

Efficiency of Monitoring and Evaluation Approaches on Project Performance in Rwanda; A Case Study Non-Government Organizations in Gasabo District

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Abstract: *This Research was conducted to examine the efficiency of monitoring and evaluation approaches on project performance in Rwanda. The case study was carried out in NGOs based in Gasabo District. The objective of this study was to establish to which extend status assessment, logical framework, performance evaluation and internal audit influence project performance. This study employed a descriptive survey research design and targeted 72 respondents and a sample of 61 respondents of the target population was considered. Simple random sampling technique method was used and primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires. A pilot study was conducted to pretest the validity and reliability of instruments for data collection. The research supervisor's opinion was obtained to ensure content validity of the research instrument. The data was analyzed using SPSS and presented using frequency tables to facilitate comparisons and conclusions. Data collected was analyzed and interpreted based on the identified independent and dependent variable. Data were analyzed using multiple regression to establish if there was a significance between dependent variable; project performance against independent variables; status assessment, logical framework, Performance Evaluation and Internal audits. The study revealed that these independent variables played an important role in determining the project performance. M & E approaches are important for performance of any project. The role of status Assessment, logical framework, performance evaluation and internal audits leaves only 26.1 percent unexplained. The P- value of 0.000 (Less than 0.05) implies that the model of M&E approaches influencing project performance is significant at the 95% confidence level. The researcher concluded that there is need to evaluate other M&E approaches which contribute to project performance.*

1. Background of the Study

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a process that assists project managers in improving performance and achieving results. The goal of M&E is to improve current and future management of outputs, outcomes and impact (UNDP, 2002). International organizations like World Bank rely heavily on Monitoring and evaluation to ensure that all projects they fund attain the expected results. World Bank reports show that developed countries in the West have been using Monitoring and Evaluation as part of their development projects control tool for years to the point that they can claim a certain master and understanding of Monitoring and Evaluation. On the other hand, developing countries are just starting to see Monitoring and Evaluation as a tool they can use to enhance their public management processes (World Bank, 2004). For the World Bank and all international organization, Monitoring and Evaluation should not be the privilege of developed countries but rather a tool used throughout the world. This is the reason why the emphasis is given to any means and tools which can be used to ensure that Monitoring and Evaluation is used to its full capacity (inputs and outputs) spheres of government (Mackay, 2007).

Western organizations (both public and private such as NGO) see in Monitoring and Evaluation a must-have and master tool to the point that they invest immense amount of effort and resources to develop Monitoring and Evaluation systems. The good example is Canada which invested in the development of strong and trustworthy Monitoring and

Evaluation system as key tools to support accountability and results-based management (Lahey, 2009).

Thanks to accountability and development results being obtained by countries and organizations which have the culture to monitor and evaluate, developing countries have understood that they cannot do otherwise if they want to count among developed countries one day. As result, Monitoring and Evaluation processes are growing in importance and application in countries like India and Malaysia where Monitoring and Evaluation is used to understand and plan national development evolution. It is in Africa and Middle East where Monitoring and Evaluation are still used at a very basic level and only on a very small set of selected projects (Zvoushe & Gideon, 2013).

Many are the elements which can explain that small adoption of Monitoring and Evaluation processes in Africa. One can mention the education level in many African countries and unstable political climate found in the majority of countries in Africa. All these create a very complex and hard to operate-in environment to implement and inculcate Monitoring and Evaluation. But there is hope that Monitoring and Evaluation will soon be a master in all African countries. There is a strong rise and desire to implement result-driven political reforms and agenda where rewards are given to those who demonstrate the ability to improve service delivery to the citizens and good utilization of public budget. That shift of mentality is giving arise the understanding of the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation as tool to improve people's lives, particularly the

underprivileged one. The results are measured by the level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries; citizens (Benington and Moore, 2011). It is good to acknowledge that Monitoring and Evaluation processes and culture take time to have and master. All Monitoring and Evaluation specialists easily admit that it takes time and requires courage to develop and implement Monitoring and Evaluation processes. The desired results being to have the results oriented culture, sometimes iterations will be done to ensure that the evaluation culture becomes part of the organization and the entire system (Lahey, 2009). Developed countries went through the same process and they have learned a lot from it, it is now the time of development countries apply monitoring and evaluation and draw lessons from it (World Bank, 2004). African continent counts a great number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), both local and international, which are working together with African authorities to boost their developmental programmes.

