



FACTORS INFLUENCING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT PLANNING IN KENYA. A CASE STUDY OF MBUCANA WATER DAM PROJECT, KIAMBU COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

The concept of community participation in development gained prominence in development discourse in the seventies and since then literature on the subject has grown dramatically. The incorporation of the locals in development projects has become a common phenomenon that almost every organization talks about. Related literature shows that there is very little scope of participation for common people in decision making, management and supervision of many community based development projects. Since independence thousands of development projects have been implemented by popularly elected leaders, out of which some have failed to produce desired outcome. Poor villagers still live in misery and deprivation; their basic human needs are not fulfilled. Their lifestyle is not improved as much as it was expected. The participatory practice has not yet been cultured properly. Project information is hardly disseminated to the community people. An effective evaluation system has not been fully institutionalized to capture the opinions of the real project beneficiaries. In the entire Citizen's report cards recommendations are always made to the development partners to involve the community in project planning and throughout the project cycle to enhance ownership of the projects by the community in line with the new constitution. This study is aimed at looking at some of the pertinent issues of community participation in the construction of the Bucana water dam. The study adopted a descriptive research in which data was gathered through questionnaires. The study was comprised of eighty six (86) respondents on a target population of members of the three villages; Kiriko, Kanyoni and Bucana Villages in Gatundu North Constituency in Kiambu County. The study used simple random sampling method to select the households who will be partially or full displaced. A content analysis and descriptive analysis was being employed.

Key words: Community Participation, Development Projects, Institutionalization

INTRODUCTION

Project approaches to development remain a vital instrument by development agencies to reach and assist poor communities in the developing world. Development interventions in the past have tended to focus on resource and knowledge transfer to beneficiary communities through the 'top-down' approach (FAO, 1991). Several decades of development funding have demonstrated the failures of the 'top-down' approach to reach and benefit the rural poor (Cernea and Ayse, 1997). This realization has led to the adoption of the 'bottom-up' approach to development. However, despite the recent upsurge in the 'bottom-up' approach to development, project beneficiaries are still not fully participating in the identification, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of projects that are meant to improve their lot (Blackman, 2003).

Even when an element of 'participation' is built into projects, it is all too often largely in terms of local investment of labour and not in real decision-making. Beneficiary communities are only informed after plans have been made and that this is done through formal meetings where the officers justify their plans but modification is not considered (APO, 2002). Limited community participation in the implementation and management of projects means that the projects have few chances of sustainability (Rahmato, 1991). Lack of reliable data on effective community participation in development projects constitutes a major constraint to rural development practitioners such as policy makers, planners and managers. This frequently leads to incorrect assessment of the development needs of rural people hence, making it difficult for governments and development agencies to properly measure progress achieved by development projects in improving livelihoods of rural communities (FAO, 1991; Karki, 2001). This

often leads to poor performance of the projects and eventual failure. Recognizing the central role of communities in the project cycle, it is important for project donors/sponsors (Government, Private or Non-Governmental Organizations) to involve all stakeholders in the design and implementation of projects so as to ensure beneficiary ownership and also to instil virtues of accountability, transparency and sustainability. Active participation of beneficiaries in project design and implementation will also enable donors/sponsors to identify and address the factors leading to poor community participation in development projects.

Community participation concerns the engagement of individuals and communities in decisions about things that affect their lives, Burns and Taylor (2000). Sometimes people do not want to be involved in decision making for development projects, but it would be important that everyone should have the opportunity to do so. Community participation implies open discussions and working with and not for people. People will participate and contribute significantly to something they feel part of, identify with, and correlate with their efforts. Participation is the practice through which stakeholders' input and share control over development proposals, decisions and resources which affect them (Odhiambo and Taifa, 2009). Gardiner (1995), Okello, Oenga and Chege (2008) further define it as a process whereby stakeholders influence policy formulation, alternative designs, investment choices and management decisions affecting their communities.

Participation is a basic human right and that it promotes many other rights. It is enshrined in article 27(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and share in scientific advancement and its benefits".

The concept of people's participation in their own development plans has been gaining momentum

in the process of human empowerment and development. Participation and involvement is part of any social group and fundamental to developing and strengthening a well-functioning community. The dynamics of a particular participatory structure are determined by the culture(s) of the group, and their beliefs, norms, values and power relationships (ALNAP, 2003/04).

Statement of the problem

In any developing country, projects are the backbone of local development. Development projects are undertaken to improve the livelihood of the community. Effective management of development projects depends primarily on proper project selection, project design, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, values, norms, social belief and opinions of the local people which are affected directly or indirectly by development interventions should also be considered. Otherwise, sustainability of development projects may generally be questioned (Khwaja, 2004).

The participatory practice has not yet been cultured properly. Project information is hardly disseminated to the community people. An effective evaluation system has not been fully institutionalized to capture the opinions of the real project beneficiaries.

In all the Citizen's report cards they constantly make recommendations to the development partners to involve the community in project planning and throughout the project cycle to enhance ownership of the projects by the community in line with the new constitution (TISA, 2010).

The lack of effective structures for people's participation has been a major constraint upon more widespread development. People's participation in their own projects has not yet attained the acceptable levels that qualify to imply full participation (Rural Communities

Impacting Policy, 2002). The research problem, therefore, is: what are the factors that influence community participation with regard to rural development?

