

Project Planning and Sustainability; Versus Community Involvement in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project

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Abstract: *The study sought to establish the effect of community involvement in planning on project sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Relevant literature was reviewed on the topics of project sustainability and project planning, and how they influence sustainability of community-based projects. The study adopted descriptive design where both qualitative and quantitative approach in order to get better analysis of the study. The population size was 185 and sample of 115 respondents was got using Slovin's Formula. Both primary and secondary sources with their relevant tools, like questionnaire and documentary analysis was used in order to come up with required data. Data was processed by use of SPSS V. 21 and analyzed by use of percentages, mean and standard deviation. The relationship between the variables was established by use of Pearson correlations module. The study found out that Community participated in financial planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.4627 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .68154. This implies that Community participated in financial planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Community participated in personnel planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.6866 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .52826. This implies that in personnel planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Community participated in work schedule in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.3731 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .62367. This implies that Community participated in work schedule in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Community participated in technological planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.3134 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .67888. This implies that Community participated in technological planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. The study has shown that the involvement of the community in planning phase, which was not the case from the findings, is very crucial in ensuring sustainability of projects. The way in which issues on community-based projects are handled significantly affect the sustainability of the project by either fostering good working relationships between all the parties involved, or alienating the parties involved. From the findings, awareness and acceptance campaigns were not extensively carried out before the actual implementation of the project and this negatively affected the sustainability of the project. The level of community support determines whether a project becomes established, how quickly and successfully it consolidates, and how it responds and adapts to meet changing needs. It is therefore important that involving local communities' starts at the identification phase, when decisions are being made about what type of project is required to address their priority need. It is recommended that there is need for community members to identify their own needs, analyze the factors that lead to the needs, and draw up community action plans to address the needs. Respect for and the use of community's inherent knowledge and capacities allows the community to cultivate innovative approaches to address their own problems.*

Keywords: Community involvement, Project sustainability, Community-based projects

1. Background

Globally, community involvement should be used to generate not only ideas for projects planning and their implementation, but also ideas to further improve existing project features (Tiwari et al, 2014). People shall participate and contribute significantly to something they feel part of, identify with, and correlate with their efforts (Häkkinen & Belloni, 2011). It is necessary for the community to understand the critical success factors, to systematically and quantitatively assess these vital factors, anticipating possible effects, and then select appropriate methods of handling them. Once identified, the success of the project can be achieved (Fulgham & Shaughnessy, 2013).

Project sustainability can be facilitated and enhanced by finding out what the community needs, what will benefit the community, what has been tried in the past, and what could be done to improve past ideas (Ashwell & Barclay, (2012). Macharia, Mbassana and Oduor (2015) argued that community members, when given an opportunity to be informed and involved in the project process, are a critical factor to a project's success. In addition, community

members may have special issues or concerns that, if incorporated into a project at the outset, may help to reduce the likelihood of challenges to risk assessment results, and potential remediation or revitalization plans.

People's participation is the very important for development. The notion of people's participation in their development has been gaining momentum in the process of human empowerment and development (Kuei & Lu, 2013). Contemporary development scholars have been advocating the inclusion of people's participation in development projects as they believe the avowed objectives of any project cannot be fully achieved unless people meaningfully participate in it (Kerzner, 2013).

Sustainability is the continuing of project benefits beyond the project period, and the continuation of local action stimulated by the project, and the generation of successor services and initiatives as a result of project-built local capacity (Schipper & Planko, 2012).

According to Jacob *et al.*, (2015), participatory development has its roots in economic development practices of the post-

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World War II period (1945 to Mid-1950s), when most of Europe needed reconstruction. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, (popularly known as the World Bank), was established to facilitate the process of economic recovery. The late 1950s and 1960s witnessed another significant process that necessitated economic development. Colonialism was in decline as many African and Asian countries attained independence. It became critical to develop and modernize of these countries. As Europe underwent reconstruction and economic development, global inequalities between rich nations and poor ones became evident and spawned the development aid era, pitting competing global war rivals, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America (USA). Development was equated to economic progress dominated by the elite, with poor people offering cheap labour. This approach to development (also called modernization or top-down development), however, widened the gap between the rich and the poor and entrenched poverty, especially in developing nations (Muraguri, 2011).

Community participation in community development activity is as old as man himself. Men have had to work individually and collectively to make life better for them. Prior to the onset of colonial administration, communities had engaged in communal efforts as a mechanism for mobilizing community resource to provide physical improvement and functional facilities in the socio, political and economic aspects of their lives. The use of community labor was paramount in this period (Kennedy, 2016).

