

FACTORS INFLUENCING PERFORMANCE OF DONOR FUNDED PROJECTS: CASE OF EMBU WATER AND SANITATION COMPANY, EMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the factors influencing performance of donor funded projects a case of Embu Water and Sanitation Company, Embu County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives; to determine how nature of technology influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects, to find out the influence of resource availability on performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects, to find out how the type of donor funding influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects, to establish how stakeholders participation influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects and to find out how regularity of monitoring influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects. The study has five independent variables; nature of technology, resource availability, type of funding, stakeholders' participation and regularity of monitoring. The moderating variables are government policy and environmental factors while intervening variables are wayleave, demographic factors and socio-cultural factors. The study used descriptive design; the target population was 49; 20 water kiosk attendants, 2 public sanitation facility attendants, 15 Embu water and sanitation company staff, 5 Embu county government officials and Ministry of water officials, 3 administration officers, 4 public health officers and community health workers. The study conducted census by carrying out 100% study on the target population this is because the target population was small and also all the

participants were very important in the study and also the donor funded projects focused both on water and sanitation. The data was obtained through administration of questionnaires to the target population and the questions were both open ended and closed ended. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the university and finally data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences. The study found out Adoption of technology is very important and it influenced positively performance of donor funded projects in Embu water and Sanitation Company. That adequate resource allocation determines the performance of a project success and adequate funding had a positive influence on the performance donor funded projects. The study concludes that stakeholder involvement to a significant extent impacts on the performance of donor funded project the study noted that good and clear stakeholder's involvement programme is of great importance in ensuring smooth implementation of donor funded projects. The study indicated that funding that was done through commercial financing/result based financing type of funding was better in terms of operations and timely completion as opposed to funding done through pure grants type of funding. This implies that type of funding influence performance of donor funded projects. Lastly the study concludes that regulatory of monitoring & evaluation influence performance of donor funded projects at very great extent. Monitoring is a very important step-in the project management life cycle. The study made the following recommendations: Both

Government and Non-Government organization should buy technology as a whole package, try to make it all within the organization, integrate the system from a variety of bought-in components, or integrate a mixture of bought-in equipment and components developed in-house. The

study also recommends that resources need to finish the project and match this with the project design and work plans.

Key Words: *performance, donor funded projects, Embu Water and Sanitation Company, Embu county, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

Since independence, the Kenya Water Sector has gone through several phases, which were affected by the prevailing politics, the natural environment and external support but above all by rapid population growth. Insufficient capacity, confusion of roles, donor driven projects, weak fiscal control and centralized service delivery has led to deteriorating water supply systems, low sanitation coverage and wanton abuse of water resource (Danish Report, 2010).

Donors began to implement their threats to Kenya in September 1991, when Danish government suspended all new aid to Kenya, citing corruption and human rights abuses. It terminated a rural development program that it had been financing for 17 years, after an audit showed that most of the \$40 million it had contributed had been embezzled. Britain cancelled \$7 million in oil subsidies, fearing the funds were going to corrupt politicians rather than consumers and the World Bank decided not to grant \$100 million loan for the energy sector (Muranga & Wanjala, 2007).

After the change of government following the end of Moi era (1978- 2002) in Kenya, donors resumed their support to Kenya and among others the water sector was chosen for cooperation. Increasing variation in Kenya's climate is evident, expressed in terms of irregular rainfall patterns, pro-longed droughts and increased flooding intensity. Increasing population causing pressure on water catchment has in the absence of investment, resulted in reduced fresh water availability (Danish Report, 2010).

The country's vision is to have 100% access to safe water and sanitation services in Kenya by 2030. Water coverage stands at 53% in areas covered by Water Services Providers in Kenya. Sewerage coverage stands at 16%. For the country to reach the 100% coverage, substantial investment in water supply and sanitation infrastructure is required both for rehabilitation of existing infrastructure as well for expanding water supply and sewer connections to unserved areas. Most of the financing for investments in the water sector has been through development partners by provision of donations (WASREB, 2015).

