

# Critical Factors Hindering Social Projects Sustainability in Rwanda; A Case of Gift of Hope Project, Nyaruguru District, Rwanda

Niyindora Emmanuel<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Patrick Mulyungi, (PhD)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Student, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

**Abstract:** *Social projects sustainability has been a very big challenge not only in developing countries but also in developed ones. Rwanda also faces such issues, an example being one of the Gift of Hope (GoH) project implemented in Nyaruguru since 2012-2014. GOH suffered sustainability problems shortly after its graduation, which pushes the researcher to conduct a research entitled “Critical Factors Hindering Social Projects in Rwanda. A Case of Gift of Hope Project Implemented in Nyaruguru, Rwanda”. The present research specifically wants to: (1) Explore effect of project handover dimension on sustainability issues of the Gift of Hope project; (2) Find out effect of beneficiary commitment dimension on sustainability issues of the Gift of Hope project; (3) Examine effect of post-project monitoring dimension on sustainability issues of the Gift of Hope project; (4) Identify effect of post-project support dimension on sustainability issues of the Gift of Hope project. A total of 37 headteachers or teachers participated in the study as informants and these were selected using the purposeful/judgmental sampling technique. The cross-sectional research design was used. Data were gathered using self-administered questionnaires. Through SPSS, percentages and regression analysis were used to present and analyze data. The findings are that GOH implementers significantly considered project handover principles and, hence, handover principles have no significant effect on non-achievement of GoH sustainability (P-Value =0.24). It was also found out that GoH beneficiaries showed a low level of commitment for its sustainability and, consequently, there is a significant effect of the target beneficiary commitment on GoH sustainability problems (P-value=0.000). Moreover, the study has revealed that post-project monitoring was not undertaken adequately, hence, there is a significant relationship with post-project monitoring and GoH sustainability issues (P-value=0.000). Finally, it has been discovered that post-project support was not provided as supposed to be, which affected GoH sustainability success (P-Value: 0.000). Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that, for social projects: (1) Project implementers need to always engage and empower the key stakeholders especially the target community (beneficiaries) and the local leaders to increase chance for successful sustainability; (2) The target community/beneficiaries as well as local authorities need to be given clear roles and responsibilities to sustain activities and outcomes after project handover; (3). The target community need to change their negative attitude and show their commitment to sustain the completed projects because it is useless to implement community projects whereby the target community lacks personal commitment; (4) Post-project monitoring is very important for social projects sustainability and local leaders are in the good position to undertake it but also projects implementing agencies need to establish a system for post-project monitoring to assist in completed projects sustainability; (5) Post-project support can assist in implemented social projects sustainability and, hence, local leaders and implementing agencies need to do it.*

## 1. Background of the Study

Sustainability has been a challenging aspect for more decades. The term “sustainability” originates from ideas of economists, philosophers, scientists, and writers of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth century. However, the concept became prominent in the 1980s with the Brundtland report released in 1987 and was used in relation to the protection of environment for sustainable development whereby any human endeavor for their economic growth should be made without endangering the environment not only for the benefits of the current but also for the future generations (Martens & Carvalho, 2016). Later on, sustainability was used across several disciplines including project management. Looking at the perspective of project management, the aspect of sustainability was introduced and regularly recalled to be given particular attention because there were challenges of projects whose continuation fails after the donour pulls out funds (Silvius et al., 2015). Several scholars and academics including Carvalho & Rabechini, (2015), Almahmoud et al. (2012); Martens & Carvalho (2016), Martens & Carvalho, (2010), Ika et al. (2012) assert that sustainability is one of the critical criteria for project success. This means that a project whose activities and outcomes fail to continue endlessly or at least

some years after the initial grant expires, its success is constrained. Having said this, however, Gaparini & Lustig (2011), Thamhain (2014), and Eid (2009) have congruently found out that, though there are evidences of projects that flourish after donour grants end, there are also major concerns, all over the world and especially in developing countries, over cases of implemented projects that face sustainability issues. To illustrate this, having great concern with the sustainability of their supported programmes and projects, the IFAD conducted research in 2009 to better understand the degree to which their executed projects/programmes are likely to get sustainable and identify areas of improvement. The findings were that though there had been significant improvements in the sustainability of their operations, especially over the past two years, projects/programmes sustainability was remaining a major challenge. According to the findings, sustainability was satisfactory in only 67 per cent of the projects that had been evaluated in 2007, as compared to only 40 per cent in 2002. However, 50 per cent of the projects that had been evaluated in 2007 were rated only moderately satisfactory in terms of sustainability and 33 per cent remained unsatisfactory (IFAD, 2009).

