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**The influence of gender in the relationship between Participatory  
Monitoring and Evaluation, and Citizen Empowerment**

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Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) has over the years been considered indispensable means to citizen empowerment. However, the validity of this claim has hardly been established empirically. This study sought, not only to establish the influence of PM&E on citizen empowerment, but also the moderating role of gender in this relationship. The empirical investigation took the form of a mixed-methods approach involving concurrent parallel design, in which samples for quantitative and qualitative components were different but drawn from the same population and data collected within the same timeframe. Two hundred and twelve participants responded to a self-administered questionnaire. Two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted to establish the qualitative mechanisms at play in the quantitative data generated. Participants of the study were community members who participated in a World Vision International's PM&E model dubbed 'Integrated Programming Model'. While quantitative data were analysed through linear regression analyses, the qualitative component utilized interpretive technique, coding and recursive abstraction. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings support the notion that there is a positive linear relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment; and that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between PM&E and citizen. The study revealed that PM&E can be a tool for pacifying the effect of inequality, since the experience of empowerment outcomes is not sensitive to one's gender.

**Key words:** *Citizen Empowerment; Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation, gender*

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## Background

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) processes are mostly implemented in the communities towards achieving empowerment outcomes. Empowerment is considered in literature as a process that progresses on a continuum from individual empowerment; small groups; community organisation; partnerships; and political action (Laverack, 2001). Laverack links the interpersonal elements such as individual control (agency), social capital and community cohesiveness with the organisation aspects of community empowerment. Building community capacities and fostering empowerment are seen as more effective ways of achieving sustainable community development than programmes and success indicators imposed by outside experts. The knowledge created through participatory evaluation process is seen as related to power and power is related to change (Lennie, 2005).

PM&E, therefore, encourages active involvement of participants and stakeholders in the design and conduct of projects and supports capacity building processes, which in turn contribute to long-term sustainability and success of community and economic development programmes. This is consistent with Laverack and Labonte (2000) assertion that achieving empowerment would improve the quality of individuals' social relations with each other (social cohesion), their individual and collective experience of capacity (self-efficacy, self-esteem, perceived power) and their perception as an important group by other institutions and social actors (political legitimacy, social status). Thus, if people participate in activities within their local community,

then they will have stronger ties to the community, feel attached to their neighborhood and contribute to its development, regardless of their gender.

## Research Questions

While there has been a considerable enthusiasm for PM&E and its influence on empowerment, the claim has hardly been tested empirically. The study sought to empirically investigate the influence of PM&E on citizen empowerment, as well as the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. This was investigated by exploring the following two research questions:

1. To what extent does participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) influence citizen empowerment?
2. In what way does gender moderate the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment?

The questions were explored both qualitatively and quantitatively by utilizing mixed methods approach. The qualitative phase was mainly for triangulation in order to have a deeper understanding of the causal mechanisms at play in the quantitative dataset.

## Literature Review

Focus on citizen empowerment has its roots in the human development approach, advanced by Amartya Sen. Human development approach emphasizes on assessing development by how well it expands the capabilities of all people (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). This understanding of development resonates well with the empowerment theory. Expansion of capabilities has been used variously to describe empowerment (Alsop et al., 2006; Hilhorst and Guijt, 2006). An

empowering intervention is that which builds the capacity of individuals to positively influence their wellbeing outcomes (Alsop et al., 2006; Hur, 2006; Rappaport, 1995).

### **PM&E and Citizen Empowerment**

Empowerment as a construct has been conceptualized variedly by different writers and researchers. According to Zimmerman (1990), at the individual level, empowerment includes participatory behavior, motivations to exert control, and feelings of efficacy and control. Similarly, Spreitzer (1996) defines empowerment as intrinsic motivation manifested in four cognitions, namely: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Hilhorst and Guijt (2006) also note that empowerment is about building the capacity, self-reliance and confidence of citizens, programme staffs and other partners to guide, manage and implement development initiatives effectively. Empowerment is, therefore, associated with feelings of competences to change situation (Self-efficacy) and with expectations of positive outcomes for one's efforts (locus of control) (Hilhorst and Guijt, 2006; Kasmel and Tanggaard, 2011; Spreitzer 1996; Zimmerman, 1990).

PM&E advocates that the ultimate beneficiaries of a development intervention – the poor, the disadvantaged, the disempowered – can, and should, lead the effort among other stakeholders to define the results to be achieved by a given intervention (Ezemenari et al., 1999; Jackson, 1999). This has the implication of the primary stakeholders taking part in defining what change should look like (indicators of intervention); participating in the monitoring and implementation where the progress towards the realization

of the change is tracked and reports generated (reports in this case capture the stories as told by the beneficiaries); and involvement in the evaluation to establish whether the desired change has occurred.

