

# Influence Of Monitoring And Evaluation Practices On Performance Of Non-Government Organizations Funded Projects In Wajir County, Kenya

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## **Abstract**

*With the increase in the number and scale of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kenya, there has been a growing concern about the need to identify their achievements and the effectiveness of their operations. Monitoring and evaluation methods have emerged as vital routines for tracking crucial aspects of NGOs' performance, especially in developing nations. Common projects' performance measurement metrics primarily focused on by NGOs include the delivery of high-quality output on schedule and within budget. However, existing literature reveals flaws in the design and implementation of program objectives. Empirical research has demonstrated that programs with weak or non-specific M&E mechanisms tend to perform poorly on average. This research aimed to focus on various recognized monitoring and evaluation procedures and their influence on the performance of NGO-funded projects in Wajir County, Kenya. Specific objectives explored how planning for M&E, community engagement in M&E process, communication of the M&E findings, and the utilization of M&E findings influenced the success of non-governmental funded projects in the region. The study adopted a descriptive research design using a mixed-method approach to collect information-rich data from the research participants. The target population consisted of the twenty-five projects operated by five active NGOs in Wajir County. The key informants, including 25 project managers, 25 M&E personnel, and one government representative, were selected to provide qualitative data using an interview guide. Additionally, a random sample of 173 project staff was drawn from the 25 operational projects in equal proportions. The questionnaires' validity was ensured through the involvement of the researcher's peer colleagues and the researcher's supervisor from Mount Kenya University, along with a split-half approach to confirm questionnaire dependability. To determine the relationship between the research variables, the quantitative data was evaluated using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was thematically analyzed to complement the quantitative information. From the study findings and lessons learned from previous projects, the study aimed to provide recommendations for improving project performance through improved monitoring and evaluation practices.*

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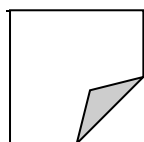
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## **I. Introduction**

### **Background to the study**

Monitoring and evaluation practices are methods utilized in tracking the progress and outcomes of a project or program. They involve the collection of data and its analysis to measure performance and progress, as well as to identify areas for improvement. M&E practices are crucial for ensuring that a project or program is meeting its intended objectives (Govender & Ajani, 2021). Similarly, the two practices deliver feedback to the program stakeholders and help to ascertain that resources are assigned and utilized efficiently. Sentamu, (2018) affirms that M&E practices lead in identification of potential risks and challenges that can be mitigated before they escalate to major complications. Monitoring and evaluation are therefore key components of managing a fruitful project or program

Monitoring and evaluation practices have been proven empirically significant on the performance of NGO-funded projects. Mutesi, & Odhuno, (2021) argue that unlike other performance drivers, M&E support performance of project implemented in accordance to their objectives by certifying that the available resources are used efficiently and effectively. Likewise, an assertion by Skedsmo & Huber, (2019) is that M&E helps to identify areas of success and failure and to identify areas for improvement by providing valuable information about project performance. Through such and related information, NGOs are able to understand how well their projects are being implemented and how effectively resources are being used. They also provide feedback on the effectiveness of the project in achieving their objectives. This information allows NGOs to make necessary changes and adapt the project to better achieve its goals With the growth of globalization, there have been advent



pressures on governments and NGOs worldwide for a more responsive move towards the amplified demands of internal and external stakeholders for good governance, transparency and accountability for tangible results.

In Brazil, the projects' worth is pegged to feasible M&E practices. Findings from empirically done studies confirm that regardless of how perfect the project implementation plan is, without regular monitoring and evaluation during the project phases, neither the project progress nor projects objectives can be achieved (Acevedo et al, 2010).As the demand for results and greater responsibility grows, so does the need for enhanced monitoring and evaluation processes in development initiatives (Kusek & Rist, 2004).

In Australian, it is mandatory for the NGOs operating under the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) to undertake evaluation of projects or programs at annual basis. A report from the department of foreign affair and trade (2016), indicate that each NGO should outline its well-planned evaluations report at the end of each year of operation. This demands for effective prior M&E planning of the program activities to make certain that the funded projects are reviewed on a regular basis for corrections and improvement. The evaluation findings are then documented and availed publicly as a commitment to transparency and accountability. As in accordance with Njenga (2013), short term leaved projects or programs should have evaluation undertaken at the completion of the activities but where the project or program runs beyond three years, subsequent evaluations should be undertaken periodically.

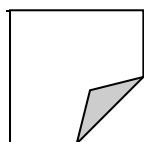
Monitoring and evaluation practices impact on the success of non-governmental organization (NGOs) financed projects has been a critical focus of research in Ghana. Robust monitoring and evaluation methods are required for measuring project effectiveness, finding areas for improvement, and guaranteeing accountability in development activities. Several studies have shown that competent M&E practices have a favourable impact on project outcomes. in Ghana. A study done by Ayirebi and Al-Hassan (2019), in Ghana, discovered that well-implemented M&E systems improve organizational performance in Ghanaian NGOs. Furthermore, Abdulai and Awunyo-Vitor (2020) revealed that project monitoring and assessment practices contribute significantly to project success and efficiency in Ghana. An implication from similar empirical findings is that, understanding the impact of M&E practices can help NGOs and development stakeholders optimize project management techniques and increase overall project impact.

In Tanzania, empirical studies have demonstrated that well-implemented M&E practices have a positive impact on project outcomes. A study by Mattee et al. (2018) on performance of community projects, discovered that the funding organizations with outstanding M&E processes had higher projects' outcomes and more community impact. Similarly, Mushi and Muganda (2019) revealed that efficient monitoring and evaluation lead to increased project efficiency and resource allocation in Tanzanian non-governmental organizations. The knowledge on the impact of M&E practices on projects' performance by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and development practitioners would help improve project management methods and maximize the beneficial effects of financed community based projects.

According to a research by Hauge (2001), monitoring and evaluation in Uganda are fragmented, with multiple donor and government planning and progress reporting forms. Policy development, work scheduling, and budgeting are all done separately at district and sector levels. The main issue from an M&E standpoint is that information management and decision making are both dedicated to the administrative process of spending and activities rather than the poverty outcomes, impressions, and aims that are being sort after. According to the author, planning, budgeting and incentives are directed toward measuring inputs, activities as well as outputs, which is one of their M&E system's failure factors. Mamer, (2010), advocates that recurrent and development expenditures should not be reviewed jointly, instead M&E should focus on their joint influence in reaching overall objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation should focus on the outcomes of policy, program, and project initiatives rather than conformity with government rules and laws. This can have a substantial impact on project success and, ultimately, the NGO's success (Kung'u & Gachunga, 2017). The challenge of the bulk of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to justify their work and produce meaningful outcomes continues to tarnish their image as development change agents among many stakeholders. Organizations can increase the efficacy of activities they do by upgrading their monitoring and evaluation processes.

In Kenya, NGOs are lensed as the development change agents. With a span of time, the number of NGOs had grown from less than 3,500 in 2002 to close to 9,000 in 2018 (Bougheas et al., 2018). Their growth in number and size has encountered a budding concern about pinpointing their accomplishments and efficiency of the projects being implemented. Despite the upsurge of NGOs in most of these third world countries, the performance of the projects being implemented on the ground have been interrogated by stakeholders (Omona & Mukuye, 2013). It is a projection that, with the declining performance trend of NGOs achievement of the Kenya Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals will be impended. There has been a general demand from stakeholders for NGOs to demonstrate the results of their work and show accountability (Lenfant & Rutten, 2013). To bridge this development gap, several studies have been empirically done with majority agreeing with various



factors influencing the NGOs' performance. Monitoring and evaluation practices have also been investigated on from different perspectives and research methodology.

