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## **Understanding the Best Method Used to Identify Most Vulnerable Children for Program Services: A Case of Kishapu Council, Tanzania**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The ultimate goal of Most Vulnerable Children identification process is to deliver quality services to right and targeted Project beneficiary. This paper is based on the study conducted in two wards of Kishapu Council, Tanzania. The study was guided by Targeting theory, cross sectional design with mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative methods. A mixed sampling approach of purposive and stratified design were used to realized a sample size of 111 respondents using simplified formula provided by Yamane (1967) at 95% level of confidence, 0.5 degree of variability and 0.05 level of precision ( $e$ ). The analysis of quantitative data was done by employing descriptive statistics to obtain frequency, percentages, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation; while qualitative data were subject to researcher and respondent's contents analysis by actual words reported. The result indicates by 83 respondents (75%) that the trend of Most Vulnerable Children is the growing problem that is dramatically increasing bagger than previous. National tools and guidelines for identification were not used for the purpose. Few stakeholders who noticed to apply do not adequately and appropriately utilize them as evidenced that organizations were discerned to use their own designed guidelines and tools instead of those provided by the government stipulated in the National Costed Plan of Action I & II. The study reveals by 71 respondents (63%) that, Stakeholders involvement typically community members were absolutely very nominal. The study reports that Resources allocated for MVC identification process were inadequate to accomplish and realize eligible MVCs for program services. Furthermore, Time and financial resources invested for the exercise were determined by organizations not identification scope. It was observed that, Community based participatory methods were accepted by majority of respondent by arithmetic mean of 1.31 and standard deviation of 0.46 showing that most respondents were strongly agreed on the method. It is recommended that more efforts should be vested to raise awareness to key implementers and overseers of MVC program especially the MVCC and community leaders on how to undertake, supervise and monitor the process.

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Keywords: MVC Identification Process, Targeting, Program Services, Identification Methods

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### **1. Introduction**

Tanzania counts one of largest populations of orphans and vulnerable children in sub-Saharan countries (UNAID, 2014). Identification of Most Vulnerable Children has been reported to be an important stage in establishing a well-coordinated process for protection, care and support by stakeholders' interventions. However, identification of non-eligible MVCs for program services has been higher compared to the number of eligible beneficiaries which is very minimal (Kacholi, 2012).

In Tanzania, the inclusion of non-eligible children has been a notable challenge despite of the government's efforts invested in the programs by Ministry Community Development Women Gender and Special Groups. The percentage of non-eligible MVC and their households identified and registered for program services has been often very higher. In 2019, more than 25.3 percent of MVC received assistance from implementing partners was non-eligible (URT, 2020).

Tanzania through Ministry of Community Development Women Gender and Special Groups (MCWGSG) reminds development stakeholders the use of Most Vulnerable Identification Process Guide (MIPG) to effectively identify eligible Most Vulnerable Children for program services in the community. However, the process has been noticed to be very weak and ineffective. The review of the evaluation reports of National Coasted Plan of Action for Most Vulnerable Children Phase one reported that the identification exercise was not adequately done. The report revealed that identification and registration of eligible children were not done properly and adequately to meet the needs of development actors and beneficiaries targeted (Coady, 2004). But this has most often resulted in the partners which do not provides significant inquiry into targeting approaches and authentic community

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participation in identification process which is essential for successful identification in the situation with limited resources (REPOA, 2013). According to Komba (2010), notwithstanding identification frameworks and guidelines, identification of non-eligible MVCs as intervention beneficiaries leaves behind eligible MVCs leading to insufficiently services and continuous lack of care, protection and support in the community. Hence, this study is an attempt to understand the best and appropriate method that can be used to identify Most Vulnerable Children eligible for benefiting from program services in the community.

