

# The Influence Of Ngo's Capacity Building On Enhancing Girl Education Programs In Rwanda

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## Abstract

This study sought to find out the influence of NGO's capacity building programs on enhancement of girl's education in Rwanda. This study adopted both qualitative and quantitative data. Structured questionnaires were administered to acquire primary data whereas key informant interviews were used to acquire qualitative information and a sample size of 116 respondents was representative enough to inform the findings of the report. Rwanda has ratified several UN conventions on child rights which have enabled the design of policy frameworks that have seen an increased enrolment for both girls and boys in schools. However, as the enrolment rate for girls is higher in lower primary classes, the completion rate has been low compared to boys. Findings revealed that income generating skills were taken by many more among the respondents. Results indicated that capacity building initiatives had influence on a relative extent. However, the correlation between training and school attendance was low the opinion of respondents in which 58.5% felt it had no influence at all. 36.6% felt there was an appreciated extent of influence and this showed that capacity building had a bearing on school attendance. The role of the NGO's in ensuring girls enrolment and completion of the basic education cycle cannot be underestimated. Their contribution in capacity building for teachers and parents has been remarkably recognized. The study findings indicate that NGOs in Rwanda have played a very critical role in enhancing the girl child's education through capacity building of not only teachers but also the parents and the girls themselves. NGOs embarked on building the capacity of teachers on gender responsive methodology that helped enhance girl's participation in class. Parents' economic capacity to support the girl child's education has also been the focus of NGOs. They have also empowered girls through catch up programs that have helped spur their academic potential to competitively thrive through the different levels of the education cycle. However, 62.5% of parents indicated that they have not received any capacity building which calls on NGOs to increase focus on capacity building of parents if girl's education has to be realized. One of the key recommendations is that benefits of NGO efforts should be shared fairly among those not in need and those in need. This is indicative that more focused interventions need to be developed in the future. It was also recommended that efforts from NGOs operating in the country should be coordinated so that there is no replication. NGO should be controlled by a body that could focus on strategic and coordinated intervention initiatives so that reduplication is minimized.

**Keywords:** *Capacity building, NGOs, girl's education.*

## Background

The result of the several international and country-specific policy frameworks has been an outpouring in school populations across the globe. Whereas the demand side has seen considerable improvements in enrolment rates in schools, the supply side in terms of budgetary allocations and infrastructural development and capacity building has not matched the increase, posing administrative challenges to the school administrators (Arowoshegbe & Anthony, 2011).

Since 1984, numerous human right treaties have reaffirmed this right and have supported entitlement to not only free but also obligatory key education for 'all' children. (Jagannathan, 2009). Rwanda has ratified several conventions on the rights of the children and has accented on the millennium development goals (MDGS) as well as the sustainable development goals (SDGs) on promotion of access to equitable and quality education. However, Weak institutional capacity to support the increase in enrolment, including

teacher capacity to deliver quality gender sensitive educational programmes, among other myriad of challenges have compounded the work of the administrators against the backdrop of leaders responding to the global push for increased numbers in basic education.

According to Armstrong and Allan (2009), while notable advancement is achieved on category of enrolment, much progress is still needed, especially in addressing the gender parity and equality in education that addresses the socioeconomic problems of all in society. Even though MDG 3 aims to reduce the gender gap in education, the problem still persists due to the following reasons; high level of both urban and rural poverty, socio-cultural issues, level of illiteracy and ignorance in society, early marriage which keep the girl-child out of school, premature pregnancy, difficult child birth, obnoxious widowhood rite, male preference and other harmful traditional practices.

In 2008, the government of Rwanda enacted the Universal Basic Education to enable both girls and boys access basic quality education where legislations enabling a compulsory education for all school going age children were enacted (MINEDUC, 2008). The universal primary and secondary education program have enthused a tremendous rise in the enrolment of both girls and boys in school.

However, the question of dropouts has been so significant among girls than boys as they advance further into higher levels of secondary schools. Factors such as poverty, parents' ignorance, culture that pushes more for the education of boys than girls, early marriages and pregnancies as well as management of the menstruation periods and menstruation cycle among others account to the shortfalls. According to the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC, 2013), the enrolment rate of girls in schools was higher than that of boys but completion rate of boys is higher than that of girls. In addition, UNESCO (2009) reported higher enrolment and low completion rates in primary and secondary school for girls than boys. This clearly indicates that more girls drop out of school while boys persist to the end. MINEDUC (2013) associates this backdrop to early pregnancy, early marriages, lack of sanitary pads, and poverty.

