



**FACTORS INFLUENCING STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION ON CONSTITUENCY DEVELOPMENT FUNDS
PROJECTS: A CASE OF MWEA CONSTITUENCY, KENYA**

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PROJECTS: A CASE OF MWEA CONSTITUENCY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Constituency development fund (CDF) is a decentralized fund which was established by the Kenyan government based on the belief that the local level government has a better understanding of community needs. Since its establishment in 2003, the management of CDF faces varied challenges which include the insufficient stakeholder's participation.

The key goals were; to increase rural incomes by raising levels of agricultural, commercial and industrial enterprise, reduction of unemployment in the rural areas by increasing wage employment in public and private projects, establishing effective procedures and techniques for quick rural development in Kenya as a whole, applying procedures and the techniques to other rural development projects in similar areas and improving development ability of public administrators in the field.

The purpose of the study was to assess factors that influence stakeholder participation on CDF projects, with a focus on Mwea constituency in Kirinyaga District, Central Province, Kenya. The study's objectives were to: evaluate the effect of socioeconomic factors, stakeholder consultation, communication and leadership on stakeholder participation.

A descriptive research design was used for the study. Instruments used included; questionnaires, personal interviews and observations to collect data from the respondents. Sequential sampling on the group of stakeholder was conducted. The study sample was 200 respondents. The data was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis and the results represented in graphs, tables and pie charts. Analysis of data was done through coding, tabulation, assessing the means using percentage and explanations.

The results obtained enabled to make appropriate recommendations, suggestions and conclusions. They are also important to project managers, implementers, advisers on matters concerning projects and the stakeholders of various projects in Mwea. The results also act a basis for further research work in future.

Key Words: *Stakeholder's Participation, Constituency Development Funds*

INTRODUCTION

The Constituency Development Fund (CDF) in Kenya was established through CDF Act (2003) and Amended in 2007. The CDF is one of the devolved funds meant to achieve rapid socio-economic development at constituency level through financing of locally prioritized projects and enhanced community participation (GoK, 2006).

According to Wanjiru (2008), the CDF initiative is intended to uplift the living standards of the Kenyan people at the grassroots level. The fund was designed to enable balanced development across the country. The CDF Act has three prime objectives: to fund projects with immediate social and economic impact in order to uplift the lives of the people, to alleviate poverty and for purposes of development and in particular in the fight against poverty at the constituency level.

The CDF Act is one of the most credible and critical legislations passed by the Kenyan Parliament in the recent past. It has enabled Kenyans to experience the value of government money and the common man and woman can now directly take part in deciding on development matters for the area.

Objectives

General objective

1. To investigate the level at which various factors influence stakeholder participation.

Specific objectives

1. To investigate the effect of leadership on stakeholder participation.
2. To determine stakeholder participation in CDF development projects.
3. To determine how various socioeconomic factors affect stakeholder participation.

Research questions

1. What effects of leadership are displayed in CDF projects?

2. How are stakeholders in CDF development projects consulted?
3. Are the various socioeconomic factors affecting stakeholder participation?

Justification

The purpose of this research project would significantly contribute towards development at the grass root level. Little is known about the use and management of existing devolved development funds in Kenya. Therefore, this research will serve as a benchmark to identify how the funds have impacted on the common man. In addition, this study will find out why the top-down approach to management of CDF projects has not been so successful, and why community participation and involvement is critical for successful management of these funds.

The CDF initiative is intended to uplift the living standards of the Kenyan people at the grass root level. The fund was designed to enable balanced development across the country. This study builds a case for community members participation in the utilization of CDF. This research project will significantly contribute towards rural development. It questions why community participation and involvement is critical for successful implementation. Hence, undertaking this study would help to find solutions and recommendations on how to improve performance of these funds through stakeholder engagement.

Scope

The research was a case study of Constituency Development Projects in Mwea Constituency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stakeholder consultation/ dialogue

Tammer (2009) states that due to the nature of projects, key players or stakeholders may expect or even be entitled to exercise involvement. As they

eventually judge the result they obviously should have a role in formulating the criteria for project success. However, in reality not all stakeholders' desires and interests can be guaranteed. It is important to timely acknowledge the stakeholder's needs during project start-up. But as projects often include contradictory interests compromises must be made to reach general consensus. Communication and the exchange of opinions, interests and expectations are of the utmost importance. In practice some issues rise when trying to facilitate this process; which stakeholders also need to be contacted and which level of involvement is desirable. So an analysis at the early process stage is needed before interests become entrenched or feelings of exclusion rise.