## 2. Research Design and Methodology

This study was done in Kishapu Council of Tanzania. It aimed at understanding the best and appropriate method that can be applied to identify Most Vulnerable Children eligibility for benefiting from program services in the community. The study employed Cross sectional research design with mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative methods) which had considered suitable for the study. The design is considered as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (Kothari, 2004). It pays attention on specific events and issue to gain profound understanding of their meaning and significances, which is the pre-determined objective of this study. The targeted population for this study was key informants from three levels. The first level incorporated development actors working in Non Governmental Organization executing protection, care and support programs to Most Vulnerable Children in the Council. The second key informant level was Local Government Authorities including district, ward and village official. Community members, caregivers and parents/guardians were the third level of respondents for accurate and relevant data collection for this study.

### 2.1. Sample and Sampling Technique

The study employed mixed sampling approach of purposive and stratified sampling design to realize a sample size of 111 respondents from 154 study population of two wards namely Ukenyenge and Kishapu. In this type of sampling, items for the sample were selected deliberately by the researcher; his choice concerning the items remains supreme (Kothari, 2004). Proportionate stratified sampling was applied to get a proportionate balance of MVC care givers and community member respondents.

In this study, the population of the study included 154 respondents grouped in the following categories; DSWO 1, caregivers 57, WEO 2, CDOs 2, MVCSC members 60, NGOs 2, and 30 community members. With regard to the sample size, the researcher applied a simplified formula provided by Yamane (1967) as cited by Yilma Muluken to determine the minimum required sample size at 95% confidence level, degree of variability = 0.5 And level of precision (e) = 0.05

$$n := \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \quad (i)$$

Where n is sample size, N is the total number of study population, 154

Where e is the level of precision

$$n = 154 / (1 + 154 * 0.05^2)$$

$$n = 111$$

From above mathematical question, the sample size used was 111 respondents.

### 2.2. Data Collection Methods and Analysis

Data collection and Data analysis were executed concurrently. The researcher collected data from both primary and secondary data sources to get hold reliable results from reliable and reputable sources. Primary data collection methods used in this study was questionnaires which used to collect data from 55 respondents (2 NGO's officers, 1 DSWO, 2 CDOs, and 50 MVCSC). The researcher appropriately employed also in depth interview to gather information at ward and village level from 24 community members and 30 care givers. The analysis of quantitative data was done by employing descriptive statistics to obtain frequency and percentages of variable while qualitative data were subjected to research and respondents' contents analysis by actual worlds as reported.

## 3. Literature Review

### 3.1. Definition of a child in Tanzania

In Tanzania the law of child Act, (2009) defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years. A strategy to fight poverty, Reduce Inequality and Promote Human Development” defines a child as age 0-14 and youth 15-24 years. However, the United Nations Conventions of the right of the child defines a child as any human being whose ages are below 18 ages (URT, 2009).

### 3.2. Vulnerable Child

Conceptually, vulnerable child is the one who is living in high risk circumstances whose prospects for continued growth and development are seriously impaired (URT, 2007-2010).

### 3.3 Orphans and Vulnerable Children

UNAID (2014) defines orphans and vulnerable children as children with increased vulnerabilities because of HIV/AIDS. Though at other times it is used to mean all vulnerable children regardless of the cause of their vulnerability, for example, chronic poverty, armed conflicts, death, and famine (URT, 2007-2010)

### 3.4 Identification and targeting MVC eligibility

Identification process of Most Vulnerable Children in Tanzania is guided by standardized guideline developed by MoHSW. The LGAs (including district, ward and village/mtaa governments) and other implementing partner groups (IPG) use standardized framework to undertake the process. Identification and targeting orphans and most vulnerable children and their households is mostly often significant because of fixed funding available to run the program interventions. The process is said to be the critical activity required to be implemented firstly to identify most eligible MVCs to continuously benefit program services. The step is passed to ensure fixed resources available and planed reach and benefit the most in neediest eligible MVCs in the community.

Participatory process of identifying and registering orphans is a valuable opportunity for communities to understand degree of the problem and number of MVCs who meet eligibility criteria for program services support. It is also helpful to build community support and participation for the initiative and ensure that the targeting approach to orphans and vulnerable children yield those who meet eligibility criteria as stipulated in the national guideline and recognized by local community as per their understanding. The concept of eligibility in identification process is based on understanding not all orphans are vulnerable, and not all vulnerable are most vulnerable; and many children who are most vulnerable are not orphans.

