

Influence of Monitoring and Evaluation Plan on the Success Child Based Projects: A Case of Nest Home Kiambu County in Kenya

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Abstract: This study was carried out to determine the monitoring and evaluation factors influencing success of child based projects: A case of the Nest Home Project in Kiambu County, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive design research (case study approach) and the target population was the three branches of the Nest project in Kiambu County. To sample; Probability sampling was used hence Stratified sampling technique was used and primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires and interview guide. A pilot study was conducted to pre-test the validity and reliability of instruments for data collection. The supervisor's opinion was obtained to ensure content validity of the research instrument. Data collected was analysed by descriptive statistics. Data was interpreted based on the identified independent and dependent variable. Finally data was presented in tables, graphical presentation.

Keywords: Monitoring, Evaluation, Success, Child based Projects.

1. INTRODUCTION

For the last twenty years as observed by Pretorius (2012) there is world-wide concentrated growth in the number child based projects involved in philanthropic aid mostly in Africa. Pretorius (2012) is supported by Kramer (2016) who points out that the dynamic environment of donors and the recent emphasis on the quality services, target objectives and timeline adherence compels child based projects to adopt processes that contribute to high performance and success due to monitoring and evaluation. Thus as concluded by Taddess (2016) there is mass growth on charitable child based projects who are embracing monitoring and evaluation as a strategy for success

Throughout Africa, the cry of a child in need of help is felt all over claims Wanchiru (2013). Wanchiru (2013) observes that the flexibility of people and inclination to bring positive impact on need children is echoed in child based projects as seen in community projects, faith based projects, charitable institutions that deal child welfare (Pretorius, 2012). According to Mulwa (2002) For the past ten years, several projects have acknowledged the increasing vulnerability of children and are responding to the outcry (Mulwa, 2002). Internationally, the number of children under age 18 who are vulnerable stands at more than 14.3 million (UNICEF, 2004). Accordingly the UNICEF report indicates that the percentage of vulnerable children and in need of assistance of rescue and rehabilitation has been growing fast and this has made Kenya one of the countries hard hit by this scourge (UNICEF, 2006). An estimated 12 million children aged 17 or younger are vulnerable in sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2006). Due to this problem a lot of resources from government, private companies, international donor agencies have been given to child based projects to respond to the challenge successfully.

There is a call for the child based projects to check their consistency commitment to attainment of project objectives by regular monitoring and evaluations. This is basically because knowing why a project succeeds or fails is even more

important than knowing it does ((Feuerstein, 2001). Feuerstein also emphasise that child based projects must not look at monitoring and evaluation as a requirement either from donors or from the board of directors but a strategy for the project sustainability. Feuerstein (2001) Emphasises that on the two basic factors which this study intends to exhaust namely the monitoring and evaluation approaches critical for project performance and the supremacy role played by the project team. Project Team is the back bone for any viable project without which project success is just but a dream (Barasa, 2014)

Today, child based projects have to make strategic M and E plan, Embrace Appropriate M and E approaches, Select effective project tools and bring on board strong project team to be successful in their undertakings (Ikal, 2009). Chan (2001) points out that monitoring and evaluation of child based projects are critical for building a strong, global evidence base around performance of projects and for sustainability. Also for assessing the wide, diverse range of interventions being implemented to address challenges faced by child based projects. As for Kalali (2011) effective monitoring and evaluation is thus critically important because while the global evidence based on the proportion of vulnerable children having ever experienced various forms of abuse is strong, child based projects responding to such need to be successful for the challenge to captured (Kalali, 2011). Projects success is the evidence on what kinds of child based projects are effective in preventing such suffering and offering adequate support to the children. Monitoring and Evaluation (M and E) factors are essential functions of any project and are fundamental to project accomplishment (Mulwa, 2002).

Mulwa (2010) emphasizes that various studies have been carried out on child based projects with an aim of determining the contribution of Monitoring and evaluation factors to project success (Mulwa, 2010). M & E is a tool in project management. Project management deals with the organization of project components to ensure successful completion of the project (Ardisan, 2012). Project management is the scientific application of modern tools and techniques in planning, financing, implementation, controlling and coordination of activities in order to achieve desired outputs according to the project objectives within the constraints of time, cost and quality (Baker, 2005). Project management is therefore about managing the processes of a project from the defining stage to planning, execution, control to the closure of the project. A project on the other hand is a specific activity to be carried out which consumes resources and has a beginning and an end.

