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# Empowering Kokal: A Decolonized, Community-Led Development Model in Homa Bay County, Kenya

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POWER CENTRES

**The Power Centres: Community-Led Solutions for Rural Development in Kenya**

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Regis University

DP: Master of Development Practice

**Author Note**

This Capstone Report is based on an ongoing start-up development project in Homa-Bay County, Kenya. For any enquiries, the Author can be reached via email at [kmiruka@regis.edu](mailto:kmiruka@regis.edu)

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## **1. Personal Statement**

From a young age, growing up in Homa Bay County, I was acutely aware of the profound impacts of poverty on my community. The sight of children missing school to help their families make ends meet and families being torn apart by economic necessity has never left me. These early experiences planted a seed of determination in me to contribute meaningfully to my community's development and welfare.

My academic journey and professional experiences have been geared towards understanding and addressing the complex issues of poverty and rural development. As a student in the Master of Development Practice at Regis University, I have been able to deepen my understanding of participatory development and the critical importance of community-driven initiatives. This has reinforced my belief that true development must originate from within the community, leveraging local knowledge and strengths to foster sustainable growth and self-sufficiency.

The Power Centres project embodies my commitment to these principles. It aims to enable communities in rural Kenya to empower themselves by creating hubs of collaboration and innovation, where local residents are the architects of their development. Through this project, I aspire to create a model of development that can be replicated in other rural settings, demonstrating the effectiveness of empowered communities taking charge of their development. My ultimate goal is to see a transformation in rural Kenya, where communities are thriving, self-sufficient, and capable of passing on a legacy of prosperity to future generations.

This project, therefore, is a culmination of my personal experiences, professional skills, and deep-seated beliefs about the power of community-driven development, making it both a professional challenge and a personal commitment to my roots.

## **2. Executive Summary**

The primary development challenge addressed by this project is poverty and its associated issues, specifically the lack of agency and passive attitude towards change within the community. Our research employed a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and community consultations to gain a comprehensive understanding of these challenges. Key discoveries highlighted the community's feelings of powerlessness and inferior participation in crucial development processes, exacerbated by systemic and cultural disempowerment.

To counter these issues, the community proposed the establishment of Power Centres, which will serve as hubs for community empowerment. We have chosen the term "Power Centre" to emphasize the model's focus on empowering communities in Homa Bay. This model is specifically designed to respond to the unique needs of the people in Homa Bay, fostering sustainable development and self-sufficiency. These centres will harness, share, and utilize local knowledge and skills in leadership, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, technology, and civic engagement. Regular forums and discussion groups will be organized to voice concerns and collaborate on solutions. Additionally, the Power Centres will mobilize resources to support local businesses, education, healthcare, and social services. This program aims to transform passive power into active and expressive power, enabling the community to assert their agency, resist oppression, and deliberately take charge of their development trajectory. By fostering a sense of ownership and active participation, the Power Centres will drive sustainable and inclusive development, allowing the community to live fully and explore the limits of their humanity.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

Rural development in Kenya has long been a focal point of scholarly and policy-oriented discourse, particularly in the context of poverty alleviation and community empowerment. The proposed Power Centres project, aimed at addressing poverty in Homa-Bay County through community-led initiatives, aligns with existing literature that underscores the significance of local knowledge, participatory development, and sustainable practices. This literature review explores the theoretical and empirical foundations relevant to the proposed Power Centres project, bringing together some of the best practices to shape the proposed Power Centre model, and providing a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand.

#### **Poverty and Rural Development in Kenya**

Homa Bay County, located in the former Nyanza Province, is predominantly inhabited by the Luo ethnic group and characterized by high poverty rates, low educational attainment, and limited access to healthcare and financial services (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The local economy is largely based on subsistence agriculture, with a significant portion of the population relying on fishing from Lake Victoria. This economic dependency on natural resources makes the community vulnerable to environmental shocks such as droughts and floods (World Vision, 2022). Traditional socio-cultural practices, while providing a sense of identity and community cohesion, can sometimes hinder development efforts, particularly in areas related to gender equality and modern educational practices (Deacon, 2018). The term "Power Centres" is chosen to reflect the initiative's aim to harness and amplify the inherent strengths and resources of the community, transforming passive power into active agency to tackle these multifaceted challenges.

#### **Theoretical Foundations**

##### ***Participatory Development***

Participatory development theory, as articulated by scholars like Robert Chambers (1997), emphasizes the active involvement of community members in the development process. This approach challenges traditional top-down models, advocating for a bottom-up strategy where the community identifies its needs and solutions. The Power Centres project embodies this principle by positioning local residents as the primary agents of change, thereby fostering ownership and sustainability. In similar contexts, participatory development has been successfully applied in projects like the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in India, which empowered local communities to take charge of their development agenda, resulting in increased accountability and sustainable outcomes (Chambers, 2008). However, challenges such as power imbalances and resistance from entrenched local elites can hinder the effectiveness of participatory approaches (Cooke & Kothari, 2001).

The Ganokendra model in Bangladesh, as discussed by Alam (2006), serves as an illustrative example. These community-led centers for education, skill development, and social mobilization have effectively addressed poverty and empowered communities through participatory approaches. The success of Ganokendra underscores the potential of the Power Centres to replicate similar outcomes in Homa Bay.

### ***Empowerment Theory***

Empowerment theory, which highlights the process of increasing personal, interpersonal, and political power, is crucial for understanding the objectives of the Power Centres. According to Zimmerman (2000), empowerment involves gaining control over one's life and influencing the organizational and societal structures in which one lives. The Power Centres aim to transform passive power into active agency, enabling the community to assert their rights and drive their development. Applications of empowerment theory in similar contexts, such as the Grameen Bank microfinance initiative in Bangladesh, have shown how providing financial resources and training to marginalized groups can lead to significant improvements in economic and social well-being (Yunus, 2003). However,

empowerment initiatives must be carefully designed to ensure they do not inadvertently reinforce existing power hierarchies or exclude vulnerable groups (Cornwall & Brock, 2005).

### ***Sustainable Livelihoods Approach***

The sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA), advanced by the Department for International Development (DFID), offers a framework for understanding the complex factors affecting rural livelihoods. It focuses on enhancing the capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living. The Power Centres' emphasis on financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and local resource mobilization aligns with SLA's goal of building resilient and adaptive communities. Empirical evidence from projects in sub-Saharan Africa, such as the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework implemented in Uganda, demonstrates how enhancing local capacities and diversifying income sources can lead to more sustainable and resilient communities (Carney, 1998). Nevertheless, SLA applications must consider the local context and potential constraints, such as limited market access and infrastructural challenges (Scoones, 2015).

### **Empirical Evidence**

#### ***Community-Driven Development***

Central to the Power Centres model is the concept of community-driven development (CDD), a widely recognized approach emphasizing community ownership, participation, and decision-making in development processes (World Bank, 2023). Research has shown that CDD projects can lead to more sustainable outcomes, increased accountability, and greater community buy-in (Rwigema, 2022). In Kenya, the Community-Based Poverty Reduction (CBPR) program has demonstrated how empowering local communities can lead to sustainable development (Torjman, 1998). Additionally, a study by Mansuri and Rao (2013) found that CDD projects in various countries resulted in improved service delivery, increased social cohesion, and enhanced local governance.



