

EFFECT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ON PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY IN RWANDA: CASE OF ESSENTIAL NUTRITION & HEALTH PACKAGE PROJECT IN KABUGA, GASABO DISTRICT, RWANDA

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Abstract: This research examined the effect of Community Involvement on the Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda because, it has been observed that often when project start, communities members are actively participating. However when the project phases out /ends, there is hardly any continuity of the project activities. This may be attributed to the fact that usually community members are not sufficiently empowered and fully engaged in every single activity of the project. The researcher intended to achieve this by use of three specific objectives namely; to establish the effect of Community participation in Planning on sustainability of Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project; to examine the effect of Community participation in Project Control on sustainability of Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project, and to assess the effect Community participation in Project Implementation on sustainability of Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. The research was beneficial to the researcher, Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project and UOK. The researcher used descriptive design of study based on qualitative and quantitative approach in order to get better analysis of the study. The population size was 185 and sample of 115 respondents was taken. Both primary and secondary sources with their relevant tools, like questionnaire and documentary analysis was used in order to come up with required data. Data was processed by use of SPSS and analyzed by use of percentages, mean and standard deviation. The relationship between the variables was established by use of Pearson correlations module. In the findings it was established that Community Involvement in development projects inform of Community Project planning, Community Project control and Community Project implementation contributes highly to on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project in form of physical growth of the children, emotional growth of the children, intellectual growth of the children and moral growth of the children. Table 4.16 gave the relationship between Community Involvement and Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda whereby the respondents N is 115 and the significant level is 0.01, the results indicate that independent variable has positive high correlation to dependent variable equal to .781** and the p-value is .000 which is less than 0.01. When p-value is less than significant level, therefore researchers conclude that variables are correlated and null hypothesis is rejected and remains with alternative hypothesis. This means that there is a significant relationship between Community Involvement on the Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda. We can therefore conclude Community Involvement greatly contribute to positive Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda.

Keywords: Community Involvement, Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project, physical growth of the children.

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Community participation in community development activity is as old as man himself. Men have had to work individually and collectively to make life better for them. Prior to the onset of colonial administration, communities had engaged in communal efforts as a mechanism for mobilizing community resource to provide physical improvement and functional facilities in the socio, political and economic aspects of their lives. The use of community labor was paramount in this period.

In recent years there has been increasing interest in participatory approaches, which have been developed to improve the health of communities. Community participation (or involvement as the World Health organization (WHO) prefers to call It) has been identified as one main principle of primary health care (PHC) at a World Conference 11 (WC11). In addition, there is evidence that efforts which involve beneficiaries at the beginning of programmes are more effective than those which do not (Gillics, 1997; Chambers, 1997). Experiences in a range of countries throughout the world have shown the potential of participatory approaches as a means of obtaining programme sustainability.

Most of the development projects are implemented with great expectation that the community will participate in the sustainability of the projects. But however many projects have failed due to lack of community participation. For example In Turkana Kenya, the development agency of Norway whose aim was to exploit fisheries resources in the lake for development by increasing incomes through employment creation and by combating drought failed because they didn't involve communities (Courtney, 2007). For the sake of this research, the researcher intends to establish extent of community participation and project sustainability in Rwanda by taking the Essential Nutrition and Health Package (ENHP) as a case study.

Statement of the Problem

Community participation is one of the pre-requisites in most development Projects around the world. However it is uncertain if community participation plays a big role in the development project's sustainability. It has been observed that often when project start, communities members are actively participating. However when the project phases out /ends, there is hardly any continuity of the project activities. This may be attributed to the fact that usually community members are not sufficiently empowered and fully engaged in every single activity of the project. Hence they don't feel as owners of projects activities.

Responsibilities and role of community members during project cycle are often limited. Additionally their involvement in the planning, design, monitoring and evaluation, is unfair and the linkages between various stakeholders undermined or weakened. Most projects have been donor-driven and only selected for their high visibility and quick impact with emphasis on achieving specific targets within a specified time rather than long-term contribution to a sustainable development process, for example of UNDP Three Year Support Project to the Implementation of The Rwanda TOKTEN Volunteer Programme. It is the above problem that prompted the researcher to study the extent to which community participation contributed to the sustainability of development projects in Rwanda.

