

INFLUENCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION CAPACITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT TOOL ON PERFORMANCE OF NONGOVERNMENTAL PROJECTS IN TURKANA COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: The critical role played by Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya is to promote development and reduce poverty by implementing socio-economic programs and projects. This has seen huge investments being channeled towards NGOs based projects and therefore, their successful implementation and performance is equally critical. However, despite the significant investment that continues to be made towards NGOs based projects, most of them suffer a myriad of challenges hindering their completion within scheduled time, experiencing cost overruns, or fail to meet the required quality standards all of which are parameters of project performance. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the influence of monitoring and evaluation capacity for the development tool on performance of nongovernmental projects in Turkana County, Kenya. The study employed both descriptive and cross-sectional research designs and the target population comprised of ongoing/completed 148 NGOs based projects in Turkana County, between the year 2014 and 2022. A stratified random sampling design was applied to take care of the different sectors where the NGOs based projects are being implemented. 20% of the target population comprised the sample size of 30 projects. The target respondents comprised of M&E officers, project managers, procurement officers, finance officers and development partners' representatives, all comprising 180 respondents as unit of observation. The primary data was collected using a semi-structured survey. Construct validity was determined by matching the operationalized variables to the theoretical construct. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of internal Consistency was used to evaluate the reliability of the data. The qualitative data was examined using descriptive as well as inferential statistics. The study established that M&E capacity tools development had a positive significant influence on the performance of nongovernmental based projects in Turkana. The study concluded that M&E tools help project managers to track and measure project progress toward organizational impact goals. The study recommended that project managers should select an M&E tool depending on the type of information required, the available resources, and the unique assessment goals and objectives.

Keywords: M&E capacity, Project Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

An NGO refers to a voluntary group of people who operate an entity with no intention of making profits or commercializing it, but with the aim of bringing them together at a national, regional, or global level for the betterment of society and the promotion of social, research and charity in areas such as education, agriculture, healthcare, among others. The role of Non-

Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Economic Development, facilitating trade, and creating healthy and sustainable communities by providing key services. The speedy NGO expansion and growth across the globe reveal their burgeoning role in economic development. NGOs provide a wide array of services in different areas, including education, health, finance, democracy building, emergency response, environmental management, human rights, conflict resolution, and enabling people to initiate revenue-generating activities.

Other NGOs offer small loans with no mortgage or collateral with the aim of helping marginalized members of the society. Such NGOs therefore provide opportunities for individuals to create agricultural or business initiatives that generate revenues and offset debts. They therefore play a significant role in the economic growth of countries or countries with limited resources and governmental capacity. Based on Kenyan Vision 2030 Third Medium Term Plan (MTP III) 2018 – 2022, firm and sustainable collaboration with NGOs can help in strengthening the adoption of the MTP and improving socioeconomic development. Based on the 2020 NGO Coordination Board Report, Kenyan NGO sector play a significant role in developmental efforts and complements the Kenyan government's developmental efforts in regards to Kenya Vision 2030, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other developmental plans.

Additionally, 2020 NGO Coordination Board Report shows that the 1,026 Kenyan NGOs contributed a sum of 34.9 billion Kenyan Shillings in the financial year 2018/2019 as they helped in adopting projects associated with the Kenyan government's "Big Four" agenda. In particular, NGOs registered in Kenya spent a sum of 30.8 billion Kenyan Shillings on healthcare and related projects, 3.8 billion Kenyan Shillings on nutrition and food security, 352.6 million Kenyan Shillings on manufacturing projects, and 19.6 million Kenyan Shillings on settlement and housing projects, in addition to offering employment opportunities to so many Kenyan citizens. Kenya's economic growth and development emanates from factors such as labor, capital, technology and natural resources. It is therefore clear that NGOs contribute to such factors and many other factors by catalyzing positive change.

In the current period of burgeoning needs and declining governmental resources, NGOs are expected to contribute significantly with limited resources, something that places additional strain on their already scarce resources. As such, every effort should be put to ensure that NGO based projects are effectively managed to ensure their success and better performance. While the income generated by NGOs are generally exempted from income tax (subject to applications and stipulated guidelines by the KRA), most NGOs incur additional costs that emanate from Value Added Tax (VAT) input taxes charged by those who supply different taxable services and goods.

Project Management Institute (2014) maintains that project performance is an undertaking of different activities in a way that results in outcome optimization. Vijayalakshmi, Desai, and Joshi (2013) perceive project performance as achieving multiple project goals with respect to cost, quality, and output. Thus, project performance relates to implementing and reviewing a project with the aim of getting the job done on time and on budget, using resources as needed, and achieving the desired results.

