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Organizational Dynamics and Public Participation in Kenya: A Critical Literature Review

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Abstract

Purpose: Organizational dynamics entails structural behavior which may include how employees are organized, how daily work deliverables are executed and how the resources are expended. Lack of public participation in CDF-funded projects commonly leads to failure or delay in completion of these projects. Our purpose of study therefore is to evaluate the influence of organizational dynamics on public participation practices in Constituency Development Fund (CDF) funded projects in Kenya, with reference to Manyatta Constituency in Embu County.

Methodology: The paper used a desk study review methodology where relevant empirical literature was reviewed to identify main themes and to extract knowledge gaps.

Findings: The study concluded that financial audit committees of CDF projects must be competently trained and imparted with relevant financial management skills and that they should be able to operate independently where they frequently hold quality meetings without undue pressures from any unwarranted quarters. The study also made the conclusion that project leadership, financial resources, and staff training played a critical role in influencing public participation in CDF projects.

Unique Contribution to Theory and Practice: The study recommends that, all CDF managers should be compelled by the public to allow and embrace public participation as an integral part of management of CDF funded projects. There must be proper priority setting in initiation of CDF funded projects to foster prudent financial resources management by CDF committees. This will further enhance proper running of all activities associated with CDF such as public participation which is a requirement by law.

Keywords: *organizational dynamics, public participation, constituency development fund projects*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Globally, public participation is progressively gaining popularity as the most effective strategy for ensuring that urgent and important government services are effectively delivered for the citizens regardless of their economic, social or political affiliations (Hickey, 2010). This trend has been further enhanced by the growing need for increased democratic space in all governance units. According to Hyden (2010), many countries are endeavoring to decentralize both political and economic resources as a means for realization of equitable and effective service delivery and rapid economic development for their citizens. Through the process of decentralization, crucial services are taken closer to the people who need them most hence further creating a close association and interaction between the government and its people. Stacey (2011) further posits that devolution of resources enhances public' legitimacy to the government since people put governments in office to serve them. In this sense, if majority of the citizens can access services then they are assured that their taxes are put into good use and therefore they have the justification to support the government even more, for the sake of economic development.

Every organization depends on its structures to operate and prove its worth. According to (Reddick, 2005), organizational dynamics entails structural behavior which may include how employees are organized, how daily work deliverables are executed and how the resources are expended. Shapiro (2005) adds that organizational dynamics involves the process of constantly reinforcing resources with the aim of enhancing employees' output. This concept can further be viewed as the process through which managers try to promote organizational learning, better business practices and enhance strategic management structures for the good of the organization. Since individuals tend to behave differently in a company setup as opposed to when they are pursuing their private endeavors, a strong leadership is mandatory if the organization has to achieve its goals and objectives. This will influence how employees, for instance, behave as they undertake their assigned roles with the long-term objective of meeting the organizational goals and actualizing the aspirations of the target population of a given organization (Hsiung, 2012).

Globally, organizational dynamics plays a critical role in determining how institutions position themselves for the sake of delivering on their mandate. According to Shapiro (2005), this further enables organizations to establish their corporate cultural values and set rules and procedures for conducting organizational activities. Organizational dynamics also entails decentralization of the institution in terms of setting up hierarchical authority for decision-making purposes and implementation of the vision of the organization. Hsiung (2012) further avers that it is through organizational dynamics that the leadership of an organization is emphasized as pillar for resource allocation and implementation of the set objectives.

Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is a global initiative employed by many developing countries to promote decentralization of resources to the grassroots levels for development. The overriding rationale of these devolved funds is to address poverty through empowerment of the people and by providing the services that they deem necessary based on their own local priorities. In Asia and Africa, Constituency Development Fund (CDF) has been a leading devolved financial model for addressing development functions at the local levels. This is a decentralized financial scheme, usually associated with Members of Parliament, where more funds from the central or national government is disbursed to each constituency for spending on various development

projects intended to address specific local needs (Eichenauer and Reinsberg, 2017). The concept of CDF is a common feature in many countries in Africa as well as in Asia.