Specific objectives

Our study focused on specific objectives as follows:

- i. To establish the effect of Community involvement in planning on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project.
- ii. To examine the effect of Community involvement in Project Control on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project
- iii. To assess the effect Community involvement in Project Implementation on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This section presents the theoretical framework and guiding the study. This study is supported by the principal agent theory, dialectical theory general systems theory and Socio - economic theory which are explained below.

A systems and Participatory Approach to Capacity Building

As briefly discussed above, capacity building encompasses institutional development but goes beyond individual organizations and institutions to broader systems, groups of organizations and networks. It addresses complex multi-faceted problems requiring the participation of various actors, organizations and institutions (Qualman and Morgan, 1996). Individuals operate within organizations, individual organizations operate within a wider sector, and these sectors operate within a broader environment. Interventions at one level need to recognize the interactions with other levels:

Individual level: refers to individuals as social or organizational actors. Their skills or ability are strengthened to contribute to the realization of development objectives (Morgan, 1998). Yet, too often capacity-building projects have focused on training of individuals without paying adequate attention to organizational issues or broader processes of empowerment. Learning over the past decade suggests that this type of investment is at risks of being of limited benefit.

Organizational level: focuses on organizational structures, processes, resources, and management and governance issues. This has been the preferred point of entry for bilateral donors (Morgan, 1998). Yet, capacity building not only is about a thorough analysis of issues at the organizational level, but also is an assessment of how factors at other levels either constrain or support organizational change. Organizations are only part of the vast development picture.

Sector/network level: capacity-building efforts have recently focused on this level, reflecting an increased awareness of the importance of coherent policies, strategies and effective coordination within and across sectors. Yet, change at this level poses challenges such as competing organizational priorities, lack of coordination, and lack of organizational capacity. On the positive side, change at this level can contribute to synergies and promote more effective use of existing capacities (Qualman and Morgan, 1996). **Enabling environment level:** this represents the broader context within which the development process takes place and which can either constrain or enable prospects for success. Change here takes place over a long term.

The systems approach to capacity building is a multidimensional idea, referring to a concept that is multilevel and interrelated, where each system and part is linked to another. This approach suggests that capacity building should build on what exists in order to improve it, rather than necessarily build new systems. This becomes a dynamic process through which networks of actors seek to enhance their abilities to perform, through both their own initiative and outsider support. While this approach lacks focus, it is comprehensible, flexible and emphasizes linkages between elements (Morgan, 1998). Those who view development as people centered and non-hierarchical believe that unless capacity building interventions are participatory, empowering partnerships for which those involved feel a high degree of ownership, intended results cannot be achieved.

A participatory approach to capacity building can apply at most of the above levels, although the tendency, more often than not, is again on the individual (Pitcoff, 2004). As a result, there is a danger that interventions which, for example, focus on training, could be named capacity building because they were carried out in a participatory way though not necessarily contributing to the building of capacity in the sense that it has been developed in this paper. Donors need to internalize some of the principles learned about capacity building within their own organizations and adapt their procedures.

Effect of Community Project Control on Project Sustainability

The purpose of monitoring is to provide indications of whether corrections need to be made in the action plan (Green, 2007). Unlike monitoring, evaluation is collection and analysis of information about the work of the organization at a single point in time. Monitoring and evaluation are vital in community development because the community is able to identify whether they are taking the necessary steps towards fulfillment of their goals and objectives. Monitoring and evaluation is a very important aspect of community development, as it provides the opportunity for learning through action, in projects/programmes (Swanepoel & De Beer, 2006). Kellerman, (1997) observed that monitoring is a continuous assessment of the functioning of the project activities that allows early recognition of the social effects, in particular, which are regressive or incompatible with equity objectives and enables one to institute the necessary corrective measures.