In Wajir, there have been multiple NGOs addressing different social-economic needs funded by different nations through the Kenyan government. Among these NGOs are Mercy Corps, Islamic Relief, Wajir South Development Association (WASDA), Save the Children Program, and World Vision. Partly due to inadvertent consequences, most of these NGOs have been under continued pressure towards demonstrating their efficiency and the influence their projects have on society wellbeing (Erasmus, 2018B; Amberger, 2000; Lingan, Cavender, Lloyd, & Gwynne, 2009).

Monitoring and evaluation process is among the ways NGOs can meet their intended objectives by keeping track of progress and gauging the influences of the projects. For further information, this current study will explicitly focus on the M&E practices bias on planning of the M&E activities, involvement of the community in the M&E process and communication of the M&E outcomes. The main aim will be to provide valuable insights into the interplay between monitoring and evaluation practices and project performance in the context of NGOs' funded initiatives in Wajir County

### **Statement of the Problem**

The NGO segment in Kenya plays a crucial role in economic growth and development. However, this sector is prone to various economic setbacks including social and financial crisis which impede achievement of its outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation are critical for tracking and quantifying results and shedding light on the effect of development interventions. Every phase must be closely monitored in order to identify any faults or deviations from the objectives in order for projects to be completed on time, within budget, and with the expected scope and quality.

The importance of M&E practices cannot be overstated. Without effective monitoring and evaluation, it is challenging to decide if a project has achieved its intended objectives. Previous studies on evaluations of NGOs projects have shown that M&E is still very weak in Kenya and other countries in general. Despite the importance of M&E, many organizations struggle to implement effective practices. This is often due to a lack of understanding of what constitutes effective M&E practices, lack of resources, or lack of commitment to the process.

In Wajir County, despite heightened activities of NGOs, poverty levels have continued to rise and living standards continue to deteriorate. The low performance of the NGOs operating in this County raises concern to the funders, the government and also the community who are the end users of the projects' output. Expected results of various NGOs development initiatives have not been forthcoming. There are multiple problems empirically identified hampering performance of NGO funded projects across countries. Among them include absence or inadequate monitoring and evaluation practices, lack of or poor collaboration between NGOs and other stakeholders, community conflicts and cultural differences, among others.

As one of the components of improved performance of NGOs, with holding other factors, this study will investigate the effect of M&E practices, specifically planning for M&E, community engagement in M&E process, and communication of M&E findings on the performance of NGOs operating in Wajir County using a mixed method approach.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on performance of non-government organizations funded projects in Wajir county, Kenya

### **Objectives of the study**

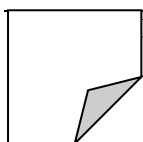
The following objectives guided the research study.

- i. To assess the influence of planning for M&E on performance of NGOs funded projects in Wajir County, Kenya.
- ii. To determine the extent to which community engagement in M&E process influence performance of NGOs funded projects in Wajir County, Kenya.
- iii. To examine the level to which communication of M&E finding influences performance of NGOs funded projects in Wajir County, Kenya.

### **Research Questions**

The study answered the following questions:

- i. What is the influence of planning for M&E process on the performance of the NGOs funded projects in Wajir County, Kenya?
- ii. To what extent does community engagement in M&E process influence performance of NGOs funded projects in Wajir County, Kenya?



- iii. To what level does communication of M&E findings influence performance of the NGOs funded projects in Wajir County, Kenya?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study findings are intended to benefit the management bodies of the projects funded by NGOs and hopefully contributes to the existing body of knowledge on monitoring and evaluation practices in the project management field. The study hopefully provided insights into the current practices, effectiveness, and challenges faced by organizations in implementing effective monitoring and evaluation practices. It is with anticipation that the study offers recommendations for best practices for monitoring and evaluation in project management and that findings of this study are valuable for project managers, policymakers, and researchers in the field of project management.

It is intended that the findings help to guide and shape the direction of present and future NGOs-funded projects in Wajir County, as well as other counties in Kenya and beyond.

### **Basic Assumptions**

There are various assumptions that this study considered. Among them are;

- 1)The NGOs remained to be key drivers in the achievement of the Kenyan 2030 vision.
- 2)It is also an assumption that the study respondents were honest and truthful in answering the interview and questionnaire questions to the best of their ability.
- 3)The researcher assumed that the project funders, project managers and the other stakeholders of all the NGOs funded projects in Wajir County made use of this research findings for decision making towards improving the living standards of the population therein.

### **Scope of the study**

The study focused exclusively on Wajir County, Kenya, examining the influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on projects funded by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within this specific geographical area. The study only concentrated on projects operated under the NGOs within Wajir County within the time of study.

The research study involved both primary and secondary stakeholders. Primary participants included representatives from NGOs operating in Wajir County, project managers, project beneficiaries, and other relevant stakeholders involved in project implementation and evaluation processes. Secondary participants included government officials, and relevant experts in the field.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

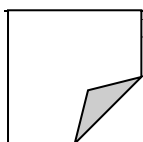
This study was done in Wajir County of Kenya. This geographical location was chosen due to its existing human suffering despite the setup of strategies and operations of the wide array of humanitarian and non-governmental organizations operating in Wajir County. It was the researcher's interest to find out why implementation of these strategies were yet to yield sustainable results, despite the government and NGOs concerted efforts. This geographical delimitation helped in controlling the cultural and political differences among different counties in Kenya.

The study unit of analysis were projects funded by the five NGOs operating in Wajir County in the time of this study. Methodologically, the study was delimited to mixed method study approach to allow accommodation of views and opinion of the NGOs stakeholders involved in putting into practice of the projects focused by the study.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Considering the education background and the literacy levels of the marginalized groups in Wajir County, written questionnaire responses were a challenge emanating from non-comprehending of the questionnaire items. Therefore, the researcher made sure the questionnaire items were clear and simple to understand. A trained research assistant was also included in the data collection process for non-biased guidance and assistance.

The response of the intended respondents was a study limitation. Given that the bulk of the target demographic was made up of people who are not well educated, the design of the data collection tools needed to be tailored to the respondents. The customization and simplification of data gathering technologies resulted in a dilution of the desired response.



### **Definition of Significant Terms in the study**

**Planning for M&E:** According to this study, planning for monitoring and evaluation focused on definition of M & E activities, approximating project M & E cost and essential resources, training of M&E persons and deciding on M & E stakeholders' representatives

**Community involvement:** study took this as the effort taken to ensure the project projects' beneficiaries are represented in ensuring the projects' activities are implemented as per the plans.

**Communication of M&E findings:** the study conceptualized this construct as the means, modes and diversity in ensuring the results of the M&E is received by the intended recipients

**Project implementation:** the study took this construct as the process of bringing together resources to actualization for a project output

### **Organization of the Study**

This research project is organized into three chapters. First chapter is the introduction part of the project proposal, outlining the study background, problem statement, the study purpose, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, study delimitations and limitations, basic assumptions and the definition of significant terms. The second chapter highlights the Literature review on the empirical studies related to this study's objectives. Additionally, theoretical and conceptual frameworks are displayed in a matrix format alongside the identified research gaps. The third chapter covers the research design, the study's target population, methods of bringing together data, the reliability and validity of the instruments of collecting the data, data collection techniques, ethical considerations, data analysis, and presentation strategies. The Appendices section of this research report includes a reference list, the researcher's letter of introduction, and the research tools. THE FORTH AND FITH CHAPTER?

