

Empowerment of Parents for Children with Disabilities with Entrepreneur Skills: A Case of Katondo Community

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Abstract

This study explored the empowerment of parents of children with disabilities in Katondo community through the development of entrepreneurial skills. The research aimed at identifying the challenges faced by parents in the community and how entrepreneurial training can help address these challenges. The study was qualitative and used a case study approach. Data was collected through the use of interviews schedule to parents who participated in the entrepreneurial training program. The entrepreneurial training program was provided as a platform for parents to develop new skills and build networks, which improved their economic status and social standing. The parents were involved in development and implementation of program as they had valuable insights into the challenges they faced and provided input on how best to address these challenges. Entrepreneurship was a viable strategy for addressing the challenges faced by families with children with disabilities. The study had a positive impact on parents' ability to care for their children with disabilities and their overall quality of life. The study also shed light on the potential economic benefits of empowering parents of children with disabilities. By enabling them to start their businesses, parents were expected to generate income for their families and contribute to the local economy. This was a ripple effect on the community, as it helped to reduce

poverty and promote economic development. The starting support and resources for parents who completed entrepreneurial training was provided by researchers. In conclusion the study provided insights into the challenges faced by parents in Katondo and emphasize the importance of how the empowerment of entrepreneurial training program addressed these challenges by recognizing the potential of parents. The study further highlight the role of education in empowering parents and providing them with the resources and support needed to start and maintain their businesses, in order to improve their economic and social well-being. The study provided insights into the challenges faced by parents and the potential impact of empowering them and laid the foundation for future research and action in this area.

Key words: *Entrepreneur, Skills, Training Program, Parents for Children with disabilities, Katondo community, Empowering.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Parents for children with disabilities are faced with a number of challenges while caring for their children with disabilities. This is supported by [11] who reported a parent saying that “having a disabled child has changed her life completely”. The author further echoed that no-one would claim that parenting is easy, but when one has a child with a disability, there is a whole new level of challenges involved. Raising a child with disabilities can feel like running a marathon

where the finish line is constantly moving further away from you and this make parents wind up isolated, exhausted and overwhelmed just by day to day life. The author further stated that, finances is their major source of worry which they need for medical care, transport, home care such as bill, food and clothing.[7]

Parents for children with disabilities have received support from the government and communities in various ways for instance gifts such as clothes, money, special equipment but not in form of entrepreneur skills. For instance, numerous organizations offer resources for both parents and children.[7]

They also receive support in form of physical lifting, mental, emotional and help to see them through but most of all they need resources that can give them support and assistance that they desperately need [7].The argument is that the author did not point out the aspect of entrepreneur skill as being necessary for these parents which can be of help to them in terms of generating the money they need for their desperate needs.

Therefore this study explored the empowerment of parents of children with disabilities in Katondo community through the development of entrepreneurial skills.

II OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the challenges faced by parents while caring for their children.
2. To offer the entrepreneurial skill training .
3. To allow parents to suggest the business they can implement that can help them address the challenge of caring for their children.
4. To empower each parents with seed money for the selected business.

III LITERATURE REVIEW

Raising a child with disabilities can feel like running a marathon where the finish line is constantly moving further away from you and this make parents isolated, exhausted and overwhelmed just by day to day life. [7]

Finances is the major source of worry which perents need for medical care, transport, home care such as bill, food and clothing. Empowering parents of children with disabilities with can foster their financial independence, positively impacting both their family's well-being and the

larger community's inclusivity [4]. However, the authors did not pay attention to lack of entrepreneur skill training as a major source of worry to parents for children with special needs which this embarked on discovering. This is because:

Entrepreneurial education equips parents of children with disabilities with the necessary skills to create sustainable livelihoods, thereby breaking the cycle of dependency and enhancing their overall empowerment. Building parental resilience through entrepreneurship fosters a positive environment for children with disabilities, enhancing their overall well-being and long-term prospects in their community. Incorporating parents of children with disabilities into the entrepreneurial fabric of their community promotes social cohesion, financial independence, and ultimately, sustainable community development. Entrepreneurial interventions offer parents of children with disabilities a chance to harness their untapped potential, fostering a sense of empowerment and self-reliance within the community. [3] [17] [13] [16].

