

# Journal of Public Policy & Governance



## Effect of Economic and Political Empowerment on Community Wellbeing

Anthony Ochieng, Prof. Thomas Cheruiyot & Prof. Daniel Tarus

# Effect of Economic and Political Empowerment on Community Wellbeing in Marsabit, Kenya

<sup>1\*</sup> Anthony Ochieng, <sup>2</sup>Prof. Thomas Cheruiyot & <sup>3</sup>Prof. Daniel Tarus

<sup>1\*</sup>Postgraduate Student, Moi University

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Moi University

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Moi University

\*E-mail of corresponding author: [nysuter@yahoo.com](mailto:nysuter@yahoo.com)

## Abstract

The Northern parts of Kenya which has the lowest development indicators and highest poverty incidence amongst all areas in Kenya. Despite the increase in donor funding to government and NGOs towards poverty reduction programs, the state of poverty in Kenya and the Arid and Semi-arid Lands (ASAL) regions in particular has been on the increase. The study investigated the effect of economic and political empowerment on community well-being. Descriptive design was used in the study. The target population of the study was made up of 800 beneficiaries of donor support programmes. A sample of 80 respondents was picked using random sampling and questionnaires given out. Primary data was collected and used. Correlation and multiple regression model was used to establish the relationship between economic, political empowerment and community wellbeing. Findings indicated that economic empowerment and community well-being were positively and significant related. The results further indicated that political empowerment and community well-being were positively and insignificantly related. The study concluded that economic empowerment and political empowerment have a positive effect on the community empowerment. The study recommended for the political leaders to identify, understand, and strengthen the community capacities, which are the primary source of solutions to local problems. Governments with the assistance of NGOs need to commit to a long-term process of local organizational development through good governance through partnership and networking.

**Keywords:** *Economic empowerment, Political Empowerment, Partnership and Community well-being*

### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The countries of Sub-Saharan Africa have been consigned to the bottom of the globes rich list. In 2008 for example, 47% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa lived on \$1.25 a day or less (United Nations, 2012). Decades of economic stagnation and declining living standards have turned Sub-Saharan Africa into the world's poorest region (Calderón & Servén, 2010). United Nations Human Development Report figures show that the per capita income ratio in Sub-Saharan

Africa fell from ninth of that in OECD countries in 1960 to an eighteenth by 1998 (UNDP, 2001). Even though there has been a small recovery since the end of the 1990s, and despite ever increasing amounts of aid from NGO's and from developed countries, Sub Saharan Africa has failed to show any significant improvements in the vast amount of indicators that aim to asses levels of poverty (Clegg, 2010). Whilst there has been a decline in poverty levels in Latin America and Asia in the past forty years, Sub-Saharan Africa achieved a depressingly small improvement in this time (Djankov, Montalvo& Reynal-Querol, 2009).

In Kenya, a dramatic build up in nominal aid flows was experienced in the1980s, according to OECD-DAC statistics. There was a slackening of donor support in the 1990s but the nominal aid flows increased from US\$ 393.4 million in 1980 to an average peak of US\$1120.5 million in 1989-90, before declining to a low of US\$ 308.85 million in 1999. There was some recovery thereafter in response to a new government in December 2002 such that the net ODA to Kenya accounted for US \$943 million in 2006, ranking it 23rd among 150 aid recipient in developing countries. The 2006 Kenya Integrated Household and Budget Survey, (KIHBS) found that 46% of the total Kenyan population is absolutely poor, i.e. below the poverty line, whereas 49% of the rural population is absolutely poor (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2007). Thus, the continued poverty, growing conflicts and the states reneging on its social responsibilities, create an arena that development NGOs existence have been valuable and that Africa's decline contributes to the continued justification of their work. Official aid agencies have come to expect NGOs to act as a substitute for state welfare programs and a solution to welfare deficiencies at a time when structural adjustment was hugely increasing the extent of welfare needs. This is the context in which both Western and local NGOs have explosively grown in Africa yet poverty is on the increase.

The Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) occupy more than 80 percent of Kenya and are home to over 10 million people. Despite their high development potential, the ASALs have the lowest development indicators and highest poverty incidence amongst all areas in Kenya. More than 60 percent of ASAL inhabitants, for instance, live in conditions of abject poverty subsisting on less than one US dollar per day. Reinforcing this endemic poverty is a cycle involving environmental degradation, insecurity, climatic shocks, diseases and general despondency (Vision, 2005).