## **II. Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

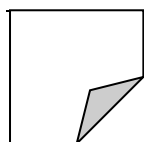
This chapter provides a review of literature on monitoring and evaluation practices in NGOs and their influence on projects' performance. The literature related to the study variables will be critically reviewed on the lens of M & E practices, and on how NGOs funded projects perform. This in-depth literature review will give clarity on the existing knowledge, and unveils existing gaps to inform practice and research that will be done in the future. The literature review will be closely directed by the study objectives clearly mentioned in the previous chapter of this study.

### **Performance of NGOs funded projects**

The concept performance is defined differently by different scholars. Samsonowa (2012) conceptualizes performance as the extent of goal achievement by an organization. In the field of project management, performance of projects has been immensely studied. Despite the in-depth investigation of project performance in the huge amount of studies done, a consensus is yet to be arrived at on the measurement of project performance. Davis (2016), outlines the organizational performance measurement indicators as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and quality of the intervention. A report by Ghalem et al., (2016) indicates that majority of NGOs suffer a high level of low performance as a result of a high rate of project failure emanating from poor quality of work and poor accountability. As observed by Lenfant & Rutten, (2013), the poor performance of NGOs is a core impediment to achieving sustainable development goals of developing countries. With this understanding, there has been a universal demand from stakeholders for NGOs to prove the results of their work and demonstrate accountability. The present study adds on to the field of project management by bringing forth additional knowledge on the M&E practices which might increase performance of NGOs funded projects in developing countries.

In both developed and developing countries, most of the development organizations integrate monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of their funded projects as a requirement to improve performance by representing results as well as accountability for donor funds (Mueller-Hirth, 2012a; Porter & Goldman, 2013). To ensure performance of these projects, NGOs and other humanitarians-based organizations make use of various management techniques to enhance performance of the projects under their funding (Barr et al., 2003; Jones, 2013). Some of the performance measurement indicators commonly used to track performance of development intervention include inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes, and effects for development programs, projects or strategies that make able managers to track progress, reveal results, and alter service delivery (James et al. 2005, James, 2005 and Symes, 2006, Clark, Sartorius, & Bamberger, 2004). Additionally, Lisa (2013) identifies other measures of project performance as project done within the anticipated specifications, accomplishment of project within stated budget and conclusion of project within the schedule of time.

A regular assessment of the implementation of result-based projects is done through close monitoring and evaluation of the project activities in all phases. A lesson learnt from Clark et al., (2004) is that cost-benefit



analysis is an effective measure of inputs and outputs used to weigh if the cost of an activity can be justified by the outcomes and impacts. It is evident from various scholarly studies that organizations with weak M&E practices perform dismally with reference to projects' timeline, and resource utilization (de Bruin, Mikhail, Noel, & Barron, 2019). Consequently, NGOs funded programs that perform well can stand on their own after the donor has withdrawn. Performance of projects funded by the NGOs can therefore be defined from different lenses depending on the researchers' conceptualization.

Monitoring and evaluation of performance of development programs allow the program managers to take counteractive measures and also inform future planning approaches during the launch and implementation of other related projects. The performance of the NGOs funded project is the dependent variable of this present study which will be measured through the lens of project time of delivery, achievement of project objectives, stakeholders' acceptance and delivery on budget, time and quality assured. Many scholars have associated program performance to these practices of M&E with similar measurement indicators although from varying study contexts (Nzayisenga, Wafula & Kirabo, 2022; Hussein, 2020).

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Practices**

From a NGOs perspective, Monitoring and Evaluation involves collecting, analyzing, and using information to improve project performance in order to achieve better outcomes. In NGOs, M&E is used to measure the progress and impact of projects, identify problems and opportunities, and make informed decisions.

An analysis of the relationship of Monitoring and Evaluation practices and performance of NGOs funded projects in Rwanda observed that M&E practices are amongst continuous routines in tracking of projects' performance (Nzayisenga, Wafula & Kirabo, 2022). The project performance was measured by obtaining the respondents' views on the project completion period, budget allocation and achievement of projects' objectives and their correlation on project planning, level of stakeholders' participation and M&E budget allocation as some of the M&E practices adopted.

M&E practices involve a range of activities, including setting goals and objectives, developing indicators, collecting data, analyzing data, and reporting of findings. Erasmus, (2018) and Hyvari (2016) ascertain that use of M&E practices by NGOs ensures accountability and transparency, demonstrates the impact of the project work, improves project management and decision-making, enhances stakeholder engagement, improves resource allocation and utilization of results and ultimately achievement of the organizational goal. Monitoring and evaluation practices have been of great importance in ensuring the performance of NGO funded projects across counties.

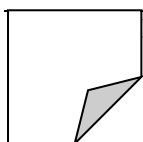
From the literature, Wajir County is among the counties which benefit mostly from the NGOs. To add on this existing literature, this current research study will investigate on the M&E practices and their impact on the NGOs funded projects in Wajir County. Specifically, the study will focus on the M&E planning, community participation in M&E process as well as communication of the M&E findings among other M&E practices in projects funded by other NGOs.

### **Influence of planning for Monitoring and evaluation process on performance of NGOs funded projects**

Monitoring and Evaluation are among the project management strategies adopted by organizations to aid project managers on tracking project performance progress. Planning for M&E is a critical element of the M&E system, which involve preparation for the project and program activities to monitor and evaluate the project aims and performance measurement pointers. To improve performance, it's crucial to identify the main problem areas during the planning process and take corrective action. In accordance to Jones, (2011) study findings, identification of project performance related problems depends on the strength of existing M&E system and how well the M&E practices are prior planned. The assertion of Micah, and Luketero, (2017) is that an M&E plan clearly describes the project's performance measurement indicators, project budget, project's stakeholders, data type, collection and analysis methods, dissemination and utilization of the findings. With this understanding, planning for M&E seems a prerequisite to project performance holding other factors constant.

Further literature review confirms M&E planning as an essential aspect on project management. From the findings of a study by Koot, (2000), a strong correlation of 0.607 on planning for M&E and project performance was realized. This established that planning for M&E activities is central in safeguarding the performance of development project. The study further suggested that there was need for organizations to align their organizational plans with M&E plans. The study also pointed out the importance of conducting routine data quality assessment for detection of difficulty areas with the staff. In support this observation, a study by Byegon, Gakuu, and Kidombo, (2022) confirmed that planning for M&E bears a predictive outcome on Performance of Health Outreach Program in Kibera Settlement, Nairobi, Kenya. A common conclusion is performance of projects is largely based on project planning and particularly on M&E practices to measure performance.

