



WOMEN AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ISSUES: A CASE STUDY OF EPWORTH PERI-URBAN AREA IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE

Ignatius Isaac DAMBUDZO* & Jane JURU

**Zimbabwe Open University, PO Box, MP1119, Mount Pleasant, Harare,
Zimbabwe**

***Email of Corresponding author: idambudzo@yahoo.co.uk**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the baseline study was to identify the needs and strategies for the empowerment of women and youth. The development of any country depends on its women and youth. Women in rural and urban areas are marginalised from the mainstream economy. Lack of empowerment is one of the barriers to more active involvement. Standards of living are low and poverty is widespread. Yet empowerment by allowing the women and youth to lead the way would enable sustainable development due to ownership. Any attempt to raise the standards of living of women, youth and their families should incorporate empowerment as a key strategy. It was against this background that RWEI conducted a baseline study to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of local communities with regard to empowerment. Questionnaires and focus group discussion were used to collect data from women and youth. Questionnaires provided quantitative data to determine the prevalence of respondents' views on empowerment. Focus group discussion provided in-depth information about the experiences, aspirations, strategies for empowerment, barriers and solutions for empowerment. Results showed that lack of capital, low level education, dearth of skills, cultural factors regarding gender equality were key barriers. The people had entrepreneurial mind-sets. The study concluded that successful empowerment required provision of capital and training. Further research is required to evaluate the effectiveness of empowerment interventions such as training and capital provision.

Keywords: empowerment, women, youth, development, poverty, gender, strategy, training, education, skills, sustainable, baseline, entrepreneur.

INTRODUCTION

According to Youth Zim Magazine (2010), empowerment is the creation of an environment which facilitates the performance of indigenous people...through empowerment programmes in the development of the national economy. Empowerment also refers to increasing the health, spiritual, political, social and economic strength of individuals and communities. From a sociological point of view empowerment addresses the exclusion of discrimination from decision making processes through for example, discrimination based on age, disability, race, ethnicity, religion or gender. Empowerment can also be described as the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalised people either directly by those people or through the help from other non-marginalised who share their own access opportunities. It also includes actively thwarting attempts to deny those opportunities. Empowerment includes encouraging and developing the skills for, self-sufficiency with the aim of eliminating the future need for charity or welfare in the individuals or groups. Though the empowerment process can be difficult to start and implement effectively, some empowerment projects have been successful.

Different strategies can be adopted for empowering marginalised people. These include helping them to create their own non-profit making organisation because it is the marginalised people themselves who know what their people need most, and control of the organisation by outsiders can actually help to further entrench marginalisation. Charitable organisations mainly lead from outside the community. This can dis-empower the community by entrenching a dependence on charity or welfare. Empowerment can also be taken as allowing or assisting the community to set their own agenda, make own plans, seek the

necessary resources, do much work, take responsibility and credit for the success of their projects or consequences should they fail.

Empowerment is therefore the process which enables individuals or groups to fully access personal or collective power, authority and influence and employ strength when engaging with other people, institutions or society. It is not about giving people power but unlocking it. People already have power in the wealth of their knowledge as well as the motivation to do their work more efficiently. What empowerment does is to encourage people to gain skills and knowledge that will allow them to overcome obstacles in life or work environment thereby helping them to develop as individuals and society as a whole. The process of empowerment will result in the following capabilities for those involved;

- The ability to make decisions about personal or group situations
- The ability to access information and resources for decision making
- Ability to consider a range of options from which to choose
- Ability to exercise assertiveness in collective decision making
- Having positive thinking about one's ability to make change
- Ability to learn and access skills for improving personal or collective issues
- Ability to inform others' perceptions through exchange, education and engagement
- Involvement in the growth process and changes that is never ending and self-initiated
- Increasing one's positive image and overcoming, and
- Increasing one's ability in discreet thinking to sort out right and wrong.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

This is an attitudinal, structural and cultural process where young people gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people including children and adults. Youth empowerment occurs in the homes, at school, youth organisations, government policy making and community organising campaigns.

Structural activities such as community decision making, planning and education reforms empower youth. Provisions of ZimAsset for education encourage promotion of entrepreneurship among the youth through education in order to empower youth for economic development. Consequently, education activities such as student-centred learning, popular education and in-service learning, youth leadership and youth voice tend to empower the youth for sustainable development.

Programmes for youth empowerment have the support of the Commonwealth of Nations which signed up to the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007-2015). The Commonwealth Youth programme defined youth empowerment thus: 'Young people are empowered when they acknowledge that they have or can create choices in life, are aware of the implications of those choices, make informed decisions freely, take action based on that decision and accept responsibility for the consequences of those actions.'

Empowering young people also mean creating and supporting the enabling conditions under which young people can act on their own behalf and on their own terms rather than at the direction of others.

To complement the Commonwealth effort the United Nations has a Secretariat called the Youth Department of Economic and Social Affairs with the explicit mandate to address youth issues. The UN youth agenda is guided by the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) which provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation for young people. It is with this background that RWEI seeks to lend support to these international initiatives on a small scale to empower young people.

Many young people such as those in the area under study do not have the advantages that promote optimal, healthy development of the body, mind, and spirit. Many youth do not have opportunities to experience positive stimulation for growth or nurturing support from family, friends, and community. While youth development is a natural process it cannot be left to chance (Youth Development Committee of the Lilly Endowment, 2009), (Pittman, 1991). Arrangements need to be made in terms of place, form

of association, getting people together for training or skills development and testing new ideas or processes.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

Not only should young people be empowered but women too. History and cultural practices have rendered women inferior to men in most countries, Zimbabwe inclusive. There is therefore a push towards gender equality through empowerment of women in various spheres of life.

