



Community Participation on Performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Project in Rwanda: A Case of Selected School-Based Early Childhood in Bugesera District

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Abstract: *The study investigated community participation on the performance of one cup milk per child project in Rwanda. Specifically, the study attempted to examine the influence of project planning on the performance of One Cup Milk per Child project in Bugesera District. The study adopted a descriptive research design. This study involved 244 committee members from nine- and twelve-years basic education in 10 sectors of Bugesera district. The study employed stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques to select 69 respondents as sample size. The researcher collected data through questionnaires, interviews and documentation to obtain up-to-date information. The data was analyzed by using both descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation was employed to analyze the data. From the findings, the study revealed that the community's suggestions and input were considered, together with the available resources, while designing the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in the Bugesera district stated that 85.3% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed. Moreover, the Pearson correlation between program planning and performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Programme was 0.917** with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than standard significance levels of 0.01. This indicates that, out of the considered other factors influencing the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in Rwanda, only program planning has a significant and highly positive effect on the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in Bugesera district. The research recommended that the management of the school programme for One Cup Milk Per Child should choose among the best decision alternatives that improve performance in the programmes in the district.*

Keywords: *Community participation, Project performance, Project planning, School-based Early Childhood, Bugesera District*

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1. Introduction

Globally, community involvement in development initiatives dates back centuries. Communities participated in cooperative initiatives before colonial governance began as a way to mobilize community resources to offer physical improvement and practical amenities for their social,

political, and economic life. A society without access to the necessary finance, managerial resources, or contemporary technological trappings responded par scientifically to the demands of development and the media. As a result, these criticisms rekindled interest in local resource management and decision-making (Tomlinson, 2017).

One cup milk per child programme has existed in developed countries since the beginning of the 19th century (World Food Program (WFP), 2016). The United States of America (USA) established a school lunch program in 1946, later adding a school breakfast program (World Bank, 2008). The WFP (2019) revealed that by 2014, these programs reached 78 per cent of the students in the USA each year at a total cost of more than 8 billion dollars per year. The main aim was to improve education attainment and health of children. However, this aim has not been fully achieved due to various challenges affecting the school breakfast programme. The study done by Ayieke (2015) found that school meals lead to cash savings as it reduces the amount of money spent in households for food purchases. This has an economic benefit to most countries that represents between four to nine per cent of annual household income. School lunch allows parents to enroll and leave their children in school during the entire day which frees up time that almost 30% of households use to expand income-earning activities. In rural areas, most parents spend their time preparing meals for their children (Espejo, 2019).

By increasing the ability of people, projects, and or communities to be self-reliant, they are then able to contribute towards the sustainability of development projects which in turn could contribute to the broader notion of sustainable national development. Community participation is in the One Cup Milk Per Child project not a simple task to implement because the communities are traditionally not ready to take on this responsibility. In the author's opinion, development projects are more likely to succeed if a well-planned strategy to enhance participation is also incorporated into the project planning. This strategy enables communities to participate effectively in participatory development which is the most important approach towards enabling communities to help themselves and sustain efforts in development work (Khan, 2018).

In African countries, Mali launched a feeding project in 2000, the national school feeding project has contributed to the increase of school enrollment and retention in primary schools, especially for girls. The project promotes locally owned one cup milk per child project, benefitting communities through community organizations, providing training, and supporting smallholder farmers (Del Rosso, 2012). One challenge is that there has not been an impact evaluation on the project, so there is no significant data on its social and economic impacts. According to Kirianki (2013), the most sustainable projects are those that respond to a community need, are locally owned and incorporate some form of parental or community involvement in Mali

school feeding projects have put schools at the heart of local development by promoting locally-owned meal projects.

