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STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF WOMEN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN KISUMU CENTRAL CONSTITUENCY, KISUMU COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Project sustainability has been a challenge to local, national and international development agencies. Globally, billions of shillings have been spent in communities to enhance the living situations of poor people. Donor funding act as a temporary driver for social change but sustaining the change is quite challenging. Unforeseen circumstances threaten the initial uptake of innovative project design elements. Potentially worthwhile healthy interventions become unviable once donor funding stops. Projects that do not meet economic needs of the community quickly become irrelevant to the community. The purpose of the study was to establish the effect of stakeholder involvement on sustainability of Women Development Projects in Kisumu Central Constituency, Kisumu County, Kenya. The study targeted 10 Women Development Projects, which have benefitted from donor funds. Survey and correlation designs were adopted. The respondents included 10 chair persons, 10 secretaries, 10 treasurers and 150 beneficiaries of Women Development Projects from which a sample 124 respondents was drawn through stratified random sampling technique. Structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used

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to collect data. Questionnaire was tested for content, face and construct validity with a validity index of .75. The reliability index of .85 through Cronbach's alpha was obtained. Quantitative data was analyzed through correlation model while qualitative data was analysed thematically.The findings of the study were presented in tables. Preliminary descriptive analysis revealed that stakeholders: were involved in project initiation and implementation (M=3.98; SD=.861); awareness campaigns were performed for project sustainability (M=3.84; SD=.718); were involved in monitoring for project sustainability (M=3.63; SD=.854); and were involved in decision making in the project (M=3.79; SD=.772). However, respondents were not sure whether stakeholders had interest in the project (M=3.40; SD=.818). Overall score showed respondents had agreed stakeholders' involvement affect project sustainability (M=3.73; SD=.805). Correlation model provided a weak degree of positive correlation (r=.328) between stakeholders' involvement and project sustainability. Project sustainability was approximately 10.8% explained by stakeholders' involvement. The overall regression model was statistically significant (*F*-ratio =10.606; p< .05). The null hypothesis was rejected. Stakeholders' involvement therefore had a positive effect on sustainability of Women Development Projects in Kisumu Central Constituency, Kisumu County, Kenya. Stakeholders involvement in project: initiation and implementation; awareness campaigns; monitoring; and decision making should be strengthen to enhanced project sustainability.

Key words: stakeholder, stakeholder involvement, project, project sustainability, women development project

Introduction

Stakeholder involvement is becoming part of project practice in order to deliver excellent project outcomes (Karlsen, Graee & Massaoud, 2008). A well-managed stakeholder engagement process helps project stakeholders to work together to increase comfort and quality of life, while decreasing negative environmental impacts and increasing the economic sustainability of the project (Bal, Bryde, Fearon & Ochieng, 2013).

Major public private partnership (PPP) initiatives in the United States have reportedly failed due to stakeholder opposition. As a result, it reveals that stakeholder s' participation in project is the

key to project success and without their input the outcome may not be favorable (Gohary et al., 2006). Different stakeholders have different levels and types of investments and interests in the project which sometimes results to conflicts among the stakeholders (Yang, 2009).

The number of community projects in Ghana such as; market structures, toilet facilities and boreholes have been abandoned due to little or no stakeholder participation (Boon et al, 2012). In Nigeria implementation of rural development projects has been impeded as observed by the centered own approach in which the rural people were not involved in project conception, planning and monitoring which has led to failure and abandonment of many valuable projects (UN, 2005).

In Meru, Kenya a study established that participation of head teachers, teachers, parents and children in school operations proved important in performance of public primary schools (M'ikiugu, 2011). Most community projects in Kenya are hardly sustained beyond six months when funding ceases due to weak stakeholder participation (Plan International, 2014).
Project sustainability is reflected in the capacity of the community to cope with change and adapt to new situations. A project that is seen as worth sustaining today may not be so in future (Williams, 2003). Sustainability refers to something which can be kept going. It also refers to resource use and lifestyles which do not damage resources or society (Merriam Webster, 2010). Sustainability is the likelihood of continuation in the stream of benefits produced by project after period of external support has ended (EU, 2004)