***Local Knowledge and Indigenous Practices***

The integration of local knowledge and indigenous practices is pivotal for sustainable development. Berkes, Colding, and Folke (2000) argue that traditional ecological knowledge can enhance adaptive management and sustainability. In Homa Bay, the use of local agricultural practices and resource management strategies, as observed in the Re-greening Africa project, highlights the value of indigenous knowledge in fostering resilience and food security (World Vision, 2022). A case study from Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE program illustrates how integrating local knowledge in wildlife management led to both ecological and economic benefits for rural communities (Murombedzi, 2003). However, it is important to navigate the potential conflicts between traditional practices and modern development interventions to ensure harmonious and effective integration (Agrawal, 1995).

The relationship between indigenous knowledge and technological innovation in poverty alleviation is further explored by Mwantimwa (2010), who emphasizes the importance of leveraging local knowledge in sustainable development efforts. The study highlights the potential of indigenous practices to contribute to poverty alleviation and calls for strategies to improve their adoption and application.

***Gender and Youth Inclusion***

Research indicates that inclusive development strategies that involve women and youth yield better outcomes. A study by Ghiron et al. (2014) in East Africa found that programs focusing on these groups led to improved health, education, and economic status. The Power Centres' focus on gender and youth inclusion is supported by this evidence, ensuring that marginalized voices are heard and empowered. Further, a World Bank (2018) report highlights that empowering woman through education and economic opportunities has a multiplier effect, benefiting entire communities. However, initiatives must address deep-seated cultural norms and practices that restrict women's and youth's participation in development activities (Moser, 1993).

***Social Networks and Mutual Aid***

The Power Centres' emphasis on leveraging social networks and mutual aid systems resonates with existing research on the role of social capital in rural development. Studies in Kenya have highlighted the importance of social networks for accessing resources, information, and support (Kusimba et al., 2015; Madhavan et al., 2018). The Luo tradition of communal living and extended family ties (Lang'o, 2021) provides a strong foundation for the project's focus on fostering mutual aid and collective action. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that social networks can also perpetuate inequalities and power imbalances, requiring a careful and nuanced approach to ensure that the Power Centres benefit all community members equitably. For example, a study by Narayan (1999) found that social capital could both enable and constrain development, depending on the inclusivity of the networks involved.

The agent-based model of the Maasai risk-pooling system, as discussed by Campenni, Cronk, and Aktipis (2022), illustrates how need-based transfers can enhance resilience to shocks. This model aligns with the Power Centres' plan to establish mutual aid groups and business collectives, promoting social cohesion and economic stability.

***Decolonizing Development***

The project's emphasis on decolonizing development aligns with a growing body of literature critiquing the top-down, Western-centric approaches that have historically dominated the development field (Shiva, 2010). Recent studies by Smith (2012) and Santos (2014) emphasize the need for a paradigm shift towards "epistemologies of the South," which prioritize local ways of knowing and being. Case studies from Latin America, particularly the "Buen Vivir" philosophy, provide practical examples of how decolonizing development can lead to sustainable and equitable outcomes (Gudynas, 2011). These approaches stress the importance of indigenous knowledge, cultural diversity, and community self-determination, which are foundational to the Power Centres project. By operationalizing these

principles, the project aims to empower local communities to take charge of their development, fostering resilience and self-sufficiency. However, the challenge lies in balancing the integration of indigenous knowledge with necessary modern practices to ensure holistic development (Escobar, 1995).

### **Case Studies and Comparative Models**

#### ***Ganokendra in Bangladesh***

The Ganokendra model in Bangladesh, which involves community-led centers for education, skill development, and social mobilization, offers a parallel to the Power Centres initiative. Alam (2006) highlights how these centers have effectively addressed poverty and empowered communities through participatory approaches. The success of Ganokendra underscores the potential of the Power Centres to replicate similar outcomes in Homa Bay. However, challenges such as sustaining community interest and securing ongoing funding are critical considerations (Alam & Rahman, 2014).

#### ***Mutual Aid and Social Networks***

Mutual aid networks and social capital are crucial for community resilience. Studies on the Maasai risk-pooling system in Kenya, for instance, illustrate how community-based financial support systems enhance resilience to economic shocks (Campennì, Cronk, & Aktipis, 2022). The

Power Centres' plan to establish mutual aid groups and business collectives aligns with these findings, promoting social cohesion and economic stability. Nevertheless, it is essential to ensure these networks are inclusive and do not exacerbate existing social inequalities (Kusimba et al., 2015).

#### ***M-PESA in Kenya***

The impact of mobile financial services, specifically M-PESA in Kenya, provides a valuable example of how financial technology can transform economic activities in rural areas. Morawczynski (2009) explores the usage and impact of M-PESA, highlighting its role in improving financial inclusion and economic resilience. The Power Centres can draw on these insights to enhance their financial literacy and entrepreneurship initiatives.

## **Challenges and Considerations**

### ***Systemic and Cultural Barriers***

While the theoretical and empirical support for community-led development is strong, challenges such as systemic barriers and cultural resistance must be acknowledged. Deacon (2018) discusses the complexities of integrating modern development initiatives with traditional social structures in Kenya. Addressing these challenges requires culturally sensitive approaches and continuous community engagement, which the Power Centres project aims to implement through its inclusive and participatory methods. Moreover, resistance from local elites who may feel threatened by shifts in power dynamics is a potential obstacle that needs strategic management (Mosse, 2005).

### ***Sustainability and Scalability***

Ensuring the sustainability and scalability of community-led projects is a significant challenge. Lin and Rosenblatt (2012) emphasize the importance of creating self-sustaining models that can be replicated in different contexts. The Power Centres' strategy of building local capacity and fostering economic independence is designed to address these concerns, aiming for long-term impact and replicability. However, securing continuous funding and adapting the model to different local contexts without losing its core principles are potential challenges that need to be planned for (Bebbington, 1999).

### ***Addressing Gender Inequality***

Gender inequality is a significant challenge in rural Kenya, where women often face barriers to education, economic opportunities, and decision-making (UNICEF, 2020). The Power Centres project recognizes the importance of addressing gender inequality through specific interventions targeting women's empowerment, such as financial literacy training, entrepreneurial support, and leadership development. Research has shown that empowering women can have positive ripple effects on families, communities, and overall development outcomes (United Nations, 2016). However, deeply entrenched

cultural norms and resistance from some community members can pose significant obstacles to these efforts (Kabeer, 1999).

### **Gaps in the Literature and Project Contribution**

While existing literature provides a valuable foundation for the Power Centres project, there is a need for more research on community-led development in the specific context of Homa Bay County. This project aims to contribute to this gap by documenting the successes and challenges of implementing a decolonized, community-driven model for rural development. Future research could focus on longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of the Power Centres, comparative studies with similar projects in other regions, and investigations into the specific mechanisms by which empowerment and participatory approaches contribute to sustainable development. By focusing on empowerment, mutual aid, and the integration of indigenous knowledge, the Power Centres project has the potential to offer valuable insights and lessons for other communities seeking to achieve sustainable and equitable development.

### **Conclusion**

The Power Centres project, with its focus on community empowerment, participatory development, and sustainable livelihoods, is well-grounded in both theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence. By leveraging local knowledge, promoting inclusive development, and addressing systemic challenges, the project has the potential to create a model of sustainable rural development in Homa Bay. This literature review supports the project's innovative approach and underscores the importance of community-led solutions in achieving lasting development outcomes. The insights gained from this project will contribute to the broader discourse on rural development and offer practical strategies for empowering communities to drive their own development agendas.