IV THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employed empowerment theory. Empowerment is the central theme to this study which emphasized the need to enable parents to take control of their lives, make informed decisions, and develop a sense of self-efficacy. Empowerment theory fitted well with this study because it is a framework that seeks to enhance the capacity of individuals and communities to control their destinies and participate actively in the processes that affect their lives. It acknowledges that empowerment is a multifaceted concept, influenced by various factors, and is often a process that unfolds over time. Empowerment efforts aim to foster a sense of self-worth, resilience, and the ability to effect positive change, ultimately leading to improved well-being and social justice.[14]

V METHODOLOGY

A Research Design

Research design is a framework of methods and techniques used by a researcher to combine various components of research in proper manner so that the research problem is efficiently handled. In this study a case study was used in order to

identify the challenges faced by parents for children with disabilities and empower them with entrepreneur skills through training in order to address their challenges. A case study is a design of inquiry in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process or one or more individuals. A case study was used for it was appropriate because the research was qualitative in nature and allowed the researchers to collect detailed information from teachers. [1] [2]

B Population of the study

According to Kasonde (2013), target population refers to the group of people that the researcher wants to draw a conclusion about once the research study is finished. The population of this study comprised of parents of children with disabilities.

C Sample and Sampling Techniques

The research sample comprised of 10 parents of children with disabilities who were sampled using snowball sampling technique. This is where all participants helped us to identify one parent after the other until ten of them were identified.

VI FINDINGS

Identified challenges faced by parents while caring for their children

During data collection the researchers used the semi-structured interview schedule. When the question was asked in order to find out the challenges faced by parents while caring for their children the answers to the question are reflected in the following responses. A response from “P1” was that, “I have the challenge of transport when taking my child for review”. “P2” narrated that, ‘I have a challenge of looking for food to feed my child because my child only eat what the child wants’. ‘P3’ echoed that, “I have a challenge of buying 2 packets of dippers for my child per month”. ‘P4’ stated that, “I have the challenge of paying rentals per month because of the expense of caring for my child in terms feeding and clothing” ‘P5’ reported that, my greatest challenge has to do with feeding which has been hard for me. ‘P6’ pointed out that my child has poor memory and cannot remember anything as such I am forced to be with my child wherever I am. ‘P7’ said that, “I have a challenge of not having money to buy clothes for my child”. ‘P8’ reported that “The challenge I am faced with is that I always put my child on my back whenever I am

working or looking for food because my child does not talk, cannot seat and is unable to walk but my child only sleeps and is getting old and heavy.” ‘P9’ stated that, “The great challenge I have is that of caring for my child because due to the disability the father ran away or divorced me.” ‘P10’ response was that I have a challenge of not having money for paying rentals per month, feeding, clothing and transporting my child to medical centers.

Entrepreneurial skills training

Training in entrepreneurial skills is essential for individuals looking to start their own businesses. Training of entrepreneur skills took three days and included some of the following areas:

Business Planning: the emphasis was that entrepreneurs needed to develop strong business plans that outline each parent vision, mission, target market, products or services, marketing strategies, financial projections, and growth plans. In other words training focused mainly on the process of creating a comprehensive and well-structured business plan.

Market Research and Analysis: parents were helped to understanding the target market, customer needs, and industry trends which is crucial for entrepreneurial success. Training in market research equipped parents with the skills to gather and analyze data, identify opportunities, and make informed decisions based on market insights.

Financial Management: parents were made to understand that entrepreneurs must have a solid understanding of financial management principles, including budgeting, forecasting, cash flow management, and financial statement analysis. The training in financial management helped parents as entrepreneurs to effectively manage their resources and make informed financial decisions.

Sales and Marketing: parents were made to know that entrepreneurs need to develop effective sales and marketing strategies to promote their products or services. Training in sales and marketing covered topics such as branding, market positioning, pricing strategies, sales techniques, digital marketing, and customer relationship management.

Leadership and Team Building: parents through the training new that, entrepreneurship often

involves leading a team or working with others. Thus training in leadership skills focused on developing effective communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and team-building skills. Entrepreneurs learnt how to inspire and motivate their team members and create a positive work environment.