A study conducted by Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, and Chavis (1990 cited in Zimmerman, 1990) observes that analysis of the effects of perceived benefits and costs of participation provides a unique understanding of psychological empowerment. In the study, the authors observed that the most highly involved individuals reported more benefits of participation – learning new skills, gaining information, helping others, increasing social contact, and fulfilling obligations – than less involved individuals. Samah and Aref (2011) also note that people who are involved in setting up community groups and organizing their activities learn and gain knowledge. These are all considered outcomes of empowerment in literature. Papineau and Keily (1996), for instance, operationalize the construct to include aspects like: (1) perception of self-efficacy and control: the transformation from a self-perception of powerlessness to viewing oneself as efficient, competent at carrying out activities to attain goals, and in control of one's life; (2) acquisition of resources, knowledge and skills needed to accomplish personal and collective goals; (3) participation in collective action to effect change leading to improved quality of life and sustainable development.

According to Abbot and Forward (2000), participation affirms dignity and self-respect; it develops political and moral awareness and responsibility; it develops community cohesion; and it empowers communities, community groups and individuals to pursue their own interests and to challenge existing power structures.

However, according to Strandberg (2001), for empowerment to be transformative it must be seen as a process existing on all levels – individual, group and societal. Leeuwen et al. (2000) also argue that PM&E is an indispensable means for ensuring that NGOs and aid agencies are accountable, not only to their supporters and donors, but also to the poor, for whom PM&E may serve as a basis for self-reliance and empowerment. As a matter of fact, the adoption of participatory methodologies in evaluation has been argued from different perspectives, but commonly from the perspective of citizen's empowerment (Fetterman, 2001). This idea of empowerment is emphasized further by Papineau and Kiely (1996) who argue that the issue of promoting stakeholders empowerment goes beyond the notion of shared control over the evaluation process to a focus on changing larger social structures through a process of grass-roots empowerment. Empowerment thus is the essence of stakeholder participation in an M&E process (Obure et al., 2008). Allowing primary stakeholders to plan their own interventions, make their own decisions and take part in research (or monitoring and evaluation) and policy formulation creates such empowerment and as a result, independence (Codd, 2011). The author argues that empowerment of the user generates confidence, independence and greater social inclusion. And as Hilhorst and Guijt (2006) argue, empowerment is about building the capacity, self-reliance and confidence of citizens, program staff and other partners to guide, manage, and implement development initiatives effectively.

### **The influence of gender in the relationship between PM&E and Citizen Empowerment**

Demographic variables have long been established in the past to influence individual's empowerment outcomes. Spreitzer (1996) argues that demographic variables such as gender, age, education have possible relationships to empowerment. In a study to establish the determinants of women empowerment, Khan et al. (2010) conclude that education, political participation and working for paid job of women are important determinants of women empowerment. Khan and others also observe that education is an important variable which brings many positive changes in human's personality. Participation in the research process or even M&E has been argued in literature to be an empowering experience for those who are involved, and especially the disenfranchised. It is against this background that Nasir et al. (2007) argue that it is important to elaborate the economic, demographic and reproductive behaviour of the respondents when considering the level of empowerment. In a study to assess the effect of gender on the phases of an activist process, McAdam (1992) conclude that gender differentials influence the dynamics of recruitment to the project, experiences during the process, the long-term political effects following participation, and the participants' own assessment of the impact of the process on their own lives.

Even with the growing evidence to the effectiveness of participatory approaches, including PM&E, the same are said to have lacked awareness of gender and gender differences (Akerkar, 2001). Participatory approaches have been argued to be largely gender neutral. The

approaches are not sensitive to the existing gender differentials and hence do little to address gender inequalities. The reason for this as argued by Akerkar (2001) is because participatory approaches tend to look for consensus within the target community, hence make false assumption that women and men will make equal expression of their priorities. Gender sensitive approaches would need skills, tools, and methodologies, which would allow for differing perspectives of social reality within the communities, and would promote citizens engagement on these different understandings to bring about gender inclusive and transformational change. Following this argument, it cannot, therefore, be said for a fact that PM&E will effectively influence empowerment regardless on one's gender, hence the need to investigate the moderating influence of gender in the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. The study hypothesized that examining the moderating influence of gender in the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment can provide an important finding in empowerment studies.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

The concept of citizen empowerment is influenced by the theory of human development, empowerment theory and social cognitive theory.