#### **4. Community Overview**

Oyugis, a town within Homa Bay County's Rachuonyo South constituency, Rachuonyo South faces stark challenges. The 2019 census revealed that 72.5% of the population lives below the poverty line, highlighting a struggle for resources that shapes daily life. Oyugis, like much of the constituency, relies on a largely rural economy, where fishing in Lake Victoria and subsistence agriculture are the mainstays. Further statistics from the census indicate a predominantly rural nature of the county with only 9.8% urban dwellers. The high population density (575 people per square kilometer), and the high dependency ratio (87.5%) also highlight the potential strain on resources. The dependency ratio of 87.5% means that for every 100 working-age individuals (typically those aged 15-64), there are 87.5 dependents (individuals younger than 15 or older than 64). This high dependency ratio indicates a significant economic burden on the working-age population, as a large proportion of the population is not part of the labor force and relies on the working population for support. This can strain resources and limit economic growth and development opportunities. Additionally, a low median age (18 years) and a high fertility rate (5.6 children per woman) suggest challenges to providing for future generations.

Oyugis town itself is a study in contrasts. Dirt roads crisscross the expanding commercial center, where new storefronts and small businesses signal economic activity. Yet, just a short distance away, homes become more modest, and infrastructure grows sparser. In Kokal Village, on the outskirts of Oyugis, this unevenness is even more pronounced. While the Oyugis Water Project has improved the lives of some town residents, many in Kokal still rely on distant, sometimes unreliable, and untreated water wells. The Oyugis Water Project, a major government investment, is a source of both progress and disparity – households in the rural areas where the water comes from are still relying on distant boreholes or untreated sources in stark contrast to the few urban dwellers who get supplied with the new water lines.

Access to reliable services like health and education presents similar challenges. In Kokal, a single small, understaffed clinic meant to serve the wider area has not been operational for over 20 years. This is due to a cycle of political promises and neglect. Every election cycle, politicians use the clinic as a campaign promise, vowing to complete its construction and make it operational. However, once elected to office, the clinic is forgotten until the next election cycle, and the funds allocated to it are often diverted or embezzled. This situation underscores the necessity for the Power Centre to empower the residents of Kokal to take control of their community's development.

Mothers endure long journeys for essential prenatal care, only to find a lack of medicine or face long wait times to see a doctor. Often, they avoid seeking medical attention due to the financial burden of transport, prescriptions, and doctor's fees. The older people suffer from chronic, treatable illnesses simply because they cannot access medical services. Children with serious ailments frequently require costly trips to the larger hospital in Oyugis town, sometimes succumbing to their ailments enroute due to inadequate transport options. These observations are based on personal experiences and consistent reports from local NGOs, which indicate that a significant portion of financial aid requests in the community are for medical and educational support. As a member of this community, I have personally supported multiple women in need of finances for medical support. I also know some who have succumbed to treatable illnesses simply because they could not afford to seek medical attention. Almost 55% of the requests I have been supporting are related to medical fees and 45% related to educational fees. These challenges persist despite the county government allocating over 30% of its annual budget to healthcare. The well-intentioned government programs fail to meet the communities' needs effectively, highlighting a gap between policy and practice.

Education likewise paints a complex picture. Oyugis town has several schools, but overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of teachers mean some students are left behind. This hits families like Atieno and Otieno's hard – while they might be able to send one child to school consistently, further education

for others could hinge on finding support. NGOs like Oyugis Integrated Development Organization sometimes step in with small scholarships or school supply drives, but limited resources mean difficult choices must be made. One sibling may need to drop-out to support another sibling to go through school.

Understanding our community means acknowledging the power of Luo tradition and social structures. Their rich history, patrilineal kinship systems, and structures like the Luo Council of Elders profoundly influence how development initiatives are received and how opportunities are distributed among families and across the wider community. Sadly, many development initiatives in the community do not seem to appreciate this significant detail. While communal traditions that foster resilience and knowledge-sharing (like Kokal farmers passing on drought-resistant planting techniques) are celebrated in theory, practices like polygamy and wife inheritance customs continue to face persistent onslaught from contemporary socio-political and development projects.

The community, however, is not stagnant. Residents themselves are powerful change agents. Facing limited job prospects in the formal economy, many turn to entrepreneurship: roadside food vendors, tailors, or motorcycle taxi drivers make up the informal backbone of Oyugis town. In Kokal, women's savings groups have become lifelines, pooling resources to invest in a small shop or raise school fees collectively. The Luo tradition of valuing education motivates families, even facing hardship, to sacrifice deeply in the hope of a brighter future for their children.

Alongside resident-led change, NGOs play a pivotal role. The Oyugis Integrated Development Organization exemplifies a grassroots approach. It runs workshops for Kokal farmers on drought mitigation and works with Oyugis town schools to boost girls' access to education. However, the small scale of their work means their impact, while vital, is limited by funding and reach. The Wire Soccer Academy offers another change model in Oyugis. Blending sports with life skills training, they create pathways for at-risk youth. Stories abound of former participants securing jobs as coaches, or even



professional football contracts, transforming their own lives and their families'. Yet, this model focuses on a specific demographic, highlighting the need for diverse strategies catering to different needs in Oyugis.

The vibrancy of Oyugis's commercial center obscures a challenging reality. Informal traders and small-scale farmers rely on unpredictable markets – a middleman may offer an exploitative price, which is unfairly low, for vegetables one week, and a high price the next due to shortages. reflecting market volatility. Without regulation or means to add value to his products, the farmers remain trapped in a cycle of precariousness. Government-backed farmers' cooperatives have been tried in the past but have struggled due to mismanagement or corruption. This creates wariness among Kokal residents towards new market-based solutions.

Oyugis is a community in flux, poised between untapped potential and entrenched obstacles. It's a place where pockets of progress coexist alongside persistent poverty. The question resonates anew: can the energy of the commercial center, the dedication of NGOs, and the resilience of the people foster inclusive development that benefits everyone? Will opportunities arise for those who didn't walk the traditional educational path? Will those who leave find ways to give back meaningfully? Will inclusive development also reach Kokal Village? These are the questions that my project aims to explore further and deeper in the next sections.

Rural communities in Homa Bay County, Kenya, possess a unique blend of social structures, cultural practices, and natural resources that they strategically utilize to enhance diverse aspects of their livelihoods. While focus is often placed on income generation strategies, achieving food security, building resilience to economic and environmental shocks, and improving overall well-being are all essential components of a sustainable livelihood in this context.

Social networks grounded in communal living and extended family ties are a cornerstone of Luo society in Homa Bay. Traditional structures provide essential support systems, fostering cooperation and

facilitating resource sharing (Lang'o, 2021). However, studies are needed to explore how evolving social dynamics, such as urbanization or migration, may influence the ability of these traditional structures to support livelihoods (for example, see the Public Affairs Index for Homa Bay County, 2023).

Cultural practices play a multi-faceted role in Homa Bay's livelihood strategies. Traditions like offering hospitality to visitors strengthen social bonds, which can translate into economic opportunities or assistance in times of hardship (Unicef, 2020).

The fertile soils, rivers, and Lake Victoria within Homa Bay provide ample potential for agriculture and fishing. Projects like Re-greening Africa promote sustainable farming practices that enhance soil fertility, increase crop yields, and support livestock, bolstering agricultural livelihoods. (World Vision, 2022. Additionally, the county's diverse natural landscape, ranging from lakeshore to fertile highlands, allows for cultivation of valuable crops like pawpaw, maize, beans, and sweet potatoes. Further research is needed to determine how communities establish governance systems for utilizing natural resources in ways that ensure long-term sustainability.

