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Monitoring and Evaluation Systems and Performance of Non-Governmental Organization Projects: A Case of AMREF Health Africa, Nairobi Kenya

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Abstract:

The performance of evaluation and monitoring of projects has been realized to be so warranted and necessary. However, a concern has been put forth for making consideration of the factors that influences evaluation and monitoring of projects in non-governmental companies, especially AMREF Health Africa that has lots of resources and projects to execute. The performance of AMREF Health Africa projects has not been implemented up to the required standards in various dimensions. For this reason, the purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of monitoring also evaluation on the performance of projects carried out by AMREF Health Africa. The general objective of this research study was the determination of M&E systems and the performance of non-governmental organization projects, a case of AMREF Health Africa. The specific goals of the survey were to determine the level of participation of stakeholders in monitoring also evaluation, availability of resources for M&E, and how the cost of implementing monitoring and evaluation affected the performance of projects implemented by AMREF Health Africa. The study also monitored the routine for monitoring and evaluation at AMREF Health Africa and its return on their projects. Theory of Change, Results theory, and Stakeholders' theory helped in guiding through this project. The research design that was implemented in this study was a descriptive research design that targeted six project activities and programs currently being undertaken by AMREF Health Africa. The researcher made use of the questionnaires to collect data whereby pilot study was used to collect data. Questionnaire's validity test was achieved by considering the research instrument's content, made by the supervisor. The collected data was analyzed with the use of computer based statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) in conjunction with the descriptive analysis. A summary was made in form of tables for easy interpretation and inference. The researcher found out from the study that the research variables; competency levels and participation of stakeholders had positive correlation with the performance. Cost of Monitoring and Evaluation system on performance as well portrayed a positive correlation. This study recommended that similar study involving the determination of systems for monitoring and evaluation and the performance of projects should be conducted in other non-governmental organizations. The survey can be based in Kenyan non-governmental organizations such as the United States Agency for International Development, World Vision, Care International, Amnesty Care International, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, and many others.

Keywords: Monitoring and evaluation, monitoring and evaluation systems, non-governmental organizations, AMREF health Africa, stakeholders, budgetary allocation, performance, stakeholders participation, level of training

1. Introduction

Monitoring and evaluation systems serve a significant part in the development of Non-Governmental organizations in Kenya. Monitoring is the act or process of keeping track of all project-related activities, as stated by (World Bank, 2006). It states that project team performance, project task duration, identification of potential risks, necessary actions to be taken to ensure that projects become successful, and is completed within its scope (budget and specific deadlines). According to John and Khilesh (2008), project monitoring entails having internal and external accountability of resources used it task completion to promote beneficiaries. Evaluation is a systematic assessment/rating of either ongoing or completed project activities with the reason of determination of the relevance of achievements of efficiency, objectives, and sustainability (Peter, 2009). This justifies that evaluation plays a significant role in ensuring a high level of performance and efficiency of tasks being executed for longer sustainability.

NGOs play an essential role in the development of various sectors in Kenya that cannot be assumed. For the past 30 years or so, there have been tremendous developments experienced in developing countries. One of the primary reasons behind these developments is the existence of NGOs that have come to grow in large numbers. Non-Governmental organizations have taken the actions of participating in project activities that governments have failed to provide to citizens (Leyton, 2008). Most of the individuals in these countries prefer to work in NGOs to government organizations and

institutions. NGOs have gone ahead to provide a conducive working environment and providing better value for money in reaching marginalized people in developing countries (Meyer, 2012). Monitoring and Evaluation system is essential in making informed choices on operations management and service delivery (Potolias, 2013). Monitoring also evaluation is vital in Kenya's development in regards to the internal agreements promoting performance aids with the increased number of rising of different NGOs in Kenya. The government has highly appreciated monitoring roles and evaluation in developing non-governmental organizations projects since it is significant for national development. Monitoring and evaluation is a complex task that requires discipline, intensive skills, and knowledge. Therefore, it is appropriate for non-governmental companies to come up with an effective M&E system that will be informative on how all the tasks need to be carried out. M&E system for the NGOs based in, Africa needs to be comprised of; appropriate standards, effective planning strategies, accountability, which makes it simple in carrying out monitoring and evaluation effectively (Nuguti, 2010). Effective monitoring and evaluation influence all the Non- governmental organizations' decisions, especially at the management level, affecting service delivery.

