

Assessing Determinants of an Effective Monitoring and Evaluation System for Community Based Projects in Rwanda - A Case Study of Early Childhood Care and Development for the Girl Child

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Abstract: *The purpose of this research was to assess the determinants of monitoring and evaluation in community development projects in Rwanda and was carried out in the Early Childhood Care and Development for the Girl Child as the case study with the following objectives; to establish the extent to which availability of funds influences the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation system on ECCD4GC project, to assess the extent to which stakeholders' participation influences the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation system in ECCD4GC project and to identify the extent to which organization's leadership influences the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation system in ECCD4GC project. The researcher reviewed literature related to how effective monitoring and evaluation systems are fundamental if the goals of a project are to be achieved. Through setting up proper monitoring and evaluation systems; planning, efficiency and proper funds utilization can be achieved thus enhancing the performance of projects and the determinants influencing effectiveness of a monitoring and evaluation system for community development projects. The research design used was descriptive and analytical while the population was 66 employees of the project, due to the fact that the population was small the sample size was the whole population. Data collection tools were questionnaires, interviews and documentary review. Data analysis and interpretation was done based on percentages and frequencies. The researcher found out that the project uses funds allocated to the project strictly for the specified activities so as to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation; stakeholders are allowed to participate in preparing the timetable for M&E activities, the organization assigns clear responsibilities to stakeholders during M&E process, the level of commitment of organization leadership/ Management determines the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation systems for projects and that the leaders always endeavor to clearly communicate M&E results to the concerned stakeholders so that fair discussions upon them can be made. The researcher concluded that the extent to which availability of funds influences the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation system on ECCD4GC project are that the organization provides enough funds for monitoring and evaluation activities, there should be a separate budget allocation for M&E, there is independency in the budgetary decisions for the monitoring and evaluation unit, the organization ensures there is timely provision of funds for M&E and that funds allocated are used for M&E activities only. The researcher recommended that Employees of the project should work hard to ensure that monitoring and evaluation determinants are identified for proper compliance*

Keywords: Effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation System, Evaluation, Monitoring, Stakeholders' participation and Organization leadership

1. Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation of projects is not only important to projects but it is part and parcel of project design. Monitoring and evaluation has been used globally over the last several decades as a tool in project management. Project monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of the project cycle and of good management practice (Olive, 2002). Olive observes that monitoring and evaluation is fundamental if the project goals, objectives and success are to be achieved. M&E improves overall efficiency of project planning, management and implementation. According to UNDP (2002) the overall purpose of monitoring and evaluation is the measurement and assessment of performance in order to more effectively manage the outcomes and outputs known as development results. It helps improve performance and achieve results. Monitoring and evaluation also enable organizations extract relevant information from past and ongoing activities that can be used as the basis for programmatic fine tuning, reorientation and future planning. Without effective monitoring and evaluation, it would be impossible to judge if work is going in the right direction, whether progress and success can be claimed, and how future efforts might be improved (UNDP, 2009).

2. Statement of the Problem

Monitoring and Evaluation is becoming an area of growing importance for many organizations and community development at large. It allows those involved in development activities to learn from experience, to achieve better results and to be more accountable. There is increased interest in M&E among the development community due to a stronger focus on the results produced by interventions. M&E processes allow those involved to assess the impact of a particular activity, determine how it could be done better and show what action is being taken by different stakeholders. (World Bank, 2011). Badly designed and managed monitoring and evaluations can do more harm than good. Misleading results can undermine the effective channelling and use of resources. Many projects have been carrying out monitoring and evaluation as a formality just because it is one of the requirements to get funds from donors. In large project, M&E activities are considered as part of ordinary projects' activities. It is not allocated autonomy and resources it deserves to ensure its effectiveness. However, monitoring and evaluation in some projects still desires much improvements and it not fully addressing the need for monitoring and evaluation in terms

