Community Participation in Development Projects in Kenya: Analytical Review of Factors Influencing Sustainability of Water Projects in Shianda Division, Kakamega County

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Introduction

- Business Ethics and Corporate Responsibility is a concept which is applicable in all aspects of business transaction and service provision.

- Project Sustainability is a desire of every community, private agency and Government as a means of ensuring that positive gains are delivered to the target communities in long term
The implementation of such projects is always easier to initiate but their sustainability poses a challenge, bringing about the question of whether the initiating agencies have in mind their corporate responsibility to the local community, who are the beneficiaries of the end product.
There is empirical evidence that most projects are initiated with minimal participation of the local community, hence jeopardizing the sustainability of the project after the handover.

Studies conducted on water project sustainability such as Ngetich, (2009) showed that most water projects did not function to the full capacity and recommended for more study to be done on the influence of project location on sustainability of water projects.
. A study by Kainda, (2012) established that community contribution and awareness were paramount to water projects sustainability but recommended for further studies in other parts of the country on factors influencing water projects sustainability in order to bring a generalization of the findings.
Study by Habtamu, (2012) established that most water project decline in performance shortly after external support is withdrawn and recommended that further study be done on factors that influence sustainability of such projects in other rural parts of other countries in Africa in order to bring a generalization of the findings.

This phenomenon is brought to focus in this study based on water projects that aim at improving the quality of life of community water users.
The objective of the study was to establish the extent to which Community participation influence sustainability of water projects. The variables studied included:

- Community education and training on technology used
- Project location
- Community capital contribution
Methodology

- Descriptive survey was used as the research design
- A proportionate sample of 196 respondents was selected from 23 Community Water Projects using stratified random sampling technique.
- The sample comprised of:
  - 46 Community Project Leaders,
  - 8 Local leaders
  - 142 community water users.
Data collection was through questionnaires

Descriptive statistics were applied in the data analysis.

To determine the relative importance of each of the three variables with respect to Sustainability CWPs, a multivariate regression model was applied.
Findings of the study

- The findings of the study revealed that both men and women were involved in leadership.
  
- More men (88%) in local leadership
- More women (65%) in project leadership.
  
- Almost all CWUs as well as the leaders were employed with the highest percentage in self-employment thus able to contribute towards the project capital either in terms of finance, material or labour.
The study also revealed that, of the three factors under study, two of them (Community Education and Training on Technology used and Project Location) influenced sustainability of CWPs in Shianda Division to a very great extent.

Community Capital Contribution had moderate influence.

The three factors combined were found to contribute 81.5% of the variation in water sustainability of water projects in Shianda.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.193</td>
<td>0.432</td>
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<td>Community education and training on technology</td>
<td>X₂</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0.141</td>
<td>0.126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project location</td>
<td>X₃</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community capital contribution</td>
<td>X₄</td>
<td>0.716</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.112</td>
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</table>
The findings further revealed the need for project initiators:

1. To involve CMs at all levels of the project cycle as this would build ownership of the project,

2. To train and educate CMs on how to operate and maintain the water facility so that its continuity is not affected by breakdown

3. To allow CMs to contribute towards the choice of the site for the water point and advise them on the need for them to contribute money, labour and material towards operation and maintenance of CWPs as this encourages ownership and assures sustainability.
Recommendations

- The study recommends effective education and training of community on the technology used in CWPs and on how to operate and maintain the system.

- The trainings need to be frequent and an analysis on the education level of the CMs be made in order to establish the most suitable language or mode of training to use so as to assure effective transfer of knowledge and skills from the trainer to the trainee.
- Involvement of CMs in identification of the site for the project in order to avoid local politics encourage ownership in terms of protection and cleanliness of the site.

- Community water users should be encouraged to contribute towards the same in order to avoid rendering the project dysfunctional or unsustainable on breakdown as they wait on well–wishers who may not be available.