
UTILISATION OF COMMUNITY BASED RESOURCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WAKIRIKA PEOPLE OF RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

The effective utilisation of community-based resources is critical to achieving sustainable development and improving the well-being of the Wakirika people in Rivers State, Nigeria. The paper highlighted the potential of community-based resources, including mangrove forests, creeks, cultural festivals, and traditional artifacts, to drive economic development, social empowerment, and environmental sustainability. However, the paper also identified several challenges that hinder the effective utilisation of these resources, including lack of access to information and technology, inadequate capacity and skills, inequitable distribution of resources, environmental degradation and climate change, lack of effective governance and institutions, and conflicting interests and power dynamics. To address these challenges, the paper recommended a range of strategies, including capacity building and training, establishment of community-based institutions, promotion of community participation and engagement, support for sustainable livelihoods, addressing conflicting interests and power dynamics, and improving access to information and technology. By adopting a holistic and participatory approach to development, the Wakirika people can harness their community-based resources to achieve sustainable development and improve their overall well-being.

KEYWORDS: Utilisation of Community based resources for the development.

INTRODUCTION

Generally, every community is naturally blessed with certain resources that sustain and shape the existence of community inhabitants, but some are blessed with even more resources with great potentials to bring about rapid development to such communities if properly developed. Utilisation of these freely God given community resources for the advancement of the

communities is very germane because the development of communities remains a critical challenge in achieving sustainable and inclusive growth, particularly in rural communities where historical, economic, and social barriers have hindered progress.

However, community-based resources, includes local knowledge, cultural practices, natural assets, and human capital which serves as vital tools for fostering development. According to Smith et al. (2018), utilisation of these resources do not only empowers communities but also ensures that development initiatives are culturally relevant and sustainable. For the Wakirika people, whose unique cultural heritage and natural environment offer a wealth of untapped potential, the strategic utilisation of community-based resources could serve as a catalyst for transformative change addressing the specific challenges faced by the community. For instance, the communities' rich biodiversity and agricultural potential can be harnessed to promote food security and economic diversification. According to a study by Adeyemi et al. (2020), community-driven agricultural initiatives have proven successful in enhancing productivity and livelihoods in similar contexts. Moreover, the Wakirika people's traditional ecological knowledge can play a crucial role in sustainable resource management, mitigating the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. By building on these strengths, development efforts can achieve long-term resilience and self-sufficiency.

Undoubtedly, some of the community based resources in Okirika include mangrove forest, forest products, river banks, cultural festivals, traditional artifacts. This position paper argues that the effective utilisation of these community-based resources is critical to achieving sustainable development and improving the well-being of the Wakirika people. The paper will explore the potential of community-based resources for development, highlighting the opportunities and challenges associated with their utilisation. It will also provide recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders on how to effectively harness these resources for the development of the Wakirika people.

Conceptual Clarification

Community

A community may be best described as harmonious environment where people share common bond. It may include a sense of place located in a specified environmental neighborhood or in fundamental space through communication channel. The concept of community is defined by different scholars in different ways. According to Adekola and Ugwu (2015), a community consists of those residing in a given locality who shares certain interest and common background or goals. This implies that certain group of people must

have one culture and work towards the achievement of common goals. Deekor and Nnodim as cited in Hanachor, (2013), noted that community refers to a group of people with common culture such as language, mode of dressing, eating, social life of the people, their folklaws, occupation, ways of playing and dancing music, e.g. Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Ibibio communities and so on. According to Ihejirika as cited in Nsirim-Ovu (2016), the term “community” is referred to a group of people living in one place with a mutual understanding and working towards the achievement of some mutual goals or set objectives. This implies that for any group to be seen as community, its’ members must be able to experience all or nearly all aspect of the culture within its boundaries.

