International Journal of Management (IJM)

Volume 13, Issue 8, August 2022, pp. 8-20, Article ID: IJM_13_08_002 Available online at https://iaeme.com/Home/issue/IJM?Volume=13&Issue=8

ISSN Print: 0976-6502 and ISSN Online: 0976-6510

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REPORTING EXTREME POVERTY ELIMINATION MODEL FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA – A CASE STUDY OF TWO YEARS JOURNEY FROM MAURITANIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper studies the mechanisms of (eliminating poverty) within two years in a difficult region of Sub-Saharan Africa in a village called Dar-Elbayda neighbourhood, Nouakchott, Mauritania. The paper comes in a unique time with the world inequality ratio and extreme poverty elimination becoming more stagnant due to the spillovers of COVID-19 pandemic and the unique situation of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The case study reports the two years journey that was led by the international inspiration economy project in collaboration with local partners and showed the cycle of cooperatives (coops) model development which helped to develop a better quality of life in the targeted neighbourhood. The model led to bringing tens of families and hundreds of their dependents away from extreme poverty. The author shares his experience of the role of the consistent periodic evaluation and how it helps to measure the qualitative outcome in such vulnerable neighbourhoods in such projects while also better classifying and stratifying the beneficiaries.

The paper concludes with a framework that could enhance the capacity to deal with poverty and extreme poverty, being a complex problems, in such a difficult time and in less developing regions. The author shares the experience of developing a poverty prevention model that led to the proposed formula for poverty elimination used in the case study.

Keywords: Poverty Elimination, Extreme Poverty, Cooperatives, Model Development, Inspiration Economy Projects, Mauritania, Sub-Saharan Africa.

Cite this Article: Mohamed Buheji, Reporting Extreme Poverty Elimination Model from Sub-Saharan Africa – A Case Study of Two Years Journey from Mauritania, International Journal of Management (IJM), 13(8), 2022, pp. 8-20. https://iaeme.com/Home/issue/IJM?Volume=13&Issue=8

1. INTRODUCTION

Most poverty elimination projects are usually linked to macroeconomics, where the formulas of growth require high budgets, and a secure environment. In such approaches, efforts to reduce poverty would be most effective only in countries where there are sound institutions and policies.

WHO (2020) issued a joint statement with the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), calling for urgent and ambitious actions to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on livelihoods, health and food systems, especially in poor communities, Buheji (2020). The devastating effects of the pandemic have put nearly half of the world's workforce of 3.3 billion people at risk of losing their livelihoods, putting tens of millions of people at risk of falling into extreme poverty, and potentially putting up to 132 million people at risk of suffering from nutritional deficiencies. Buheji (2022b)

In this paper, the poverty in Mauritania and Sub-Saharan Africa is explored, Mahler et al. (2020). The needed poverty elimination models in unstable times are discussed. The author shows the role of women's leadership in coop's contribution to poverty elimination models. Buheji and Bebana (2022).

The case study shows the cycle of coops model development as per inspiration economy and its psychology. More details about coop's role in bringing quality of life to the DarElbaydah neighbourhood are presented. The author brings examples of the types of coops participating in poverty elimination programs. Birchall and Simmons (2013).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Stagnation of World Inequality Ratio

Lakner et al. (2020) studied the relationship between inequality and the GDP per capita growth, according to World Bank forecasts. Historically, it was observed that growth rates are related to the number of extreme poor (living on less than \$1.90/day). Therefore, Lakner and his team estimated that till 2030 the number of the poor would remain above 600 million, resulting in a global extreme poverty rate of 7.4%. Buheji (2019b)

The estimates suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed at least 10% more of this estimate, i.e. 60 million people into extreme poverty and also increased the number of those considered to be in extreme poor by 10%, Nicola (2020). Sub-Saharan Africa is considered to be most of this last category where most of the people are living without proper incomes, shelter, or any means for the quality of life. Buheji et al. (2020), Buheji (2019c), Jones (2008).

