

The Role of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming on Socio-Economic Development of Rwanda. A Case of Igire Gimbuka Program / Rubavu District

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ABSTRACT: This study primarily aims to assess how social inclusion and gender equality collectively enhance access to goods and services for all individuals, encompassing women, marginalized groups, and those facing financial challenges. Its central objective is to evaluate the impact of social inclusion and gender equality on Rwanda's social and economic advancement.

It was guided by the following objectives: to assess the effectiveness of different initiatives of IgireGimbuka program aiming for gender equality and Social Inclusion mainstreaming in Rubavu District; to analyse the status of social economic development to beneficiaries of IgireGimbuka program in Rubavu District before and after the program and to find out the role of gender equality and Social Inclusion mainstreaming of IgireGimbuka program to the social economic development of beneficiaries in Rubavu District. The study reviewed literature on gender equality and social inclusion, employing a mixed-method approach with a sample size of 399 randomly selected from beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with local leaders and program managers in Rubavu District, confirming the positive impact of the IgireGimbuka Program on Rwanda's socio-economic development. The study confirmed the effectiveness of the program to the beneficiaries at more than 80%. The study revealed different benefits of IgireGimbuka Program in Rubavu District. The study asserted a positive relationship between gender mainstreaming program and socio-economic development of population in Rubavu District. It

recommended to different stakeholders to reinforce gender mainstreaming activities for the socio-economic development of the country. By the way of conclusion, it proved by this research that gender mainstreaming program play a crucial role to the socio-economic development.

KEYWORDS: Gender equality, social inclusion, gender mainstreaming and Social Economic Development

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality and social inclusion are crucial for sustainable development, impacting economic growth and societal well-being. In Rwanda, these issues are central to the national agenda, reflecting the country's transformative journey (UNDP, 2021). Efforts to mainstream these ideals face challenges, including financial costs and personal or political risks. UNICEF's 2019 report highlights resistance, including violence, faced by those challenging gender norms (UNICEF, 2019).

Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It ensures no one is excluded from program benefits and considers diverse social group needs. The SDGs recognize GESI as essential for reducing poverty and advancing various aspects of societal well-being (Learning Brief, 2019). The UN consistently emphasizes GESI's importance in development programming (CVE Reference, 2023).

Gender equality is increasingly recognized worldwide as essential for sustainable development. Rwanda, particularly after the 1994 genocide, has demonstrated a commitment to reducing gender-based inequality (EAC, 2009). Gender equality involves acknowledging and valuing diverse behaviors, goals, and participation in decision-making across social, political, and economic spheres. It entails treating men and women equally based on their individual needs (Lindsey, 2010). The 2030 Agenda emphasizes prosperity and access to basic living standards for all (UN, 2016). The Sustainable Development Goals aim to ensure universal access to modern energy, information, healthcare, and to eradicate poverty and hunger. Achieving these goals requires institutions to serve the poorest and most vulnerable, promote the rule of law, ensure equitable access to justice, and foster inclusive decision-making processes (UN, 2016).

Gender mainstreaming is acknowledged in development policy practice as vital for poverty reduction and enhancing women's agency, based on the belief that equal opportunities for men and women are crucial for social and economic progress (Chant and Sweetman, 2012). The Sustainable Development Goals prioritize inclusivity with the slogan "Leave no one behind," emphasizing that development should benefit and involve all individuals, including men, women, children, and diverse socioeconomic groups. Goal 5 of the SDGs focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, essential for sustainable development and upholding fundamental human rights. Empowering women and girls ensures equitable access to resources, promotes gender equality, and fosters economic growth (Ria Fitriana, 2021). Mainstreaming social inclusion and gender equality has contributed to Rwanda's socioeconomic development, as demonstrated by programs like the IgireGimbuka program by Caritas Rwanda/Rubavu District.

1.2. Problem statement

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is a transformative process that aims to remove barriers preventing marginalized individuals and children from reaching their full potential. Mainstreaming GESI ensures fair distribution of benefits and prevents unintentional harm, especially in technology-driven climate initiatives. It involves considering how laws, programs, and proposed actions impact women and other oppressed groups across all levels and domains of society, including political and economic spheres (Valentina and Samantha, 2023). GESI aims to provide equal access to opportunities and respect for everyone,

regardless of differences, while also addressing power imbalances and reducing disparities (Valentina and Samantha, 2023). This approach recognizes the intersectionality of disadvantage, considering factors such as age, poverty, migrant status, location, education, ethnicity, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. Stern and Dunkle (2018) highlighted that women with disabilities face greater socioeconomic disadvantages compared to men with disabilities or women without impairments.

The Fourth Rwanda Population and Housing Census (2022 RPHC) reveals a disability prevalence rate of 3.4%, with households headed by individuals with disabilities experiencing higher poverty rates (50%) compared to those headed by individuals without disabilities (44%) (PWD policy, 2021). Stephen and Kabare (2019) found significant obstacles faced by individuals with disabilities in Rwanda, including lower educational attainment and labor force participation rates, as well as limited formal employment opportunities due to social exclusion and discrimination. USAID initiated the IGIRE Activity to address social inclusion and gender equality issues in Rwanda, recognizing their importance in national development (Banyan Global, 2019). Research by Banyan Global identified gaps and recommendations in various areas, including discrimination against the LGBTI community, rising drug use in rural areas, health insurance coverage for adolescent mothers, lack of awareness among disability advocacy groups, and persistent gender-based violence (Banyan Global, 2019). The study evaluated the contribution of mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion to Rwanda's socioeconomic development, focusing on the IgireGimbuka program by Caritas Rwanda/Rubavu District.

