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# EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT COORDINATION IN THE COMPLETION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT FUNDED PROJECTS IN MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA

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**Abstract:** Project success is necessary to achieve development goals within the local communities around the world. The objective of this study is to investigate the role of external stakeholders' involvement in the completion of national government county development funded projects in Murang'a County. This study applied a descriptive research design since it was focused on describing the attributes of the participants involved in the study. The target population was 150 participants drawn from two CDF projects of the Gatango water Supply Project and the Makomboki, Kiruri and Ichichi Water Supply Project from Murang'a County who will comprise the unit of observation. The study used self-administered questionnaires on 150 individuals from the target population. The respondents were given a period of 14 days to complete the questionnaires before collection and there was a drop and pick arrangement of the same. The presentation of the results was then done using a combination of graphs and tables. The study determined that there is a strong positive correlation between the Stakeholder Involvement Coordination and the Completion of NG-CDF Projects. The multiple regression model reflected a strong relationship with the data pertaining to the variables indicating that it is a good predicting model. Additionally, the study found a statistically significant relationship between Stakeholder Involvement Coordination is the strongest determinant of the Completion of NG-CDF Projects.

**Recommendations**: The study recommended that the project administrators should ensure the involvement of community stakeholders through the project lifecycle.

Keywords: County Development Funded Projects, National Government, Stakeholder Involvement Coordination

### **INTRODUCTION**

Both Projects are initiated to transform the well-being of individuals socially, politically, and economically (Ochieng & Tubey, 2013). As such, there is an increasing need for effective development aimed at improving people's lives (UNDP, 2002). Community development projects are typically aimed at uplifting the economic welfare of community members by making them financially independent through social transformation initiatives (Wachira & James, 2018). However, such projects in Kenya are usually hampered by a number of challenges including budget constraints, poor project design, inappropriate project management tools, limited managerial competences, and lack of effective performance measurement (Walubengo, Kyalo, & Mulwa, 2018).

One form of community development project is a constituency development funded (CDF) project. Wanderi (2016) posited that CDF projects were initiated as devolved arrangements between the national Government of Kenya and constituencies as channels of financial assistance where members of parliament control the distribution and the funds with some degree of community participation. Waribu (2016) added that CDF projects enable enhanced access to funding from central government by local communities as well as the ability to make expenditure decisions that ensure the maximization of their welfare. Kinanu (2017) opined that the CDF, which was created in 2003 under the CDF Act 2003, was mandated to address prevailing regional imbalances in Kenya that were propagated by political patronage by targeting priority areas in constituencies as far as the community members were concerned.

Stakeholder management is crucial to the success of any project. According to Rajablu, Marthandan and Yusoff (2015), stakeholder management is a process that involves the facilitation of the needs of the stakeholders by the project management team through the identification, discussion, agreement and contribution towards the attainment of their objectives. Mohamud (2017) affirmed that stakeholder involvement is one of the critical causes of success in CDF projects since it leads to the attainment of stakeholder expectations and project objectives.

## **Stakeholder Involvement Coordination**

Akong'o and Oluoch (2017) conducted a study on participatory communication strategies for enhancement of development in CDF projects in Migori Constituency, Kenya and posited that CDF projects had yet to adopt best practices in participatory communication that would ensure optimal dissemination of information between the local communities and the CDF committees. These projects had, instead opted for more rudimental methods of communication such as public gatherings and forums within the community, otherwise known as Barazas. Typically, the CDF committees utilized the PMCs to disseminate information at the community level.

A study by Mbulo (2015) found that there was a mismatch between the projects that youth tended to participate in and the utility that they derived from those projects. This was because these youth were under the mistaken impression that they were meant to only participate in projects that utilize their physical attributes rather than their intelligence. Thus, the study recommended that better information dissemination techniques be employed to equip the youth with knowledge regarding the right skills that they can acquire so that they can seek to exploit these skills in CDF projects.