2.2. Unique Situation of Sub-Saharan Africa

With the rapid population growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, the scenarios of inequality are expected to increase the number of poor in this region. The share of the Sub-Saharan Africa of poverty is increasing as the global poor ratio, and the inequality-conditions scenarios are improving in most of the world regions, except in the Middle East and North Africa. Hence, it is expected that around 85% of the global poor will reside in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030, if all countries continue to experience a fall in inequality. Buheji et al. (2020), Mahler et al. (2020).

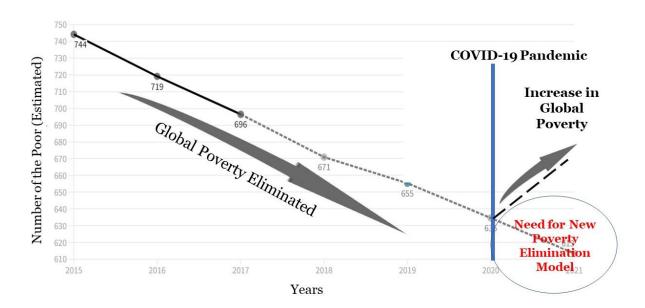
The unique situation of Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly important as these countries in this region have high poverty rates, and the causes for the continuation of the vicious poverty cycle are present and very high. Mahler et al. (2020)

2.3. Importance of Poverty Elimination Models in Unstable Times

A large number of economic sectors have laid off their employees, and many people, especially in developing countries, are living today without fixed wages, without social security funds. Many companies cannot pay their employees as a result of losing their liquidity. This is also reflected in the daily wage workers, temporary employees of informal jobs. A recent ILO (2020) emphasized that nearly 25 million jobs in the world are exposed to loss as a result of the pandemic.

Various organizations and bodies have expected that between 40 to 60 million people will fall into extreme poverty, due to the economic shocks caused by the pandemic crisis. Poverty rates all over the world in terms of the expected changes in global GDP according to the estimates of the 'World Bank' and the 'International Monetary Fund'. UNDP (2020), Buheji (2019b)

Figure (1) Illustrates Global Economic Prospects Report Showing the Impact of the Pandemic on Poverty Statistics – where Extreme Poverty is measured by the number of people living on less than \$1.90 a day, as per the global World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.



Modified after Ref: World Bank (2020) and Lakner et. al (2020)

https://blogs.worldbank.org/ar/opendata/updated-estimates-impact-covid- 19-global-poverty

The worsening scenario of the world's capability for poverty elimination, calls for new models that mitigate the risks of a sharp increase in extreme poverty rates. The models would work on re-inventing new levels of creative solutions that support the efforts of straining the spread of poverty. Buheji (2019b)

The models should help the poor communities first towards self-sufficiency, then to build their capacity to cope with the turbulent challenges. This means the targeted poor communities need to change from being consumers to being more producers of items needed by the community to reduce their financial pressure. Buheji (2020).

Implementing such models would help reduce the sharp fall of 71 million people into extreme poverty on the basis of the International poverty line, which is \$1.90 per person per day, besides would take them away from the scenario of situation deterioration where 100 million are expected to fall into the trap of poverty. Mahler et al. (2020).

2.4. Poverty Elimination and Role of Women Leadership

Women were found to play a major role in eliminating poverty, especially extreme poverty. Inclusion of women in the poverty elimination models would ensure the sustainability of the development path in both the social and economic outcomes.

Models can create an effective response to sudden socioeconomic instability where countries and societies can invest selectively in the model development and adapt to new risks, and implement solutions to build a better movement against falling into poverty. UNDP (2020), Buheji et al. (2020).