Project sustainability is concerned with the continuity of a project until it attains its set objectives (Mulwa, 2010). For a project to achieve sustainability, it needs to be implemented through a strategic approach. The strategic approach incorporates four main elements: future orientation, which assumes that things will change and so planning to maximize benefits may be derived during and from that change; external emphasis, which is recognizes the diversity of the project environment and many dimensions which impact on project outcomes, including technology, politics, society, and economics; environmental fit, which involves planning for a continual fit between the project and its environment, including its mission, objectives, strategies, structures, and resources; and process orientation, which involves planning and management priorities

evolving in an iterative cycle of conscious and deliberate learning from experience as the reality changes (Ingle, 2005).

Sustainable projects comprise short term outputs that are highly valued by the stakeholders such that they are willing to sacrifice and commit resources to the maintenance of the project to ensure it produces outputs in the long term. It comprises a holistic look at multiple indicators that can be monitored to ensure project continuity (Bagheri & Hjorth, 2007).

Project sustainability has been a challenge to local, national and international development agencies. Globally, billions of shillings have been spent in communities to enhance the living situation of the people. Aid effectiveness is a growing concern for the donor community. Donor funding can act as a temporary driver for social change but maintaining the social change is quite challenging. For instance, unforeseen circumstances may threaten the initial uptake of innovative project design elements. Short funding cycles, conflict with time needed to stimulate social change; and potentially worthwhile healthy interventions may no longer be financially viable once donor funding ends (Adhiambo, 2012). For a community development project to be self-sustaining, it must meet economic development, environmental protection and social development (United Nations, 2002). A project that does not meet the economic needs of the community will quickly become irrelevant and the community will lose interest in it (Sneddon, 2000).

Project sustainability ensures that institutions supported through projects and the benefits realized are maintained and continue after the end of the project. It entails determining whether the results of a project will be sustained in the medium or even long term without continued external assistance (IFAD, 2007).

Project sustainability is a major challenge not only in Kenya, but also in many developing countries. Most projects implemented at huge amounts often tend to experience difficulties with sustainability. Donors such as the World Bank, DFID, USAID and other bilateral aid agencies have been expressing concerns on project sustainability, while the trend with implementation of projects is showing significant improvement, post-implementation sustainability is rather

disappointing with very few projects being sustained. When donor funding and support structures are withdrawn, community development projects stall either due to lack of funds, community not appreciating fully the benefits of a project, lack of knowhow or basically lack of project viability in the target population (Panda, 2007)

Sustainability of a project ensures benefits from a project are felt for extended periods of time that can justify the economic and social input invested in to the project (Hayward & Neuberger, 2010). Despite heavy funding of development projects in Kenya, little evidence is available on the true impact of such projects on the lives of the people. Apparently, little evidence indicates that, it is sustainability that makes the difference between success and failure of community-based projects (Ababa, 2013).

Research objective

To establish the effect of stakeholders' involvement on sustainability of Women Development Projects in Kisumu Central Constituency, Kisumu County, Kenya.

Research hypothesis

H_0: There is no statistically significant effect of stakeholder involvement on sustainability of Women Development Projects in Kisumu Central Constituency, Kisumu County, Kenya.

H_1: There is statistically significant effect of stakeholder involvement on sustainability of Women Development Projects in Kisumu Central Constituency, Kisumu County, Kenya.

Literature review

Knowledge from internal and external stakeholders' engagement contributes to a firm's sustainable innovation orientation. The knowledge has to be managed by a firm internally in order to be converted into new ideas for innovation (Ayuso, Rodríguez, Castro & Ariño, 2012). When communities are involved in project initiation and implementation sustainability is assured. Stakeholders' engagement eliminates the tendency to abandon the projects half-way completed and sustains interest of communities or group with a view to protecting projects (Ayuso et al, 2012).

Ofuoku (2011) assessed the effect of community participation on sustainability of rural water projects in Delta Central Agricultural Zone of Delta State, Nigeria. The study was concentrated in the rural settlements where water projects were executed. The community citizens were rarely involved in various stages of projects. In most communities, water projects were funded by respective communities and other bodies. Those partly funded were highly sustainable than those solely funded by governments. There was significantly relationship between participation and sustainability of water projects (r-cal =0.652 and r-critical = 0.632).