Studies such as the assessment of rural livelihoods (Ngoleka et al., 2023) provide evidence of intricate links between social, cultural, and natural assets in Homa Bay. Additionally, livelihood assessments highlight the importance of both traditional knowledge systems and collaborative initiatives like Re-greening Africa in ensuring the sustainability of resource use. Local governance initiatives appear to play a key role, with formal institutions emerging to support community-led resource management. Communities may leverage social networks to access additional labor for planting and harvesting, maximizing benefits from fertile lands. Traditional knowledge systems may work hand-in-hand with initiatives like Re-greening Africa to enhance sustainable agriculture and resource management.

Rural communities in Homa Bay County demonstrate remarkable resilience and adaptability in utilizing their resources for livelihood enhancement. Nonetheless, a more nuanced understanding is

required regarding the specific mechanisms through which these elements interact and how external factors like climate change, policy shifts, or market fluctuations influence their effectiveness. Future research should also investigate the potential tensions and limitations inherent in these livelihood strategies.

## 5. Stakeholder Analysis and Strategy

The stakeholder analysis process began with a comprehensive brainstorming session by my team of peers in July 2023, identifying potential stakeholders based on their connection to the project and the community. This was followed by in-depth consultations, in December 2023, with seven village elders, fifteen leaders of established savings groups, and four religious figures to gain a deeper understanding of the social dynamics and power structures within Kokal. The analysis identified three primary stakeholder groups:

- Local Community:** The heart of Kokal. This includes residents (women, youth, elders, farmers, fisherfolk, and marginalized individuals), local businesses, educational institutions, health facilities, and religious institutions. Their active participation and ownership are crucial for the project's sustainability and impact.
- Local Organizations:** These existing CBOs, NGOs, and community leaders (both government and traditional) are potential allies for amplifying the Power Centre's impact. This includes grassroots organizations like the Swambo Kinship Table Banking Group, addressing local needs and mobilizing community action, and local government officials and agencies.
- External Partners:** While offering invaluable funding, expertise, and networks, their goals must align seamlessly with Kokal's self-defined path to empowerment. This includes national and international NGOs, government agencies, donors, researchers, academia, and the diaspora community.

The following table breaks down key stakeholder types for the Power Centre project:

Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder Description	Stakeholder Needs	Stakeholder Interest	Potential Risks of Engaging the Stakeholder	How Might We Engage the Stakeholder?
Local Villagers	Directly affected by poverty, beneficiaries of and	Resources, opportunities, sustainable solutions, basic	Upliftment from poverty, better quality of life,	Resistance to change, cultural challenges	Ensure community involvement, conduct culturally sensitive outreach, community

	contributors to the project	needs, stop-gap solutions	community development		engagement, surveys, meetings
<b>Government</b>	Regulators, policymakers, potential funders	Socio-economic development, stability	Poverty alleviation, sustainable development, governance effectiveness, public service	Bureaucratic hurdles, political considerations	Engage in policy advocacy, align project goals with government priorities, regular meetings
<b>Local NGOs/CSOs</b>	Engages in poverty-related discussions, Capacity Building Community Based CSOs	Effective poverty solutions, community development	Sustainability of projects, community participation	Limited financial resources	Collaborate on research and project implementation
<b>International CSOs/NGOs</b>	Focuses on child welfare and development	Poverty alleviation, child well-being	Success of child-focused poverty programs	Limited financial resources	Collaborate on child-centered projects and capacity-building
<b>Religious Institutions</b>	Addresses poverty within the community from a moral/spiritual perspective	Moral guidance, community development	Spiritual well-being, community harmony	Potential conflicts with project vision	Collaborate on community programs, social support
<b>Local Business Owners</b>	Contribute to local economic development and can provide resources or expertise	Business growth, community development, Profits	Economic development, community prosperity	Economic competition	Explore partnerships for economic development and job creation
<b>Diaspora Community</b>	Invest in the community from abroad, provide financial or informational support	Project engagement	Welfare of their home-villages	Differing perspectives, logistical challenges	Engage in fundraising and provide guidance
<b>Political Leadership</b>	Influential in community development, control resources, and public opinion	Political goodwill	Successful poverty alleviation, political stability	Political considerations	Advocate for project alignment with political agendas

## 6. Needs Assessment

Needs Assessment for this project was done in 2 stages. Stage 1 involved assessing the needs for organizational set-up, primarily focusing on how we may shift our social arrangement by, for example, harnessing the social energy to create a space for mutual aid, community ownership and sustainable participation. A team of my peers drawn from the community between August 2023 and October 2023 did this part of the Needs Assessment. The assessment was done through Desk Review of known Community Development models, approaches, and organizations, to explore which model or combination of models would work in the context of Kokal Village. The Desk Review was complemented by a collaborative workshop with members recruited from within the community.

The second stage of needs assessment, conducted between December 2023 and January 2024, delved deeper into the multifaceted nature of poverty and prosperity in Kokal Village using a mixed methods approach to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, aiming to understand material deprivation and the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of well-being. Surveys and questionnaires, including 43 online and 21 paper-based ones, were administered to 78 participants to capture demographic information, economic status, social interactions, and perceptions of poverty and prosperity, providing a snapshot of the community's socioeconomic landscape and key trends. Additionally, 9 semi-structured interviews with key informants like community leaders, elders, and individuals in various economic sectors offered in-depth insights into individual experiences and perspectives on poverty, prosperity, and community development. Furthermore, 5 focus group discussions with diverse community groups facilitated open dialogue, capturing the collective wisdom and shared experiences of residents, guided by protocols focusing on community dynamics, challenges, resources, and aspirations.

The needs assessment revealed several key findings including:

- **Low sense of agency:** A majority of community members expressed feelings of powerlessness and a deep-seated expectation to be supported by external actors, such as those in the diaspora, donors, and politicians. This reliance on external aid has fostered a sense of dependency and limited local initiative.
- **Deep disappointment and desperation:** The lack of anticipated external help has led to widespread disappointment and desperation, further eroding community agency and self-reliance.
- **Passive development expectations:** A prevalent sentiment within the community is that development is to be "brought" by outsiders, highlighting a lack of ownership and initiative in driving local development.
- **Financial barriers to essential services::** Access to finances emerged as the primary obstacle to healthcare and education, underscoring the need for economic empowerment initiatives.
- **Culture of entitlement ("yako"):** Business owners and privileged community members expressed concerns about a culture of entitlement, where individuals feel entitled to resources without a strong sense of ownership, leading to resource depletion and discouraging investment in the community.
- **Pervasive Poverty:** Poverty is a consistent theme throughout the community, affecting various aspects of life.
- **Powerlessness and inferior participation:** This manifests in language that expresses waiting for external assistance rather than advocating for self-determination. Many community projects have stalled due to a lack of local initiative to complete them, and residents feel powerless to influence local decision-making.