Nakhumicha and Macharia (2017) established that a number of projects were left incomplete due to the lack of adequate support from stakeholders that led to cost over-runs, time over-runs, and idling of resources. Thus, the study recommended that the CDF committees conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise in conjunction with experts within the constituencies in order to establish the available competencies and skills with the stakeholder network and determine the most effective ways of developing linkages with the networks.

### **Completion of NG-CDF Projects**

A study by Ngacho and Das (2017) found that despite the importance of quality in the implementation of CDF projects in Kenya, its impact varied depending on the particular category. The quality aspects that pertained to projects such as conformity to the mandatory quality standards were found to be most influential on the completion of CDF projects. A different study by Mathenge (2017) established that the quality of the projects was not to the accepted standard due to the lack of credible M&E systems to facilitate access to accurate feedback on projects.

In a study on determinants of completion time of projects funded from CDF in Ainamoi Constituency, Kenya, Kiprono, Kemei and Rotich (2015) posited that more than 70% of the projects had not been completed on time. Additionally, those that were completed were not completed exhaustively owing to delays in the disbursement of funds and the limited skills of the project management team. The study, therefore, recommended that funds be disbursed on a timely basis and meritocratic recruitment policies.

Kinanu (2017) posited that projects were able to be completed accordingly due to adherence to budgetary provisions which ensured that the costs of project implementation were controlled. Additionally, the projects received timely disbursements of funds that ensured that there were no cost overruns. Sarah, Sakataka and Oteki (2016) affirmed that the implementation of these projects was hampered by the inability to control cost overruns due to corruption of CDF administrators as well as members of the PMC.

# CDF Projects in Murang'a County

Murang'a County is one of the five counties from the central region of Republic of Kenya and is bordered to the North by Nyeri, to the South by Kiambu, to the West by Nyandarua and to the East by Kirinyaga, Embu and Machakos counties. The county occupies a total area of 2,558.8 Km<sup>2</sup>. According to the most recent census of 2019, it has a population of 1,056,640 and has seven constituencies, namely, Kangema, Kiharu, Mathioya, Kigumo, Kandara, Maragwa, and Gatanga. This study will feature two projects that were supported by the CDF, namely, Gatango Water Supply Project and Makomboki, Kiruri and Ichichi Water Supply Project.

# **Gatango Water Supply Project**

This is a 220 million Kenya Shillings (KES) project that was undertaken by the Murang'a CDF to provide water for an estimated population of 60,000 Mathioya residents in Kiharu and Maragua sub-counties. The main beneficiaries of the project will be the residents of Gaturi and lower parts of Maragua which were identified as areas that suffer from perennial shortage of water for domestic use. It was implemented by Unibee Construction Company Ltd. under the direction of the Athi Water Services Board which installed water pipes from the intake along North Mathioya River, which is located in the Aberdare Forest and pumping this water to a major storage tank at Kairo Place. The project which was funded by the World Bank through the CDF, was completed in December 2019.

# Makomboki, Kiruri and Ichichi Water Supply Project

The project, which was implemented by the Athi Water Services Board in October 2017, sought to construct a water distribution pipeline and storage tank that would enable the supply of water to the locations of Makomboki, Kangari, Kiruri and Ichichi. The project is composed of two separate projects: the Kiruri and Ichichi; and the Makomboki Water Supply Projects which are located in Kangemo and Kigumo sub-counties in Murang'a County. The justification of the project was informed by the fact that the existing community water systems were insufficient to unsustainable to serve the estimated population of 50,000 in the three locations. The project was conceived as a consequence of the Northern Collector Tunnel Phase 1 Project.

# **Statement of the Problem**

Constituencies in Kenya are allocated up to KES. 137 million each under CDF, this has been the case since 2019/2020 financial year and represents an increment of more than 25% from the 2018/2019 financial year (National Government CDF (NG-CDF) Board, 2021).

