

# **FACTORS INFLUENCING COMPLETION OF DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF CDF PROJECTS IN IMENTI NORTH SUB COUNTY IN MERU, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

There has been a lot of criticism, from various quarters, on the way the secondary school development projects are managed and implemented. For instance there is lack of transparency in allocation of funds for development projects in secondary schools and it is not clear how decisions are arrived at on what development projects to be implemented and the formation of school project committees that are the center of decision making is characterized by organization politics. Secondary schools are intended to transform the education well-being of the students leading to access of knowledge at lower costs. However, most of the secondary schools development projects have stalled and therefore are not helping the students achieve their objectives. The questions being asked here are: Why is it that the secondary school development projects like buying of school buses, building of modern equipped science laboratories and libraries as well as other developmental projects taking years to be completed? What is the relevancy of these initiated projects in the school to the students if the project will not be completed? The foregoing has resulted in inevitable cost over-runs, time over-run, idling resources, and also inconveniences to the targeted beneficiaries of such projects. Projects which have stalled or are unsuccessfully completed negatively affect students, teachers and the education fraternity at large both at the secondary school concerned and beyond. The purpose of this study was to establish the factors influencing completion of development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County, Kenya. The specific objectives were to determine the

extent to which financial resources influences completion of development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County, to determine the influence of school leadership on completion of development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County, to assess the influence of stakeholder support on completion of development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County and to establish the influence of organization politics on completion of development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County. The key limitation that was experienced was time availability as the schools chosen for this study were not in close proximity with each other. However, this was overcome by the researcher visiting some of them on different days. This study assumed that all the respondents would be available and would respond honestly to the questionnaire. It also assumed that the respondents offered information that addressed the study objectives. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design which is concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or groups. In choosing the members who would participate, the researcher focused on the management employees of secondary schools, the board of management members and parent representatives. The study targeted 15 public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County. The study adopted a census sample design which allowed the use of a sample size of 60 respondents. This is due to the fact that the target population was manageable and the respondents were within school systems which could be accessed easily. Data was collected

through questionnaire. Descriptive statistic such as frequencies, percentages, mean, median and mode were used. Quantitative data was represented using tables while qualitative data was presented in narrative form.

**Key Words:** *completion, development projects, secondary schools, CDF projects, Imenti North Sub County, Meru, Kenya*

## **INTRODUCTION**

School development projects require the involvement and participation of all the stakeholders in the education sector. This helps in identifying the strategies they wish to use to improve their quality of education. Participation is seen as developmental, educative, and integrative and as a means of protecting freedom. One of the key assumptions of participation is that education stakeholders will be more supportive to the project, and therefore increase the likelihood of its success when involved in project decision-making process. It is also noted that education stakeholders probably have a better knowledge about the needs of the students and school in particular (Green and Haines, 2008).

In the European countries, education sectors offer several advantages for carrying out projects that will benefit the schools and students. Most if not all, school projects go through a life cycle which varies with the size and complexity of the project. The life cycle for medium to large projects will generally follow the pattern which includes conception, feasibility, evaluation, authorization, implementation, completion, operation and termination. In identification, one project idea out of several is chosen and defined. Feasibility comprises tests for technical, commercial and financial viability, technical studies and investment appraisal plans are made. Evaluation includes application for funds, stating risks, options. Authorization comprises of funds approvals relevant schools authorities, permits, conditions and project strategy (Albert, 2007).

In the United States of America, the completion of school projects requires the execution of planned activities which converts financial, human and physical resources into a product or service of value to the students, schools and all stakeholders involved (Cleland 2010). It is should be noted that if the operational systems are not clear then the completion will have a rocky path and the project might fail to realize the intended goal or purpose. The way in which the project is designed has a significant impact on whether it will be successful to completion or not. Project completion is complex since it usually comprises of multiple variables which influence completion rate such as financial resources, operational systems, the organizational culture and the leadership of the organization.

Chikati (2009) argued that in Russia, school developmental projects are designed, planned and implemented in tandem with the sequence displayed by the project cycle to enhance the completion rate. The log frame matrix is followed and used as the specific planning tool that is used to design, appraise, manage, monitor and evaluate the passage of a project through the project life cycle from policy framework to final evaluation and finally completion. The log frame adopted presents the objectives-related activities and corresponding assumptions and pre-conditions of the project design of different hierarchical level matrix format projects are

often initiated in the context of a turbulent, unpredictable and dynamic environment. Many school projects therefore in Russia, have been able to reduce challenges, constraints and risks in the course of their execution through completion.