NGOs help governments to extend their social and development policies to remote rural areas, and to vulnerable persons such people living with disabilities, women and girls among other. NGOs construct hospitals in remote rural areas because in general sense rural areas are less touched by development programmes as African countries usually do not have sufficient budget to launch large scale development programmes countrywide and as consequence rural areas or places where politicians do not have direct interest are left off. NGOs bring in country specialized programmes for people living with disabilities (most of African cultures consider them as unable and cursed) and sensitize local population about gender equality.

In order to achieve their actions NGOs need to plan for their activities specifying the expected duration of their activities and what will be the beneficiaries of their programme but most of all they need money to finance activities and afford necessary materials. The huge parts of the budget used by NGOs come from donors who appreciate NGOs programme and decide to contribute to its success. Contributions are mostly given as periodical installments or through periodical call for contribution done by NGOs. In return donors require a proof that their money has been used for what it was given for (the programme is achieving its goal) otherwise NGOs lack working budget and close.

Effective monitoring and evaluation helps in providing timely information on the project progress which in turn leads to increase in technical capacity and project performance (Raynolds 2011). Ineffective monitoring and evaluation leads to wastage of resources and has a negative effect on the project performance. NGOs find in Monitoring and Evaluation an incredible tool to pledge their programmes in front of potential donors. This is due to the fact that monitoring and evaluation is a process that helps program implementers make informed decisions regarding program operations, service delivery and program effectiveness, using objective evidence (Ballard 2010). This study sought to illustrate the efficiency of Monitoring and Evaluation approaches for NGOs working in development countries like Rwanda (both local and international organizations) on their project performance.

2. Problem Statement

Monitoring and Evaluation is still in its infancy in Africa and Rwanda is not an exception; to the extent that many are those who cannot even give a general description of what Monitoring and Evaluation is. This cruel reality makes us wonder whether NGOs find required resources to help them accomplish their Monitoring and Evaluation activities. NGOs management team appreciate the fact that Monitoring and Evaluation allow them to understand the importance of the project they are implementing for them and for its beneficiaries. In fact, regular monitoring and evaluation processes allow them to get feedback from different parts (beneficiaries and donors) and adjust in time if necessary.

Project monitoring and evaluation exercise adds value to the overall efficiency of project planning, management and implementation by offering corrective action to the variances from the expected standard. "Project managers are required to undertake more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the projects and develop frameworks and guidelines for measuring impact" (Kahilu D 2010). Monitoring and Evaluation practices allow them expect greater value creation for the organization as result of project success.

A good example of weak use of M&E can be found in the implementation of VUP programme which is a social protection programme that is part of programmes implemented by Rwandan Government (and some donors) to achieve its Vision 2020. The goal of the programme is to contribute on the fight against poverty and allow the achievement of a national human resource based economy and development.

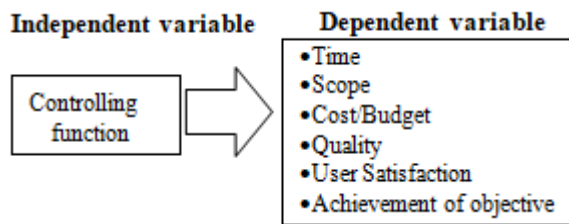
The VUP logical framework does not clearly link some of the outputs to be achieved with addressing the causes of poverty. In particular, problems such as mindset, capacity building and training, sensitization, participation and ownership, collaboration between actors and interface management are not explicitly expressed in the VUP Logical Framework. This can hamper the sustainability of VUP's achievements (Imanzi, 2011).

The monitoring and evaluation of VUP has found some challenges such as; not all communities have members with monitoring and evaluation skills, there is insufficient technical guidance about how to monitor the implementation of activities, and a lack of a standard reporting framework. Monitoring and evaluation planning should indicate the necessity of sensitizing the community about the activities conducted to increase ownership and sense of achievement, training and capacity building on monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, this study aimed to understand the efficiency of using monitoring and evaluation approaches by NGOs in Rwanda on their project performance.