Different donors fund several non-governmental organizations in Kenya. At times, donors give out the pressure of monitoring and evaluating the level of work performed by these NGOs. There are no set rules that should be governing the operations and performance of NGOs in Kenya. Non-Governmental organizations have, therefore developed different mechanisms for effective monitoring and evaluation for sustainability (Prakash, 2011).

Despite the rise of different Non-Governmental organizations in country Kenya, they are facing various challenges that hinder them from developing effective project M&E systems. One of the significant challenges which is faced by these non-governmental organizations, is a financial challenge. Financial difficulties have led to retardation in conducting surveillance and evaluations. For monitoring and evaluation to be effective, NGOs need to develop a detailed and structured report for Monitoring and Evaluation that can help in changing their practices. This becomes a challenge whenever an NGO lacks enough monetary funds. Evaluation process gives a presentation of several organizations experiencing challenges; rectifying such challenges may need the non-governmental organizations to experience the painful process of change which may entail methodological and theoretical difficulties (Askari, 2011).

The level of technology serves a significant role in monitoring and evaluating in execution of NGO projects in Kenya. The Non-Governmental organization established most of the mobile and website-based monitoring and evaluation techniques. Technology quickens monitoring and evaluation processes and ensures efficiency in keeping track of all the project activities. The Academy developed website-based M&E systems for Education Development in collaboration with the Advantech Consulting. These two obtained the funds from the Rockefeller foundation, launched in 2012. Since then, it has been found that execution of manual monitoring also evaluation is more hectic, therefore use of mobile and web-based monitoring and evaluation is more efficient for Non-Governmental organizations.

2. Review of Literature

This topic has been widely researched on before however this specific study was keen on making an assessment of the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation systems towards the project performance of non-governmental organizations. Chapter two provides highlight of relevant literature towards the importance of Monitoring and Evaluation systems on the performance of non- governmental organizations projects. This chapter examines the monitoring and evaluation structure, social capacity skills, data quality, performance and evaluation methods, and literature review summary. The variables covered in this section included, competency in monitoring and evaluation, stakeholders' participation, cost and budget allocation and timelines for monitoring and implementation systems.

2.1. Theoretical Review

On this project I majored on two main theories which guided me through it all. The theory of change; this theory was formulated by Stein and Valters in the 1900s. The theory of change is implemented through the execution of complex problems related to the project matter. Theory of change provides a clear outline of ancient as well as changes on the recent times which are required to attain the lengthy term set goals (Georges, 2007). This theory provides description of the changes responsible for planning execution and assessment of project activities. As highlighted by (Weiss, 1995), the theory of change comes alongside conditions that project activity is required for it to succeed. These conditions consist of data quality, effective project management leadership, and appropriate project management planning. With these conditions, the theory of change justifies that the project activities will proceed with many problems.

The second theory is the theory of results; this is a theoretical approach that was provided by Joley in 2003. Results theory urges the management and project implementers to be result oriented. This notion focuses on the essentiality of project leaders within the non-governmental organizations to be focused on the measurements of the project results since the end justifies the means. It is believed that this theory forms part of a tool that generates good results at the conclusion of the project operations. This theory will be relevant to ensure that at the end of the monitoring as well as evaluation system, effective results will have been obtained and will be significant to the organizations. Many organizations have applied results theory as a tool for guideline and execution of their project activities in order to focus on the results for the betterment of the final output. This theory plays an important role in developing guidelines for comprehensive project activities on monitoring as well as evaluation. This theory has been used by numerous other diverse non-governmental organizations to help in providing guidelines for effective project results. Therefore, the results theory is highly relevant towards providing information needed in formulating plans and ways of executing the Monitoring and Evaluation systems to enhance project performance activities at AMREF Health Africa and production of better results.

2.2. Empirical Review

Different studies have been conducted regarding factors contributing towards the performance of projects through adoption of the monitoring and evaluation systems.