Gender equality also known as gender equity, or sexual equality is the goal of the equality of the genders or sexes due to the injustices of different forms of gender inequality. World bodies have defined gender inequality in terms of human rights, especially women's rights and economic development. UNICEF defines gender equality as 'levelling the playing field for girls and women by ensuring that all children have equal opportunities to develop their talents.' Focusing on gender equality and fighting inequality has been one of the UN's goals, namely that women have a right to equality as declared by the United Nations Population Fund. Consequently, gender equity has been declared one of the goals of the UN Millennium Development Project to end poverty by 2015.

The importance of women in economic development has been stated by the project thus: Every single goal is directed to women's rights and societies where women are not afforded equal rights as men can never achieve development in a sustainable manner. Promotion of gender equality is seen as an encouragement for greater economic prosperity. Gender empowerment generally looks at political participation, decision making, economic participation and decision making, and power over economic resources. Focus of this study was on decision making and economic participation. It is against this background that the study sought to investigate the level of youth and women's empowerment and their needs to acquire such empowerment.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to identify the needs for women and youth empowerment in Epworth in order to raise the standards of living of individuals and families. The specific objectives were:

1. To identify the state of awareness of empowerment among women and youth.
2. To identify expressed needs of the women and youths.
3. To document the causes/barriers to empowerment.
4. To identify strategies for women and youth empowerment.
5. To make recommendations on what can be done to empower women and youth in Epworth.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quantitative was preferred for its objectivity and the need to get evidence in terms of numbers so that the degree of need and areas of focus can easily be identified. The qualitative was used because it would provide rich data on women's and youths' experience in their quest for empowerment. They describe their current experiences, opportunities for empowerment as well as barriers towards empowerment, their desires and what they are currently doing. This enlightens areas of need to complement the numerical data thereby authenticating any request for support to turn around the lives of women, youths and their families. Such evidence facilitates the planning of strategies or the way forward using the clients' voices and preferences.

Population

Epworth Community of Overspill

Epworth was chosen because there is abject poverty in the area. After several efforts to cover the seven wards in Epworth area, the study zeroed in on a church gathering of AFM followers in Overspill. The strategy was adopted to get started. Women and young people at church on Sunday 12 October, 2014 were the target. Participants came from Magada, Jacha, Stopover, Muguta and Overspill all under Epworth hence geographical coverage was representative of the people in the area. Housing structures, mode of transport, income generating activities, dress were some of the things that were observed. Though the area may be regarded by some as urban, living conditions and the environment are typical of a rural environment. The only indicator of urban environment is the density of the settlement.

Sample

Out of the congregation, only women and youth were singled out to complete a questionnaire. The Pastor and other church elders assisted in distributing questionnaires to women and youths in the gathering. There appeared to be more women than males in the congregation.

A total of 200 questionnaires were prepared. Pens were also provided to enable quick completion of the questionnaires. Out of the 200 questionnaires 150 (30 youths and 120 to women) were distributed, 134 were returned, from 106 females and 28 males. Participants were allowed to complete the questionnaires at home and bring them back at the Pastor's house for collection by the Research Assistant.

The total returns were large enough for valid and reliable description and conclusions to be made on various issues addressed by the questions. For some questions, participants did not answer all the questions while in other cases double answers were given when only one was required. It should not be surprising therefore to find varying totals from question to question. A wrong assumption may have contributed to non-responses. The questions were all in English. The responses showed that some had difficulties in comprehending some questions. The problem has been noted and will be rectified by simplifying questions, format of presentation and having a local language translation of the questionnaire for the next group. A focus group discussion was also held to collect qualitative evidence to complement the objective quantitative data. Despite these difficulties with the questionnaire, the responses generally reflect the ideas and feelings of the people contacted.

Data Collection Procedure

As stated earlier, data was collected by means of questionnaires, focus group discussion and observation of people's lifestyles in the area. One hundred and thirty-four (134) (67%) questionnaires were completed and returned. This was a good response rate. The questionnaires comprised 50 questions of varying demands from demographic data to economic activities current and future. Questions were the multiple choice type and participants had to tick or write their responses.

The second method was the focus group discussion. Ten female and four male youths participated in the discussion. Questions for the interview were structured and had been prepared in advance. Questions sought an understanding of the concept of empowerment, what they can do without asking for permission and what they needed to seek permission for before they could embark on some activities. Questions also sought to find out if there was need for empowerment and what the target group needed for empowerment. Their current activities were also sought and their responses were tape recorded and later transcribed. Participants were allowed to speak one at a time. This allowed uninterrupted recording of individual voices and views. Questions were repeated or rephrased to clarify and to enable generation of appropriate responses. Rich data was generalised from both women and the youths.

They were very clear about their current states, what they were doing and what barriers they were experiencing/encountering and how they wished to minimise the barriers. Physical conditions of participants and environment were observed.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire

Data were analysed by common responses to each question. These were tabulated and presented in the form of bar graphs to summarise the responses to enable readers to see and understand the state of women and youth empowerment at a glance. Data were described in relation to the research questions.

Focus Group Discussion

Data was transcribed from the tape and later coded with pre-determined categories as follows:

- 1) Knowledge of empowerment
- 2) Aspirations for empowerment
- 3) Strategies for empowerment
- 4) Barriers to empowerment
- 5) Overcoming barriers

RESULTS

Qualitative and quantitative data are presented and discussed below. Results from the focus group discussion will be presented first under categories: knowledge of empowerment, aspirations for empowerment, strategies for empowerment, barriers to empowerment and solutions to barriers.