## **7. Theory of Change**

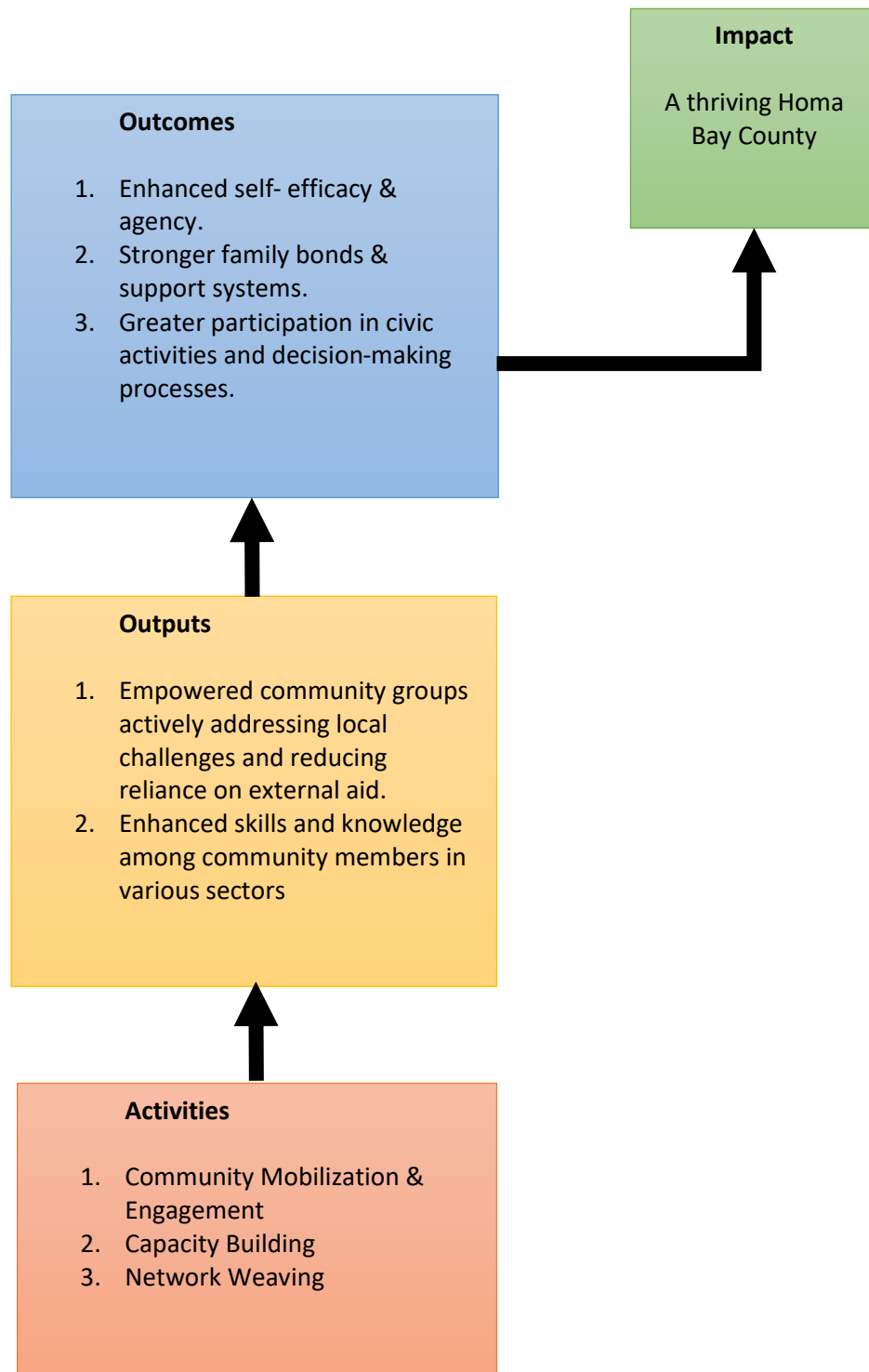
The Power Centre's theory of change is driven by the need to address not just poverty and its related challenges but also the underlying issues of powerlessness, passivity, and inferior participation in crucial development processes, as highlighted in the needs assessment. This lack of agency leads to inefficient civic engagement, a sense of inferiority, and vulnerability to manipulation, resulting in systemic, economic, scientific, and cultural disempowerment. Our project aims to reverse this challenge by empowering individuals and communities to become active, assertive participants in their governance and development processes. By reclaiming and expressing their power, individuals can boldly demand justice, fairness, and love, transforming from passive to active agents of change.

The Power Centre's approach involves community mobilization, capacity building, network creation, and fostering mutual aid, leading to transformative outcomes. These include increased community participation and ownership, stronger and more effective community groups, enhanced skills and knowledge, greater access to resources and information, and sustainable support systems. At the individual level, this translates to improved financial literacy, skills, self-efficacy, expanded social networks, and better access to reliable information, empowering individuals to improve their livelihoods and participate actively in community life. For families, increased household income, better communication, and access to essential services reduce poverty, enhance well-being, and strengthen family bonds. At the community level, these changes lead to a thriving local economy, increased social cohesion and trust, and empowered community groups addressing local challenges in areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, commerce, and industry; hence reducing reliance on external aid.

Ultimately, the Power Centre aims to influence systemic change, resulting in responsive local governance, policies supporting community-led development and environmental conservation, and increased community investment due to demonstrated self-reliance. Success hinges on active community participation, equitable partnerships, sufficient resources, a conducive external



environment, and community embrace of information access and media freedom. By investing in community-led initiatives, capacity building, and information access, the Power Centre empowers Homa Bay County residents to shape their future, creating a thriving, resilient, and equitable community.



## **8. Program Description**

The needs assessment revealed a community grappling with a low sense of agency, feelings of powerlessness, and a passive approach to development. Financial barriers to essential services like healthcare and education were identified as significant obstacles. Additionally, a culture of entitlement among some community members was noted as a potential hindrance to sustainable development. The Power Centre's theory of change and the proposed program below directly address these needs by fostering community empowerment, building capacity, and promoting self-reliance. By increasing community participation and ownership, strengthening community groups, and weaving a robust network of support, the Power Centre aims to shift the community mindset from dependency to self-determination. The program's focus on financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and mutual aid will address the financial barriers to essential services and promote economic empowerment. Furthermore, the emphasis on inclusive leadership and transparent governance will counteract the culture of entitlement and foster a sense of collective responsibility for community development.

### **8.1 Goals and Objectives**

The Power Centre in Kokal, Homa Bay County, aims to empower the community to actively shape its future and achieve lasting prosperity by fostering a decolonized, community-led development approach, with a particular emphasis on recognizing and addressing historical and present-day inequalities, centering indigenous knowledge, and ensuring the active participation of all community members, especially marginalized groups.. This is being done through a three-pronged approach, focusing on increasing community participation and ownership, strengthening community groups and weaving a robust network of support and collaboration across these groups. The three-prongs are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. Increased community participation and ownership creates a fertile ground for stronger, more effective community groups. As these groups gain capacity and collaborate, they form a network of support and shared learning, further enhancing community

participation and ownership. This positive feedback loop drives sustainable development, empowering the community to take control of their own destiny.

***Goal 1: Increased Community Participation & Ownership***

The Power Centre seeks to foster a sense of empowerment and agency among all community members, with a particular focus on women and youth, who often face systemic barriers to participation. This goal is centered on shifting the community mindset from dependency on external aid to self-reliance and active involvement in their own development.

**Objective 1.1: Enhanced Community Decision-Making:** Develop the community's capacity to make informed decisions about their development priorities. This will be achieved through regular community meetings, consultations, and training on communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills. By actively involving community members in decision-making processes, the Power Centre aims to foster a sense of ownership and agency, leading to more sustainable and impactful initiatives.

**Objective 1.2: Active Community Engagement:** Cultivate a vibrant culture of participation in community development activities. This will be facilitated by creating inclusive spaces for dialogue and collaboration, organizing regular community events, and celebrating cultural traditions. The goal is to strengthen social bonds, build trust, and ensure that all voices are heard and valued in the development process.

**Objective 1.3: Inclusive Leadership and Representation:** Ensure diverse representation in leadership and project activities, particularly for women, youth, and marginalized groups. This will be achieved through targeted outreach, leadership training programs, and the establishment of inclusive governance structures. By empowering these groups to take on leadership roles, the Power Centre aims to break down systemic barriers and foster a more equitable and representative community. A power analysis will be conducted to understand the existing power structures and dynamics within the

community, and specific programs aimed at empowering women and marginalized groups will be implemented, ensuring their voices are heard in decision-making processes.