In Africa developing countries, despite the significant input of human and financial resources in school development projects many fall short of expectation. Many schools' projects failed to meet the priority needs of students and other education stakeholders, costs escalated, stated outputs were not achieved or if achieved were not sustained, projects progressive dates slipped by or adverse outcomes were not anticipated (Kikwasi, 2012). In Africa, schools' development projects are influenced by a multiple of factors which are both external and internal. These include poor project management, inadequate opportunities for potential beneficiaries to participate in project identification and design, poor linkages between project activities and project purpose, as well as insufficient attention to external environment during project design. It has also been recognized that schools' projects were likely to succeed when account was taken of socio-economic context in which they operated (Batten, 2011).

In Nigeria, almost any person or organization with an interest in a school project is recognized as a stakeholder. Each school project attracts its own unique set of stakeholders. The type and interest of a stakeholder are of great interest to the project manager since they enable him to use these to the greatest benefit of the project. It is therefore important that he carries out a stakeholder analysis to list, classify and assess the influence of the stakeholders. The view point of every stakeholder should be considered. This ensures that the effect of the stakeholders and leadership on how to complete schools project is analyzed (Ireland, 2007).

In Kenya, secondary schools projects have seemed to create the impression that nothing can work without money. Ali (2012) in his study noted that some do not have developmental meetings with all the stakeholders in order to avoid paying the allowances. As a result of not having inclusive developmental committee meetings, project activities stagnate and completion rate is very low due to lack of ownership of the schools projects. The rationale of addressing ownership of the schools projects is to enhance and achieve sustainable school development. Secondary schools projects should identify and understand the different roles and entitlements between students and teachers in the school (Akumu, 2007).

The government of Kenya recognizes the fact that implementation of development projects in secondary schools will contribute to knowledge production, information and communication sharing among the school community. This view stems from assertions in the literature regarding the importance of development projects in schools. The development projects in schools have a direct role to play and if used properly, they can bring many benefits to schools as well as to the community (Manduku, Kosgey & Sang, 2010).

In the past ten years, the CDF has been handy in improving the education programmes. Despite the tremendous impact on educational programmes, other factors such as economy, politics, social, and management have influenced the completion rates of CDF funded projects.

The economic factors affect implementation of CDF programmes by way of funding and educational environment. Economic problems cause strain on resources that would facilitate proper implementation of the educational programmes as well as affecting the amount allocated for CDF projects which may also affect the educational programmes. This in turn may affect the projects funded by CDF by process of attribution (Ajibora, 2008; Greenwald, Stiglitz, 2006). Social matters such as religion, behavior of the teachers, corruption, misappropriation of funds, and lack of cooperation from the community may influence implementation of CDF projects (Kibebe & Mwirigi, 2014).

In Imenti North Sub-County, schools have been undertaking developments projects funded by CDF ranging from construction of dormitories, building of modern classrooms and libraries among others. School politics have manifested themselves in schools development committees due to differences in opinions and attitudes. In addition, the project's completion rate has been challenged where some have dragged themselves in a single project while others have completed multiple projects at once. The relationships to the project and its completion in Imenti North can vary from very supportive to antagonistic, but this is based on the field of influences which have been considered and managed (Gwaya, Masu, & Wanyona, 2014).

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

One of the main roles of CDF is to provide facilities in learning institutions. This creates the right learning atmosphere for the learners and other stakeholders. In schools these funds are meant to facilitate construction of various infrastructure including classrooms, laboratories and libraries among others. Most of the secondary schools' development projects funded by CDF have stalled and therefore not helping the school communities in achieving their objectives. Moreover, there has been a lot of criticism, from various quarters, on the way the secondary school development projects are managed and implemented. According to Transparency International (2014), doubts have been raised as to whether the funds set for development projects in secondary schools have met their stated objectives. For instance there is lack of transparency in allocation of funds for development projects; it is not clear how decisions are arrived at on what development projects to be implemented and the formation of project committees that are the center of decision making is characterized by organization politics. The questions being asked here are: Why is it that the secondary school development projects like buying of school buses, building of modern equipped science laboratories and libraries as well as other developmental projects taking years to be completed? What is the relevancy of these initiated projects in the school to the students if the project will not be completed? The foregoing has resulted in inevitable cost over-runs, time over-run, idling resources, and also inconveniences to the targeted beneficiaries of such projects (Kikwasi, 2012). This is so due to the fact that incomplete and/or unsuccessfully completed construction projects such as classrooms, dining halls, libraries, laboratories, hostels, etcetera cannot be used by, say, students and teachers. Projects which have stalled or are unsuccessfully completed will negatively affect the school community at the secondary school concerned and beyond thus the purpose for which the CDF was created will be compromised. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the factors

influencing completion of development projects in secondary schools specifically those funded by CDF in Imenti North Sub County.