Focus Group Discussion

Knowledge of empowerment

From the responses given, both women and youth showed awareness of the concept of empowerment. It was the power to make decisions and act independently. Women expressed awareness of current legislation and human rights issues that removed restrictions on what they could because they are women. This included participation in politics, employment outside the home and other issues. However, because of cultural issues, they felt obliged to consult the men before taking any action such as looking for employment outside the home, participation in cross border trading and starting some project. The youth felt that the major restriction in acting independently is lack of capital and /or education and skills.

Aspirations for Empowerment

Both the youth and women aspired to be empowered to act independently if only they could get money to undertake their projects. They sounded aware of the opportunities available but could not be accessed due to lack of funding, low level education and lack of appropriate skills. However, the need to seek permission from the men before taking any action slowed down their response to opportunities.

Strategies for Empowerment

The focus group discussion revealed that most of the participants were already involved in some project on a small scale. They already had ideas of what they wanted to do but the scale of operation was not big enough to empower them on a sustainable basis. The following strategies for empowerment were suggested:

1. Entrepreneurship involving different activities such as buying and selling, making liquid soap, peanut butter, poultry project, dress making and cross border trading on a larger scale.
2. Organisation into co-operatives to pool resources and expertise for what whatever project they embarked upon.
3. Access to relevant education to enable them qualify for training in different professional courses such as teaching, nursing and business management. This included completing 'O' Level studies or enrolling for degree programmes. Technical vocation education was also suggested to equip them with skills for budgeting, sales, customer care and marketing. Such skills would enable them to operate more professionally.
4. Access to capital in the form of loans to enable them increase the scale of operations, procure appropriate equipment to meet the demand continuously.
5. Access to information and information sharing regarding opportunities available, markets and sources of raw materials.

Barriers to Empowerment

Though the women and youth already had ideas of what they wanted to do, there were barriers that slowed down their empowerment. These include:

1. Lack of money to start, expand or sustain the projects and procure equipment. *(Yes, we want to carry out projects but have no money to do so on a large scale. The market is there but we can only produce small quantities).*
2. Lack of appropriate education and low level of education. *(The type of education we need is one that is appropriate for the projects we are running).*
3. Lack of information about what is available which they could embark upon. *(We do not have information for example, that we can train with institutions like Zimbabwe Open University, where to get loans and how to go about).*
4. The need to consult the men before embarking on any project slows down decision making and progress on the whole. *(We cannot start anything without consulting the husband or seeking his permission. Lack of money is the main drawback for young people).*
5. Lack of appropriate skills to do the various projects professionally. *(We do not have appropriate skills and equipment and we do not know where we can train.).*
6. Lack of space to operate from. *(We can start a poultry project but we do not have the space to do so. If we get more land we can run a successful poultry project. Market is available).*

The above barriers can be overcome to empower women and youth by availing loan facilities, providing education that empowers them, support for education to prevent early dropouts from school, training to equip them with skills for their projects. There are more benefits working as groups than as individuals. Local authorities could provide land for various self-help projects. The success of any project or strategy would largely depend on high level commitment by individuals and the group.

Notes were also recorded. Results were used to complement quantitative data for a complete description and explanation of the issues regarding empowerment of women and youth and the way forward.

Demographic Information

Gender

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender (N = 134)

Sex	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Male	28	21
Female	106	79
Total Responses	134	100
No Response	16	10.7
Total	150	100

The group comprised more women than men in the whole congregation and the youth were fewer than the adults.

Age

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age (N = 142)

Age in years	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below 20 years	10	7
20 – 30 years	61	43
31 – 40 years	30	21
Over 40 years	41	29
Total	142	100

The majority (71%) of the respondents were under the age of forty while 29% were above the age of forty. The participants were generally lively.

Residence

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by location (N = 133)

Location	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Urban	97	73
Rural	16	12
Other	20	15
Total	133	100

The majority (73%) reported that they were urban dwellers while a small proportion (12%) indicated that they were in a rural setting. The group under other could not tell whether they were urban or rural.

Marital status

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by Marital Status (N = 144)

Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Married	99	69
Single	44	30
Widowed	1	1
Total	144	100

The majority (69%) were married while only 30% reported to be single. Many of these indicated that they had family responsibilities to cope with.

Employment status (Spouse)

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by Employment Status of the Spouse (N = 110)

Spouses' Employment Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Working	50	45
Not Working	60	55
Total	110	100

The proportion of those working and not working was almost the same. However, those reporting to be working were not necessarily in formal employment but informal trade and other small income generating activities at home.

Family size (Number of Children)

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by Number of Children (N = 137)

Number of children	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Have children	101	74
No children	36	26
Total	137	100

Most of the participants (74) had children to look after. This meant an economic responsibility.

Employment and Economic Activities

Employment status (Self)

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by Own Employment Status (N = 140)

I am employed	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	21
No	110	79
Total	140	100

Results of this question show that the majority (79%) of the youth and women were unemployed. This is clear evidence of the youth's and women's powerlessness and low level of contribution to the economy. It is however, unfortunate that some gave the two answers and it was difficult to choose. In the end information was taken as given, thus distorting the totals.

Place of work

Table 8: Distribution of respondents by Workplace in or out of Epworth (Residence) (N = 27)

Here I am Employed	Number of Respondents	Percentage
In residential area	16	59
Out of residential area	11	41
Total	27	100

Of the women and young people working, 59 percent worked in Epworth while 41 percent worked outside Epworth. This meant that transport costs were incurred to get to and from work daily.

Chief economic activity

Table 9: Distribution of Sample by Survival Means (N = 110)

Means of survival	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Support from others	18	16
Club activities	8	7
Piece work	47	43
Vending	35	32
Subsistence farming	1	1
Cross border trading	1	1
Total	110	100

The question sought to find out what their means of survival were. Support from relatives, piece work, vending and club activities were the main sources. Self-reliance was largely the source of income for daily sustenance.