Frankenberg in Ogbonna (2018), defined community as “a territorially bounded social system within which people live, sharing common social, economic and cultural characteristics”. The above definition did not look at community in terms of geography alone, but also included some degree of shared interest due to common socio-economic and cultural characteristics. Hassan, and Oyebamiji (2012), described the concept of community as a localised population which is interdependent and which develops and nurture’s specialised institutions that provide on a day to day basis, a full range of goods and services necessary to meet the common goals and perpetuate its existence on the surface of the earth. Oni and Bello in Toruten (2011:2), identified the following as basic characteristics of a community, population whatever size, geographical limits whatever the size, common socio-economic problems or characteristics such as poverty or affluence, highly industrialised or agricultural, lacking infrastructure or having lots of infrastructural facilities highly socialised or very apathetic., The feeling of oneness amongst members or a great sense of belonging, which enables them to pursue common goals such as development of the people and their physical environment.

Resources

A resource is any physical material that makes up aspect of environment which community inhabitant or human beings desired for and upholds for their own benefit. Natural materials become resources when humans value them. It is a god giving assets that enhances the community and its inhabitant’s welfare if properly harnessed, developed and utilised. The uses and values of resources vary from culture to culture and from time to time. However, resources are spatially distributed varying in quantity and quality. A resource is a basis from which benefit is derived, also resources are natural possessions that are transformed to generate benefit and in the process may be consumed or made unavailable. Social benefits of resource exploitation may include increased wealth, meeting needs or wants, proper

functioning of a system, and/or enhanced well-being (Miller & Spoolman, 2011). Resources have three main characteristics: utility, limited availability and potential for depletion or consumption. According to Banjo (2013), there are many categories of resources and 'natural resources' are part of them.

According to Uzoma (2010), the idea of resources has been useful in various spheres, with reverence to Geography, Management, Human Resources, Economics, Biology and Ecology, Computer Science, and is connected to the perception of struggle, sustenance, preservation, and stewardship. In practice within human culture, viable or non- profitable factors require resource distribution through resource administration (Miller & Spoolman, 2011). Geographically, a resource has been described as those things which are gifted by natural world, and are of immense significance to man (Iwena, 2013). Consequently, Chris-Valentine, Eze, Onyishi and Nwankwo (2019) acknowledged that resources could come in the form of forest and vegetation, landscape, mineral deposits, water bodies, sand dune, mountains and rocks, fertile agricultural lands, biodiversity species etc that are given by nature free of charge. This means that it is any physical material that constitutes part of the earth and which people need and value. In line with the above assertion, Getis, Ord, and Kang (2011) in their views, avowed that a resource is any naturally occurring, exploitable material that society perceives to be useful to its economic and material well-being. The geographically informed person must understand that a "resource" is a cultural idea. Natural materials become resources when humans value them. Some resources are finite, while others can be replenished at varying rates. Everything available in our environment which can be used to satisfy our needs, provided, it is technologically accessible, economically feasible and culturally acceptable can be termed as 'Resource'. However, in community development, resources are referred to human and natural assets required for community and individuals advancement.

Economics, a resource is defined as a service or other asset used to produce goods and services that meet human needs and wants (McConnell, Brue & Flynn, 2011). Economics itself has been defined as the study of how society manages its scarce resources.. A resource is a source or supply from which benefit is produced. Typically resources are materials, energy, services, staff, knowledge, or other assets that are transformed to produce benefit and in the process may be consumed or made unavailable. In Biology and Ecology, a resource is defined as a substance that is required by a living organism for normal growth, maintenance, and reproduction. Resources, such as food, water, or nesting sites, can be consumed by an organism and, as a result, become unavailable to other organisms. For animals key resources

include food, water, and territory. Natural resources which satisfy the material and spiritual needs of humans are the free gifts of the nature. In other words, any material which is valuable and useful for humans is called a resource. These resources include physical like land, water, soils and minerals; biological living like vegetation, wildlife and fisheries. In fact every material has some utility for human beings but its utilisation is possible on the availability of appropriate technology. For example, for centuries, coal and petroleum were present below the earth's surface, but the technology for their utilisation has been developed recently. These materials turned into resources only when they could be used. It is, therefore, human ability and need which create resource value. From a human perspective a natural resource is anything obtained from the environment to satisfy human needs and wants (Miller & Spoolman, 2011).