Networking and Relationship Building: parents were trained on how to build a strong network of contacts and partnerships. Training in networking skills provided guidance on how to establish and maintain relationships with potential customers, suppliers, investors, mentors, and other stakeholders in the business ecosystem.

Risk Management and Resilience: parents were informed that, entrepreneurs face various risks and challenges, and being able to manage and mitigate these risks is essential. Training in risk management helped entrepreneurs identify and assess risks, develop contingency plans, and build resilience to navigate uncertainties and setbacks.

Innovation and Creativity: parents were trained that as entrepreneurs they need to think creatively and be innovative to differentiate themselves in the market. Training in innovation and creativity encouraged them to embrace a mindset of continuous improvement, explore new ideas, and find innovative solutions to problems.

Legal and Regulatory Knowledge: they were made to understand that, as entrepreneurs they must have a basic understanding of legal and regulatory requirements relevant to their business. Training covered topics such as intellectual property, contracts, business registration, tax obligations, and compliance with industry-specific regulations.

Business Development and Growth Strategies: parents were made to know that, entrepreneurs need to develop strategies to grow their businesses over time. Training in business development covered topics such as identifying new market opportunities, expanding product lines or service offerings, entering new markets, and strategic partnerships or alliances.

Negotiation and Communication: the training covered effective negotiation and communication skills which are essential for entrepreneurs when dealing with suppliers, partners, investors, and other stakeholders. Training in negotiation helped them develop techniques for successful

negotiations, conflict resolution, and persuasive communication.

Time Management and Productivity: during the training entrepreneurs were told that they may often juggle multiple responsibilities and tasks. Training in time management and productivity provided strategies for prioritizing tasks, setting goals, managing schedules, and optimizing efficiency to make the most of limited resources.

Emotional Intelligence and Resilience: parents were told that being an entrepreneur can be challenging, and emotional intelligence plays a vital role in managing stress, building relationships, and making sound decisions. Training in emotional intelligence helped entrepreneurs develop self-awareness, empathy, and resilience to effectively handle the emotional demands of entrepreneurship.

Presentation and Pitching Skills: parents were told that they frequently need to present their business ideas or products to potential investors, partners, or customers. Training in presentation and pitching skills helped entrepreneurs develop engaging and persuasive presentations, including crafting effective pitches and delivering compelling elevator pitches.

Ethical and Social Responsibility: parents were equipped with the knowledge of knowing that entrepreneurship is not just about profit-making; it also involves considering ethical and social implications. Training in ethical and social responsibility focused on topics such as corporate social responsibility, sustainable practices, ethical decision-making, and maintaining integrity in business operations.

Problem-solving and Critical Thinking: since entrepreneurs encounter various challenges and obstacles along their journey the training in problem-solving and critical thinking equipped them with techniques to analyze complex problems, think creatively, and develop innovative solutions.

Adaptability and Agility: In today's rapidly changing business landscape, parents were made to know that they need to be adaptable and agile. Training in adaptability helped entrepreneurs to get to know their need to embrace change, learn from failures, and pivot their strategies or business models when necessary.

Financial Literacy and Funding Options: parents were informed that as entrepreneurs they need to

understand financial concepts and funding options available to them. Training in financial literacy covered areas such as financial statements interpretation, financial modeling, sources of funding for example, bootstrapping, loans, venture capital and investment pitches.

Decision-making and Risk Assessment: parents were told that entrepreneurship involves making critical decisions that can impact the success of a business. Training in decision-making equipped entrepreneurs with frameworks and tools to assess risks, evaluate options, and make informed choices that align with their business goals.

Customer Relationship Management: parents were trained on how to build strong relationships with customers which is crucial for the success of any business. Training in customer relationship management focused on understanding customer needs, providing exceptional customer service, managing customer feedback, and cultivating long-term customer loyalty.

Project Management: parents were trained on how to handle multiple projects simultaneously, and project management skills helped them effectively plan, execute, and monitor projects to achieve desired outcomes. Training in project management covered areas such as defining project scope, setting objectives, allocating resources, managing timelines, and evaluating project performance.

Digital Literacy and Technology Integration: In today's digital age, entrepreneurs need to be familiar with technology tools and trends that can enhance their businesses. Parents were trained in digital literacy and covered topics such as online marketing, social media management, e-commerce platforms, data analytics, and cyber security.