Effect Community Project Implementation on Project Sustainability

Partnership in development processes allows stakeholders to work, talk, and solve problems with individuals who are often perceived as the masters. Instead of demonstrating the relationship as a worker- client tie, the parties involved should agree on working in partnerships. An expression used by the Latin American activists to describe their relationship

with the people (communities, groups) with whom they are working is *acompanamiento*, or “accompanying the process” (Wilson and Whitmore, 1997). Wilson and Whitmore identified a set of principles for collaboration in a variety of settings and situations. These include nonintrusive collaboration, mutual trust and respect, a common analysis of what the problem is, a commitment to solidarity, equality in the relationship, an explicit focus on process, and the importance of language. According to Igboeli (1992), no matter the level of technical and financial assistance offered to self-help groups, the members should share actively in the decision to undertake certain projects. That is, rather than imposing development projects on a community, its members should be allowed to participate meaningfully in the planning and execution.

Conceptual Framework

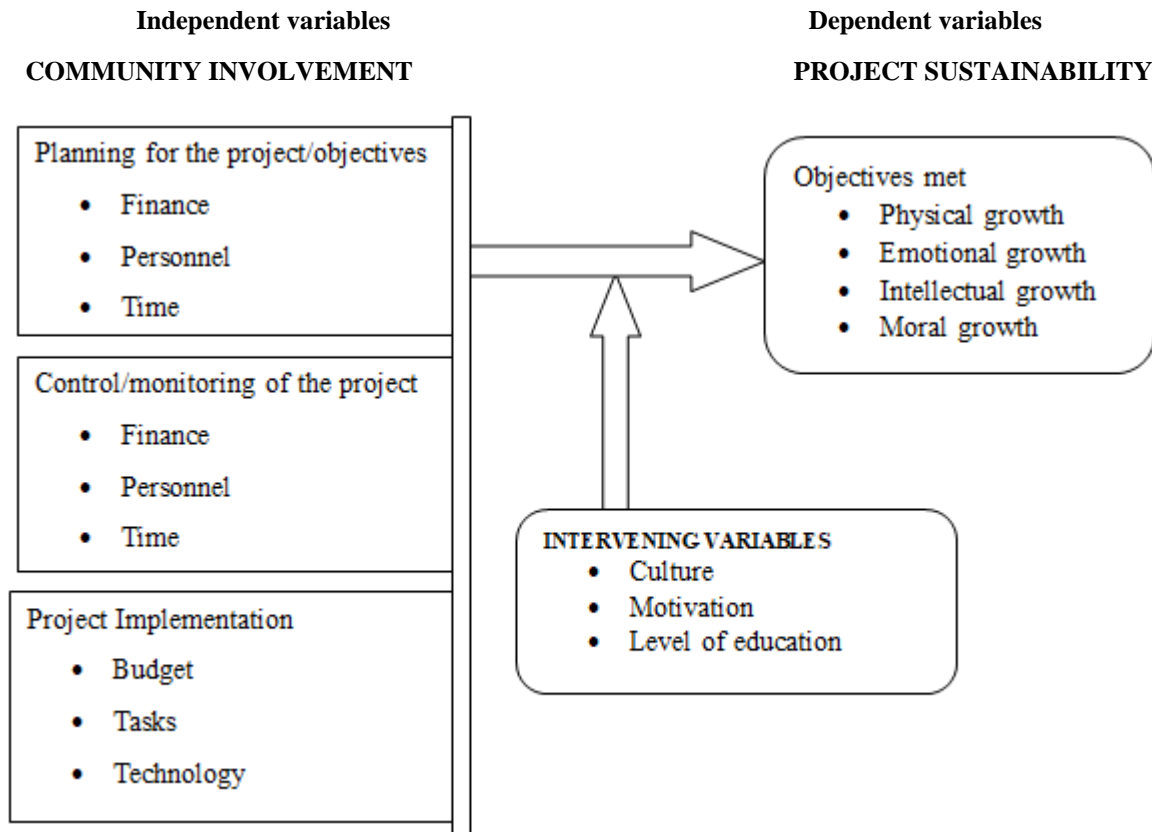


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The researcher used a descriptive research design. The major aim of a descriptive study according to Kumar (2005) is to describe and provide information on what is prevalent regarding a group of people, a community, a phenomenon or a situation. In order to achieve the objective of this study by providing information on Community Involvement and Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda, this study embarked on the research mission of using quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate a number of diverse variables to describe different types of community participation strategy and how they lead to project sustainability. This study also used renowned theoretical perspectives to derive the hypotheses of the study and to name the research variables. This stance of the study as descriptive research is underscored by Hussey and Hussey’s (1997) argues that research constructs in a descriptive study must be supported by established theory.