Community Based Resources

Community based resources are resources that exist within the community without the actions of mankind. Nxumalo (2010) described community based resources to be resources such as crude oil, forests, rivers, natural gas that has the capacity to enhance communities to create employment opportunities and sustainable development in rural communities. In line with the above assertion, Munalula, Mwewa and Chishala (2020), acknowledged that community based resources are resources through which communities empower themselves with the varying resources within their environment while satisfying their livelihood needs. They help to build the capacity of communities and their developmental initiatives. Community based resources give communities the legal right to have substantial resources to meet the developmental needs of the communities (Ozuruokey, Etuk & Okoro, 2021).

According to Miller and Spoolman (2011), community based resources are assets that are transformed to produce benefit and in the process may be consumed or made unbearable. Its social benefits may include increased wealth and meeting the needs or wants of the community. Chris-Valentine, Ogunjemilua, and Ajewole (2019), emphasised that community based resources could come in the form of forest and vegetation, landscape, mineral deposits, water bodies, sand dune, mountains and rocks, fertile agricultural lands, biodiversity species etc that are given by nature free of charge. Community natural resources are that resources made available and ready for use by nature. They include mineral ores, forests, wildlife, lakes, streams, mountains, petroleum, gas etc (Emeghara, 2015). Consequently, Arocena and Driscoll (2013) noted that community based resources are resources drawn from land and minerals, air and water, etc and their attributes that are derived from the earth and are useful

to the maintenance of the quality of human life in the community. These community based resources are not merely consequential components of the earth, but products of interactions of plants, animals, climate, soils, and water. According to Nxumalo (2010) community based resources are resources such as crude oil, forests, natural gas that has the capacity to enhance communities to create employment opportunities and sustainable development in rural communities. He further stated that through community based resources, communities empower themselves with the varying resources within their environment while satisfying their livelihood needs. They help to build the capacity of communities and their developmental initiatives.

Community based resources are the foundation from which rural community people can overcome poverty, improved their welfare and bring about even development in the community. However, planners and implementers of natural resource development projects do not always profit from the lessons learned either information is lost or it is not easily accessible or changing circumstances may limit its value. Whatever the reason, learning from the past still makes sense. Knowledge does not wear out although it is sometimes difficult to find, synthesise and use. The livelihoods of community inhabitants depend on the resources around their immediate environment. Community based resource is often characterised by amounts of biodiversity and geodiversity in various ecosystems. A community natural resource may exist as a separate entity such as fresh water, and air, as well as a living organism, or it may exist in an alternate form which must be processed to obtain the resource such as metal ores, oil and most forms of energy. According to Ricklefs, as cited in Ozuruoke, Etuk and Okoro (2021), there is much debate worldwide over natural resource allocations; this is partly due to increasing scarcity (depletion of resources) but also because the exportation of natural resources is the basis for many economies (particularly for developed nations such as Australia). Some natural resources such as water in its cycle, sunlight and air can be found everywhere, and are known as ubiquitous resources. However, most resources only occur in small sporadic areas, and are referred to as localised resources. There are very few resources that are considered inexhaustible (will not run out in the foreseeable future) these are solar radiation, geothermal energy, water in its cycle and air (though access to clean air may not be available at all the time and in all circumstance especially in industrialised nations). The vast majority of resources are exhaustible, which means they have a finite quantity, and can be depleted if managed improperly (Schilling & Chiang, 2011).

Forms of Community Based Resources in Okirika

Creek and Mangrove Forests, forest products, river banks, cultural festivals, traditional artifacts Mangrove forest,

Creek and mangrove forests: are invaluable community-based resources that hold immense potential for the development of the Wakirika people in Rivers State, Nigeria. These ecosystems are not only rich in biodiversity but also provide a wide range of ecological, economic, and cultural benefits that can drive sustainable development. According to Adeyemi et al. (2020), mangrove forests serve as natural barriers against coastal erosion and flooding, protecting communities and their livelihoods from the adverse effects of climate change. Additionally, these ecosystems support fisheries by serving as breeding grounds for fish and other aquatic species, which are critical for the food security and income generation of the Wakirika people. The creeks, on the other hand, provide waterways for transportation and trade, enabling the movement of goods and people within and beyond the community. By sustainably managing these resources, the Wakirika people can harness their potential to create jobs, boost local economies, and enhance environmental resilience.