It is from this backdrop that some questions may subsequently arise in the mind of development practitioner; does the existing decision making process of many developing partners not promote people's participation in development process? Does the development projects undertaken by these development agencies suffer ownership crisis? What are the factors that affect the participatory process of the locals in these development projects? This study is an endeavor to look through these pertinent questions and determine some of the factors that may be hindering full participation of community members from their own projects.

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to establish the factors influencing community participation in rural development planning processes with specific reference of the World Bank funded water dam project in Buchana Village of Kiambu County. The specific objectives of the study are; to evaluate whether key principles of participation are understood and considered in projects planning and to establish the effect of community awareness on participating in project planning.

Research questions

- i. Are these principles of participation a considered in local projects planning?
- ii. Does the level of awareness of local community influences their level of participation in project panning?

Scope of the study

Geographically the focus of this study was limited to the three villages that are out to be displaced by the construction of the water dam. These are Buchana, Kanyoni and Kiriko villages of Kiambu

County. The study involved interviewing randomly selected members of the affected households.

Theoretical Framework

a) A continuum of Participation

As a development of this ladder concept of participation Wilcox identifies seven interconnected levels of community participation (figure 1).

Passive strategies very often involve a one-way flow of information from the planners to the public (Kumar, 2002). Persons “participate” by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. Participation relates to a unilateral top-down approach by the authorities. The information being shared belongs to outsiders or professionals. It’s a unilateral announcement by the project manager without listening people’s responses or even asking their opinion.

Nampila (2005) agrees that different individuals in the same community may have different interests and may not necessarily want to participate in development projects. With community participation, the people decide, act and reflect on their actions as conscious subjects. The common belief is that involving citizens in rural programmes and empowering them have the potential to boost their livelihoods and foster development (Kakumba and Nsingo, 2008). Such involvement facilitates the reversal of the inequalities that have been developed under colonialism by helping people to engage in the process of identifying problems and acting on them.

In the case of the Bucana Water dam project, the community members should exercise the freedom to decide on issues affecting them and should also realize that it is their constitutional right to participate. For example, communities have to decide on the committee members who will represent them in the development

programmes. They also should have the authority to make decisions with regard to their expertise because this affects them directly. The local residents should also be able to express their views at meetings without fear, regardless of presence of government or local authorities’ officials. African Development Bank (2001), indicate that offering citizens more choice would stimulate competition, geared at making the public service more efficient and service oriented by capturing the larger citizens’ public interest (Kakumba and Nsingo, 2008).

World Bank (1996) indicates that reaching the poor requires working with them to learn about their needs, understanding how development decisions are made in their communities, and identifying institutions and mechanisms that acquire opportunities and resources. Oakley and Marsden (1991) state that community participation in the context of rural development is not concerned in the first instance with how to achieve a totally participatory society but we are more concerned with how to bring about some significant participation in the improvement of the rural sector on the part of those who depend on that sector for a livelihood.

Community participation takes place in a socio-political framework (Kumar, 2002). One should realize that implementing community participation in rural development process is not an easy exercise, as the form which participation takes is influenced by the overall circumstances and the unique social context in which action is being taken (Nekwaya, 2005).

In order to examine levels of community participation in any development project, one must understand the context in which it takes place. Population figures and density, economic conditions, religious traditions, literacy, health status, nutritional benefits, political economy, land arrangements, government structures and effectiveness, levels of infrastructural development, educated unemployed youth, and other factors are relevant variables that differ

from community to community (Osti, 2003). Osti also notes that development strategies appropriate in one locality are not necessarily needed or appropriate in another because contextual constraints and possibilities differ widely; particular projects are not necessarily replicable community to community even where needs are similar.

b) Arnstein's ladder of participation

Perhaps the seminal theoretical work on the subject of community participation was by Arnstein (1969). The particular importance of Arnstein's work stems from the explicit recognition that there are different levels of participation, from manipulation or therapy of citizens, through to consultation, and to what we might now view as genuine participation, i.e. the levels of partnership and citizen control (see figure 2).

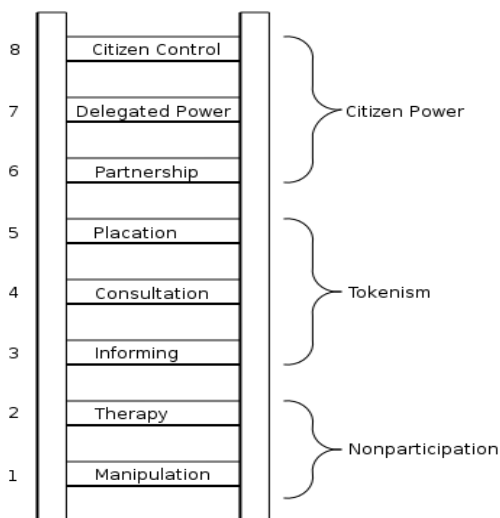


Figure 1 The Ladder of Citizen Participation. Source: Picture based on (Arnstein, 1969)

Arnstein categorizes the first two levels in her ladder of citizen participation as *non-participation*, this is where the public is not directly involved and may be manipulated into

thinking they are part of decision making, where the power holders have created a phony form of participation, perhaps around a decision already made. At the first level there is *manipulation* where people are “educated” and may be advised to sign proposals they believe to be in their interest.