(Martin and Green, 1995) argues that this should also be clearly communicated to the potential stakeholders. In this phase the threat of not reaching the appropriate level of specification has to be tackled without silting up in excessive details or exaggerate stakeholder's potential influence. Therefore a clear goal and order of ranking for each dialogue has to be set, the correct primary stakeholders and representatives spoken to, gaining mutual consent and confidence, but preventing unrealistic expectations

Leadership

The leadership structure (whether accommodating or rigid) and levels of awareness on CDF among the constituents affect the degree of active participation. Under normal circumstances, leaders give sense of direction in any given group. Leadership stewardship in CDF project attracts participation while the opposite is also true. Also enlightens (creates awareness) and directs recipients (respondents) in achieving the intended development goals.

Ostensibly, the total amount allocated to each constituency translates to types and numbers of CDF anti-poverty projects. This creates a solid connection between locals' participation and

projects viability particularly in projects geared towards poverty alleviation. The anti-poverty bridges the development gap. Thus, how well projects objective(s) succeed translates to improved livelihood. Active interplay between a network of study variables results to high level of satisfaction among the respondents. This is derived from active participation trickling down to improved livelihood at the local level.

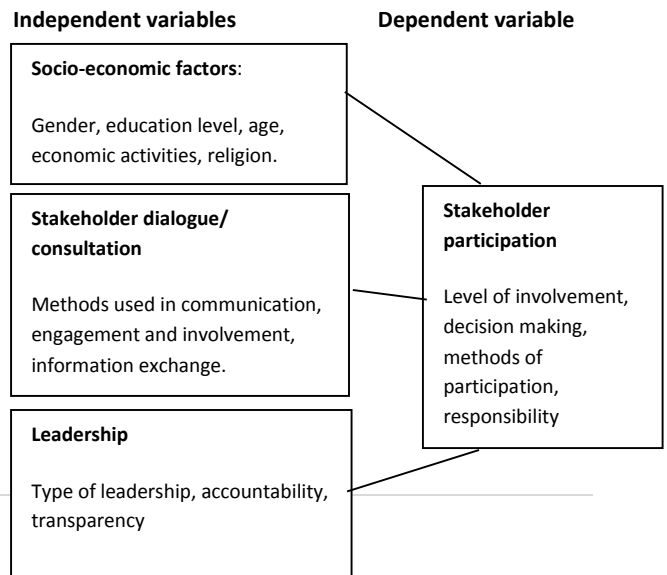
Social-economic characteristics

According to Ditcher (1992), the theory of decentralization teaches that the heterogeneity of preferences is a key determinant of the efficiency of the public goods provision. The utilization of CDF is also expected to be influenced by the degree of diversity. There are many parameters that capture the heterogeneity of a community including income, economic activities and education. Diversity is expected to influence scope of project choices.

Ditcher (1992) states that in homogeneous communities, projects could be few but much larger in scope. There is a likelihood that communities select projects that export costs to others—that is activities that have negative consequences to residents of other constituencies. This is an interesting issue that should also be looked into.

Conceptual framework

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Parahoo (1997) describes a research design as a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed. The research focused on CDF projects and the level of stakeholder participation. A list of stakeholder groups existing within Mwea Constituency was used as a major resource tool. Their participation based on the type of project to be determined by use of questionnaires and observations. A descriptive research design was used in this study and in particular, the case study research design.

According to Burns and Grove (2001), descriptive research is designated to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens, justify current practice and make judgment and also develop theories. Application of similar designs on impact studies have been successfully used with good results (Kothari, 2006).

Target population

According to Parahoo (1997) the target population is the total number of units from which data can be collected such as individuals, artefacts, events or organizations. The target population of this research project were the residents of Mwea constituency. The population comprised of respondents from different economic levels, age brackets, both genders and levels of education.

Sampling

Burns and Groove (2001) refer to sampling as a process of selecting a group of people, events or behavior with which to conduct a study. Polit and Hungler (1997) confirm that, in sampling a portion that represents the whole population is selected.

Sampling frame

According to Sekaran (2003), a sampling frame is a list of all population from which you draw your sample. In this project research a sampling frame

of 200 respondents was used which was selected using random sampling method.

Sample and sampling technique

From the population indicated above, a stratified sampling was conducted. The eight wards in Mwea constituency acted as strata. About 20 respondents were randomly sampled from each ward. For every ten constituents, one was considered as the respondent.

Instruments

The sources of data for this study were primary data and secondary data. A structured questionnaire was used. This allowed the researcher to organize relevant detailed questions that were coded into the questionnaire. These kinds of questions, which were close ended, easily guided the respondents as they have to tick from the multiple choice questions. This kind of questions also allowed easier coding of data.

Interview schedule was also used to collect data from respondent who do not have enough time to fill in a questionnaire. However, the interview was guided by a structured questionnaire. The secondary data was collected from CDF offices, library and internet.

Data collection tools and procedures

The study made use of both primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative data. Secondary data was collected through literature review from various sources. Content analysis from the internet was also used to obtain up to date literature related to this assignment especially on devolved funds.