3. Objective of the study

To assess the influence of internal audit on project performance in NGOs based in Gasabo District

4. Conceptual Framework



5. Research Design

Cooper and Schindler (2003) summarizes the essentials of research design as an activity and time based plan; always based on the research question; guides the selection of sources and types of information; a framework for specifying the relationship among the study variables and outlines the procedures for every research activity. The researcher has used a descriptive research design, where qualitative and quantitative approach has been used. The qualitative method was used for the data collected using interviews. The quantitative method was used to prove the statistical tables. The data from respondents was used extracted using questionnaires and interviews.

6. Population of the Study

Population is defined as the total collection of elements about which the researcher wishes to make inferences (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), explain that the target population should have some observable characteristics, to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the study.

Population refers to the entire group of people; event or organizations that a researcher wants to study. The population of this research is at the number of 72 people who work in NGOs operating within Gasabo District and have monitoring and evaluation function.

7. Sample Size and sampling techniques

A sample size is a subset of the population to which researcher intends to generalize the results. Any statements made about the sample should also be true of the population (Orodho, 2002).

Sampling is defined as the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that they represent the larger group from which they are selected (Mugenda and Mugenda2003). A sample size will be determined from a total population of 72 individuals who are M&E staffs or project managers where necessary from each NGOs within Gasabo District using the formula by Yamane (1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \quad \text{Where:}$$

n = the desired sample size

e= probability of error (i.e., the desired precision, e.g.,0.05 for 95% confidence level)

N=the estimate of the population size.

$$n = \frac{72}{1+72(0.05)^2} = 61 \text{ Population}$$

A sample size will be 61 respondents

When limited resources such as time and costs dictate that complete population is not possible, sampling is an alternative. Therefore, in this research, researcher had limit concerning cost and time, as well as the population under study is 61 people.

8. Sampling Technique

The sample of this research was selected using probability sampling with simple random sampling technique. This technique was selected because it assures the researcher of representation of the overall of the population, it has also statistical precision. The confidence level for this research was 95% confident with a margin of error of +/-5% (Smith, 2013).

9. Data Collection Instruments

A questionnaire was used to collect information on the M&E function being used by the NGOs. Primary data were collected through the administration of written questionnaires to the M&E staff or project managers from each NGO. Questionnaires were used for the following reasons: Their potentials in reaching out to a large number of respondents within a short time; ability to give the respondents adequate time to respond to the items; they offer a sense of security (confidentiality) to the respondent and it is an objective method since no bias resulting from the personal characteristics during interviews. Every item on the questionnaire addressed an objective of the study. The questionnaire had close-ended questions. The questionnaire focused on the determinants of effective M&E approaches in NGO's, which are status assessment, Logical framework, performance evaluation and internal audit

10. Research findings and discussion

10.1 Internal audit and project performance

The fourth objective of the study was to establish the extent of internal audit and project performance in NGOs. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to summarize the data as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Internal audit and project performance

	% to a Very large extent	% to a large extent	% to some extent	% to a small extent
Consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations	16.7	40	30	13.3
Disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management	26.7	46.3	20	7
Play an important assurance and advisory role within the contemporary governance environment.	42.7	44.3	8	5
Controlling Function	51.7	15	20	13.3

Source: Primary Data,2018

Result in Table 1, shows that majority reported that internal audit is a controlling function to a very large extent with a percent of 51.7 on project performance and internal audit

play an important assurance and advisory role within the contemporary governance environment with 42.7% to a very large extent. Respondents agreed to a large extent with a percent of 46.3 that internal audit disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management and the percent of 40 reported that consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations had large extent on project performance

11. Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that internal audit influence Project Performance in NGOs based in Gasabo District. The influence of internal audit on project performance in NGOs based in Gasabo District. The study revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between internal audit and project performance on 56.4%. There is need to internal audit approach which is to be used in every stage of project implementation. These M&E approaches ought to be in a position to meet the specific needs of the project.

12. Recommendations

The teams charged in carrying out M & E of Projects should consider adopting a modern information and communications technology in carrying out monitoring and evaluations to capture real time data. There is need to examine the role of M&E approaches since it had a positive influence on project performance. More so project implementation teams should continuously evaluate the skills and knowledge associated with specific M&E approaches in projects and ensure there is optimal benefit.

The M& E approaches should be continuously evaluated through workshops and seminars. All project implementers ought to attend benchmarking seminars which will ultimately improve their skills on project planning and implementation.

There is need to include all stakeholders in project M & E in each stage as they play an active role since they are the consumers of the project for the sake of sustainability. Cooperation of stakeholders should also be encouraged.

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