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Community Participation and Sustainability of Education Project: The Case of Kenya Equity in Education Project in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya

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Community participation in monitoring and evaluation is essential for sustainable education projects; yet, without lasting structures, even high involvement may fail to secure long-term impact in protracted refugee situations. This study examined the influence of community participation in monitoring and evaluation on the sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP). The study was grounded on the Ladder Theory of Participation and Stakeholder Theory. This study employed a descriptive research design and used stratified and simple random techniques in selecting 11 project staff, 26 teachers, and 154 parents from a target population of 20 project staff, 50 teachers, and 294 parents. Questionnaires were administered to parents, teachers, and project staff; Focus Group Discussions were conducted with illiterate parents; and interviews with key informants. Community participation in monitoring and evaluation has a significant effect on the sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project ($\beta_4=0.460$, $p=0.000$). This study found that there were high levels of participation in monitoring. A significant 96% of community members participated in monitoring the performance of the girls; 87% provided feedback on the impact of the Project; and 31.6% assessed the progress of the construction of school facilities. The Kenya Equity in Education Project was not sustainable as the operations of the project ceased upon the conclusion of the implementation timeframe. This study recommends that: Donors enact policies making it mandatory for organizations to reserve a certain percentage of positions for communities in the project management team as a pre-condition for funding their projects. Windle International Kenya to enact a policy that will require beneficiary communities to contribute 10 to 20 percent of resources through funds or materials during the implementation of projects.

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INTRODUCTION

Researchers have witnessed efforts towards the use of participatory approaches to improve the well-being of the communities and implement successful and sustainable projects (Napier et al. 2020). This is to ensure a continuous flow of benefits and services to the community without detrimental effects after managerial, technical, and financial assistance is phased out by the exit of donors, government, or development partners (Olukotun, 2017). The adoption of the SDGs in 2015 has set the world on a path toward the implementation of sustainable development projects. A project is sustainable when community members, on their own, are capable of continued production of outcomes for their long-term benefit without assistance from the government or donors.

The beneficiary community is therefore expected to ensure continuity of the project past the implementation period (Olukotun, 2017), through putting sustainability mechanisms before the funding is over. This is done through the building of local community capacity to manage and operate projects on their own, enhanced through community participation in the project (Obar *et al.*, 2017). Externally conceptualized projects may result in project interventions that do not match the needs of the local community, as donors may not have an understanding of the needs of the community (Wanyera, 2016).

Community participation refers to the active involvement of targeted beneficiaries in initiating, planning, implementing, and monitoring the project (Kinyata & Abiodun, 2020). The monitoring and evaluation phase is the final phase where the project's outcomes or results are assessed based on indicators to determine if the project objectives have been realized and if the project interventions have had an impact on the targeted beneficiaries.

The Kenya Equity in Education Project was funded by the Department for International Development and implemented by Windle International Kenya in Kakuma Refugee and Dadaab Refugee camps. The project was initiated to break barriers to girls' education with the objectives of enhancing attendance, retention, performance, and transition. The project was informed by barriers to girls' education such as community preference for boys' education over girls' education, early marriage, high cost of education, which is exacerbated by the extra cost of providing sanitary pads, which adversely affected girls' attendance and performance as they would miss school 4 to 5 days every month. Interventions of the project included Cash Transfers (CT), involving the provision of scholarships for girls to cater for school requirements and other personal needs to facilitate completion of the secondary school; school upgrades aimed at making schools girl-friendly and safe spaces through the construction of dormitories for girls and classrooms to decongest the classes, latrines for girls,

counselling and training of school teachers as lay counsellors, training of school teachers on gender-responsive pedagogy, and provision of grants to schools come up with girl empowerment project. Interventions also included remedial classes targeting girls in primary school from class 6 to class 8 who scored 200 marks and girls in high school with a mean grade of D (plain) or below, and training of PTAs and BOMs on school management (Girls Education Challenge, 2022).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a general overview of project sustainability and critically evaluates previous research on the influence of community participation in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) on project sustainability. It further identifies key knowledge gaps in the existing literature and highlights the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the current study.