The second level of the participation, which Arnstein calls *therapy*, involves the power holders “curing” the people. The power holders promise to assist the citizens and have them engage in different activities where their opinions may be “cured”, and in the end accepted by the citizens.

Arnstein refers to the third, fourth and fifth levels as *tokenism*. This is where the citizens become involved but only to certain extent. The *informing* level is where the citizens are informed of what is happening. This is a one-way information process, where people receive the information in newspapers, in the media, online or by other means.

Consultation is the fourth step, in which citizens' opinions can start to affect the power holder's opinion. This is a common form of citizen participation utilized in urban planning. If consultation and information is taken into account as part of the planning process, this can be effective. However, if the consultation and information is not taken into consideration at the end of the day, this step will be of limited value and could therefore fall back into the non-participating level.

The fifth level in Arnstein's ladder is where a citizens' opinion will start influencing the power holder's decision. Arnstein calls this level in the ladder *placation*. At this level, citizens may be hand-picked to sit on a governing board that makes decisions on the planning process. According to Arnstein, this process is more likely to work if the board members are equally split

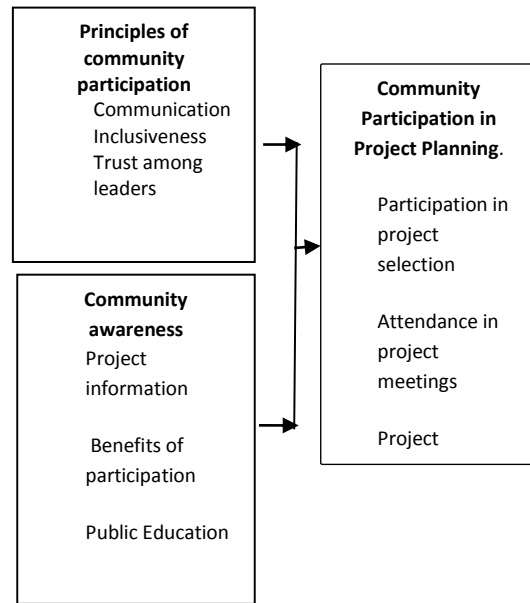
(citizens and power holders), so the citizens cannot be outvoted in the process.

The last category in the participation ladder is what Arnstein calls *citizen power*. This is where the citizens get to influence the decision making directly. At the sixth level the power holders and citizens create a *partnership*. Arnstein considers partnership relatively high on her ladder as she believes this can keep both citizens and power holders content.

The seventh level is what Arnstein calls *delegated power*. At this level the citizens can start taking control, and the power holders need to start negotiating with the citizens. Compared to the example given for *placation* (the fifth level), the majority of the board members would be the citizens. This would mean that the power holders would need to negotiate decisions with the board members.

The final level is what Arnstein calls *citizen control*. The words describe this level, since it gives the citizens the power to decide. This can be achieved through referendums, but since those are often costly and difficult to arrange it would most likely slow down the process substantially. They are therefore often only utilized for larger decisions. In many cases, local authorities do not, however, give their citizens full control in such elections, but treat the results instead only as advisory for the final decision made by the city council or other such decision making bodies.

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables Dependent Variable

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework Principles of Community Participation

For effective implementation of community participation, it is essential to understand its principles as highlighted by Manila Declaration (1989) in Theron (2005). This thorough understanding would help to change the perception of the project officials of the towards community participation in terms of development planning and service delivery. As stated in the Manila Declaration (1989) a people-centred development seeks to return control over resources to the people and their communities to be used in meeting their own needs. It further calls for active mutual self-help among people, working together in their common struggle to deal with their common problems.

The principles of community participation, based on the Manila Declaration, as applied to the situation at the proposed project are as follows:

Understanding participation

Participation is a rich concept that varies with its application and definition. The way participation

is defined also depends on the context in which it occurs. For some, it is a matter of principle; for others, practice; for still others, an end in itself (World Bank, 1995). For people to effectively participate in any project there is need for them to understand when, how and why they have to participate (Spieges, 1998). For this reason it is important to first determine the understanding of the locals and their perception to participation in development processes.

Inclusiveness

Trevor (2006) asserts that knowing the community, who are to be the beneficiaries of any development initiative, is critical to building support. One of the first steps is to identify the individuals and organizations in the community who will be affected by the project. There are many barriers to participation in society; poverty, literacy levels, disability, age, race and ethnicity are some of the characteristics that often marginalized people (Oakley and Marsden, 1991). A healthy community embraces diversity and recognizes that all community members have right to be heard and participate in processes that affects their lives. The community participation process seeks out and facilitates the engagement of those potentially affected. In every project there is a need to identify those and facilitate their participation (Kinyondi, 2008).

Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002) affirm that living in a democratic society means we elect representatives to speak on our behalf at the government level. By virtue of their larger population, urban areas tend to have greater representation in the National parliament and other higher legislatures than rural communities. The greater number of urban representatives is one factor that can lead these elected bodies to have a more urban focus and reduce the influence rural community members have in the decision making process. Specific communities

and groups of community members must also be considered in the rural policy-making process.