In project management, identification of the required knowledge roles and functions within project personnel is quite essential in the project planning process. An in-depth case study by Kimweli (2013) on the



role of monitoring practices donor-funded food security intervention projects in Kibwezi Kenya concluded that M&E planning for development projects activities is a major determinant of project success. It enables the project work to remain on track based on the budget allocated and time duration specified just as asserted by Kohli & Chitkara, (2008) that planning for M&E enables achievement of project objectives within the time and budget allocated. The authors further argue that M&E planning of any project should be done within the project planning phase. However, this contention is contradicted by (Nyonje et al 2012) who maintain that planning for M&E should be initiated when the project planning phase is completed but before the design phase. Despite these variations in views, there is a convergence in the scholarly literature which maintains that project plan should be inclusive of how the project activities will be assessed throughout the project implementation process.

The extensive literature done on variables related to this study, confirm related conclusions with minimal variations and gaps to be filled by other future studies. A 2007 study in Washington by Mackay and the World Bank revealed that, from a national standpoint, planning for monitoring and evaluation was needed in bettering project performance on government projects. Government initiatives that the World Bank has mainly sponsored were the study's main focus. The aim of the study was to make certain how project monitoring and evaluation could improve the performance of government projects. Descriptive statistics were used during the study, and the results revealed that majority of respondents thought there weren't enough monitoring and evaluation procedures in the different projects they were involved in.

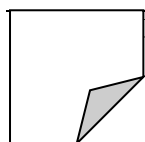
A positive embrace of M&E planning would contribute significantly towards achievement of the project anticipated results. From a quantitative study approach, Phiri, (2015) established that when an M&E Plan is developed during the project planning phase, it helps the project stakeholders to identify challenges early enough and mitigated actions are taken for improvement. The author recommends that for projects to achieve their objectives, they must have an articulated M&E plan for timely data collection and analysis of the results. In support of this research recommendation is the findings of a quantitative study by Wachaiyu (2016), that M&E planning component is a key driver of projects success. The author advocates for a stand-alone budget for M&E, use of professional M&E persons for quality information for project consumption. Close to this reflection is the assertion by Mulandi, (2013) who puts it clearly that M&E for projects should be well planned for to evade challenges related to low data quality, inadequate resources, and unskilled M&E persons. On the same brenthg, Cleland & Ireland, (2007) explain important considerations for an M&E plan: resources, capacity, timeline, and ethics among others. The authors insist that with considerations of the mentioned aspects, M&E planning will be well comprehensive with respect to coverage for the purposes of giving an oversight on project direction during execution.

According to the literature review, there exists a strong link between M&E planning and project performance, so if project performance is to be achieved, a thoughtful M&E plan must be put in place and fully carried out. A study on the effect of benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation planning, budgeting, and piloting on the effectiveness of internet banking was completed by Wausi in 2016. An exploratory and descriptive survey research design was used for this quantitative study. The author discovered that competitive benchmarking improved a company's goods, services, or operational procedures to boost its competitive strategy and effectiveness. Additionally, it was discovered that planning for monitoring and evaluation is an important component of any ICT-related program that should be taken into consideration during the planning stage, prior to a project's start. There is evidence from the literature reviewed that planning for M&E practices is a prerequisite of the entire projects' performance and therefore through a mixed method approach, this study will focus on M&E planning and its influence of the performance of NGOs funded projects in Wajir County.

### **Influence of Community engagement in the M&E process on Performance of NGOs funded Projects**

The second study objective is on engagement of the community in the collecting, analyzing and utilization of the material used in M&E. This objective is anticipated to measure the degree to which community engagement in M&E process influences performance of the NGOs funded projects. In development projects, especially those supported by NGOs, engaging th e community in the project process is an essential component of the monitoring and evaluation process. Community participation in M&E, according to Bamberger, Rao, and Woolcock (2010), can improve the quality and effectiveness of development projects, as well as promote project ownership and sustainability. Participation by the community can take several forms, including involvement in project planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Several studies have found that community involvement in M&E process has a positive relationship with improved project performance. Engaging community in the M&E process, for instance, was found to be positively associated with project outcomes in a study conducted by Njiraini and Njuguna (2017) in Kenya, such as increased access to healthcare services and higher agricultural output. Similarly, Mukasa and Kabonesa, (2019) discovered that including community members in the M&E process boosted transparency, accountability, and project relevance in Uganda where in most cases, projects outputs influenced the livelihoods of the community therein.



While community engagement in the M&E process has several potential benefits, some notable drawbacks have been noted in some studies empirically done on various contexts. Bamberger et al., (2010) discloses one significant problem as the limited ability of the community members to participate effectively in the M&E process. The author emphasizes on the point that some of the community members may lack the technical skills and expertise required to conduct rigorous M&E, such as data collection, analysis, and reporting. This may result in collection of degraded and misinforming data not suitable for project consumption.

In support of this assertion, a study by Khan, Iqbal, & Ahmed, (2017) identified another challenge of engaging community in the M&E process as the possibility of power dynamics influencing the M&E process. Certain community members, such as those with higher socioeconomic status or who are more vocal, may, in some cases, dominate the decision-making process, potentially marginalizing other community members. Furthermore, NGO staff and other external actors may exert significant power and influence over the M&E process, potentially limiting community members' ability to truly participate. The author recommends for use of M&E professional to maintain M&E data quality. These observations hold some contradictions, and therefore further studies along similar variables should be conducted in search of a consensus in the existing body of knowledge.

Public participation in carrying out projects fosters a sense of ownership that is crucial for a successful project outcome (Kumar, 2009). Community involvement in projects, according to Mansuri and Rao (2004), develops the fit between what a community needs and what it attains because the project will be more in line with the community's preferences. It also results in more cost-effective projects, better designed projects, more equitable distribution of project benefits, less corruption, better targeted benefits, and stronger citizen competencies to engage in self-initiated development activities. For ownership and sustainability, the author sees a need to involve the community in the M&E process of the projects they are invested in.

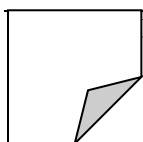
In addition, a study by Singh, Chandurkar, and Dutt (2017) showed that the main driving force behind development projects was monitoring and evaluation. This study's goal was to make certain how development projects would respond to monitoring and evaluation. However, the study's recommendation was that management should fully support and involve stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process as this will enable them to make wise and informed decisions that will enable the projects to be successful.

Despite conflicting findings various studies on community engagement, having community represented in M&E of projects has numerous benefits as identified from multiple studies. On the same strength, Barasa and Jelagat, (2013) claim that community engagement in project work allows people to build their capacities, identify and own the projects' outputs, resulting in efficiency and project sustainability after donor withdrawal. Similar findings from a quantitative study by Musa (2012) supported the notion that community involvement in project management results in the development of abilities for project preservation and sustainability. According to Okafor (2005), there is a strong correlation between community involvement in its own projects and increased efficiency, accountability, transparency, and service delivery. The author also notices that community involvement promotes donor coordination and can spark local service providers and private contractors.

The importance of including community participation in the M&E process in development projects is adequately supported by empirical data. Increased community involvement in M&E activities results in better project outcomes, according to research on 121 rural water supply projects from 49 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that examined the relationship between M&E practices and performance (Isham, Narayan, & Pritchett, 2015). However, there are arguments against the notion that boosting community involvement always results in better project outcomes.

According to the results of an empirical study by Mugo and Oleche (2015), heavily involving stakeholders could lead to unwarranted impact on M&E practices and lower the output quality of the M&E process. In a similar vein, Were (2014) makes the point that community involvement in projects can lead to start-up delays and community coercion. However, the results favor using an M&E system when implementing projects.