The Concept of Project Sustainability

Project sustainability is widely defined as the ability of a project to continue delivering benefits and services to the community after the cessation of external support, including donor funding and technical assistance (Wanyera, 2016; Kozuka et al., 2016). This concept is echoed globally: Kozuka et al. (2016), studying school-based management in Burkina Faso, argue that sustainability is realized when communities can independently maintain project outcomes over the long term. Similarly, Luvega et al. (2015) emphasize that sustainable projects are those in which local stakeholders are empowered for ongoing management and benefit realization, a view shared by Noori (2017) in the context of post-conflict Afghanistan.

The literature consistently compares various dimensions of sustainability. Akumu and Onono (2017) and Baradei and Amin (2016) highlight the importance of financial, technical, managerial, and social sustainability. For example, Nyakwaka and Muronga (2019) found that in Kisumu County, Kenya, technical and managerial training improved

operational sustainability for water projects, but inadequate revenue generation led to project collapse after donor withdrawal. This finding is corroborated by Tengan and Aigbavboa (2017), who, examining construction projects in Ghana, found that technical training alone failed to prevent project failure when resource mobilization was lacking.

Contrasts emerge when examining the degree of community involvement. Studies in Kenya (Wanyera, 2016; Onjolo, 2015) and Nigeria (Obar et al., 2017) reveal that higher community participation in planning, monitoring, and resource mobilization is positively correlated with sustainability. Wanyera (2016) found that community engagement in multiple project stages accounted for nearly 98% of sustainability variation in Nairobi's Kiambu slums. In contrast, Obar et al. (2017) showed that even high participation levels in Nigerian social projects only explained 41.5% of sustainability variance, indicating that context and other variables can mediate the participation-sustainability relationship.

Critically, the literature identifies inconsistencies and challenges. While Barasa and Jelagat (2018) and Nishimura (2017) advocate for building local capacity, they also recognize that resource limitations, dependency on donors, and lack of technical skills impede true sustainability. Kozuka et al. (2016) further critique sustainability efforts in low-income contexts by noting that externally driven projects risk failing if local ownership and capabilities are not sufficiently developed. Furthermore, as highlighted by Noori (2017) and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (2013), project sustainability in fragile and humanitarian contexts faces unique challenges related to instability, shifting populations, and limited institutional frameworks.

Connecting these findings to the current study, it is clear that robust community participation, combined with holistic capacity building and local resource mobilization, is essential for sustainable

outcomes. However, as highlighted by local and global studies, these conditions are difficult to achieve in protracted refugee settings such as Kakuma, underscoring the need for context-specific research on sustainability drivers in education projects for displaced populations.

Participation of Communities in Monitoring and Evaluation

Community participation in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is recognized globally as crucial to project sustainability (Kusek & Rist, 2017; Napier et al., 2020; United States Agency for International Development & American Institutes for Research, 2017). Kananura et al. (2017), examining health projects in Uganda, argue that beneficiaries are well-placed to provide reliable, context-specific assessments of project outcomes, a finding echoed in African (Onjolo, 2015; Nalinya & Luketero, 2017) and Middle Eastern (Noori, 2017) contexts.

Comparative analysis reveals different models and levels of participation. Napier et al. (2020) describe four levels of M&E participation, from passive data provision to active decision-making and indicator selection. In most cases, such as in Bungoma, Kenya (Nalinya & Luketero, 2017), community members are involved in basic monitoring or data collection, while technical M&E tasks remain with project staff due to limited local expertise. Tengan and Aigbavboa (2017) similarly found in Ghana that community involvement in M&E was minimal, particularly for technical or analytical roles.