### **Human Development Theory**

Human development is a trans-disciplinary theory which integrates ideas from ecological economics, sustainable development, welfare economics, and feminist economics. It focuses on measuring the well-being and social welfare or quality of life of people. The most notable proponents of human development theory are Amartya Sen and

MahbubulHaq (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). According to human development theory, development is an expansion of human capabilities achieved through expanding the range of things that a person can do. These include health and nourishment, acquiring knowledge and participating in community life (Fukukda-Parr, 2003; Chimni, 2008). Chimni (2008:7) observes that Sen's theory offers a conception of development that goes beyond the 'technocratic fixes' as it draws attention to the need to consult and deliberate with the subjects of social policies, consistent with participatory paradigms.

Human development theory has, however, been criticized for being ambiguous. According to Chimni (2008), the concept of development is not as attentive to social structures and processes that inhibit its realization. The theory fails to deal adequately with the questions of power and social conflict. It thus does not advance a theory of practice commensurate with its own perception of development as creation of capabilities. It is this absence of any strategy to achieve the goals of development that undermines its utility. The theory also neglects the subject of political economy that offers valuable ideas into social processes and structures necessary for the realization of development goals. Furthermore, the theory does not explore specifics in the context of real world situations and how these could undermine goal achievement. Similarly, while the theory views the individual as the key agent of social change, it does not explore the role of collective action (social capital) in the shaping of social processes. Because of its inadequacies, other scholars have advanced supporting theories.

### **Empowerment Theory**

PM&E processes are usually implemented in communities with the objective of empowering citizens (Bailey, 2009). The origin of empowerment as a form of theory is traced back to the Brazilian humanitarian and educator, Paulo Freire (Hur, 2006). Paulo Freire's, "*The pedagogy of the oppressed (1970)* provided the conceptual base for the debates on empowerment. However, according to Bodja (2006), Ernst Friedrich Schumacher's '*Small is Beautiful*'(1973), which came into circulation at a similar time with Freire's piece, is also known to have influenced the debate on empowerment. According to Zimmerman (1990), empowerment theory postulates that participation in decision making may enhance individual's sense of empowerment and that empowered individuals are likely to be active in community organisations and community activities.

Empowerment as a construct is multifaceted. Theories of empowerment touch on different dimensions of life. Hur (2006) argues that empowerment theories are not only concerned with the process of empowerment, but also with results that can produce greater access to resources and power for the disadvantaged. An empowering intervention is that which builds capacity of individuals to positively influence their wellbeing outcomes. Rappaport (1995) in support of this argument observes that the goals of empowerment are enhanced when people discover, or create and give voice to, a collective narrative that sustains their own personal life story in positive ways.

Empowerment is operative at various levels: personal or individual, interpersonal, organisational, community,

and collective (Hur, 2006). Zimmerman et al. (1993) observes that the focus of both empowerment theory and practice is to understand and strengthen processes and context where individuals gain mastery and control over decisions that affect their lives. Thus, interventions that provide genuine opportunities for individuals to participate may help them develop a sense of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman et al., 1993). Typically therefore, an empowering development process might begin with an environmental assessment of the opportunities to participate and develop strategies to include participants in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

Empowerment, however, is not a panacea for all individual and social illness. It has been criticized as "overly individualistic and conflict-oriented, resulting in an emphasis on mastery and control rather than cooperation and community" (Speer, 2000:58 cited in Hur, 2006). According to Hur (2006), although the practice of empowerment is effective for the removal of powerlessness, certain factors still exist that may inhibit the manifestation of empowerment. He cites organisational aspects, such as an impersonal bureaucratic climate, supervisory styles described as authoritarianism and negativism as well as arbitrary reward systems as hindrances to empowerment.

The other argument against the empowerment theory is the 'loose' manner in which empowerment as a concept is framed. According to Lincoln, Travers, Ackers and Wilkinson (2002), empowerment is a highly elusive theoretical concept. This is because, as a concept it has no single guru, nor does it have a clear definition. The same view is

held by Bodja (2006), who argues that at a broader level, the concept of community empowerment is short of a strong theoretical foundation. Consequently, the term is attractive, loose and ambiguous enough for it to gain superficial initial acceptance by most people (Lincoln et al., 2002). Bodja (2006) attributes this 'vagueness' in empowerment theory to the non-academic origin of the concept. The concept has its origin in 'conscientization' and 'gift of knowledge' both of which to a larger extent have their origins in practical development work and not academia. The other deficiency, according to Bodja is that there is no single model of empowerment. There exist diverse empowerment instruments, which are used in different contexts by development practitioners.