***Goal 2: Stronger, More Effective Community Groups***

Recognizing the crucial role of community groups in driving local development, the Power Centre aims to strengthen their capacity and effectiveness. This will be done by addressing common challenges such as lack of leadership, transparency, and accountability, while also fostering collaboration and mitigating potential conflicts.

**Objective 2.1: Enhanced Capacity and Collaboration:** Empower community groups to identify and address local challenges through capacity building, training, and access to resources. The Power Centre will facilitate collaboration and cooperation among different groups, fostering a network of support and shared learning. This will include workshops on project management, financial literacy, and conflict resolution, as well as opportunities for networking and resource sharing.

**Objective 2.2: Effective and Inclusive Leadership:** Build leadership and organizational capacity within community groups by providing training, mentorship, and opportunities for peer learning. This will focus on developing the skills of current and emerging leaders, particularly those from underrepresented groups, to effectively manage group finances, plan projects, and make informed decisions.

**Objective 2.3: Transparent and Accountable Governance:** Enhance transparency and accountability within community organizations by establishing clear guidelines and procedures for financial management, record-keeping, and reporting. The Power Centre will also promote inclusive decision-making processes that ensure all members have a voice and that resources are used efficiently and equitably.

By achieving these goals and objectives, the Power Centre aims to create a measurable and sustainable impact on the lives of the people in Kokal. This will be achieved by fostering a community-

led development approach that empowers individuals, strengthens community groups, and promotes collaboration among all stakeholders. The ultimate goal is to create a thriving Homa Bay County where all residents have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and contribute to a prosperous and sustainable future.

## **8.2 Activities**

To achieve its goals, the Power Centre will implement a range of activities that promote community participation, ownership, and collaboration. These activities will be guided by principles of decolonization, ethical engagement, and respect for local knowledge and cultural practices.

### ***8.2.1 Meeting Immediate Needs***

Recognizing the urgency of certain needs within the community, the Power Centre will prioritize addressing immediate challenges as an entry point for engagement and trust-building. This will include:

- **Offering Bursaries and Scholarships:** The Power Centre will provide financial assistance to children from low-income families to access education, ensuring that lack of funds does not hinder their potential.
- **Purchasing Medical Insurance for the Vulnerable:** The Power Centre will work with local healthcare providers to secure affordable medical insurance for vulnerable community members, improving their access to healthcare and reducing the financial burden of illness.

By addressing these immediate needs, the Power Centre aims to alleviate some of the most pressing challenges faced by the community, creating a foundation of trust and goodwill that will facilitate deeper engagement and participation in the Power Centre's long-term development activities.

### ***8.2.2 Community Engagement and Mobilization***

The cornerstone of the Power Centre's approach is robust community engagement, achieved through a multifaceted strategy that includes Monthly Community Forums, Regular Focus Group

Discussions, the establishment of a Community Advisory Board (CAB), and the use of participatory tools and methods. Monthly Community Forums will provide a platform for open dialogue, information sharing, and collective decision-making, engaging community members, local leaders, NGO representatives, and businesses. Regular Focus Group Discussions will ensure that the voices of women, youth, and marginalized groups are heard, allowing the Power Centre to tailor interventions to their specific needs. The CAB, a diverse and representative body, will guide the project's strategic direction, meeting quarterly to review progress and provide feedback. Additionally, participatory tools and methods, such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and community mapping, will empower community members to identify their assets, articulate their needs, and visualize their aspirations, ensuring that project activities are grounded in local knowledge and context. Together, these elements will foster a sense of ownership and active participation, essential for the Power Centre's success.

### ***8.2.3 Capacity Building and Training***

To ensure the long-term success and sustainability of community-led initiatives, the Power Centre will invest in comprehensive capacity-building efforts, which include strengthening self-help business collectives and providing tailored training programs. The creation of self-help business collectives will stimulate economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. This process begins with identifying common business interests and needs within the community through surveys and focus group discussions, ensuring that collectives are formed around shared goals and aspirations. In addition to supporting business collectives, the Power Centre will conduct thorough needs assessments to identify specific training and capacity-building needs of community members and groups. Based on these assessments, the Power Centre will develop and deliver a wide range of interactive and practical training programs and resources.

### ***8.2.4 Network Weaving***

To foster sustainable development through collaboration and resource sharing, the Power Centre will actively engage in network weaving, building connections between individuals, community groups, and external stakeholders. This will involve facilitating regular meetings and workshops where community groups can share experiences, learn from each other, and explore opportunities for joint initiatives. The Power Centre will also proactively identify and establish partnerships with relevant NGOs, government agencies, and businesses, ensuring these collaborations are based on mutual respect, transparency, and shared values. To improve access to information and resources, the Power Centre will create a community resource center or online platform, conduct regular information sessions, and support community groups in securing external funding. By weaving a strong network of interconnected actors, the Power Centre aims to create a supportive ecosystem where resources, knowledge, and opportunities are shared and leveraged for the collective benefit of the community, ultimately fostering sustainable and community-led development.

### **8.3 Participants**

The Power Centre anticipates directly impacting at least 5,000 individuals throughout its 2-year pilot period. While community involvement will be strongly encouraged, the project will prioritize specific target groups to maximize impact and address existing inequities.

**Gender Focus:** Women, who represent approximately 68% of projected beneficiaries (3,400 individuals), will gain access to programs specifically designed to empower them to overcome resource limitations. This includes financial literacy training, entrepreneurial support, and participation in the Mutual Aid program. Men, representing 32% (1,600 individuals), will engage in economic development initiatives, skill-building, and leadership opportunities tailored to their needs.

**Age Considerations:** Recognizing the large youth population in Kokal, the Power Centre will focus on youth aged 15-24, projected at 70% of beneficiaries (3,500 individuals). This aligns with the need to tackle unemployment and limited livelihood options for this demographic. Youth will participate

in mentorship programs, access entrepreneurial start-up support, and a wide range of skill-building opportunities linked to their career aspirations. Adults aged 25-59, roughly 20% of beneficiaries (1,000 individuals) will have opportunities to expand their existing capabilities and explore alternative income generation strategies. They will also benefit from the Mutual Aid program and the Power Centre's resource network. The project recognizes the often-overlooked needs of the elderly (60+ years), estimated at 10% of beneficiaries (500 individuals), who will primarily benefit from the supportive network created by the Mutual Aid program, reducing social isolation and addressing unmet practical needs.

The Power Centre is committed to ensuring that its programs and resources are accessible to all members of the Kokal community. Outreach efforts will leverage community leaders, schools, and established communication channels to raise awareness and specifically target populations often marginalized, such as individuals with disabilities, single-parent households, and ethnic minorities. The physical site of the Power Centre will be designed with accessibility in mind, including ramps, designated areas for rest and childcare, and other accommodations. Educational materials will be tailored to account for differences in literacy levels and learning styles, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to benefit.

The Power Centre's impact will ripple far beyond those directly participating in its programs. As participants experience increased income security and develop valuable skills, their households, and the broader community benefit. This economic boost can reduce family-level economic strain and contribute to a more vibrant local economy. Additionally, the Mutual Aid program fosters a culture of collaboration and support within the community, with benefits ranging from shared childcare to increased resilience during crises. By focusing on youth empowerment, the project aims to break cycles of poverty, building a foundation for strong families and community leaders for generations to come. Finally, as the Power Centre model demonstrates success, its innovative solutions have the potential to



inspire replication in other communities throughout Homa Bay County and beyond, catalyzing a wider movement towards sustainable development in the region.

