

Barriers to women's participation in constituency Development fund (CDF) projects in Kilome constituency, Eastern province, Kenya.

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Abstract:

This was a cross-sectional study on barriers to women's participation in CDF projects in Kilome constituency. The study specifically sought to determine the extent of knowledge of CDF funded projects in Kilome constituency by women, to establish socio-cultural barriers to women's participation in CDF projects in Kilome constituency and to determine economic barriers to active participation of women at large in CDF projects. The study was guided by the social relations approach. The study used a sample of a 100 respondents randomly selected. Data was collected through survey questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews. Data collected through survey questionnaires was analysed through SPSS while data gathered from Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews was analysed thematically. The findings of the study reveal a high awareness of the existence of CDF amongst the study subjects but low knowledge on the project details such as the amounts of money so far disbursed. Barriers to participation in the CDF activities that are socio-cultural in nature include the perceived inferior status of women in the society, the relegation of women to the domestic sphere rather than be given 'public positions such as those in the CDF management institutions. The existence of gender-blind policies in the .. management of the CDF projects at the devolved level is another social factor leading to lower participation of women. The social barriers combine with economic aspects which include lack of strong economic associations for women that improve their management skills in financial affairs. The study recommends awareness creation on CDF Act provision targeted at women members of the society. This should be done in the local dialect to cater for the low literacy levels identified amongst the women in Kilome constituency. There is need to publicly display the CDF project information to reveal the statuses of the projects in terms of the amounts of money disbursed and the available participatory avenues for the community by the CDFC. Finally, the CDF national management committee should move an amendment to the CDF act that expressly provides for a proportionate representation of women in each of the management committees for the CDF.