Primary data was also collected through face-to-face interviews with constituency levels key informants and through focus group discussions. Interviews were also held with randomly selected individuals from a stratified sample frame ensuring a mix in gender, age, occupations/ professions and geographical spread in the sampled areas. The individual questionnaire adopted predetermined questions with agree or disagree response and

detailed questions to establish facts and gauge respondents' opinions and suggestions on the study issues.

Data analysis and presentation

According to Polit and Hungler (1997), data analysis means to organize, provide structure and elicit meaning. In this research project questionnaires were adequately checked for credibility and verification. The data was then coded and tabulated on frequency distribution tables.

The Statistical Package on Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze for descriptive characteristics such as means, mode, median, standard deviation and frequencies. The summarized data was analyzed using percentages and presented using tables and pie charts. Regression analysis was also carried out on the data and analysis of variation (ANOVA).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response rate

The study targeted 200 respondents in collecting data with regard to the evaluation of Mwea constituency. From the study, 180 out of the 200 sample respondents filled-in and returned the questionnaires making a response rate of 90%. This excellent response rate was made a reality after the researcher made personal calls and visits to remind the respondent to fill-in and return the questionnaire.

Socio-economic status of the residents

For proper understanding of the residents under the study area, the study sought to establish the socio-economic attributes of the respondents. In this case, data collected included the demographic status, which included age and their education level.

Demographic status

In studying the resident's demographic status, the study concentrated on the age, level of education, occupation and the level of income. Therefore,

data regarding the above information was collected. The table 1 and figure 2 below summarize age and the level of education of the respondents.

Table 1: Representation of respondent's age

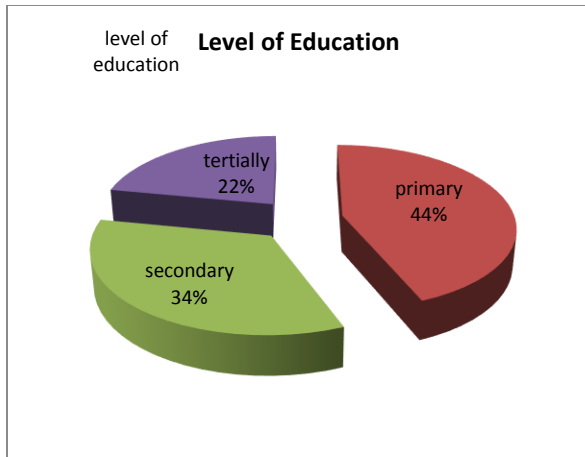
Age	Frequency	Percentage
0-18	20	11.1%
19-36	76	42.2%
37-54	64	35.5%
55-above	20	11.1%
Total	180	100.00%

From the above table, the researcher established that most of the respondents are in the youth category. With a cumulative percentage of 77.7%, the respondents reflect a larger picture of Mwea Constituency having a large population of youths. The ages after youth that is the ages after 36 are significantly lower with a cumulative percentage of 46.6%.

Level of education

The study sought to establish if the respondent education level was influencing project participation. From the findings, all the respondents who filled in the questionnaire indicated that they participate or are involved and understood their involvement towards the development projects.

Figure 2: Representation of respondent's level of education



From the chart, the respondents were fairly educated with a cumulative 56% of them having post-primary education. However, only 22% had a post-secondary educational qualification with a bulky 44% only having primary education. It is noteworthy that none of the respondents were uneducated.

Occupation

The study also sought to establish if the respondents were employed in the various professions. With respect to this, the respondents were asked if they got any employment through the CDF funded projects either directly or indirectly. 42% stated that they were benefiting from these projects. However, 58% stated that they were not benefiting from the projects.

Level of income

When asked to state their level of incomes, most of the respondents were able to highlight that they were earning slightly above the poverty line. Hence most were not financially stable throughout the year only when there is peak period.

Leadership

The CDF leadership does not deal with problems facing the constituents. This view is prompted by the majority of the respondents (57%) disagreeing that the CDF leadership deals with problems facing the constituents. Only 27% of the

respondents think that the CDF leadership deals with problems facing the constituents. An appreciable 16% of the respondents are not fully convinced that the CDF leadership deals with problems facing the constituents.

Majority of the respondents, at 53%, agree that the CDF committee has good characteristics. Actually, 27% of them strongly agree on the good characteristics. It is, however, noteworthy that a significant 22% can't judge whether the CDF committee has good characteristics or not. A quarter of the respondents, however, believe that the CDF committee lacks good characteristics.

The CDF office has an appreciable degree of integrity. According to 57% of the respondents, the CDF office has a high level of integrity. Only 15% disagree that the CDF office has a high level of integrity. It is, however, noteworthy that a considerable 28% of the respondents are not sure whether the CDF office has a high level of integrity.