1.3. Research Objectives

The research has explored through the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the effectiveness of different initiatives of IgireGimbuka program aiming for gender equality and Social Inclusion mainstreaming in Rubavu District.
2. To analyze the social economic development to beneficiaries of IgireGimbuka program in Rubavu District before and after the program.
3. To find out the relationship between of gender equality and Social Inclusion mainstreaming of IgireGimbuka program to the social economic development of beneficiaries in Rubavu District.

1.4. Research questions

The research aimed answering the following questions:

1. How effective the initiatives of IgireGimbuka program aiming for gender equality and Social Inclusion mainstreaming in Rubavu District?
2. What are social economic development of beneficiaries of IgireGimbuka program in Rubavu District before and after the program?
3. What is the relationship between gender equality and Social Inclusion mainstreaming for Igire.Gimbuka program to the social economic development of beneficiaries in Rubavu District?

1.6. Conceptual framework

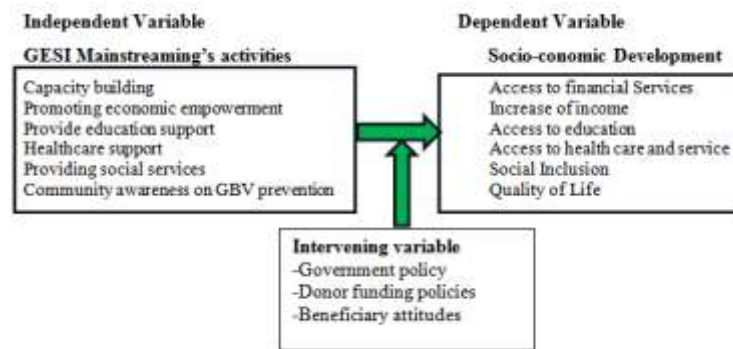


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Researcher's compilation, 2024.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Concept of Gender equality

Gender roles and distinctions between men and women are established by societal norms, dictating rights, obligations, and responsibilities (DAC Expert Group on Women in Development, 1998). Gender inequalities persist globally, favouring men in various aspects of society (Weekes-Vagliani, 1994). The UN emphasizes equality as fundamental to social justice and human rights (UN, 2002). Gender equality, as defined by the UN, entails women having equal opportunities as men, particularly in education and employment (UN Human Development Report, 1995; UN, 2000).

The World Bank defines gender equality as equal treatment under the law, equal opportunities, and equal voice in development processes (World Bank). The UN identifies three fundamental components of gender equality: agency, capabilities, and opportunities (UN, 2002). These components are interrelated, emphasizing the need for progress across all areas simultaneously. Recognizing women's contributions to economic development is crucial for achieving gender equality (UN, 2002).

1.5. Significance of the study

This study advances the researcher's Master's degree and expertise in gender equality and social inclusion within Rwanda's development.

The study sets a precedent for future research on gender equality and social inclusion in Rwanda's development, fostering a deeper understanding of societal progress.

The study guides future research, informs policymaking, and encourages inclusivity.

2.2. Gender equality and household socio-economic development

Anand and Sen (2000) emphasize the critical importance of linking gender equality to the household for several reasons. Firstly, achieving gender equality is a moral and ethical imperative essential for building a fair and sustainable society and realizing the human rights, dignity, and potential of all women. Secondly, it is vital to address how shocks and pressures related to the economy, society, and environment disproportionately affect women and girls, undermining their ability to exercise their rights and support their families and communities. Finally, empowering women and enhancing their agency are crucial steps in improving the synergy between gender equality and household socioeconomic outcomes.

The World Bank (2014) highlights the increasing recognition of the importance of gender equality, women's empowerment, and the realization of women's rights in achieving household development. International agreements like the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development's principle 20 emphasize the crucial role of women's involvement in household development. The Beijing

Declaration and Platform for Action, ratified by Member States in 1995, urged governments to integrate gender considerations into policies and programs for the socioeconomic development of families (World Bank, 2014).

2.4. The importance of gender equality and social inclusion for education

Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in education is vital for ensuring equal access to education and achieving desired learning outcomes. Without GESI, individuals such as males, females, children with disabilities, and members of minority groups may be marginalized from educational opportunities needed for full participation in society (Gender Equality Policy and Strategy, 2016-2020). Gender equality is about granting equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities to all genders, empowering individuals to shape their lives and contribute to society. Policies and programs must be developed to ensure inclusivity and prevent anyone from being left behind, necessitating systemic institutional changes (Gender Equality Policy and Strategy, 2016-2020). The 20203 Global Education Monitoring Report emphasizes the importance of inclusive education while acknowledging existing challenges (UNESCO, 2023).

The disparity in education is stark: only 18 out of 100 impoverished adolescents' complete secondary education compared to affluent peers. In rural areas, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, few young women finish secondary education, facing safety concerns on their journey to school. Children with disabilities encounter significant barriers, with 15% of out-of-school children believed to have impairments. These children are 2.5 times more likely to have never attended school compared to their peers without disabilities. Disparities in educational achievement also affect minority ethnic, indigenous, and linguistic groups. However, education serves as a catalyst for addressing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), empowering children, challenging gender norms, and promoting inclusivity in society.

2.5. Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts driven by socially constructed gender disparities, encompassing physical, sexual, psychological, and economic coercion perpetrated against the victim's will. In Rwanda, GBV predominantly affects women, girls, and children, with men and boys often identified as perpetrators, despite laws explicitly addressing and combating such violence. The National Policy Against Gender-

Based Violence (2011) acknowledges GBV as depriving individuals of their freedom with severe consequences, while criminal law covers various forms of GBV, excluding marital rape. Despite constitutional protections against cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, data from the Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (RDHS) 2014–2015 and the Gender Statistics Report 2019 reveal alarming prevalence rates, with significant proportions of women reporting experiences of physical and sexual abuse since the age of fifteen. These findings underscore the persistence of GBV in Rwanda, despite constitutional guarantees of the right to life and state obligations to protect all individuals from harm (Republic of Rwanda, Law on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-based Violence, 2008; RDHS 2014–2015).