Author	Focus of Study	Findings of the Research	Knowledge Gap
Nuguti (2013). Journal for Evaluation: Programs, policies and Practices	Evaluation and Implementation Handbook: Programs, Policies and Practices	The researcher found out that evaluation policies and programs need to be carried out for each and every project under execution	Future studies should be done on the different policies guiding different projects during the implementation process
Agutu (2014)	Development of Capacity Evaluation: Training and Teaching Activities	The study found out that implementation of monitoring to full capacities require prior teaching and training to the project managers	A study needs to be done on extent to which teaching and training of M&E systems have got impacts on the project success
Rivera, K., & Lima, (2010)	Problems faced in the Evaluation of M&E Process	This study discovered that the challenges encountered during implementation of M & E systems need to be actualized to breed greater benefits to the organizations	A research study needs to be carried out on ways to cope up with the incoming challenges during project implementation using M & E systems
Prakash, H. (2014).	Reasons behind adoption of Monitoring and Evaluation systems in Education sector in Kenya	This study was able to identify factors such as proper leadership skills and data quality as factors influencing implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems in organizations	Studies need to be done on the challenges countering the factors influencing the implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems during project implementation
Trochim (2013).	Early warnings on factors influencing status of community based organizations.	This research paper highlighted on the indicators that need to be taken care of before negatively influencing project performance in an organization	Future study to be carried out on other how to realize on the project management indicators especially in the implementation of M & E systems
Nyandemo, S. N. & Singh, D. K., (2013).	Elements of Monitoring and Evaluation Planning and Implementation	This paper gave out a description on the needs for project planning, M&E	Future studies need to be carried out on the activities that need to be done during planning, evaluation and implementation of project activities using M & E systems
Banice (2015)	Project development and monitoring systems	This study realized the importance of carrying out organizational projects with implementation of M&E systems. The study realized a difference in implementation of M&E systems in project and without implementation	A future research study to be done to measure the level of difference in determining project scope with and without implementation of M & E systems
Mackay, K. R., & World Bank. (2007)	Building Monitoring and Evaluation systems to support better government	This paper found out the value of building M&E systems to support on the implementation of government projects	A future study to be carried out on the support of monitoring and evaluation systems on non- governmental projects in comparison to the government projects
Shapiro, J. (2014).	Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation systems implementation	This study justified on the importance of M&E systems in project implementation within organizations.	Future studies need to be made to highlight on the benefits of monitoring and evaluation systems implementation in organizational projects
Scriven, M. (2010).	Reflections of the Evaluation Process, Views, Influences and Theories	This study was based on theory explaining the importance of implementing M&E systems during project implementation	More theories need to be formulated in future to provide further description on how to go about implementing M&E systems in government and non- governmental projects

Table 1: Empirical Review

3. Research Methodology

I applied different research approaches during my study:

3.1. Research Design

From Creswell (2014), research design is a framework of approaches that researchers prefer to effectively tackle problems in research. The main work of a research design is to act as a bridge between objectives in research, questions of study, empirical studies, recommendations and conclusions of a given study. It is invented to give out a clear outline on how the findings should be provided as per the population of study (Bernauer, 2015). The study applied descriptive surveys as section of the research approach. It is worth noting that it will try to provide accurate details (Mugenda, Mugenda, 1999). The researcher found this method effective in connection of data on the influence of monitoring as well as evaluation system on the performance of projects of AMREF Health Africa. The researcher required participants to offer responses on the study. This research design was preferred because it gave the respondents on both why and how questions and giving explanations on what questions. This design gave a provision for the collection of data consisting of both qualitative and quantitative data with the use of the research instrument.

3.1.1. Target Population

From Ngechu (2011), a target group represents a collection of people upon which research revolves around. Mostly this definition comprises a description to suit particular subject upon which the research is about. Mugenda, (2003) opens that a study sample population comprises cases alongside facets that have pertinent information that researchers are interested in whereby they gain samples of making observations. The population in this research consisted of the AMREF projects that are under implementation for the last two years. The distribution of the target population is as below:

Strata Project Activities	
Water, Hygiene and Sanitation Program	1
Capacity Building Program	1
Disease Control and Prevention Program	1
Reproductive, Maternal and Child born program	1
Non-communicable disease control program	1
Health Systems and strengthening program	1
Total	6

Table 2: Target Population Distribution

Source: Human Resource Department, Amref Africa (2019)

3.2. Data Collection Instrument

We preferred the use of questionnaire as an instrument that was to be deployed by the researcher in this study. Questionnaires provide survey methods that apply standardized questions provided to groups or individuals upon which results can be considered, compared, and contrasted (Trochim, 2006). It is cost effective and can be used to get to wider population as compared to interviews since it also reduces bias among the interviewers. Its limitations are clarity issues, low response rates, literacy issues among others. The project management committee administered the questionnaires at AMREF Health Africa. There were open-ended and closed questionnaires which respondents filled. There were two sections; A and B in the questionnaire. Questionnaire a included background details on the company's profile in the form of years or ownership and part B incorporated structured queries regarding the influence of evaluation and monitoring. The researcher used the data attained from questionnaires which helped in attaining conclusion for this research.