## **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of the study is to establish the factors influencing completion of CDF funded development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County, Kenya.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To determine the extent to which financing resources influences completion of CDF funded development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County.
2. To establish the influence of organization politics on completion of CDF funded development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County.
3. To determine the influence of school leadership on completion of CDF funded development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County.
4. To assess the influence of stakeholder support on completion of CDF funded development projects in secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

This section covers theories pertinent to successful completion of development and construction projects. The study reviews the theory of discounted cash flow and the balanced scorecard.

### **Theory of Discounted Cash flow**

The theory of discounted cash flow (DCF) is employed in capital budgeting, or project valuation, or asset valuation, or securities valuation (Shrieves & Wachovicz, 2001; Myers, 2001). The theory compares the future returns of potential projects by discounting the future cash flow at a rate that reflects the yield of similar securities in the market. Some of the techniques adopted in respect of DCF according to Brounen et al. (2004) include net present value (NPV), adjusted present value (APV) and discounted payback period (DPP). In context of construction projects, ideally, the DCF of those projects ought to be determined with the object of assessing their viability.

Myers (2001) underscores the importance of NPV but also cautions about the difficulties when defining discount rates, forecasting cash flows, estimating time series, and dealing with the stringent accounting principles (Shrieves & Wachovicz, 2001). The foregoing is anticipated to be common amongst construction projects in public universities given that, several projects fail to be completed within the budget estimates and projected timelines. The technique employed under DCF varies from one country to another; from one firm to another; and indeed from one project to another. Brounen et al. (2004) using a survey of 6,500 firms across the United Kingdom (UK), Netherlands, France, Germany, and the United States (U.S.) exemplifies that, European firms do not apply DCF techniques as much as they do payback technique. The scholars reasoned that, the limited academic and professional

qualifications of the small firms' management team influenced increased use of discounted techniques.

### **Balanced Scorecard**

The balanced scorecard was introduced in 1992. The propositions under this scorecard were based on a 1990 Nolan, Norton multi-company research project that studied the performance measurement in companies whose intangible assets played a crucial role in value creation (Atkinson et al., 1997). It is asserted that, financial reporting could be more relevant if organizations capitalized their expenditures on intangible assets or looked for other methods by which the aforementioned assets could be placed on corporate balance sheets. The foregoing enhances understanding and management.

The balanced scorecard also includes performance in communities as process perspective objectives when such performance contributes to the differentiation in the strategy (Kaplan & Norton, 2003). The balanced scorecard is compared to the stakeholder theory where performance measurement starts with the stakeholders. Stakeholders have expectations which they expect to be achieved through the performance of the managers. Explicably, the stakeholders pertinent to secondary schools projects expect those charged with their implementation to ensure the successful completion of the said projects. Unsuccessfully completed projects reflect poor performance on the part of project managers.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design which is concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or groups (Orodho 2008). This method was suitable since it allowed flexible data collection and the respondents were not manipulated. Descriptive research design is used when the problem is known and well designed as it was evident in this study. Descriptive survey research design also allows the use of questionnaires.

### **Target Population**

The study targeted the leadership in the 15 public secondary schools in Imenti North Sub County that benefit from CDF. It picked from each school the chief administrators, that is, the Principal and Deputy Principal; and also the chair persons of the Board of Management and of the Parents/Teachers Association (PTA) to a total of 60 leaders on whom the operations of schools are entrusted, including ensuring that the developments projects are completed.

### **Sample Design and Sample Size**

According to Orodho (2008), sampling is selecting some of the elements in a population from whom the same conclusions can be drawn about the entire population. He also says that, as in our case, where the targeted population is small and manageable and all the respondents are

covered, a census design is acceptable. Accordingly, this study adopts a census sample design that allows taking the entire 60 respondents as the sample.