There is also a majority consensus that the CDF leaders are accessible to the public. A huge majority at 71% of the respondents agree that, indeed, the leaders are accessible to the public. A significant 34% of the respondents strongly agree. 29% of the respondents do not support this claim, with 16% disagreeing while 13% are neutral on the matter.

Regression Analysis

A multivariate regression analysis was used to establish the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The model was represented as shown below,

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \epsilon$$

Where: Y = stakeholder participation; β_0 = Constant Term; β_1 , β_2 , β_3 and β_4 = Beta coefficients; X_1 = socioeconomic factors; X_2 =

stakeholder dialogue/consultation; X3=
 leadership; ϵ = Error term

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.5692
R Square	0.323989
Adjusted R Square	0.248877
Standard Error	1.291467
Observations	180

ANOVA

	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance</i>
					<i>F</i>
Regression	4	28.77702	7.194254	4.313392	0.005939
Residual	36	60.04396	1.667888		
Total	40	88.82098			

The regression represents the relationship between the stakeholder’s participation and the factors that affects it which includes; socioeconomic factors X1, stakeholder dialogue/consultation X2, leadership X3.

The negative Y intercept shows that when the independent variables above are all zero then effect on the stakeholder participation is ether zero or less than.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Socio-economic status of residents

Participation differed in terms of the degree to which stakeholders were actively involved in most of the projects. Gender participation also differed with the male youth being mostly involved. Some of the ways in which participation featured were involvement of more women in projects than men.

The traditionalism of community norms serves as the bedrock for its socio-cultural features, and dictates the kinds of values imbibed by majority of the people in that community. This invariably influences the level of commitment of the people to the development of the community. The kinds of socio-cultural factor prevailing in the community underpins the level of gender inequity in people’s participation and decision making process.

Stakeholder dialogue/ consultation

There is use of modern methods of communication and encouragement of vulnerable groups of people by funding their projects. Others included holding consultative meetings with the constituents, proper communication with the people and accessibility to the CDF office.

Exchange services for effort, where appropriate, consider requiring constituents receiving services from an organization to give back time and effort in support of the group’s policy efforts and infrastructure.

Leadership

From the analysis of the findings the objective of the study was established. The results showed that elements of most CDF projects are stakeholder driven. It appeared that the leadership does not encourage stakeholder participation. It was evident that the stakeholders' views and opinions based on how often they were consulted keep changing and hence are the drivers of most CDF projects.

Conclusions

The study examined different groups of people participating in CDF projects and therefore it was thought to give a representative conclusion about stakeholders' participation of CDF projects in Mwea. The various factors of participation revealed some degree of active participation by the youth and the vulnerable group. There were little of consultation and demographic factors. Stakeholder consultation was geared towards proper involvement in these projects.

CDF funded projects have immensely contributed in lessening rampant poverty levels witnessed in the study area prior to its inception. Conversely, war on poverty alleviation was largely impeded by delay in disbursement of finances, leadership, changing climatic conditions within the area and insufficient funds. However, the available funds only catered for immediate needs like water, education and health rather than initiating more developments that would translate into direct income for the households.

A significant relationship between household level of participation and its corresponding socio-economic status translated to respondents' satisfaction with CDF anti-poverty projects. Further the research indicated that overall participation in projects was encouraging, however there was need to encourage more households to actively participate in the projects to maximize benefits. Participation in capacity building activities was extremely low. This scenario was attributed to the CDF management committee citing that there

were minimal allocations to capacity building exercise within the wards. In addition, attendances of capacity building sessions were by males rather than females.

The research concluded that decentralization of resources through CDF was an effective tool in alleviating poverty in rural areas. However, more benefits can be realized by increasing awareness on the importance of participating in CDF funded projects.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the research came up with the following recommendations: CDF projects should be realigned to reflect locals' development needs. Thus, the government needs to focus more on community-felt needs and apportion a certain percentage of CDF fund to projects that will yield to direct benefits to individual households.

There is need to raise awareness on knowledge, management and prioritization of CDF funded projects. To realize this, the local CDF committee needs to intensify their public awareness campaigns through workshops, education tours and public meetings.

In order to address CDF management problems, there is need to strictly adhere to a structured leadership selection criteria based on academic qualification, leadership skills, adherence stipulated number of CDF committee members and encourage the local people to actively engage with their CDF leaders.

Leadership for community requires effective stakeholder consultation and engagement. There is need to involve women in management if equity is to be achieved in CDF projects. The community or public should be sensitized on the functions and operations of CDF, their role in project identification and forward management should be clear.

Areas for Further Research

Research on stakeholder participation is a very wide subject. The study did not capture an in depth

inquiry on this but a general overview. The study therefore recommends that, the three variables such as; socioeconomic factors, dialogue and leadership can be singled out and an in depth

inquiry conducted. The study was restricted and limited to CDF projects only. Further studies can be conducted on big projects and/ or industries and more so focus on stakeholder involvement.

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