Furthermore, mangrove forests and creeks offer opportunities for eco-tourism and cultural preservation, which can contribute to the socio-economic development of Wakirika. As highlighted by Arintoko et al. (2020), community-based tourism initiatives centered around mangrove ecosystems can attract visitors interested in exploring the unique flora and fauna, thereby generating revenue for the community. For instance, guided tours, bird-watching activities, and cultural festivals showcasing the traditional uses of mangrove resources can create employment opportunities and promote local entrepreneurship. Additionally, the sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products, such as honey, medicinal plants, and handicrafts, can provide alternative livelihoods for community members. However, as Eze et al. (2022) caution, the exploitation of these resources must be carefully managed to prevent overharvesting and environmental degradation. By adopting a participatory approach that involves the Wakirika people in decision-making processes, these resources can be utilised in a way that balances economic development with ecological conservation, ensuring long-term benefits for the community.

Forest products: A forest product is any material derived from forestry for direct consumption or commercial use, such as lumber, paper, or fodder for livestock. According to Makuwa (2017), the utilisation of forest products is a vital aspect of promoting development

of the host communities. The forests in Wakirika are rich in various products, including timber, fuelwood, fruits, and medicinal plants, which can be harnessed to promote economic development and improve the livelihoods of community members. The sustainable harvesting and marketing of these forest products can generate income and create jobs for local residents, thereby contributing to poverty reduction and economic growth (Kajembe, 2020). For instance, the sale of forest products, such as timber and fuelwood, can provide a source of revenue for community members, while the use of medicinal plants can help to improve healthcare outcomes and reduce the financial burden of healthcare costs.

The utilisation of forest products can also promote the development of the Wakirika people by supporting the conservation of their cultural heritage and traditional way of life. As argued by Mutisya (2023), the sustainable use of forest products can help to maintain the cultural and spiritual significance of the forest, while also promoting the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. For example, the use of traditional forest products, such as medicinal plants and craft materials, can help to preserve the cultural knowledge and practices of the Wakirika people, while also promoting the conservation of the forest ecosystem. By promoting the sustainable utilisation of forest products, the Wakirika people can ensure that their development is aligned with their cultural values and traditional way of life.

River banks: The utilisation of river banks is a vital aspect of promoting the development of the Wakirika people. As noted by Odhiambo (2018), the river banks in Okirika offer a range of opportunities for economic development, including fishing, aquaculture, and tourism. The sustainable use of these resources can generate income and create jobs for local residents, thereby contributing to poverty reduction and economic growth. For example, the development of fish processing and marketing facilities along the river banks can provide a source of revenue for community members, while also promoting the conservation of fish stocks and the protection of the aquatic environment.

The utilisation of river banks can also promote the development of the Wakirika people by supporting the conservation of their cultural heritage and traditional way of life. As argued by Mutisya (2023), the sustainable use of river banks can help to maintain the cultural and spiritual significance of the river, while also promoting the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services. For instance, the preservation of traditional fishing practices and the protection of sacred sites along the river banks can help to preserve the cultural knowledge and practices of the people, while also promoting the conservation of the aquatic ecosystem.

By promoting the sustainable utilisation of river banks, the Wakirika people can ensure that their development is aligned with their cultural values and traditional way of life.

Cultural festivals: Cultural festivals are an integral part of the Wakirika people's heritage and can be leveraged as a community-based resource to bring about development. As noted by Kamau (2016), cultural festivals provide a platform for community members to showcase their traditions, customs, and values, which can help to promote cultural preservation and tourism. The Wakirika people's cultural festivals, such as the Ogwu festival, can be harnessed to attract tourists and generate revenue for the community, thereby contributing to economic development. Furthermore, cultural festivals can also serve as a tool for social mobilization and community engagement, as argued by Njenga (2019), which can help to promote social cohesion and community development.