The Rwanda Voluntary National Report (VNR) 2019 acknowledges the need for further action to address sexual gender-based violence (GBV). Despite commendations for Rwanda's strong political will to integrate gender into governmental policy, concerns remain about the ongoing high prevalence of GBV against women, girls, and children. Jessica Hansen's research underscores the importance of human rights in combating gender-based violence, highlighting the complexities of female empowerment in Rwanda (Rwanda Vision 2020, 2003; VNR 2019; Hansen, 2017).

2.6. Mainstreaming and Social Change

Recent studies have increasingly delved into the role of gender in shaping outcomes in war and peace, as evidenced by works by scholars such as Bjarnegård et al. (2015), Caprioli (2005), Chaney (2016), Daly (2005), Forsberg and Olsson (2016), Hall and True (2009), Melander (2005), and Zuckerman and Greenberg (2004). Strickland and Duvvury (2003) argue that the unequal consequences experienced by women during conflict persist into post-conflict periods, with ongoing issues like sexual violence, political exclusion, and economic marginalization, despite increased political commitment and funding. Research also indicates a stronger correlation between peaceful nations and women's physical security compared to the correlation between democratic states and peaceful states (Hudson et al., 2009).

Moreover, while some literature explores the potential for female engagement to enhance democratic political processes (Bjarnegård and Melander, 2013; Gizelis, 2018; Charlesworth, 2005), minimal evidence supports the concept that the causal link isn't reversed. Another argument

posited is that social change may be stunted as long as mainstreaming agendas and institutions equate women's empowerment with gender equality, overlooking the roles of "boys and men" as a separate field of study (Cornwall and Rivas, 2015). Ultimately, studies suggest that merging gender democratization with economic growth in post-conflict settings can reshape social relations, as women's economic empowerment is associated with improvements in some aspects of gender inequality (Gizelis & Pierre, 2013).

2.7. Socio-economic development

Midgley (1995) defines "social development" as a concept arising from the intersection of "social" and "development," with each term holding nuanced meanings. "Social" refers to human interactions and the resulting complex phenomena, encompassing various levels from households to societies. Meanwhile, "development" signifies a process of growth, change, and advancement, originally associated with economic modernization post-World War II. However, its contemporary understanding expands to include social, cultural, gender, political, environmental, and economic dimensions.

Initially, sociologists employed "development" to describe the transition from traditional to modern societies in the late nineteenth century. In the Rwandan context, where significant developmental efforts are underway, both men and women contribute to various successes. Historically, Rwanda overlooked women's contributions to development, prompting an examination of how gender equality impacts social development across multiple domains.

Understanding the intricacies of social development entails recognizing the multifaceted interactions between individuals and society, as well as the dynamic nature of growth and change. In Rwanda's evolving landscape, acknowledging the roles of both genders is pivotal for fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

Neamtan and Downing (2005) emphasize that economic progress encompasses various dimensions, defying a singular definition. Economic growth is commonly associated with objectives such as raising living standards, generating income, and creating employment opportunities. Moreover, economic development encompasses a broader process aimed at enhancing a community's financial well-being by influencing economic growth and restructuring.

In its broadest sense, economic development comprises three main aspects: government policies targeting sustainable growth,

high employment rates, and inflation management; initiatives to provide essential services and infrastructure development for disadvantaged populations; and efforts to enhance the business environment through targeted strategies, marketing, and technology transfer.

The primary goal of economic development is to improve a community's economic well-being by fostering job creation, employment retention, tax base expansion, and overall quality of life. However, achieving economic growth requires diverse plans, policies, and approaches tailored to specific contexts, as there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

2.8. Relationship between gender mainstreaming and development

The disregard for women's roles in development has sparked ongoing initiatives aimed at empowering women to achieve gender mainstreaming. The patriarchal system has historically placed women 'behind' men, perpetuating gender bias that shapes economic knowledge (Eroglu and Isler, 2006). Debates surrounding women's involvement in economic and political spheres highlight opposing views, with some arguing for restricting women's roles to the household due to biological factors, while others advocate for broader participation (Tilakasiri, 2016). Chen (2004) suggests that gender mainstreaming may negatively impact economic development, with a significant association found between gender mainstreaming in education and economic growth rates. Malhotra et al. (2002) acknowledge advancements in measuring women's empowerment and examine various conceptualizations of women's empowerment within this context.

The complex dynamics of gender mainstreaming, particularly in economic, sociological, anthropological, and demographic contexts, are explored to understand women's empowerment and its implications for development and poverty reduction. Gender mainstreaming is crucial for achieving equality and breaking societal conventions that limit women's participation in political and economic life. Women's roles in society, including caregiving and household responsibilities, often restrict their access to full-time employment and economic opportunities, perpetuating gender disparities (Tilakasiri, 2016). Women are often concentrated in the informal sector, balancing work and family obligations, while men typically have more control over income allocation (Floro, 2001). In economies dominated by agriculture, women play vital roles in both productive and reproductive functions, highlighting

the interconnectedness of their responsibilities (Floro, 2001). Trade liberalization can either benefit or disadvantage women, depending on various factors such as access to opportunities and resources (Tran-Nguyen, 2004)

Women employed in the formal trade sector experience improved status, decision-making power at home, increased opportunities, and enhanced self-worth (Floro, 2001). In some communities, involvement in trade leads to a shift in gender beliefs, with parents viewing daughters as potential wage earners, thus promoting investment in their education (Tran-Nguyen, 2004). However, women's contributions to export crop production often result in lower revenue compared to men, and they are more likely to occupy precarious, lower-paying jobs when the export agriculture sector expands (Joekes, 2002). Additionally, the influx of subsidized imports due to trade liberalization poses threats to women farmers' livelihoods and food security, particularly in regions where subsistence farming is prevalent (Joekes, 2002).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study area description

Rubavu District, located in Rwanda's Western Province, encompasses Gisenyi, a

significant border city and beach resort. With a total area of 388.4 km², it is one of the country's seven districts. Gisenyi, along with Rugerero and neighboring areas, forms the Rubavu Urban area, the second most populated urban area in Rwanda as of 2012. Positioned near the Congolese city of Goma, Rubavu shares borders with Goma and Lake Kivu, contributing to its status as a commercial and tourism hub.