Communication

A new project generally represents some form of a change to a community. Typically, 5 – 10% of community members will support the project initially and 5-10% of still the same community will oppose it. Opponents or supporters are unlikely to change their positions. The remaining 80%, called the silent majority, are either undecided indifferent or sceptical about the project. Failure to bring the silent majority on the winning side can lead to massive opposition and seriously jeopardize the project. Various communication strategies can be used to win the support of this group. Open public participation is one communication strategy that has proven to be successful (Community Development Society, 2000).

It is wise to begin consulting with the community right from the start. This helps to bring trust, understanding and support for the group. If the project proceeds too far before community are informed there may be problems with rumours and the spreading of misinformation. To build community support for your project there is need to ensure that the community is well informed and ideally, part of the initial planning for the project. Inviting the public to express their views and concerns about the project can help to enhance community support and ultimately the success of the project. The community participation process must communicate to participants how their input affected the decision. Feedback is the essential exercise in this regard. Development agencies should create conducive platform which would enable communities to air their views. The community participation process provides participants with the information they need in order to participate in a meaningful approach (Kumar 2002).

If the community does not support the project, there is need to stand back and try to be objective. Maybe enough information about the project was not provided. Advice from the community should be sought. The community participation process communicates the interest and meets the process needs of all participants.

Trust

Trust is the glue that binds organizations and communities together. Building trust in local community organizations has been identified as a viable strategy for the economic development of organizations, communities, and regions (Reid, 2000)

For decades, social science research has emphasized that a positive relationship exists between trust among citizens in a local region and that region's economic performance or prosperity; citizens who trust one another exchange ideas, goods, and services within local community boundaries, all of which bodes well for local economic development (Granovetter, 1985; Putnam, 1993a; Coleman, 2002). Therefore, building trust in local community organizations represents a viable strategy for economic development (Putnam, 1993b). Trust, or social capital, refers to the mutual confidence that no party involved in the exchange of goods or services will exploit others (Cohen & Fields, 1999). That is, if citizens in a community hold each other accountable for their actions over time, a foundation is built that allows for the development of trust. Thus, accountability precedes the development of trust and the economic prosperity of communities (Holland, 2002; Knack & Zak, 2005).

The easy task is to realize that building trust among community members is essential for them to participate leading to effective decision making.

Engagement is based on community support. A positive change is more likely to occur when community members are an integral part of a program's development and implementation. All partners must be actively respected from the start. For example, meeting with key community leaders and groups in their surroundings helps to build trust for a true partnership. Such meetings provide the development partners with more information about the community, its concerns, and the factors that will facilitate or constrain participation. In addition, community members need to see and experience "real" benefits for the extra time, effort, and involvement they are asked to give. Once a successful rapport is established, meetings and exchanges with community members can build into an ongoing and substantive partnership (Andrews et al, 2006).

Reid, (2000) has pointed out that when contacting the community, some engagement leaders find it most effective to reach out to the fullest possible range of formal and informal leaders and organizations. They try to work with all factions, expand the engagement table, and avoid becoming identified with one group. Coalition building is a key part of community engagement. Alternatively, implementers of development projects may find that identifying and working primarily with key stakeholders is the most successful approach. Therefore, they engage with a smaller, perhaps more manageable, number of community members to achieve their mission. The range of individuals and groups contacted for an engagement effort depends in part on the issue at hand, the engagement strategy chosen, and whether the effort is mandated or voluntary.

It is essential for those engaging a community to adhere to the highest ethical standards. Indeed, under some circumstances, community engagement might itself be considered an ethical imperative. The rights, interests, and well-being

of individuals and communities must have the utmost priority. Past ethical failures are known to create distrust among some communities and this can produce great challenges for community organizers. The community must be educated about any potential for harm through its involvement with or endorsement of an initiative so it can make an informed decision (Yang, 2006).

Community Awareness

The proverb “information is power” is important in societies where the majority are illiterate and cultural and superstitious thinking dominates. Awareness-raising will help to break social, superstitious and other barriers among the community through information - sharing and dialogue. Once these barriers have come down, communities are able to express themselves more freely; both as individuals and collectively, internalize the underlying need for development projects and the expected returns (Dayal, 2000).

Rural Kenyans have been reporting that the information that is available on policy, government programmes and services is difficult to obtain and interpret. There is a desire to learn about and access information about government programmes and services that is understandable, concise and timely (Omolo, 2010).

Before citizens can express their opinions, and participate in the public decision making process, they need information about the subject at hand. A civic participation process can not be built unless those who participate have a high level of education and information about the issue(s) (World Bank, 2004).

Through the public education process one can determine citizens' awareness about specific issues, inform citizens about specific problems in which they can make a difference or even persuade them to change their behaviour and actively participate in the life of their community. Public education is the first step in involving citizens in the life of their community and in

creating a participative culture. Through public education, the attitudes of citizens regarding the political system and its different components can be changed. Public education is the method used to implement a certain policy, to create a state of mind and define the role of good in society.

Public education means informing and motivating a large number of citizens in order to solve a problem that affects them. The first important step in this process is developing an education campaign. A public education campaign is a method whereby information is sent to a large number of citizens to heighten their awareness of a problem and, as a result, encourage them to change their behaviour. The planning process to develop a civic education campaign is complex, but not difficult. It takes time, usually from three months to a year (Osti, 2003).