The 2002 water sector reforms in Kenya have been one of the most advanced and comprehensive institutional designs and intervention packages for the water sector in Africa. The reforms were a key step to improving water and sanitation services provision in the country and the sector has

experienced significant progress since then. The reform process entailed setting up and building the capacity of the new institutions inaugurated by the water act 2002 and the introduction of the new service delivery framework for water and sanitation services and for water resource management. This saw the transfer of the functions previously held under various ministries and other stakeholders to new organisations under the new institutional and service delivery framework. The arrangement in the water sector has made funding easy for different donors interested in various departments. The funding provided by the donors is now specific either to water resources, water services and sanitation. For example, the funding of water resources is channeled to Water resources management authority, water services to water service providers. Despite the high number of projects initiated by donors, the performance of the projects depends on various factors that may vary from country to country (WASREB, 2015).

As per water and sanitation component of vision 2030, there should be improved water and sanitation and accessible to all, increase both access to water and sanitation in both rural and urban areas beyond the present levels. Vision 2030 strategies were introduced to raise the standards of the country's overall water resources management and harvesting capacity. The Kenyan national governments' budget on water and sanitation for 2013-2030 totals to KES 1,764 billion investments against KES 592 billion funding, this means that there is need to attract private sector funding and improve the self-financing capacities of water service providers as a mean to bridge the gap (Claasen & Sweerts, 2016).

Donor funding refers to official development assistance; this is mainly administered with the objective of promoting sustainable social and economic development and welfare of receipt country. It comprises of both bilateral aid that flows directly from donors to receipt government and multilateral aid that is channeled through an intermediary lending. The donations can be through grants which are non-repayable often a government payable funds or products disbursed by one party. Some donors are now shifting to different funding mechanisms' like result based financing and commercial financing as opposed to grants.

Result based financing is an alternative to conventional mechanisms for water, sanitation and hygiene projects, this is funding for an initiative after results have been delivered. This is in contrast to the conventional approach of providing the finance upfront. This mechanism was developed in an attempt to improve aid effectiveness by increasing accountability, efficiency and private participation. Effectiveness is defined as achieving what an intervention sets out to do. Result based projects on average deliver 94 percent of targeted outputs. Commercial financing this mainly involves the public private partnership where the water service provider or the interested organizations are allowed to attract commercial funding from financial institutions for commercially viable investments. However, due to lack of sufficient cash flow, water service providers in Kenya hardly have capital available to co-finance investments, as financiers will require 20-30% equity contribution but few water providers have tried it Embu water and Sanitation Company being one (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2015).

Donors have invested funds in development project globally, nationally, regional and locally, however most of the projects have not been able to achieve the set goals and objectives. Most donors have been providing grants but are currently shifting to result based funding to achieve and ensure the goal of the project is fully achieved.

Each year the World Bank group finances hundreds of projects valued for \$60 billion. While some projects are fully financed by the World Bank group alone, many are co-financed with borrowing governments themselves, other multilateral institutions, commercial banks and private investors. The World Bank has introduced the program for results that links disbursements of funds directly to the delivery of defined results, helping countries improve the design and implementation of their own development programs and achieve lasting results within the country, enhances effectiveness and efficiency and leads to achievement of tangible, sustainable program results (World Bank Country guide, 2016).