In Rwanda, the government started the school feeding program (SFP) in 2016 under a partnership between parents and the government to address the problem of food insecurity in districts of Rwanda. School meals are a lifeline for many families. A daily school meal provides a strong incentive to send children to school and keep them there (especially girls), it helps to increase school enrollment and attendance, decrease drop-out rates, and improve learning. The aim of the school feeding program (SFP) is to raise and maintain school enrolment, and attendance, and decrease drop-out rates of chronic food insecure and vulnerable children (MINEDUC, 2016). The school management committees have, in many cases, a very narrow definition of their responsibilities and do not serve the vital purpose of representing the school to the community. Currently, in most of the schools covered by the evaluation, the school is perceived as a government building and not as a community asset; hence the lack of parental involvement in the smooth run of the school feeding programme in the achievement of its objective (MINEDUC, 2013).

1.1 Problem statement

In Rwanda, the One Cup of Milk per Child project is one of the projects set up by the government to help learners access education, especially in lower primary. The schools were facing high variation of absenteeism, poor attendance, students eating cold food and coming late for morning lessons (Nine- and Twelve-Years Basic Education) (MINEDUC, 2016). The one cup milk per child project has the potential to increase learners' friendships, increase meals at schools, improve food diet and reduce children's dropout. The one cup milk per child project aims at improving basic education, especially by increasing enrollment, attendance and academic achievement and it contributes to reducing dropout in areas of high food insecurity (WFP, 2015). WFP and USAD have significantly supported the one cup milk per Child project, supporting over 200 hundred schools nationwide. The government of Rwanda passed a one-cup milk per child project policy envisaging a school based on the local purchase of commodities with a view to eventual nationwide implementation without external support (MINEDUC, 2015).

In Bugesera District, the One Cup Milk per Child project has the potential to increase access to twelve years of basic education in lower sections, reduce dropout rates, and

improve the academic achievement of pupils. The school community has failed to register children for the project, there are still high school dropouts, children delayed morning lessons and eating cold food both at home and at school, small budgets for the project, inadequate financial capacity of parents and negative attitudes of teachers and administrators towards the project. Despite the implementation of the one cup of milk per child project to reduce the problems of malnutrition, and poor quality of education in twelve- and nine-year basic education at the lower section of Bugesera district; dropout rates are still high where, several learners from poor families who are left behind the project in accessing to meals at schools with complementary health and nutrition intervention, (Bugesera District report, 2019).

The one cup milk per child project, therefore, needs to be effectively implemented by community participation in project planning. The Problem facing the Rwandan Government is how to accelerate community participation in the educational system as lack of community participation leads to programme failure. However, the research done by Mbui (2018) showed that community participation in financial planning monitoring and evaluation had a moderate positive influence on program performance, Therefore, this paper sought to investigate whether community participation influences the performance of one cup of milk per child programme in Rwanda, with reference selected school-based ECDS in Bugera district

Specifically, this study attempts to:

- To examine the project planning on the performance of one cup of milk per child project in Bugesera district

1.2 Hypothesis of the study

Ho1: There is no statistically significant relationship between project planning and the performance of the one cup milk per child project in Bugesera district.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The stakeholder theory was advanced by Freeman (1994) and holds that the purpose of any business is to enhance the value of the organization and promote value for all the stakeholders. The Stakeholder Theory exhaustively covers the various stakeholders involved in the project implementations such as donors, researchers, customers/

beneficiaries, suppliers and management and even the ultimate users of the project, (Miller, 2015). This theory holds that the coordination between the various project stakeholders both internal and external can be instrumental in fostering cohesion in the undertaking which will lead to the attainment of the mutual goals within such a system of partnership (Miller, 2015).

The strength of stakeholder theory is that Stakeholder theory is not a single model that identifies the objectives of an organization. It also considers economic and ethical questions. Furthermore, it promotes fairness for everyone involved in the organization and gives directors an objective. They must work to benefit the stakeholders. This creates an environment where social wealth is promoted for everyone. Stakeholder theory is a good combination of economy and ethics. No company can survive if it only has the shareholders' economic gain in mind. It needs to accept feedback from creditors, customers, employees, suppliers, and the like. After all, a stakeholder's investment directly impacts the company's performance and wealth. As a result, if directors keep stakeholders in mind, the entire organization will stand to benefit from that frame of mind (Torrás, 2015).

