

# Stakeholders' Participation and Project Outcomes of Selected Projects at Catholic Churches in Nakuru County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** For a long time, the Catholic Church, Nakuru Diocese has been facing the challenge of not achieving intended goals of their projects due to the over runs in time and budgets in most Catholic Churches' projects, it become necessary to examine the influence of project management practices on project outcomes at catholic churches. The study was therefore carried out to establish the influence of stakeholders' participation on project outcomes at Catholic Churches Nakuru diocese, Nakuru County, Kenya. This study employed descriptive survey design. The target population comprised three projects, that is; rehabilitation of street children project, (Mwangaza street children rehabilitation project), Rehabilitation of commercial sex workers project (Women of destiny) and Integrated programs for the handicapped with a total of 162 staff including project management staff, project non-management staff and Church project planning and Development office staff. The research utilized stratified random sampling to select a sample size of 115 respondents. Structured Questionnaires were used to collect information from the sampled respondents. Data collected was checked for completeness and thereafter coded and entered into SPSS version 22 for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis. For descriptive statistics, mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentages were employed while for inferential analysis bivariate Pearson correlation coefficient and Multi regression analysis were used. Correlation analysis showed that the stakeholder involvement was significant and positively correlated with project outcomes at catholic churches in Nakuru county, Kenya. The positive correlations suggest that when management of projects improved stakeholder involvement, the project outcomes improved in terms of performance indicators beneficiary satisfaction. The study therefore concludes that project stakeholder involvement has a significant influence on project outcomes and if improved, the project outcomes should improve in a positive way. The study recommends that Management of church projects should ensure they provide an opportunity for different stakeholders to participate in the project. The stakeholders need to feel that their opinions are included in the final decisions making process. Stakeholders like project beneficiaries, project staff and local leadership are very important groups whose contribution is priceless in the efforts to ensure project performs as expected and achieves the set goals.

**Keywords:** Stakeholder Participation, Project Outcome, Project Management Practice.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, there has been a significant increase in the number of project activities both in the business and non-business sector (Winter & Szczepanek, 2008). The British Standard (BS 6079:2000) has defined a project as a set of activities that are coordinated that have a beginning and end points that may be carried out by individuals or institutions to achieve specific specified aims with well-defined schedule of activities, cost to be incurred and indicators for measuring performance. On the other hand, the Project Management Institute (PMI, 2004) noted that a project is a temporary undertaking to create a unique product, service or results. Due to increased emphasis on projects and the fact that the utility of a project depends upon successful project completion, project management field of study has emerged as a distinct discipline from general management (Cleland & Ireland, 2002).

Chase, Aquilano, & Jacobs (2001) defines project management as the process of planning, directing, and controlling resources with the view of ensuring high level of project performance which is usually expressed in terms of time, cost, and quality and stakeholder satisfaction perspectives. With the objective of enhancing project performance, the PMI has a project management body of Knowledge (PMBOK) guide which documents processes, knowledge areas and best practices applicable in most projects. In the current PMBOK, there are five basic process groups and ten knowledge areas that are documented with issues related to two of the areas namely time and cost management being the subject of most studies in project management (PMI, 2013).

With the embrace of globalization in every part of the world, organizations are finding it hard to deal with internal and external forces and demands for continuously improving projects they are carrying out to improve performance and remain competitive (Kusek & Rist, 2004). The demands originate from number of sources that includes governments, donors, private sector, civil society and the media. Organizations must therefore be responsive to stakeholders' demand to demonstrate solid project outcomes (Khan, 2001). Cost and schedule performance are the primary measures of a project's outcomes. Project work is said to have been successfully performed if it is finished within the planned cost and time. Developing countries are faced with the problem of scarce project financial resources. For a long time, project aims have concentrated on achieving time & budget constraints. However, contemporary PM practises are increasingly focusing on meeting business outcomes via multiple criteria.

Lim and Mohamed (1999) explained that project completion & beneficiary satisfaction one of the success criteria for projects. The constraints of cost, time & scope determine the successful completion of a project. Consequently, beneficiary is derived from quality, utility and operation. Study by Kerzner (2003) noted that institutions consider project management success to include meeting business aims such as on-time delivery of product, achieving contractual specifications and within specified budget figures. Study by (Gwaya, Munguti, & Wanyona, 2014) noted that PO sometimes depends on targets that have been set by clients within the three constraints of time, cost and scope. PO is also observed by the process of delivery as the value perceived in advance on what is to be delivered (Steinfort & Walker, 2007).