2.5. Coops in Africa and the Contribution of the New Poverty Elimination Models

Coops have played a significant part in most African communities in the last five decades, since they were found to be successful and economically viable means for creating economic opportunities, Develtere et al. (2008) . In specific African countries, coops play a role in addressing the basic level of social protection and social security. However, the coops have never been used effectively to address poverty elimination. Develtere et al. (2008)

2.6. Coops Competency to Manage Poverty Elimination Projects in Times of Crisis

Birchall and Ketilson (2009) mentioned that the pandemic and its spillovers, followed by the unstable socio-political, and economic crisis, have had negative impacts on the majority of enterprises, except cooperative enterprises (coops). Coops around the world are showing resilience to the crisis and are reporting increased turnover, or effectively responding to the new economic realities. ILO (2020), Birchall and Simmons (2013).

Develtere et al. (2008) see when any community member can own or be a partner in a business, they would start to appreciate how much power they, as individuals and groups, have and their role in lives. It is the collection of this type of mindset that could provide ways out of poverty.

The global economic crisis after the COVID-19 pandemic may force more than 50 million additional people into poverty and demolish at least 8 to 10 years of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) achievements. Savings and credit cooperatives stayed strong in reaching the poor, since most of the poor did not have any alternative financial services. Buheji et al. (2020), Nicola (2020) Develtere et al. (2008).

3. CASE STUDY

3.1. Inspiration Economy Project Purpose & Approaches

The number of the 'inspiration economy' projects' direct beneficiaries in Africa surpasses more than 1000 families, spread in countries such as Mauritania, Ghana, Sudan, Morocco, and recently Rwanda, besides Ethiopia. However, the poverty elimination projects in DarElbydah neighbourhood, Noukchoutt, is considered a unique experience as it managed to eradicate the vicious cycle for more than 300 families in just two years. Out of these beneficiaries, more than 175 families now can afford to send their children to go to school regularly, and could afford to put two meals on the table. More than half of the beneficiaries could afford to develop their housing from basic shelters to block-based housing, with toilets and basic water. More than 50 families started to settle their national identity issues for all the family members, which is usually a problem in Mauritania in the poor neighbourhoods. Buheji (2019d)

This achievement could be referred to as the detailed design of community change through selective cooperatives (coops) approaches which were explained by Buheji and Bebana (2022). The holistic approach of the coops made it compulsory for all the beneficiaries, i.e. the members of the coops, to attend and pass the stratified literacy education programs. These programs address what the women participating in coops need as basic reading and writing in Arabic, basic math, basic sales and marketing skills, besides life skills. This simple investment in all the coop members ensured that all the members had the same level of communication rhythm.

The poverty elimination project built a lot on the capacity of the community to see opportunities inside the challenges it faces. Accessibility to life essentials became among the culture of the DarElbydah neighbourhood. Many children (almost 70%) of the beneficiaries' families started to address the absence of their civil papers, which was one of the group barriers that prevented them from accessing education, or getting proper healthcare services. Buheji (2019a)

The poverty elimination model is also dealing with the high (divorce rate) besides the different causalities that lead to (family instability). The DarElbaydah neighbourhood became a safe place to visit by many government officials and NGOs who hesitated to do so before the projects, Buheji (2019d). They now can see how a unique approach to poverty elimination with minimal resources, but with strict follow-up contributed to the high rate of societal solidarity, societal harmony, and a clear reduction of vulnerable groups in the community.

3.2. Cycle of Coops Model Development as per Inspiration Economy

Almost all of the charitable work in Mauritania and Sub-Saharan Africa are related to charity, and they do not have any idea about the creative solutions for their complex and chronic problems, Mahler et al. (2020), Buheji (2019e). They never thought that coops could change the life of the community, and as many in MENA countries have never been introduced to this concept or approach well, and never been linked to poverty elimination.

As per inspiration economy approaches, coops, if successful, usually would be followed by incubators, and accelerators. Incubators would bring expertise to coops' product or services development, while the accelerators would focus on the advancement of the coops' brand design and eliminate the control of the intermediaries and make it competitive enough to be part of the local and global chain.