The issue of construct measurement also comes to mind. Brook and Holland (2009) identify three challenges that make the measurement of the empowerment construct difficult: (1) measuring empowerment captures processes and relational changes that are less predictable, less tangible, more contextual, and more difficult to quantify. This raises challenges of meaning, causality, and comparability; (2) changes in power relations (empowerment) are not single-event outcomes, but dynamic, process-based tied up with bargaining, cooperation, conflict, co-option, rent seeking, and other forms of contracting; (3) empowerment often involves relative rather than absolute changes in states of being: an observable move towards empowerment by one person or group cannot be assumed to apply to other individuals or groups, both within and across communities or countries. Hence, empowerment as a concept can best be understood under the complexity framework.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Social cognitive theory is a learning theory developed by Bandura in 1977 as a direct response to behaviourism to describe how behaviours are learned. The theory is founded on the model of causation, in which behaviour is depicted as being shaped and controlled by environmental influences or by internal dispositions (Bandura, 1989). The internal disposition, also referred to as 'self-influence' in Bandura (1991), encompasses the self-efficacy which is an outcome of empowerment, as it plays a central role in the exercise of personal agency. Personal agency is generally considered as one of the factors that influence empowerment (Alsop et al., 2006; Bandura, 1991). Self-efficacy is the individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1991). Self-efficacy beliefs are not only confined to judgments of personal capabilities, it also encompasses perceived collective efficacy representing shared beliefs in the power to produce desired effects by collective action (Bandura, 2002). The latter resonates with social capital.

Critical to the understanding of social cognitive theory is self-regulated behavior. Bandura (1989) defines self-regulated behavior as the process of using one's own thoughts and actions to achieve a goal; identify goals and adopt and maintain their own strategies for reaching the goals. Self-regulation also encompasses self-efficacy, a component of empowerment (Papineau and Keily, 1996; Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman et al., 1993; Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland, 2006; Bandura, 1991). Self-efficacy is people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their

own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives. Bandura (1991) argues that people's beliefs in their efficacy influence the choices they make, their aspirations, how long they persevere in the face of difficulties and setbacks, the amount of stress they experience in coping with challenging environmental demands, and their vulnerability to depression. Self-efficacy beliefs are not only confined to judgments of personal capabilities, it also encompasses perceived collective efficacy representing shared beliefs in the power to produce desired effects by collective action (Bandura, 2002).

Social cognitive theory is based on a number of assumptions, namely: people learn by observing others; learning is internal; and that learning is a goal directed behavior. The theory therefore assumes that values and behavior patterns arise from diverse sources of influence and are promoted by institutional backing. It highlights the idea that much human learning occurs in a social environment. However, social cognitive theory alone is insufficient to explain why there is often substantial variation in values and behavior patterns, even within the same community segments. The other limitation is about how to measure the related constructs such as general self-efficacy. Chen, Gully and Eden (2001) argue that commonly used generally self-efficacy (GSE) measures have low content validity and multidimensionality. This is worsened further by the confusion with the related

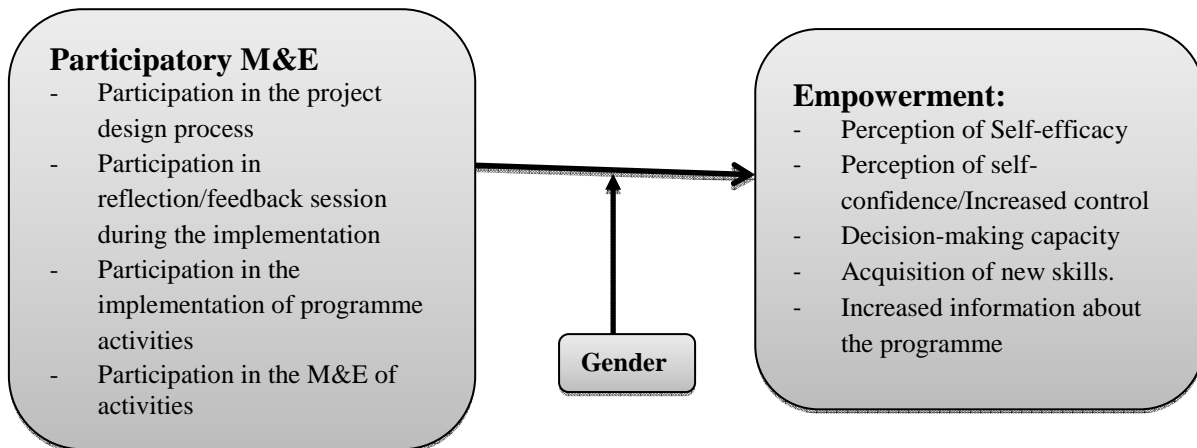
constructs such as self-esteem. Chen et al. (2001) note that the utility of GSE for both theory and practice is low due to the confusion as to whether GSE is a construct distinct from self-esteem.