Importance of community participation in integrated water resources management in the save catchment, Zimbabwe was studied. It revealed that water resources management cannot be successful and sustainable without the support and participation of water resource users. Natural resource management requires knowledge, experience and opinions of local communities who play pivotal role in resource conservation and community participation. This fosters better adaptation of management and policy responses to emerging water crisis (Chifamba, 2013).
Analysis of community participation in projects managed by Non-Governmental Organizations under World Vision in Central Tanzania revealed that 'community participation' takes on different forms in different stages of the project life cycle. Key to the success of stakeholders' participation were identified as: commitment of NGO in working with the poor; availability of staff with knowledge and skills on participatory management; continuous community sensitization and mobilization; and perceptions that interventions address participants' needs (Masanyiwa & Kinyashi, 2008).

Ochunga (2016) studied influence of stakeholder participation on sustainability of community development projects implemented by Plan International in Homa Bay Town Sub-County was studied. Chi-square p-value was used to test the significance of relationships between stakeholder participation and sustainability. It revealed: a weak positive insignificant association between passive stakeholders participation and sustainability (r=0.043,p=0.666); a moderate significant positive correlation between interactive stakeholders participation and sustainability (r=0.365, p=0.000); a moderate significant positive correlation between functional stakeholders participation and sustainability (r =0.455, p=0.000); and a moderate significant positive correlation between optimum stakeholders participation and sustainability (r= 0.382, p=0.000).

Golicha (2010) studied the extent of stakeholders' participation in formulation of donor funded education projects in Garissa district. The results showed that level of stakeholders' participation was not adequate in the most important stages of project formulation, design and implementation.

Maina (2013) studied influence of stakeholders' participation on the success of economic stimulus programme in education, Nakuru County, Kenya. Key findings were a positive relationship between stakeholder participation in: project identification and selection; planning; implementation; and monitoring and evaluation and success of Economic Stimulus Programs

Research Design

This study adopted both survey and correlation designs. Survey design was selected because the study entailed opinions, ideas and beliefs of respondents in their natural settings. It allowed collection of large amounts of data from the target population, which was expressed quantitatively (Kothari, 2012; Oso & Onen, 2009). Correlation design was chosen because it enabled establishment of the relationship between stakeholder involvement and project sustainability.

Target population

Population is the aggregate of all that conforms to a given specification (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). The target population included 10 chair persons, 10 Secretaries, 10 Treasurers and 150 beneficiaries from 10 selected women development projects in Kisumu Central Constituency. The details are shown in table 3.1.

Table 3. 1:Distribution of the target Population

Category	Respondents	Respondents(%)
Chairperson	10	5.6
Secretaries	10	5.6
Treasurers	10	5.6
Beneficiaries	150	83.2
Total	**180**	**100.0**

Source: Social Development Office, Kisumu Central Sub County (2017)

Sample design

A sample design is the framework, or road map, that serves as the basis for the selection of a survey sample. A sample size represents the population of interest, from which a sample is to be drawn (Lavrakas, 2008; Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Yamane (1967) model $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$: n is the sample size; N is the population size; and e is the level of precision was used to determine the sample size of 124 at 95% confidence level. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 124 respondents from the target population. Stratified random sampling was deemed suitable because of homogeneity of respondents within each stratum. Also, researcher could exercise control within each stratum to ensure that only important factors are considered. The distribution of the sample size is shown in table 3.2.

Table 3. 2: Distribution of sample size

Category	Respondents	Respondents (%)
Chairperson	7	5.6
Secretaries	7	5.6
Treasurers	7	5.6
Beneficiaries	103	83.2
Total	**124**	**100.0**

Source: Research Data (2017)

Data collection instruments

Research instruments are measurements tools which are designed to collect data on a research topic (Kothari, 2012). Structure questionnaire and interview schedule was used to collect data. Questionnaire had three sections: general information; stakeholders' involvement and project sustainability. Interview schedule interrogated issues of stakeholders' involvement and project sustainability.