In Africa the concept of CDF has been implemented in countries such as Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Kenya among others (Tearfund and Micah, 2013; Chinsinga, 2005). For the case of Uganda for instance, recognition of decentralization of financial resources can be traced back to the 1980s during the rise of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government (OECD, 2012). The Ugandan devolved District-based administration provides a model under which local councils are mandated to raise local revenue and receive additional finances from the central government to fund services at that level. The decentralized money is essentially channeled to forty-seven District Councils under the management of the Member of Parliament. The CDF therefore supplements the existing funding mechanisms for devolved units of government (Kairu and Ngugi, 2014).

In Kenya, constituency development fund in 2003 as a government intervention strategy in addressing poverty eradication and enhancing rapid social economic development at the grassroots (Kariuki and Misaro, 2014). Furthermore, the initiative was meant to serve as an important mechanism for supplementing implementation of the national government development agenda through community participation. This is a form of devolution since it involves redistribution of decisions, resources and authority through legislation. Other devolved funds include the Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF), geared towards addressing youth unemployment and the Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) initiated to economically empower women through access to affordable capital (Oyungi and Nyaguthii, 2013). In order to improve efficiency in the use of CDF in Kenya, the law was amended in 2013. However, this was subsequently declared unconstitutional in 2015 and replaced with CDF legislation which was considered more effective. Based on the provisions of this Act, projects implemented through CDF funds should be in respect to national government functions and should be community-based so as the benefits are available to a widespread cross-section of residents in a particular constituency (GoK, 2015). Some of the common projects considered under CDF are education and health related ones.

Community engagement is an increasingly popular concept in the management of public affairs not only in Kenya, but globally (Ejimabo, 2013). In Kenya, public participation is enshrined in the country's 2010 Constitution, which emphatically underlines the need for transfer of powers to the common person at the grass-root levels (Phillip, 2009). The aim for involving citizens in decision-making processes regarding important public projects is to promote fairness and transparency hence rendering initiated projects more impactful on the lives of the majority of members of the community. Public Participation is a concept that is often mentioned in constituency development projects as it enhances good governance. According to (Mwenda, 2010), in order for community projects to be successfully implemented, communities/citizens must be allowed to actively take part in all the important stages and aspects of project implementation in a prioritized manner.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of community engagement for successful implementation of CDF-funded projects in Kenya, this practice is commonly lacking in many constituencies. Lack of public participation in CDF-funded projects commonly leads to failure or delay in completion of these

projects (Jane, 2017). Furthermore, numerous cases of misappropriation of CDF funds have been reported where they are associated with poor or lack of public participation. For instance, the 2016 Auditor General report indicated that Kshs 700,000 had been spent on a water project in Rongai Constituency, yet there were no proper records showing how the money was spent. This anomaly was further linked to poor leadership of the CDF management office and the IT systems for effective recordkeeping.

In another government audit for Yatta constituency, it emerged at the close of the financial year in 2016, Kshs 118,325,345 out of the total allocation of Kshs 190,955,612 to CDF had been spent, which was a 38% underutilization of the funds. This gap was a clear indication of poor management of the CDF where priorities on CDF-funded projects may not have been set well to ensure that all the money was spent appropriately. Lack of proper public participation was generally blamed for the existence of this gap. In a study by Fadhil (2011) on the challenges facing management of CDF funded projects Moyale District, it emerged that there was a lot of external influence on project selection and implementation, especially due to lack of public participation to scrutinize any underhand activities.

Furthermore, a research conducted by Nyanguthi and Oyugi (2013) observed that in most CDF funded projects, public participation is progressively abandoned as projects' implementation advances. Eventually, this significantly negatively influences the outcome and the long-term existence of the project. From the foregoing, public participation in CDF-funded projects has not sufficiently been addressed. This study focused on project leadership, financial resources, IT infrastructure, and staff training as organizational factors influencing public participation in the running of government's locally initiated projects.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to establish the influence of organizational dynamics on public participation practices in Constituency Development Fund (CDF)- funded projects in Kenya, with reference to Manyatta Constituency in Embu County.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will help community members to understand their role in management of CDF projects for their maximum social and economic benefits. Additionally, the findings will play a vital role to the CDF managers in understanding the role of community engagement in community projects initiated by the government so as to come up with better strategies to effectively include key local community members in key decision-making.