The gender analysis conducted by the USAID LEARN project in 2014, whereby from 2001, net enrollment in primary school was 76.1% for girls, and 74.5% for boys. According to the ministry of Education report by 2013 net enrollment in primary school was 97.5% for girls, and 95.7% for boys.

The government of Rwanda set an ambitious vision 2020 to respond to global millennium development goals (MGDs) and prioritised a Knowledge based economy. Rwanda's EDPRS has provided a medium-term framework for achieving the country's long-term development aspirations as embodied in Rwanda Vision 2020. The approach builds on strong achievements in human capital development and promotes three flagship programmes. These flagships serve to prioritize actions by the GoR, mobilize resources for development and improve policy implementation through more coordinated interventions across sectors. NGOs have been critical to helping the state in many areas or fields, ranging from health and education to livelihood sustainability. NGOs intervention in education sector played a vital role in the realization of the MDGs and helping the government achieve the universal 9-year basic education and of recent the 12-year basic education to help Rwandan children complete a cycle of secondary education. Their contribution in capacity building for teachers and parents has been remarkably recognized.

In education, the report found that 68 per cent of females in Rwanda are literate as compared to 73 per cent males but across the different levels; primary education has the biggest enrolment of girls at 95 per cent higher than 92 per cent for boys. However, for those above 25 years, 26 per cent of females attain primary education as compared to 35 per cent of males. Also, males at 59 per cent dominate the figure of students who are supposed to be in primary but are out of school as compared to only 41 per cent of females.

Civil Society role in education is now more crucial than ever as the Government is taking education and training as a priority now so that it can support other sectors. Public Private Partnership (PPP) is required at all levels with special attention on (TVET and Higher Education). Hence the urge of this study on NGOs capacity building on enhancing girl education programs in Rwanda.

## Literature Review

### Theoretical Review (Knowledge based theory).

This theory focuses at knowledge as a strategic important reserve that a firm can be proud of. Different authors claim that knowledge-based resources are usually difficult to replicate. In the comprehensive knowledge-based competition, the protagonist of hominoid wealth has developed enormously. Most folks are not only mere fundamentals of a manufacture system but proprietors and managers of the most important factor of production – knowledge. Different people basing on skills in organizations may decide on implicating their skills geared towards motivation in impacting how the organization works. Kogut and Zander (2010) looked at knowledge as the key source for professional performance. Therefore, the knowledge-based view of an organization must be unwritten as a social community that specializes in efficiency and effectiveness hence transference of knowledge as a theory of the firm.

It is largely accepted that the knowledge-based (KBV) of the firm is a recent extension of the RBV of the firm (Sveiby, 2001b; Bontis, 2002b; De Carolis, 2002; Huizing and Bouman, 2002; Balogun and Jenkins, 2003). The KBV of the firm considers knowledge as the most important strategic resource and, in that sense, this perspective is an extension of the RBV of the firm (De Carolis, 2002). The theory suggests that people use their capacity-to-act in order to create value in mainly two directions; by transferring and converting knowledge externally and internally to the organization. The value grows each time a knowledge transfer or conversion takes place. The strategy formulation issues are concerned with how to utilize the leverage and how to avoid the blockages that prevent sharing and conversion. Activities that form the backbone of a knowledge-based strategy are to be aimed at improving the capacity-to-act both inside and outside the organization.