In contrast, studies that actively build M&E capacity report stronger sustainability outcomes. For example, Kozuka et al. (2016) demonstrated that school-based management projects in Burkina Faso that included community members in M&E decision-making achieved higher educational outcomes and project longevity. Onjolo (2015) found that in Nakuru, Kenya, community participation in monitoring was strongly correlated with project sustainability ($r = 0.707$), while

Wanyera (2016) reported even higher correlations ($r = 0.971$) in Nairobi's informal settlements. These findings are mirrored by Baradei and Amin (2016), who found that meaningful community voice in Egyptian school management boards enhanced project effectiveness and sustainability.

However, several critiques persist. Arnstein's (1969) "ladder of participation" remains relevant, with many projects criticized for superficial engagement, rather than in shaping M&E frameworks or interpreting results (Collins & Ison, 2006; Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Moreover, as Napier et al. (2020) and Noori (2017) point out, projects in resource-constrained or humanitarian settings often lack the time, funding, or institutional stability to build deep community M&E capacity. INEE (2013) and Nishimura (2017) further stress how displacement, trauma, and constantly changing populations in refugee contexts can undermine the process and impact of participatory M&E.

Connecting these insights to the Kenya Equity in Education Project in Kakuma, this study addresses a gap in the literature by empirically examining the quality and depth of community involvement in M&E within a refugee setting. By comparing local findings with regional and international evidence, it highlights the universal challenges of participatory M&E and the unique barriers and opportunities in protracted refugee environments. This expanded perspective is critical for informing future policy and practice in sustainability of education projects in Kenya and similar humanitarian contexts worldwide.

Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically anchored in the Ladder Theory of Participation and Stakeholder Theory to examine the dynamics between community participation and the sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya. The Ladder Theory of Participation, as articulated by Arnstein (1969), conceptualizes participation as a hierarchical

process with varying degrees of citizen involvement, agency, and influence over project outcomes. The theory delineates a continuum from non-participation to full citizen control, emphasizing that authentic and sustained project outcomes are contingent upon higher levels of participation such as partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. In the context of KEEP, this framework illuminates the gradations of community involvement in monitoring and evaluation (M&E), ranging from mere attendance and information receipt to active partnership and decision-making in project processes.

Stakeholder Theory, as advanced by Freeman (1984), complements the Ladder Theory by stating that project sustainability is fundamentally linked to the identification, engagement, and alignment of interests among all relevant stakeholders. This perspective is critical for education interventions in refugee settings, where multiple actors, including parents, teachers, project staff, donors, and the broader refugee community, possess unique interests, resources, and capacities. Effective stakeholder engagement, according to the theory, necessitates the systematic inclusion of these actors in all stages of the project cycle, particularly in monitoring and evaluation (M&E), to foster mutual accountability, resource mobilization, and adaptive management (Mitchell et al., 1997; Brugha & Varvasovszky, 2000).

Integrating these theoretical perspectives, the framework for this study highlights that the sustainability of education projects in humanitarian contexts is a function of the depth of community participation and the breadth of stakeholder involvement. Specifically, it is hypothesized that high levels of community participation in M&E, manifested through active monitoring, feedback provision, and assessment of project activities, enhance project sustainability by cultivating local ownership, improving accountability, and strengthening the alignment of project objectives with community needs. Conversely, limited

participation, or the exclusion of key stakeholders, undermines the project's capacity to endure beyond donor-driven implementation cycles.

In the case of KEEP, the theoretical framework guided the empirical examination of participation patterns and their association with project sustainability outcomes. The findings reveal that while community participation in monitoring was high, evidenced by widespread involvement in performance monitoring, feedback, and facility assessments, the project's sustainability was nonetheless compromised due to cessation of operations post-implementation. This underscores the necessity, as posited by both theories, of institutionalizing participatory mechanisms and embedding stakeholder roles within project governance and resource structures to ensure longevity. The framework thus provides a basis for recommending policy reforms that mandate community representation in project management and require local resource contributions as prerequisites for future donor support.

