

# MAASAI RURAL WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECT

Ngonina Kirwa

IACD themes which were involved in the project:

**Organizing for change, participatory planning**

## SYNOPSIS

Before the beginning of the project, the community members were not well aware of the negative impacts of social practices such as Female genital mutilation, wife inheritance, as well as existence of gender inequality between men and women. During the project, traditional leaders were able to co-coordinate and monitor the community members. The foundation of this project enabled the community members to achieve the kind of education which offer them the explicit instruction, ample knowledge as well as skills to eradicate women's rights violations in the community.



*Early beginning of the project in Rural areas in Ngorongoro*

## BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

The project took place in rural areas of Ngorongoro district found in the northern parts of Tanzania on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2019. The community members from Maasai tribe, and government agents and development stakeholders were the main participants of this project. The dominant

existence of inequality between men and women and violation of women's rights as the common social practices were the major reasons which led this project to take place.

## **THE PROJECT**

Despite the challenges of inadequate funds and poor awareness of community members on the negative impacts of social practices, the project was done in a successful way. The traditional leaders from the Maasai tribe and government stakeholders were the key figures involved in the formulation and development of this project. The project aimed to empower the community through offering them education on visionary ways of realizing the rights, economic status and the position of women within the society. It also aimed at equalizing the gap that has existed for too long between women and men in the community. **The role of community development practitioners were Facilitator, Educator, and Pathfinder.**

Project identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation were the stages used to formulate and develop this project. *Organization, situation analysis, planning, implementation, evaluation, celebrate, and sustainability* were the community development processes that have been used this project. The role of community development practitioners in the formulation of this project was to co-ordinate and monitor the community members towards the project. The project achieved women's empowerment and equal access to education.

## **CORE VALUES OF THE PROJECT**

The project values were evidenced in increased awareness of gender-based violence among the community members which led to the high participation of community members to give their views as the main actors of the project, aid for legal assistance for woman, and justice in different aspects within the community. The primary resources which were harnessed are financial, human resources, offices, and equipment; the secondary resources were an office computer, printer, and notebooks.

## **THINGS THAT WORKED IN THE PROJECT**

In the project, activities involved human and financial resources to ensure the project activities worked efficiently and effectively to achieve intended objectives on the anticipated time due to the presence of efficient management and utilization of available resources in the project.

The project enhanced income generation group among rural women, raised awareness about gender-based violence in rural areas through conduct campaigns, and finally the project improved achievement of girls' access to education by encouraging community self-contribution.



*During provision education to Maasai women in village.*

## **CHALLENGES FACING THE PROJECT**

Some challenges faced the project such as a delay in provision of information to the beneficiaries of the project technologies, inability to reach target groups within anticipated time due to disparity of settlements in rural areas, lack of funds which enable project operations, it was time consuming for the project worker to reach people when undertaking project activities since they walked by foot in order to reach community members, and there was a lack of funds to support the project activities. The challenges were addressed in different ways such as use of villages and Wards Assembly during community mobilization, selecting small number of women from each villages to give them training about identification of existing gaps and cultural norms

which violate the rights aimed at effectively addressing the root causes which start from family level and cultural norms. Information was provided through community leaders to inform issues about the project and encourage community contribution to support young girl access quality education.

**IACD themes which were involved are participatory planning and organizing for change.**



*Provision of education in primary school*

## **THE KEY LEARNING POINTS AND FUTURE PLAN OF THE PROJECT**

Women's empowerment is an integral part of community development in the sense that development should benefit all members in that community.

Women's lives in remote location are vulnerable to lacking opportunities in different social aspects due to cultural factors.

Larger numbers of young girls need intervention to rescue them through education. The future plans are:

- Address gender-based violence at roots level such as those practiced by intra-household/family or cultural customs,
- Increase the project scope to offer its mobilization services to members of the community at large
- Offer support to Maasai young girls to access Advanced Education in primary and secondary schools. Current achievement gaps identified were used to inform the sustainability of the project activities such as new approach of intervention.

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