Most of the population of coops (80% of the total beneficiaries) are made of divorced or widowed, or single parents with orphans. The rising problem of dropouts from education, raised the unemployed youth ratio. Most of the beneficiaries at the time of starting the coop were considered displaced people from the slums. No clear socioeconomic data were available about almost all the beneficiaries. Buheji (2019e)

There is no R&D culture within all the associations (NGOs) serving the poor in MENA countries in general and in Mauritania specifically. The community of the DarElbaydah was found to be missing many essential services, including essential food products, including cooking vegetables and baby nutritional items. This brought many opportunities for the coops types of business. The village was far away from being self-sufficient.

The following flowchart flow Figure (2 a, b, c) explains the mechanism used by the inspiration economy experts in order to start projects (in this case, coops) that target to eliminate poverty with the least resources and to explore the skills of members of society.

One- Steps of Setting Up Poverty-Elimination Models as per Inspiration Economy Coops



Figure (2 a) Step One of Poverty Elimination Model

Second- Steps to Start (Poverty Elimination Projects)

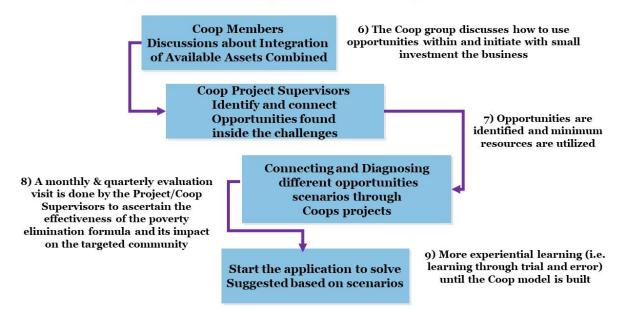


Figure (2 b) Step Two of Poverty Elimination Model

Third - Steps to disseminate the (Poverty Elimination) Model

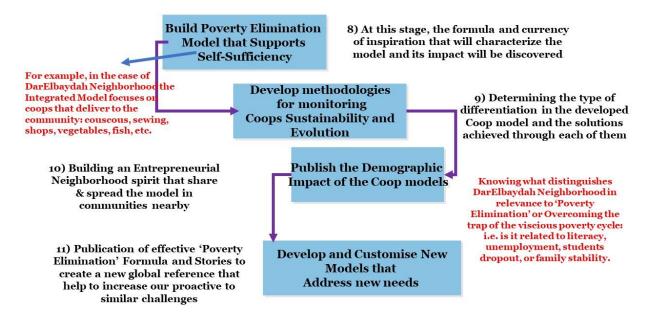


Figure (2 c) Step Three of Poverty Elimination Model

3.3. Psychology of Inspiration Economy Poverty Elimination Projects

The psychology of poverty elimination emphasises the role of cooperatives as a way of getting them out of poverty. To ensure poor financial inclusion, we need to find ways to create, and foster such inclusion that leads to better life stability. This led to innovative approaches that lead to sustainable enterprises, poverty alleviation, social protection, a better informal economy, and family stability. Jones (2008).

Most of the NGOs of the world have poverty elimination goals and probably guidelines, but did not get used to doing poverty elimination projects or learning through doing training programs. Thus, it is normal in Mauritania not to find competent people who can manage, follow up, and evaluate poverty elimination projects. This is especially true if we are talking about out-of-the-box techniques such as the ones followed by the inspiration lab. Buheji (2022a), Buheji (2019a).

The specific selection of volunteering youth helped to ease their training and later be appreciated by specific support coops. A weekly and then a monthly training and discussion between the young project supervisors and the poverty elimination expertise about the needs and wants of the community. The target for these youth is clear; it is focused on "achieving an elimination of poverty while creating a productive and inspiring society". Despite the limited materialistic resources and the poor socioeconomic conditions of these young volunteers, since most of them are victims of divorce and family disintegration and come from poor families, they are now becoming inspiration economy experts gradually as they get acquainted with the methodologies used.