While the study was mainly influenced by human development theory, the inadequacies exhibited by the theory created demand for an alternative theoretical framework to respond to these limitations. The study was based on a framework that integrates human development, empowerment and social cognitive theories. From literature, human development theory emerged as a trans-disciplinary theory that integrates certain ideas resident in the other three theories. Human development theory, for instance, describes development as an expansion of capabilities (Fukukda-Parr, 2003), a phrase used to describe empowerment (Alsop et al., 2006). Empowerment itself can also be explained by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991). Empowerment is thus seen both to lead to participation in community organisations and to result from it (Perkins and Long, 2002).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The schema in *Figure 1* illustrates the relationship between the independent variable (IV) and Dependent Variable (DV). The moderating influence of gender on the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment was also examined as represented in the schema. The study thus tested 2 major relationships.





**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

The study was based on mixed-methods approach involving a concurrent parallel sampling design. Samples for quantitative and qualitative components were different but drawn from the same population and data collected within the same time frame. Mixed methods approach was considered for its relative advantages. It has the ability to ensure dependable feedback on a range of questions; improve the depth of understanding of particular interventions; give a holistic perspective; and enhance the validity, reliability, and usefulness of the findings (Stufflebeam, 2001; Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib and Rupert, 2007; Creswell, 2009). Mixed methods was also found to be useful in empowerment studies. Zimmerman (1990), for instance, argues against the use of methods that are primarily quantitative. He commends studies that have integrated the quantitative and qualitative methods, arguing that in such studies the qualitative aspects reinforce the quantitative data presented and as a consequence, further strengthen the research. It is an agreed position that both approaches are not only compatible but pragmatic in order to take into account contextual consideration. It is for these reasons that this study applied a mixed methods approach.

### **The study population**

The study consisted of known individuals who participated in a World Vision International driven PM&E model. Karemo Area Development Programme (ADP) adopted a World Vision International's participatory monitoring programming model; an innovative operationalization of PM&E with the aim of leading communities through a participatory and empowering process to research, implement, monitor, evaluate and end a shared development programme. The study was based on 17 functional/starter groups – sub-locations based units, with a population of between 6 and 15 members each. In total the study had a target population of 240. Given the small size of the population, census was applied in the quantitative component. Simple and stratified random sampling design was, however, used to select participants for the qualitative phase of the study. Two FGDs were conducted with 2 randomly selected starter groups. Each FGD constituted of 12 to 15 members who participated in the PM&E process as operationalized by the programme.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guides to collect qualitative data. The questionnaires were administered to individual members from the starter groups. The questionnaires were designed to help generate a range of measures of dimensions of the study variables as had been operationalized in the study. A number of composite measures were designed to capture each of these dimensions. These dimensions were arrived at through the review of literature. The questionnaires were administered to 212 respondent out of the intended 240 individuals, representing 88.3% response rate. Those who did not participate either declined or were not available to respond to the questionnaire.

Quantitative data were analysed through bivariate and multiple regression analyses. Data from the respondents were entered, cleaned and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 17.0 software. The data was then explored for normality, linearity, kurtosis, skewness, homogeneity and factorability to decide on the probable statistics if relevant assumptions were met. Since most of the assumptions for parametric tests were met, the study utilized statistical tests amenable to parametric analysis. The hypotheses testing mainly employed the use of Pearson *r* correlation to test the relationships between the main study variables and the nature thereof; as well as to test the hypotheses.

The qualitative component on the other hand involved drawing analytical conclusion from qualitative datasets. Qualitative data were summarized into

themes. Techniques such as interpretive, coding and recursive abstraction were then employed in order to summarize the dataset into meaningful chunks. Interpretive technique was then used to give and report the observer's impression in a structured form. To accomplish this, data was analysed to read the data and demarcate segments within it. Each of these segments was labeled with a 'code' – a word or short phrase suggesting how the associated data segments describe the specified research objective. The process of analysis involved reading of the qualitative data, discovering of significant groupings and coding and the generation of categories, the regrouping of themes and patterns, testing of evolving understanding of the issues and a search on alternative explanations or divergent views which helped in the identification and explanation of key issues which are likely to have influence on the study findings.

### **Measures**

The study was aimed at establishing the extent to which PM&E influences citizen empowerment; as well as the moderating influence of gender in the relationship. In this study, PM&E was conceptualized to include: participation in project design, participation in reflection during implementation, participation in the implementation of activities, as well as participation in the monitoring and evaluation of activities. Citizen empowerment on the other hand, was operationalized as perception of self-efficacy, perception of self-confidence, decision-making, acquisition of new skills, and increased information about the programme. Gender, which in this study is understood as the main categorization of human beings in relation to their social and

cultural roles was the moderator. The moderator effect was represented as an interaction term between gender and PM&E, which was the only independent variable.