Situated about 154.7 kilometers (a two-hour and fifty-three-minute drive) from Rwanda's capital, Kigali, Rubavu District is characterized by 12 administrative sectors, 80 cells, and 525 villages. The district experiences annual rainfall ranging from 1200 mm to 1500 mm, with diverse soil conditions across its landscape. While the southeast features deep but leached soils due to erosion and is near the active volcano Mount Nyiragongo, the northwest boasts fertile soil albeit with shallow volcanic ash and lava disintegration.

The 12 sectors within Rubavu District include Rugerero, Rubavu, Busasamana, Cyanzarwe, Gisenyi, Kanama, Kanzenze, Mudende, Nyakiriba, Nyamyumba, Nyundo, and Bugeshi, each contributing to the district's economic and social fabric.

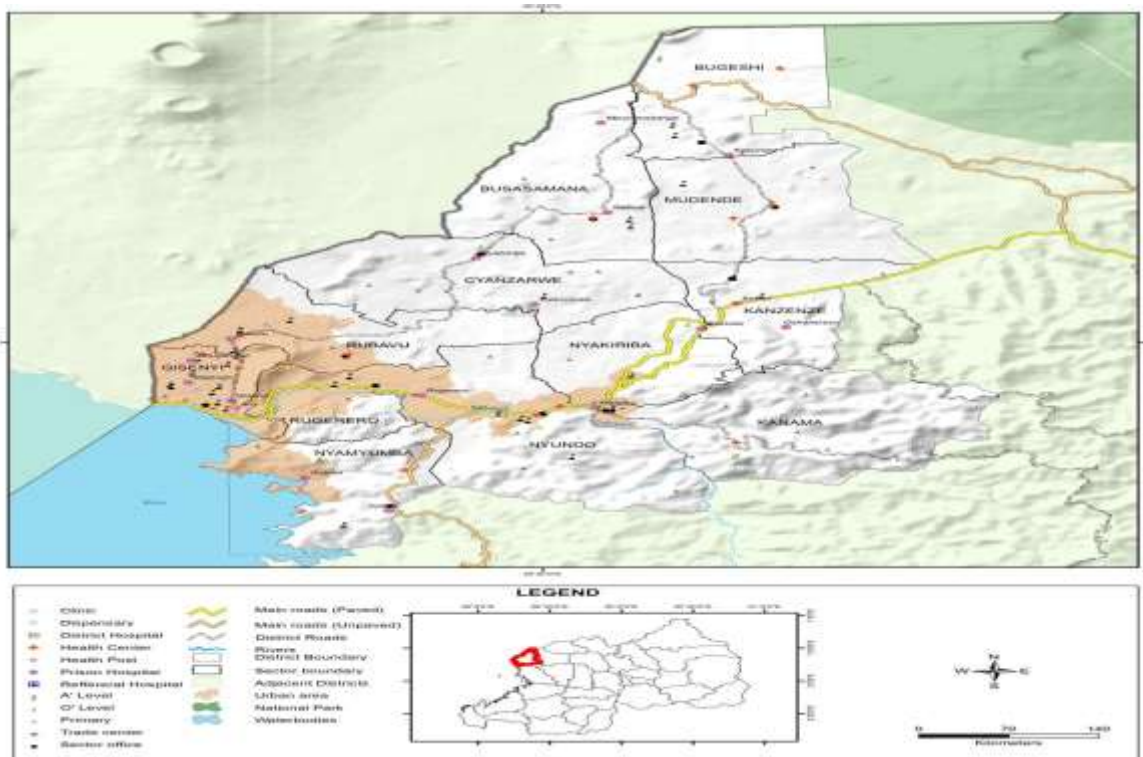


Figure 2: Administrative map of Rubavu District.

3.2. Research design

An arrangement of circumstances for collecting that attempts to combine relevance with the study objective is what Kombo and Tromp (2014) define as a research design. Exploratory research design used by the researcher to examine the topic of the contribution of social inclusion and gender equality mainstreaming to social economic development. The survey research design for the study was descriptive-correlational.

Descriptive survey research methodologies, according to Alex (2015), are appropriate for measuring connections or correlations between items, and the resulting data might be utilized to explain occurrences by identifying their causative agents.

The most effective techniques for gathering data that illustrates relationships and characterizes the world as it is are often descriptive research.

The goal of the qualitative research in this study was to gather information through conversational and open-ended questions concerning people's opinions as well as the reasons behind them. Correlation approach designed to measure a relationship between two variables without the researcher controlling either of them.

Both Quantitative and Qualitative research approach has been used to collect data from the field. Documents referred to exploit related literature written by different authors with diverse ideas on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming

3.3. Targeted population of the study

Table 1: Target population

S/N	Sector	Female	Male	Total
IgireGimbuka beneficiaries				
1	Bugeshi	169	113	282
2	Busasamana	236	220	456
3	Cyanzarwe	211	157	368
4	Gisenyi	388	344	732
5	Kanama	315	224	539
6	Kanzenze	113	91	204
7	Mudende	226	181	407
8	Nyakiriba	236	169	405
9	Nyamyumba	727	603	1330
10	Nyundo	234	213	447
11	Rubavu	1118	944	2062
12	Rugerero	1098	944	2042
Sub-Total		5071	4203	9274
Local Leaders in Rubavu District				
1	At Sector (CNF and Social affairs Officers)			24
2	At District (Vice Mayors, NCPD and Gender and Family promotion Officers)			4
Sub-Total				28
Grand Total				9302

Source: Primary data, September 2023.