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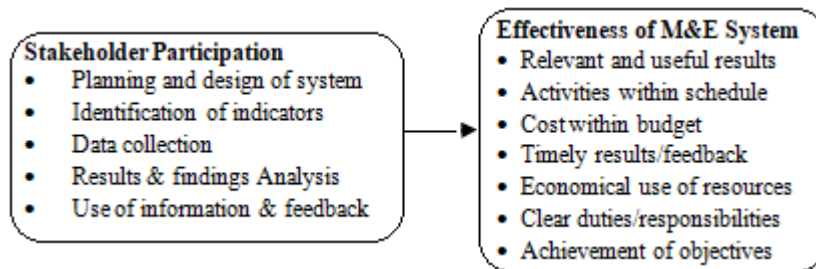
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output, this problem is resulting from different factors that stand among the way for effective monitoring and evaluation. This calls for the need to have a research carried out on the assessment of the determinants of effective monitoring and evaluation for community based projects. It is against that background that the researcher carried this research with reference to early childhood care and development for the girl child as the case study.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to assess the determinants of effective monitoring and evaluation system for community development projects in Rwanda. Its second specific objective was to assess the extent to which stakeholders' participation influence the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation system in ECCD4GC project.

4. Conceptual Framework



5. Research Methodology

- **Research Design:** The study used descriptive research design for open ended questions with a survey used as a method of collecting data while correlation research method was used for quantitative data analysis.
- **Target Population:** The target population for this study was staff in ECCD4GC Rwanda program and personnel in the administrative, finance and human resource departments. There are 66 including 46 employees working under Wash Program and 20 working under administrative and finance and human resource departments.
- **Sample Size:** The sample size of the study was the same as the population because of the population size is small. Therefore universal sampling was done.
- **Data collection instruments:** The researcher used different instruments that helped in acquiring the sufficient data required from both primary and secondary sources. The researcher used questionnaires, interviews and documentary review.
- **Data processing and analysis:** Data analysis is the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and interpretation of data. The basic steps in the analytic process consist of identifying issues, determining the availability of suitable data, deciding on which methods are appropriate for answering the questions of interest, applying the methods and evaluating, summarizing and communicating the results. This involved presenting findings in a logical and sequential way so that conclusions could be drawn from them. The data was presented according to research questions and research objectives. Tables were used to present data. Data analysis was based on the percentages and frequencies of the views collected from respondents.

6. Summary of Research Findings

6.1 The extent to which stakeholders' participation influences the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation system in ECCD4GC project.

Table 1: The extent to which respondents agree that stakeholders participate in the organization's planning of formal meetings for M&E

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	28	42
Agree	20	31
Neither agree nor disagree	13	20
Disagree	5	7
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	66	100

Source: Primary data, 2019

According to table 1, respondents contacted said that there the project ensures the stakeholders participate in the organization's planning of formal meetings for M&E (42%) while 31% of respondents agreed and 20% of respondent's neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 7% of respondents disagreed. When asked to give reasons for their answers, respondents said stakeholders participate in the organization's planning of formal meetings for M&E so that they can positively contribute to effective monitoring and evaluation. This led the researcher to the understanding that stakeholders participate in the organization's planning of formal meetings for M&E so as to contribute to improved monitoring and evaluation

Table 2: The extent to which respondents agree that stakeholder's feedback is sought during M&E processes

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	30	46
Agree	18	27
Neither agree nor disagree	13	20
Disagree	5	7
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	66	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2019

According to table 12, respondents contacted said that stakeholder’s feedback is sought during M&E processes (46%) while 27% of respondents agreed and 20% of respondent’s neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 7% of respondents disagreed. When asked to give reasons for their answers, respondents said stakeholder’s feedback is sought during M&E processes so that it can be incorporated in monitoring and evaluation. This led the researcher to the understanding that the stakeholder’s feedback is sought during M&E processes so that they can be involved in monitoring and evaluation.