3.4. How the Coops Managed to bring Better Quality of Life to the DarEldaydah Neighbourhood?

The target of the coops is to bring a better quality of life services to the community besides improving or solving socioeconomic issues.

This is why the author personally encouraged (Reem Beauty Cooperative) which not only delivers women's cosmetic services, but also helps to arrange wedding services. The project had difficulty in the beginning as this village was not used to such services, but now Reem coop is more stable, and the service is on demand for many nearby villages. The project is now also becoming a source of on-the-job training for many unemployed women and girls.

3.5. Examples of Coops Participating in Poverty Elimination Program

Within the framework of developing the community and improving the capacity, competency, changeability, and capability for poverty elimination, the following coops in Table (1) participated in the following necessity businesses: bakery, grocery shop, vegetable, butcher, fishery, cloth production, gas supply and beauty salon.

To review the most important and urgent - and then delay what can be pushed from the coops, we ask coops leaders and the youth facilitators to suggest what they need for support, as part of the bi-annual evaluation. This type of engagement approach makes the coops feel responsible for the success of the journey. Table (1) illustrates the type of coop community needs and the seed fund invested. Buheji (2022a)

	Coop Cmmunity Needs Addressed	Name of Coop	Investment \$
01	-Development of the shop from a small shop to a grocery that provides all the needs of the residents of the neighborhood	Women Wefa	571
02	Preservative - dyeing materials – sifting	Qurasheen	442
03	Dyeing materials - cloth - money for the investment activity	Innovative Generation	285
04	Refrigerator - table - increase the goods in the shop	Altaqadum	571
05	Flour machine-drying machine-gas	Belindi	1571دولار
06	Dyeing materials and dyeing machines - gas - cloth	Alezdehar	714
07	Refrigerator-a machine for grinding meat and fish	Goodness Seeds	400
08	A sum of money to increase the capital in order to invest in the purposes	Jack Jerba	285
09	Cosmetics and skin-whitening creams - and some women's supplies	Reem for Beauty	285
10	Gas-bash - materials for preparing couscous	Albaraka	285
	Total		3838

Table (1) illustrates the type of coop community needs and the seed fund invested.

4. METHODOLOGY

Both a field and literature evaluation session was conducted in May 2022, as a result of passing 24 months of poverty elimination projects in Mauritania, Dar Eldaydah neighbourhood cooperatives. The video in the below link shows the evaluation sessions done by the coop facilitating team leaders.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SISYVAtwkg&t=920s

Due to the bad quality of the bandwidth, the questions about the challenges faced by the coops were recorded on youtube and then the expert (the author) answers were also recorded in a video to confirm the next direction towards maintaining the rhythm of poverty elimination.

The evaluation carried first the results of the general outcome that determine the impact of cooperatives projects in the DarElbaydah village until May 17, 2022. The numbers related to evidence for poverty elimination as: changes in family income, meals on the table, ability to improve the housing status, ability to send children to school or get a loan from the coop, ability to get legal civil identification, and ability to develop the family capacity in reading and writing were all evaluated, for each direct and indirect beneficiary of the poverty elimination program. Jones (2008)

The qualitative outcome of the bi-annual evaluation targets to classify and stratify the beneficiaries of poverty elimination projects in dealing with poverty, being a complex issue in a difficult region. These results and the analysis of the case study shows how poverty prevention models were developed and followed by a proposal for a formula that help be more focused on poverty elimination vectors.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE EVALUATION

5.1. Type of Qualitative Outcome that comes from the Bi-Annual Evaluation

The results of the evaluation of the impact of projects (the eradication of poverty) in the neighbourhood of DarElbaydah, Nouakchott, Mauritania, after two years of launch, until - 17 May 2022, show the importance of strong follow-up in breaking down the barriers towards this complex and viscious problem.

