

**POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMME AND IMPROVEMENT OF LIVELIHOODS  
IN RWANDA  
A CASE OF ONE COW PER POOR FAMILY PROGRAMME IN NYANZA DISTRICT  
(2007-2011)**

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**ABSTRACT**

One cow per poor family programme is a unique programme based on its cultural heritage to fight against poverty at community level. The objective of the programme was to enable every poor to own a dairy cow which in turn will result in getting milk for improving nutritional status, income generation and improved productivity through the use of manure and ultimately leads to food security. The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of poverty reduction programme and improvement of livelihoods in Rwanda through one cow per poor family programme. It was carried out in Nyanza District located in Southern Province of Rwanda. The specific objectives of this research were to assess the improvement of nutritional status of the beneficiaries of the programme, to assess the contribution of the programme to food security, to assess the increase in beneficiaries 'household income. The study adopted a case study research design whereby both qualitative and quantitative data were sought. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data whereas interview was used to collect qualitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS whereas for qualitative themes were used to narrate them. The findings indicated that there were more female gender compared to male. This is mainly seemed to be due to rural urban migration by male counterparts or husbands in search for jobs leaving their wives at the villages whereas some are survivors of 1994 genocide. Majority of them are farmers at and small scale business operators whereas some are employed in private sector. Majority of them fall under the bracket of 30-40 years of age of whom most of them are widowed, divorced or single. They have large families with its members falling under the age of 17 years. The study revealed that majority of the respondents depended on dairy farming as a source of income to cater for their family's needs. it was revealed that majority of the respondents consumes less than two liters of milk a day as per either the size of the family or ability. The little milk produced by the cow is easily sold locally than taking them processing plant since most local vendors provide cash at their doorsteps that is much needed. The study revealed that price fluctuation hits most of the farmers, inadequate information about prices and season variation causes milk shortage. The study also found out that the programme facilitates them to get loans from the banks or microfinance, get access to training or technical assistance from extension officers, obtain a medical insurance, able to pay school fees for their children and others get employed through this programme. It was recommended that the government should train more extension officers and post them to various stations in order to address the challenges faced by local farmers. Local leaders are also required to monitor them once they are given a cow in order to report back the progress or challenges which the farmer might encounter. And finally the NGOs could extend their activities in the up country areas where many still living in poverty because they

don't have possibility to increase financial resource to get way from poverty, hence in partnership with those NGOs for sure the local population could benefit a lot.