According to Caldwell and Usadolo, (2016). In recent years there has been increasing interest in participatory approaches, which have been developed to improve the health of communities. Community participation (or involvement as the World Health organization (WHO) prefers to call it) has been identified as one main principle of primary health care (PHC) at a World Conference 11 (WC11). In addition, there is evidence that efforts which involve beneficiaries at the beginning of programmes are more effective than those which do not (Nyamasege & Mburu, 2015). Experiences in a range of countries throughout the world have shown the potential of participatory approaches as a means of obtaining programme sustainability.

Most of the development projects are implemented with great expectation that the community will participate in the sustainability of the projects. But however, many projects have failed due to lack of community participation. For example, In Turkana Kenya, the development agency of Norway whose aim was to exploit fisheries resources in the lake for development by increasing incomes through employment creation and by combating drought failed because they didn't involve communities (Njogu, 2014). For the sake of this research, the researcher intends to establish extent of community participation and project sustainability in Rwanda by taking the Essential Nutrition and Health Package (ENHP) as a case study.

The Essential Nutrition and Health Package (ENHP) was a nutrition project sponsored by World Vision Rwanda, the project was located in Kabuga ADP in Gasabo District in Kigali city, in Rusororo Sector/Rwanda. The Project started

in 2007 with the main objective of improving the community nutritional status targeting under five years' old children and pregnant women. Malnutrition is both a direct cause and underlying factor for the high infant and child mortality rates. There were also improvements in key nutrition indicators in Rwanda with reductions in underweight from 18% to 11%, wasting from 5% to 2.8% and stunting decreased slightly during the same period from 29% in 1992 to 22% in 2005 from 51% to 44% over the same period (DHS 2010). ENHP project encouraged for community participation on rehabilitation of malnourished children with Positive Deviance Hearth in Rusororo sector. The malnutrition rate was reduced from 44% to 34% for moderate cases and from 9% to 8% of severe malnourished (ENHP evaluation report 2011). The project objectives of improving the community nutritional status targeting under five years' old children and pregnant women achieved to a large extent and now the researcher would like to assess the role of community participation in the whole ENHP project cycle and sustainability of the project after the projects. The findings will help project implementers, development partners and stakeholders to address the issue of project future sustainability.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Community participation is one of the pre-requisites in most development Projects around the world. However, it is uncertain if community participation plays a big role in the development project's sustainability. It has been observed that often when project start, communities' members are actively participating. However, when the project phases out /ends, there is hardly any continuity of the project activities. This may be attributed to the fact that usually community members are not sufficiently empowered and fully engaged in every single activity of the project. Hence, they don't feel as owners of projects activities.

Responsibilities and role of community members during project cycle are often limited. Additionally, their involvement in the planning, design, monitoring and evaluation, is unfair and the linkages between various stakeholders undermined or weakened. Most projects have been donor-driven and only selected for their high visibility and quick impact with emphasis on achieving specific targets within a specified time rather than long-term contribution to a sustainable development process, for example of UNDP Three Year Support Project to the Implementation of The Rwanda TOKTEN Volunteer Programme. It is the above problem that prompted the researcher would like to study the extent to which community participation contributed to the sustainability of development projects in Rwanda.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical framework (Community Action Planning (CAP) Theory).

Community Action Planning (CAP) Theory was developed by (Hamdi & Goethert, 2017) and focus on who participates in projects and at what level. Effective development plans must clearly state those who will participate since inviting

every person is difficult to manage, hence it is better to design a strategy that will ensure a fair representation of everyone (Kuei & Lu, 2013). The central claim of the theory is that communities and their groups should be responsible for the initiation, planning, design, implementation and maintenance of development projects in their environments.

The Community Action Planning (CAP) is a 5-step, community-driven theory designed to build communities' capacity to address disparities through mobilization. Fundamental to the theory is a critical analysis identifying the underlying social, economic, and environmental forces that create inequities in a community. The goal is to provide communities with the framework necessary to acquire the skills and resources to plan, implement, and evaluate project actions and guidelines.

Community engagement serves as a framework that explains that residences of a community must be made to participate in any development project in their environment. As community residents know their problems more than any other outside consultant or government. Therefore, getting their input and having them to help decide the design of the project brings a sense of ownership and success of the project (Bank & Fund, 2014). According to (Hamdi & Goethert, 2017) the new realism of development requires a new definition of public responsibility and a new role for development practitioners. By moving away from the orthodox trend where consultants plan, politicians decide and the people receive towards a trend that promote community empowerment; involving people who are directly affected by the development project; and promoting the appropriate technologies in the planning process (Hamdi & Goethert, 2017).