Desire to improve lifestyle/Income

Table 10: Distribution of respondents by Wish to Improve Income/Lifestyle (N = 154)

Wish to Improve Income/lifestyle	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	138	97
No	5	3
Total	143	100

This was one question a few respondents did not understand. The question simply wanted to know whether they were keen on improving their incomes or lifestyles. The five who responded 'No' may not have understood what the question was asking for. On the whole, the majority responded 'yes', implying that they were not satisfied with their current status and wished for something better.

Income generating activities

Table 11: Distribution of respondents by: Preferred Income Generating Activities (N = 70)

Preferred income generating activity	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Selling	8	11.4
Sewing	6	8.6
Business	6	8.6
Nursing	2	2.9
Welding	1	1.4
Farming	6	8.6
Mukando'(Money Lending)	4	5.7
Clubs	1	1.4
Cobra making	1	1.4
Piece work	2	2.9
Vending	2	2.9
Teaching	1	1.4
Employment	1	1.4
Poultry project	8	11.4
Catering	2	2.9
Shopkeeping	1	1.4
Pre-school	1	1.4
Hairdressing	4	5.7
Cross border	10	14.3
Dressmaking	3	4.3
Total	70	100

Out of the 70 who responded to the question, only five wanted to be in employment. The rest wanted to engage in self-help activities to earn money for their upkeep. It would appear that they had an entrepreneurial mind-set if only they could get starting capital. The results also show that self-help projects were perceived as vehicles for empowerment. It is therefore, important that any plans for intervention take these sentiments into account. This is in line with the aims and objectives of ZimAsset, the economic blue print for the period 2013 to 2018.

A report back meeting was held some four weeks later. Apart from reporting back the findings from the questionnaire and focus group discussion, the participants were also asked to indicate individually what empowerment activity each preferred. Exercise books were provided for each activity for the participants to record their names including, identification, telephone numbers and addresses. The activities recorded were: cross border trade, vending/buying and selling, lifelong learning (teaching, nursing, completing 'O' and 'A' levels, technical and vocational training, higher education) grooming (hairdressing, cosmetology, manicure etc.), dress making, catering, welding, Poultry/farming, running early childhood development centres. Armed with this information, RWEI plans to seek for sponsorship to carry out training and fulfil the ambitions of the participants as starting point towards their empowerment. The distribution of participants by activity is shown in the table below.

Education

Literacy

Table 12: Distribution of respondents by Literacy (N = 133)

Literacy Rate	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	121	91
No	12	9
Total	133	100

Of the 133 who responded, 121 (%) indicated they were literate though the level of literacy needs further study. This is an advantage in that they could be given written instructions and work on their own or training them would be easier if training materials could be obtained for various activities they wanted to embark upon for a living.

Highest level of education attained

Table 13: Distribution of respondents by Level of Education Attained (N = 141)

Level of education attained	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Primary	25	18
Secondary	102	72
Tertiary	11	8
None	2	1
Total	141	100

An overwhelming majority had received education up to secondary level. This is an advantage when it comes to training and record keeping for the various activities they may engage in. Of these the majority had some secondary education. Since education is a basic requirement for raising standard of living, the sample and population in this study be given the necessary background for empowerment to live better lives. The type of education may need serious consideration. Results from the focus group discussion showed a greater preference for skills based education which would enable them to manage the small self-help projects. On the other hand, this also suggests that the current curriculum may be perceived as not offering the type of education that is relevant to their needs. Requests such as education to enable us to budget, manage, plan and market products effectively testify the demand for skills based education. It equips them for survival here and now.

Number of O' level completed

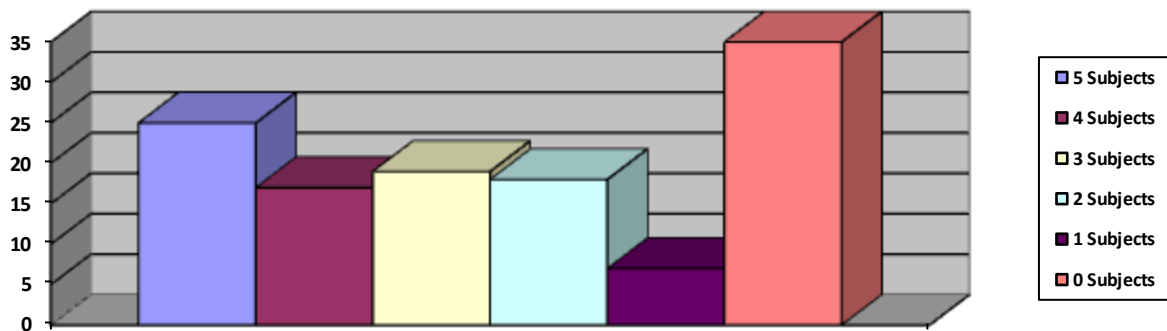


Figure 1: number of 'O' Level Subjects passed

It was interesting to note that well over 60% of the participants had at least one 'O' Level subject or more. For those who may want to pursue further professional studies or training, they already have the necessary background education. Some may want to supplement the remaining subjects enabling them to qualify for training in different field such as teaching, nursing and counselling. Such responses demonstrated awareness of the availability of professional course where regular income was possible once trained had been completed. The current economic environment in the country where unemployment was very high and only professional fields such as teaching and nursing were providing employment more easily than the others may be the attraction.

Desire to pursue further studies

Table 14: Distribution of respondents by Desire for Further Studies (N = 80)

Wish to Further Education?	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	70	88
No	5	6
Nil	5	6
Total	80	100

Asked whether they would like to pursue further studies to improve their level of education, 88% responded ‘yes’ with 6% saying ‘no’. This is was an expression of thirst for education in a country where education is highly valued. Thus provision of further education may be an instrument for empowerment of some of the youth and women.