The findings will also be important for policymakers at both the parliamentary and ministerial levels. For instance, the outcome of the study may help parliament to review or amend policies governing CDF so that projects funded through CDF can effectively be completed to serve the people better. At ministerial level, the findings may enable the Ministry of Devolution and the CDF board in reviewing, strengthening and enacting policies that will promote meaningful public engagement as a critical component in effective management of devolved projects for addressing poverty at the grassroots levels.

It is further anticipated that the study will serve as a reference point and provide other researchers and scholars with relevant information for further research areas in the management of CDF as an important strategy for poverty eradication at local levels. The research is expected to build scholarly knowledge base that will be useful to researchers and the academia keen on pursuing studies meant to strengthen CDF as an important government poverty eradication scheme.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter reviews current empirical works in order to demonstrate the link between organizational dynamics and public participation in CDF projects. The review is done based on thematic subheadings in line with specific areas being addressed in the study objectives.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This research will be guided by the Theory of Change by Carol Weiss (1995) and Realistic Evaluation Theory by Ray Pawson (1997). Both of these theories mirror the aspect of organizational dynamics as a factor that influences public participation in community development projects. However, the study will mostly be founded on the theory of change.

2.2.1 Theory of Change

This perspective was mooted by Carol Weiss in 1995 and attempted to explain why and how systems work to solve human problems. The theory of change tries to move away from rigid planning applications to social change processes by defining and describing necessary more pragmatic steps for arriving at practical solutions to everyday issues. CDF projects generally are aimed at addressing emerging poverty issues at local levels where the citizens are struggling to improve their lives. The theory assumes that key stakeholders in a project are always looking forward to more practical solutions to their problems. However, for any meaningful change to be realized there must be resources which should be appropriately channeled to where they are needed. In this sense, the project leadership must use available finances and put realistic mechanisms in place to enhance public participation and institute feedback mechanism.

2.2.2 Realistic Evaluation Theory

First published in 1997 by Ray Pawson, the Realistic Evaluation Theory is centered on establishing not only what comes out of project intervention but also how the outcomes are produced and the significance of those outcomes. CDF projects are usually intended for uplifting the lives of the local community members. Hence, in a CDF project lifespan, several steps are always undertaken including selection, design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation as well as handing over or closure stage. According to realistic evaluation theory, none of these steps should be undertaken for the sake of it. Rather, each step should be planned carefully where the interests of the community are always emphasized. According to Pawson and Tilley (2004), realistic evaluation is all about ‘what works for whom, under what circumstances, and how’. This means that although organizational dynamics influence public participation in CDF projects in varied ways, projects should be evaluated based on their realistic impact on the people’s lives.

Realistic evaluation theory further postulates that any evaluation of a community project must be crafted into context to understand possible outcomes. This is because projects should always be viewed in terms of realistic changes in a given social setting. Public participation gives the citizens an opportunity to contribute in the selection, design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the project in question. The theory further helps in putting into context the aspect of public involvement in project management where the practical benefits of the project to the target population or community should be emphasized. This theory was suitable for this study given the fact 31 that community development projects such as CDF-funded initiatives require public participation so that they can have a real impact on the lives of the communities for which they are intended.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Wanyama (2013) undertook a research on the role played by leadership in the management of CDF programs in Juja constituency. The research was informed by the assumption that CDF projects failed to materialize due to bad leadership and exposure to other management risks. With a target population of 239 projects which had a budget allocation of at least 200,000 shillings, the study revealed that CDF projects which had effective management team stood lower risks of non-completion. However, majority of the project managers indicate that they were not well-versed with risk management in the lifespan of a project. This included the fact that they did not consider it critical to fully involve the public in the selection, design, and making follow-ups on the subsequent status of projects. Hence, this caused limited involvement of key stakeholders from the communities in which the projects were being implemented.

Mulwa (2017) analyzed the effects of monetary allocation on public participation in government-initiated programs in training colleges in Nairobi City County. Employing descriptive research design and targeting three institutions in the county where 51 board of management members and 3 principals were interviewed, the study revealed that financial records in these institutions were poorly kept. Furthermore, the study established that there were no finances set aside for facilitating public participation.