From a local perspective, Magondu, (2013), did a study to look into influencing factors of Monitoring and Evaluation performance among Development Projects in Machakos County. The author found that M&E budget allocation, stakeholders' participation, planning for M&E, and M&E capacity building correlated positively with projects' performance. However, importance of involvement of community project stakeholders in the M&E process is crowned by INTRAC, (2008) claim, that absence of space for community stakeholders in the M&E process allows external experts to measure projects' outcomes and impacts yet their interest is focused only on reporting results to the project donors without the end users' views in them. There seems to be a lot of research to be done to bring a balanced consensus on the issue of engagement of community in the M&E process of projects they have a stake in. The current study seeks to extend this research based on the projects funded by NGOs in Wajir County.





### **Influence of communication of M&E findings on performance of NGOs funded projects**

Monitoring and evaluation practices are multiple and their application vary across organizations. Communication of the M&E outcomes has been researched and its impact found relevant to projects' performance. For the sake of this study, communication of M&E findings as one of the M&E practices will be investigated based on the projects funded by NGOs in Wajir County. Communication is important in all organizations, but it is absolutely critical to the success of Monitoring and Evaluation; a major influencer of the organizations' performance Mugabe, & Kanda, (2018). The validity of a project monitoring and evaluation findings will maximize once received by the intended stakeholders.

Effective dissemination or communication of the M&E results to important internal and external stakeholders increases awareness and, as a result, contributes to the development of a favorable perception of the project, improving performance. The study findings of a study by Juma, (2021) confirm that monitoring and evaluation dissemination impact performance of youth projects to a great extent. This observation is closely supported by Bakewell, Adams, and Pratt, (2003) that to be useful, information acquired through monitoring and evaluation should be communicated to different stakeholders as per the project plan. However, responses to the Cassidy, Ball, and Cassidy (2018) study on the appropriateness of M&E findings dissemination channels suggested that in order to reach the intended goal, it was essential to assess whether these channels were well matched with the target users. M&E communication was also found to be more of an accountability issue than it was for other purposes, like decision-making, planning, and reflections to advocate for youth-friendly laws or policies. The channels for M&E communication should be regularly reviewed to make sure they are appropriate and properly matched to the targeted users both internally and externally, according to the authors.

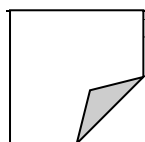
Project performance was found to be critically dependent on regular feedback and transparent communication of M&E findings among all stakeholders (Martin 2013). The study's respondents' perceptions were in line with those of Valle (2016), who wrote about the Mexican experience and noted that effective monitoring and evaluation depended on stakeholder involvement, clear communication of findings, and utilization of results. The performance of county-funded education projects was also said to be significantly influenced by project performance and planning for M&E. The study discovered majority of respondents were familiar with the M&E plan and were at ease talking about its components. A small portion of the respondents from the projects in the sample were unaware of the M&E plan.

However, the study revealed that a team from the community was educated and made aware of the project's key issues, including monitoring and valuing, budgeting, timeliness, and expected outcomes to watch for after the projects closure, prior to the start of the projects.

Planning for M&E communication has a positive effect on performance of construction Projects. This is an observation made by a quantitative study conducted by Setiawan, Hansen and Fujiono (2021) in Jakarta. The authors advise that the project managers should carefully manage the overall project communication process particularly during its initial planning stages. Concerning M&E communication channels, Amami and Beghini (2017) emphasise that despite the effectiveness of emails as a convenient communication technology, the capacity to send the meaning through the body language, rhythm and tone are compromised with the potential for content to be comprehended. In support of this reflection, the view of Cheng et al. (2016) is that face-to face communication across the project phases upsurges recipients' comprehension. Similarly, in multicultural project teams the inadequacy of face-to-face communication can lead to misinterpretation and the lack of non-verbal signals such as eye contact and body language leading to reduction of information validity.

The concept of dissemination of the M&E findings is essential as it encompasses conveying evidence on the project work progress to the project owners for improvement and learning. According to Patton's (2007) argument, an evaluation's design and methodology can be strong, but if the results are not effectively communicated to the stakeholders for use, the evaluation process is useless. Indeed, according to the World Bank, the value of monitoring and evaluation comes not just from carrying out any M&E practices but also from making the information available to improve government performance (Barca and Carraro, 2013). This implies that the importance of effectively communicating monitoring and evaluation results is beyond debate and that measures should be taken to guarantee that M&E results are provided to the appropriate individuals for use.

Communication of the findings obtained from project's M&E process links the project stakeholders and the project work progress. Adamchak, and Nelson (2000) have multiple reasons why communicating of M&E is indispensable. Their contention is that M&E results aid in improving project interventions because they put project staff in a learning mode as they comprehend how and why the program is working, assist project staff in advocating for additional resources because M&E results are crucial in influencing donors' decisions regarding resource allocation in terms of what to fund, and also cause changes in project implementation because these results are crucial in early identification of The information presented above makes it clear that, when applied, the M&E findings result in improved project performance. Project funded by the NGOs are susceptible failure factors and therefore this study specifies on the communication of M&E findings for accountability along with performance.



The messages concern how groups and individuals feel about the intervention or projects taking place, whereas communication for development is carried out as an M&E practice involving people's thoughts and feelings. The main goal of institutional communication, on the other hand, is to make sure that the institution's reputation and its image remain intact and trusted among both internal and external publics. As a result, the chief goal of M&E communication practices is on social and/or political change in policy or activities. The channels that are employed are crucial to M&E communication procedures. Results from M&E are frequently shared through channels that are open to all stakeholders. Public gatherings (like public lectures and neighborhood meetings), local media like newsletters, and multi-media like internet-based social media and community radios are some of these channels. However, institutional communication practices typically use printed materials, conferences, and websites to communicate.

A conclusion that can be drawn from the literature review is that effective M&E result communication involves teaching project staff about how the program is operating, how the project design is being followed, how project resources are being used, and how program implementation changes are being made. Because of this, the M&E result communication variable will include the usefulness of results in enhancing project design, implementation, intervention, and resource mobilization as indicators.

### **Theoretical framework**

Based on the results of the literature review, theoretical framework was provided. The theoretical framework was put to use in this study to further our understanding of monitoring and evaluation practices, which were crucial to the success of projects. The study predicted that M&E practices had a relationship with project performance and that project outcomes had a role to play in bringing changes to community livelihoods. So, the theory of change served as the foundation for this study.

### **Theory of change**

The concern of M&E is on how change happens within the projects' components and the surrounding environment due to the project's outcomes. The theory of change, popularized by Carol Weiss in 1995, gives an explanation of how an intervention results to an expected change, impacts or utility. This study adopts this theory of change to provide the foundation for arguing that the NGOs' funded projects bring a difference in communities' livelihoods. This theory makes the claim that the project team will be in a position to monitor and measure the preferred results and compare them to the intended changes by understanding what the project is trying to accomplish, how, and why.

The study's theoretical foundation will make it easier to conceptualize M&E practices as inputs whose results will be evident in the performance of NGOs-funded projects. Further, for the contribution of the community stakeholders in the M&E process, the development of this theory of change will help the NGOs funded projects' stakeholders own the resulting outputs and therefore sustain the projects' outcomes. The process can help develop ownership of the projects' outputs for a lasting intended change as advocated by Ika, (2009). Stakeholders will be able to point out the envisioned change of each activity and communicate the results to pertinent stakeholders by incorporating this theory into the planning of projects' issues, which will result in the success of the entire intervention. From this theory, the performance of the NGOs-funded projects in Wajir County will be examined in relation to project planning, project activities, communication logics of the M & E findings, and community stakeholder engagement.