Despite the widely acknowledged importance of stakeholder involvement, many government projects fail to incorporate the rights and responsibilities of stakeholders during the stakeholder identification process owing

to the fact that there are few or no representatives of key stakeholders from the start as part of the formalization of the project governance structure (Derakhshan, Turner & Mancini, 2019). Some CDF projects fail to conduct an effective stakeholder mapping or classification of stakeholders prior to the start of the projects owing to lack of willpower of the CDF administrators or sheer incompetence which has resulted in poor completion of the same projects (Sugal, 2017).

According to Mohamud (2017), some NG-CDF projects are handicapped by inadequate stakeholder involvement mechanisms such as the lack of focus groups discussions with appropriate community representatives to establish community priorities and ensure buy-in by the members of the community. Additionally, a study by Karioh (2019) established that the implementation of other NG-CDF projects has been adversely impacted by the irregularity of public hearings and meetings with the beneficiary communities.

Wamugu and Ogollah (2017) posited that the implementation of CDF projects has been constrained by a low level of involvement by some community stakeholders due to factors such as low level of literacy and poor awareness. Njogu (2016) determined that the level of involvement of management in the running of some of the government projects is wanting given that they tend to adopt a casual and ad-hoc approach rather than a formally institutionalized approach.

The study sought to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing new insights into the challenges experience by CDF projects in stakeholder involvement and the probable solutions to the same. It was envisioned that the findings of the study would provide useful reference material for CDF administrators in Murang'a and beyond on how best to ensure effective stakeholder participation so as to improve the success of such projects.

# **Objective of the Study**

The study set out to investigate the role of external stakeholders' involvement in the completion of national government county development funded projects in Murang'a County. The specific objective was to evaluate the influence of stakeholder involvement coordination in the completion of national government county development funded projects in Murang'a County.

### **Conceptual Framework**



### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study applied a descriptive research design since it was focused on describing the attributes of the participants involved in the study.

# **Pilot Testing**

The study used a pilot test of 10 individuals from a focus group that will be representative of the target population, in accordance with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). The pilot involved questionnaires, which were administered to 10 individuals from the two projects which comprised the unit of analysis.

CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Response	10	100%
Non- Response	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table 1: Response Rate for the Pilot Study

#### **Reliability of Instruments**

The study applied a correlation coefficient of  $r \ge 0.7$  to ensure the steadiness of the research questionnaires over time (Bolarinwa, 2015); it also used a Cronbach's alpha (this is a function of the mean inter-correlations of items and the number of items in the measurement scale) score of 0.7 to improve internal consistency (a test of the equivalence) of the questionnaires as recommended by Kimberlin and Winterstein (2008). Each of the variables had Cronbach's Alpha scores above the 0.7 threshold indicating that they all had acceptable levels of internal consistency.

#### Table 2: Reliability of the Pilot Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Completion of NG-CDF Projects	0.720	6
Coordination of Stakeholder Involvement	0.703	6

#### Validity of Pilot Test Results

The study conducted a pilot test on 10 people who were chosen according to their knowledge and expertise as members of the management staff from various CDF projects included in the study and selected in the pilot to provide content validity while criterion validity was provided by the assurance that each participant would be given an equal opportunity to respond to each question impartially.

The results of the validity affirm the evidence of content validity as far as the pilot test results are concerned.

#### Table 1: Validity of Pilot Test Results

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Issue of external stakeholder involvement has been adequately captured				50%	50%
Number of questions are sufficient for research				30%	70%
Completion of NG-CDF Projects is well captured by the questions				40%	60%
Demographic Questions add value to the research				10%	90%
The questions are well articulated				80%	20%
Likert Scale is appropriate for the study				40%	60%

### **Descriptive Statistics on Stakeholder Involvement Coordination**

According to Kaur, Stoltzfus and Yellapu (2018), descriptive statistics are used to enable the organisation of data in a summarized manner so as to properly describe the relationships that exist between research variables.

