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Original Article

### Influence of Project Planning on Economic Development Projects in Kajiado West Sub County, Kenya

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*Accountability,  
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Project Coordination,  
Project Implementation,  
Project Monitoring and  
Evaluation,  
Project planning.*

Lack of or poor public participation in politics, policy discussions, and the ability to demand accountability of the government is a major deficit of democracy in Kenya. The general objective of the study was to analyse the influence of community participation on economic development projects in the Kajiado West sub-county, Kenya. The variables of interest were to examine the influence of community participation in project planning, project implementation, project monitoring and evaluation, and project coordination on economic development projects. The research methodology was mixed triangulation research which involved the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in data collection, analysis, and data interpretation. The study adopted a descriptive research design to allow the collection of comprehensive data. The target population was 1500 participants out of the entire population of the Kajiado West sub-county, which was approximately 104,376 people as per the 2009 population census. The sample size was 150 respondents from five wards. The collection of data was carried out using questionnaires and interview schedules. Questionnaires were circulated to traders, village elders, religious leaders, and farmers, while structured interviews were conducted with MCAs, chiefs, and assistant chiefs. The qualitative data was analysed using content analysis, while the quantitative data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics entailed mean, standard deviation, and frequencies, while the inferential statistics entailed the person correlation and regression analysis. The study found that community participation in project planning, project implementation, project monitoring and evaluation, and project coordination on economic development projects were positively and significantly associated.

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## INTRODUCTION

The involvement of the community in economic development projects is very beneficial and portrays the democracy enjoyed by the community (Mwei, 2016). However, it becomes a challenge to mobilise people to participate in community projects because there is no guarantee that all the individuals within the community will voluntarily be interested in influencing and executing the direction of the project (Aga et al., 2018). Society can be involved in economic development projects by allowing them in project planning, monitoring, evaluation, implementation, and coordination (Mbui & Wanjohi, 2018).

The project planning process identifies the problems of the community and outlines the number of resources needed to implement the project fully so as to solve the existing problem (Karuti, 2016). Moreover, the plans create boundaries between the management and the external environment by clearly stipulating the content of the project, the estimated time duration, and the management to be involved in the project (Njeru & Kimutai, 2018). More so, the project implementation covers issues such as timeliness of service delivery, the achievement of the set goals, impacts and benefit to the locals, efficiency of the project, social

development, technical implementation, achievement of set goals and capacity-building process management (Ananga et al., 2016).

This overview of Kenya's development strategy indicates that Kenya embraced the economic development paradigm shift (from technocratic trickling down from the 1960s and 1970s to current participatory strategies). Members of the public must be involved from needs identification to implementation processes of the prioritised economic development projects. This enhances greater accountability, thereby minimising misuse of public funds/resources such as the C.D.F and the annual revenue allocation of the national budget, which is all managed by county elected leaders. This research, hence, is focused on analysing the influence of community participation on economic development projects in Kajiado West Sub-county, Kajiado County.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Kiogora (2013) examined the impact of community participation in project planning in Embu County. The data were analysed with the help of inferential and descriptive statistics. The conclusions of the research established that process of project implementation is key, and the community must be

involved both directly and indirectly in project execution. Moreover, when the goals of the project are clearly articulated, high transparency is presented, and with no information asymmetry, the sustainability of both governmental and non-governmental projects is boosted, and they face less resistance from the local members.

Moreover, Maraga et al. (2011) explored the impact of community participation in projects in Nyando. Data was collected from the interviews, standardised questionnaires, and focus group discussions. The sampling method used was a systematic sampling method. A single-family was chosen out of the initial five families. The conclusion of the research revealed that locals were partly engaged in activities of the projects that were taking place in the area. At the point when the respondents were asked whether they were continuously involved in arranging and attending the meeting, more than a half, 54%, of them were never involved in arranging the meetings, and only the influential members in the community were allowed to participate in any of the meetings that were taking place. The less fortunate did not attend the meetings and were not aware of the content of the projects in Nyando.

Besides, Hague et al. (2013) examined whether the individuals in the community were engaged in participating in the management of the projects in Scotland. The findings of the study found that the majority of the community in Scotland were not involved in the planning of any of the projects in the country, and only the rich and the influential were the voice of the larger community in matters to do with the projects. Through communication, individuals can accomplish any responsibility important to sustain the choice taken them. Planning is a very important phase of the project and determines the future status of the projects in the area and whether the community will accept the project or resist it (John, 2018).