On the other hand, universal program interventions are not targeted; all members of the community are eligible for the transfer benefits. Major significance of such interventions follows under no stigmatizing individuals and lower administrative costs. However, depending on the magnitude of the program, universal transfer can be expensive (Pauw *et al*, 2007)

## 4. Theoretical analysis

### 4.1. Targeting theory

The theory is concerned with taking active close look at potential beneficiaries in order to determine conformance of pre-set eligibility criteria for program services. The theory provides an alternative community based views and guidelines for selecting specific group of people with clear eligibility characteristics for benefiting from program services (Mbaula, 2011). Targeting visualizes as eligibility criteria and other course of intervention programs that intend to discriminate between the poorest or most in need individuals and those who are not. Targeting also focuses on identifying and reaching the neediest individuals who are eligible beneficiaries, (Mamdani *et al* 2009). Thus, targeting has been used as strategy of increasing program efficiency by increasing the benefit that the poor can get within fixed or limited program budget. From targeting theory, success in identification process depends on many variables that forester the process of getting those who have and haven't; so that those who haven't can be engaged in the benefits of program services. Thus targeting theory helped to analyze dependent and independent variable for the process.

## 5. Findings and Discussion

### 5.1. The trend of MVC in the study area

The trend of MVC problem in the study area typically in the two selected wards is dramatically growing. Findings reveal that, 75 percent equivalent to 83 respondents reported the problem is increasing while 25 percent equivalent to 28 respondents reported that the problem is decreasing (Table 1). The statistics suggest that there is daily increasing of the problem specifically in number of the marginalized children in Kishapu council. The statistics generated by this study call for immediate efforts and interventions to investigate on the reasons for such daily increase in number of Most Vulnerable Children in the study area and invites a number of development actors to continuously design, plan and execute interventions focusing on provision of protection, care and support to the targeted group.

*Table 1: Trend of MVC in the study area*

Current status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Increasing	83	75
Decreasing	28	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>

### 5.2 Tools used in MVCs identification for Program services

The results in table 2 found that 3 respondents equivalent to 5 percent revealed stakeholders are using guidelines, by laws and frameworks prepared at district level by their local authorities, while 6 respondents equivalent to 8 percent of all respondents interviewed objectively to this aspect reported

stakeholders implementing MVC interventions are using National tools, Guidelines and frameworks. On the other hand 50 respondents equivalent to 76 percent seemed to use own organization guidelines, tools and frameworks in identification process as per their needs while 8 respondents equivalent to 11 percent reported using other methods in identification process. The action shows that, majority are using local methods of identifying MVC beneficiaries for program interventions like Copying vulnerable names from other interventions like those identified in TASAF intervention, those names found in the district database – Social welfare officer and those identified previously by other stakeholders implementing similar projects. In addition to that, questionnaires denoted that such practice leave aside those who haven't and in need of program services and directly benefits those who have and not in need of assistance. These study statistics reflects to why there is daily increase of Vulnerable Children in Kishapu Council.

**Table: 2 Tools used in MVC Identification for program Services**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
District tools	2	5
National tools	6	8
Organizational tools	50	76
Other Methods	9	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 5.3 Stakeholder involvement in MVC identification Process

The analysis involved 111 respondents to objectively understand if respondents have ever involved in identification process of MVC beneficiaries in the targeted study area. The analysis in table 3 shows that, 40 out of 111 respondents equivalent to 37 percent said that they have involved in the identification process; despite the fact that 71 out of 111 respondents equivalent to 63 percent reported that have never involved in any way in identification of MVCs for program services. On top of that, Interview's results designated that those who have not been involved have not even heard the process.