Embu water and Sanitation Company is a water service provider owned by Embu County that was operational in March 2005 and mandated to cover 972km² reaching a population of 89,000. The water company has received various funding from donors like World bank, japan International Cooperation Agency, Water services Trust fund in terms of grants, result based financing and also on commercial financing. The funding was mainly to improve the water supply, sanitation services, water quality and to capacity build the staff on technical, social and financial issues.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Hough (2004) demonstrates common problems with donor funded projects in South Africa which is the same case with the problems seen in other parts of Africa. Lavagnon (2012), donor funded projects in Africa fail due to various reasons; lack of accountability for results, lack of project management capacity, problems in monitoring and evaluation and cultural issues. There is too much emphasis within aid agencies on strong procedures and guidelines which lead to culture of accountability for results and little attention to managing for results. Number of projects through donor grants continues to fall below their targets. A lot of invested funds in these projects have gone down the drain with no tangible outcomes or results. In Kenya, there are a number of projects that have so far proved useless and non-operational in relation to their objectives. The under-performance of these projects has terribly affected the relationship of the donors and the implementing organization. The overall performance of a project is a key factor to ascertain the success of a project. There are various reasons for project delays including and not limited to change of project scope, poor budgeting or underestimation of the overall project cost (Nyanje & Wanyoike, 2016). Result based financing approach is that the donor only disburses funds when the agreed results have been achieved. This approach differs from grants where aid is given in advance in order to finance inputs for activities expected to produce results, SIDA report (2015). Eldridge & Tekolste, (2016), Result based financing model has improved service delivery and government performance and evidence suggests that clear performance-

based incentives have yield improved outcomes in projects. The bilateral development agencies of developed country government (US Agency for international development), multilateral international organization (World Bank) and philanthropies (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) have applied this approach and achieved improved results. For example, United Kingdom implemented National Health Service in 2003- 04 using this approach. Other successful implementation in Kenya includes Muranga water and sanitation Output based Aid water project and Embu water and sanitation company Aid on Delivery water projects. Therefore, due to the differences in performance of donor funded projects through grants and result based financing the study will research on the factors that influence performance of donor funded projects. It examined nature of technology, resource availability, type of funding, stakeholders' participation and regularity of monitoring in relation to performance of donor funded projects.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study investigated the factors that influence performance of donor funded projects, a case of Embu water and Sanitation Company, Embu County, Kenya.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To determine how nature of technology influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects
2. To find out the influence of resource availability on performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects
3. To find out how the type of funding influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects
4. To establish how stakeholder's participation influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects
5. To find out how regularity of monitoring influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Theory of Citizen Participation

Citizen participation is a process which provides private individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions and has long been a component of the democratic decision-making process. The roots of citizen participation can be traced to ancient Greece and Colonial New England. Before the 1960s, government processes and procedures were designed to facilitate external participation. Citizen participation was institutionalized in the mid- 1960s with President Lyndon Johnson's great society Programs (Cogan & Sharpe, 1986).

Public involvement is means to ensure that citizens have a direct voice in public decisions. The term 'citizen' and 'Public' and involvement and 'participation' are often used interchangeably. While both are generally used to indicate a process through which citizens have a voice in public policy decisions. The perceptions of stakeholder and planners are an important consideration in the development and implementation of any public participation program. Public participation is often a requirement for planners; however, it is always optional for citizens. Citizens choose to participate because they expect a satisfying experience and hope to influence the planning process.

Cogan indicates that participation can offer a variety of rewards to citizens. These can be intrinsic to the involvement or instrumental. The planner's expectations are also important in that an effective public participation program can lead to a better planning process and product as well as personal satisfaction. In citizen involvement programs, the disparity between the planners' and the participants' is minimal. If expectations are different conflict is probable. This conflict is damaging to the planning process and to the relationship between the participants and the planner. He suggests that citizen participation programs can make the planning process and planner more effective by reducing isolation of the planner from public, generating a spirit of cooperation and trust, providing opportunities to disseminate information, identifying additional dimensions of inquiry and research, assisting identifying alternatives solutions and increasing public support.

Cogan argues that a successful citizen participation program must be integral to the planning process and focused on its unique needs, designed to function within available resources of time, personnel and money. To be effective, Cogan suggest that the citizen participation programme must meet legal requirements, clearly articulate goals and objectives, command political support, be an integral part of decision making structure, receive adequate funding, staff and time, identify concerned or affected public and delineate roles and responsibilities for participants.