This theory has some weaknesses such complexity of stakeholder identification (Ritcher 2010). Identifying all stakeholders in a community project can be challenging, especially in large and diverse communities. Some stakeholders may be overlooked or marginalized, leading to incomplete representation and potential conflicts of interest. Furthermore, there is a power imbalance. Stakeholder theory assumes that all stakeholders have equal power and influence, which may not be the case in reality. Certain stakeholders, such as government agencies or large corporations, may hold disproportionate power compared to community members or grassroots organizations. This power imbalance can skew decision-making processes and lead to outcomes that favour powerful stakeholders over others (Ritcher 2010).

This theory is relevant since the first step in project planning is to identify all stakeholders who may be affected by or have an interest in the project. This includes not only direct beneficiaries and contributors but also those who may be indirectly impacted or have the potential to influence the project's success. By integrating stakeholder theory into project planning processes, project planners can enhance stakeholder engagement, mitigate risks, build stronger relationships, and ultimately increase the likelihood of project success and sustainability. This Theory further fosters the need for community

participation in project management as a key tool for fostering projects and project success in Rwanda.

2.2. Empirical literature

Planning is a management process concerned with defining goals for a company's future direction and determining the resources required to achieve those goals. Managers may develop a variety of plans (business plan, marketing plan, etc.) during the planning process. The management planning process is a step-by-step guide to creating a realistic organizational plan to meet set goals after assessment of available resources. It takes into consideration both long-term and short-term corporate strategies and spells out the vision and the direction in which the company is headed (Reid, 2014).

A study conducted by Makueni (2013) on the role of community participation in development project performance. Descriptive survey design was used to establish relationships between independent and dependent variables. The sample size was 38 project management committee members and 150 community members benefitting from the project selected using the purposive and systemic random sampling method. A semi-structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings from the study indicated that communities have not fully participated in the project cycle, especially in monitoring and evaluation, training, resource contribution and decision-making. However, this is due to limited economic resources and the failure of the community not to fully understand their roles in projects. The study established that community participation through information sharing, resource contribution collective decision making and project governance have contributed extensively towards development project performance.

A study done by Murungi (2012), did not indicate the effect of each predictor such as monitoring and evaluation, training, resource contribution and decision making on the performance of the project. This implies that there is a gap in the method of data analysis because it only used correlation. Hence, there is a need to extend the research by using multiple linear regression analysis. There is also a gap in context because the study done by Mwendu (2016), dealt with a single project while this study dealt with the performance of school feeding projects in Rwanda.

Kirianki (2013) did a study on an assessment of community participation in the sustainability of school breakfast

Projects in Primary Schools: A Case of Kasese, Rwanda. The general objective of this study was to assess the sustainability of school breakfast projects in Uganda. It explored the challenges of community participation. A descriptive study design was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data adopting a deliberate sampling technique. The findings revealed that at least 63.1% of the respondents felt that there was consultation in the design meaning that there is a bit of involvement necessary for sustainability and over 70.1% agree that there is a committee in place that comprises representatives of stakeholders which is also key to sustainability. However, this finding does not consider other factors such as community involvement in decision-making and how this affected the sustainability of the study. Thus, it appears inconclusive to claim that the difference in enrollment between treatment and control groups was the result of the project without considering unobservable factors.

Mumbi (2017) studied the influence of the school feeding project on the participation of pupils in the public primary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The objectives of this study focused on finding the influence of the School Feeding Program (SFP) on the attendance, enrolment and dropouts of primary school pupils in Kilome Division of Makueni County. The study adopted a descriptive survey design where four public primary schools were selected through a simple random technique. The fifth school was purposively sampled. It had a long and uninterrupted School Feeding Program supported by NGOs; hence in-depth knowledge of the subject under study. The respondents included: Headteachers, a Sub County School Feeding Project Officer (SCSFPO), an Area Educational Officer (AEO), teachers and Standard Seven pupils. A census sampling procedure was used to select one SCSFPO and one AEO.