While the Ladder Theory of Participation and Stakeholder Theory offer valuable frameworks for analyzing community engagement and stakeholder dynamics, each has notable limitations. The Ladder Theory has been critiqued for imposing a linear and hierarchical view on participation, which may not fully capture the nuanced and evolving nature of community involvement in diverse settings (Collins & Ison, 2006; Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Likewise, Stakeholder Theory's broad conceptualization of stakeholders can create ambiguity in stakeholder identification and management, particularly in resource-constrained, multi-actor environments (Friedman & Miles, 2006; Parmar et al., 2010). Nevertheless, their combined use provides structural clarity and inclusivity, enabling a comprehensive analysis of how varying levels and forms of participation contribute to the sustainability of education projects in refugee contexts.

Conceptual Framework

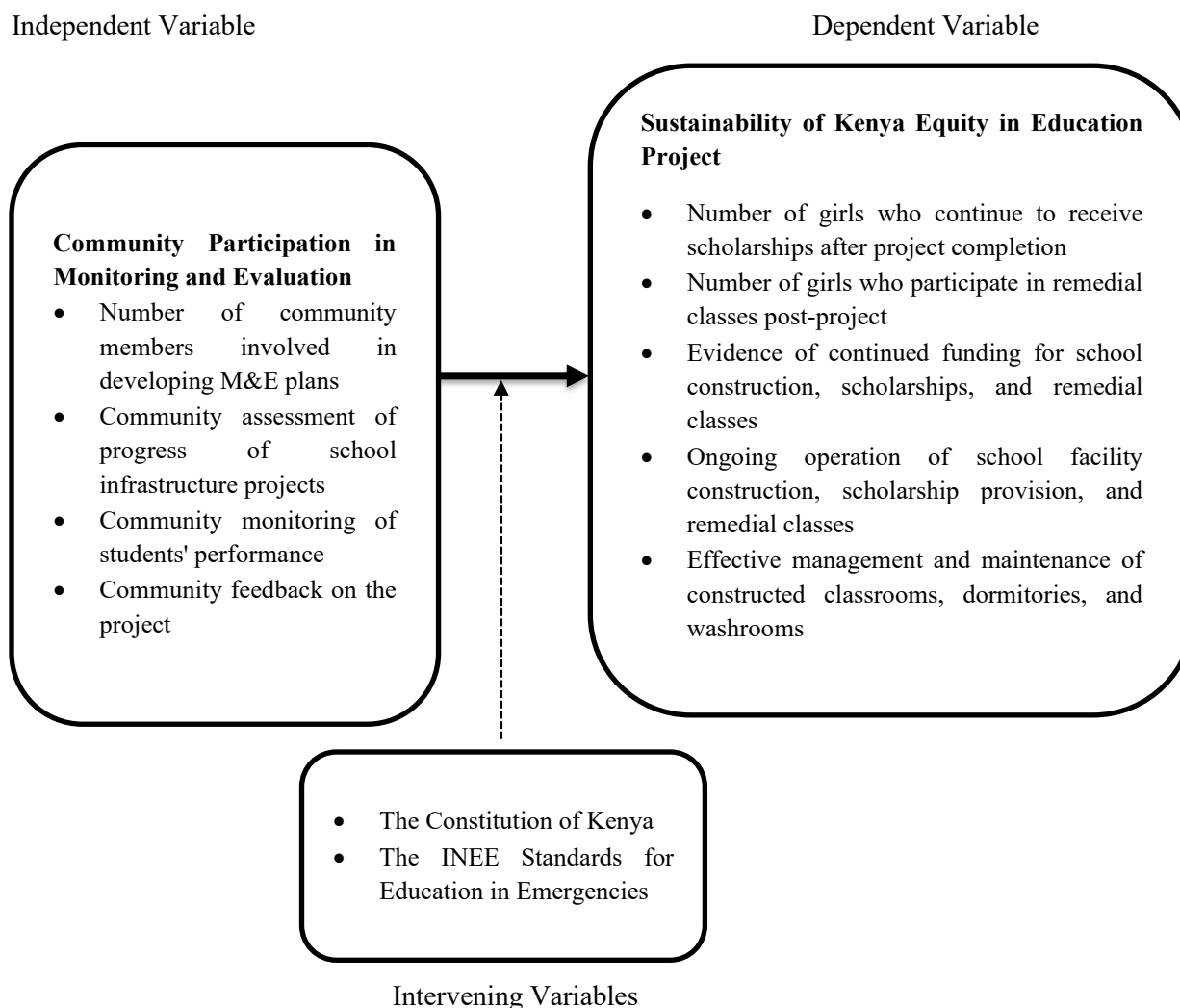
The conceptual framework guiding this study is grounded in the hypothesis that community participation in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plays a critical role in determining the sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP). Community participation in M&E is conceptualized as the independent variable and is measured through several indicators: the number of community members involved in the development of M&E plans, the extent of community assessment of school infrastructure project progress, the degree of community involvement in monitoring students' performance, and the regularity and quality of community feedback on the project. These indicators capture the breadth and depth of community engagement in processes fundamental to project oversight and accountability.