Barriers to pursue further studies

Table 15: Distribution of respondents by Barriers to Further Education (N = 127)

Barriers to Further Education	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A Money	106	83
B Time	9	7
C Childcare responsibilities	8	6
D Not allowed	1	1
E Not Interested	3	3
Total	127	100

From the results, it was clear that lack of money was the single most important barrier to further education. Though aspirations for further education were high, the lack of money to pay fees was a key barrier. It was interesting to note that child care responsibilities, lack of time and interest to pursue further education were also barriers for some. Thus, empowerment could not be achieved through education as long as poverty remained pervasive in the community. Once again money and child care facilities may be needed to enable attendance at educational institutions as the basis for empowerment of women and youth.

Highest level of education attained before leaving school

Table 16: Distribution of respondents by Highest Level of Education Achieved Before Leaving School (N = 135)

Highest Level of Education achieved	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	53	39
No	82	61
Total	135	100

53 (39%) indicated they had reached the highest level of education when they left school. Asked whether they had reached the highest level of education before leaving school, the majority (61%) said they had not. This meant that some of the people had been forced to leave school by circumstances probably beyond their control. As already stated earlier, money is the key barrier to education. This underscores the need for financial sponsorship for the needy. It would appear that BEAM is failing to cope with the demand for financial assistance needed for education in both urban and rural areas. Results in table 18 confirm the problem posed by lack of funding for education. Looking for employment early during school years further underscores the impact of poverty on education and empowerment of youth and women.

Reasons for leaving school early

Table 17: Distribution of respondents by Reasons for Leaving School Early (N = 51)

Reasons for leaving school early	Number of Respondents	Percentage
A. Lack of Fees	39	75
B. Pregnancy	1	2
C. Expulsion	1	2
D. Family care	2	4
E. Look for employment	8	17
Total	51	100

Once again the lack of money to pay schools fees was given as the main cause for premature dropping out of school. This underlines the effect of poverty on empowerment of individuals or groups.

Wish to go back to school

Table 18: Distribution of respondents by Whether They Would Like to Go Back to School (N = 132)

Do you want to go back to school?	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	108	82
No	24	18
Total	132	100

Asked whether they would like to go back to school, an overwhelming majority of 82% responded in the affirmative. However, responses from the focus group discussion most indicated that they would prefer the type of education that enabled them to manage their small ventures, budgeting, marketing and sales. In other words they did not want academic education as such but functional education that enabled them to run the projects more effectively and efficiently. Two indicated that they preferred formal education to acquire qualifications that would lead them into employment as professionals.

Reasons for wanting to go back to school

Table 19: Distribution of respondents by What They Would Like to Do When They Go Back to School (N = 108)

What they would like to do when they go back to school	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Complete primary school	3	3
Complete 'O' level	35	32
Study for a qualification	30	28
Learn some skills	27	25
Study for a degree	13	12
Total	108	100

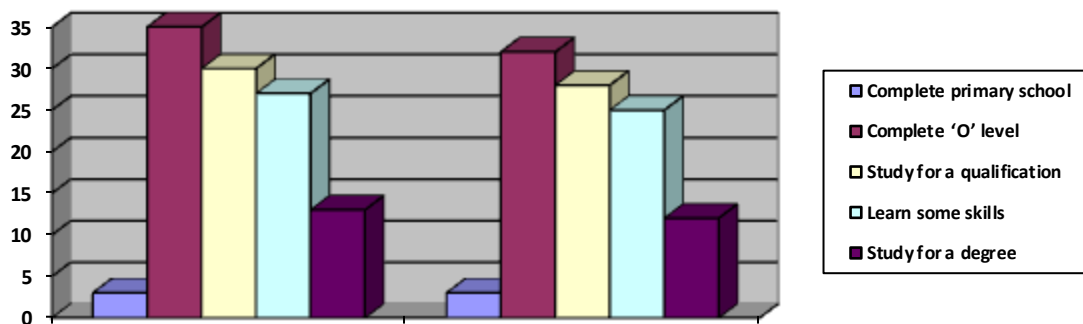


Figure 2: What they wish to do if they go back to school

Asked what kind of education they wanted to pursue, should they go back to school, about 53% reported that they would like to study for some qualification or learn some skills. Though the question did not seek specification of the qualifications their responses to focus group discussion questions seemed to indicate that they wanted to get some skills or qualifications that would enable them to run the small projects in groups more successfully. Some wanted to complete primary and secondary education and 12% to study for a degree. This shows the need for informal education programmes ranging in their offerings from academic to skills based training. Acquiring of such education would empower the women and youth to live a better life through decision making and choice.

Income generating activities in local area

Asked what activities they would carry out in their local area and earn money successfully, the majority indicated selling and sewing or dressmaking. Other activities such poultry, hairdressing, building and construction, welding, fish and piggery projects were also reported as viable.