Besides the statistics, qualitative reports are important for two things to establish the credibility of what has been achieved scientifically and practically, and thus the ability to generalize the experience. Secondly, such reports help to identify new paths that have not yet been explored by the poverty elimination teams and ensure effective knowledge sharing. Table (2) represents the type of information collected during the poverty elimination project.

Table (2) Qualitative Measurement of Poverty Elimination Model.

Impact on the Targeted Communities	Measure both Quantitatively & Qualitatively	
1-To what extent do results achieve the greatest impact?	State accurately and preferably in numbers the impact targeted	
2-How does the project lead to independence?	o Improving the level of ability to face life's challenges without asking for aid (in numbers)	
(Choose one or more from the	o Improving the ability to produce distinguished (in numbers)	
options)	o Improving the level of family income and exceeding the poverty line level (in numbers)	
	o Increasing competition opportunities for production, work, sale or distribution (in numbers)	
	o Increasing the level of availability of basic materials in the region (in numbers)	
	o Prevention of accidents or injuries (in numbers)	
	o Increasing the ability to keep pace with education (in numbers)	
	Other (mention it):	
3-How did the projected rise to a distinguished level so far?	State in Numbers & How?	
4-How many families have become self-sufficient (clothing, water and shelter)?	State in Numbers & How?	

group been raised (for example, their education to a level that enables them to be self-reliant in production	State in Numbers & How?
and quality of life? 6-Do the projects really guarantee that priority is given to those who deserve it?	State in Numbers & How?
7-What is the impact of the project on the life of the target group (eg the poor)?	State in Numbers & How?

5.2. Classifying and Stratifying the Beneficiaries of Poverty Elimination Projects

The number of direct beneficiaries of the inspiration economy projects in extreme poverty elimination is 325. These beneficiaries supported 175 families in the village. These families have children that started to go to school regularly, thanks to their affiliation with the coops and the projects.

The beneficiaries of inspiration economy's selective literacy education program, which is a program for women participating in coops who are trained and educated on basic life skills, reached more than one-third of the coop members. Every batch cover 45 women every season. The children's education project managed to send many children to basic education schools. Now the program is targeting to sponsor students for high school and university.

The rate of divorce and family problems decreased, and the family stability rate in the neighbourhood increased clearly. However, there is no more work to be done through the new family reconciliation office that the poverty elimination team have established as part of the projects'. The coops and the dedication of the projects have contributed to a high rate of solidarity, cooperation and societal harmony among families. Some cooperatives, such as the Creative Generation Coope and the Quraishieen Coop, have created savings funds for emergency situations such as diseases, floods and other community problems, which contribute to reducing vulnerability in such groups.

The mechanism of the methodology carried by the international inspiration economy project to eliminate poverty helped to optimize the available community resources and minimization of the dependence on materialistic and depleting resources.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1. Dealing with Poverty as a Complex Issue in a Difficult Region

To bring effective solutions to Sub-Saharan Africa's poverty, the researcher focused on addressing this complex issue from several angles. Therefore, poverty elimination projects in the DarElbaydah neighbourhood focused on addressing issues of unemployment, family and community stability, developing the role of youth, and empowering women in the targeted society. The target community, in this case, the DarElbaydah neighbourhood, brought more innovative solutions once the volunteering youth started to see the benefits of the formula and the simple equation of inspiration economy that focuses the mindset from (capacity - vs - demand) instead of the usual (supply - vs - demand). This type of formula and mindset helped to do with \$100 only, projects that cannot be done with \$1,000.

The more we can change the community by relying on its other resources, such as: societal assets, which are very strong in the village of DarElbaydah, or the natural assets (the nature of the region, its unique characteristics and requirements), and the knowledge assets (the skills and capabilities available in this small community), the more we can come up with successful and inspiring models.