Public participation is one means of decreasing tension and conflict over public policy decisions. A variety of techniques exist that solicit public input effectively. Planners and participants can derive a number of tangible benefits from an effective public involvement process. However, the expectations of planners and the public must be roughly equivalent for the process to be effective. Theoretically, involving interested publics in all phases of planning and decision making will lead to better decisions.

Resource Dependence Theory

The theory originated in the 1970s with the publication of the external control of organizations. It was by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik. The theory is concerned with how organization behavior is affected by external resources the organization utilizes, such as raw materials. The theory is important because an organization's ability to gather, alter and exploit raw materials faster than competitors can be fundamental to success.

The theory is underpinned by the idea that resources are key to organizational success and that access and control over resources is a basis of power. Resources are often controlled by organisations not in the control of the organisation needing them, meaning that strategies must be carefully considered in order to maintain open access to resources. Organizations typically build redundancy into resources acquisition in order to reduce their reliance on single sources.

The theory has implications regarding the optimal divisional structure of organizations, recruitment of board members and employees, production strategies, contract structure, external organization links and many aspects of organization strategy. Organizations depend on multidimensional resources, labor, capital, raw material. Organizations may not be able to come out with countervailing initiatives for all these multiple resources. Hence organization should move through the principle of critically and principle of scarcity. Critical resources are those the organization must have to function. Managers throughout the organization understand their success is tied to customer demand. Manager's careers thrive when customer demand expands. Thus customers are the ultimate resource on which companies depend. An organization may adopt various countervailing strategies like associate with more suppliers or intergrate vertically or horizontally.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A research design provides the glue that holds the research project together. A design is used to structure the research to show how all the major parts of the project which include samples or groups, measures and methods of assignment that work together to try to address the central research questions Brown (2003). The study used descriptive research design; this is suitable for the study since the study intends to collect comprehensive information through descriptions which will be of great help in identifying the variables.

Target Population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a target population is a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common observable characteristics. The target population for this study comprised of 20 water kiosk and two (2) Public sanitation facility attendants who benefited from the donor funded projects implemented by Embu water and Sanitation Company, 15 staff members from the company who will include seven (7) members of project implementation task team that is in charge of monitoring any donor funded project in the company, five (5) technical officers, the project accountant, finance manager and the Managing Director. Others include, Chief Officer Water, two (2) sub-county water officers, two (2) officers from Water Resources Management Authority (WRMA), three (3) administration officers, two (2) public health officers and two (2) community health workers in the areas implemented with donor funded projects.

Sampling Procedures

A sample is a smaller group or sub-group obtained from the accessible population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). This subgroup is carefully selected so as to be representative of the whole population with the relevant characteristics. However, the research did not sample since the target population is small, hence the study conducted census, by carrying out a 100% study on the target population. This included the water kiosks attendants, public sanitation facility attendants, Embu water and sanitation staff members, Embu county government officials and MWI, administration officers and public health officers. The rationale behind this is because all the participants are important in the study and the donor projects are on both sanitation and water supply. Therefore, the study focused on 49 members.

Research Instruments

The data was obtained through administration of questionnaires to the target population. According to Farrell (2016), open –ended questions prompt people to answer with sentences, lists and stories giving deeper and new insights. Closed-ended questions limit answers thus tighter stats. Therefore, the questionnaire applied both open ended and closed ended questions. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the researcher, this helped create a rapport with the respondents and convince them to answer truthfully. The questionnaires have potential in reaching out to a large number of respondents within a short time.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the university as a means of verifying that the research is for academic purposes, this was presented to the management of Embu water and Sanitation Company and other stakeholders involved. The Embu water also provided an introductory letter to enable the researcher speak to the Water kiosk and public sanitation attendants.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data was analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is a widow's-based program that can be used to perform data entry and analysis and to create tables and graphs. It is capable of handling large amounts of data and can perform all the analyses covered in the text. The entire questionnaire received were referenced and items in the questionnaires and coded to facilitate data entry. After data cleaning, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, was estimated for all quantitative variables and information presented inform of tables. The qualitative data from the open-ended questions was analyzed using conceptual content analysis and presented in prose