As Rafael *et al*, (2008), contends knowledge-based view on how the of the firm is managed brings about a notion of administrative erudition providing organizations with approaches as a way of accomplishing viability. With NGO support to school via capacity building the study will enhance the knowledge gained by students to enable the girl child compete effectively in Rwanda. This is achieved through increased NGO involvement in the formulation and administration of the Knowledge based theory

### Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework shows the school system as an input process-output model in which the roles played by the NGOs serve as inputs into the system, school administration as the through put process and access to education by vulnerable children as an output of the system. The inputs (NGOs' roles) that may influence access to education by vulnerable children are financial support, provision of basic necessities, capacity building of parents and teachers and development of infrastructure. Capacity building of parents of vulnerable children serves to mitigate the effects of stigma associated with negative perceptions about girl child education. Besides, sensitizing the parents on the importance of taking these children to school (child's right to education) which is integrated with training on counselling skills provides the necessary psychosocial support that ensures that such children are eventually enrolled in school. Parents are also trained on their obligations and responsibilities as stakeholders in the school system leading to good discipline among learners hence stability in the school. This article however focuses on capacity building as a key driver to the enhancement of girl education

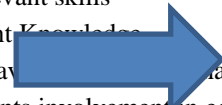
**Independent Variable**

**Dependent variable**

### Capacity building indicators

- Teacher capacity
- Child rights
- Parents capacity to engage
- Psychosocial support

### Educated girl child Indicators

- Relevant skills
  - Right Knowledge
  - Behaviour change
  - Parents involvement in education
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### Capacity building activities in enhancing girl child education

The empirical review has indicated that Capacity building is another NGO's strategy that helps to bring about sustainable community development. Capacity building is an approach to development that builds independence. It can be: (i) a 'means to an end', where the purpose is for others to take on programs; (ii) an 'end' in itself, Where the intent is to enable others, from individuals through to government departments, to have greater capacity to work together to solve problems or (m) a process, where capacity building strategies are routinely incorporated as an important element of effective practice. Before beginning to build capacity within programs, practitioners need to identify pre-existing capacities such as skills, structures, partnerships and resources. Frankish (2013) has counted a number of dimensions for community capacity including financial capacity (resources, opportunities and knowledge), human resources (skills, motivations, confidence, and relational abilities and trust) and social resources (networks, participation structures, shared trust and bonding).

UNDP (2017) has introduced capacity building as the process by which individuals, groups, and organizations increase their abilities to (1) perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives; and (2) understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, in terms of NGOs' functions, Langran (2012) has defined capacity building as the ability of one group (NGOs) to strengthen the development abilities of another group (local communities) through education, skill training and organizational support. Capacity building is an approach to development not a set of pre-determined activities. There is no single way to build capacity. Although experience tells us that there is a need to work across the key action areas, practitioners approach each situation separately to identify pre-existing capacities and develop strategies particular to a program or organization, in its time and place. NGOs, through the provision of education, skill and knowledge, develop the capacity of community towards achieving sustainable development. In fact, NGOs act as a capacity builder to help the community to develop the resources, building awareness, motivating to participation in project and finally improving the quality of community's lives.

A link to empowerment is frequently cited as one of the reasons for and outcomes of community capacity building. Empowerment is discussed at the level of individual empowerment (changes in skills, knowledge, consciousness and awareness, hope, action and beliefs in abilities to affect change) and changes in wider social structures and processes that result in increased resources and opportunities (Verity 2017). Furthermore, with regards to sustainability, capacity building has been identified in much sustainable development policy as one of the key strategies for increasing the potential towards sustainable development. For example, in a program to train women to establish a small enterprise, a positive result was that women have co-operated to start the enterprise, but a sustainable outcome will depend on whether women have the capacity to make it work and derive an income from it without external financial or technical assistance (Viswanath 2011).

Building community capacities and fostering empowerment are more effective ways of achieving sustainable community development than programs and success indicators imposed by outside experts (Mobbs 2012). They point out that outside experts usually have limited knowledge and understanding of the particular context, needs and issues of a community. Local solutions to

achieving sustainable community and economic development are therefore seen as important outcomes of a capacity-building approach (Lennie 2015).

### Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It is a scientific method that involves observing and describing the behavior of a subject without influencing it in any way (Coopers & Schindler, 2011). The target population of the study was 116 respondents who included 72 students; 24 school principals and 20 CEOs/project managers working in the NGOs that support education programmes in the Bugesera district.

A Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Stratified random sampling technique ensures that different groups of a population are adequately signified. Stratified sampling divides the population into homogeneous groups such that the elements within each group are more alike than the elements in the population as a whole (Nachimas & Nachimas 2008).