Monitoring and evaluation of child based projects in Kenya is very critical indicator of project success (Baker, 2005). Not only does best practices require that projects are monitored for performance and control but also project stakeholders require transparency, accountability for resources, and impact on good project performance (Mulwa, 2002). Good project performance is an indicator of success since child based projects faces internal challenges that have always lead to underperformance.

Child based projects performance that leads to success has four main indicators which need to be managed in order to ensure that the project is successful. These indicators are; people, time, and quality services. Child based Projects vary in their size and complexity (Baker 2005). Project monitoring and evaluation is hence acknowledged as being the most successful approach of managing changes brought about by projects acknowledges (Nabulu, 2012). This is because it M & E is one of the tools that assist child based project managers track performance Project monitoring is the continuous assessment of project in relation to design schedules, and the use of inputs, infrastructure, and services by project beneficiaries (Barasa, 2014). Project evaluation is the periodic assessment of a project's relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact both expected and unexpected in relation to stated objectives (Barasa, 2014).

Projects monitoring and evaluation provide child based project team with continuous feedback on progress, for example interim and terminal evaluations gives a clear picture on expected result. These are conducted on projects as ways to identify necessary modifications in project to assess the projects' effects and their potential success (Kurgat, 2016) Child based Project success and sustainability is relevant concept in terms of measuring result against intend goals. It refers to the continuation of a Project's goals, principles, and efforts to achieve desired outcomes (Kurgat, 2016). The competent and conversant exploitation of project M&E tools seriously affects project results and therefore it is imperative to analyze their exploitation in child based projects. This in turn informs both child based project team and managers on areas of improvement for the achievement of better result and success.

Studies carried out in Kenya shows that quite a number of child based projects with the practise of Monitoring and Evaluation have been successful (Ardisan, 2012). According to hope and Timmel (2000) such projects have been evaluated severally and have proved to be effective. For such projects monitoring of project work package is non-negotiable as claimed by (Ardisan, 2012). Ardisan is supported by Ikal (2009) who cries that fail to monitor and evaluate

a project is one indicator of being unsuccessful, for him monitoring and evaluation forms the key pillar against which success of any project must be anchored.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite a consensus among scholars that proper monitoring and evaluation of child based projects leads to project success, there are still cases of project failure of such projects in Kenya and in Kiambu County (Mulwa, 2002). The main problem is that monitoring and evaluation is a mandatory requirement for child based projects yet this projects fail despite heavy presence of monitoring and evaluation activities (Mulwa, 2010).

There has been a lot of criticism as to whether the M&E of child based projects in Kenya are done effectively to bring about success (UNICEF, 2006).According to Muiruri,child based projects Project in kenya are unique and deals with a delicate matter of young children, and experience major hurdles in execution of monitoring and evaluation effectively thus not yet successful (Muiruri 2014), this is because evaluations are normally done in the domain of psychology and for routine purposes (Mulwa, 2010). The first factor is that, child basedprojectsseeks always to do what they do better for the best interest of the child as required by law and monitoring and evaluation function is a tool at hand for attainment of that objective successfully but they struggle to succeed (Mulwa, 2010).

The problem that the study sought to respond to was why the Nest home project was not performing successfully despite its worthy efforts on monitoring and evaluation. Over twenty years now since its initiation the project was not yet effective in achieving its objectives, offering quality services and timeline requirements (Muiruri, 2014). They had been several instances of underperformance in the project hence; beneficiaries had been complaining bitterly against the project. On the same note of not performing most Donors had withdrawn. The study was tailored to the question of; what were the monitoring and evaluation factors that influenced the success of child based projects in Kenya.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan identifies the level of performance and the milestone indicators to quantify projected result (Kamau, 2015)the initiation phase is serious to the success of the project as it establishes its core foundations. Effective project planning takes into consideration all aspects of planning including project team engagement, milestone prediction, risk assessment, and estimated time for project closure as well as the schedule.