The effective utilization of cultural festivals as a community-based resource requires careful planning, coordination, and management. As emphasized by Makuwa (2017), cultural festivals should be managed in a way that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable, with benefits accruing to all members of the community. This can involve the establishment of community-led festival management committees, the development of festival management plans, and the provision of training and capacity-building programs for community members. By leveraging cultural festivals as a community-based resource, the Wakirika people can promote cultural preservation, economic development, and social cohesion, thereby improving their overall well-being and quality of life.

Traditional artifacts: Traditional artifacts are a vital component of the Wakirika people's cultural heritage and can be leveraged as a community-based resource to bring about development. As noted by Njenga (2019), traditional artifacts, such as wood carvings, masks, and textiles, can be used to promote cultural tourism and generate revenue for the community. The Wakirika people's traditional artifacts can be showcased in cultural festivals, exhibitions, and museums, attracting tourists and promoting cultural exchange. Furthermore, traditional artifacts can also serve as a tool for cultural preservation and education, as argued by Mutisya (2023), which can help to promote cultural awareness and appreciation among community members, particularly among the younger generation.

The effective utilisation of traditional artifacts as a community-based resource requires careful planning, coordination, and management. As emphasised by Mwaura (2022), traditional artifacts should be managed in a way that is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable, with benefits accruing to all members of the community. This can involve the establishment of community-led artifact management committees, the development of artifact management

plans, and the provision of training and capacity-building programs for community members. By leveraging traditional artifacts as a community-based resource, the Wakirika people can promote cultural preservation, economic development, and social cohesion, thereby improving their overall well-being and quality of life.

Development

Development, in the context of utilisation of community-based resources, refers to the process of improving the quality of life of community members through the sustainable and equitable use of local resources. Kajembe (2020) acknowledged that this approach to development prioritises the needs and aspirations of community members, and seeks to promote their social, economic, and environmental well-being. Community-based resources, such as traditional knowledge, cultural practices, and natural resources, are harnessed to support development initiatives that are tailored to the specific needs and context of the community. This approach to development recognises that communities have the capacity to drive their own development, and seeks to empower them to take ownership of their development trajectory.

The utilisation of community-based resources for development is a holistic and integrated approach that seeks to promote sustainable livelihoods, social justice, and environmental sustainability. According to Makuwa (2017), development is not just about economic growth, but also about promoting social cohesion, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation. By harnessing community-based resources, development initiatives can be made more responsive to the needs of community members, and can help to promote more equitable and sustainable development outcomes. Ultimately, the utilisation of community-based resources for development seeks to empower communities to take control of their own development, and to promote a more just, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

Relationship Between Utilisation of Community Based Resources and the Development of Wakirika People of Rivers State

The utilisation of community-based resources has a direct and positive impact on the development of communities. As noted by Kajembe (2020), community-based resources offer a unique opportunity for communities to take ownership of their development trajectory and to promote sustainable development. When communities are able to harness their own resources, they are better able to address their unique needs and challenges, and to develop in a way that is tailored to their specific context. This approach not only promotes self-reliance

and self-sufficiency but also ensures that development is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. The utilisation of community-based resources is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the livelihoods of communities. As argued by Makuwa (2017), community-based resources are essential for promoting poverty reduction and improving the livelihoods of marginalised communities. When communities are able to access and utilise their own resources, they are better able to address poverty and inequality, and to promote economic growth and development. Furthermore, the utilisation of community-based resources also promotes social cohesion and community engagement, as noted by Njenga (2019), which are critical for building strong and resilient communities.

However, community-based resources offer a unique opportunity for communities to promote sustainable development and to improve their livelihoods. However, the effective utilisation of community-based resources requires careful planning, coordination, and management, as argued by Gichuhi (2020). In addition, the utilisation of community-based resources must also be accompanied by supportive policies and institutions, as noted by Odhiambo (2018), in order to ensure that development is inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. By harnessing the potential of community-based resources, communities can promote sustainable development, improve their livelihoods, and build a brighter future for themselves and their children.