Dukeshire and Thurlow (2002) have indicated that the rural citizens feel that there is a lack of access to information about government programs and services. There is a desire to learn about and access information about government programs and services that is understandable, concise and timely.

An awareness-raising process ideally aims to boost the commitment of society beyond the simple acquisition of knowledge and skills. As the awareness raising takes many forms like demonstrative/practical training of communities, continuous dialogue and information sharing, participatory planning and monitoring including regular assessment of progresses and constraints allows communities to enhance their analytical skills and implementation capacity (Clever 2001). Sensitizing and raising the levels of awareness of the community helps to promote local level participation and participatory approach. Raising the levels of awareness can contribute to community involvement in that it helps people formulate their interests, knowledge and understanding as being a precondition for real

participation of the community in the project management cycle (Mosse, 2001).

Public participation processes are an important means of raising awareness. Their involvement in the project management (problem identification & prioritization, resource assessment, annual action plan preparation, implementation, monitoring) and decision-making is a means of transmitting knowledge and values. They provide opportunities for dialogue, mutual learning, and ownership. It will help increasing communities' commitment and participation beyond enhanced knowledge and skills, and as such may be described as an empowerment process (Uemura, 1999).

According to Zanetell and Knuth (1994), wide variety of methods and techniques are available for developing public sensitization and raising the awareness level, and can be put to use in promoting project activities. Particular leaders influence the community, help pass the message to others, have the power/authority to change things, can encourage "ownership" of initiative throughout the community. Therefore, it is important to capacitate and keep these people well informed on the issues to demonstrate to communities their exemplary behaviour and action. For this and to get leaders to understand and actively support the initiative, adequate orientation on the objectives, the efforts needed and what is expected from each partner and the like should be clear to these leaders.

Documentation of project plans and progress reports is important for disseminating the good practices identified, the activities implemented and the results achieved in order to stimulate the awareness and interest of the community (Putnam 2000). For effective dissemination of such information, community forums need to be arranged to discuss on the results that would help them to evaluate the achievements and weaknesses for continuous learning from experience. This will in turn help to enhance their awareness level and knowledge or skill.

Collecting and documenting experiences and practices, designing strategies for communities to access and discuss on these lessons on a regular basis is of important to raise their awareness levels, skills and interest towards the project (Oxfam, 2007).

Critique of existing literature relevant to the study

Most of the literature on factors influencing the level of community participation has been descriptive and isolated in terms of context. The few studies that have been comparative are not comprehensive in their outlook. The literature has been keen to point out specific issues while wearing a blind eye on others. Whilst quantitative based evidence map out the general factors influencing the level of community participation in projects, methodological approach adopted are inadequate for the understanding factors influencing the level of community participation in community based projects (Blackburn, 2009).

Research Gaps

Cheng, (2012) in his study on community participation noted that there is little research on the impact of government regulation and according to Taylor, (2007) on understanding community participation portrays that previous studies of factors influencing the level of community participation have tended to take a general approach using a single theoretical framework to explain community participation and fails to explain why community participation have not improved over time.

A clear picture of the factors influencing the level of community participation in donor funded has not emerged from the previous studies. Mostly, the studies concentrate more on the effects community participation on project performance. The existing body of knowledge is not sufficient enough to explain the factors influencing the level of community participation in donor funded

projects. There is contradiction on how, when the community should be involved on donor funded projects. Despite the importance of community participation on donor funded projects, there is little empirical evidence of the factors influencing the level of community participation in donor funded projects with specific reference of the World Bank funded water dam project in Bucana of Kiambu County. Thus this study envisions filling this research gap.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In order to clearly examine the topic of research, descriptive method of research was used. This method of research was preferred because a researcher was able to collect data to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of study. Descriptive research determines and reports the way things are and also helps a researcher to describe a phenomenon in terms of attitude, values and characteristics (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). According to Orodho (2003), descriptive case study is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. The study seeks to administer questionnaires to a sample of individuals.

The focus of the study was to investigate the factors that influences community participation in rural development processes with specific reference to the World Bank funded water dam project in Buchana Village of Kiambu County.

Target population

A population is defined as a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common observable characteristics (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).It is the total collection of elements about which the study wishes to make some inferences (Cooper, R. & Schindler, S.

2008). Dencombe, (2007) defines a population frame as “an object list of the population from which the researcher can make his or her selection of the sample. According to Cooper, and Schindler, (2008) it is a complete and correct list of population members only. The survey target population will be the community members who are living in Bucana, Kanyoni and Kiriko villages where Bucana dam will be constructed. The target population will either be the fully displaced or partially displaced persons. According to Athi Water and Sewerage Board report (2012) a total of 250 households will be fully displaced and another 250 households will be partially displaced.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to identify the households to be studied. This is appropriate when the population is heterogeneous and it is possible to establish strata which are reasonably homogeneous within each one.

In stratified random sampling, subsets of the frame are given an equal probability. Each element of the frame thus has an equal probability of selection.

