



**ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF TECHNICAL EXPERTISE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF CDF PROJECTS IN
BALAMBALA CONSTITUENCY, GARISSA COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The implementation phase of a project is composed of more than half of the project work. Balambala Constituency is one of Kenyan constituencies exemplified with criticism on the implementation of CDF (Constituency Development Fund). This study bridged the gap created in the CDF projects implementation stage and to identify the problem leading to pending projects. Studies have found out that expert involvement in projects have a positive impact on successful project completion. The study therefore established the impact of technical expertise on the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency. The study employed quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used for data collection by use of random sampling method. The respondents were people of Balambala Constituency. The target population was 93,029 citizens, one resident engineer, and five monitoring and evaluation staff. The study sample size was 228 respondents. Data collected was analyzed using tables, percentages and measures of central tendency and also correlation and regression statistics. The findings indicated that training is satisfactory to most of the CDF officers. They also indicated that CDF officials always and often use the skills gained in trainings to solve the CDF kitty issues. That indicates that technical expertise has a positive impact on CDF monitoring and evaluation in Balambala Constituency. It was also confirmed in the interview findings that indicated that technical expertise in monitoring and evaluation influenced the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency.

Key word: CDF, Technical Expertise, Implementation of Projects, Monitoring and Evaluation

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INTRODUCTION

Spending on human resource with appropriate skills and understanding is a valuable task in project monitoring and evaluation. Competent employees increase the productivity of the available resources. Whereas some organizations prefer investing primarily on human resource, it has been shown that success begins at the point of resource deployment, and thus resources have to be allocated strategically throughout the implementation plan. The worth of technical expertise is determined in line with the agenda of the project to ensure spending in the development of employees' ability is equal to the resources value.

The expert boundary of the relationship in top assessments, the investment and esteem of its human resource in the course of developing approaches, and their enthusiasm to influence adoptions, can be great dictators of how the instructions of evaluation are passed, conveyed, and viewed (Vanessa and Gala, 2011). One of the great parts of increasing expert skills and reducing restrictions is the real valid centering on the staff to improve their work, either as an individual or as an affiliation adherent. Pearce and Robinson (2004) assert that association together with extensive wants, after the open entrance can lead to obvious outcome of improved production by an employee. Evaluation should be more of importance and free. Self-efficiency is practiced when it is done by individuals and teams free of regulation of the people responsible for the plan and use of the succession negotiation (Gaarder and Briceno, 2010). Hulme (2000) shows that it is important to be rational on the suitable methodologies for the clients' needs, given the issues and setting of data, market, and standard.

Problem Statement

Since CDF was launched in Kenya, people have been complaining about the projects' outcome as they do not benefit from them. Usually, CDF projects take

longer than projected, and the beneficiaries get unsatisfactory results or the resources are not used satisfactorily. Most projects are deserted in the completion stage. Balambala Constituency is one of the Kenyan constituencies exemplified with criticism of the use of CDF (Constituency Development Fund, 2011). The National Monitoring and Evaluation System report of 2009/2010 indicates that it is not easy to efficiently determine whether the monitoring and evaluation of CDF projects are completed as per the requirements of the exercise.

Although research has been conducted on the CDF projects' implementation, it has mainly centered on the problems facing CDF project implementation. There are limited studies focusing on the role experts' play on implementation of CDF projects. This study bridged the gap by establishing the impact of technical expertise on the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency in Garissa County.

Research Objective

To establish the impact of technical expertise on the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency.

Research Question

How does technical expertise impact the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency?

The Scope of the Study

This study particularly established the impact of technical expertise on the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency, Garissa County. It was conducted between July and September of 2021. The study was anchored on path diagram theory. The theory formed the basis of the theoretical framework. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methods to study stakeholders, project officials, and project engineers of CDF projects in Balambala constituency.

Conceptual Framework

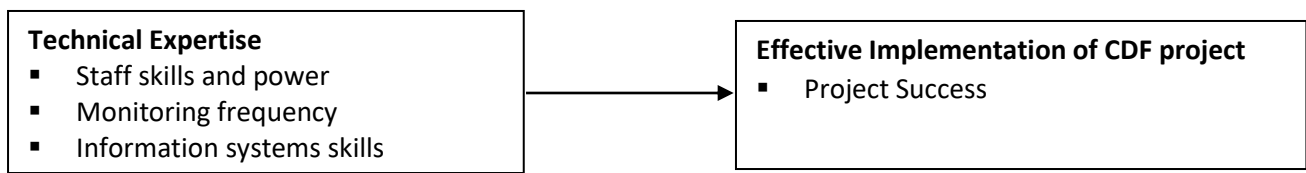


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2022)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Path Diagram Theory

Path diagram theory was developed by Weiss (1972). The theory is prescribed using path graphs to indicate the categories of projects between the mediations of a project and the preferred outcomes. Such type of easy going model assists the assessor to differentiate the variables to integrate in the assessment, establish the points at which the chains of opportunities separates, and remain open to adjustments in the project implementation that may impact the outlined illustration of the model.