## **2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In their struggle to exist & remain very competitive, firms have had to increasingly adapt to dynamic business environment. PM has now been singled out as one of strategy to achieve competitiveness for firms (PMI, 2014). The implementation of projects successfully has enables firms to wholly achieve objectives targeted for instance profitability and growth. Despite the importance and emphasis on projects, the end results for most projects have been discouraging with majority of projects across different countries, industries and sectors registering poor performance (Jugdev & Muller, 2005).

The Catholic Churches in Nakuru County are not an exception when it comes to challenges in management of projects. The church has been implementing a number of projects aimed at uplifting the livelihood of members of the community in the areas of street children, widowed and the youth. All these projects have their own share of challenges in their management hence it is imperative to look at management practices on project management.

Indeed, a review of empirical literature shows that time and cost over-runs have become the norm rather than an exception (Jugdev & Muller 2005; Kibuchi, 2012). Consequently, there has been increased number of litigations, wastage of resources, negative reputation of clients and professionals involved in unsuccessful projects as well as lack of envisioned product, service or change (Jugdev & Muller, 2005). Most studies about influence of project management practices have been done in businesses especially construction works with few studies existing in church projects in general and Catholic Churches in particular. Due to the challenge of over runs in time and budgets, in most Catholic Church projects, it has become almost essential to examine the influence of project management practices on project outcomes at catholic churches.

This study therefore intends to establish the influence of selected project management practices on project outcomes at Catholic Churches in Nakuru diocese, Nakuru county, Kenya. It intends to find answers to the question, what is the influence of project management practices on project outcomes at catholic churches in Nakuru County?

### **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The PMBOK posits that project stakeholders are persons or institutions for instance sponsors, customers, the implementing organization or the general public, that are involved actively in the project and whose interests in the project outcomes may be positively or inversely influenced by the completion or performance of the project at hand. (Project Management Institute, 2008). In PMBOK, management of stakeholder is explained as process of communicating with and working with project stakeholders to actualise their interest & tackling issues as they emerge (Project Management Institute, 2008).

The Traditional Project Management approach is having a feature of systematic steps for the development, and the emphasis is put on the value of preconceived stakeholder needs in the initial phase. The Traditional PM mostly comprises 5 steps namely: “Initiating, Planning, Executing, Monitoring and controlling, and Closing” (Project Management Institute, 2008). The responsibility of the stakeholder in the traditional approach of PM is to form targeted goals and the scope of demands concerning cost, quality and time (Adjei & Rwakatiwana 2009).

The Management of Stakeholder requirements is a process that involves communicating & working through and with project stakeholders so as satisfy the needs of and addressing issues of interest to stakeholders as soon as they occur. Stakeholder management also involve communicating the type of activities directed at project stakeholders to manipulate their expectations and address their concerns as well as solves arising issues (Project Management Institute, 2008).

Study by Leybourne (2009) noted that the process of initiating traditional project management according to Project Management hand Book of Knowledge puts stress on the importance of noting down the business needs of stakeholders just before beginning the process of project actualization, and by so doing that, it promotes the preconception of the requirements of stakeholder. Study by Aguanno (2005) noted that that the early consideration of the requirements of stakeholder at the initial stages of a project may have retrogressive impact if preconceived business environment is altered by changes or the stakeholders bring on board new demands afterwards not stated initially.

The Traditional thought on project management on the issues of management of stakeholder means proactive planning for stakeholders via the consideration of the channels of communication and variety of tools and techniques that aid to designing and controlling the relationship with stakeholder. For instance, Freeman *et al.*, (2007) explained how to adopt 7 daily tools to manage better the relationship with valued stakeholder. The tools and techniques involve: the analysis of stakeholder behaviour, the assessment of stakeholder strategies, the in depth understanding of stakeholders, the development of specific tools for managing stakeholders, creating new interaction modes with stakeholders and designing and building value chain creation that is well integrated.