The population was divided into 2 strata; fully displaced and partially displaced households. Each stratum was then be sampled as an independent sub-population, out of which individual elements (household heads) were randomly selected. The land parcel numbers for each stratum were used to determine which households to be selected for study.

Table 1: Sample Size

Target households	Frequency	Sample size (20% of target population)
Fully displaced	180	36
Partially displaced	250	50
Total	430	86

Research Instruments

The study used well pre-tested questionnaires containing questions which comprised of open ended and close ended questions. The questionnaires were used to obtain data from respondents because they were convenient to use when handling a large group of respondents. The questionnaire consisted of a list of questions relating to the objectives and research questions of study.

Data analysis

Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Data cleaning was done in order to determine inaccurate, incomplete, or unreasonable data and then improve the quality through correction of detected errors and omissions. After data cleaning, the data was coded and entered in the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data analysis procedures used involved both quantitative and qualitative procedures. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means and percentages. Quantitative data analysis required the use of a computer spreadsheet, and for this

reason the SPSS was used. Qualitative data was analyzed qualitatively using content analysis based on analysis of meanings and implications emanating from respondent information and comparing responses to documented data on participatory project planning. The qualitative data was presented thematically in line with the objectives of the study. The results of data were presented using frequency distribution tables, bar graphs and pie charts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Profile

The researcher collected data using questionnaires and entered results as already indicated in chapter three. The community respondents were selected from the three villages in Gatundu North- Buchana, Kanyoni and Kiriko, according to the selection criteria. A total of 86 respondents filled in the questionnaires.

Age of the respondents

The figure below illustrates the five age categories that were used by the researcher to gather the information. The age distribution of the respondents varied from 18 and above 55 years. Of these respondents, 10% fell between 18 to 24 years. Twenty eight (28%) were between ages 25 to 34 years, 31% of the respondents were between 35 to 44 years, 16% were between 45 and 54 years while 14% of the total respondents interviewed were above 55 years of age. The fact that there is no equal representation in age group in the sample makes any generalization about age influence on community participation impossible. Regardless of this however, all respondents revealed a positive attitude towards community participation irrespective of age group.

Distribution of respondents according to educational qualifications

Figure 3 indicates that 22% of the total sample was illiterate. Another 35% reported to have up to primary level of education. A further 26% had acquired secondary level. It was only 17% of the respondents who have reported to have attended tertiary institutions where they they have acquired certificate, diplomas and degrees. The researcher understands that the general level of education of the people has a significant relationship to their standard of living. The 2009 national census reports that approximately 30% of the population in Gatundu North has no basic education. Theron (2005) also states that illiteracy is an inhibiting factor in community participation. This is because illiterate people may be marginalised by professional and technical communication during participation process.

Distribution of respondents according to the length of period lived in the area

The finding indicates that 65 respondents, representing 76% of the total sample population reported that they had been living in the area for over 10 years. This simply implies that the respondents were permanent residents of the area of study. This points that the data collected from them is relevant and valid. Only 24% reported that they had been in the area for less than 10 years.

Attendance to the First Project Meeting

The finding indicated that only 36% of the respondents attended the first project meeting that was arranged within the area in order to bring attention to the local residents of the intended project. This results show that either the publicity was never done or the people just ignored the call. This first meeting was very important because it was the meant to bring to awareness and also cause the members to

brainstorm over the idea to have a water dam within the area.

Participation during the First Project Meeting

The results indicate that 71% of the respondents did not raise any issue during the first project meeting. However 9 respondents who attended the first project meeting reported to have raised issues to do with the project.

Support for the Project

The finding indicates that only 41% of the respondents support the project. A vast majority of the respondents totalling to 59% reported that they did not support the project. This 59% of the respondents were noted to be mainly drawn from those within the age of above 44 years. Majority of those between 18 and 35 years were seen to be in support of the project.

The major concerns that were raised by those who are against the project are that; once the construction of the dam starts they will be forced to resettle to unknown area. The idea of resettlement of the people seems to bring a lot of fears than the joy of the project benefits. The respondents need the government to find them an equally productive land for them to move to. The compensation criterion was also sited to be a big impediment to their support for the project. Most of the respondents stated that it is until they are compensated to almost 5 times the current market value of their land that they will be ready to move.

However other did report that the construction of the dam will provide jobs opportunities and provide water to the entire Gatundu Sub-county. It will also allow them to relocate to a new area all together. They also highlighted that those who were moved during the construction of the Gachege tea factory within the area were give good returns as compensations for their land and they now lead better lives.

Understanding of Community Participation in Development

The first objective of the study was to evaluate whether some of the principles of participation are understood and considered in projects activities. The findings of the study indicate that there are different perceptions and understanding about community participation amongst community members in Gatundu North. Intellectuals, people with little education and those that participated in development activities had a better understanding of community participation than those at the grassroots levels who never participate in any development initiatives.

The finding indicates that 23 respondents, representing 27% did not comment. This shows that there is still a proportion of the community that do not understand about community participation in development. Then twenty seven (27) respondents representing 31 percent stated that community participation is the process whereby community members participate in decision-making process in development. Theron (2005) agrees that community participation means the process of empowering people by developing their skills and abilities so that they can negotiate with the rural development systems and can make their own decisions. Ten (10) respondents which were 12% view community participation as a course where the community members are involved in designing the projects. These were mainly drawn from those respondents with high education levels and also understood the project life cycle. However twenty six (26) respondents which were 30%, view community participation as a course where most of the community members are actively involved in project implementation. Sproule (1996) states that community participation is the process of "giving people more opportunities to participate fully in development activities,

empowering people to mobilise their own capacities, be social actors rather than passive subjects, manage resources, make decisions and control the activities that affect their lives."