Choudhry and Iqbal (2013) maintain that the significance of project performance is attained by preventing possible project failure, ensuring it is completed within the stipulated cost, and within the time stipulated for occupancy, design, approvals, as well as failure to meet the necessary technical standards for fitness of purpose, functionality, quality, environmental protection, and safety. Kululanga and Kuotcha (2010) note that project performance helps in ensuring that firms minimize the consequences of risks and uncertainties with respect to attaining project goals, maximize profits, and reduces the possibilities of risk events from emanating. Yu and Kwon (2011) stress that an individual or organization can assess project performance through different performance indicators that can be linked to client satisfaction, quality, cost, time, safety and health, with the key performance indicators applied by organizations to assess the performance of infrastructural projects including time, cost, and quality.

A project's benefits majorly depend on attaining the stipulated quality standards, while ensuring the goals are attained economically. Both NGOs and for-profit organization encounter operation challenges (Intezari & Gressel, 2017). Also, most, if not all, Kenyan NGOs face an array of challenges, including inadequate human, financial, and technological capital, high rates of unfunded overhead and maintenance costs, restrictive contract structures, and high transparency requirements. Also, NGOs tend to face challenges that relate to reliable collection of funds from donors, cost controls, responsible spending, and compliance to good accounting standards for maintaining financial stability in the long run, in spite of being not-for-profit organizations. Consequently, NGOs need to measure whether the projects they implement are successful and they therefore need an effective system of monitoring and evaluation to ensure this success.

M & E capacity development is the process of empowering the M&E unit to deliver on its mandate. Generally, the Monitoring and Evaluation of a project relates to the A process for monitoring, evaluating, and managing project performance and milestones; identifying areas of improvement for better result, and initiating appropriate changes. A critical advantage of M&E is that it helps in measuring and analyzing project performance in appropriate events, on a regular basis or in exceptional circumstances to detect deviations from project management plan.

This is the overall capacity for developing M&E instruments necessary for monitoring and controlling of project works. In this study capacity for M&E tool development is conceptualized as the existence and effective utilization of M & E Results framework, Logical Framework and Monitoring Plan. According to PMBOK (2015), a results framework shows (graphically, in a summary or a matrix display) the various chains or levels of results expected from a program. The framework depicts the long-term goals, also referred to as impact or outcomes, as well as the intermediate outputs or outcomes that results in the desired long-term goals, in addition to clarifying the expected time horizons to see the transformations in such results. Examples of similar frameworks are change theory, logical model, logical framework, outcome mapping and results chains (World Bank, 2020).

The logical framework or log frame is probably the most important document in project planning and in the M&E process. It is a concise planning technique that outlines the project goals and how such goals would be assessed or measured. On the other hand, a M & E plan helps in explaining the objectives and goals of an M&E strategy, as well as its key attributes. It is therefore a roadmap that describes in detail how a project is tracked and evaluated, in addition to describing how to employ evaluation outcomes to improve decision-making processes and overall project deliverables (Agi, 2020).

An M&E plan also provides for the definition, implementation, tracking, and improvement of an M&E strategy within a given project(s). It includes all the activities, elements, and steps required for a successful project planning phase till the project attains its objectives and creates the intended outcome (Toladata 2019). M&E plan also needs to be established in the right way at the start of project interventions, something that helps in ensuring the adoption of a robust system for monitoring different interventions and activities and evaluating their success (Toladata, 2019). It is critical to involve project donors, evaluators, managers, and other key stakeholders in developing an M&E plan, considering that stakeholder involvement in the initial stages of M&E planning ensures sustainability and applicability of the M&E activities

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to National Council of Kenyan NGOs (2022), there are over 12,000 NGOs that have been operating in the Kenyan soil since 1990s, something that raises questions about the importance of NGOs and projects performance have arisen. Ooko, (2014) poses the following question among others; with so many NGOs in Kenya, why such little progress? This question points to the weakness in their M&E systems to track progress towards achievement of objectives. About 33% of Kenyan private sector organizations have implemented monitoring practices for service improvement (Kim et al., 2008). Therefore, it would be important to identify the main barriers that prevent public and private sector organisations in Kenya from implementing monitoring practices. A few studies have been conducted on M & E practices but not on M& E capacity development.

Ochieng et al (2012), for example, examined the effectiveness of CDF project monitoring and evaluation in Kenya, with an emphasis on the Ainamoi constituency; Karanja (2014) examined the impact of management practices on project sustainability in Kangema District, Kenya. Kimweli (2013) studied the impact of monitoring practices on the success of food security intervention projects funded by donors in Kenya; Andove and Mike (2015) assessed how monitoring affects the outcome of constituency development fund projects in Kenya; Jackson et al (2015) analyzed factors that affect the efficiency of monitoring and evaluation of CDF projects in Kenya. Different NGOs projects funded by donor countries have been attained over the years and there are additional projects that are still being planned for and implemented. Nevertheless, there are reports that such projects are not accomplishing their intended outcomes in the sense that countries often suffer from donor fatigue by failing to find a connection between growth and aid (Elkana, 2007).