The dependent variable, sustainability of KEEP, is assessed using multiple indicators that reflect the continuation of project benefits and the maintenance of project outcomes beyond the initial funding period. These include the number of girls who continue to receive scholarships after project completion, the number of girls who participate in remedial classes post-project, evidence of ongoing funding for school construction, scholarships, and remedial classes, and the continued operation of school facility construction, scholarship provision, and remedial class initiatives. Furthermore, the effective management and maintenance of constructed classrooms, dormitories, and

washrooms provide tangible evidence of sustained project impact.

The relationship between community participation in M&E and project sustainability is influenced by important intervening variables, most notably the Constitution of Kenya and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Standards. The Constitution of Kenya mandates public participation in governance and development processes, thereby providing a legal framework that supports and legitimizes community engagement in educational projects. Similarly, the INEE Standards offer a normative foundation for community involvement and accountability in education, particularly in emergency and refugee settings like Kakuma.

Within this framework, it is hypothesized that robust and meaningful community participation in M & E processes will lead to greater sustainability of education projects, as evidenced by the ongoing realization of project benefits and proper management of resources. However, the extent and effectiveness of this relationship are also shaped by the broader legal and policy environment, which can either enable or hinder community efforts. Thus, the conceptual framework not only elucidates the direct link between participation and sustainability but also acknowledges the critical role of supportive institutional and policy contexts in achieving lasting educational outcomes in refugee settings. Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive research design, which collects and reports information to provide a snapshot of the state of the phenomenon under study as it is. The design was appropriate for this study as it sought to collect both qualitative and quantitative information to describe the influence of participation on the sustainability of education projects. Quantitative techniques enhanced the collection of data from a representative sample to obtain statistically valid results that were generalized to the wider community in Kakuma Refugee Camp.

This study collected numerical data on the number of community members who participated in different phases of the Kenya Equity in Education Project; estimation of the community's contributions to the KEEP project; determining the number of girls accessing scholarships, attending remedial classes, and school projects undertaken. Quantitative analysis was used to determine the correlation between community participation and project sustainability. Qualitative techniques were useful in collecting data on the community's subjective experience in participation in the KEEP and in-depth descriptions of how participation affects sustainability.

Interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires were used for collecting data. Questionnaires were administered to parents, teachers, and project staff. Focus group discussions were conducted among illiterate parents while interviews were conducted with key informants.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (1967), which is appropriate for a finite population and allows for a 5% margin of error. The

formula is as follows: $n = \left\{ \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \right\}$, where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the margin of error. Applying this formula to a target population of 364 (excluding the three purposively selected key informants) with a margin of error of 0.05 resulted in a sample size of 191. The sample allocation across respondent categories is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Population and Sample Size

Respondents Category	Target	Sample	Percentage (%)
Project Manager	1	1	0.0
Chairperson PTA	1	1	0.0
Education Officer	1	1	0.0
Project staff	20	11	5.5
Teachers	50	26	13.7
Parents	294	154	80.7
Total	367	194	100

To ensure a representative sample, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used. Community members were stratified into project staff, teachers, and parents, with sampling frames obtained from school records. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was applied to select proportionate numbers of project staff, teachers, and parents, ensuring all groups were adequately represented. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants, including the project manager, PTA chairperson, and education officer, due to their specialized roles in KEEP. This approach maximized representativeness and diversity among the study's respondents.

The inclusion criteria for this study required participants to be actively engaged in the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) as key education stakeholders within Kakuma Refugee Camp during the study period. Respondents were selected based on their direct involvement in the administration, implementation, or oversight of the project, and included the project manager, chairperson of the Parents Teachers Association

(PTA), education officer, project staff, teachers, and parents with children enrolled in participating schools. These roles were chosen as they provided diverse yet complementary perspectives on project processes, community participation, and sustainability outcomes. Individuals not occupying these specific roles, or those unavailable during data collection, were excluded to ensure that the data reflected firsthand knowledge and direct experience with KEEP activities. This approach ensured that the final sample represented a comprehensive cross-section of the stakeholders most knowledgeable and relevant to the study objectives.

RESULTS

The objective of this study was to examine the influence of community participation in monitoring and evaluation on the sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project. Community members were therefore required to indicate if they participated in monitoring as well as evaluation of the Kenya Equity in Education Project and how their participation influenced the sustainability of the project. Findings are presented in the

subsequent subsections: Table 2 presents the findings of this study on the involvement of community members in monitoring the Kenya Equity in Education Project.

Table 2: Areas of Community Involvement in Monitoring and Evaluation

Activity /Aspect of Project Monitoring	YES		NO	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Development of a monitoring & evaluation plan	11	6.2%	166	93.8%
Assessing the progress of the construction of the school facilities and amenities	56	31.6%	121	68.4%
Continuously monitoring the performance of girls	170	96.0%	7	4.0%
Providing feedback on the impact of the project on girls' access to education	154	87.0%	23	13.0%

Table 2 shows that the majority of community members participated in monitoring the performance of the girls and providing feedback on the impact of the project on enhancing girls' access to education. However, there was minimal community participation in assessing the progress of the construction of school facilities, and non-participation in developing the M&E plan, as it is only 11 project staff indicated that they participated in developing the M&E plan. Information provided by the project manager indicated that the community was not involved in developing the M&E plan due to their lack of knowledge of the monitoring and evaluation plan. The plan was developed by the project staff led by the M&E unit. The manager also observed that it was only the school project management committees that were involved in assessing the progress of the construction of school facilities.

Teachers continuously monitored the performance of girls in remedial classes by regularly administering continuous assessment tests to determine if their performance was improving or not. Parents were also involved in monitoring the performance of their daughters through regular examinations of their daughters' performance in Continuous Assessment Tests as well as main exams. The parents were actively involved in closely monitoring girls' school attendance. Community volunteers periodically visited girls' homes to assess their needs; monitor their progress, and determine if the parents were using the cash

they received to provide for the needs of the girls. The staff project, on the other hand, periodically collected data from the schools where projects were being implemented to determine if the project had enhanced the retention of girls in the schools, school attendance, and performance. Therefore, while community members were not involved in developing the M&E plan, they were actively involved in monitoring the Kenya Equity in Education project.

According to Napier *et al.* (2020), effective participatory practices in monitoring projects involve consultation and involvement of the beneficiary community in the design and development of M&E plans. However, Kananura *et al.* (2017) observe that involving community members in the designing and developing of monitoring plans is not common due to the technicality involved and the limited knowledge of community members on monitoring. Similarly, Napier *et al.* (2020) observe that the technical nature of the M&E process may limit effective participation in the process. Given the technicality of developing M&E tools, it was not practically feasible to involve community members in developing the plans for monitoring the Kenya Equity in Education Project.