Putting sustainability aspect in the Rwandan context, as a developing country, Rwanda in partnership with its development partners makes huge effort to achieve its development goals through implementation of projects that enhance the lives of the citizens. However, while there are projects whose sustainability is demonstrable, there are also indications, in all the corners of the country, of others that fail to persist. In support of this statement, the Rwanda Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN, 2013) argue that although the Government of Rwanda has established a programme for Monitoring & Evaluation, till now, many of Government projects do not sustain their outcomes. Additionally, the Rwanda Prime Minister, while discussing with the Members of Senate, the debate that was aired on the Rwanda National Radio in the weekly radio talk commonly known as Kubaza Bitera Kumenya (Translated as "Inquiring leads to better understanding") of Sunday February 25, 2018, didn't gainsay existence of sustainability issues for some community projects implemented in Rwanda. In the course of that discussion, it was stressed that the main cause these community projects fail to sustain is that most local authorities do not include sustainability aspect of already implemented projects in their annual performance contracts whereas the community is not committed to sustain them by themselves. It was then decided that future contract performance evaluations will also be considering the sustainability situation of last year's projects.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Project sustainability has become a worldwide issue especially in developing countries. There is no gainsaying that in Rwanda there are huge projects sustainability problems that need to be improved. To evidence this statement, we find, throughout the country, cases of community water systems which failed to provide water to users just a few years after construction, ill wash and sanitation systems (e.g. the commonly known Kandagirukarabe "Tap and wash your hands" system), idle electricity systems, abandoned and overgrown vegetable gardens (Akarima k'igikoni), non-functional ECOSAN toilets, etc. But above all, the researcher has very recently identified the Gift of Hope (GoH) project that was implemented in 37 schools of Nyaruguru District in 2012-2014 but which ceased to continually function after very few years of completion. GoH was the project that provided a large number of rabbits for rearing to 37 schools from 7 administrative sectors of Nyaruguru as a demonstration model to the surrounding community to: (1) improve children/pupils nutrition and, (2) to enhance personal and household income (Plan International Rwanda, 2013-2014). The methodology that was adopted was "one child, one rabbit" whereby off springs had to be passed from one child to another until all are served (Idem). Surprisingly, shortly after the grant expired, the process of passing rabbits from one student to another stopped and now the cages that are not demolished are empty.

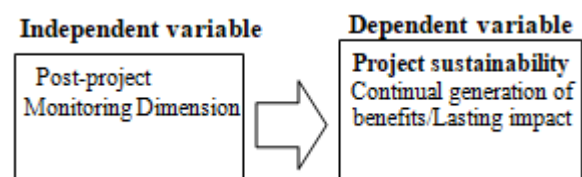
Diversified studies and literatures provide various drivers to project sustainability. According to Carvalho & Rabechini Jr. (2011), Silvius & Schipper (2015), Martens & Carvalho (2016), Singh et al. (2012), and Adrienne (2009), integration

of economic, social, and environmental aspects in the whole project cycle are key to project sustainability. Turner (2010), Silvius & Schipper (2015) and Derby & Silvius (2012) share the same view that stakeholder participation is associated with project sustainability, Turner (2010) and Silvius & Schipper, (2015) suggest risk management, Travest (2010) propose cultural dimension, Agarwal & Kalmar (2015) and Silvius & Schipper (2015) point out transparency dimension, Silvius & Schipper (2015) note accountability aspect, and last but not least IFRC (2009), ADA (2009), EU (2009), and Alice (2016) focuses on monitoring and evaluation functions as the key factors to project sustainability. While the most literatures focus on the aforementioned factors, it is very important to point out that project "project handover processes, Target beneficiary commitment, and post-project monitoring and support" are further factors which, apparently, are left out while these can be strongly associated with project sustainability. In this sense, the researcher has been curious to conduct a research thereof.

## 3. Objective of the Study

To examine effect of post-project monitoring dimension on the sustainability problem of the Gift of Hope project.

## 4. Conceptual Framework



## 5. Research Design

The research employed the cross-sectional design. According to Maryam (2015), the cross-sectional research design is suitable while we need "to understand the prevalence of various conditions, treatments, services or other outcomes and the factors associated with such outcomes". It is then reasonable to report that, as the current research aims at better understanding critical factors behind the sustainability problems of the implemented Gift of Hope project, the cross-sectional design fits for the purpose.

## 6. Target Population

The research population is an accessible total universe or group of people or objects who meet a well-defined set of eligibility criteria to which the researcher wishes to generalize the study findings. The research population as "all the members who meet the particular criterion specified for a research investigation". Therefore, the population of the current study is 37 headteachers of the schools in which GoH was implemented.

## 7. Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is a list of all members of the population from which members of a sample are selected (SIAP, 2015).

This study is thus targeting 37 schools in which GoH was implemented, namely:

GS Giheta, Mbasas PS, Mpanda PS, Munege PS, Kibangu GS, Rubona PS, Nkakwa GS, Nyantanga, Gihemvu PS, Rubona II, Kiyonza GS, Rugerero GS, Remera PS, Musebeya GS, Runyami PS, Runyomby GS, Masiga GS, Gitwe PS, Gahurizo PS, Kimina PS, Rusuzumiro PS, Kabavomo PS. Runyinya GS, Kagarama GS, Muhambara GS, Ruganza PS, Munini GS, Kamana GS, Giheta PS, Mwoya GS, Rutobwe PS, Ramba PS, Rwishywa PS, Sekera PS, Mubazi PS, Bigugu PS, Muganza GS.

