold collectively and then the money is either shared or saved in the group account. Each of the members was also given a packet of *Ndengu* and red beans to plant as a way of supporting their nutritional needs. They were also trained to build their self-esteem and reduce stigma affecting many (AAK, 2015). The AAIK also links the affected members to other organizations that can help them and get food relief.

Women work together as support groups made up of both the HIV positive and negative members to reduce stigma towards the infected and affected members. The groups also receive education on how to live positively, eat well-balanced food, and accept their conditions. The following was shared by women in FGD.

INGOs do provide us with nutritious foods such as red beans, which are known to boost the immune system. The INGOs' development programs are also empowering us by helping us know our status, reduce the stigma and label infected people. We do this by accompanying those infected to their meetings. FGD,22/7/2018.

As the findings spell, the HIV/AIDs program is very important not only for economic development but also for the social and physical development of the women beneficiaries.

From the above analysis of objective one on the types of programs offered by WVK and AAIK, the programs are vital in the process of empowering women socio-economically. It is important for any INGO's development program to ensure its outcomes will benefit the local community: they ought to make the communities better - socially and economically. This was demonstrated in some of the programs offered, for instance, the water and sanitation program - whose aim is to empower the women beneficiaries so that they move from lower levels of being recipients of welfare support (such as food donations and other handouts) to a higher level such as participation and decision making. Most women groups are doing horticultural farming where they can sell the surplus food and gain income.

4. Conclusion

It is evident from the study findings that development programs provided by the INGOs do impact women differently, and this is also influenced by climate change, hence calling for alternative approaches to empowering women socially and economically in Makueni County.

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