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study employed descriptive survey design to establish the influence of selected project management practices on project outcomes at catholic churches Nakuru diocese, in Nakuru County. The target population was three projects with a total of 162 staffs. A sample size of 115 was then distributed based on proportions in the target population identified by stratified random sampling. The researcher then used simple random sampling to actually select 115 respondents that participated in the study from the various strata in the target population. Secondary data was collected from project planning and development office of the Catholic Church Nakuru diocese using data collection form. Primary data on the other hand was collected through administration of questionnaires. Statistical analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics where descriptive analysis involved mean, standard deviation; minimum and maximum while for inferential statistics Bivariate Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to test the relationship between project management practices and project outcomes. Further regression analysis was used to identify the influence of project management practices on project outcomes.

### **5. FINDINGS**

The study sought to establish the extent to which the project managers of projects under catholic churches in Nakuru county involved stakeholders in the project management. The respondents were required to rate a number of responses given on Likert scale. The data collected and associated analysis is given in Table 1

**Table 1: Stakeholders' Participation and Project Outcome**

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Project manager does not stop others from expressing their opinions	29	33	6	13	1	1	5	4.0303	1.1227
The opinion of project beneficiaries are usually sought	31	45	6	0	0	3	5	4.4697	.50291
The opinion of local leadership is sought when carrying out projects	36	30	9	7	0	2	5	4.5455	.50175
project member felt responsible for maintaining the project.	32	33	8	8	0	2	5	4.4697	.53262
Members of this project felt proud to be a part of the project.	25	47	3	6	1	1	5	4.2879	.69648
The team members were strongly attached to the project	36	38	6	2	0	2	5	4.5152	.56138
Team members discussed problem-solving methods	25	44	8	0	5	1	5	4.1818	.87546
Donors are usually involved at every stage of project cycle	38	44	0	0	0	4	5	4.1970	1.0110
<b>Mean</b>								<b>4.2727</b>	<b>.81226</b>

Source: Survey Data (2017)

Table 4.5 shows data analysis about stakeholder involvement in project management. Majority (75.6 Percent) of respondents supported the statement that Project manager did not bar other team members from airing their point of view during staff discussion and meetings. The statement that opinions of project beneficiaries like street children are usually sought on their satisfaction with projects was supported by almost all respondents (92.6 Percent). Additionally, the opinion of local leadership like county government is usually sought when carrying out projects was supported by majority of respondents (80.4 Percent) who either strongly agreed or simply agreed. The statement that every project team member felt the need to and protecting the project was supported by 79.2 Percent of respondents. Members of these projects felt proud to be a part of the project as shown by 87.8 Percent of respondents who supported the statement. The team members were strongly attached to the project as supported by 90.2 Percent of respondents. Statement that Project Team members talked about methods of solving problem and worked in unison with others to solve problems was supported by 84.1 Percent of the respondents and finally statement that Project Donors are usually involved at every stage of project cycle was supported by all respondents. All the means for responses on statements are greater than four (Mean > 4) and the overall mean response was 4.2727 meaning generally respondents supported the statements about stakeholder involvement. The standard deviations also show that most responses are spread around the mean with very small deviation since most respondents either strongly agreed or just agreed with statements.

The finding about the presence of high stakeholder involvement in project management is evidenced by high frequencies and percentages of supportive responses with regards to various statements about level of stakeholder involvement in project management process. This finding corresponds to finding by Aguanno (2005) who noted that preconception about the needs of stakeholders may lead to a negative impact on the project if preconceived environmental factors fluctuates or if the stakeholders brings on board new demands later on during project implementation.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings show that Stakeholder involvement has a significant influence on project outcomes: The positive correlation between stakeholder involvement and project outcomes ventures at catholic churches in Nakuru County shows that stakeholder involvement and participation is very essential for success projects under catholic churches in Nakuru county Kenya .The study therefore concludes that project stakeholder involvement has a significant influence on project outcomes and if improved, the project outcomes should improve in a positive way.

Given A positive correlation between stakeholder involvement and project outcomes at Catholic Churches in Nakuru, Management of church projects should ensure they provide an opportunity for different stakeholders to participate in the project. The stakeholders need to feel that their opinions are included in the final decisions making process. Stakeholders like project beneficiaries, project staff and local leadership are very important groups whose contribution is priceless in the efforts to ensure project performs as expected and achieves the set goals.

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