RESEARCH RESULTS

Nature of Technology and Performance of Donor Funded Projects

The first objective, the study sought to determine how technology influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects. The study found out that majority of the participants was aware of water and sanitation technology that Embu Water and Sanitation Company used. Based on this analysis this implies technology used is very important and it influenced positively performance of donor funded projects. This goes in line with Mariken Vaa (1993) in his report towards more appropriate technologies on water and sanitation, In most of the developing world, both water and money are scarce resources, most countries have adopted standards and systems from industrialized world at least for their larger cities. Purchases of new technology are hardly ever subjected to a cost-benefit analysis or even a simple assessment of whether it would be more effective to; buy technology as a whole package, try to make it all within the organisation, integrate the system from a variety of bought-in components, or integrate a mixture of bought-in equipment and components developed in-house (Mariken Vaa, 1993).

Resource Allocation and Performance of Donor Funded Projects

The second objective, the study sought to find out the influence of resource availability on performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects. The study found out that availability of resources in any project is most important for any project to success . The study concur with a report by African development bank (2015) on water sanitation project which found out that For African cities to provide water and sanitation services to meet social and economic demands they need investments.

Most African countries lack adequate local funding to expand or renew their utilities and current investments in urban services are insufficient given urbanization rated. Aid for water and sanitation has risen since 2001 after a temporary decline in the second part of the 1990s. In 2007-08 bilateral annual aid commitments to the water and sanitation sector rose to USD 5.3billion, over the period 2003-08 bilateral aid to water increased at an average annual rate of 15%. Multilateral aid rose over the period 2003-08 at 4% annually meaning a lot of grants have been invested in the water sector

The study also found out that adequate resource allocation determines the performance of a project success. The findings correspond with International Project leadership Academy report (2016) which states that Establishing borehole and well infrastructure requires more than just implementation, it requires post project support. In many cases the implementation of water infrastructure projects is battle won because the donors/sponsors fail to consider elements that guarantee that projects deliver long-term value.

The scope of such projects needs to consider not only the installation but also the capacity building activities. Lack of capacity building and qualified staff who are a resource underlies many failed donor projects. To overcome this problem, donors need to direct efforts and advocate for mandatory project skills related capacity building at local authority level to increase chances that project deliver on the value they were intended for in the first place. National agencies in respective countries that receive funding and tasked to implement national initiatives should insist that skills development to ensure sustainability is an integral part of the funding proposition.

Type of Funding and Performance of Donor Funded Projects

The third objective, the study sought to find out how the type of funding influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects. This implies that funding influence performance of donor funded projects. Funding that was done through commercial financing/result based financing type of funding was better in terms of operations and timely completion as opposed to funding done through pure grants type of funding. This implies that funding influence performance of donor funded projects. Result based funding/commercial financing is used as an attempt to solve the principal agent problem. It strives to align the goals of the principal with those of the agent through setting a monetary incentive for the agent to pursue the goal set. The principal defines exactly and ex-ante which results achieved by the agent will be paid, that is sets performance targets. The payment will only be released if the predefined results are achieved. If the agent fails to fulfill the performance targets the payments will be affected automatically without considering the reasons for the failure. Melina (2013)

According to WSUP (2016) found out that commercial financing supported by many donors has not worked well for water service providers in Kenya because many of the service providers operate on negative or neutral cash flow mainly caused by the high amount of non-revenue water due to low billing efficiency and high leakage levels, the low collection efficiency and regulated fee structure that although encouraged by the regulator does not allow Water Services Providers easily propose new tariffs. Due to lack of sufficient cash flows water service providers hardly have capital available to co finance investments as most financiers or donors will require 20-30% equity contribution. Some of the alternative type of funding by donors includes; result based financing or fund, commercial financing and grants.