3.4. Sampling procedures and sample size

Multistage cluster and systematic random sampling strategy are used to make sure that all target groups are represented in the sample

The researcher used stratified sampling techniques to find them. In this case, individual and focus group technique are used in order to target mass population as well as get hold of local leaders.

A sample is a set of individuals selected from a population and is usually intended to represent the population in a dissertation (Newing, 2011).

In order to select, the sample of the population the researcher applied convenient sampling technique. With the help of the grass root leaders (Executives Secretaries and Village Leaders), the researcher simply used participants who were available and willing to participate. Yamane (1967) provides a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes. This formula is used to calculate the sample size for category I of target population which is IgireGimbuka beneficiaries.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size= 9274 and e is the level of precision (margin error) = 5%. The sample size is 383 beneficiaries of IgireGimbuka Program.

All those

$$n = \frac{9274}{1+9274(0.05)^2} = 383.46082282 \approx 383$$

beneficiaries of IgireGimbuka Program.

All those \approx 383 are beneficiaries of IgireGimbuka Program. Therefore, the sample size of the targeted population is selected randomly from beneficiaries of IgireGimbuka Program.

To calculate the sample size for category II which is local leaders; the researcher applied universal sampling for 28 respondents since the population of the study is less than 100. With this technique the researcher selected all individuals that deemed to have the required information. There is no bias in selecting respondents.

Table 2: Sample size

S/N	Sector	Total Population	Sub calculation	sample size	Sample size
1	Category of IgireGimbuka beneficiaries				
	Bugeshi	282	11.66		12
	Busasamana	456	18.85		19
	Cyazarwe	368	15.21		15
	Gisenyi	732	30.26		30
	Kanama	539	22.28		22
	Kanzenze	204	8.43		8
	Mudende	407	16.82		17
	Nyakiriba	405	16.74		17
	Nyamyumba	1330	54.99		55
	Nyundo	447	18.48		19
	Rubavu	2062	85.25		85
	Rugerero	2042	84.43		84
2	Category of local leaders in Rubavu District				
	At Sector (CNF and Social affairs Officers)	24		Universal sampling	24
	At District (Vice Mayors, NCPD and Gender Promotion Officers)	4		Universal sampling	4
Total		9302			411

Source: Primary data, September 2023.

3.4. Data Collection method and tools

The data collection methods employed in the study include both primary and secondary

sources. Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and interview guides, aiming to obtain quantitative

information from respondents. Primary data, which is measurable and allows for arithmetic operations, was collected directly from the field where respondents provided information.

Secondary data, on the other hand, was obtained from various sources such as reviews, encyclopedias, books, reports, newspapers, and electronic resources including websites, blogs, and social media. The researcher reviewed literature sources on gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming in socioeconomic development, and supplemented this with information from books, government reports, and other sources. These secondary sources provided additional insights to complement the primary data gathered, contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming in Rwanda's socioeconomic development.

In order to facilitate the study to be well accomplished each objective of the study investigated by using specific questions. During data collection, the researcher will use documentary study questionnaires, interview guide and other instruments in conjunction with interview and focus groups in order to obtain an idea on the role of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming to Social Economic Development of Rwanda.

Documentation involves examining stored data, sourced from fieldwork or storage, for analysis. Documentary study entails thorough analysis of written records beyond social research, aiding in gathering secondary data for comparative analysis.

3.5. Questionnaires

A questionnaire, as described by Oppenheim (2016), gathers information through inquiries, including open and closed-ended questions. This study employs 100 surveys with a mix of question types, pre-tested and designed for Rubavu District IgireGimbuka recipients. Closed-ended questions offer predefined options, while open-ended questions allow free expression. Likert scales gauge participants' perceptions on social inclusion and gender equality's role in socioeconomic development.

3.6. Interview guide

Interviewers use guided interviews to gather qualitative insights from key informants, adjusting questions based on feedback. Twenty-eight informants, including district and sector-level

officials, share perspectives on social inclusion and gender equality. The researcher observes emotional cues and records audio to ensure accurate data collection during interviews.

3.7. Focus Group Discussion

Focus groups gather qualitative insights through interactive discussions on specific topics. Nineteen sessions, mainly comprising 15 beneficiaries each, discussed the role of gender equality and social inclusion in Rwanda's socioeconomic development, moderated in Rubavu District.

3.8. Data analysis

In this study, data from various sources were collected, reviewed, and analyzed using statistical and comparative methods. The statistical analysis involved descriptive analysis, where frequencies, proportions, and percentages of variables were computed, alongside means and standard deviations calculated for Likert scale items. Correlation analysis was also employed to quantify the statistical relationship between gender equality, social inclusion mainstreaming, and Rwanda's socioeconomic growth. This analysis aimed to determine the direction and strength of the link between these variables, utilizing correlation coefficients to assess linear and non-linear relationships.

Before administering research tools, a pre-test was conducted on questionnaires to ensure their validity and reliability. A pilot study involving 38 beneficiaries of a family development project was undertaken to assess the questionnaire's effectiveness, clarity, and respondent engagement. Reliability, measured by Cronbach's Alpha Model on SPSS, indicated the consistency and stability of measurement tools over repeated trials. Validity, on the other hand, was assessed through expert opinions, particularly from the research supervisor, to ensure that the instruments effectively measured the intended variables.