Monitoring and evaluation are individually related efforts of in organization confines and as required, there is high confusion in trying to influence them to control diversion. Monitoring and evaluation are obvious, but vital. Crawford and Bryce (2003) disprove the use of monitoring and evaluation as it stipulates looking particularly without creating reasonable modification between them. Jones et al. (2009) asserts that to complete monitoring and evaluation rationally, there are important aspects that have to be considered, including good procedures, straightforwardness, and attractive resources, with a specific decisive objective of quality. Here, the resources are such as money related resources and competent human resource.

Empirical Literature

In a study by Zainabu (2008), it was established that self-help projects have performed poorly because of lack of employee capacity development. Zainabu

(2008) thus stresses that well developed employees can evaluate the path of a project while looking at both internal and external factors, thus amending any deviation noted. Through job trainings, PMCs can execute different projects, an approach that can please the stakeholders.

Lavender (2002) claims that often introducing diversity to the market and developing client trust and loyalty is valuable to a company. She also comments that diversity is not only the creation of diverse goods, but it can also be realized by basic value addition, when the value of a produce is changing. Kuen et al (2008) conducted a study in which they inferred that major factors impact a project's success. The factors identified were such as support from the management, having a clear project mission, and the capability of the project staff. A proficient project team with suitable skills and qualification is important for the accomplishment of a project.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed quantitative and qualitative methodologies using descriptive research design. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used for data collection by use of random sampling method. The respondents were from all the 5 assembly wards of Balambala constituency. The target population was 93,029 citizens, one resident engineer, and five monitoring and evaluation staff. The study sample size was 228 respondents. To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire in the study, a test-retest was used. Before embarking on the study, the researcher sought an introduction letter from the University Ethical committee

together with a permit for research from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation. Additionally, the researcher obtained authorization from the county and national offices of concern. Data collected was analyzed using tables, percentages and measures of central tendency and also correlation and regression statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Effectiveness of training for CDF monitoring and evaluation team

Statement	Always		Often		sometimes		Not at all	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Staff competence is treated with importance	8	57%	3	22%	2	14%	1	7%
Staff trainings are organized	3	22%	9	64%	1	7%	1	7%
Officers treat trainings with importance	1	7%	4	29%	8	57%	1	7%
Officials apply skills gained in trainings to solve CDF kitty issues	2	14%	9	64%	3	22%	-	0%

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 1 shows that 8 (57%) respondents indicated that staff competence is treated always treated with importance, 3 (22%) indicated it is often treated with importance, 2 indicated sometimes it is treated with importance and 1 indicated it is not treated with importance. On the organization of staff training, 3 (22%) indicated always organized, 9 (64%) stated they are often organized, 1 (7%) indicated sometimes are organized, and 1 (7%) stated they are not organized. In the case of officers treating training with importance 1 (7%) indicated they are always treated with importance, 4 (29%) indicated often, 8 (57%) indicated sometimes, and 1 (7%) indicated they are not treated with importance at all. 2 (14%) indicated that officials apply the skills gained in training to solve CDF kitty issues, 9 (64%) indicated often, 3 (22%) indicated sometimes, while none indicated not at all.

The quantitative results from Table 1 were compared to the qualitative findings reported through interviews. The interviewees indicated that technical expertise in monitoring and evaluation is important in influencing the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency. They explained

398 questionnaires were distributed to the CDF beneficiaries and 20 questionnaires were distributed to the officials. 346 (87%) beneficiaries and 14 (70%) CDF officials returned their dully filled questionnaires. The overall response rate for the study was 88%.

To determine if training for CDF monitoring and evaluation team was effective, the CDF officials were asked to rate statements related to training. The findings were presented in Table 1.

that to conduct monitoring and evaluation, staff needs exceptional skills and abilities. Therefore, training of monitoring and evaluation staff is important in building their skills in monitoring and evaluation. The interviewees noted;

Experience of the monitoring and evaluation workers increases with time as they respond to different changing needs of the population. Training are organized and emphasized in Balambala constituency. The monitoring and evaluation team members have to attend training to be considered for the position in the team [KI 02].

The informant also explained that the experience of the members is also considered where it was noted that some members may lack high education levels but have gained skills through training and experience through the years of working in CDF projects in the Constituency.

Summary of the Findings

It is evident that Balambala constituency has qualified CDF officials who engage in monitoring and evaluations. It is also evident that the officers are often trained as staff competence is treated with importance. However there are few officials who feel that competence is treated with importance sometimes and not always. The findings indicated that training is satisfactory to most of the CDF officers. They also indicate that CDF officials always and often use the skills gained in trainings to solve the CDF kitty issues. That indicates that technical expertise has a positive impact on CDF monitoring and evaluation in Balambala Constituency. That is confirmed in the interview findings that indicated that technical expertise in monitoring and evaluation influenced the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency.

The findings of this study are in line with Zainabu (2008) who established a positive relationship

between poor performing self-help projects and lack of employees' capacity development. She thus stressed that well developed employees can evaluate a project's path and correct any noted deviation. Kuen et al. (2008) also confirm the findings of this study through their study that showed that the capacity of project staff impacts the success of a project.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

From the study findings, it concluded that technical expertise in monitoring and evaluation positively affects the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency. Offering satisfactory training to the CDF project officials, it shows that competency in monitoring and evaluation is treated with importance in the constituency. CDF officials in return always and often use the skills gained in trainings to solve the CDF kitty issues impacting the implementation of CDF projects in Balambala Constituency.

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