2.3. Conceptual framework

The framework demonstrates that the independent variables which are teachers 'motivation and pupils' academic performance as dependent variables., workplace environment, performance appraisal and incentives influence school performance. It is expected that when schools give incentives to appreciate teachers' efforts, it will increase teachers' motivation to discharge their duties hence, leading to good performance in schools. The following conceptual framework gives more details:

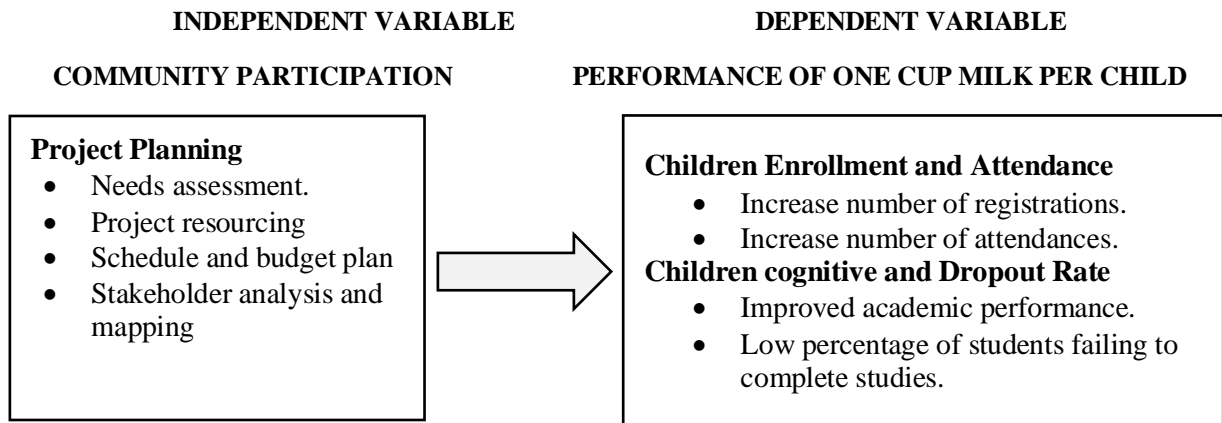


Figure 1: Conceptual framework
Source: Researcher, 2024

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive and analytic research design. The researcher was able to better understand the nature of the relationship between community participation and performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Project in Bugesera District, with the use of this design. Therefore, the design was useful in determining if a relationship between the independent and dependent variables exists or not.

The research also discussed the effectiveness of the One Cup Milk Per Child Project in the Bugesera District, including time effectiveness, quality effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, child enrollment, child attendance, dropout rate reduction, alleviation of hunger in schools, and child understanding. The performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Project in the Bugesera district was evaluated using a systematic study approach.

As a total population, 244 committee members from Nine- and Twelve-Year Basic Education in 10 Sectors among the 19 Sectors that make up the Bugesera district were the entire population employed in this study. Those schools are GS Mayange, GS Musenyi, GS Nkanga, Nyamata Primary School, GS Rango, GS Mareba, GS Ruhuha, GS Kagasa, GS EPR and GS Ntarama in Bugesera district.

The study used Alain Bouchard's (2000) formula to calculate the sample size, which states that for populations under 1,000,000 people, a sample size of 96 may be employed with an estimated error of 10% and 90% accuracy. The following figures further explain this:

N: Population size equals 244

No: Sample size when the population size goes towards infinite is 96

Nc: Corrected sample size

$$N_c = \frac{(N * No)}{(N + No)} = \frac{(244 * 96)}{(244 + 96)} = \frac{23424}{340} = 68.89 = 69 \text{ respondents}$$

A sample of 69 respondents was targeted among 244 people who were randomly selected in this study. To collect quantitative and qualitative data, semi-structured questionnaires were administered to sixty-nine (69) randomly selected members.

The validity of the data collection instruments was done with the help of an Expert (the Researcher's Supervisor) to edit the questionnaire. The researcher forwarded the structural questionnaire to the supervisor who is an expert in the area covered by the researcher for editing and reviewing while to ensure the reliability of the data, all the questionnaires that were used in the research were uniform to all respondents. To ensure the reliability of the questionnaires, the test-retest method was employed. A sample of 15 questionnaires was administered randomly to the One Cup Milk Per Child Project committee in the Bugesera district. The researcher selected this sample based on the similarities in characteristics to the actual sample. One of the similarities was the fact that the respondents in the selected sample were the main stakeholders of the One Cup Milk Per Child Project.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Project planning

The study sought to establish the relationship between project planning and the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in Bugesera district. The respondents were asked to rate the statements by indicating the extent to which they apply to their project in a 5-point Likert scale.