### Findings

A linear regression analysis was first conducted to assess the extent to which PM&E influences citizen empowerment. The analysis in Table 1 below yielded  $F(1,210) = 198.25$  and  $p < .05$ , indicating that PM&E has a significant influence on

citizen empowerment. Similarly, a positive coefficient of 0.5 and a correlation coefficient of  $r = .70$ , suggests a strong linear relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment.  $R^2 = .486$  shows that PM&E accounts for approximately 48.6% of the variation in the citizen empowerment. The regression model showing the influence of PM&E on citizen empowerment can therefore be represented as follows:

$$\text{Citizen Empowerment} = 0.401 + 0.049\text{PM\&E}$$

Table 1: Summary of the Model (PM&E and Citizen Empowerment)

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	B	Predictor Variables
1	.697 <sup>a</sup>	.486	.483	.012 .003	.401 .049	Constant Term PM&E

a. Predictors: (Constant), PME

b. Dependent Variable: Citizen Empowerment

Model 1:  $F(1, 210) = 198.246; p < .05$

The emergence of citizen empowerment was also explored qualitatively. One of the areas explored was the participants' level of knowledge and understanding of development programmes. Participants in the FGDs cited several examples of development programmes and activities, and also explained the purpose of these programmes. Some participants defined development as a positive transformational change in a community. They also went ahead to cite examples of processes in the community that cause change. One of the participants had this to say,

*“Development is moving from one state to another. For instance, if as a person I do not know the importance of putting up a kitchen garden. If I get knowledgeable on the same, then I can consider myself to have developed”* (Participant, Nyandiwa – Mulaha Starter Group)

Judging from the many examples given, it was also clear that their understanding of

development was not just limited to hardware-based initiatives like building of schools, development of water infrastructure among others; but spans a spectrum ranging from hardware to skills improvement imperative for community wellbeing.

*“Community members have become aware of the benefits of initiating groups. Working through groups is easier. Information can then be passed to different groups”*. (Participant, Mur Ng'iya Starter Group)

Most of the respondents affirmed the fact that they have up-to-date information about development activities in the area. By exploring this sub-theme, the study established that questions touching on participation in development programmes were well interpreted. The sub-theme also points to the existence of some level of empowerment among the respondents. In this study, knowledge of development

programmes was considered as one of the proxy indicators of citizen empowerment. Another outcome of citizen empowerment is the ability to participate in decision making. To investigate this, the study explored the participants' knowledge and understanding about decision making process in project programme implementation as well as the extent to which community members have been provided with opportunities to get involved and influence the decision making process. The FGDs revealed that the participants could clearly articulate their understanding of decision making process in programme implementation. Some of the respondents could eloquently explain the ideal development planning and decision making processes from ideas generation, prioritization of needs and consensus building. They however feel that the community has not been adequately involved in defining the development agenda.

*"The ideas are shared in a group meeting; the options are weighed and prioritized; then by consensus the ideas are agreed; donors cannot come and dictate what needs to be done"* (Participant, Mur Ng'iya Starter Group)

Some of the participants also demonstrated evidence of self-efficacy. They perceived themselves to have acquired pertinent skills that can be used to bring some transformation in the community. They expressed that these skills have enabled them to influence certain things in their community. For them participation is an obligation motivated by the desire to change situations in the community. A participant from one of the group had this to say,

*"Being a trained person, I feel empowered to go and tell the community what needs to*

*be done; I feel obliged to go and hear so as to support what is likely to happen afterwards"* (Participant, Mur Ng'iya Starter Group)

Even in areas where the participants perceived their involvement as passive, the individual respondents themselves exhibit some level of self-efficacy. They see themselves as having ability to influence their community situation, if given opportunity.

*"We feel we have capacity to influence, but not given opportunity to do so"* (Participant, Mulaha Starter Group).

The participants also exhibited good understanding on programme resourcing. According to them, part of programme resources come from the community. They however, noted that while they contribute to the development programme process their contribution is, in most cases not quantified by the development agencies. This notwithstanding they hold the view that the community contributes more to the development projects than the funding or implementing agencies.