Correlation Study is the strength of relationships between variables described and explored from the testing of the specified questions of the study. According to Bryman (2004), in a correlation analysis, the strength of relationships between variables is explored. Similarly, Kumar (2005) emphasized that in correlation studies relationships or associations between two variables are ascertained. This study showed the relationships between the independent variable and dependent variable.

Target population

A population is the number of all the organisms of the same group or species, which live in a particular geographical area, and have the capability of interbreeding (Kothari, 2004). The target population of the study was 185 community members of the project.

Data collection Source

Data is facts or things certainly known and from which conclusions may be made. The main sources of data collection referred to when conducting this study was both primary and secondary sources of data. The survey questionnaire was used as the main data collecting instrument, and the secondary data was gathered from books, research articles and appropriate websites that are relevant to this study.

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

The study was mainly concerned about the effect Community Involvement on the Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda. This summary was based on the objectives of the study which are effect of Community Project planning on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project, effect of Community Project Control on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project and lastly effects of Community Project Implementation on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project.

Effect of Community Project planning on sustainability ENHP Project

The findings shows that community participated in financial planning in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project, they also participated in personnel planning, work schedule planning and technological planning. Community involvement in Planning has improved physical growth of the children, emotional growth of the children, intellectual growth of the children and moral growth of the children. Table 4.9 gave the relationship between Community Planning on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project whereby the respondents N is 115 and the significant level is 0.01, the results indicate that independent variable has positive high correlation to dependent variable equal to .721** and the p-value is .000 which is less than 0.01. When p-value is less than significant level, therefore researchers conclude that variables are correlated. This means that there is a significant relationship between Community Planning on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project.

Effect of Community Project control on sustainability ENHP Project

The finding shows that Community was involved in financial control in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project, personnel control, time schedule control and technological control in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Community involvement in control has improved physical growth of the children, emotional growth of the children, intellectual growth of the children and moral growth of the children. Table 4.12 gave the relationship between Community Project Control and sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project whereby the respondents N is 115 and the significant level is 0.01, the results indicate that independent variable has positive high correlation to dependent variable equal to .793** and the p-value is .000 which is less than 0.01. When p-value is less than significant level, therefore researchers conclude that variables are correlated. This means that there is a significant relationship between Community Project Control and sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project.

Effect of Community Project implementation on sustainability ENHP Project

The finding shows that Community participated in financial implementation in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project, task implementation, time/schedule implementation and technological implementation in Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project. Community involvement in implementation has improved physical growth of the children, emotional growth of the children, intellectual growth of the children and moral growth of the children. Table 4.15 gave the relationship between Community Project Implementation on sustainability ENHP Project whereby the respondents N is 115 and the significant level is 0.01, the results indicate that independent variable has positive high correlation to dependent variable equal to .829** and the p-value is .000 which is less than 0.01. When p-value is less than significant level, therefore researchers conclude that variables are correlated. This means that there is a significant relationship between Community Project Implementation on sustainability ENHP Project

Conclusion

In the findings it was established that Community Involvement in development projects inform of Community Project planning, Community Project control and Community Project implementation contributes highly to on sustainability Essential Nutrition and Health Package Project in form of physical growth of the children, emotional growth of the children, intellectual growth of the children and moral growth of the children. Table 4.16 gave the relationship between Community Involvement and Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda whereby the respondents N is 115 and the significant level is 0.01, the results indicate that independent variable has positive high correlation to dependent variable equal to .781** and the p-value is .000 which is less than 0.01. When p-value is less than significant level, therefore researchers conclude that variables are correlated. This means that there is a significant relationship between Community Involvement on the Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda. We can therefore conclude Community Involvement greatly contribute to positive Sustainability of Development Projects in Rwanda.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Researcher has identified the following recommendations;

- i. Community should be able to mobilize enough funds to fund the project effectively so that the project is managed effectively and effectively.
- ii. Donors and government should involve community right from project planning, control and monitoring as well as implementation.
- iii. Community members should be trained on project management skills especially project assessment, monitoring and evaluations as well as resource management skills.

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