Reliability and validity of research instrument

Reliability is the extent to which research results are consistent and replicable (Amin, 2005; Kothari, 2012). It is the consistency of scores when the research instrument is administered from one set of items to another, and also from one point in time to another (Frankel & Wallen, 2006). The instrument was pre-tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha (α) approach with a sample

of 18 respondents randomly selected from the target population. A reliability coefficient of .85 was obtained which was higher than 0.7 (Frankel & Wallen, 2006) accepted as ideal.

Validity is the extent to which the results of the study can be accurately interpreted and generalized to other populations (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008).The questionnaire was tested for content, construct and face validity. Content validity ensured that contents of the instrument were adequate. Face validity ensured clarity in font size and type, adequacy of workspace, and appropriateness of language. Construct validity ensured psychological construct or characteristics measured by the instrument were in line with the study objectives. The questionnaire was given to the supervisors to evaluate and rate each item in relation to the objectives as very irrelevant or very relevant on 1-4 scale. Validity index was determined from the assessors agreement scale as $n_{3/4}/N$, where $n_{3/4}$ is the number of items marked 3 or 4 by both supervisors, and N total number of items assessed. A validity index of .75 was determined which was above .70, the minimum accepted value of validity (Oso & Onen, 2009).

Administration of research instruments

Permission was sought from Social Development Office, Kisumu Central Sub County through the Research Department of The Kenya Institute of Management, Kenya. Research assistants were trained on research ethics and how to handle questionnaire constructs. Appointments were made with various organizations. Questionnaires were administered through drop and pick method. This was necessary to give respondents ample time of response. Interview was conducted with the chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers sampled from selected Women Development Projects.

Data analysis methods

Collected data was checked, edited and cleaned for completeness. Coded data was entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software ready for analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics was correlation and simple linear regression analyses. The findings were presented through tables. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically.

Ethical considerations

Permission to collect data was obtained from Social Development Office, Kisumu Central Sub County through The Kenya Institute of Management. Respondents' informed consent was obtained. For confidentiality issues, respondents' personal identifiers were not being taken during the exercise. Personal and sensitive questions were avoided from the outset. Results of the study would be copyrighted.

Results and discussions

The study sought to establish the effect of stakeholders' involvement on sustainability of Women Development Projects in Kisumu Central Constituency, Kisumu County, Kenya. The accompanying null hypothesis was, **"t**here is no statistically significant effect of stakeholder involvement on sustainability of Women Development Projects in Kisumu Central Constituency, Kisumu County, Kenya." Preliminary analysis involved descriptive analysis of stakeholders' involvement. The details are shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Descriptive analysis of stakeholders' involvement and project sustainability

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Stakeholders are involved in project initiation and implementation	90	3.98	.861
Stakeholders have interest in the project	90	3.40	.818
Awareness campaigns on project sustainability is performed	90	3.84	.718
Stakeholders are involved in monitoring for project sustainability	90	3.63	.854
Stakeholder are involved in decision making in the project	90	3.79	.772
Overall scores		**3.73**	**.805**

Key: 1.0-1.4 = strongly disagree, 1.5-2.4= disagree, 2.5-3.4= not sure, 3.5-4.4 = agree, 4.5-5.0 = strongly agree; std. deviation = standard deviation

Source: Survey data (2017)

The Table 4.4 shows respondents agreed stakeholders: are involved in project initiation and implementation (M=3.98; SD=.861); awareness campaigns are performed for project sustainability (M=3.84; SD=.718); are involved in monitoring for project sustainability (M=3.63;

SD=.854); and are involved in decision making in the project (M=3.79; SD=.772). However, respondents were not sure whether stakeholders had interest in the project (M=3.40; SD=.818). Overall score shows that respondents agreed stakeholders' involvement affect project sustainability (M=3.73; SD=.805).

The qualitative data confirmed the results. Sampled quotations from the interviewees are:

"We engage stakeholders in project planning and decision making. We also ensure that stakeholders develop interest in projects undertaken

[Interviewee 1]

"Involvement of stakeholders in operations has led to project sustainability. Normally we carry out awareness campaigns before we initiate projects and this has resulted in sustainability."