*"According to us the community usually gives more than the agency only that ours (the community's) is not quantified"* (Participant, Mulaha Starter Group)

The forgoing goes to confirm the influence of PM&E on empowerment. The study revealed that people who participated in the PM&E process seem to know and understand who makes decision and how they do so in the implementation of development programmes and activities. There is emergence of empowerment as revealed by some members exhibiting a level of self-efficacy and understanding of development resourcing processes. Self-efficacy is described in the study as the perceived competency by an individual to change a situation.

Once the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment was confirmed, the study embarked on establishing the moderating influence of gender in the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. The study hypothesized that the strength of the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment depends on gender. Thus gender influences the direction of the relationship. The moderator effect was represented as an interaction term between the PM&E and gender. The following model was applied in the analysis:

$$\text{Citizen empowerment} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{PM\&E} + \beta_2\text{Gender} + \beta_3\text{PM\&E*Gender} + e$$

Where:  $\beta_0$ ,  $\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$  and  $\beta_3$  are the correlation coefficients; social sustainability is the dependent variable; PM&E is the independent variable; gender is the moderating variable; PM&E\*Gender is the interaction factor between PM&E and gender (moderator); and e is the error term.  $\beta_3$  coefficient reflects the interaction between the predictor variable and the moderating variable only if the lower order terms, namely  $\beta_1\text{PM\&E}$  and  $\beta_2\text{Gender}$  are included in the equation.

By utilizing the hierarchical regression model, the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment was explored by first computing the interaction term between PM&E and gender. A multiple regression involving the PM&E, gender and the interaction term between PM&E and gender was then conducted to establish the moderating effect of gender in the relationship. The multiple regression analysis yielded 2 models, namely: model 1 (without the interaction term) and model 2 (with the interaction term). Model 1 was significant with  $F(2, 209) = 98.799, p < .05$ . However, model 2 with interaction term between PM&E and gender was found to be insignificant with  $F(1, 208) = 1.935, p > .05$ . Table 2 shows the results of the analysis. Gender, therefore does not significantly moderate the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. The regression model showing the moderating influence of gender on the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment can therefore be represented as follows:

$$\text{Citizen empowerment} = .385 + .053\text{PM\&E} + .012\text{Gender} + .0\text{PM\&E*Gender} + e$$

**Table 2:** The Moderating Influence of gender on the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment.

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Change	Sig.	B	Predictor Variables
1	.70 <sup>a</sup>	.486	.481	.486	.000	.399	Constant Term
						.049	PM&E
						.697	Gender
2	.70 <sup>b</sup>	.491	.483	.005	.000	.385	Constant
						.053	PM&E
						.178	Gender
						.166	PM&E*Gender

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, PME

b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, PME, PME\*Gender

Dependent Variable: Citizen Empowerment

Model 1:  $F(2, 209) = 98.799; p < .05$

Model 2:  $F(1, 208) = 1.935; p > .05$

Further analysis was conducted to establish whether experiences of empowerment for male and female were different from each other. By use of one way analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the study tested if the mean responses to questions on citizen empowerment were different between male and female. To establish the existence of the difference, the study tested the hypothesis:

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{Male}} = \mu_{\text{Female}}$$

Where  $\mu$  represents the mean citizen empowerment.

Since the citizen empowerment was approximately interval scaled, and with two groups representing male and female, the study considered between-subjects one way ANOVA appropriate for the analysis. The descriptive output in *Table 3* below, shows the sample size, standard deviation, standard error, and confidence interval of each the independent variables (male and female). Two hundred and twelve (212) respondents were interviewed, out of whom 92 were female and 120 male. While the mean of empowerment was 0.565, approximately similar for both male and female, the standard deviation were 0.058 and 0.052 for female and male respectively.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Citizen Empowerment**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Female	92	.5646	.05845	.00609
Male	120	.5648	.05194	.00474
Total	212	.5647	.05473	.00376

The test of homogeneity was also conducted to establish the variance in empowerment between male and female. Accordingly, *Table 4* shows the output of the test of homogeneity. At  $p > .05$ , we

accept the null hypothesis and concludes that the variances are equal and the homogeneity of variance assumption has been met.

**Table 4: Test of Homogeneity of Variances: Citizen Empowerment**

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
3.624	1	210	.058

The analysis summary is provided in *Table 5*. The one-way, between-gender analysis of variance failed to reveal a reliable effect on empowerment,  $F(1, 210) = .000$ ,

$p = .986$ . With F ration at  $p > .05$ , study accepted the null hypothesis and concluded that, the mean empowerment between male and female are equal.