5. Strongly Agree (SA), 4. Agree (A), 3. Neutral (N), 2.

Disagree (D) and 1. Strongly Disagree (SD). Besides, the mean and deviation were used for the interpretation of the findings where mean (M) is the average of a group of scores and it is sensitive to extreme scores when the

population samples are small. Moreover, the standard deviation (SD) was also used to measure the variability in those statistics as it shows how much variation is there from the average (mean).

Table 1: Perceptions of respondents on influences of program planning on Performance

Program planning on the performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Programme	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	Std Dev.
	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%		
The community's suggestions and input were considered, together with the available resources, while designing the feeding programs in the Bugesera district.	29	42.6	29	42.6	3	4.4	4	5.9	3	4.4	1.8676	1.04958
The management plan specifies the type and quantity of personnel needed to carry out the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in the Bugesera district and achieve the organization's goals.	38	55.9	18	26.5	6	8.8	4	5.9	2	2.9	1.7353	1.04550
The community is informed about the schedule, budget, and planning process for the district	34	50.0	23	33.8	4	5.9	5	7.4	2	2.9	1.7941	1.04466
The Bugesera district consults with all pertinent parties during the planning stages of its One Cup Milk Per Child Program.	38	55.9	24	35.3	2	2.9	2	2.9	2	2.9	1.6176	.91471
Overall Average											1.7536	1.0136

Source: Primary Data, Field results (2023)

Findings in Table 1 confirmed that the community's suggestions and input were considered, together with the available resources, while designing the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in the Bugesera district stated that 85.3% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed. The management plan specifies the type and quantity of personnel needed to carry out the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in the Bugesera district and achieve the organization's goals, confirmed by 82.4% of respondents in the Bugesera district. The community is informed about the schedule, budget, and planning process for the district, as stated by 83.8% of respondents. The Bugesera district consults with all pertinent parties during the planning stages of its One Cup Milk Per Child Programme, confirmed by 91.2% of respondents.

According to findings from program planning in One Cup Milk Per Child Programme of Bugesera district has presented an overall average of (\bar{x} =1.7536 and SDEV=1.0136) in stimulating the performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Programme Bugesera district; that means there is a moderate mean and evidence of the existence of

the fact and heterogeneity of responses. However there are different influences of program planning affected the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in Bugesera district including the community's ideas and contributions that are considered in in the design and assessment of available resources of One Cup Milk Per Child Programme; the management plan and identifies the number of staff and type of staff that are required to meet the organization's objectives hence coming up performance of programmes; the community is informed about schedule time, budget plan and planning process of One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in Bugesera district, and all relevant stakeholders are consulted about planning processes of One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Bugesera district.

According to findings from program planning in One Cup Milk Per Child Program of Bugesera district has presented an overall average of (\bar{x} =1.7536 and SDEV=1.0136) in stimulating the performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Program in the district; that means there is a moderate mean and evidence of the existence of the fact and heterogeneity of response.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix Results

		Program Planning	Performance of the Programme
Program Planning	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	68	
Performance of the Programmes	Pearson Correlation	.917**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	68	68

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the correlation matrix Table 2, the results show that there is a very strong correlation between program planning and the performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Program as the Pearson correlation is 0.917** with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the standard significance levels of 0.01. This indicates that, out of the considered

Regression analysis is a form of predictive modelling technique which investigates the relationship between a dependent (target) and independent variable(s) (predictor). This section tests the research hypotheses as follows.

other factors influencing the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Rwanda, only program planning has a significant and positive effect on the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in the Bugesera district.

4.2 Regression Analysis Test

4.2.1. Testing Ho1:

“There is no significant influence of program planning on performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Bugesera district.”