Scalability and Growth Planning: parents were informed that if they aspire to scale their businesses they need to understand the strategies and considerations for growth. Training in scalability and growth planning helped entrepreneurs develop scalable business models, establish efficient processes, and create plans for expansion, including hiring, scaling production, and entering new markets.

Networking and Mentorship: parents were trained on how to building a strong network and finding mentors who can provide them with valuable guidance, support, and opportunities for

entrepreneurship. Training in networking and mentorship helped entrepreneurs develop networking skills, leverage relationships, seek mentorship, and build a support system within the business community.

Cultural Intelligence and Diversity: In a globalized world, entrepreneurs often work with diverse teams and cater to multicultural markets. Training in cultural intelligence and diversity equipped entrepreneurs with skills to understand and respect different cultural perspectives, adapt business practices accordingly, and leverage diversity as a source of innovation and growth.

Entrepreneurial Mindset and Resilience: Developing an entrepreneurial mindset is essential for entrepreneurs to embrace challenges, take calculated risks, persevere in the face of setbacks, and maintain a positive attitude. Parents were trained to have entrepreneurial mindset which focused on fostering qualities such as creativity, curiosity, adaptability, persistence, and a growth mindset.

Legal and Intellectual Property Considerations: Entrepreneurs need to navigate legal and intellectual property issues to protect their businesses and innovations. Training of parents on this area involved legal and intellectual property and covered topics such as business contracts, trademark and copyright laws, patents, and licensing agreements.

Finally parents were told that, entrepreneurial skills are honed through a combination of training, practical experience, and continuous learning. It's important for them to stay updated on industry trends, seek feedback and guidance from mentors or advisors, and embrace a growth mindset to adapt and thrive in the dynamic business environment.

Business parents suggested and implemented that helped them address the challenge of caring for their children.

When the researchers asked respondents after entrepreneur skill training the business they wanted to settle for and implement, the parents suggestions were as follows; 'P1' and "P10" voiced that, I am settled for the business of buying and selling maize. "P2" expressed that " I will be buying and selling assorted food stuff such as beans, rice, tomatoes, onions, oranges and all

types of fruits.” “P3” and “P8” stated that, I will buy and sell beans. “P4” said that, I will be buying and selling ground nuts. “P5”, “P6” “P7” mentioned that, I will be keeping and selling chickens. ” P9” narrated that, I want to start selling dry fish.

Amount of money each parent was given as seed money for the selected business

After discussion among researchers the money settled for was one thousand kwacha only for each parent for a start of their business they settled for of which they were giving reports after every two months in order to monitor their progress. Then after the researchers assessment and found out that they were not yet stable more money was given to them. Then when they were stable with their business the seed money was no longer given to them but the project continued to be monitored and steady progress was noticed.

Outcome of the empowerment to parents of children with disabilities.

“ P1” reported that, I have no challenge now of taking my child for review and have bought a plot where I will build my house this is due to the skills I learnt and money I was given which I really appreciate “P 2” reported that “ I am now able to feed my child the food my child likes” “P 3” reported that, I have no challenge now of buying 2 packets of dippers for my child per month because of the training and the money I was given to start my business. Then teacher “P4” expressed that “ I can now pay rentals per month and care for my child in terms of feeding and clothing and I have even bought a plot on which I am planning to build my house. “P5” reported that, “feeding is no longer hard for me” I have built a two bedroomed house and I have stopped worrying in terms of monthly rentals and I manage to take care of my child the business has really helped me. “P6” added by saying that, “ Due to the skills given and money I am now able to take my child to school and teachers help my child in terms of remembering some of the things.” “P7” said that, “ I now feel independent because I can now buy clothes for my child. “P8” said that, I now take good care of my child because I sell the chickens from my home unlike the way I used to sell from the market and could not care for my child well I always had to put my child on my back whenever I am working or looking for food because my child does not talk,

cannot seat and is unable to walk but my child only sleeps and is getting old and heavy.” I now have enough money and I have bought the wheelchair for a my child who is unable to walk, seat and stand, I can now move with my child and do my work without worry. “P9” stated that, though I was divorced due to the nature of my child but now I am able to take care of my child this is due to the training which opened up my mind and the money I was given for my business. “P10” echoed that, I have at least some money from my business for paying rentals per month, feeding, clothing and transporting my child to medical centers with less problem as before.