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

Where n = the desired sample size

e= probability of error (i.e., the desired precision, e.g.,0.05for95%confidence level)

N=the estimate of the population size (116)

$$n = \frac{116}{1 + 116 (0.05)^2} = 90$$

**Table 1: Sample Size**

	Numbers	Sample
Students	72	62.0
School headteachers	24	20.6
NGO project managers	20	17.4
<b>Total</b>	116	90

Both qualitative and quantitative data was considered for this study. Structured questionnaires were used to generate quantitative information that fed the study while key informant interviews were critical for generating qualitative research data. A pretest to the questionnaires from where proposed suggestions to improve the questionnaire were brought forward and adjustments made to obtain a refined tool.

The coefficient of variation was used to determine the extent of variability of the research instrument in relation to the mean of the population. This was done using CV determination formula by Reed et al., (2012). Low CVs % was taken to indicate validity of the instrument.

$$CV = \frac{SD}{\bar{X}} \times 100$$

Data analysis included sorting, cleaning and organization of data from the questionnaires. The information was then coded and entered into a spreadsheet and analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21 and was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The main quantitative techniques used included descriptive statistics such as absolute and relative (percentages) frequencies, measures of central tendency and dispersion (mean and standard deviation respectively). Quantitative data was presented in tables and explanation presented in prose. Qualitative data was analyzed based on the content matter of the responses. Responses with common themes or patterns were grouped together into coherent categories.

**Results and findings.**

**Influence of NGO capacity building on access to education by the girl child**

The study sought data on whether the parents had attended any training in capacity building. This was to establish the extent to which NGOs had extended capacity building training to parents of vulnerable children within the district.

The results in Table 2 showed that 62.5% had not undergone any capacity building training. This indicated that more than half of the parents had not undergone capacity building training. This capacity building is in relation to financial literacy and financial management. Respondents admitted to have been trained on entrepreneurial skills, business proposal development and on stating small scale income generating activities. These activities were designed to equip parents with skills to generate sustainable income that would help sustain their children in school. Through the sustainable access to finance initiatives (SAFI) program, Plan International in partnership with the Global Humanitarian Development Foundation (GHDF); a registered local NGO pioneered initiative that promote women’s access to sustainable sources of finance to increase their financial independence and capacity to support the girl child’s education. Through this program women were taught to craft shoes, make liquid soap and also make the common wrappers that women use that generates a regular domestic income. This has improved family welfare and henceforth improved the conditions of the girl children attending school. Parents have been enabled to pay school dues through these initiatives and this has minimized on the syndrome of give the boy a priority that was largely caused by poverty and inability to meet daily domestic bills.

These results indicated that income generating skills were taken by many more among the respondents. However, the correlation between training and school attendance was low the opinion of respondents in which 58.5% felt it had no influence at all. In table 2 results indicated capacity building initiatives had influence to a low extent while it had influence to a great extent. However, in that 36.6% there was an appreciated extent of influence, this showed that capacity had a bearing on school attendance.

**Table 2: Parents undergone capacity building training**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	42	53.8
No	36	46.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Also, NGOs have helped to build the capacity of parents to address the gender-based barriers to girls’ education. This was mainly done by Rwanda Men’s’ Resources Centre (RWAMREC) through the positive masculinities program that was implemented in 21 secondary schools in the Bugesera district. Through capacity building for local opinions and programs mainstreamed through the parent’s evenings (Umugoroba w’ababyeyi), parents’ attitude towards girl’s education were changed tremendously hence enhancing the girl child’s sustainability in acquisition of basic education. The boys for change clubs initiated by RWAMREC also helped the boys to accommodate the shift from the cultural norms that hindered their sisters’ progress in education and adopted the rather

positive norms of assisting them with domestic chores and school works that supported them to complete the 9-year basic education cycle.

**Table 3: Teacher capacity building**

	Frequency	Percent
English language training	60	25.5
Learner centered methodology	68	29.0
Gender responsive pedagogy	68	29.0
Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights	47	20.0

The study revealed that NGOs have contributed greatly in the capacity building of teachers in key pedagogical areas that enhances and support girl children learning. Trainings in sexual reproductive health and rights, gender responsive pedagogy and learner centered methodology are key pedagogical knowledge and skills that enhances teacher capacity to support girl’s in school. 29% received training in gender responsive methodology and learner centered methodology, 20% were trained in sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and 25.5% got training in using English as a medium of instruction.