Data variability, representing the extent of deviation from central values in a dataset, was also considered. High variability indicated a diverse range of values, while low variability suggested more consistency. Validity, in terms of measuring what the instruments were designed to measure, was ensured through expert evaluation. Overall, these methods ensured the reliability and validity of the research findings, providing a robust foundation for analysis and interpretation.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Gender of respondents

Table 3: Genders of respondents

S/N	Gender of respondents	Total Number	Percentage (%)
1	Male	196	47.5
2	Female	216	52.5
Total		411	100

Source (Researcher’s primary data, 2024)

The above table reveals that 411 people participated in the research and among them 47.5% are male and 52.5% are female.

Table 4: Marital Status of respondents

S/N	Marital status of respondents	Total Number	Percentage (%)
1	Single	103	25
2	Married	258	62.7
3	Widow	50	12.3
Total		411	100

Source (Researcher’s primary data, 2024)

The above table shows that among 411 interviews in the research, 25% were single, 62.5% were married and 12.3% were widows.

Table 5: Age category of respondents

S/N	Age category of respondents	Total Number	Percentage (%)
1	16-24	93	22.6
2	25-34	185	45.1
3	35-44	93	22.6
4	More than 44	40	9.8
Total		411	100

Source (Researcher’s primary data, 2024)

The age group of 411 respondents to the study is shown in the above table. 22.6 percent of the 399 respondents were between the ages of 16 and 25, 45.1% were between the ages of 25 and 34, 22.6 percent were between the ages of 35 and 44, and 9.8% were older than 44.

Table 6: Level of education of respondents

S/N	Level of education of respondents	Total Number	Percentage (%)
1	Primary	72	17.5
2	Ordinary level	51	12.5
3	High School	155	37.6
4	Diploma	51	12.5
5	Bachelor’s or higher	82	19.9
Total		411	100

Source (Researcher’s primary data, 2024)

The table above displays the level of education of respondents during the research. 17.5% of respondents had completed primary education, 12.5% completed ordinary school, 37.6% completed high school, 12.5% held an advanced diploma, and 19.9% held a bachelor's degree or above.

Table 7: Occupations of respondents

S/N	Function of respondents	Total Number	Percentage (%)
1	Program managers	6	1.2
2	GBV survivors	214	52
3	Local authority/government officials	21	5.0
6	Any Other stakeholder	170	41.4
Total		411	100

Source: Researcher’s primary data, 2024.

According to the table above, 1.2% of respondents were program managers, 52% were GBV survivors, 5% were local

authority/government officials, and 41.4% were other important stakeholders to the IgireGimbuka Program.

Table 8: Rate of effectiveness of IgireGimbuka Program

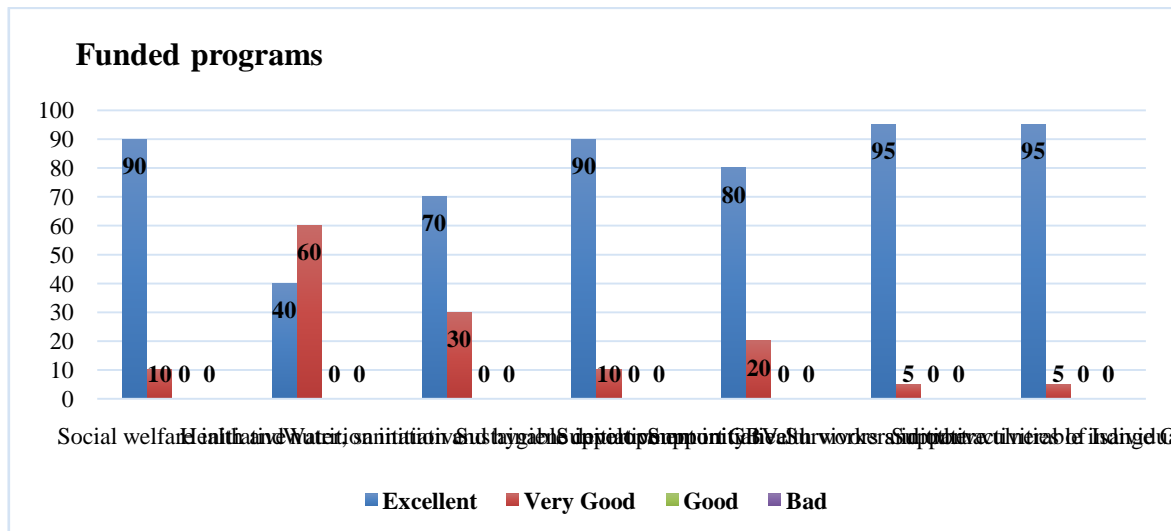
S/N	Component of the program	Level of effectiveness in percentage		
		Not effective	Effective	Extremely effective
1	Access to finance	0	11	89
2	Increase of income	0	20	80
3	Access to education	0	17	83
4	Health care activities	0	6	94
5	Social inclusion activities	0	70	30

Source (Researcher’s primary data, 2024)

According to table 8, 10% of respondents said the IgireGimbuka Program was effective, while 90% of respondents said it was extremely effective. When the IgireGimbuka program was implemented, 80% of respondents said that the income boost was extremely effective. 80% of

respondents rated access to education as extremely effective, 94% of respondents rated health care initiatives as extremely effective and social inclusion activities were rate by 70% of respondents as effective.