#### **8.4 Sustainability**

The Power Centre's sustainability strategy is rooted in fostering self-reliance and continuous improvement within the Kokal community. The exit strategy involves gradually transitioning ownership and management to local leaders trained through the Power Centre's capacity-building programs, aiming for complete local control by Year 5. This includes establishing a locally elected governing body responsible for strategic planning, fundraising, program implementation, and evaluation. To support this transition, the Power Centre will develop a diversified funding model comprising income-generating activities, local fundraising, and partnerships with local businesses and government agencies. Leadership development and community ownership are prioritized, ensuring the Power Centre remains a valuable resource for generations to come.

Sustainability efforts include comprehensive capacity-building programs, such as bi-weekly training workshops on essential skills, mentorship and coaching, and peer learning opportunities. The Power Centre will also establish robust mutual aid networks to foster community resilience and reduce dependence on external aid. Strategic partnerships with local and external organizations will leverage diverse expertise, resources, and networks to enhance the Power Centre's impact. Social enterprise development will generate income, create jobs, and stimulate the local economy. Continuous improvement will be ensured through regular feedback sessions, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework, and adaptive management practices, allowing the Power Centre to respond effectively to changing circumstances. By integrating these strategies, the Power Centre aims to create a self-sustaining, resilient model for community-led development, achieving lasting positive impact in Kokal and inspiring other communities.

#### **8.5 Potential Risks and Challenges**

The Power Centre project, while ambitious and well-intentioned, is not without potential risks and challenges. These include:

***Political Instability:*** Homa Bay County, like many regions in Kenya, has experienced periods of political unrest and instability. This could disrupt the project's activities, hinder access to resources, and create an uncertain operating environment. To mitigate this risk, the Power Centre will actively engage with local leaders and government officials to build relationships, foster understanding, and ensure that the project's goals align with broader development priorities. Additionally, the Power Centre will develop contingency plans for potential disruptions, such as identifying alternative venues for meetings and workshops or establishing communication channels that can function even during periods of unrest.

***Funding Shortfalls:*** Securing and maintaining adequate funding is a perennial challenge for development projects. The Power Centre will proactively address this risk by diversifying its funding sources, including grants, local fundraising, fee-for-service models, and income-generating activities. The Power Centre will also establish a reserve fund to provide a buffer against unexpected financial shocks. Regular financial reviews and audits will ensure transparency and accountability in resource management.

***Community Resistance:*** While the project emphasizes community participation and ownership, there is always a risk of resistance or skepticism from some community members. This could stem from misunderstandings about the project's goals, concerns about potential disruptions to traditional practices, or skepticisms about the effectiveness of community-led initiatives. To address this, the Power Centre will prioritize transparent and inclusive communication, actively seeking feedback from all community members and addressing concerns in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner. The Power Centre will also invest in building trust and rapport with the community through regular engagement, open dialogue, and the demonstration of tangible benefits from the project's activities.

## **8.7 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Power Centre is deeply committed to establishing a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework that emphasizes continuous learning, critical questioning, and adaptability. This framework will not only track the project's progress and measure its impact but also cultivate a culture of continuous learning and improvement within the community. By embracing a data-driven and participatory approach, the Power Centre aims to ensure that its initiatives remain responsive to the evolving needs of the Kokal community and achieve sustainable, long-term success.

### ***Metrics for Success***

To assess the effectiveness of the Power Centre's interventions, a comprehensive set of key performance indicators (KPIs) will be tracked across various dimensions. These metrics, co-created with the community, will provide a holistic view of the project's outcomes, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative aspects.

To gauge community participation and ownership, the Power Centre will track attendance at meetings, workshops, and consultations, particularly focusing on the representation of women and youth in decision-making roles. Regular feedback surveys will capture community members' perceptions of empowerment, social cohesion, and the responsiveness of local governance. The effectiveness of strategies to address power dynamics and gender inequality will be evaluated by tracking changes in the representation of women and marginalized groups in leadership positions and decision-making bodies.

The capacity and effectiveness of community groups will be assessed by monitoring the number of active groups, their ability to successfully implement projects, and the extent of collaboration and resource sharing among them. Financial performance and transparency will also be evaluated through regular financial reports and audits. Additionally, the success of conflict resolution mechanisms and collaborative efforts will be gauged by tracking the number and nature of conflicts reported and resolved, as well as the frequency and quality of collaborative projects undertaken by different groups.

To measure the economic impact of the Power Centre, indicators such as increased household income, the number of new businesses created, and the uptake of financial services like savings accounts and microloans will be tracked. The social impact will be assessed through improvements in health and well-being indicators, educational attainment, and social cohesion within the community.

Empowerment and agency, crucial aspects of the Power Centre's mission, will be measured through qualitative assessments. These will include interviews and focus group discussions to gauge community members' sense of self-efficacy, participation in decision-making, and overall satisfaction with the program. The project will also track the adoption and adaptation of its model in other communities, particularly those with nomadic populations, to assess its scalability and effectiveness in diverse contexts.

### ***Data Collection Methods***

The Power Centre is committed to understanding the full extent of its impact on the Kokal community through a multifaceted approach to data collection. To assess the program's overall reach and effectiveness, quantitative data will be gathered using surveys and questionnaires designed to measure key metrics such as program participation, skill acquisition, and economic improvements. These tools will provide a broad overview of the Power Centre's influence on the community's well-being. However, recognizing that numbers alone cannot tell the whole story, the Power Centre will also conduct in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gain qualitative insights. This approach will allow for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and aspirations of community members, shedding light on the nuanced ways in which the program has influenced their lives. By combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, the Power Centre will gain a comprehensive understanding of its impact, informing continuous improvement and ensuring the program's responsiveness to the community's evolving needs.

### ***Creating a Culture of Learning***

To complement these qualitative insights, the Power Centre will maintain meticulous attendance records for meetings, workshops, and training sessions, providing valuable data on participation and engagement levels. Furthermore, community groups receiving support from the Power Centre will be required to submit regular project reports, detailing progress, challenges, and outcomes. These reports will offer critical insights into the effectiveness of the Power Centre's support and the impact of community-led initiatives. Trained observers will also document the Power Centre's activities and interactions within the community, contributing an additional layer of understanding to the program's overall dynamics and reach.

### ***Community Involvement and Data Sharing***

The Power Centre is deeply committed to fostering a culture of learning, where data is not merely collected but actively used to inform decision-making and drive continuous improvement. This commitment will be realized through regular data gathering and analysis, enabling the identification of trends, successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. Quarterly review meetings with the Community Advisory Board and other stakeholders will serve as a platform for open dialogue, reflection, and collaborative learning, ensuring that the Power Centre's strategies remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of the community. By embracing a flexible and adaptive approach, utilizing data and feedback to inform decision-making and refine program strategies, the Power Centre will ensure that its work remains impactful and sustainable over time.

## 9. Implementation

### 9.1 Timeline

This structured timeline ensures that all activities are aligned with the goals and objectives of the Power Centre, fostering increased community participation, ownership, and effective community groups while addressing power dynamics and gender inequality. In summary here is the condensed implementation timeline

#### Goal 1: Increased Community Participation & Ownership

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Months 1-6</b>	<b>Months 7-12</b>	<b>Year 2-5</b>
<i>Objective 1.1: Enhanced Community Decision-Making</i>	Conduct a comprehensive community needs assessment, recruit, and train staff, establish partnerships with local stakeholders, NGOs, and government agencies.	Organize regular community meetings and consultations to engage community members in decision-making processes.	Offer ongoing training on communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills to build the community's capacity for informed decision-making.
<i>Objective 1.2: Active Community Engagement</i>	Develop and set up infrastructure for inclusive spaces.	Launch community engagement activities, including the first community event to foster participation.	Continue organizing regular community events and cultural celebrations to promote active participation.
<i>Objective 1.3: Inclusive Leadership and Representation</i>	Conduct a power analysis to understand existing power structures and dynamics.	Implement leadership training programs and establish inclusive governance structures for diverse representation.	Provide targeted outreach and ongoing leadership programs to empower women, youth, and marginalized groups.