There is need for direct communication with community residence in identifying community needs and in planning a project for execution. (Hamdi & Goethert, 2017) argued that the planning team should undertake a direct observation by looking, listening and talking. Care must be taken to ensure that various interests in the community are represented. Communication plays an integral role in project sustainability. The project manager is charged with guiding all aspects of the project, including the communication plan with method and frequency as specifics.

2.2 Community involvement in planning on sustainability

Fulgham and Shaughnessy (2013) recommended community engagement in project planning can lead to different types of project success: Attitudinal success most likely when the project creates or improves social capital, when communities participate in project planning, establishment, and daily management, and when benefits are equitably dispersed without choice capture; behavioural success most likely when the project invests in building capacity of local individuals and institutions; ecological success most likely when the project engages positively with cultural traditions and governance institutions, and economic success most likely when the project invests in capacity building.

The Implementation phase of the Project Management Process puts the project into action. Kerzner (2013) states that, project implementation or execution is the phase in which the plan designed in the prior phases of the project life cycle are properly coordinated and put into action. The purpose of project execution is to deliver the project anticipated results or deliverable and other direct outputs. It is the longest phase of the project management lifecycle, where most resources are applied. Ochieng and Owuor (2013) recommended that project implementation should include the planning, coordination of the various activities and the execution of the project activities required towards achievement of the project deliverables. Most projects fail to be completed on schedule due to poor planning, lack of implementation plan and uncoordinated execution of the relevant activities.

According to Ojwang and Bwisa (2014), a manager must have vision, a good implementation plan, follow-up and follow through for successful implementation. Successful implementation requires, in addition, proper knowledge and skill, clear well-written goals, clear priorities, a clear plan of action, and emphasis on quality control (QC), quality assurance (QA) and quality improvement (QI). An inadequate implementation plan is the final factor that can sabotage an otherwise successful project performance.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Participation of the masses in development activities implies enhanced capacity to perceive their own needs. Through participation, local people identify their needs as well as the relevant goals of a program. By participating in decision making and implementation activities, local people help project officials identify (1) needs, (2) strategies to meet those needs, and (3) the necessary resources required to implement the various strategies (Yadama, 2015). For example, community participation will be discouraged if environmental issues are given priority in agendas without addressing issues such as poverty, homelessness, health, and other basic necessities perceived to be more important by the coastal communities. The variables and their relationships are illustrated in the following Figure 1:

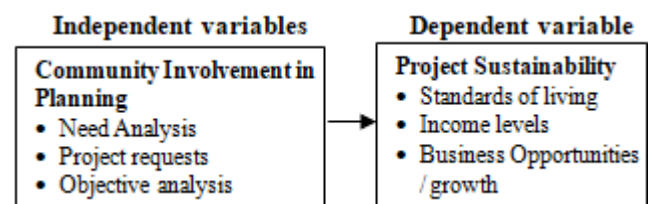


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3. Research Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive research design. In order to achieve the objective of this study by providing information on Community Involvement and Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda, this study embarked on the research mission of using quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate a number of diverse variables to describe different types of community participation strategy and how they lead to project sustainability. The target

population of the study was 185 community members of the project. Slovin’s formula was used to calculate the sample size. Therefore, the sample size was 115 respondents. A list of project members was obtained from selected project office and it is this list that was used to group the community members. The researcher asked the sector office, where names was provided to the researcher and screened on the parameter of performance. Some groups were purposively selected in order to explore most of the research questions. Data is facts or things certainly known and from which conclusions may be made. The main sources of data collection referred to when conducting this study was both primary and secondary sources of data. The survey questionnaire was used as the main data collecting instrument, and the secondary data was gathered from books, research articles and appropriate websites that are relevant to this study.

One set of questionnaires was designed for the community members; it included both open and closed ended set of questions that to be answered. The questionnaire was written in a simple and clear language for the respondent to feel free while answering. In addition to that the use of questionnaire is considered vital to the research since it provides accurate information regarding the study. The process involves examining and assessing each item in each of the instruments to establish whether the item brings out what it is expected to do. The data collected was processed and analyzed using SPSS (Version 21). This involved data coding, editing and tabulation especially quantitative data. The purpose of all these is to make the information clear and understandable for other people. Qualitative analysis techniques were used. The Qualitative analysis techniques complemented with some statistics that will mainly be obtained from the secondary data that was obtained through documentary analysis from the case study organization. The data collected was processed and analyzed using SPSS software. This involved data coding, editing and tabulation especially quantitative data. The purpose of all these is to make the information clear and understandable for other people. Qualitative and quantitative approach was used for analysis. Mean and standard deviation was used to give a clear understanding of the research interpretations for clear and easy understanding of the phenomenon studied. Relationship between the variables was established by use of Pearson correlations.