Stakeholder Participation and Performance of Donor Funded Projects

The fourth objective, the study sought to establish how stakeholder's participation influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects. The study found out that stakeholder involvement influence performance of donor funded projects to very great extent. Okech and Ltumbesi, (2016) asserts that Donors are urged to respect and encourage strong local commitment, participation, capacity development and ownership of project activities. According to CIDA, (2002) sustainability purpose development strategies must be developed by recipient

countries which are key stakeholders and must reflect the priorities of the recipients rather than those of donors. Studies also show that participatory approaches to project development and implementation where those affected by the project take part throughout the entire process of the project cycle is important.

Community involvement is always pointed out as an important ingredient likely to provide better results of any donor funded project in terms of sustainability. Ltumbesi and Okech(2016) in their study contend that donor funded projects vary in the extent to which they ensure beneficiary participation in their own activities. Beneficiary may range from passive listening, to communities defining their own objectives and implementing and monitoring the project themselves. In the study, various aspects of community participation in donor funded project were analysed in terms of time devoted; time allocated to projects activities, participation in the decision committee, commitment of resources and what resources committed to donor projects.

Regularity of Monitoring & Evaluation and Performance of Donor Funded Projects

The fifth objective, the study sought to find out how regularity of monitoring influence performance of Embu water and sanitation donor funded projects. The study found out that regularity of monitoring & evaluation influence performance of donor funded projects at very great extent. Monitoring is a very important step-in the project management life cycle. Handiwo, (2010) states that nearly all donor agencies have been insisting on this activity on the projects they are supporting. In the research where a sample survey method where primary data was collected from 25 donors funded projects and 26 non- donor funded projects through questionnaires. The findings of the study indicated that donor funded projects have incorporated the monitoring practices more than the non-donor funded projects. Their approach on monitoring and evaluation has formal as opposed to non-donor funded projects which is less formal

The study also found out that Regular monitoring should be understood as a management tool and should be carried out for learning, documentation, control, transparency, legitimization and improve decision making. Programme managers through regular monitoring will help improve decision making through provision of immediate feedback of performance-related information into the management process. Danida,(2006) assets that different stakeholders will need different types of monitoring outputs for monitoring to serve their purpose. This ranges from highly detailed and possibly localized information at target group level via less detailed but rather frequent information at programme management level, general and less frequent information at national level to very general information at the global level.

CONCLUSIONS

The study makes the following conclusions: Adoption of technology is very important and it influenced positively performance of donor funded projects in Embu water and Sanitation Company. That adequate resource allocation determines the performance of a project success and adequate funding had a positive influence on the performance donor funded projects. The

study concludes that stakeholder involvement to a significant extent impacts on the performance of donor funded project the study noted that good and clear stakeholder's involvement programme is of great importance in ensuring smooth implementation of donor funded projects. The study also concludes that the type of funding applied has an influence on performance of donor funded projects. Lastly the study concludes that regulatory of monitoring & evaluation influence performance of donor funded projects at very great extent. Monitoring is a very important step-in the project management life cycle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study made the following recommendations: Both Government and Non-Government organization should buy technology as a whole package, try to make it all within the organisation, integrate the system from a variety of bought-in components, or integrate a mixture of bought-in equipment and components developed in-house. The study also recommends that resources need to finish the project and match this with the project design and work plans. This will help eliminate the potential of discontinuing the project for lack of resources. Project managers must build contingency monitoring so that interventions are preferably on or under budget and with a minimal number of problems along the way. The Local resource mobilization should be enhanced to shield the projects from shifting foreign donor priorities. Also the study recommends regular monitoring should be understood as a management tool and should be carried out for learning, documentation, control, transparency and legitimization and improve decision making. Programme managers through regular monitoring will help improve decision making through provision of immediate feedback of performance-related information into the management process.

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