#### Goal 2: Stronger, More Effective Community Groups

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Months 1-6</b>	<b>Months 7-12</b>	<b>Year 2-5</b>
<i>Objective 2.1: Enhanced Capacity and Collaboration</i>	Conduct a thorough needs assessment to identify training and capacity-building requirements.	Launch initial capacity-building workshops on project management, financial literacy, and conflict resolution.	Provide ongoing workshops and training, facilitating collaboration and cooperation among different community groups.
<i>Objective 2.2: Effective and Inclusive Leadership</i>	Identify current and emerging leaders within community groups.	Begin leadership training and mentorship programs.	Offer continuous opportunities for peer learning and leadership development to build organizational capacity.
<i>Objective 2.3: Transparent and</i>	Develop guidelines and procedures for financial	Train community groups on transparency and accountability practices.	Monitor and evaluate governance practices regularly, making necessary adjustments

<i>Accountable Governance Meeting Immediate Needs</i>	management, record-keeping, and reporting.	to enhance transparency and accountability.
	Identify children for bursaries and vulnerable individuals for medical insurance.	Provide bursaries and purchase medical insurance for vulnerable community members.

## 9.2 Capacity

The successful implementation of the Power Centre program in Kokal, Homa Bay County, hinges on securing both human resources and the necessary physical and intangible assets. A well-structured team, along with strategic partnerships and community contributions, will be essential to achieving the project's goals.

### Core Project Personnel

A dedicated team is crucial for transforming the vision of the Power Centre into reality. Leading this team will be the **Project Coordinator (Full-Time)**, who will play a vital role in guiding daily activities, managing the budget, cultivating partnerships, and ensuring alignment with the project's mission. This position demands expertise in community development, project management, and basic financial reporting.

**Outreach Workers (2-3 Part-Time)** will serve as the project's connection to the community. Their responsibilities will include broad mobilization, facilitating discussions, conducting needs assessments, recruiting participants, and maintaining respectful, ongoing communication with diverse residents. Proficiency in local dialects and an inclusive engagement approach are essential for this role.

The **Power Centre Assistant (Part-Time, Potentially Evolving to Full-Time)** will manage the physical space, coordinate resources, schedule programs, and provide essential support wherever needed. This role requires technical literacy and strong organizational skills to ensure smooth operation of the Power Centre.

Additionally, an **Advisory Group (Volunteer, 5-8 Members)** will be indispensable. These individuals, respected within the community and representing diverse demographics and backgrounds, will bridge community concerns with the project, guide culturally appropriate implementation, aid in conflict resolution, and actively support outreach efforts.

### **Physical Resources**

Securing a suitable space for the Power Centre is a top priority. Ideally, this space will be donated by the community or available at a low rental cost. A central location with a minimum of three areas—one for meetings, one for training, and a resource/computer area—is essential. Any necessary basic upgrades will be included in the budget.

To maximize cost-effectiveness, second-hand or donated computers and peripherals (3-5 to start) will be sought for training and accessing online resources. Secure internet access is non-negotiable to facilitate effective communication and resource management.

Training resources will include essential meeting facilitation supplies and a curated mix of development library materials in accessible formats and local languages. These supplies will be directly aligned with the skill-building tracks identified in the needs assessment, ensuring relevance and utility.

### **Intangible Resources**

Intangible resources, such as the goodwill within Kokal, established trust networks, and community members' willingness to invest time in the project, are invaluable. The project's success will rely heavily on these existing networks and the community's enthusiasm for the Power Centre.

Building partnerships with NGOs operating in the Homa Bay region, particularly those that value local knowledge and are committed to community-driven solutions, will be critical. These partnerships will provide additional expertise, resources, and support, enhancing the Power Centre's impact.

### **Resource Mapping & Acquisition Strategy**



A detailed project budget, aligned with approved funding, will be developed to manage resources efficiently. Emphasis will be placed on community contributions, such as space, materials, and volunteer time, to demonstrate strong shared ownership of the project.

Proactive targeting of NGOs and businesses that share the Power Centre's vision will help cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships, offering expertise and physical resources. Sustainability is a key consideration, with plans to develop revenue-generating projects within the Power Centre, explore small fees for select services, and engage in active fundraising efforts.

The initial **Needs Assessment** will be critical in identifying additional potential resources or opportunities for in-kind support specific to the Kokal context. Building strong relationships with local vendors and seeking discounts to stretch the budget will further enhance the project's impact within the community.

### 9.3 Funding

The Power Centre's financial sustainability is crucial for its long-term success. To achieve this, a diverse range of funding sources will be leveraged. Grants from national and international donors, foundations, and government agencies will provide a stable base of funding. Local fundraising events and campaigns will foster community ownership and participation, while collaboration with the Homa Bay County Government will be sought to access public resources and secure long-term support. Additionally, a fee-for-service model for specialized training and services will contribute to operational costs. Partnerships with NGOs and businesses will provide additional resources and expertise, and community contributions of space, materials, and volunteer time will further strengthen community ownership. Finally, the development of social enterprises and income-generating projects will create sustainable revenue streams, ensuring the Power Centre's continued operation and impact.

The implementation of the Power Centre's programs and services will require careful financial planning and management. Personnel costs, including salaries and benefits for staff and trainers, will be

a significant expense. Operational costs, such as rent, utilities, transportation, and administrative expenses, will also need to be covered. Additionally, the Power Centre will invest in training and program materials, as well as seed funding for community-led projects. To ensure transparency and accountability, the project will adhere to strict financial management and reporting protocols, including regular internal audits and an annual external audit.

***Detailed Budget and Resource Allocation Plan***

Category	Estimation Cost	Total
<b><i>Personnel</i></b>		
Project Coordinator (Full-Time)	\$2,000/month x 12 months = \$24,000	\$24,000
Outreach Workers (2, Part-Time)	\$8/hour x 20 hours/week x 52 x 2 = \$16,640	\$16,640
Development Centre Assistant (PT)	\$6/hour x 15 hours/week x 52 = \$4,680	\$ 4,680
External Trainers/Mentors	\$100/day x 10 workshops = \$1,000	\$ 1,000
<b><i>Operational</i></b>		
Center Space	\$500/month x 24 months = \$12,000	\$12,000
Utilities & Connectivity	\$200/month x 24 months = \$4,800	\$ 4,800
Equipment Maintenance	\$500	\$ 500
Transportation	\$300/month x 24 months = \$7,200	\$ 7,200
Administrative	\$100/month x 24 months = \$2,400	\$ 2,400
<b><i>Training &amp; Programs</i></b>		
Workshop Materials	\$2,500	\$ 2,500
Curriculum Development	\$1,500	\$ 1,500
Participant Stipends	\$500	\$ 500
Seed Funding Pool	\$5,000	\$ 5,000
<b><i>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</i></b>		
Data Collection	\$800	\$ 800
Analysis	\$500	\$ 500
Progress Reports	\$300	\$ 300
Contingency Fund (5%)	\$3,475	\$ 3,475
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET</b>		<b>\$ 87,795</b>

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