In 2001, the Government of Kenya (GoK) developed a Kenya rural development strategy (KRDS). Its departure from the District Focus for Rural Development (1983) was (i) its stronger emphasis on empowerment of the rural beneficiaries; (ii) the need to strengthen budget execution to ensure that resources are reaching communities; (iii) combating corruption; and (iv) participation of the private sector, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community based organizations (CBOs). Though the design of this 2001 KRDS looks appropriate, its implementation has not been undertaken (Vision, 2005).

NGOs received over \$95 million in 2011 to be used on development projects throughout the country though to be more specific Northern part of Kenya. Despite their high development potential, the Northern parts of Kenya which include Marsabit have the lowest development indicators and highest poverty incidence amongst all areas in Kenya. Therefore this study used Marsabit County to investigate the effect of political and economic empowerment on the community well-being.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The Northern parts of Kenya has the lowest development indicators and highest poverty incidence amongst all areas in Kenya. Despite the increase in donor funding to government and NGOs

towards poverty reduction programs, the state of poverty in Kenya and the ASAL regions in particular has been on the increase (Catherine & Fitzgibbon, 2012). Development in Kenya has been focused on the main urban centers and the fertile densely populated highlands stretching across the Rift Valley from Mount Kenya to Lake Victoria, which supports the commercial agricultural production of export and domestic crops that form the back bone of Kenya’s economy (Catherine Fitzgibbon, 2012). World Bank estimates that between 34 to 42% of the population in Kenya survives on less than \$1 per day and a substantial number of these people are found in ASAL areas which Marsabit County is categorized (KNBS, 2013). Welfare monitoring survey indicates that 60% of the poor reside in the rural areas and more so in conflict zones like Marsabit. To this end, a number of projects and programs through NGOs have been implemented and financed by various donors to improve social and economic welfare conditions for people in this region. This research sought to establish whether there was any relationship existing between economic, political empowerment and the overall community wellbeing of people living in the area of study.

Nancy and Yontcheva (2006) conducted a study on Does NGO aid go to the poor? Empirical evidence from Europe. This study focused on Europe economy and thus presenting a contextual gap. The current study will focus on Kenyan economy. Wattoo, Ali, Khan, and Shahbaz, (2010) conducted a research in Pakistan involving eighty randomly selected projects. This study focused on Pakistan economy and thus presenting a geographical gap. Tott, (2013) conducted a study on influence of donor funded projects on the social-economic welfare of the rural communities in Elgeyo Marakwet County. This research project sought to bridge these gaps and specifically explore the effect of economic and political empowerment on well-being of communities in Marsabit, Kenya.

**1.3 Specific Objectives**

- i. To establish the effect of economic empowerment on community well-being in Marsabit, Kenya.
- ii. To establish the effect of political empowerment on community well-being in Marsabit, Kenya.

**1.4 Research hypothesis**

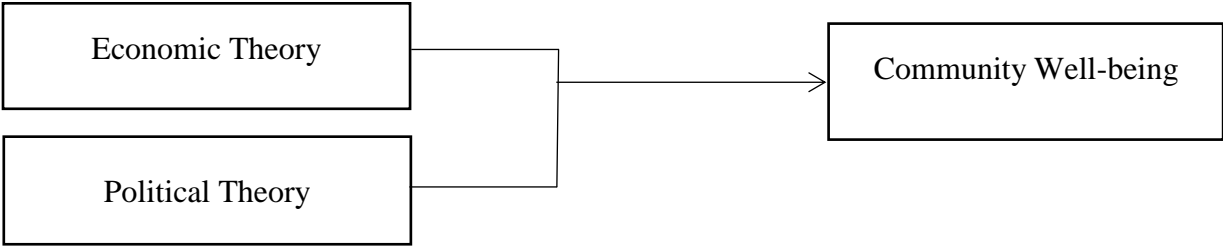
H<sub>01</sub>. There is no significant effect of economic empowerment on community well-being in Marsabit, Kenya.

H<sub>02</sub>. There is no significant effect of political empowerment on community well-being in Marsabit, Kenya.

**2.0 Literature Review**

**2.1 Theoretical Review**

Theoretical which underpinned the current study were political and economic theories. This are presented in figure 1.



**Figure 1: Theoretical Framework**

**2.2 Empirical Review**

Oduor (2009) points that; Oversee Development Assistance (ODA) has significantly reduced poverty in Kenya. His results from sixty nine districts in Kenya however, show that disbursements had stronger impacts on the poorest of the poor more than those who are less poor. This may be a pointer to the fact that donors may have, in the past, put too much emphasis on the poorest of the poor regions and ignored those who are just below the poverty line. This calls for a review of donor funding allocations among the poor regions in order for the impact of ODA to be felt more uniformly.