**8. Sample and Sampling Technique**

The present study targeted respondents who were significantly involved in the project. In this sense, all 37 head teachers (these constitute the whole population because the population is too small to the point that is not convenient to draw a sample) were in the best position to fulfill the requirement. However, due to some head teachers who were unable to be reachable as they were no longer in service, these were replaced by teachers provided that these were also involved in the GoH project. Thus, this study used the purposeful sampling technique to select the respondents. According to Taherdoost (2016), purposeful sampling also called judgmental sampling is “a strategy in which particular settings, persons or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices. It is where the researcher includes cases or participants in the sample because they believe that they warrant inclusion”.

**9. Research Findings and Discussion**

**Regression Analysis**

**Table 1: Model Summary**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .885 <sup>a</sup> | .783     | .780              | .56939                     |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Project monitoring dimension

R-square is equal to 0.783(78.3%), this implies that variations change in post-project monitoring dimension influence Projects sustainability, since the p value is 0000, this means that Post project monitoring dimension in relation with Projects sustainability is statistically significant as seen further in ANOVA table below.

The rule of Thumb is that, usually an R square of more than 50% is considered as better. This study proves the rule of Thumb the R<sup>2</sup> is (0.783). This implies that Stakeholders’ contributed 78.3% to the project sustainability.

**Table 4.2: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F       | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 85.453         | 1  | 85.453      | 263.582 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 23.667         | 35 | .324        |         |                   |
|       | Total      | 109.120        | 36 |             |         |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: project sustainability  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Project monitoring dimension

ANOVA results further show that project monitoring dimension influence the project sustainability in Nyaruguru District. The sig value (0.000) less than the level significance (0.05). The F-statistics (F=263.582) is far greater than the P-value (0.000) hence a further confirmation that Project monitoring dimension is significantly influence the project sustainability in Nyaruguru District.

**Table 4.3: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t    | Sig.   | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B |             |       |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|--------|---------------------------------|-------------|-------|
|       | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |      |        | Lower Bound                     | Upper Bound |       |
| 1     | (Constant)                  | .130       | .567                      |      | .229   | .820                            | -1.001      | 1.261 |
|       | Independent Variable1       | .724       | .031                      | .885 | 16.235 | .000                            | .439        | .562  |

a. Dependent Variable: Project sustainability

From coefficient table above, the researcher came up with following regression equation in order to justify the study.

Y = Project sustainability

B<sub>0</sub> = Constant Term

β<sub>1</sub> = Beta coefficients

X<sub>1</sub> = Post-project Monitoring Dimension

Y = 0.130 + 0.724X<sub>1</sub> (Post-project Monitoring Dimension)

.....Equation 1

The results indicate that Post-project Monitoring Dimension have a relationship with Project sustainability. The significance is 0.000 which indicates that there is positive relationship between Post-project Monitoring Dimension and Project sustainability.

**10. Conclusions**

The GoH sponsor accounted very much on integration of the handover dimension in GoH life cycle in line with the

project management requirements despite that this alone was not enough to ensure GoH sustainability. Consequently, the study has not found any significant effect of the handover dimension factor on GoH sustainability issues (P-value: 0.24, which is greater than the level of significance 0.05). Thus, non-consideration of this factor feeds into non-achievement of project sustainability. The study has also shown that there is a significant correlation between the beneficiary commitment and GoH sustainability problem (the calculated P-value 0.000 is lower than the level of significance 0.05). With this, beneficiary commitment dimension affects the sustainability of social projects.

To progress, the research has clearly indicated that there is a significant association between the post-project monitoring and GoH problem (P-value 0.000). That said, the post project monitoring dimension has effect on sustainability of social projects. Finally, it has been found out that there is a

significant relationship between post-project support dimension and GoH sustainability problem (P-value 0.000). Then, post-project support has a significant effect on sustainability of social projects.

## 11. Recommendation

Projects are primarily designed for the benefits of the target beneficiaries and are initiated to help them help themselves and improve their living conditions. Sustainable development principles force the direct beneficiaries to play a significant role in their own development. Beneficiaries should then always understand that they have to demonstrate high level of ownership and commitment to supplement and sustain development interventions performed for them by the well-wishers (outsiders) instead of always relying on them.

Local government authorities are key community development facilitators. Despite the fact that community development boosting is within their primary roles as leaders, local government authorities represent permanent institutions and have absolute power to influence the community to achieve their development. Basically, sustainable development is not possible while implemented projects are not sustainable. In this regard, local authorities are in good position to monitor and support implemented projects in their areas and should always show high level of commitment by putting this in their annual performance contract.

It has been found out that the target community and local government authorities play a critical role in sustaining project activities and outcomes. It has also been revealed out that adequately engaging these stakeholders in the project and empowering them is not always a guarantee that they will support in sustaining the project after the grant expires. In this way, project internal team should put in place an adequate system for post-project monitoring to encourage those who have been left with responsibilities for continuing the project to do so as required.

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