These findings align with those by Nalianya and Luketero (2017), which revealed low levels of participation in technical aspects of M&E and high levels in non-technical activities of the Maternal

Healthcare Projects in Bungoma. According to the study, participation of the community in monitoring maternal projects was high in non-technical areas involving data collection and information provision on the performance of the project. However, there

was minimal participation in technical aspects of M&E where only 16% of community members were involved in data analysis, report writing, and information dissemination.

Table 3: Participation of Communities in Monitoring and Evaluation and Project Sustainability

Statement	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Community members provide an accurate picture of the progress and impact of the Kenya Equity in Education Project as they have a better understanding of how the project has enhanced girls' access to education	4.00	5.00	4.922	.268
The community was involved in assessing the progress of the construction of school facilities and amenities	2.00	5.00	4.255	.599
The community participated in monitoring the performance of girls	1.00	5.00	4.666	1.108
The community was involved in providing feedback on the impact of the Kenya Equity in Education Project in facilitating girls' access to education	1.00	5.00	4.194	.909
Involving the community in monitoring & evaluation enhances their capacity to monitor and evaluate projects on their own and take corrective action to ensure that the project is on track toward achieving its objectives	4.00	5.00	4.944	.229
Aggregate Mean & Std. Dev.			4.596	0.636

An aggregate mean of 4.596 implies that respondents strongly agreed that community participation in monitoring the Kenya Equity in Education Project influenced the sustainability of the project. A standard deviation of 0.636 implies that individual responses clustered closely around the means as they are 0.6 points away from the mean.

Respondents strongly agreed that involving the community in monitoring the performance of girls (Mean=4.666; Std. Dev.=1.108); providing feedback on the impact of the Kenya Equity in Education Project in facilitating girls access to education (Mean=4.194; Std. Dev. =0.909); and assessing the progress of construction of school facilities (Mean=4.255; Std. Dev. =0.599) provides an accurate picture of on progress and impact of Kenya Equity in Education Project as they have a better understanding of how the project has enhanced girls access to education (Mean=4.922; Std. Dev. =0.268). This implies that participatory

monitoring provides an effective and more accurate approach to measuring the progress and impact of the Kenya Equity in Education Project, s it involves teachers who administer tests and exams to the students to assess the progressive performance of the girls. The approach also involves parents of the beneficiaries who are responsible for enrolling the project beneficiaries in schools and can monitor their school attendance daily. Therefore, the two can provide an accurate picture of how the project has enhanced girls' access to education. According to Onjolo (2015), involving the community in monitoring ensures that the project goals and targets are geared towards community needs and expectations. This enhances the community's interest in ensuring that the project is successful and sustainable. Hence, the involvement of the community in monitoring the Kenya Equity in Education Project ensures that the project goals and targets are geared towards enhancing the enrolment, attendance, and performance of girls, which

subsequently enhances the interest of the community in ensuring that the project is successful and sustainable.

Table 3 further shows that respondents also strongly agreed that involving the community in monitoring & evaluation enhances their capacity to monitor and evaluate projects on their own and take corrective action to ensure that the project is on track towards achieving its objectives (Mean=4.944; Std. Dev.=0.229). This implies that participation of the community in monitoring the Kenya Equity in Education project equips community members with practical skills and experience of projects monitored, which enhances their ability to continue monitoring the project on their own beyond the project implementation period. This enables the community to decide on whether the targets of the project are being realized in accordance with plans, and if this is not the case, they can take corrective action to ensure that the projects realize its objectives so that they can continue to benefit from the project for a long period.