[Interviewees 2 &8]

Though there was general agreement that stakeholders' involvement affect project sustainability, there was lack of surety about the degree of effect. In order to show the degree of effect, simple linear regression analysis was sought. The general simple linear regression model was

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

The response variable y is project sustainability while explanatory variable x is stakeholder involvement. The term ε is the *residual* and represents deviation of observed values of project sustainability from that approximated by the model. Linear regression analysis was therefore sought and the results interpreted in stages. The details are provided in table 4.5.

Table 4. 5: Regression analysis of stakeholder involvement on project sustainability

Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	2.053	.510		4.024	.000
	Stakeholder	.444	.136	.328	3.257	.002

involvement

Goodness of fit:

$R = .328$

$R^2 = .108$

Adjusted $R^2 = .097$

$F = 10.606$

$p < .05$

a. Dependent Variable: project sustainability

b. Predictor: (Constant), Stakeholders involvement

Source: Survey data (2017)

In table 4.5, R is the correlation coefficient. It provides a weak degree of positive correlation (r=.328) between stakeholders' involvement and project sustainability. R-square of .108 measures part of project sustainability which was explained by stakeholders' involvement. It showed that approximately 10.8% of the variation in project sustainability was attributed to variation in stakeholders' involvement**.** The adjusted R square provides an idea of how the model may be generalized. It should be as close to R square as much as possible if not the same. In this case, the difference for the final model is small; i.e. .011 or 1.1%. This means if the model was derived from the population rather than a sample, then it would have accounted for approximately 1.1% less variance in project sustainability. The overall model was statistically significant (*F*-ratio =10.606; p< .05). The null hypothesis was rejected. Stakeholders' involvement therefore had a positive effect on sustainability of Women Development Projects in Kisumu Central Constituency, Kisumu County, Kenya.

Un-standardized coefficient values were used to construct the regression equation. The Beta coefficient for stakeholders involvement was .444 (p<.05) and was statistically significant. It made a unique contribution in explaining project sustainability. Table 4.5 and model 4.1 shows that optimum regression equation showing the relationship between stakeholders' involvement and project sustainability was

$$Y = 2.053 + .444x \quad (2)$$

Regression model 4.2 has a weak degree of positive correlation (r=.328) between stakeholders' involvement and project sustainability. The model is 10.8% explained by the variation in stakeholders' involvement and is statistically significant.

The results of the study are in concurrence with (Ayuso, Rodríguez, Castro & Ariño, 2012) which posits that knowledge from internal and external stakeholders' engagement contributes to a firm's sustainable innovation orientation. While (Ayuso, *etal,* 2012) looked at sustainability in terms of innovation orientation, the current study considered sustainability in terms of economic, social and environmental aspects.

Ofuoku (2011) in a study of rural water projects observed a strong significant relationship between community participation and sustainability (r =0.652). This is in slight disparity with the current study which shows that despite the existence of relationship between stakeholders involvement and sustainability (r=.328), the relationship was relatively weak. The current study also concurs with Ochunga (2016) results which showed a significantly positive moderate correlation between optimum stakeholders participation and sustainability (r= 0.382).

Chifamba (2013) while studying the importance of community participation in integrated water resources management in the save catchment, Zimbabwe observed that water resources management could not be successful and sustainable without the support and participation of water resource users. This is in concurrence with the current study where those interviewed agreed that stakeholders in operations led to project sustainability. While the current study observed stakeholders involvement through creating awareness campaigns, planning processes, monitoring processes (Masanyiwa & Kinyashi, 2008) observed community participation takes different forms at different stages of project life cycle.

Conclusion

There was a weak positive relationship between the stakeholders' involvement and sustainability of the Women Development Projects in Kisumu Central Constituency, Kisumu County, Kenya. The contribution of stakeholders' involvement though small was significant. Stakeholders

involvement in project: initiation and implementation; awareness campaigns; monitoring; and decision making are therefore significant in project sustainability.

Recommendations

i. Stakeholders involvement in project: initiation and implementation; awareness campaigns; monitoring; and decision making should be strengthen to enhanced project sustainability,

ii. More levels of project life cycle should be identified for stakeholders' involvement if effective project sustainability is to be achieved.

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