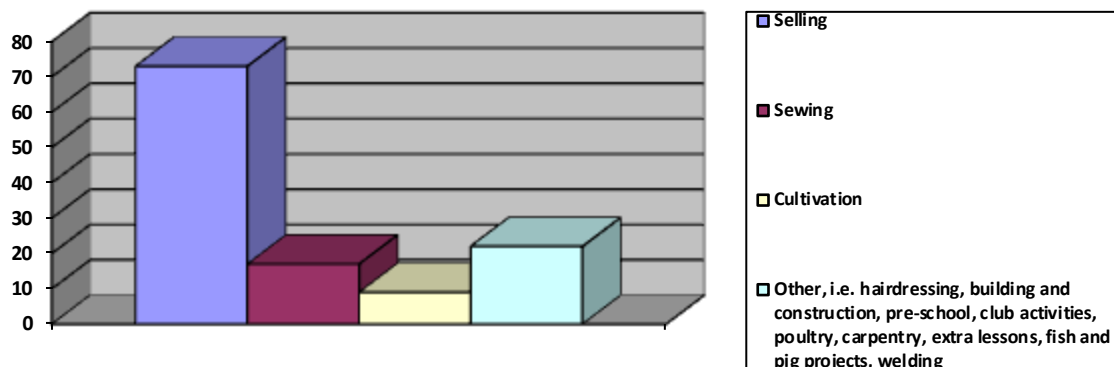


Figure 3: Activities undertaken in the local area to earn money

Career Development

Preferred mode of working

Table 20: Distribution of respondents by Preferred Mode of Working (N = 118)

Preferred mode of working	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Work alone	51	43
In groups/partnership/co-operatives	67	57
Total	118	100

The question also sought to find out if they wanted to work, as individuals or as groups. Of those who answered the question, 57% preferred to work in groups or as co-operatives or partnerships while the rest preferred to work alone. Working as co-operatives was reported as better for sharing ideas and pooling expertise to make the project more successful. On the other hand those who preferred to work alone cited less confusion. In addition if the others are less committed, they will slow down progress while working alone there will be no one to look up to do some of the work.

Barriers to making choices

Table 21: Distribution of respondents by Barriers to Making Choices (N = 107)

Barriers to making choices	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Inexperience	4	4
Childcare responsibilities	2	2
Lack of support	4	4
Lack of capital	74	69
Lack of education	5	5
Unemployment	5	5
Lack of motivation	2	2
No place to operate from	2	2
Lack of appropriate tools and equipment	1	1
Economic hardships	1	1
Lack of information	1	1
House wife responsibilities	1	1
Lack of self confidence	1	1
Discrimination	2	1
Praying	1	1
Total	107	100

On barriers to making own choices, lack of capital (61%) was cited as the biggest hurdle. They could not start their own projects or businesses due to the lack of capital. Other barriers such as lack of support, inexperience, lack of education, information, appropriate tools among others were also cited as barriers to independent decision making and choice.

Help needed to become independent

Responses to barriers to independent choice making were corroborated by responses to help they needed to become independent. The majority reported that if they got money, they would be able to operate or function more independently than currently happening. In support of this if they had gainful employment or jobs they would be able to function more independently. Education and knowledge or information on what to do would also help. The responses underlined the impact of poverty on empowerment of the women and youth. Capital and access to means of earning money would ensure empowerment of the women and youth in the area.

Table 22: Distribution of Sample by Help Needed to Become Independent (N = 135)

Help needed to become independent	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Money	65	62
Jobs	10	10
Skills development	2	2
Property	1	1
Space	2	2
Business start up	1	1
Payment	1	1
Praying	2	2
Starting projects	1	1
Cross border	2	2
Equipment	2	2
Effective ideas	1	1
Knowledge	4	4
Education	7	7
Support	2	2
Accommodation	2	2
Total	105	100

Requirements for a better life

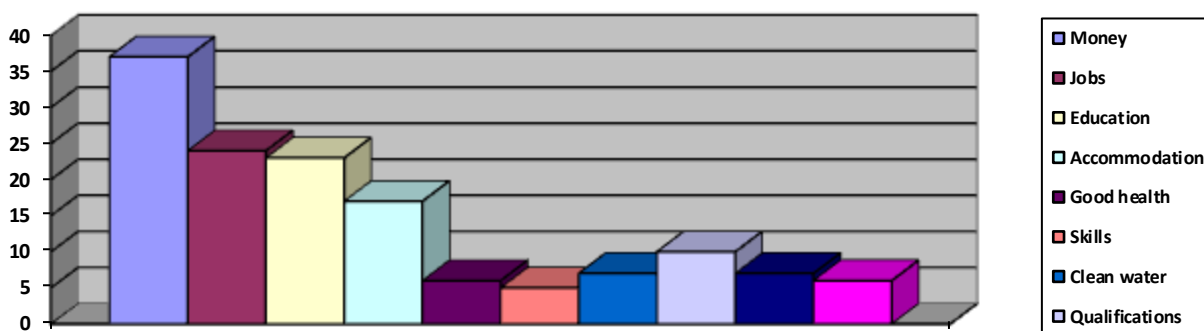


Figure 4: What can help you live a better life

Asked what they needed to live a better life, the many highlighted money, jobs, education, accommodation and qualifications as the most important. Once again, money topped the list followed by jobs (source of money) and education, the gateway to success and higher standard of living. Others felt that engagement in projects, selling and acquiring skills would raise their standard of living. Health and sanitation were also cited. The responses underline the need for money or means to earn money, and receive education as means to empowering the youth and women in the area.

Skills training attended

Table 23: Distribution of respondents By: Attendance at Any Skills Training (N = 126)

If any skills training had been attended	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes. That is computers, merchandising, technical colleges,	46	37
No	80	63
Total	126	100

Asked whether they had attended any skills training, the majority reported, ‘no.’ Those who had attended some training had done so in the following areas: computers and merchandising. Though some were skilled, they were unemployed and needed to apply the skills somewhere to earn a living. The high proportion of those not trained underscores the need for skills training as part of empowerment, confirming what literature said. Through training the women would be able to undertake different activities that would earn them money to raise their standards of living.