The respondents agreed that CDF projects had yet to adopt best practices in participatory communication that would ensure easy dissemination of information. This response had a mean score of 3.816 indicating that most of the respondents agreed with this. This tallied with the findings of Akong'o and Oluoch (2017). the respondents agreed that there is a mismatch between the projects that community members tended to participate in and the satisfaction that they got from those projects. This response had a mean score of 4.936 indicating a very high level of affirmation by the respondents and agreeing with Mbulo (2015). the respondents agreed that the role of the beneficiary communities particularly in monitoring and evaluation of the projects. This response had a mean score of 4.064 indicating that most of the respondents agreed with this statement. This supported the findings of Owuor *et al.*, (2013).

The results also showed that 16% of the respondents disagreed while 55.2% were neutral towards the statement that MPs have given themselves and their families the key roles and responsibilities of running the CDF projects. This indicated that most of the respondents were unsure about this statement and contradicted the findings of Gikonyo (2015). This response had a mean score of 3.176. Further, 80% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the CDFCs normally conduct stakeholder-mapping exercises in collaboration with experts within the constituencies in order to establish the available competencies and skills within the stakeholder network. This response had a mean score of 3.992 indicating that the majority of the respondents were in agreement with this. This echoed the findings of Nakhumicha and Macharia (2017). the respondents agreed that the CDFC engages with the PMC and community representatives to ascertain the existing stakeholder network in order to get the needed competencies. This response had a mean score of 4.04 indicating that the majority of respondents agreed with this statement. This corroborated the findings of Mburu and Kamaara (2019).

Given that all the standard deviations were so low, it is clear that all the responses were concentrated tightly around the average responses indicating a low variation in the responses. Further, the high mean scores for all

the indicators of Stakeholder Involvement Coordination are a reflection that it plays a very significant role in the completion of NG-CDF projects.

	Mean	Standard Deviation
CDF projects had yet to adopt best practices in participatory communication that would ensure easy dissemination of information	3.8160	1.46675
There is a mismatch between the projects that community members tended to participate in and the satisfaction that they got from those projects.	4.9360	.27662
The CDF Act does not explain the role of the beneficiary communities particularly in monitoring and evaluation of the projects.	4.0640	1.54369
MPs have given themselves and their families the key roles and responsibilities of running the CDF projects.	3.1760	.75203
The CDFCs normally conduct stakeholder-mapping exercises in collaboration with experts within the constituencies in order to establish the available competencies and skills within the stakeholder network.	3.9920	.65372
The CDFC engages with the PMC and community representatives to ascertain the existing stakeholder network in order to get the needed competencies.	4.0400	1.62838

### Table 4: Descriptive Statistics Pertaining to Stakeholder Involvement Coordination

# **Descriptive statistics on the Completion of NG-CDF Projects**

According to the results, the respondents agreed that the PMC has been able to ensure adherence to the requisite standards of performance. This response had a mean score of 4.248 indicating a high level of affirmation by the respondents. This was consistent with Ngacho and Das (2017). the respondents agreed that the CDFC in collaboration with the PMC has been able to invest in credible M&E systems that have improved access to information that is accurate and reliable. This response had a mean of 3.912 indicating that most of the respondents agreed with this statement. This tallied with the findings of Mathenge (2017). The response that CDF projects were not completed exhaustively owing to delays in the disbursement of funds. This response had a mean score of 4.416 indicating that most of the respondents agreed with this and corroborated the findings of Kiprono et al., (2015). the respondents agreed that projects could not be completed on time due to the lack of transparency and inclusivity in budgetary discussions by the CDFC. This statement had a mean of 4.608 indicating a very high level of affirmation by the respondents and agreeing with Gicharu (2018). the respondents agreed that projects received timely disbursements of funds that ensured that there were no cost overruns. This indicated only a moderately affirmation by the respondents. This statement had a mean score of 3.752 and was consistent with Kinanu (2017). the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the implementation of CDF projects was hampered by the inability to control cost overruns due to corruption. This statement had a mean score of 4.928 indicating that the vast majority of respondents agreed with it. This echoed the findings of Sarah et al., (2016).

Since all the standard deviations were so low, it is clear that all the responses were concentrated tightly around the average responses indicating a low variation in the responses. Further, the high mean scores for all the

indicators of Completion of NG-CDF Projects are a reflection that it has been prioritized by the CDF administrators in Murang'a County.