Nunnenkamp, Weingarth, and Weisser, (2009) noted that the enhanced role of NGOs in the development process is their presumed efficiency and effectiveness in terms of program delivery and meeting the needs of the poor. This is compared favorably with the failures of the state, the private sector and multilateral efforts to promote development. Arguably, NGOs possess development capacities and capabilities that states and governments lack and are acceptable as a necessary part of the development process. In fact, NGOs are widely believed to provide better targeted aid than state agencies for their being closer to the poor. Similar positive impact has been experienced in Rwanda where the findings of a study research by (Oehmke, Jayne, Aralas, & Mathenge, 2010) on sustainable poverty reduction, indicated that USAID donor programs have had a significant and cost-effective impact on smallholder income increments and poverty reduction.

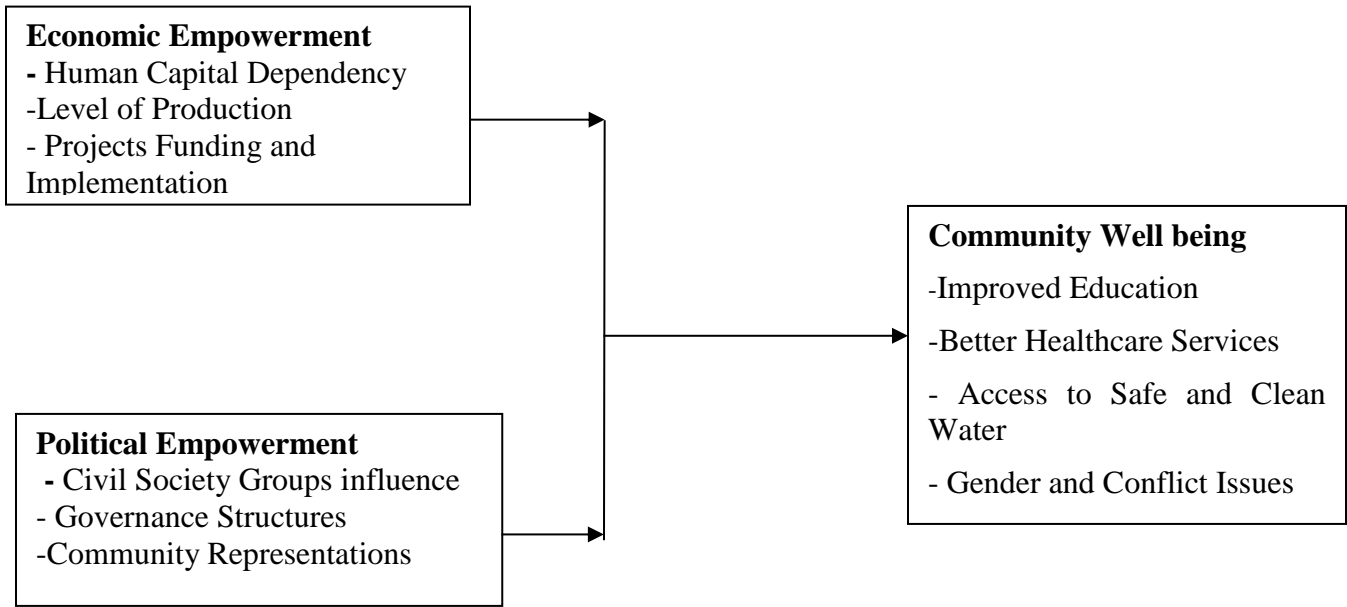
Kimani, (2009) in a study purposed to establish the influence of financing on institutional capacity of Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers in Kikuyu District in Kenya using descriptive survey, eighteen identified financing as a major impediment towards the realization of the institutional capacity. In his study, Kasoo (2010) reiterated in his findings that besides community participation, sources and composition of project finance has a bearing on project success as well. This was confirmed by Ayodele (2011) when he reported that one major cause of abandonment of construction projects in Nigeria was due to inadequate funding/finance. His study report further emphasizes the importance of financial resources in project implementation. The study is in consonance with Yang and Jackson’s affirmation on the stalled pumped-hydro energy storage in the United States that financial uncertainties was the project’s limiting factor (Yang & Jackson, 2011).

**2.3 Conceptual Framework**

According to Kombo and Tromp (2009), a concept is an abstract or general idea inferred or derived from specific instances. The study focused economic and political empowerment as the



independent variables and community well-being as the dependent variables. The figurative representation is on figure 1.