Training required for career

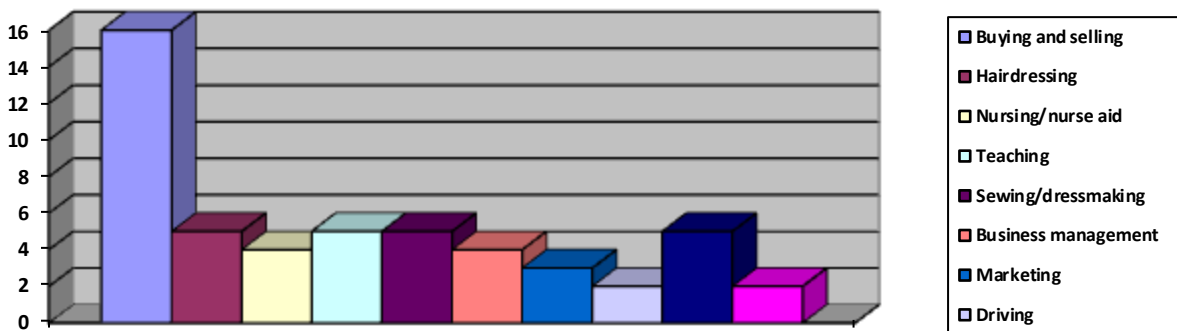


Figure 5: Training required for a career

In response to a question on what kind of training they needed to empower them, the majority reported those skill areas that supported self-help projects such as buying and selling, hairdressing, dressmaking, marketing, poultry projects, driving etc. Few mention training for professions such as teaching and nursing. Once again, it can be seen that people want to engage in their own projects and become independent. Getting such training would empower them to make choices as well as raise their standard living.

Possession of entry qualifications for a career

Table 24: Distribution of respondents By Entry Qualifications Available For the Preferred Career (N = 122)

Entry qualification available	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	37	30.3
No	85	69.7
Total	122	100

When asked whether they already had qualifications to train in the fields they indicated in question 27, the majority indicated that they did not have. This may not be true because they were not told what entry qualifications were required for each. Some required mere interest and commitment since these are projects some are familiar with and they already know what skills were required for success. This is supported by what was reported during the focus group discussion when they reported that what they required was knowledge in how to budget, manage a business, record keeping etc.

Wish to study for a qualification

Table 25: Distribution of Sample by Whether They Want to Study For a Qualification (N = 93)

Do you want to study for a qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	75	
No	18	
Total	93	100

It was interesting to note that the majority (75) wanted to study for a qualification while 18 did not want. Studying for a qualification is a strategy for empowerment through either for self-employment or for getting employed in the relevant field.

Qualification for future career

Table 26: Distribution of Sample by Qualification Required for Further Training (N = 91)

Qualification required for further training	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Teaching	14	15
None	19	21
Security	6	7
Sales	40	44
Other. That is, construction, degree, carpentry, education, pastor, music, agriculture, technician, dressmaking, boiler making	12	13
Total	91	100

Asked about a preferred qualification should training facility be available, the majority (40) preferred sales, followed by teaching with several other fields mentioned. These include construction, carpentry, agriculture, dressmaking, music, pastoral and security. It was once again interesting to note that as many as 19 indicated that they did not need any training or qualification.

Problems faced by women

Table 27: Distribution of Sample by Problems Faced by Women in the Area (N = 152)

Problems faced by women in the area	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender violence	12	8
Unemployment	58	38
Poor health facilities	4	3
Low self esteem	17	11
Lack of markets	15	10
Inadequate housing	10	7
Divorce	12	8
Poor roads	7	5
Ill-health	4	3
Lack of time	4	3
Lack of recreational facilities	9	6
Total	152	100

The biggest problem facing women in the area was unemployment followed by, low esteem, lack of markets, gender violence, divorce among others. The challenges led women to feel powerless in their environment or families. Of importance is the need to tackle unemployment or introducing projects that will keep the women busy, earn money and empower them.

Problems faced by youth and other vulnerable groups

Problems faced by youth

Table 28: Distribution of Sample by Problems Affecting the Youths (N = 165)

Problems affecting youths	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Unemployment	71	43
Early pregnancy	20	12
Unavailability of land	1	1
Lack of skills	12	7
Lack of focus/direction	18	11
Peer pressure	10	6
Lack of information	3	2
Heading families	4	2
Dropping out of school	17	10
Lack of library facilities	8	5
Other	1	1
Total	165	100

On problems affecting the youth, unemployment topped the list followed by early pregnancy, lack of direction, skills dropping out of school pre-maturely and peer pressure among others.

Prevalence of early pregnancy

Table 29: Distribution of Sample by: Prevalence of Early Pregnancies (N = 109)

Whether there are any early pregnancies	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	94	86
No	15	14
Total	109	100

Participants reported that early pregnancy was indeed a problem in the area. Opportunities to help the girls remain in school may lower the rate of early pregnancies

Causes of early pregnancy

Table 30: Distribution of Sample by Causes of Early Pregnancies (N = 97)

Causes of early pregnancies	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Poverty	58	60
Peer pressure	31	32
Other	8	8
Total	97	100

Chief among the causes of early pregnancy were poverty and peer pressure. This means that as long as poverty remains a problem in the area early pregnancies are likely to continue featuring and also putting financial pressure on the young people and their parents. Empowerment with information and activities to keep them busy may go a long way in reducing early pregnancies among the young people.

Strategies to reduce early pregnancies

Table 31: Distribution of Sample by Strategies to Reduce Early Pregnancies (N = 99)

Strategies to reduce early pregnancies	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Poverty reduction	43	43
Awareness campaigns	50	51
Other	6	6
Total	99	100

As indicated in the previous question, poverty reduction and awareness campaigns can go a long way in reducing incidence of early pregnancies.