**Table: 3 Stakeholder Involvement in MVC identification Process**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Involved	40	37
Not involved	71	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 5.4 Resource allocations for MVC identification Process

The National Coasted Plan of Action I & II vests considerable emphasize on adequate allocation of resources (both human, financial and time) for effective and efficient identification process. National frameworks and guidelines call attentions to stakeholders implementing MVC interventions to regularly conduct refresher trainings to MVC members and allocate enough time for those involved in the process and pay them enough. The study analysis in table 4 shows that, 9 out 25 interviewee equivalent to 36 percent strongly agreed there is adequate resources allocation for identification whilst 16 out of 25 respondents equivalent to 64 percent strongly disagree on the statement. Importantly, the interview's results shows that majority of development actors ignore identification process and jump to available statistics, being the reason to why resources allocated to the process is significantly minimal and often not accomplished as well.

**Table: 4 Resource allocations for MVC identification Process**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Adequate	09	36
Inadequate	16	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

### 5.5 The best Methods to be used in MVC eligibility identification

Table 5 shows that Community based participatory has an average mean of 1.31 and .46 standard deviations, indicating that most of respondent were strongly agreed on the method accounting to 68.5% of all respondents interviewed. The mean for involving MVCSC members in identification is 1.94 at .22 standard deviation indicating that the method also is acceptable for the process. Moreover the findings revealed that, the mean for direct identification by actors was 2.64 with .92 value of standard deviation. Further, the mean for the use of only social welfare and NGO officers was 3.86 at .34 value of standard deviation indicating that, the method was strongly disagreed by most 96 respondents involved in the study equivalent to 83.5% of all respondents. Similarly, it has been reported that, the mean of provision of services to all OMVC in the community was 3.65 at 0.78 value of standard deviation showing that, the method was not accepted by 53.2% respondents who were not sure, 27.9% disagreed and 18.9% strongly disagreed with the use of such method. Generally the mostly and strongly methods which have accepted by most of respondents to be used in OMVC eligibility identification are community based participatory and involving MVCSC members in the process. These have become the key methods such most of respondents have strongly agreed with minimum variance among them.

**Table: 5 Methods of MVC eligibility identification**

Methods	N	Mean	N Std. Deviation
Community based participatory method	111	1.3153	.46675
Involving MVCSC members	111	1.9459	.22715
Direct identification by actors/ NGO	111	2.6486	.92095
The use of only social welfare and NGO officers	111	3.8649	.34342
To provide services to all MVC	111	3.6577	.78039
<b>Valid N (list wise)</b>	<b>111</b>		

## 6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

### 6.1. Conclusion

The study aimed at understanding the best method used to identify Most Vulnerable Children for program Services, experience of Kishapu Council. The study wrap up that MVC identification for program services is not a matter to have beneficiaries for projects focusing on supporting care and protection to MVCs in the community, rather than an authentic community involvement process for identification activity. The study noted that, there is noteworthy need for continues involvement of community members and MVC structural system for successful eligibility identification. The study further revealed that, there were identification tools, guidelines and frameworks settled at national level; however, were less and inappropriately utilized. Approaches and methodology employed to identify eligibility by stakeholders were not reflected in the National frameworks and Guidelines. The caretakers and heads of households were left instead available database at district level were used.

### 6.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that for the Government and to tackle MVC identification following has to be done:-

- More efforts should be made to create awareness of key implementers and overseers of MVC program especially the MVCC and community leaders on how to undertake, supervise and monitor MVC identification exercises. The study noted less understanding on the process by key implementers and overseers. This can be achieved by conducting regular seminars that focus on basic objectives, methodologies and the role of each player towards appropriate MVC identification that qualify for social protection as per national guidelines. Additional resources should be invested on training to transfer the necessary required skills and knowledge to social workers, MVCC and community leaders to improve effectiveness of child protection interventions.
- Key participants of identification process should adequately be allocated with sufficient time for them to have appropriate plans for identification process that fit with their context. The study noticed that, community members were not at the front line in determining the appropriate time for undertaking identification exercises.
- Strong coordinated advocacy and dissemination of the policy and guidelines should be emphasized in order improve awareness of MVC identification process among stakeholders. Through advocacy, the community will in turn appraise their contributions that will ultimately the focus of the identification process.
- MVCC should be empowered through appropriate training that will enable them to acquire potential skills that are significant in undertaking their responsibilities. In addition, there should be financial support that will ensure volunteerism remain motivated.

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