The ability to employ M&E tools is an area of improvement that helps in addressing the need for measuring the effectiveness or achievement of a project. Nevertheless, project M&E in many firms is perceived as a donor requirement as opposed to a management technique (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). As such, entities such as NGOs often adopt project M&E to meet the pressures and demands from donors and funding agencies, as opposed to adopting them as a measure that is geared towards promoting enhanced project performance (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

It is clear that no study has been conducted to determine the relationship between the development of monitoring and evaluation capacity and its impact on the performance of NGOs in Turkana County. The underlying problem is that over the years, many donors' funded projects have been implemented by NGOs in Turkana by deploying massive resources but there has been no significant change in the lives of the residents. These inadequacies rationalized this study in order to investigate how monitoring and evaluation capacity for the development tool on performance of nongovernmental projects in Turkana County, Kenya.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

Resource dependency theory developed in 1978 by Pfeffer and Salancik, resource dependency maintains that an organization's success is influenced by external resource availability (Fapohunda & Stephenson, 2010). The theory maintains that an organization's capacity with respect to resources is a key factor that influence successful adoption of organizational projects and tasks. Those who support resource dependency theory, including Mohammed (2012) posit that that it is critical for organizations to allocate sufficient resources for successful project implementation or attainment of stipulated project goals. The investigator identifies critical resources that are essential for attaining M&E capacity development, including personnel, financial resources, and time.

However, there are opponents of the resource dependency theory, including Fapohunda and Stephenson (2010) who maintained that a number of entities have excelled without the use of resources, something that indicates the need for considering other factors such as organizational culture, leadership efficiency, and adoption of effective organizational strategies. Nevertheless, while such criticism can be justified, it is worth noting that having needed resources have to be combined with other enablers such as appropriate organizational strategy and conducive workplace environment that ensures employees are motivated and committed to the organization.

The resource dependency theory is therefore relevant to the current study since it offers a theoretical comprehension of an organization's ability to successfully complete a project. As such, M&E capacity development is significantly influenced by resource availability. Critical resources that influence M&E capacity development include human resources or personnel, financial resources, and time.

Empirical Literature Review

According to Cleland (2004), an effective monitoring and evaluation requires the use of monitoring and evaluation tools to help demonstrate the results and impacts of the project. According to the authors, this monitoring and evaluation tool helps team members and other key stakeholders evaluate goals and determine whether they are being met. M&E planning forms the core of the M&E system and includes the actual preparation of plans or projects to monitor and evaluate long-term indicators and objectives (IFRC, 2011). In addition to identifying evaluation issues that need to be considered, the Monitoring and Evaluation plan helps manage the process of evaluating and documenting the progress and results of the project (USAID, 2016).

The Monitoring and Evaluation tool includes specific definitions of cost, performance, and time to manage and specifies areas to manage. According to Pinto and Slevin (1999), monitoring and evaluation tools are the direct link between planning and control. Thus, Monitoring and Evaluation tools allow stakeholders interested in a project to access the information needed to guide project management, in addition to being appraised about the associated uncertainties. The tools give project managers needed information for making timely and informed decisions that facilitate successful accomplishment of project deliverables. Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer (2010) suggest that tools should be used to gather and publish information on key elements of the plan, and to manage failures that may be impossible or still cannot be done.

Lai, Hancock, & Muller-Praefcke (2017) conducted research into how ICT affects project performance. According to the research, an NGO project in Southeast Asia shows the possibility of ICT by creating a MIS with good work for integration with GIS and information gathering on the web and decision support at many projects and levels. and remote sensing technology and applications. The high cost of using the advanced M&E process and professionalization prevents many underfunded NGOs from taking advantage of the MIS's ability to provide decision-making information such as implementation and progress. According to this study, the use of ICT in MIS design may be limited in some environments due to the lack of modern remote decision support infrastructure and lack of access to expert advice and support. This study

concludes that MEP staff need to understand the information collected by MIS and its relationship to the goals and objectives of a project.