Challenges Affecting Utilisation of Community Based Resources for the Development of Wakirika People

- 1. Lack of Access to Information and Technology:** Lack of computer literacy and on other digital devices is a significant challenge that hinders the effective utilisation of community-based resources for development. According to noted by Odhiambo (2018), limited access to information and technology can lead to a lack of awareness about available resources, opportunities, and best practices, thereby limiting the community's ability to make informed decisions about resource utilization. Furthermore, the absence of digital technologies, such as computers and mobile phones, can make it difficult for community members to access and share information, communicate with external stakeholders, and participate in online platforms and markets (Mwaura, 2015). This can result in missed opportunities for economic development, social empowerment, and environmental sustainability, ultimately undermining the community's ability to achieve its development goals. Therefore, addressing the lack of access to information and technology is critical to unlocking the potential of community-based resources for development.

- 2. Inadequate Capacity and Skills:** The inadequacy of capacity and skills is a significant constraint that hinders the effective utilisation of community-based resources for development. As argued by Mutisya (2023), community members may lack the necessary skills and knowledge to manage and utilise community-based resources effectively, leading to inefficiencies and wastage of resources. Furthermore, inadequate capacity and skills can also limit the community's ability to identify and access external resources, such as funding and technical assistance, which are critical for supporting community-based development initiatives (Mwaura, 2021). This can result in missed opportunities for economic development, social empowerment, and environmental sustainability, eventually undermining the community's ability to achieve its development goals. Therefore, building the capacity and skills of community members is essential for unlocking the potential of community-based resources for development.
- 3. Inequitable Distribution of Resources:** The inequitable distribution of resources is a significant challenge that affects the utilisation of community-based resources for development. As noted by Makuwa (2017), the uneven distribution of resources, such as land, water, and financial resources, can lead to inequality and social injustice, undermining the effectiveness of community-based development initiatives. Furthermore, inequitable distribution of resources can also perpetuate existing power dynamics, with dominant groups controlling access to resources and decision-making processes, thereby marginalising vulnerable groups, such as women and youth (Kamau, 2015). This can result in unequal access to benefits and opportunities, and can ultimately hinder the achievement of community development goals, making it essential to address the inequitable distribution of resources to ensure that community-based resources are utilised in a way that promotes equity, justice, and sustainable development.
- 4. Environmental Degradation and Climate Change:** Environmental degradation and climate change pose significant threats to the utilization of community-based resources for development. As noted by Njenga (2017), environmental degradation, such as deforestation and land degradation, can reduce the productivity of land, leading to decreased agricultural yields and reduced access to natural resources, thereby undermining community-based development initiatives. Furthermore, climate change can alter the availability of natural resources, such as water, and can increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters, such as floods and droughts, which can devastate community-based resources and infrastructure, as argued by Kamau (2015). This can result in food insecurity, economic hardship, and social instability, ultimately hindering

the achievement of community development goals, making it essential to address environmental degradation and climate change to ensure the sustainable utilization of community-based resources for development.

5. Lack of Effective Governance and Institutions: The lack of effective governance and institutions is a critical challenge that hinders the utilisation of community-based resources for development. As argued by Mwaura (2017), weak institutions and poor governance can lead to corruption, mismanagement of resources, and lack of accountability, thereby undermining the effectiveness of community-based development initiatives. Furthermore, the absence of clear policies and regulatory frameworks can create an environment of uncertainty and confusion, making it difficult for community members to access and utilize community-based resources, as noted by Odhiambo (2015). This can result in unequal access to resources, social injustice, and economic hardship, ultimately hindering the achievement of community development goals, making it essential to establish effective governance and institutions to ensure the sustainable utilization of community-based resources for development.

6. Conflicting Interests and Power Dynamics: Conflicting interests and power dynamics within communities can significantly impact the utilization of community-based resources for development. As noted by Mwaura (2022), conflicting interests and power dynamics can lead to unequal access to resources, social injustice, and economic hardship, ultimately hindering the achievement of community development goals. Furthermore, power imbalances within communities can result in the marginalization of vulnerable groups, such as women and youth, who may have limited access to decision-making processes and resources, as argued by Mutisya (2016). This can perpetuate existing social and economic inequalities, making it essential to address conflicting interests and power dynamics through inclusive and participatory decision-making processes that prioritize the needs and interests of all community members.