Programs funded through IgireGimbuka Program



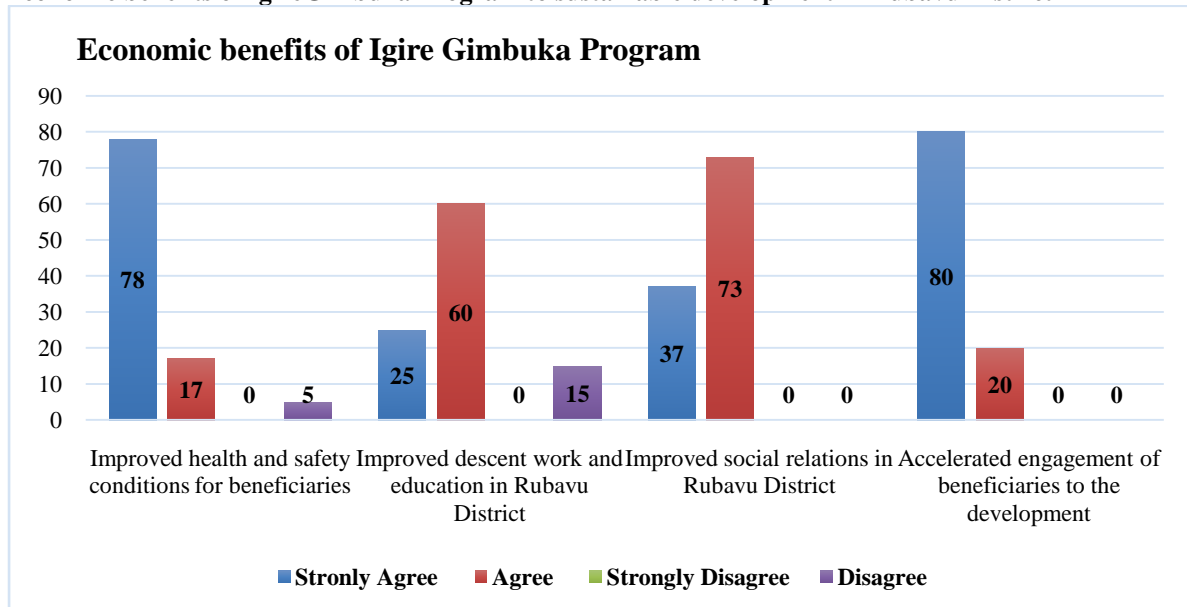
Source (Researcher’s primary data,2024)

Figure 3: Initiatives of IgireGimbuka Program

Figure 3 depicts the outcomes of the first research objective, which is to evaluate the performance of various initiatives of the IgireGimbuka program aimed at gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming in Rubavu District. According to the findings, 90% of respondents strongly agree and 10% agree that social initiatives have helped to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion in Rubavu District; 40% of participants strongly agreed with the health and nutrition initiative, while 60% agreed; 70% of respondents strongly agreed that the water, sanitation, and hygiene program through the IgireGimbuka Program helped to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion in Rubavu District, whereas 30% agreed with the statement. In

Rubavu District, 90% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement on the contribution of sustainable development initiatives through the IgireGimbuka Program to promote gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming, whereas 10% of respondents agreed. 90% strongly agree that community health initiatives through IgireGimbuka Program to promoted gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming and 10% of respondents agree that community health initiatives through IgireGimbuka Program to promoted gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming. 95% of respondents strongly agreed, whereas 5% felt that supporting GBV survivors and other vulnerable individuals helps to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion.

Economic benefits of IgireGimbuka Program to sustainable development in Rubavu District



Source (Researcher’s primary data, 2024)

Figure 4: Socio-economic benefits of IgireGimbuka Program to sustainable development

The figure 4 summarizes the views of respondents on economic benefits of IgireGimbuka Program to sustainable development in Rubavu District as follow: 78% of respondents said that the IgireGimbuka Program's health and safety initiatives had a positive socioeconomic impact. Of them, 17% and 5%, respectively, agreed and disagreed that the program's health and safety initiatives have this effect. 25%, 60% and 15% of respondents respectively strongly agree, agree and disagree that improved decent work and education

is one of the socio-economic benefits of IgireGimbuka Program in Rubavu District. According to the findings of the study, 37% of 399 respondents strongly believe that improved social relations are one of the benefits of the IgireGimbuka Program, while 73% agree. Accelerated beneficiary engagement in development activities is considered a socio-economic benefit of the IgireGimbuka Program, with 80% of respondents strongly agreeing and 20% agreeing.

Role of gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming to socio-economic development in Rubavu District