### Table 5: Descriptive Statistics Pertaining to Completion of NG-CDF Projects

	Mean	Standard Deviation
The PMC has been able to ensure adherence to the requisite standards of performance.	4.2480	1.50620
The CDFC in collaboration with the PMC has been able to invest in credible M&E systems that have improved access to information that is accurate and reliable	3.9120	1.44253
CDF projects were not completed exhaustively owing to delays in the disbursement of funds.	4.4160	.82486
Projects could not be completed on time due to the lack of transparency and inclusivity in budgetary discussions by the CDFC.	4.6080	.53726
Projects received timely disbursements of funds that ensured that there were no cost overruns.	3.7520	1.54323
The implementation of CDF projects was hampered by the inability to control cost overruns due to corruption.	4.9280	.28894

#### **Pearson Correlation Analysis**

Hall (2015) defines Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) as the proportion of the covariance of two variables representing a set of numerical data, and standardized to the square root of the variances.

According to the results, Stakeholder Involvement Mechanisms had positives correlation of r= 0.865. this indicates that a change in Stakeholder Involvement Mechanisms by a value of 1 result in a corresponding change of 0.865 in the Completion of NG-CDF Projects.

The results also showed that the p-value of the Stakeholder Involvement Mechanisms was well below 0.05 indicating a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

#### Table 6: Pearson Correlation Coefficients

		Coordination of Stakeholder Involvement	Completion of NG- CDF Projects
Coordination of Stakeholder Involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Completion of NG-CDF Projects	Pearson Correlation	.585	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	

### **Multiple Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis is a technique that analyses associations between an independent variable and a dependent variable by fitting a line-of-best-fit through a series of observations (Mooi & Starstedt, 2014). This enables the clarification of whether the independent variables have a significant relationship with a dependent variable.

### **Beta Coefficient Analysis**

Beta Coefficients as unknown constants that are estimated from the data which are associated with given predictors or independent variables (Mooi & Starstedt, 2014). These coefficients measure the magnitude of change in an independent variable and how this affects the dependent variable when the rest of the independent variables are held constant. The values of the constants and coefficients enabled the generation of the following multiple regression model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

 $= 3.407 + 1.275X_1 + 0.304$ 

Where; Y = Completion of NG-CDF projects

 $X_1 = Stakeholder Involvement Coordination$ 

 $\beta 0 = Constant Term$ 

 $\beta 1$  = Beta coefficients to be estimated;

 $\epsilon = Error Term$ 

### Table 7: Beta Coefficients

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		В	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		3.407	.304		11.203	.000
Stakeholder Coordination	Involvement	1.275	.132	1.901	9.632	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Completion of NG-CDF Projects

From the Table 7 above, the constant term is 3.407 which indicates the level of completion of NG-CDF Projects.

# Stakeholder Involvement Coordination and completion of NG-CDF Projects.

According to the Regression equation, taking the Stakeholder Involvement Coordination to be zero Completion of NG-CDF Projects will be a constant equivalent to 3.407. This implies that when all factors are held constant, a unit increase in Stakeholder Involvement Coordination will lead to a 1.275 increase in Completion of NG-CDF Projects when the independent variables are held constant.

#### Summary of the Findings

The study determined that there is a strong positive correlation between Stakeholder Involvement Coordination and the completion of NG-CDF Projects. The multiple regression model reflected a strong relationship with the data pertaining to the variables indicating that it is a good predicting model. Additionally, the study found a statistically significant relationship between the Stakeholder Involvement Coordination and the Completion of NG-CDF Projects.

#### Conclusions

Stakeholder involvement coordination has been adversely affected by a mismatch between the projects that community members tended to participate in and the satisfaction that they got from those projects. Additionally, the CDF Act does not explain the role of the beneficiary communities particularly in monitoring and evaluation of the projects. Further, CDF projects had yet to adopt best practices in participatory communication that would ensure easy dissemination of information.

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