Participation in Projects/ Development Programmes

The finding demonstrates that 55 respondents, representing 64% of the total sample, do not participate in development projects. It is only 31 respondents; representing 36% of the total sample partakes in development initiatives.

However, Raid (2000) appeals that democratic policies states that community activities are not considered to be the special vicinity of the knowledgeable few perhaps, the same elite leadership who always run community affairs, but is the business of everyone in the community.

Respondents reasons for not participating in community development projects

The respondents gave the following reasons that hinder their participation on initiatives. Table 4.6 indicates that 16 respondents stated that they did not have enough time to participate. It was also noted that time factor was the major constraint. Fourteen (14) community respondents stated that political interferences and conflicts of interests is also a pertinent factor representing 25% of the total sample. Nine (9) respondents representing 16% quoted poverty and lack of financial support as another reason for obstructing their involvement in community projects. Another nine (9) respondents reported that they failed to participate as many development projects lack sustainability and progress and that they did not like to be associated with such projects. There were four (4) respondents who reported that they lack knowledge on projects representing 7% of the sample, and that this prevents them from active participation. It was only three (3) respondents representing 5% of the sample who

reported that they avoided participating in project to avoid conflicts with their neighbours.

Benefits of Participating in Community Projects

the findings indicates that 69% of the respondents believe that community members within the area had benefited from participating in community development projects. These respondents reported that community members in Gatundu North have directly benefited from participating in development projects. This includes plumbing of clean water, construction of social amenities like churches and schools, electrification of their houses among others. The respondents also quoted that they had been employed during the implementation stage of some of the projects. Their participation helps them share positive ideas with their peers and alleviates poverty and crime in the area. The table also shows another 31% of the respondents who asserted that community members did not benefit from development programmes within the area. Inclusion in Needs Identification Meetings

The findings illustrated that 86% of the respondents have never attended any project identification meetings. It is only 14% of the respondents reported to have ever attended a stakeholders meeting for identification of projects to suit the communities needs. Dulani (2003) like many other authors points out that people will freely participate in those projects they directly own. This goes as far as giving the community a chance to identify what should be done. Nekwaya (2007) believes that people at the local grassroots level know their needs better than development agencies. It then goes without much asking that needs which are addressed should be those identified by the people and not those imposed on them.

Participation in Elections of Project Leaders

The finding illustrated that only 70% of the respondents did not participated in elections of current project leaders. This shows that the community members either did not have trust in the leadership of the project or that they were not for the support of the project. However 26 respondents reported to have participated and they had an optimistic attitude towards participation mainly in issues concerning development.

Distribution of respondents according to communication systems

The findings indicated that majority of the respondents, representing 55% did not communicate with community leaders about issues regarding development and projects. Respondents also indicated that they did not believe that the community leaders are in position of knowing their problems better because they were members of the same community. Nampila (2008) states that poor communication often leads to chaos and uncertainty. Forty five percent (45%) agreed that they had communicated with the local authorities regarding development issues mainly during the mass gathering. The integrated Environment Management Information Series (2002) reported that the ultimate goal of community participation is to improve communication between stakeholders in order to facilitate better decision making and sustainable development. That is why continuous efforts should be made in order to improve communication and engages all stakeholders in repeated interactions (World Bank, 1996). In order to enhance inclusive decision-making by the community, communication channels have to be put in place right from project initiation stage. Community members who are the final consumers of the project should feel free to transmit their views, wished and interests in order to participate fully.

Nampila (2008) agrees that effective communication keeps various role players in contact with each other and can affect a desirable and sustainable result.

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson’s coefficient was used to verify the existence or non-existence of linear correlation among the quantitative variables as indicated below. Emolument and size do exhibit a somewhat strong link. However, there was little evidence of multi-collinearity among the explanatory variables since the correlations among them were not very strong hence all the variables can be incorporated into the subsequent regression analysis

Table 4. 30: Pearson Correlation

Variables	Principles of community participation	Community awareness	Will power to participate
Principles of community participation	1.0000		
Community awareness	0.40	1.0000	
Will power to participate	0.437	0.196	1.0000

Regression Analysis

Mainly the study was on dependence and independent relationship, a moderate multiple regression analysis was used. The multiple regression analysis was mathematically expressed as shown below: A multivariate regression model was applied to determine the relative importance of each of the two variables with respect to community participation in rural development

planning processes. The regression model was as follows:

$$Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + \dots + e$$

Y is community participation in project planning

B₀ is the constant

X₁ is Principles of community participation

X₂ is Community awareness

B₁, and B₂ are coefficients

e is the error term

Regression equation and the predictor relationship

The established multiple linear regression equation becomes:

$$Y = 1.2018 + 0.3061 X_1 + 0.4559 X_2 + 0.00016$$

Where

Constant =1.2018 shows that If Principles of community participation, Community awareness and Will power to participate in project planning were all rated as zero, changes in community participation in project planning would be 1.2018.