3.2.1. Validity Test of Research Instrument

Kothari (2008) defines instrument as the relevance and validity of inferences that researchers attach to findings. In order to get enough content validity, Kothari (2008) believes that the expert judgmental approach is fundamental in questionnaires whereby they are given to supervisors who should be tasked with evaluating and providing feedback and comments to the researcher.

4. Findings and Discussion

My major focus in this chapter is to highlight the findings obtained based on each variable being monitored by the study. Above topic towards this study was mainly to make an assessment of the monitoring and evaluation systems and performance of projects at AMREF Health Africa. The objectives that guided this study were: determining the level by which human participation of stakeholders in M & E system have an influence on the project performance; to assess the how cost of monitoring and evaluation systems influence project performance at AMREF; to determine the influence of competency levels in monitoring and evaluation systems on project performance. This study also considered determining the impact monitoring as well as evaluation timelines towards the achievement of AMREF Health Africa.

The researcher adopted descriptive survey as a research design in this study. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from the study population. The analysis of obtained data was through descriptive statistics which involved having a determination of the frequencies from tables, obtaining the average values and standard deviations. Implementation of both linear and multiple regression followed together with the variance analysis which helped in the determination of the link existing between the study variables. Analysis of the collected data was through statistics, basically descriptive which involved assessing the frequency levels based on the tables. Out of this, tables mean average

values and standard deviations were determined. Linear and basic multiple regression was adopted by the study together with variance analysis to help in assessing the existing link between the variables of study.

From the analysis of the objectives of the study, the study determined a significant relationship between the project performance in AMREF Health Africa and competency levels. The study identified that competency levels in monitoring and evaluation affects performance of non-governmental organizations projects to great extent. The study identified that high frequency of training and possessing a lot of knowledge was found to be of importance in improving the project performance at AMREF Health Africa.

Regarding the participation of stakeholders, it was identified by the study that the attitude and competence of stakeholders towards the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation system are vital towards project success carried out at AMREF Health Africa. The financial contributions and frequency of participation of stakeholders at AMREF Health Africa have geared progress towards the achievement of ongoing projects. This study also determined that costs incurred during monitoring and evaluation systems have significant effects on the project performance at MREF Health Africa.

Further, it was identified by the study that cost of monitoring and evaluation affects the performance towards projects to a greater extent. The study determined that cost implications and proper laydown of the M & E budget was found to be of great significance towards project success at AMREF Health Africa.

5. Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

The study found out that competency levels in Monitoring and Evaluation systems affect project performance in AMREF Health Africa to great extent. The majority of the respondents concurred with the fact that a high level of competency in monitoring and evaluation systems forms the background of project success. This study, therefore, recommends that investment in the training of project committee members on monitoring and evaluation systems at AMREF Health Africa should be made regularly. This will enable the committee members to be well equipped with the relevant knowledge on monitoring and evaluation systems that will achieve long term project success at AMREF.

5.1. Conclusions

This study concluded that competency levels in Monitoring and Evaluation systems affect project performance in non- governmental organizations to great extent. The survey can conclude that staff members at AMREF have been well trained on the concepts of monitoring and evaluation, thereby increasing their efficiency, hence led to improved project performance at AMREF Health. The study identified that skills acquired by employees at AMREF enabled staff to participate well in project monitoring and evaluation hence recorded positive influence towards the project performance of the non-governmental organization. The training on monitoring and assessments has made it possible for the employees to contribute towards project success at AMREF.

In relation to human participation of stakeholders, the study identified that participation of stakeholders affected project performance in AMREF Health Africa to great extent. This study concluded that participation of stakeholders in monitoring and implementation is of high importance towards project performance at AMREF Health Africa. This indicated that the involvement of stakeholders towards the implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems plays a significant role in the achievement of project success. The levels of stakeholders' participation were identified by this study to be determining the level of project success at AMREF and therefore are significant. The study also concluded that the more the stakeholders engage in monitoring and evaluation systems, the increase in the chances of project success at AMREF Health Africa.

The study concluded that cost of implementing monitoring and evaluation system affects project performance in AMREF Health Africa to great extent. The study concluded that the Monitoring and Evaluation Budget helps in easier facilitation of project activities and hence contributed towards project success as at AMREF Health Africa. The study also concluded that preparation of the budget for monitoring and evaluation system is relevant towards gearing compelling project performances at AMREF Health Africa. Further, the study made a conclusion that cost implications and proper laydown of the M & E budget is of significance towards project success at AMREF Health Africa.