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.917 ^a	.841	.838	.79358

a. Predictors: (Constant), Program Planning

Table 3 shows the value of R-square in this study is 84.1% means that the proportion of performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Bugesera district (dependent variable) is explained by the independent variables (Program Planning) at 84.1%. This indicates that the model is very strong, as the independent variable highly explains

the dependent variable. The adjusted R-square is used to compensate for additional variables in the model. In this case, the adjusted R-square is 83.8% for the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Bugesera district.

Table 4: ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	219.200	1	219.200	348.063	.000 ^b
1 Residual	41.565	66	.630		
Total	260.765	67			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Programme

b. Predictors: (Constant), Project planning

In this case, from the ANOVA Table 4, the *p-value* is 0.000 which is less than 0.001, set as standard significance level

with the fit level of 348.063. This means that the null hypothesis states that there is no significant influence of

program planning on performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Bugesera district, was rejected and goes by the alternative hypothesis, which states that the

independent variable affects the performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Bugesera district.

Table 5: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.212	.204	1.042	.301
	Project Planning	.477	.026	.917	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Rwanda

$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$ Y=Dependent variable–Performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Program
 α =Constant ϵ =Error
 β =Coefficient of the Disbursement
 X_1 = Program Planning
 $Y = 0.212 + 0.917 (\text{Program Planning}) + 0.026$
 β =Coefficient of the Disbursement
 X_1 = Program Planning
 $Y = 0.212 + 0.917 (\text{Program Planning}) + 0.026$
 The regression equation shows that the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Rwanda will always depend on a constant factor of 0.212 regardless of the existence of other factors. The other variables explain that; every unit increase in program planning will increase the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in the Bugesera district by a factor of 0.917.

4.3 Discussion

The objective of this study was to establish how project planning affects the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Rwanda. These findings revealed that project planning affects the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Bugesera District. There is the influence of program planning which affected the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Bugesera district including the community’s ideas and contributions that are considered in the design and assessment of available resources of One Cup Milk Per Child Program; the management plan and identifies the number of staff and type of staff that are required to meet the organization’s objectives hence coming up performance of One Cup Milk Per Child Program; the community is informed about schedule time, budget plan and planning process of One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in the district, and all relevant stakeholders are consulted about planning processes of One Cup Milk Per Child Program.

The correlation analysis results revealed that the *p-value* is 0.000, which is less than the standard significance level of 0.01. The results from correlation matrix analysis showed a relationship between community participation and the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in the Bugesera district with a Pearson correlation value of .962**. It is significant, that the researcher proved that there is a very high and positive relationship between community participation and the performance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Program in Bugesera district.

These findings are relevant since Breuer (2017) in his study on feeding programmes when designed with micronutrients in mind, can greatly improve the children’s micronutrient status and improve their class attendance, retention, and participation. To alleviate this type of hunger the designers of the feeding programmes must make sure that the diet contains the three micronutrients that are linked to mental and learning capacity accompanied by the need assessment; program resourcing; schedule and budget plan; and stakeholder analysis and mapping of the programme that influence the attendance of children with reduced hunger due to One Cup Milk Per Child Program leading to improved learning performance.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that the community's suggestions and input were considered, together with the available resources, while designing the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in the Bugesera district stated by the majority of respondents. The management plan specifies the type and quantity of personnel needed to carry out the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in the Bugesera district and achieve the organization's goals, confirmed by a majority

of respondents from in Bugesera district. The community is informed about the schedule, budget, and planning process for the district, as stated by the majority of respondents. The Bugesera district consults with all pertinent parties during the planning stages of its One Cup Milk Per Child Programme, confirmed by a majority of respondents.

5.2 Recommendations

Given the importance of the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in education in Rwanda especially in Bugesera district, there is a need to sustain this program to strengthen its support to education as a key economic pillar for economic development in Rwanda.

A healthy nation would provide a vibrant working environment for the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme and so that it functions effectively throughout the country in terms of level of children enrollment and attendance improved children's cognitive and reduced dropout rate. Therefore, the management of the program should emphasize the community being informed about schedule time, budget plan and planning process of the One Cup Milk Per Child Programme in the district. School management should gather relevant community participation information that leads to better decision-making in One Cup Milk Per Child Programme meetings in the district.

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