**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework**

**3.0 Research Methodology**

The study employed descriptive research design. The study covered the two constituencies of Marsabit County- North Horr and Laisamis which has a population of 800 beneficiaries of donor funded programmes. Therefore the target population of the study was 800 beneficiaries and community leaders. Stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size of 80 respondents. Data was collected through the administration of the questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis). Multiple regression model was used to test the significance of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

The Multiple regression model is.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \mu$$

Where:

Y = Community well being

X<sub>1</sub> = Economic

X<sub>2</sub> = Political

μ is error term

β<sub>0</sub> is constant

4.0 Results and Findings

4.1 Economic Empowerment

The study determined the effect of economic empowerment on community wellbeing. The respondents were asked to respond to statements on economic empowerment. The responses were rated on a five likert scale as presented in Table 1. 79.7% of the respondents agreed that economic empowerment from the NGOs has enabled them to sustain their household, 71.6% agreed that economic empowerment offered by NGOs had enhanced credit access facilities through revolving fund approach in my constituency, 67.6% of the respondents agreed that NGOs have developed an approach to engage my community coalition in expanding the implementation of youth Screening, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT), 79.8% of the respondents agreed that economic empowerment offered by NGOs through lobbying had caused their government to zero rate tax on medicine for livestock, while 82.4% of the respondents agreed that economic process had built on efforts to sustain water access programs. On a five point scale, the average mean of the responses was 3.92 which mean that majority of the respondents were agreeing with most of the statements; however the answers were varied as shown by a standard deviation of 1.09. The results herein imply that economic empowerment contributes to community wellbeing.

Table 1: Economic Empowerment

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
I feel that economic empowerment from the NGOs has enabled me to sustain my household	4.10%	6.80%	9.50%	50.00%	29.70%	3.95	1.02
I feel that economic empowerment offered by NGOs has enhanced credit access facilities through revolving fund approach in my constituency	4.10%	10.80%	13.50%	36.50%	35.10%	3.88	1.13
I feel that NGOs have developed an approach to engage my community coalition in expanding the implementation of youth Screening, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)	10.80%	4.10%	17.60%	39.20%	28.40%	3.7	1.24
I feel that economic empowerment offered by NGOs through lobbying has caused my government to zero rate tax on medicine for livestock	6.80%	8.10%	5.40%	56.80%	23.00%	3.81	1.09
Economic process has built on efforts to sustain water access programs	0.00%	10.80%	6.80%	29.70%	52.70%	4.24	0.99
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.92</b>	<b>1.09</b>

4.2 Political Empowerment

The study established the effect of political empowerment on community well-being. The results are presented on table 2 show that 70.3% of the respondents agreed that NGOs Share a vision for addressing their people’s immediate needs and the underlying causes of suffering and cattle rustling, 71.6% of the respondents agreed that NGOs engaged with civil society, to help transform unjust structures and systems, 79.7% of the respondents supported that NGOs do identify, understand, and strengthen their community capacities, which were the primary source of solutions to local problems, 82.4% agreed that NGOs committed to a long-term process of local organizational development while 70.3% agreed that NGOs encouraged good governance through partnership and networking. Using a five point scale likert mean, the overall mean of the responses was 3.91 which indicates that majority of the respondents agreed to the statement of the questionnaire. Additionally, the standard deviation of 1.20 indicates that the responses were varied. The results herein imply that political empowerment influence the community well-being.

Table 2: Political Empowerment

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
I feel that NGOs Share a vision for addressing my people’s immediate needs and the underlying causes of suffering and cattle rustling.	17.60%	4.10%	8.10%	12.20%	58.10%	3.89	1.558
I feel that NGOs engage with civil society, to help transform unjust structures and systems.	4.10%	14.90%	9.50%	40.50%	31.10%	3.8	1.158
I feel that NGOs do identify, understand, and strengthen my community capacities, which are the primary source of solutions to local problems.	4.10%	4.10%	12.20%	41.90%	37.80%	4.05	1.019
I feel that NGOs commit to a long-term process of local organizational development.	4.10%	5.40%	8.10%	40.50%	41.90%	4.11	1.041
I feel that NGOs encourage good governance through partnership and networking.	10.80%	5.40%	13.50%	41.90%	28.40%	3.72	1.244
Average						3.91	1.20

4.3 Correlation Analysis

The study established the association between economic and political empowerment and community well-being in Marsabit County. The results revealed that economic empowerment and



community well-being were positively and significant related ( $r=0.300$ ,  $p=0.009$ ). Similarly, it indicated that political empowerment and community well-being were positively and significantly related ( $r=0.115$ ,  $p=0.033$ ). This implies that an increase in any unit of the explanatory variables leads to an improvement in community well-being. The results is presented on Table 3.