Table: The extent to which respondents agree that stakeholders are involved in M&E decision making process

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	29	43
Agree	16	25
Neither agree nor disagree	16	25
Disagree	5	7
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	66	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2019

According to table 3, respondents contacted said that stakeholders are involved in M&E decision making process(43%) while 25% of respondents agreed and 25% of respondent’s neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 7% of respondents disagreed. When asked to give reasons for their answers, respondents said the stakeholders are involved in M&E decision making process by giving their views on the relevant information pertaining the project. This led the researcher to the understanding that stakeholders are involved in M&E decision making process is vital for the success and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation process.

Table 3: The extent to which respondents agree that the organization involves stakeholders in identification of indicators

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	26	40
Agree	20	30
Neither agree nor disagree	15	23
Disagree	5	7
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	66	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2019

According to table4, respondents contacted said that organization involves stakeholders in identification of indicators (40%) while 30% of respondents agreed and 23% of respondent’s neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 7% of respondents disagreed. When asked to give reasons for their answers, respondents said the organization involves stakeholders in identification of indicators upon which analysis can be based. This led the researcher to the understanding that organization involves stakeholders in identification of indicators facilitate monitoring and evaluation through provision of information for analysis.

Table 4: The extent to which respondents agree that stakeholders are allowed to participate in preparing the timetable for M&E activities

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	27	41
Agree	22	33
Neither agree nor disagree	13	20
Disagree	4	6
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	66	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2019

According To table 5, respondents contacted said that stakeholders are allowed to participate in preparing the timetable for M&E activities (41%) while 33% of respondents agreed and 20% of respondent’s neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 6% of respondents disagreed. When asked to give reasons for their answers, respondents said stakeholders are allowed to participate in preparing the timetable for M&E activities. This led the researcher to the understanding that the project uses funds allocated to the project strictly for the specified activities so as to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation stakeholders are allowed to participate in preparing the timetable for M&E activities

Table 5: The extent to which respondents agree that the organization assigns clear responsibilities to stakeholders during M&E process

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	30	46
Agree	19	29
Neither agree nor disagree	13	19
Disagree	4	6
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	66	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2019

According to table 6, respondents contacted said that the organization assigns clear responsibilities to stakeholders during M&E process (46%) while 29% of respondents agreed and 19% of respondent’s neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 6% of respondents disagreed. When asked to give reasons for their answers, respondents said the organization assigns clear responsibilities to stakeholders during M&E process. This led the researcher to the understanding that the organization assigns clear responsibilities to stakeholders during M&E process

Table 6: The extent to which respondents agree that M&E results and findings are communicated to the stakeholders

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	26	39
Agree	21	33
Neither agree nor disagree	13	19
Disagree	6	9
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	66	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2019

According to table 7, respondents contacted said that M&E results and findings are communicated to the stakeholders (39%) while 33% of respondents agreed and 19% of respondent’s neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 9% of respondents disagreed. When asked to give reasons for their

answers, respondents said M&E results and findings are communicated to the stakeholders. This led the researcher to the understanding that M&E results and findings are communicated to the stakeholders

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

The researcher concluded that the extent to which stakeholders' participation influence the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation system in ECCD4GC project are stakeholders are adequately involved in designing and planning of M&E Systems and activities, stakeholders participate in the organization's planning of formal meetings for M&E, stakeholders participate in the organization's planning of formal meetings for M&E, stakeholders feedback is sought during M&E processes, stakeholders are involved in M&E decision making process, Stakeholders are involved in M&E data collection process, the organization involves stakeholders in identification of indicators, stakeholders are allowed to participate in preparing the timetable for M&E activities, organization assigns clear responsibilities to stakeholders during M&E process

7.2 Recommendations

The researcher made the following recommendations that should be put into consideration in relation to the determinants of effective monitoring and evaluation in community based projects

- **To Early Childhood Care and Development for the Girl Child** -The project should continue carrying out effective monitoring and evaluation in order to assess the gaps that need to be closed.
- **To Early Childhood Care and Development for the Girl Child**- Employees of the project should work hard to ensure that monitoring and evaluation determinants are identified for proper **compliance**
- **To the Government** - The government of the Republic of Rwanda should help projects to know how best monitoring and evaluation should be carried out

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