5.2. Policy Implications

The discussion in this chapter is to highlight the findings obtained based on each variable being monitored by the study. Above topic towards this study was mainly to make an assessment of the monitoring and evaluation systems and performance of projects at AMREF Health Africa. The objectives that guided this study were: determining the level by which human participation of stakeholders in M & E system have an influence on the project performance; to assess the how cost of monitoring and evaluation systems influence project performance at AMREF; to determine the influence of competency levels in monitoring and evaluation systems on project performance. This study also considered determining the impact monitoring as well as evaluation timelines towards the achievement of AMREF Health Africa.

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Further, it was identified by the study that cost of monitoring and evaluation affects the performance towards projects to a greater extent. The study determined that cost implications and proper laydown of the M & E budget was found to be of great significance towards project success at AMREF Health Africa.

The researcher found out that evaluation policies and programs need to be carried out for each and every project under execution. Evaluating policies helps in meeting the project goals. It is important to monitor the project process so as to identify the adjustments that are meant to be done in subsequent research. Documenting these projects is beneficial to next researchers and also continuing with the company's practice and theory. The study found out that implementation of monitoring to full capacities requires prior teaching and training to project managers. Monitoring of projects measures the progress both financially and physically. When the inputs and the outputs of a project are well stated, the subsequent researchers get to understand what is to be used and what needs to be implemented in order to achieve better.

This study discovered that the challenges encountered during implementation of M & E systems need to be actualized to breed greater benefits to the organizations.

This study was able to identify factors such as proper leadership skills and data quality as factors influencing implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems in organizations. When projects are conducted under good leadership and management, it is easier to account for all resources availed for the research. Roles are effectively played under proper leadership and management in running projects. When good leadership is observed, it becomes easier to have a guideline of activities for future projects when targeting advanced results as well as furthering the project research. This research paper highlighted on the indicators that need to be taken care of before negatively influencing project performance in an organization.

This paper gave out a description on the needs for project planning, M&E. Project planning gives an overview of what the researchers are up to and what exactly they want to achieve after the project. This may turn out helpful to other researchers who would like to do further research on the same. It gives them a sense of direction on doing similar research.

This study realized the importance of carrying out organizational projects with implementation of M&E systems. The study realized a difference in implementation of M&E systems in project and without implementation. Carrying out organizational projects enables proper implementation of project activities whereby members interact freely. These team based structures focus on enabling team work with minimal conflicts and disruptions. This in return gives future researchers a guide on what is expected when furthering their research. Minimal interferences enable maximization of available time for best results.

This paper found out the value of building M&E systems to support on the implementation of government projects.

This study justified on the importance of M&E systems in project implementation within organizations. This study was based on theory explaining the importance of implementing M&E systems during project implementation

5.3. Limitation and Future Research

This research study was done with the mind of overcoming all the kinds of constraints that may be present. The researcher faced prejudiced and inaccurate information from participants either because to misunderstanding of questions, fear and lack of clear comprehension of the research field that is not extensively covered in Kenya. Principally, the researcher overcame this by self-providing the interviews and pilot understanding the research instrument to check any fallacy and to make right any irregularities subsequent to disseminating the final instrument to the respondents of the study. The other possible limitation was the fact that other AMREF health African employees were reluctant to provide information about the organization and the variables under investigation. This was observed since there was a fear of being victimized for providing ill comments concerning the performance of the organization. Limitation of finances was done away with by minimizing the operation costs and all the expenditures by designing simple questionnaires which are open-ended direct to the points and are printed on both sides.

This research study was keen towards assessing the effects on adopting the use of monitoring and evaluation system on performance of projects at AMREF Health Africa. This study implemented a descriptive research design for 11 months (July 2019-April, 2020); this duration is not sufficient in fully establishing the determination of monitoring and evaluation systems and performance of non-governmental organization projects. A case of AMREF Health Africa. Carrying out a similar study would be appropriate for a longer time, maybe 5 years with the same research design to assess the effects of monitoring and evaluation systems on the performance of projects at AMREF Health Africa. On the other hand, other research designs such as longitudinal research design would be implemented in the future studies to monitor the same variables.

A similar study involving the determination of M & E systems and project performance of non-governmental organization projects should be conducted in other non-governmental organizations. The survey can be based in Kenyan NGOs such as the United States Agency for International Development, World Vision, Care International, Amnesty Care International, International Rescue Committee, Save the Children, and many others. Out of this, the researcher will be able to compare the findings whereby a convincing conclusion can be arrived at.

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