In a study by Okere et al., (2017) to assess the relationship between financial resources allocation and public participation in management of local programs in Nigeria where survey research design was used, the findings indicated that lack of a clear-cut framework for budgetary allocation and spending of money in public participation logistics curtailed involvement of locals in important projects directly impacting their lives. The study concluded that for effective public participation, availability of financial resources was critical.

Namano (2015) did a research to establish how fiscal auditing affected local government projects where descriptive research design was employed and 72 programs in Thika subcounty involved. Using both regressive and correlation analysis, the findings revealed that audit committee financial competence was one of the critical aspects of a competent CDF project management committee. The study concluded that financial audit committees of CDF projects must be competently trained and imparted with relevant financial management skills and that they should be able to operate independently where they frequently hold quality meetings without undue pressures from any unwarranted quarters.

2.4 Research Gaps

A knowledge gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the issue discussed. For instance, Mulwa (2017) analyzed the effects of monetary allocation on public participation in government-initiated programs in training colleges in Nairobi City County. Employing descriptive research design and targeting three institutions in the county where 51 board of management members and 3 principals were interviewed, the study revealed that financial records in these institutions were poorly kept. Furthermore, the study established that there were no finances set aside for facilitating public participation. On the other hand, our study focused on organizational dynamics and public participation.

Secondly, a methodological gap can be identified as the above researchers for example, Namano (2015) did a research to establish how fiscal auditing affected local government projects where descriptive research design was employed and 72 programs in Thika subcounty involved. Using both regressive and correlation analysis, the findings revealed that audit committee financial competence was one of the critical aspects of a competent CDF project management committee. The study concluded that financial audit committees of CDF projects must be competently trained and imparted with relevant financial management skills and that they should be able to operate independently where they frequently hold quality meetings without undue pressures from any unwarranted quarters. On the other hand, our study employed desktop literature review method.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop literature review method (desk study). This involved an in-depth review of studies related to the influence of organizational dynamics on public participation practices in Constituency Development Fund (CDF)- funded projects in Kenya. Three sorting stages were implemented on the subject under study in order to determine the viability of the subject for research. This is the first stage that comprised the initial identification of all articles that were based on the influence of organizational dynamics on public participation practices in Constituency Development Fund (CDF)- funded projects in Kenya. The search was done generally by searching the articles in the article title, abstract, keywords. A second search involved fully available publications on the subject on the influence of organizational dynamics on public participation practices in Constituency Development Fund (CDF)- funded projects in Kenya. The third step involved the selection of fully accessible publications. Reduction of the literature to only fully accessible publications yielded specificity and allowed the researcher to focus on the articles that the influence of organizational dynamics on public participation practices in Constituency Development Fund (CDF)- funded projects in Kenya which was split into top key words. After an in- depth search into the top key words (organizational dynamics, public participation, constituency development fund projects), the researcher arrived at 4 articles that were suitable for analysis. These are the findings from the research.

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with risk management in the lifespan of a project. This included the fact that they did not consider it critical to fully involve the public in the selection, design, and making follow-ups on the subsequent status of projects. Hence, this caused limited involvement of key stakeholders from the communities in which the projects were being implemented.

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4.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

Every organization depends on its structures to operate and prove its worth. Organizational dynamics entails structural behavior which may include how employees are organized, how daily work deliverables are executed and how the resources are expended. The study concluded that financial audit committees of CDF projects must be competently trained and imparted with relevant financial management skills and that they should be able to operate independently where they frequently hold quality meetings without undue pressures from any unwarranted quarters.

The aim for involving citizens in decision-making processes regarding important public projects is to promote fairness and transparency hence rendering initiated projects more impactful on the lives of the majority of members of the community. The study also made the conclusion that project leadership, financial resources, and staff training played a critical role in influencing public participation in CDF projects.

4.2 Recommendations

The study made several recommendations, All CDF managers should be compelled by the public to allow and embrace public participation as an integral part of management of CDF funded projects. There must be proper priority setting in initiation of CDF funded projects to foster prudent financial resources management by CDF committees. This will further enhance proper running of all activities associated with CDF such as public participation which is a requirement by law. All CDF management activities must integrate information and communication technology through proper installation of IT infrastructure and regular updates to meet current demands. Also, CDF management staff must be regularly trained to be properly equipped with the necessary skillsets for effective execution of their work and interaction with members of the public.

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