The International Education Exchange (IEE) with support from UNICEF and Plan International implements capacity building programs for teachers on gender responsive pedagogy. This has been so crucial to the holistic approaches for addressing the gender gap in education. The gender responsive pedagogy prepares teachers to gender sensitivities while teaching and helps teachers to identify areas such as shyness that could probably retard the girl child’s competitiveness and therefore their progress in education. Also, IEE has played a very important role of building the capacity of academically struggling girls to help raise their academic performance and increase competitive edge with other students as a key motivator for their sustenance in school. This has been done through organized catch up classes

To determine the extent to which capacity building has influenced school attendance, the study sought data on respondents’ assessment on the influence of school attendance among the vulnerable children. This was to gauge the extent which capacity building among parents of vulnerable children had influence school attendance in the children themselves. The results indicated that most (53.8%) did not think capacity building did influence school attendance

**Table 4: Extent to which capacity building has influenced school attendance**

	Frequency	Percent
Limited extent	42	53.8
Great Extent	36	46.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100.0</b>

On how training/capacity building for parents had affected administrative work with respect to enabling vulnerable children access basic education, most indicated that there was no way of connecting the two since they did not have a strong case, they could refer to that would help them respond to the question. On whether NGOs built the capacity of parents/guardians, PO3 and PO5 indicated they



do it through community-based approaches of empowerment. They indicated that most of the people they trained were themselves in groups and were identified communally.

### Correlational analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to empirically determine whether capacity building was a significant determinant in enhancing girl child education.

**Table 5: Correlation Analysis on capacity building**

		Capacity building	Enhancing girl child education
Capacity building	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	78	
Enhancing girl child education	Pearson Correlation	.789**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	78	78

\*\* . Correlation

Table 5 indicate that capacity building is significantly correlated to enhancement of girl child education ( $r=0.789$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). There is a Strong positive relationship between capacity building and NGOs enhancement of girl child education as indicated by correlation of 0.789. This shows that the sampled data can be applied to the general

### Discussions

This paper draws on the theoretical arguments of a model that argues that the end result of development should be developing people’s capability. Capability refers to the opportunity to accomplish and function within a lifestyle that a person perceives as valuable (Sen, 2016). When people have capability, their agency is enhanced. Agency is the ability to act on behalf of what you value and have reason to value (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2017). To sum up, for women and girls, especially in the rural context, one of the most empowering factors is to have agency—agency in making decisions with regards to women’s own bodies and informed decision making with regards to family matters—this is the true essence of capability in capacity building. Uninterrupted access and equitable education for female children, from kindergarten to the highest level of achievement based on ability: provide an awareness of personal freedoms, develop personal agency and choice, and promote the ability to choose a life that is meaningful and of value to the child as she grows into adulthood. Nussbaum (2010) argues that when women and girls are provided the right opportunities to develop capabilities, they ultimately contribute to their local economies in a more meaningful way, and thus help build community capacity.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

These results indicated that income generating skills were taken by many more among the respondents. However, the correlation between training and school attendance was low the opinion of respondents in which 58.5% felt it had no influence at all. In table 4.19 results indicated capacity building initiatives had influence to a low extent while in table 19.5 it had influence to a great extent. However, in that 36.6% there was an appreciated extent of influence, this showed that capacity had a bearing on school attendance.



Empowering parents and guardians through capacity building did not indicate a major influence on school attendance. However, it still showed relevance in that many seemed to agree that it raised the chances for sustainable access to education for girls.

Therefore, although there was no major evidence that capacity building of parents contributed to increased school attendance or wider provision of education to vulnerable students, it should not be minimized but efforts to ensure it achieves its success rate should be enhanced. Increased income to parents and guardians could ensure that they are able to fend for themselves. It can also create a favorable environment at home for the students to excel in their academics. Therefore, success rate for income generation training initiatives should be enhanced.

Benefits of NGO efforts should be shared fairly among those not in need and those in need. This is indicative that more focused interventions need to be developed in the future. The future of NGOs contributions is in the form of putting up infrastructure.

Efforts from NGOs should be coordinated so that there is no replication. Those NGOs operating in the district should come under one umbrella body that could focus on strategic and coordinated intervention initiatives so that reduplication is minimized.

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