Ways of Tackling the Challenges Affecting Utilisation of Community-Based Resources for the Development of Wakirika people:

1. Capacity Building and Training: Capacity building and training refer to the process of enhancing the skills, knowledge, and abilities of individuals, organizations, or communities to effectively manage and utilize resources, achieve their goals, and improve their overall performance, through activities such as workshops, training programs, mentorship, and technical assistance, to foster innovation, leadership, and sustainability. Providing training

and capacity-building programmes for community members can help to address the challenge of inadequate capacity and skills. This can include training on resource management, entrepreneurship, and leadership, as well as providing access to technical expertise and mentorship (Kajembe, 2020).

2. Establishment of Community-Based Institutions: Establishment of Community-Based Institutions refers to the creation and strengthening of local organizations, structures, and mechanisms that are owned, managed, and controlled by community members to manage and utilize community-based resources, make decisions, and provide services that benefit the community. According to Makuwa, (2017), establishing community-based institutions, such as community-based organisations and cooperatives, can help to address the challenge of lack of effective governance and institutions. These institutions can provide a framework for community members to come together and make decisions about resource management and development

3. Promoting Community Participation and Engagement: Promoting community participation and engagement in decision-making processes can help to address the challenge of inequitable distribution of resources. This can include using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques to identify community needs and priorities, and establishing community-led planning and management committees (Mutisya, 2023).

4. Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods: Supporting Sustainable Livelihoods refers to the provision of resources, services, and opportunities that enable individuals, households, and communities to maintain and improve their well-being, while also protecting and conserving the natural environment. Njenga (2019), acknowledged that supporting sustainable livelihoods can help to address the challenge of environmental degradation and climate change. This can include providing training and support for sustainable agriculture practices, promoting eco-tourism, and establishing community-based natural resource management committees.

5. Addressing Conflicting Interests and Power Dynamics: Addressing Conflicting Interests and Power Dynamics refers to the process of identifying, analyzing, and managing the different interests, needs, and power relationships within a community or organization to promote fairness, equity, and sustainable development. In the view of (Mwaura, 2022), addressing conflicting interests and power dynamics within communities can help to address the challenge of conflicting interests and power dynamics. This can include using conflict resolution techniques, such as mediation and negotiation, and establishing community-based conflict resolution committees

6. Access to Information and Technology: Improving access to information and technology can help to address the challenge of lack of access to information and technology. This can include establishing community-based information centers, providing training on computer and internet skills, and promoting the use of mobile phones and other digital devices for development (Odhiambo, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The utilization of community-based resources offers a promising pathway for the development of the Wakirika people. By building on their cultural heritage, natural assets, and human capital, development initiatives can achieve sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience. However, this requires a concerted effort to address structural barriers, foster partnerships, and leverage technology. The success of such efforts ultimately depends on the active participation and empowerment of the Wakirika people themselves. This position paper calls for a holistic and participatory approach to development, one that recognises and values the unique resources of the Wakirika community while addressing their specific needs and challenges. Through collective action and shared vision, the Wakirika people can chart a path toward a brighter and more prosperous future

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. community leaders with support from local government and non-governmental organisations should establish community-based institutions to provide a framework for community members to make decisions about resource management and development.
2. Local Government, non-governmental organisations, and community-based organizations should provide training and capacity-building programmes for community members to enhance their skills and knowledge in resource management, entrepreneurship, and leadership
3. Community leaders and members, with support from local government and non-governmental organizations should promote community participation and engagement in decision-making processes through participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques and community-led planning and management committees.
4. Local Government, non-governmental organisations should support sustainable livelihoods by promoting sustainable agriculture practices, eco-tourism, and community-based natural resource management.

5. Community leaders and members, with support from local government and non-governmental organisations should address conflicting interests and power dynamics within the community through conflict resolution techniques, such as mediation and negotiation, and establish community-based conflict resolution committees.
6. Local government, non-governmental organisations, and community-based organisations should improve access to information and technology by establishing community-based information centers, providing training on computer and internet skills, and promoting the use of mobile phones and other digital devices for development.

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