

**THE IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN
NYAMATA SECTOR
A CASE STUDY OF COPASHANYA COOPERATIVE IN NYAMATA SECTOR,
BUGESERA DISTRICT (2000-2010)**

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the researcher undertakes to assess the impact of participatory approaches on rural development in Nyamata Sector during the period from 2000 to 2010. The title suggests two key concepts underlying this research namely; “participation” and “development”. These two concepts will be focus of this study and their interdependence will be determined.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, there arose an increasing desire by decision-makers to effectively incorporate the perspectives of local people in decision-making, policy development and project implementation. This led to the emergence of a number of participatory approaches to development which have grown tremendously during the past decades as indispensable strategies that ensure ownership, sustainability of initiatives, and accelerate rural development.

In this study the researcher undertook an exercise to establish how much participatory approaches have implemented in Nyamata sector and what impact this has made to rural development initiatives. In this study the researcher wanted to assess the extent to which participatory approaches have been implemented in Nyamata sector and the impact these approaches have made to the success and sustainability of rural development programs during the past ten years.

Regarding literature review, the researcher conducted a critical review on available literature on the topic of participatory approaches and the impact these approaches engender on rural development. Particularly the concept of participatory approach was critically reviewed in terms of the principles and practice globally, regionally and in Rwanda. The researcher drew from various literatures on the concept, identified the gaps and made conclusions.

In terms of methodology, the researcher conducted a survey within COPASHANYA cooperative which is implementing the participatory approaches. In addition, the researcher conducted a survey among a control group of other community members who are not implementing the same approaches. This study demonstrates that the participatory approaches have not been fully implemented in Nyamata Sector despite the colossal amounts of funds injected into the sector during the period under review. Research instruments included questionnaires both for individual respondents as well as for focus group discussions.

The researcher found out that participatory approaches have not been fully implemented by development agencies in Nyamata sector and this has significantly impeded sustainability to rural development. The researcher recommends that local government should incorporate community participation into the development strategy and establish a rigorous monitoring mechanism. Specific indicators should be established and means of verification set in order to measure the implementation of participatory approaches. Development agencies should revisit their development approaches. Local government should strengthen the forum of development organizations and establish checklists to ensure that participatory approaches are systematically implemented.