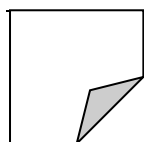
Despite the notable contribution of the theory of change to projects' success, its short falls have been pin pointed by some scholars. According to Reer (2009), the theory of change is only applicable to what is measurable, which could force an organization to focus on what is important rather than what is measurable and could easily encourage an excessively linear approach. Despite these drawbacks, the theory of change is thought to be fitting for this study because it only focuses on the M&E practices of NGOs-funded projects that are closely aligned with its components.

Conclusively, grounding this study on the theory of change, will guide in the identification of the M&E practices required to bring about desired long-term outcomes of all those community projects supported by Non-Government Organizations.

### **Stakeholder theory**

Stakeholder theor was advanced by Edward Freeman in 1984. this theory suggests that it is the role of organizations to consider the stakeholders welfare in their work process and procedure. according to Freeman, (1984), stakeholders deserve to be motivated through addressing their concerns and expectations. This will create value, gain support, and ensure the long-term success of projects

This stakeholder theory emphasis on the broader social impact of projects. By engaging the all stakeholders including the project beneficiaries, community projects are likely to perform exceedingly an the stakeholders' projects' ownership and sustainability are certain. (Costa & Andreaus, 2021). Stakeholder theory



also highlights the importance of building relationships and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, which can lead to improved project design, implementation, and sustainability.

despite the positive contribution of this theory to project implementation success, it is not without some limitation as argued by individual scholars. Reed et al.,(2009) argues that identifying and managing the diverse range of stakeholders can be challenging and time-consuming. Additionally, it may be difficult to balance the conflicting interests and priorities of different stakeholders, leading to potential conflicts and compromises. Critics also highlight the potential power dynamics between stakeholders, where certain groups may have more influence or decision-making authority than others. Despite these proposed shortcomings, stakeholder theory delivers a valuable basis for recognizing and addressing the interconnectivity and benefits that impact the performance NGOs funded projects of Wajir County.

### **Research Gaps**

According to the literature reviewed, M&E practices have an impact on how well projects specifically financed by NGOs perform. The M&E practices focused on by the current study were planning for M&E, engagement of the community in the M&E process, and communication of the M&E findings, all in a combined approach. Most of the scholarly studies reviewed have given attention to similar M&E practices although on a single variable approach and from different contexts.

Generalization based on findings of other studies performed was avoided and addressed as a gap in the literature. The study will address some of the knowledge gaps identified and add to the body of knowledge that provides the NGOs funded projects as the unit of analysis. Further, the reviewed literature was done in different contexts and findings cannot be generalized to Wajir County, hence the inspiration to bridge the gap. Other specific knowledge gaps identified in the literature are highlighted in the matrix.

## **III. Research Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The research methodology used in the study on the impact of monitoring and evaluation practices on how NGOs in Wajir County perform is described in this chapter. The term "methodology" refers to the processes and methods used in data collection and sampling for any given research project. The research design, target population, sampling design, sample size, data collection techniques, validity and reliability of research instruments, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations are all dealt with in this section.

### **Research Design**

The study employed a mixed method study approach where a descriptive survey study design was used. A research design, according to Anthony and Julie (2011), is a strategy that specifies how the research study will be conducted. This study benefited from a descriptive survey research design because enabled the collection of information on the current state of monitoring and evaluation practices in NGOs in Wajir County. Additionally, the survey revealed how much monitoring and evaluation procedures were used to enhance project performance from both qualitative and quantitative angles. Rasairo, (2010) successfully utilized a similar study research design from a mixed method approach in a study done in Sri Lanka.

### **Study Area**

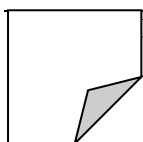
The study was done in Wajir County; one of Kenya's largest counties. It has borders with Garissa to the south, Marsabit, Moyale, and Isiolo Districts to the west, Ethiopia to the north, Somalia to the east, Mandera District to the north-east, and Somalia to the east. According to ALRMP (1999), the county's population was approximately 471,000 in 1998. Ajuraan, Degodia, and Ogaden are the three main Somali clans that live in the Wajir district.

### **Study Target Population**

Creswell, (2012) defines a population as a group of individuals with similar characteristics identifiable for study. For this population, the study population comprised of all the projects funded by the NGOs operating in Wajir County as per the time of study. The sampling frame was gotten from the Wajir county government's records of the five registered NGOs and the projects funded and operating under each of them. The five registered NGOs with the Wajir County government are as shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Distribution of the NGOs' funded projects operating in Wajir**

NGOs	Number of projects	Project staff
1. Mercy Corps	6	32
2. Islamic Relief	4	29
3. Safe the children	7	42
4. World vision	4	30



5. Wajir South Development association	4	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>173</b>

Table 3.1 displays the five Registered NGOs in Wajir County and the projects funded and operating under each of them. In total, there are 173 projects’ staff working within the identified 25 NGOs’ funded projects. The study also targeted other important stakeholders to the study, including the 25 project managers, the five M&E persons and one government representative. Table 3.2 displays the distribution of the study target population in the different categories.

NGOs’ funded projects stakeholders	Target Population
Projects’ staff	173
Project managers	25
M&E persons	5
Government representative	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>

**Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

The method that was used to the sample size for this study is described in this section along with the sample size determination itself. The study’s respondents, who provided both qualitative and quantitative data for triangulation, were included in the sample size.

**Study Sample Size**

The Nassiuma (2000) sample size formula was utilized in calculating a sample size of 110 projects’ staff. Along with this, 25 project managers, 5 M&E persons, and one government representative were purposively selected to give qualitative data to supplement the quantitative data from the project staff. The study sample was calculated at a 25% coefficient of variation and 1.5% margin of error as recommended by Nassiuma. The following formula adapted from Nassiuma was used to calculate the sample of this study

$$n = \frac{Ncv^2}{cv^2 + (N-1) e^2}$$

Where,

n = sample size,

N= population size

Cv= coefficient of variation

e = standard margin error

$$= 109.8419 = 110$$

**Sampling Procedure**

The 25 NGOs’ funded projects are not uniformly distributed in the five NGOs operating in Wajir County and therefore, a simple random sampling was used to select equal proportions of representative funded projects operating in Wajir County. The following Table 3.3 displays the study sample size as distributed in the study target population categories.

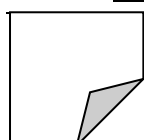
**Table 3.3: Study Sample Size distribution**

NGOs	Number-of projects	Project staff sample size per project	
Mercy Corps	6	32	32/173*110 21
Islamic Relief	4	29	29/173*110 18
Safe the children	7	42	42/173*110 27
World vision	4	30	30/173*110 19
Wajir South Development association	4	40	40/173*110 25
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>110</b>

The size of the study sample for each category is well shown in Table 3.3. The key informants including the project managers, M&E persons, and the Government representative were purposively sampled to give qualitative information rich data.