According to Donald (2008) project inputs processes and output, guided by historical information, provides valuable insight about the M and E plan and information from prior similar projects. project inputs processes and output can also suggest whether to combine methods and how to reconcile differences between monitoring and evaluation based upon expertise in project area, knowledge area, discipline, diligence, as appropriate for the activity being performed, should be used in developing the schedule management plan (Kramer,2016).The inputs required in child based projects would include human resources with M&E training capacity and resources, management team, project team, with a ability and to develop the M&E plan as noted by (Kalali, Ali & Davod K, 2011).

Activities tasks and dependencies fall under schedule. The understanding of the number of task to be performed and their relationships is critical (Donald, 2008). Relationships in terms of which tasks should come first and which one depends on the other is vital for effective project performance. The Plan Schedule Management process may involve choosing strategic options to estimate and schedule the project activities such as: scheduling organization, scheduling tools and performances, estimating styles, presentations, and project administration.(Anderson, 2005). The schedule supervision plan may also detail ways to fast track or crash the project schedule such as undertaking work in parallel. These decisions have to emanate from the project team and, like other schedule decisions may affect the project success.

Data collection analysis and reporting sets the crucial foundation for child based project M&E and these can significantly affect the success or failure of an M&E process (Kalali et al, 2011). M&Edata collection analysis and reporting s is often set up to fail if not seriously considered. Data collection analysis and reporting should run through the entire project life cycle, First, during project implementation, the effectiveness of M&E will be greatly influenced by the attitude and commitment of project members and management involved in the project and how they value the project goals and objectives (Ogolla, 2008).Planned project data collection, analysis and reporting will in most cases generate positive performance and success.

When a child based project has reason in its approach with realistic goals, target clients and objectives, it makes collection of data easy and possible (Anderson, 2005). This is because the evaluation questions and indicators often become quite meaningful and permits useful information (Anderson, 2005). Furthermore, the project team will know clearly the status of the project thus, the understanding of how best to use any information that might be collected. The third is when the collected.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive design research (case study approach) and the target population was the three branches of the Nest project in Kiambu County. To sample; Probability sampling was used hence Stratified sampling technique was used and primary data was collected through the use of questionnaires and interview guide. A pilot study was conducted to pre-test the validity and reliability of instruments for data collection. The supervisor's opinion was obtained to ensure content validity of the research instrument. Data collected was analysed by descriptive statistics. Data was interpreted based on the identified independent and dependent variable. Finally data was presented in tables, graphical presentation.

5. FINDINGS

This objective of the study sought to establish the influence of M& E plan on success of the Nest Home project in Kiambu County, Kenya. To achieve this descriptive statistics were used to summarize the information as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Influence of M and E plan on project Success

ITEM	Very high extent		High extent		Moderately high extent		Low extent		Very low extent		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Promptness in organization of project resources	10	32.26	5	16.13	14	45.16	2	6.45	0	0	31	100
Influence on appropriateness of planning and scheduling	13	41.94	11	35.48	4	12.9	2	6.45	1	3.23	31	100
Influence on project participants' understanding of project time line	14	45.16	13	41.94	3	9.68	1	3.23	0	0	31	100
Factual data collection methods identified	5	16.13	5	16.13	8	25.81	10	32.26	3	9.68	31	100

ITEM	Mean	Std. dev
Promptness in organization of project resources	2.26	1
Influence on appropriateness of planning and scheduling	1.9	1.1
Influence on project participants' understanding of project time line	1.68	0.83
Factual data collection methods identified	3.03	1.25

Majority of the respondents 45.16% or 14 reported that speed in deployment of project resources at moderately high extent has impact on project success followed by 32.26% who reported that it had influence at very high extent, followed by 16.13% indicating a high extent and finally 6.45% choose low extent. Secondly, 41.94% of respondents reported that effect on appropriateness of planning and scheduling has a very high extent on project success; in addition 35.48% argued that it had a high extent and 12.9% said moderately high effect on project success. However 6.45% indicated low extent and 3.23% felt a very low extent

On one hand 45.16% of respondents reported that influence on project stakeholders understanding of project timelines had a very high influence on project success; on the other hand 41.94% of respondents reported that it had a high extent and 9.68% moderately high extent, but 3.23% were for low extent. Finally 32.26% of the respondents reported that

appropriate data collection methods specified had a low extent, on the same 25.81% felt it at moderately high extent and 16.13% high effect and 16.13% high effect on project success.