People with disabilities in the area

Table 32: Distribution of Sample by People With Disabilities in The Area (N = 94)

People with disabilities	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	85	90
No	9	10
Total	94	100

The people of Epworth are aware of the presence of people with disabilities. During the focus group discussion it was revealed that there was a centre where children with disabilities were looked after on a 1:1 basis while allowing/creating space for working parents to go to work. Availability of toys and other objects of play would go a long way in raising the physical, emotional and cognitive development of the children. On their part those who look after the children would feel empowered if they can get toys and other play objects as well as funding for income generating projects.

Degree of disabilities

Table 33: Distribution of Sample by Condition of Disability (N = 83)

Condition of disability	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Good	18	22
Bad	54	65
Deplorable	11	13
Total	83	100

While only 18 people reported the state of disabilities as good the rest were described as bad and difficult to care for. This meant parents with such children needed support to cope with looking after children or people with disabilities. It was also reported that there were many more children with disabilities in the

homes but parents tended to hide them from public view. Such children could get some education to empower them for independent living.

Orphans in the area

Table 34: Distribution of respondents: Were There Orphans in The Area (N = 125)

Whether there are any orphans in the area	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	97	78
No	28	22
Total	125	100

Presence of orphans meant there were vulnerable who needed support for their empowerment for the future. Programmes and projects were needed to get something going for their benefit.

Problems faced by orphans

Table 35: Distribution of respondents by Problems Faced by Orphans (N = 46)

Problems faced by orphans	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Child labour	11	24
Lack of education	23	50
Lack of support	12	26
Total	46	100

Key problems facing the orphans were the lack of tuition fees that would eventually empower the children through education for independent lives.

Access to social services

Table 36: Distribution of respondents by Access To Social Services (N = 105)

Access to social services	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Banks	16	15
Clinics	25	24
Schools	33	31
Shops	31	30
Total	105	100

The scenario seems to indicate that many people in Epworth experience difficulties accessing banks, schools and clinics.

Humanitarian Organisations in the area

Table 37: Distribution of respondents: Awareness of the Presence of Humanitarian Organisations in the Area (N = 96)

Humanitarian organisations	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	27	28.1
No	69	71.9
Total	96	100

Very few people were aware of the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the area. This may mean the people lacked information on organisations that could provide information and assistance with their needs for empowerment. The following were listed as Humanitarian organisations in Epworth: UNDP, PLAN, Police and HIV/AIDS counsellors. The issues to be addressed to improve the standard of living include: job creation, health matters, money, market places, skills training and starting projects.

Participation in money saving clubs

Table 38: Distribution of Sample by Participation in Informal Savings Clubs (mukando) (N = 99)

Informal savings clubs	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	49	49
No	50	51
Total	99	100

The practice of the money lending clubs is evidence of people trying to help themselves fill the financial gap in order to empower themselves to raise their standard of living.

Membership of savings clubs

Table 39: Distribution of Sample by Membership of Savings Clubs. (N = 53)

Whether one belongs to such clubs	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	27	51
No	26	49
Total	53	100

There were as many who belonged as those who did not. Those who did not belong cited the lack of starting capital as a barrier and also lack of information about trustworthy people involved. The following were listed as benefits from ‘mukando’ (Savings clubs): more money in the pocket, paying fees and motivation to start own business. Reasons why some have not joined the savings clubs: lack of starting capital, no team members to start with, no information, failed to take off, no support and no experience.

Environmental awareness

Table 40: Distribution of respondents by People of Epworth Looking After Their Environment (N = 68)

Whether the people are looking after their environment	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Not cutting down trees	18	27
Not littering the environment	22	32
Awareness campaigns	21	31
Other	7	10
Total	68	100

Responses to this question showed awareness of what makes the environment poor and what action they can take to conserve or protect the environment. This is good. When then carry out any projects it will be expected that they will the environment friendly for sustainable development.

Support expected from RWEI

Table 41: Distribution of respondents: Expected Support From RWEI (N = 124)

Expected support from RWEI	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Skills development	30	24
Funding	21	17
Information	9	7
Projects	54	44
Markets	7	6
Other	3	2
Total	124	100

Asked what support they expected from RWEI, the following responses were given: skills development, funding, information, projects and markets. Apparently, these are the areas that need addressing in pursuit of empowering women and youth in the area judging by their responses earlier. Other issues include support for skills development, awareness about empowerment, help people, shelter, no starting capital and business

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The baseline has revealed the general poverty prevailing in Epworth. Unemployment is common among the women and the young people. Those who may have qualifications are not employed either. Some women and young people were engaged in small scale economic activities as a means of survival. These include, selling vegetables, clothing and some food stuffs. Others were into poultry, liquid soap, cobra, peanut and butter making. Making these on a larger scale for a bigger market was hampered by the lack of capital and transport to reach markets far away from their homes. Others lacked space to operate from. Lack of information was yet another problem. People were therefore ignorant about what to do and how to go about. Training was required to give the people skills as a vehicle for empowerment. Both academic and vocational educational were needed for the women and young people to fulfil their ambitions. Key

aspirations for empowerment were capital, to fund their projects and paying fees to attend school or training, lack of education, inexperience or lack of skills. Any intervention should facilitate their working as groups or individuals.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Empowerment of the Epworth community would need the following;

1. Provision of capital to enable operation of projects on a medium scale and continuous basis to satisfy the customers and earn money on a continuous basis.
2. Training to equip the women and young people with skills to manage their projects more professionally for profit thereby enabling them to earn money continuously.
3. Provision of information on what is available which they can do for a living.
4. Financial support to enable the young people to remain in school until they have acquired completed the level of education. Those who wish to complete O level or acquire skills should be assisted to do so.
5. Identifying space to operate from.
6. Procurement of appropriate equipment for the projects.
7. The women and young people already know what they want to do. They can be supported to organise themselves to get started and operate effectively and efficiently with some close monitoring for sustainable operations.

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