**Table 3.4: Study Sample Size Grid**

category	Target population	Sample size
Projects staff	173	110
Project managers	25	25
M&E team	5	5
Government rep	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>151</b>



The study therefore focused on the 151 study subjects as the representatives of the NGOs funded projects in Wajir County.

### **Research Instruments**

Research instrument are the data collection tools which enable the researcher to gather information from the study respondents in order to answer the research questions. This is in accordance to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). For this study, data was collected using two instruments to separately collect qualitative and quantitative data.

### **Semi-structured questionnaires**

The questionnaire comprised of a set of questions to address the study research questions. It was used to gather the views of the projects' staff on the M&E practices and performance of these projects. The questionnaire was divided into five sections representing the respondents' demographics and the study variables in the form of objectives themes.

A Likert scale aided in determining the level of agreement of the respondents with the questionnaire statements. The respondents' responses ranged from Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, and Strongly Agree = 5. The questionnaire was pretested before it is administered to the sampled respondents.

### **Study Interview Guide**

This is a list of questions that led the research in interviewing the key informants in an in-depth approach in order to obtain information rich data. The researcher was able to probe further and seek for clarity for data validity.

### **Pilot Testing of the research instrument**

This involved the pre-evaluating of the data collection tools to be certain of their validity and reliability. Before collecting data, a pilot test of the instruments was done with some projects staff who did not participate in the study. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) acknowledge a 10% of the study sample size to be used in the pilot testing of the questionnaire prior to data collection. The results aided in making any alterations and modifications on the questionnaire items to improve the validity.

### **Reliability and Validity of Research Instrument**

The validity and reliability of the data to be gathered using the questionnaire was ensured through the use of appropriate sampling and data collection techniques. The questionnaires was administered to a representative sample of the target population.

### **Validity of Research Instruments**

Validity is the attribute given to propositions or measurements based on how closely they jibe with accepted knowledge or reality. It describes the degree to which an instrument accurately asks the right questions (Frankel & Wallen, 2008). There are two ways to assess the instrument's content validity. To make sure that each item in the questionnaire measured what it is intended to measure, the researcher first went over the instrument's items with their supervisor. Second, a pilot study was used to evaluate the content validity of the instrument by pre-comparing the subjects' responses to the study's goals.

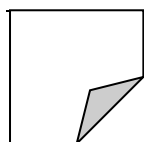
### **Reliability of Instrument of Data Collection**

When repeated measurements are made of the same individual under the same circumstances, a test is said to be reliable if it consistently produces the same results (Leedy, 2000). Scores from the test-retest technique, which were applied to a sample of study participants, were used to calculate the reliability coefficient. The instruments were deemed suitable for the study if their reliability coefficient is at least 0.5 (Neuman, 2000).

### **Data Collection Procedure**

A mix of quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the data collection process. As part of the survey exercise, the study sample was given questionnaires, and key informants such as the project managers, the M&E team, and the government representative were interviewed to collect qualitative data. All this was done with a close approval and permission from Mt Kenya University Research Centre and the Ministry of Higher Education via the National Council for Science and Technology.

The raw data collected from the respondents was then be analyzed through the supervisor's guidance ready for presentation off the findings before the panelist.



**Methods of Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves data exploration which entails data cleaning, inspecting, and modeling to explain the raw data (Strydom et al., 2005). The data collected from this research was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, means and standard deviations. Data analysis was facilitated by use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientist) Computer package. The results of the analysis were put in tables and figures. Qualitative data obtained from the key informants was analyzed thematically and presented in themes.

**Ethical Considerations**

The respondents' privacy was treated with utmost respect. Informed consent was obtained from the respondents before they participated in the study. Prior to distributing the study instruments, the researcher explained the study purpose to the respondents in a language they understood better. Each questionnaire had a code number for future reference; participants were not required to write their names on the form. Participants received assurances that the information they provide was kept private and used only for that purpose. Any respondents who wished to leave the study at any point or time were do so without penalty.

**Table 3.5: Operational Definition of the Study Variables**

Objectives	Variables	Indicators	Measuring levels/data type	Tools of data collections	Type/tool of Analysis
To study the impact of M & E practices on the performance of funded projects by NGOs in Wajir County	Dependent variable  Performance of-NGOs funded projects	period of completion -beneficiaries satisfaction Cost of the program implementation	Interval data	Questionnaire Interview guide	Descriptive and Thematic analysis
To establish the effect of planning for M&E on the performance of NGOs funded projects in Wajir County	Independent variable  Planning for M & E	M & E resource procurement.  M & E budget allocation	Interval (Parametric)	Questionnaire Observation guide Focus group guide interview guide	Pearson correlation Regression  thematic
To examine the impact of stakeholders' involvement in M & E on the performance of NGOs funded projects	Independent variable Stakeholders involvement	-Definition of M & E roles and responsibilities- -Size of the M & E team -Training of M & E team for skills	Ratio ordinal (parametric)	Questionnaire  Interview guide Focus group guide	Descriptive  Regression
To determine the influence of communicating M&E findings on the performance of NGOs funded projects	Independent variable  Communication of M & E findings	-Communication channels of the M & E findings -Frequency of data reporting -technology integration	Interval, Ratio	Questionnaire  Interview guide  FDGs	descriptive Regression  Thematic

**IV. Summary Of Findings, Discussion, Conclusion And Recommendations**

**Introduction**

Chapter five presents a summary of the study findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations. It also highlights areas for additional future research. The findings are discussed based on the study objectives highlighted in chapter one.

**Summary of the findings**

The study unit of analysis was performance of NGOs funded projects focusing on M&E practices, in particular M&E planning, engaging community in M&E process and communication of M&E findings in Wajir County of Kenya. Both qualitative and quantitative data for analysis were collected from different categories of respondents in terms of age bracket, gender and education level. This section provides details on the major findings of the study.

**Performance of NGOs Funded Projects in Wajir County**

From the study findings, there is a positive influence of M&E practices on performance of the NGOs funded projects. The community who are the projects' beneficiaries confirmed a high acceptance of the projects output, an indication that the NGOs funding these projects were likely to achieve their intended objectives. The findings showed that the resources allocated for the projects' work were available and adequate for projects

completion and delivery on time and within expected scope, withholding any other factors not explored by his study.

It is evident that the projects activities on implementation were in line with the community's priority and therefore once the projects are released to the community, they would be owned and well sustained to address the poverty gaps along the generations as earlier anticipated. However, the study revealed existence of some mild cultural differences on the choice of projects' locations and order of priorities. Divided responses and resistance to changes emanating from development community is confirmed widely by empirical studies, but with constant and strict monitoring, success of the projects work is assured. These study findings are in concurrence with the inference of a study by Kariuki, (2015) which described project performance as synonymous with project success, within schedule, cost and quality and meeting the client's expectation. This can only be achieved if M&E reports are of higher quality and giving the fundamental information concerning the projects being implemented by the NGOs in Wajir County.

Serra and Kun, (2014) in their study argued that project performance is measured by the achievement of budget and quality while at the same time delivering benefits sustainably to the satisfaction of the client. This harmonized with the study that project was delivered within the agreed timelines and had great influence on the baneberries of the project

### **Planning for M&E activities and Performance of NGOs Funded Projects**

As outlined in chapter one of this study, planning for M&E activities was among the investigated independent variables in search of its influence on the performance of the NGOs funded projects in Wajir County. The construct was measured using measurement indicators like budget allocation, M&E tools and techniques applied, and staff training on the M&E process. Despite varying perceptions from the respondents, the study established that planning for M&E has a positive influence on performance of NGOs funded projects in Wajir County.