**Table 3: Correlation Matrix**

		<b>Well being</b>	<b>Economic Empowerment</b>	<b>Political Empowerment</b>
<b>Well being</b>	Pearson			
	Correlation	1.000		
	Pearson			
<b>Economic Empowerment</b>	Correlation	.300**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>0.009</b>		
	Pearson			
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	Correlation	0.115	0.143	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>0.033*</b>	0.224	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>0.010**</b>	0.462	0.819

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed),  
\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level(2-tailed)

**4.4 Regression Analysis**

The study established the relationship between economic and political empowerment and community well-being in Marsabit County. Economic empowerment and political empowerment were found to be explaining 14.3% of the community well-being in Marsabit County. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the adjusted R square of 14.3%. This results further means that the model applied to link the relationship of the variables was satisfactory. The result is presented on Table 4.

**Table 4: Model Fitness**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>
R	0.378
R Square	0.143
Adjusted R Square	0.106
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.468741

Table 5 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. Additionally, the results imply that the independent variables (economic and political empowerment) were good predictors of performance of NGOs in community empowerment in Marsabit County. This was supported by an F statistic of 3.892 and the reported p value (0.012) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level.

**Table 5: Analysis of Variance**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.566	3	0.855	3.892	.0120
Residual	15.38	70	0.22		
Total	17.946	73			

Regression of coefficients results on Table 6 shows that economic empowerment and community well-being were positively and significant related ( $r=0.212$ ,  $p=0.007$ ). The result also indicated that political empowerment and community well-being were positively and insignificantly related ( $r=0.069$ ,  $p=0.565$ ). This implies that an increase in any unit of the explanatory variables leads to an improvement in community well being.

**Table 6: Regression of Coefficients**

Variable	B	Std. Error	t	Sig
(Constant)	2.075	.680	3.050	.003
Economic empowerment	.212	.077	2.757	.007
Political empowerment	.069	.120	.579	.565

Thus, the optimal model for the study is;

$$\text{Community Well-being} = 2.075 + 0.212X_1 + 0.069X_2.$$

Where:

$X_1$ = Economic Empowerment

$X_2$ = Political Empowerment

**5.0 Conclusions**

Based on the findings above, the study concluded that economic empowerment and political empowerment have a positive effect on the community empowerment. The study concluded that economic empowerment from the NGOs has enabled the community to sustain their household enhanced credit access facilities through revolving fund approach in my constituency, developed an approach to engage my community coalition in expanding the implementation of youth Screening, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT).

**6.0 Recommendations**

The study recommends for the political leaders to identify, understand, and strengthen the community capacities, which are the primary source of solutions to local problems. Governments with the assistance of NGOs need to commit to a long-term process of local organizational development through good governance through partnership and networking.

**7.0 References**

Calderón, C., & Servén, L. (2010). Infrastructure and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of African Economies*, 19(suppl 1), i13–i87.

Clegg, L. (2010). Our dream is a world full of poverty indicators: the US, the World Bank, and the power of numbers. *New Political Economy*, 15(4), 473–492.

Djankov, S., Montalvo, J. G., & Reynal-Querol, M. (2009). Aid with multiple personalities. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 37(2), 217–229.

Kimani, K. (2009). *The role of foreign aid in poverty eradication; a case study of the donor assisted settlement programmes in Lamu and Malindi Districts of Kenya* (Thesis). University of Nairobi, Kenya.

Kombo, D.K. & Tromp, L.A. (2009). Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

Nancy, G., & Yontcheva, B. (2006). *Does NGO aid go to the poor? Empirical evidence from Europe* (No. 6-39). International Monetary Fund.

Nunnenkamp, P., Weingarh, J., & Weisser, J. (2009). Is NGO aid not so different after all? Comparing the allocation of Swiss aid by private and official donors. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 25(4), 422–438.

Oehmke, J. F., Jayne, T. S., Aralas, S. B., & Mathenge, M. (2010). Impacts of USAID/Kenya supported agricultural productivity interventions on household income and poverty

reduction. *Unpublished manuscript. Michigan State University and Tegemeo Institute. (Kenya).*

Tott, G. (2013). *Influence of Donor Funded Projects on the Social-economic Welfare of the Rural Communities: Case of Cadsal in Elgeiyo Marakwet County, Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

Vision, G. G. I. (2005). *Strategy 2006-2015. World Health Organization. and UNICEF*