A study by Onjolo (2015) established that high levels of participation in the monitoring of projects by 61.2% of community members enhanced the sustainability of school projects. A correlation analysis established that the involvement of the community in monitoring was strongly correlated to project sustainability as indicated by a correlation coefficient of 0.707. Similarly, Wanyera (2016) established that participation by 97.02% of beneficiary households in the monitoring of projects had a strong and positive correlation of 0.971 with project sustainability. A regression analysis revealed that variation by one unit in monitoring and evaluating project results in an increase in project sustainability by 0.189 units. Therefore, involvement of the community in involving the community in monitoring the performance of girls, providing feedback on the impact of the Kenya Equity in Education Project, and assessing the progress of the construction of school facilities may positively influence the sustainability of the project.

DISCUSSIONS

This study found that 96% of community members participated in monitoring the performance of the girls; 87% were involved in providing feedback on the impact of the Kenya Equity in Education Project in enhancing girls' accessibility to education and their academic performance; and 31.6% were involved in assessing the progress of the construction of school facilities. Participatory monitoring and evaluation provided an effective and more accurate approach to measuring the progress and impact of the Kenya Equity in Education Project.

Teachers continuously monitored the performance of girls in remedial classes by regularly administering continuous assessment tests to determine if their performance was improving or not. Parents were also involved in monitoring the performance of their daughters through regular examinations of their daughters'. The parents were actively involved in closely monitoring girls' school attendance. Community mobilizers periodically visited girls' homes to assess their needs; monitor their progress, and determine if the parents were using the cash they received to provide for the needs of the girls. The project staff, on the other hand, periodically collected data from the schools where projects were being implemented to determine if the project had enhanced enrolment of girls in the schools; school attendance, retention, and transition.

However, community members did not participate in developing the M&E plan. It is only the project staff who developed the M&E plan. The community did not participate in developing the M&E plan due to their lack of knowledge in monitoring and the technical nature of the process. The plan was developed by the project staff led by the M&E unit.

Involvement of the community in monitoring the performance of girls, providing feedback on the impact of the Kenya Equity in Education Project, and assessing the progress of construction of school

facilities equips community members with practical skills and experience in monitoring projects, which enhances their ability to continue monitoring the project on their own beyond the project implementation period.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that there were high levels of community participation during the initiation of the Kenya Equity in Education Project and were instrumental in identifying the actual barriers to girls' education factors responsible for their poor performance; and subsequent development of interventions to break the barriers and enhance attendance, retention, transition, and performance.

Minimal participation of the community in the planning phase of the Kenya Equity in Education Project was not sufficient to build the capacity and skills of the community to undertake the planning of development projects on their own without external assistance.

The approach used in funding the Kenya Equity in Education Project did not build the capacity of community members to mobilize resources to continue financing the project when financial support was withdrawn by donors. Participation in school management committees and training in the management of school projects enabled committee members to gain the practical experience and managerial skills required to continue with the management of the Project.

Involving the community in monitoring the performance of girls, providing feedback on the impact of the Kenya Equity in Education Project, and assessing the progress of construction of school facilities equipped community members with practical skills and experience to continue monitoring the project on their own. The Kenya Equity in Education Project was not sustainable as the operations of the project ceased upon the conclusion of the implementation timeframe by Windle International Kenya.

To enhance the sustainability of future projects, Windle International Kenya should ensure that community members or their representatives actively participate in the planning of projects to build their capacity and skills in planning development projects on their own without external assistance. Further, they should train community members on writing funding proposals and management of projects to equip them with skills in resource mobilization to fund community projects and manage projects on their own.

Additionally, it should be mandatory for beneficiary communities to contribute resources through funds; provision of locally available materials; and volunteering labour to inculcate a sense of responsibility in ensuring that the project is successful and sustainable, besides project management team adopting participatory approaches in the implementation of projects in which beneficiary communities are consulted and actively participate in decision making throughout the project. This will promote acceptability and ownership of the project and motivate the community to ensure the project is sustainable.

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