The respondents were interviewed on deployment of the project resources and their feedback is given in table 2

Table 2 Deployment of project resources

Deployment of the resources	Frequency	percentage
Good	21	67.74
Bad	10	32.26

Majority of the respondents 67.74% reported that the deployment of the project resources was good while 32.26% reported that the deployment of the resources was bad. The same respondents were interviewed on how staffing is done and their responses is given in table 3

Table 3 Project staffing

How is staffing done?	Frequency	Percentage
Easy	24	77.42
Difficult	7	22.58

The study revealed that most of the respondents 77.42% agreed that staffing is easily done while a few 22.58% had it that staffing is difficult. Similarly all the respondents agreed that they take their duties as scheduled. Following was the interview if the respondents were obliged to meet their daily obligations to which they gave the response indicated in table 4.

Table 4 Obligation to daily timelines

Obligated to meet daily timelines	Frequency	percentage
Yes	28	90.32
No	3	9.68

The study showed explicitly that 90.32% agreed that they are obliged to meet their daily but the minority 9.68% of the respondents felt that they were not obliged. The study sought to evaluate the monitoring approaches and their influence on success of the Nest Home project in Kiambu County, Kenya. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Monitoring and Evaluation Approaches

ITEM	Very high extent		High extent		Moderately high extent		Low extent		Very low extent		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Determines the frequency of monitoring prison project progress	12	38.71	5	16.13	13	41.94	0	0	0	0	31	100
Impacts on examining and documentation of project milestones	12	38.71	6	19.35	6	19.35	6	19.35	0	0	31	100
Motivates prison project participants to meet project objectives	10	32.26	8	25.81	12	38.71	0	0	0	0	31	100

A number of the respondents 41.94% reported that determination of monitoring and evaluation frequency of the project influences project success at a moderately high extent. Their response was similar to 38.71% of respondents who reported a very high extent, followed by 16.13% who reported high extent. A number of respondents 38.71% reported that examining and documenting project milestones has high effect on project success their responses corresponding to very

high extent, surprisingly 19.35% respondents reported very high extent, and low extent and extremely low extent. In the same way 38.71% of respondents reported that evaluation approaches motivates prison project participants to meet project objectives, their responses followed by 32.26% inclusive of very high extent, high extent and 25.81% who reported high extent. None of the respondents reported low or very low extent. On the interviews concerning Evaluation Approaches the respondents were asked to indicate how often evaluations are done and their responses are tabulated in table 6.

Table 6 Frequency of Evaluation

Times of evaluation in a year	Frequency	Percentage
Twice	23	74.19
Once	6	19.35
Don't know	2	6.45

The lowest number of respondents 6.45 said that they didn't know followed by 19.35% who reported that it is done once a year and the majority 74.19 indicated that it is done twice a year. On the evaluation used the respondents' feedback is given in table 7.

Table 7 Used Approaches

Most used approach in the project	Frequency	Percentage
Result based	16	51.61
Do not know	13	41.94
Direct method	2	6.45

The study shows that result based approach is mostly used as reported by 51.61% respondents, followed by direct approach as reported by 6.45 respondents and a number of respondents 41.94% did not have idea of the approach used. The same respondents were asked to answer if the evaluation did have impact on the project. Their response is shown in table 8.

Table 8 Evaluation impact on projects

Evaluation has impact on the project	Frequency	percentage
Yes	18	58.06
No	9	29.03
Not sure	4	12.90

Many of the respondents 58.06 agreed that the evaluations done have impact on the project, some 29.03 disagreed stating no impact and a few 12.90 said they were not sure

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There are positive benefits associated with Evaluation approaches, there is need to have applicable relevant approaches implemented in child based projects as such to attain all benefits associated with efficient use of monitoring and evaluation approaches. As for the Study findings both logical framework and Result framework are relevant approaches applicable in child based projects. Result framework is project result oriented and thus frequently used in comparison with Logical framework. There is necessity for clearly articulated M& E plan which will ensure the project timing is clearly illustrated with specific time frames, project milestone are clearly specified, project resources clearly identified and project risks premeditated. Those steps with chances of implementation they should be implemented as such to achieve project objectives to save the resources and more so the completion project within the specified time frame. Monitoring and evaluation factors influencing project success of child based projects in Kenya have various challenges, that may impact negatively on the success of child based projects. For instance, not having competent project team that adds value to the project is a challenge that ought to be considered adopting training strategy.

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