VII DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion was based on the identified challenges faced by parents while caring for their children, entrepreneurial skills training, seed money for business, business parents suggested and implemented that can helped them address the challenge of caring for their children and the outcome of the empowerment to parents of children with disabilities.

Challenges Faced by Parents in Caring for Their Children

The study discovered the following challenges: lack of transport logistics for medical attention of their children, experienced divorce due to the nature of their children, children having poor memory, challenge of feeding, clothing their children, buying of essentials such as dippers, paying of rentals, carrying of their children on their back. The findings of this study is similar to some of the research findings by [4] who highlights that low-income families often struggle to afford basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and healthcare. The researchers’ argument is that, challenges significantly impacted on a children's well-being and development due to lack of daily cash and management of small scale business.

However the findings of this study was not similar to what was discovered by a study conducted by [12] who reveals that parents often struggle to find a balance between work and family, leading to feelings of stress. The argument by the researchers was that the study [12] focused on time while in this current study time management was not a challenge to the parents. Furthermore the research by [10] indicates that social isolation is common among parents, particularly those with limited social networks or living in isolated areas. This

finding was not also similar to the findings of the current study because it focused on social isolation as a challenge which was not mentioned by the respondents from this study whose challenges were different. [12]

Entrepreneurial Skills Training, Seed Money, and Business Suggestions

In this study entrepreneurial skills training provided parents with entrepreneurial skills and empowered them to generate income while addressing the challenges of caring for their children. Thus the training programs which focus on business planning, marketing, financial management, and networking have shown to enhance parents' ability to start and manage successful businesses [5].

Seed Money for Business

This study discovered that access to seed money or small business grants is crucial for parents to establish and grow their businesses. This is in-line with the study by [2] who emphasizes the positive impact of financial support in overcoming initial financial barriers and providing necessary resources for business development. Another study revealed that, access to seed money or small business grants can significantly impact parents' entrepreneurial endeavors. Financial support in the form of grants or microloans can help parents overcome initial financial barriers and establish sustainable businesses because the funding can cover startup costs, equipment, marketing, and other essential expenses.[6]

Business Suggestions Implemented by Parents

The study discovered that parents suggested and implemented business ideas that align with their skills, interests, and local community needs and these were buying and selling of maize, assorted food stuff, chickens, dry fish, beans and groundnuts. . The researchers' argument is that, empowering parents to pursue businesses that cater to their strengths and passions can lead to increased and improved financial stability. Nevertheless the current findings were not in agreement with the research findings [6] who pointed out the examples of business which include home-based childcare services, tutoring or

coaching, crafting or handmade products, and specialized services for children with disabilities.

Outcomes of Empowerment to Parents of Children with Disabilities

Parents of children with disabilities identified gaps through the help of researchers in available services and developed businesses to address those specific needs. For instance, the outcome made them address the challenges of transporting their children for medical services, accommodation, feeding, clothing, of being divorced, not having wheel chair and educating their children with disabilities and thereby fill a critical gap in their life.

Empowering parents of children with disabilities through entrepreneurial opportunities significantly improved their financial independence. This is similar to the findings by [15] who found that parents who engaged in business activities reported higher income levels and reduced reliance on social assistance programs. This financial stability positively influenced their ability to provide adequate care and support for their children.

VII CONCLUSION

Based on this empirical findings it was discovered that, parenting comes with numerous challenges, but by addressing skills problem and financial constraints parents can better care for their children. For instance, entrepreneurial skills training, seed money for business, and implementing business suggestions empowered parents, leading to improved financial independence, enhanced well-being, and better outcomes for children with disabilities. The outcomes of this empowerment extend beyond individual families, contributing to community development and fostering a more inclusive society.

VIII RECOMMENDATIONS

1.Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term sustainability and scalability of such empowerment initiatives to support parents in their caregiving journey.

2.Offering of quality education such as entrepreneur skills during Community Service is critical for empowerment of parents for children with special needs especially in lifting their economic status

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