Njiri (2015) conducted a study to determine how the implementation of monitoring and evaluation affected the implementation of NGO agribusiness projects in Mulanga County. The following objectives are based on the principles of this study: to explore the impact of the decision evaluation system, the impact of human resources, the use of M&E results, and the implementation of the M&E model of the NGO agribusiness project in Murana City. The study revealed that the presence and use of indicators in projects are negatively related to the performance of NGO projects, monitoring and evaluation performance is related to people's use, and the use of monitoring and evaluation methods has negative findings related to use. There is a relationship between the use of data frames in NGO projects and finally projects and project performance. The study came to the conclusion that human resources, such as staff participation, cooperation, and capacity, are significant in M&E operations and have an impact on project performance.

Mokua and Kimutai (2019) undertook a study to look into monitoring and assessment procedures for P3 project performance in Nairobi County. An online survey research design was used. To gather the data, questionnaires and interview schedules were used. 26 projects with a total of 161 project staff members were targeted. Ten county government representatives were also involved in the study. To choose 125 respondents for the study sample, stratified sampling, simple random, and purposive sampling strategies were all used. Data that was both quantitative and qualitative was gathered and numerically analyzed. The calculation and interpretation of descriptive and inferential statistical measurements. The analysis discovered that while the majority of PPP projects have working M&E systems, the vast majority are not well-equipped to function as intended.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed both descriptive and cross-sectional research designs and the target population comprised of ongoing/completed 148 NGOs based projects in Turkana County, between the year 2014 and 2022. A stratified random sampling design was applied to take care of the different sectors where the NGOs based projects are being implemented. 20% of the target population comprised the sample size of 30 projects. The target respondents comprised of M&E officers, project managers, procurement officers, finance officers and development partners' representatives, all comprising 180 respondents as unit of observation. The primary data was collected using a semi-structured survey. Construct validity was determined by matching the operationalized variables to the theoretical construct. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of internal consistency was used to evaluate the reliability of the data. The qualitative data was examined using descriptive as well as inferential statistics.

5. FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics results of monitoring and evaluation capacity for the development tool are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity for the Development Tool

Statement	M	SD
There is a functional M&E log frame	4.66	0.651
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan exists	4.02	0.779
There is effective M&E results framework	4.26	1.130
M&E data collection & analysis tools exist and in use	4.77	0.711

The results in Table 1 indicate that most of the respondents strongly agreed that the M&E data collection & analysis tools exist and in use ($M=4.77$, $SD=0.711$) and there is a functional M&E log frame ($M=4.66$, $SD=0.651$). The results in Table 4.4 also show that the respondents agreed that there is effective M&E results framework ($M=4.26$, $SD=1.130$) and that monitoring and evaluation plan exists ($M=4.02$, $SD=0.779$). Effective management and economic development requires the use of M&E tools to help demonstrate results and impacts in programmes, as Cleland (2004) points out. The author states that such M&E tools assist programme teams, as well as others of significant importance to assess the objectives and decide whether they have been successfully achieved. The M&E tool is a direct link between planning and control, according to Pinto and Slevin in 1999. Moreover, the M&E instruments provide for stakeholders involved in a specific project access information which is necessary to be able to exercise control over that project on time and also assess any associated uncertainties.

Results of Regression Analysis**Table 2: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.714 ^a	.806	.796	1.119

For the monitoring and evaluation capacity for the development tool, the adjusted R square provides an explanation of 0.806 (80.6%) for the performance of nongovernmental projects in Turkana County, Kenya. This means that the other factors not included in this study account for 19.4 % of project performance

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	110.031	1	110.031	3650.818	.000 ^a
	Residual	5.214	173	.0301		
	Total	115.245	174			

A value of 0.000a indicates that the significance level is lower than 0.05 indicating a statistical significance for the model on how the development of M&E tools studied affected the performance of the NGO project performance variable. The calculated F value is also higher than the tabulated value $F = 3650.818 > 110.031$ with a significance level of 5% confirming the relevance of the model.

Table 4: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.524	.179		2.927	.001
	M&E tools development	0.679	.034	5.207	19.971	.000

Table 4 shows that keeping independent variable constant constant would result in a performance factor of 0.524 for NGO based projects. According to the study, a unit increase in M&E tool development would lead to a factor of 0.679 rise in the performance of NGO-based projects. As demonstrated in Table 4 also, it was also found that M&E tools development contributed positively and significantly to the performance of NGO projects as measured by t values ($t=19.971 < 0.005$).

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that M&E tools help project managers to track and measure project progress toward organizational impact goals, enabling them to make data-driven choices and take action where it is most needed. M&E tools enable project managers to collect and analyze data in order to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and relevance of a project. Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, case studies, and observational techniques are examples of such instruments.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that project managers should select an M&E tool depending on the type of information required, the available resources, and the unique assessment goals and objectives. In the planning stages, project managers should identify the relevant indicators to measure so that the extent to which what they expect or want to happen is properly measured.

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