4. Results and Findings

4.1 Community Planning on sustainability ENHP Project

4.1.1 Assessing the Community Planning in Essential ENHP Project

Table 1 shows the perception of the respondents on the Community Planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project.

Community participated in financial planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.4627 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .68154. This implies that Community participated in financial planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Community participated in

personnel planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.6866 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .52826. This implies that in personnel planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Community participated in work schedule in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.3731 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .62367. This implies that Community participated in work schedule in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Community participated in technological planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.3134 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .67888. This implies that Community participated in technological planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project.

Table 1: Community Planning in ENHP Project

Community Planning	Mean	Std. Deviation	Comments
Community participated in financial planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project	4.4627	.68154	Strong Heterogeneity
Community participated in personnel planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project	4.6866	.52826	Very Strong Heterogeneity
Community participated in work schedule in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project	4.3731	.62367	Strong Heterogeneity
Community participated in technological planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project	4.3134	.67888	Strong Heterogeneity
Valid N (listwise)	115		

Source: Primary data, 2018

4.1.2 Effect of Community Planning on sustainability ENHP Project

Table 2 describes respondent’s views on the effects of Community Planning on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Community involvement in Planning has financial support in the project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.0896 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .75340. This implies that Community involvement in Planning has financial support in the project. Community involvement in continuous operations of the project: This was indicated by a strong mean of 4.1194 and a heterogeneity standard deviation of .70759. This implies that Community involvement in continuous operations of the project.

Table 2: Effects of Community planning on sustainability ENHP Project

Effects	Mean	Std. Dev	Comments
Community involvement in Planning has financial support in the project	4.0896	.75340	Strong Heterogeneity
Community involvement in continuous operations of the project	4.1194	.70759	Strong Heterogeneity
Valid N (listwise)	115		

Source: Primary data, 2018

4.1.3 Correlation between Community Planning on sustainability ENHP Project

Table 3 is giving the relationship between Community Planning on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project whereby the respondents N is 115 and the significant level is 0.01, the results indicate that independent variable has positive high correlation to dependent variable equal to .721** and the p-value is .000 which is less than 0.01. When p-value is less than significant level, therefore researchers conclude that variables are correlated. This means that there is a significant relationship between Community Planning on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. We can therefore conclude Community planning greatly contributes positively to sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project.

Table 3: Relationship between planning and sustainability ENHP Project

Relationship		Community Planning	Sustainability ENHP Project
Community Planning	Pearson Correlation	1	.721**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	115	115
Sustainability ENHP Project	Pearson Correlation	.721**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	115	115

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

4.2 Discussions of the results

From the overall findings, it was established that the community was not actively engaged in the projects phases and therefore their needs were not taken into consideration during the project planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation phases. These findings are in line with Ashwell & Barclay, 2012 who urged that by engaging the community in the different project phases, community ensures the success of a project through collective responsibility in terms of resources control. The lack of this engagement will lead to project failure.

Seghezze, (2013) stated that authentic community participation in the different project's phases enhances the sustainability of the community projects. He added that this could only be achieved through a people centred development. Project sustainability had positive impact on community's wellbeing in terms of improved living standards, increased business opportunities and increased income levels. According to Bamberger & Cheema (2017), a project is considered to be sustainable in the short term when the project activities and benefits continue at least 3 years after the life of the project. For project sustainability to be realized, the community must play a role (Bovaird, 2017). Sustainable projects should be defined by people themselves and this is achievable through project requests. The community is supposed to be brought into focus through active participation and collective decision making.

According to Seghezze, (2017) without the community being involved in the different project phase's sustainability of the project may not be achieved since the community is unlikely to take responsibility for something, they do not own themselves. The study established that those who

managed the community projects did not respond adequately to concerns whenever raised. Grievances raised by community members were not addressed appropriately.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study has shown that the involvement of the community in planning phase, which was not the case from the findings, is very crucial in ensuring sustainability of projects. The way in which issues on community-based projects are handled significantly affect the sustainability of the project by either fostering good working relationships between all the parties involved, or alienating the parties involved. From the findings, awareness and acceptance campaigns were not extensively carried out before the actual implementation of the project and this negatively affected the sustainability of the project. The level of community support determines whether a project becomes established, how quickly and successfully it consolidates, and how it responds and adapts to meet changing needs. It is therefore important that involving local communities' starts at the identification phase, when decisions are being made about what type of project is required to address their priority need.

It is recommended that there is need for community members to identify their own needs, analyze the factors that lead to the needs, and draw up community action plans to address the needs. Respect for and the use of community's inherent knowledge and capacities allows the community to cultivate innovative approaches to address their own problems.

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