Moreover, Njeru and Kimutai (2018) investigated the success and failure of slum upgrading projects in Nairobi. The findings of the study established that, for effective and reasonable improvement to be made, the community, which is the significant recipient of the project, must be among the group mandated with project planning, implementation, the process of procurement, and distribution of the project resources. Despite the significant roles played by the experts, they are only required to be the project facilitators but not the project deciders (Kinyili, 2017). Thus, the plans designed by outside experts, regardless of their specialised soundness, cannot move the general population to take an interest in their implementation plans (UNDP, 2003). Community participation in the village's project in Poland increased its sustainability (Idziak et al., 2015).

Ojwang and Bwisa (2014) determined the importance of locals being involved in the management of CDF projects in the Maragua Constituency. The study established that the management of many projects in the county was not involving many locals in the process of managing the projects and became the reason why many projects failed and were unsuccessful. The only locals who were involved were very few and the majority were outsiders. Moreover, the findings showed that a great execution plan guided and facilitated a successful implementation process throughout different project phases. Successful implementation requires clear, elegantly composed objectives, clear needs, a reasonable game plan, and accentuation of quality control (QC), quality affirmation (QA) and quality improvement (QI) (Woronkiewicz, 2018). A lacking execution plan is the last factor that can undermine a generally effective project development.

Finally, Daluwatte (2019) examined the significance of community-based water projects in Sri Lanka to analyse the effects of the project on the wellbeing and social improvement of the community. The findings of the study revealed that

incorporating the community in the planning process of the activities and making them participate in decisions making positively changed their negative attitude towards the projects and thus supported those projects. The community will feel to be respected and recognised in matters dealing with their lives. Moreover, Njeru and Kimutai (2018) asserted that each program and project should be planned and designed with the goal of increasing the realisation of stakeholders' rights for survival, protection, development, and participation.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is the process through which a researcher establishes a well-designed method of data collection, the instruments to be employed, and the intended means for analysing and interpreting the data collected (Kothari, 2004). A purposive sampling technique was employed. This technique allowed the researcher to select only those respondents who could provide detailed and factual information on the subject concerning the objectives of the study. One thousand five hundred participants were the targeted respondents out of the entire

population of the sub-county. These participants were from five wards and in six specified categories-chiefs assistant chiefs, religious leaders, M.C.A's, farmers, traders, and village elders. The interview guide and questionnaire were used in data collection. Data processing involves recording, editing, coding, classification, transforming and modelling data into information that was used to make decisions and conclusions. The qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. Besides, the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) was used to organise code and generate the quantitative report. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were presented in mean, standard deviation, and frequencies, while the inferential statistics included the Pearson correlation and regression analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Response Rate

The number of questionnaires that were administered to the respondents was 150 out of which 131 questionnaires were duly filled and returned, as presented in *Table 1*.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

| Response  | Returned | Unreturned | Percentage |
|---|----------|------------|------------|
| Politicians-M.C. A's (both current and former)    | 5        | 1          | 83.33      |
| Public administrators-chiefs and assistant chiefs | 9        | 3          | 75.00      |
| Traders   | 39       | 3          | 92.86      |
| Farmers   | 32       | 5          | 86.49      |
| Religious Leaders                                 | 21       | 4          | 84.00      |
| Village elders                                    | 25       | 3          | 89.29      |
| Total   | 131      | 19         |            |

**Source:** (Researcher 2022)

Based on the results presented in Table 3, the response rate of the MCAs was 83.33, chiefs and assistant chiefs 75%, traders 92.86%, farmers 86.49, religious leaders 84%, and village elders 89.29%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) and Kothari (2004), a response rate of above 50% is

adequate for a descriptive study. Babbie (2004) also asserted that return rates of above 50% are acceptable to analyse and publish, 60% is good, and 70% is very good. Based on these assertions from renowned scholars, the response rate from all the

units of observation in the current study was above 70% hence very good for the study.

### Community Participation in Project Planning

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of community participation in project planning on economic development projects in Kajiado west Sub County. The descriptive statistics of community participation in project planning are presented in *Table 2*.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Community Participation in Project Planning**

| Statement   | SA (%) | A (%) | N (%) | D (%) | SD (%) | Mean | Std Dev |
|---|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------|---------|
| In our sub-county, we participate in identifying the economic development projects that will be prioritised and implemented | 4.3    | 13.7  | 11.1  | 32.5  | 38.5   | 3.87 | 1.19    |
| In our sub-county, we are involved in the setting of the project goals  | 6.8    | 12.0  | 8.5   | 20.5  | 52.1   | 3.99 | 1.31    |
| In our sub-county, we participate in the identification of the project's deliverables for economic development projects     | 6.0    | 7.7   | 9.4   | 34.2  | 42.7   | 4.00 | 1.17    |
| In our sub-county, we are involved in the planning of project schedules   | 7.7    | 14.5  | 6.0   | 24.8  | 47.0   | 3.89 | 1.34    |
| In our sub-county, we are involved in the short-term and long-term planning of projects to ensure sustainability            | 5.1    | 13.0  | 7.5   | 23.1  | 51.3   | 4.03 | 1.25    |
| Average   |        |       |       |       |        | 3.96 | 1.25    |

*Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree*

**Source:** (Researcher 2022)

Based on the results depicted in *Table 2*, 71% (32.50%+38.50%) of the total respondents disagreed that they participate in identifying the economic development projects that will be prioritised and implemented, 18.00% (4.30%+13.70%) of the respondents agreed with the statement and 11.10% were neutral. However, the results had a mean score of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 1.19, meaning that most of the respondents disagreed with the statement and their responses varied. Besides, 72.60% (20.50%+52.10%) of the respondents disagreed that they are involved in the setting of the project goals, 18.80% (6.80%+12.00%) agreed with the statement and 8.50% were neutral. The statement had a mean score of 3.99 and a standard deviation of 1.31.

Similarly, 76.90% (34.20%+42.70%) of the respondents disagreed that they participated in the identification of the project's deliverables of economic development projects, 13.70% (6.00%+7.70%) agreed with the statement, and 9.40% were neutral. The statement had a mean score of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 1.17. Also, 71.80% (24.80%+47.00%) of the respondents disagreed they are involved in the planning of project schedules in the county, 22.20% (7.70%+14.50%) agreed with the statement, and 6.00% were neutral. The mean score of the statement was 3.89, with a standard deviation of 1.34.

Furthermore, 74.40% (23.10%+51.30%) of the respondents disagreed they are involved in the short-term and long-term planning of projects to

ensure sustainability in the county, 18.10% (5.10% +13.00%) agreed with the statement, and 7.50% were neutral. The mean score of the statement was 4.03, and the standard deviation was 1.25. The average mean score of the research questions relating to project planning was 3.96, with a standard deviation was 1.25. This implied that the majority of the respondents disagreed with the questions concerning participation in project planning in the sub-county, but their responses varied.

Moreover, in an interview session, assistant chief 2 revealed that *“the majority of the members of the community are not allowed to participate in project identification and planning in the sub-county”*, Assistant Chief 2 [Key Informant, 2020]. Also, MCA 1 noted, *“Members of the community in many instances are side-lined by government and other non-governmental organisation in planning of the projects in the sub-county”* MCA 1 [Key Informant, 2020]. Furthermore, chief 3 established that *“gender mainstreaming is critical in the allocation of available resources and equipment”*, chief 3 [Key Informant, 2020]. According to chief 1, *“locals are not given any priority during the project planning in the sub-county and are only supposed to take what the project management will provide them”*, chief 1 [Key Informant, 2020].

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The model fitness revealed that community participation in project coordination, implementation, planning, monitoring, and evaluation was found to be satisfactory in explaining economic development projects in Kajiado West Sub County. This was supported by the coefficient of determination, also known as the R square of 0.787 (78.7%). This means that community participation in project planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and implementation explained 78.7% of the variations in the dependent variable, which is economic

development projects in Kajiado West Sub County. Besides, the overall model was statistically significant. This was supported by an F statistic of 103.150 and the reported p-value of 0.000, which was less than the conventional probability significance level of 0.05, implying that the independent variables (project planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and implementation) were significant in predicting economic development projects in Kajiado West Sub County.

From the descriptive statistics, the average mean score of the questions in the questionnaire was 3.96. This implied that most respondents disagreed with the questions of community participation in project planning projects in Kajiado west Sub County. Besides, the correlation analysis showed that participation in project planning and economic development projects was positively and significantly associated ( $r=.702$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Similarly, community participation in project planning was positively and significantly related to economic development projects ( $\beta=.188$ ,  $p=0.002$ ). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 3.183, which is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. This meant that a unitary increase in participation in project planning led to an increase in economic development projects by 0.188 units holding other factors constant. The results were in agreement with the findings of Njeru and Kimutai (2018), who established that project planning, implementation, the process of procurement and distribution of the resources of the projects improved the performance and efficiency of the projects. Also, Woronkowitz (2018) reported that successful implementation of the projects requires clear objectives, clear needs, a reasonable game plan and accentuation on quality control, quality affirmation and quality improvement.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that community participation in project planning and

economic development projects was positively and significantly associated. Besides, the study concludes that there existed a positive and significant relationship between participation in project planning and economic development projects. Moreover, the study concludes that ways of community participation in project planning include the community identifying the economic development projects that will be prioritised and implemented, involvement in the setting of the project goals, participation in the identification of the project's deliverables of economic development projects, planning of project schedules and involvement in the short term and long-term planning of projects to ensure sustainability.

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