X₁= 0.3061 show that one unit change in Principles of community participation results in 0.3061 units increase the level community participation in project planning.

X₂= 0.4559 show that one unit change in Community awareness results in 0.4559 units increase the level community participation in project planning.

Regression coefficients

Table 3 Regression coefficients

	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Principles of community participation	1.2018	.424	.973	1.041	.682
Community awareness	0.3061	.066	.053	.412	.720
Principles of community participation	0.1723	.079	.253	1.930	.027

Strength of the model

Analysis in table below shows that the coefficient of determination (the percentage variation in the dependent variable being explained by the changes in the independent variables) R² equals 0.743, that is, principles of community participation, community awareness and will power to participate explain 74.3 per-cent of the level to community participation in rural development planning processes leaving only 25.7 per-cent unexplained.

Model Summary

Table 4. 32: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
.917(a)	.743	.807	3.69669	.841	102.78	4	89	.000

Adjusted R² is called the coefficient of determination it show how change in the independent variable results to changes in the dependent variable. It is also the coefficient of determination and tells us how to community participation in rural development planning processes varies with principles of community participation, community awareness and will power to participate. From data, the value of adjusted R² is 0.807. This implies that, there was a variation of 80.7% of the Level of community participation in rural development planning processes varied with principles of community participation, community awareness and will power to participate at a confidence level of 95%.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study indicate that most community members involved in this study had little understanding of what good and bad community participation in rural development process in particular.

5.2.1 General understanding of community participation

Community participation is an elusive concept which acts as an umbrella term for a style of development planning intervention (Theron, 2005). Burkey (1992) mentioned that participation of the rural poor in their own development has been measured as a key success of projects.

Research findings indicate that there are mixed feelings and understanding about community participation amongst the people who were interviewed. Literate people have a better understanding of community participation than the illiterate. From the various responses obtained it could be noted that most community members within the area of research do understand what community participation is all

about. However, it is not being practical implemented. This means that there is need to explain to the community about its participation in the development process, project sustainability and service delivery system and this would encourage them to participate.

It was clearly stated by the respondents that, although the community members have a problem working together, community participation is still essential because only when the whole community participates, can the goals of the community be achieved. The community can only develop when they work together.

Community support is an important ingredient in determining the success of the project. The Buchana water dam can be seen not to have gained enough public support having enjoyed a support of only 41% of the total respondents. This could be attributed to the low levels of community participation in development projects where more than 64% are quoted to have never participated.

Communication is also very important so as not to take the people by surprise. More than half of the population represented by 55% of the respondents lamented to having never communicated or received any form of communication of any undertakings within the community. This lack of communication could be the same reason that makes a vast majority of the respondents (65%) not to trust the local leaders on issues development.

ing meaningful community participation

Conclusions

It is identified that communities in Buchana area, which represents people in rural communities are having inadequate understanding of community participation. This influences their aptitude to participate in development programmes. However, the extent of community participation

in projects has been measured as a key factor in the success and sustainability of development projects. The literature review in chapter two indicated that community participation has more benefits as opposed to its shortcoming. We could therefore, value community participation and making it a spontaneous activity to do, in order to carry out development initiatives. The findings of the empirical survey showed clearly that the views, feelings and opinions of the community should be heard and implemented by development structures in ensuring public involvement.

In the case of the community, it could be said that there are community members who are trying to avoid conflict by not saying all they have to say at the meetings. This should not be the case as conflict should not be avoided when it comes to community participation. Discussions could take place, and in the process the stakeholders could have a common vision, but other people's views could also be appreciated. However, it could be concluded that the success of community meetings should not be measured against the attendance but by its ability to transform needs and wants into tangible solutions.

Recommendations

Based on the discussion of the findings, the researcher made the following specific recommendations that can be considered among others in the efforts to strengthen community participation in rural development processes.

Communities for a long time have been deprived of information on the role of their effort in development processes. In this case there is a strong need for awareness on the role of the communities and their home-grown knowledge systems in ensuring community participation. As such there is a need to establish community based information technological centres (ITC) for the exhibit, storage and distribution of

community participation related knowledge to communities. County governments, NGOs and other development partners should strengthen community awareness on the value of the role of the locals in sustainable development.

Recommendations for further research

The main contention behind peoples in development is that real development must be people centered. Yang, (2006) notes that many projects conceived and implemented outside organizations have failed because consideration was not given to the importance of local participation. Upon conclusion of the research with the given research questions and the scope, it is observed that some significant and important concerns have not been covered by this research. In view of the findings of the study, the researcher offers the following suggestions which should act as a basis for further work a

comparable or similar study on community participation trends in other rural areas so as to find if such projects carry values which match the needs of that particular area and in turn those set by the devolved county governments in Kenyan Counties.

- As such, there is a need for supplementary study on the issues that affect the communities in projects processes. Further research will facilitate researchers to query the status quo on why the concept of community participation has not lived up to its expectation of ensuring sustainable projects.
- To map the influences of participation in local development projects, in this study the prime focus is given only to the planning stage whereas the other stages like project appraisal, monitoring and evaluation stages remained unscathed which can be a relevant and interesting areas for future research work on the subject.

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