The study findings suppose that planning for M&E activities is a significant role in determining the resource requirements for M&E activities. Non-Government Organizations that effectively utilize comprehensive planning processes can better allocate the necessary resources for successful M&E implementation. This finding highlights the need for organizations to enhance their planning procedures to better allocate adequate resources for M&E activities, develop M&E indicators, and put in place control mechanisms to track implementation of the projects' activities for results.

### **Community Engagement in the M&E Process on Performance of NGOs Funded Projects**

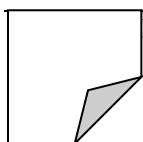
Community engagement in the M&E process is one of the independent variables used by the study to measure performance of the projects funded by the NGOs in Wajir. The study findings reflected an average level of agreement across all statements describing this study objective. Despite a diverse range of opinions from the respondents, the average mean strongly reflected a reasonable agreement on the positive influence of engaging community in the M&E process on performance of the NGOs funded projects. The quantitative findings were closely complemented by the qualitative information gathered from the key informants through the interview guides.

The diverse range of the responses designates that community engagement in M&E practices is increasingly gaining traction. Engaging community representatives in the M&E process offers valuable insights and improves the validity of evaluation findings for improved performance. Going with these findings, projects should continue to prioritize inclusive approaches to ensure local voices are heard since they are the projects' end users who are behind sustainability of the projects' sustainability. The consented findings outline the necessity for NGOs to actively identify, sensitize and assign competent personnel for M&E roles, a gap identified from the literature. Planning for M&E is critical for unbiased evaluation results and therefore, projects with compromised M&E planning activities should reexamine their implementation process to augment objectivity for improved performance.

Organizations should focus on addressing specific challenges identified to enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of their M&E practices towards improving their projects' performance. The findings provide valuable insights into the current state of M&E practices in NGO-funded projects. The findings emphasize the importance of skilled personnel, budgetary independence, community engagement, and stakeholder involvement. Addressing these aspects will contribute to more effective, transparent, and inclusive M&E processes for performance, aligning with the comprehensive literature in the field and in the existing body of knowledge.

### **Communication of M&E findings and Performance of NGOs funded projects**

The second focus of the study was on communication of M&E findings as an M&E practice influencing performance of the NGOs funded projects in Wajir. This construct was measured along a Likert scale through multiple statements which resulted to the findings discussed herein. The respondents portrayed a general



agreement that communication of M&E findings to the stakeholders has a positive influence on performance of the NGOs funded projects. This was strongly complemented qualitatively by the project managers among other study key informants who are mostly the recipients of the M&E information for decision making.

The findings also indicated some level of variations in the respondents' views with a number of them being neutral to the statements. Despite the relatively higher standard deviation, the implication of the respondents' positive perception on this statement is that planning for M&E communication methods is recognized, however, additional clarity and alignment among stakeholders could boost information sharing. These responses underscore the importance of proactive planning for disseminating M&E findings for informed decision making in line with donor expectations. Organizations should build robust communication strategies at the planning stage to ensure accurate and timely information flow. This will also improve stakeholders' engagement, leading to informed decision-making and project success.

### **Summary of the Findings**

The findings of the studied objectives adequately answered the study questions highlighted in chapter one. The analysis of the empirically gathered information show that planning for M&E activities through planned budget allocation, M&E tools and techniques used and training for M&E skills correlate positively with projects' performance. Planning for M&E at the project inception stage is essential in ensuring that all the required resources for effective M&E practices are available to enable valid data to inform decision making for improved projects' results. These findings call for adoption of M&E planning procedures to better allocate resources for M&E activities, train on basic M&E skills and specify on the effective M&E methods and tools to gather reliable data which will ultimately contributing to the success of their projects.

For the second objective that was to establish the extent to Community Engagement in M&E Process influences Performance of NGOs Funded Projects, the results indicated that involving stakeholders in data collection, data analysis and in utilization of the findings have a positive association with project performance. The responses of the respondents underscore the prerequisite for enhanced community involvement in project decision-making. When communities are excluded, projects risk overlooking local needs, preferences and priorities. Involving community representatives ensures that project outcomes are well aligned with local priorities and enhance project relevance. The NGOs funding community projects need to engage community members who are the end users. Once the projects' end users own the projects' output, sustainability follows closely. Likewise, addressing these aspects will contribute to more effective, transparent, and inclusive M&E processes for performance, aligning with the comprehensive literature in the field and in the existing body of knowledge

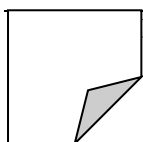
On the third objective regarding communication of M&E findings, the study concluded that conduction of M&E may be useful if only the findings are communicated to the stakeholders for consumption. The frequency of communication of the M&E findings, communication mode and channel determine influence how the information is received by the stakeholders. The study findings conclude that organizations funding community projects should build robust communication strategies at the planning stage to ensure accurate and timely information flow to reach the project stakeholders.

### **Conclusion**

The study examined influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on performance of NGOs funded projects in Wajir County. From the study findings, it is evident that M&E practices focussed by this study have a positive influence on the performance of projects. In particular, planning for M&E activities closely correlates with projects' performance. It is therefore crucial to include M&E aspect in the initial planning of the project implementation phases.

Likewise, engaging community in the M&E process is inevitable along with communication of the findings to the stakeholder for decision making and future project improvement of project work. Regular communication of M & E findings through varied channels will enhance timely information rich data to the targeted participants. Consequently, the stakeholders become motivated into making informed changes towards improved projects' performance.

In particular, the study findings support the fact that community engagement improves their perception towards projects' output. This enhances the ownership and thus sustainability of the projects' outputs after the donor withdrawal. Therefore, when planning for project implementation phases, project stakeholders should be actively involved. When planning for communication of the M&E findings, it is important to consider the suitable communication frequency, most ideal and convenient formats and channels to avoid unnecessary inhibitions to performance. As supported by the literature, communicating M & E information to the stakeholders is a critical step in the management process and is necessary to strengthening performance strategies on the projects being executed.





Conclusively, the study established that monitoring and evaluation practices influenced performance of community projects.

### **Recommendations**

From the study findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made regarding monitoring and evaluation practices of the study focus.

1. The development of monitoring manual framework should be inclusive and involve the key stakeholders and in the development of data collection tools. This will increase data collection tool applicability for the monitors and evaluators
2. The researcher also recommends that continuous capacity training on monitoring and evaluation will enhance M&E experts with more skills in collecting relevant data and developing quality report. The use of ICT will also improve response time of programme implementation team thereby increasing performance of the projects.
3. For funding of third-party monitors to have great influence on service delivery of school feeding programme, adequate funds should be allocated for monitoring and evaluation and funds disbursement should be timely.

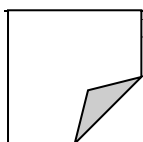
### **Areas of Further Studies**

The study suggested future study areas in relation to monitoring and evaluation practices on performance of NGOs funded community projects . The study was limited in terms of planning for M&E, engagement of stakeholders and communication of M&E findings, in the projects being implemented. These includes.

1. The role of organization's financial systems and governance structure on monitoring and evaluation of projects.
2. Influence of ICT in monitoring and evaluation systems towards project' performance

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