6.2. Shaping the Outcome of the Inspiration Models

The inspiring models target to improve the way people live for the better, and how the community manage together to re-invest in its internal resources till they get out of the socioeconomic problem, which is, in this case, it is poverty. The development of the models in the last 5 to 7 years has helped to spread inspiration economy and brought more purpose-driven, or active human beings that now are dedicated to helping their societies and perhaps the world.

Each model created depends on the mechanisms that can be applied, and the nature of the issue to be addressed. In the case of the poverty issue, specifically in the DarElbaydah neighbourhood, we need all the many field experiments, starting with cooperatives, but not ending there. For example, the poverty elimination team tried to enter into a partnership with the small sports clubs in the neighbourhood, and build better networking between cooperatives. This is how the model develops and advances towards focusing on exploring opportunities within challenges and relying on non-financial assets. Thus, such models are expected to raise the community 'capacity vs demand', which raises the return to the community, not just the financial gain.

6.3. Development of Poverty Prevention Models

The poverty elimination projects have several projects that include youth and men, not just women. The DarElbaydah neighbourhood turned from a neighbourhood that receives crumbs of aid to a neighbourhood that is considered a centre for necessity and neighbourhood entrepreneurship, or productive families and a source of inspiration for innovative community works.

New development project goals were set for the cooperatives in the DarEldaydah neighbourhood for the year 2022-2023 in collaboration with (International Inspiration Economy Project) which focuses on reducing and eliminating poverty by preventing its causes for occurrence or sustenance in the first place. One of the earliest poverty prevention projects is reducing family disintegration and divorce cases. The other was reducing school dropouts and increasing the percentage of educated children. The third type of project is focused on defining the characteristics of what contributes to family stability.

During two years of continuous work, continuous effort, follow-up and evaluation by the collaborating NGO partner, the field youth coordinators, and the author, the International Inspiration Economy Project began to see that this effort reflected positively on cooperative projects and their performance. During this short period, the number of beneficiaries of cooperative projects increased directly, as the percentage of education among children increased to 45% compared to the previous situation, and the percentage of women whose conditions improved to 35%, as some of them were suffering from poverty significantly. Productive awareness and participatory work also spread in the neighbourhood significantly. Requests for the establishment of production coops and poverty elimination projects started to arrive from other neighbourhoods, expressing their needs and commitment to join such a program on a daily basis.

6.4. Proposed Inspiration Economy Formula for Poverty Elimination

Coops managed to effectively participate in the inspiration economy formula of poverty elimination that says

Reliability of Poverty Elimination (Rpe) = P (Availablity) of Multiple Integrated Programs that eliminate the causes of poverty)

This formula was tested to eliminate the vicious cycle of poverty. To raise the probability of the 'availability' formula, for example, is what made us work with the coops to pay the tuition fees for 18 children in private schools throughout the past academic year 2021/2022 and plan to do the same and double the beneficieries this year. Applying 'availability' made us to put a scheme for good loans and project returns which contributed to the transfer of some families from the huts that did not protect them from the cold or heat, to more protective houses with water and electricity.

6.5. Overall Outcome of the Two Years Journey

Despite about 20% of the coops still suffering from fluctuations in management and frequent withdrawals of members, as the number of its affiliates has become more than 30 women in the beginning, most of the coops have managed to put new projects or start new plans for an extension of their business, or develop a new type business that addresses the communities needs. Still inspiration economy is trying to come up with solutions for the scarcity of food and water in the village to complement its self-sufficiency. However, being realistic about the African Subharan Region, more coops are being encouraged to sell locally (home) cultivated vegetables, besides the local fish and poultry meat.

The poverty elimination projects in the DarElbaydah neighbourhood have achieved great positive results that led to the discovery of opportunities and internal skills of the communities and developed their ability to change and produce products or services. The projects contributed to raising education rates, and reducing divorce and family disintegration. At the national level, it has become a source of inspiration for many young people and women and a living example of development and organized and effective associative work in Mauritania.

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