**Table 5: ANOVA – Citizen Empowerment**

	Sum Squares	of Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.000	1	.000	.000	.986
Within Groups	.632	210	.003		
Total	.632	211			

## Discussion

The first research question asked, “To what extent does PM&E influence citizen empowerment?” To address this question, a linear regression was conducted to assess the extent to which PM&E predicted citizen empowerment. The study findings suggest that there is a strong linear relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. This is consistent with previous research on the relationship between participation and empowerment. A study conducted by Butterfoss (2006) found that more time spent in activities geared toward affecting change is related to higher levels of empowerment. Similarly, Zimmerman (1990) argues that participation in decision making enhances individual’s sense of empowerment. Lennie (2005) also argues that PM&E has the capacity to create knowledge, which in itself related to power and power ultimately leads to development. Mostly highly involved individuals, therefore report higher levels of empowerment than the uninvolved. People who are involved also learn and gain knowledge, which is one of the indicators of empowerment (Samah and Aref, 2011). The same view is held by Abbot and Forward (2000), who argue that participation affirms dignity and

self-respect; as well as developing community cohesion and empowering communities to pursue their own interest. This explains why the push for the adoption of participatory methodologies in evaluation has been argued from the perspective of citizen empowerment (Fetterman, 2001; Papineau and Kiely, 1996; Obure et al., 2008).

The second research question asked, “To what extent does gender moderate the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. A multiple regression analysis involving the PM&E, gender and the interaction term between PM&E and gender was found not to be significant with  $p > .05$ . A confirmatory analysis to test the variance of mean empowerment between male and female also arrived at the same conclusion. From the analyses, the study found out that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. This finding was largely unexpected. According to Chua and Iyengar (2006), the effectiveness of participation depends on individual differences such as gender. In this study, however, the fact that one is male or female did not seem to influence their empowerment outcomes.

### **Implications on policy, theory and practice**

The findings of this study have significant implications on policy, theory and practice of monitoring and evaluation, and especially the application of participatory development. The findings have implications for researchers, M&E practitioners, civil society organisations and governments. The study findings suggest that sex does not influence the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. This has the implication that PM&E will positively predict the attainment of citizen empowerment regardless of one's gender. This means that every individual irrespective of their gender has the capacity to experience empowerment. PM&E therefore can be a tool for pacifying the effect of inequality. Governments and development practitioners should, therefore create policies that promote participatory development processes. This has the capacity to result in an interdependent and empowered community.

Results from this study have shown that inviting participation of primary stakeholders in all aspects of monitoring and evaluation builds up beneficiaries' feelings of empowerment. Consequently, civil society organisations and government should develop strategies that can increase the effectiveness and inclusiveness of community participation and engagement processes. The strategies could include identifying stakeholders, using processes that aim to be inclusive and empowering for a diversity of participants as well as gathering relevant quantitative demographic data about participants to enable more accurate assessment of the inclusiveness of the evaluation and the

diversity of participants. The study has further revealed that, although building awareness, skills and networks that enable more inclusive and empowered forms of participation takes time, these are critical for long-term success in the PM&E process.

The study provides a documented analysis and answers questions critical for the credibility of PM&E. The findings of this study are consistent with the theories against which the study was underpinned. The study was framed within human development, empowerment and social cognitive theories. This consistency with these theories will go a long way in expanding the utility of these theories in the theory and practice of PM&E. Accordingly, the study theorizes that participation in PM&E processes contributes to citizen empowerment, and that gender does not predict the magnitude of this influence.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study results provided an understanding of PM&E and its relationship with citizen empowerment. It has empirically confirmed that PM&E processes increase one's sense of control, perception of self-efficacy, acquisition of new skills and increased decision making capacity (Papineau and Kiely, 1996; Zimmerman et al., 1992). While the findings agree with most of literature on citizen empowerment, the finding that is particularly interesting is that gender does not influence the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. This is contrary to prevailing understanding on the differentials in empowerment outcomes as moderated by gender. PM&E therefore can be a tool for pacifying the effect of



inequality, since the experience of empowerment outcomes is not sensitive to one's gender. This is consistent with Hilhorst and Guijt (2006) assertion that a PM&E process can enhance the equity of outcomes. In the context of this study, it was clear that PM&E is an effective M&E model that transcends gender among other demographic characteristics that were not considered in the study. The study results give credence to the principle of user involvement in M&E and other project management activities, which for a long time has been put under scrutiny by several commentators (Burton et al., 2006; Fraser et al., 2006; Jones, 2001; Abbot and Guijt, 1998; Papineau and Kiely, 1996). There is, however, need for more studies to explore the relationship between the demographic factors on citizen empowerment. A study to determine the contextual factors predicting citizen empowerment, as well as a confirmatory study to establish whether indeed gender has no significant moderating influence on the relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment may also be instructive. Future research could also focus on characteristics of context that may enhance or inhibit empowering processes.

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