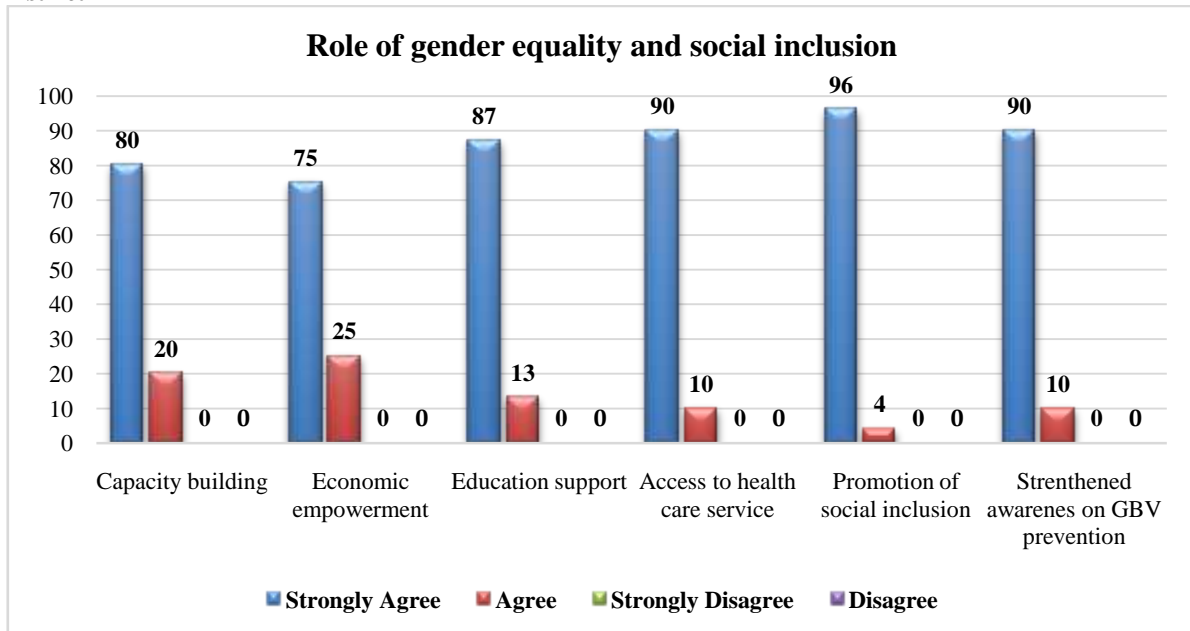


Figure 5: Role of gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming to socio-economic development in Rubavu District

Figure 5 illustrates how gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming contribute to socioeconomic development in the Rubavu District. These development strategies include capacity building, economic empowerment, support for education, access to health care, social inclusion promotion, and increased knowledge of GBV prevention. 20% of the 399 respondents agree that capacity building is a means of mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion into socioeconomic development, while 80% of respondents strongly agree.

75% of respondents strongly agreed that economic empowerment is one of role of gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming to socio-economic development and 25% just agreed. Support for education is one way that gender equality and social inclusion can be mainstreamed into socioeconomic development, according to 87% of respondents. 90 % of respondents strongly agreed that promotion of social inclusion and strengthened awareness on GBV prevention are key roles of gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming to socio-economic development in Rubavu District whereas 10% agreed to the statement.

Results from the face-to-face interviews

Respondents highlighted the positive impacts of the IgireGimbuka program, facilitated

by Caritas Rwanda, in Rubavu District. The program facilitated access to education for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) at various levels, while caregivers benefitted from financial and digital literacy training through Community Based Saving and Lending Groups (CBSLGs). Beneficiaries were equipped with skills in e-business planning and income-generating activities (IGAs), supported by evidence-based curricula developed to enhance partner capacity.

The program actively engaged local communities through youth clubs, community networks, and radio broadcasts to raise awareness on gender-based violence. It facilitated referrals for HIV testing and treatment, as well as other essential services, for vulnerable individuals. Gender equality and social inclusion were emphasized, aiming for equitable outcomes across genders and strengthening socioeconomic relationships.

To address mental health needs, the program collaborated with medical facilities, utilizing the MoH/RBC Mental Health Curriculum to provide support to survivors of gender-based violence, teen mothers, and individuals with adverse childhood experiences. Respondents recommended expanding the program's geographical coverage to other districts in Rwanda. Overall, respondent perspectives affirmed the program's positive contribution to Rwanda's

socioeconomic development in Rubavu District through Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming initiatives.

Results analysis and discussion

The researcher conducted a study to evaluate the impact of gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming on the socio-economic development of Rwanda, focusing on the IgireGimbuka Program by Caritas Rwanda in Rubavu District. Findings indicated the program's effectiveness, with over 80% of respondents confirming its benefits.

The first objective aimed to assess the program's effectiveness, aligning with the country's vision and Caritas Rwanda's mission. Results affirmed the program's relevance for Rwanda's socio-economic development.

The second objective focused on measuring social inclusion mainstreaming in Rubavu District. The majority of respondents reported improvements in health, safety, education, and social relations, reflecting the program's positive impact on various aspects of community life.

The third objective explored the relationship between gender equality and social mainstreaming through the program. Activities such as capacity building, economic empowerment, and awareness of gender-based violence prevention contributed to beneficiaries' access to finance, education, and improved quality of life.

The research addressed gaps in understanding the role of gender equality mainstreaming, recommending investment in similar initiatives globally. By aligning with existing knowledge and skills, the study encourages further exploration and implementation of gender mainstreaming initiatives for socio-economic development.

V.CONCLUSIONAND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main objective of this study was to assess the role of gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming to social economic development of Rwanda; a case of IgireGimbuka program of Caritas Rwanda / Rubavu District. The objective was attained and the researcher found that capacity building, economic empowerment, education support, access to health service, promotion of social inclusion and strengthened awareness of GBV prevention are strong benefits of IgireGimbuka Program. Readers and researchers are encouraged to explore the aforementioned

findings and to add their contribution by deepening this research.

Recommendations

After conducting this research of role of gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming to socio-economic development of Rwanda. a case of IgireGimbuka Program of Caritas Rwanda in Rubavu District, the researcher highlights different recommendations to the government of Rwanda, project of IgireGimbuka Program and future researchers.

To the Government of Rwanda

After conducting this research, the researcher recommends the following to the government:

- To reinforce gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming across the whole country;
- To increase the services of awareness program of reproduction for young women that contributing muri GBV prevention;
- To harmonize the gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming initiatives across the country for sustainable development

To IgireGimbuka Program

Following analysis of the research findings, the researcher suggests the following to the IgireGimbuka Program:

- To strengthen the prevention and response to violence against children and youth;
- To increase the community/facility level coordination and delivery of quality health and social services for children and youth;
- To put much emphasis on health and prospects for at-risk adolescents and youth;
- To sustain adoption of essential practices by families and communities for most vulnerable children and youth;
- To reinforce the sustainable development goals across all activities for the promotion of family wellbeing.

To future researchers

It recommended to future researcher to deepen role of gender equality and social inclusion mainstreaming and compare different principals of GBV prevention and contextualize all theories to the Rwandan context.

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