### **Research Instruments and Data Collection Procedures**

Data was collected through questionnaire with closed ended questions. The questions were simple and logical giving straight forward directions to the respondents so as to make answering of the questions easy. The researcher personally collected the data. This was useful in administering the questionnaires to the sampled population since it ensured that respondents were reached without any external influences.

### **Reliability**

Reliability explains that the result will be the same even if the research will be carried out by another researcher on a different occasion. Furthermore it should not be subject to bias, observer bias and it should not have any subject error (Kothari, 2008). Test- retest was used to measure reliability where questionnaires were given to respondents to school administrators in Buuri Sub County in Meru County, and after 3 weeks this was repeated. The data was subjected to correlation coefficient in order to ascertain the reliability coefficient. According to Kothari (2010), a correlation coefficient reliability of 0.7 is desirable for newly developed questionnaires.

### **Validity**

Validity of research instrument refers to the extent to which a test or instrument measures what it was intended or supposed to measure (Mbwesa, (2006), Ranjit and Kumar (2005) further define validity as the quality of measurement procedure that provides respectability and accuracy. In this study, the meaning of terms used in the study and also the questionnaires were discussed and agreed to with my University Supervisor.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

Data analysis process included data sorting, editing, coding, or variable generation, data entry, cleaning, processing and interpretation of results. The SPSS tool was used by the researcher to analyze data. Descriptive statistic such as frequencies, percentages, mean, median and mode were used. Quantitative data has been presented using tables while qualitative data is presented in narrative form.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

### **Financial Resources**

The study has established that the funds from CDF are not adequate for the development projects in schools and also that differing interests among stakeholders and lengthy procedures on release of funds negatively influenced completion of the assigned development project. This finding agrees with the study of Charles (2009) on project completion done in Kenya where he found that inadequate funds on their own are a major factor hindering the completion of development projects. This finding is also in line with that of Konya (2011)

done in Nigeria where it was revealed that seven out of ten classroom projects surveyed suffered delays in their execution mainly due to insufficient funds allocated to the projects.

### **Organization Politics**

As it concerns organization politics the study established that school politics create conflict between the school Principals, BOM members and other Stakeholders. When this happens, it results in disparities in allocation CDF money to various schools which in turn affect how projects in different schools are managed and completed. These findings are in line with the study done by Bozzo (2010) which notes that the process through which public secondary schools acquire funds to implement and complete their projects is political through lobbying from government and other stakeholders in order to mobilize resources.

### **School Leadership**

The study established that schools had skilled and accountable leadership that was even prepared to delegate responsibility to other competent staff members. This positive action contributed positively towards completion of development projects in secondary schools with adequate and timely resources. These findings support the study done by Mulory (2013), which notes that effective principals, through their physical presence in the community as well as a consistent track record of service accountability, create an environment that fosters developmental project success from which community benefits. It also supports the study conducted by Green (2005) in Singapore learning institutions which found that leadership helps to remove barriers so that projects can be started and completed efficiently.

### **Stakeholders Support**

The study has established that despite there being communication between school leaders and the Stakeholders, conflict continued to exist between them mainly due to different interests. Such a conflict inevitably hinders the stakeholders from actively taking part in project monitoring and evaluation; and thus negatively influencing the completion of development projects in secondary schools. These findings are in line with those of Mulwa (2013) done in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. He notes that the success of a school project completion will be measured by support accorded by the stakeholders whose duty is to oversee, guide and direct the schools in terms of human resource.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study concludes that funds for completion of projects from CDF in secondary schools were insufficient and unreliable. Completion of the projects is also compromised by the poor relations between various stakeholders due to personal interests and allowing negative politics to interfere with equitable distribution of available resources among schools. However, the study establishes that the schools have skilled, competent and hands-on leadership that, despite the negative factors recorded in this paragraph, has ensured that all projects have been stated and a fair number of them completed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The government should encourage the school management to aim at diversifying their sources of funds by engaging in income generating activities. This will minimize the schools' dependency on government funds alone thus ensuring successful completion of school projects.
2. The school management and the government should discourage the stakeholders from politicizing education matters in order to ensure that school projects are implemented without any political interference.
3. The Ministry of Education should ensure that school leadership, through relevant tailor-made courses, is constantly equipped with the necessary knowledge on financial management and accountability, and also conflict resolution, to enable it cope with situations in development and completion of projects as they arise.
4. The education stakeholders should ensure that they work as a team with the school community by embracing a participatory approach so that they are aware of the daily running of the school as well as understanding the objectives of the school Project.

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