

STAKEHOLDERS' PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING AND DESIGNING OF LOCALLY BASED UNDP PROJECTS: A CASE OF MINISTRY OF DISASTERS AND REFUGEES AFFAIRS (MIDIMAR)

Jolly Iribagiza

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology,
Kigali, Rwanda.
eMail: gizajo@yahoo.com

Eugine Ndabaga

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology,
Kigali, Rwanda.
eMail: ndabagav@yahoo.com

Dr.Mike A.Iravo

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology,
Kigali, Rwanda.
eMail: miravo@jkuat.ac.ke

JOSEPH ODUOR

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology,
Kigali Campus- Rwanda
eMail: joekoduor@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This research is on stakeholders' participation in planning and designing of rural based UNDP project in Rwanda. A lot of stakeholders including government, private companies, international donor agencies, and civil society have come up with interventions to respond to challenge of fighting this. Among the key players in this fight against disasters are MIDIMAR and civil society organizations, commonly known as NGOs. These organizations play a crucial role of bringing disaster services to the communities where the other players may not reach or may not be effective. The services the NGOs offer to communities are normally delivered as projects. Effective monitoring and evaluation of projects is usually one of the ingredients of good project performance and provides means of accountability, demonstrating transparency to the stakeholders and facilitates organizational learning for benefit of future projects. This study sought to determine how effectively the disaster projects implemented based locally NGOs are monitored and evaluated. The study investigated the monitoring and evaluation practices of the NGOs and compared them with the best practices. It also sought to identify the challenges faced in carrying out this function.

The target population of this study is composed of around 150 employees in the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR).

Data for the study was collected using the descriptive survey method where a questionnaire was administered to project managers and monitoring and evaluation officials of MIDIMAR.

The study also identified quite a number of challenges the Ministry faced in carrying out monitoring and evaluation of the projects they faced. These challenges made it hard for the NGOs to effectively monitor and evaluate the projects they implemented. The most significant ones included; inadequate finances, lack of expertise, stringent and multi-donor reporting requirements, lack of baseline data.

The study made some recommendations in order to mitigate the challenges faced by the NGOs. The study found out that, all in all the projects implemented by UNDP did not fully incorporate rural stake holders in planning and designing of rural based projects in Rwanda. Data collection methods : Two basic techniques will be used to collect data, are namely documentary review and questionnaire.

Concerning the research instruments, the researcher will use thematic and comparative analysis as well as descriptive statistics. While using thematic analysis data will be presented and discussed through the themes emerging from data collected. Comparative analysis will be used to analyze data by comparing the responses emerging from different respondents as emphasized by Dawson (2009). Descriptive analyses important for making research judgments on the data collected for meaningful conclusions and recommendations. Since the study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature meaning data is in form of words, opinions and descriptions, data will be analyzed while reflecting on what other authors have written about the subject before so as to make the analysis comprehensive. This will be done to ensure the research problem is answered and the gaps encountered in the field are filled. Data analysis will be a continuous process right from the first time in the field till the end.

This study specifically aimed at examining the relationship between the importance of local stakeholders' involvement in planning and designing of locally based UNDP projects and level towards quality disaster management.

1.0 Background of the study

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations' global development network. Headquartered in New York City, it advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It provides expert advice, training, and grant support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries (wikipedia, 2014).

To accomplish the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and encourage global development, UNDP focuses on poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS, democratic governance, energy and environment, social development, and crisis prevention and recovery. Under these areas, special projects are undertaken to meet the prevailing needs to society and these call for local stakeholders to help meet the project requirements in order to have the commendable results (Crawford, 2002).

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) found in the Republic of Rwanda is one of the government ministries which are mandated in mitigating issues such as;

- i) Taking lead in formulation, coordination, control, direction of disasters management, refugee affairs policies, political guidance, supervision of the humanitarian assistance in emergency situations and mobilization of appropriate resources accordingly in order to promote disaster awareness culture and handling timely of Rwandan and foreign refugee affairs and to generate visionary answers to challenges related to the both areas at all levels,
- ii) Participating actively in operational process aimed at boosting disaster management capability for sustainable regional stability and development and to advise the government, stakeholders and other interested partners.

MIDIMAR having missions related to UNDP and actively involves in the functions as seen above qualifies to become our case study in building national and local capacities for disaster risk management.

Stakeholder engagement (ShE) within projects is particularly noticeable in complex, trans-disciplinary research that is associated with high levels of uncertainties and complexities, such as climate change research (Blackmore, 2007). Depending on the project, research may necessitate studies that span the academic, policy, economic, and civic communities (Pohl, 2007; Papadopolous and Warin, 2007).

The rationale behind this engagement may include, amongst other issues, compliance with a funder's request; a need to add legitimacy to the project work; the wish to incorporate the values of people who in some ways 'represent' (a section of) the wider public; and the desire to reduce stakeholder scepticism in the science, when forming, assessing and disseminating the project (Norgaard & Baer, 2005). There are a wide range of actors who may be included as stakeholders for example: policy makers, members of the public, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and these are frequently engaged in the process and outcomes of a given venture.

1.1.UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations' global development network. Headquartered in New York City, it advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It provides expert advice, training, and grant support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries (wikipedia, 2014).

2.0 Statement of the problem

According to (Cresswell, 2003), “a research problem is the question that exists that leads to a need for the study because no answers were found within the literature reviewed, in theory, or in practice”

Projects have always required planning, management and control to deliver the desired outcome, from the building of the pyramids in ancient Egypt to the implementation of new information and communication technology (ICT) systems in the modern world, satisfying key stakeholder requirements has been central to achieving a successful outcome (Bourne, 2006). Today, many different types of organizations have embraced the concept of projects as a mechanism for delivering change and to find a way of involving stakeholders in planning and designing of projects.

Jiang & Klein, 1999; Lemon, Bowitz, Burn & Hackney, 2002; Meredith & Mantel, 2000; Sauer, 1993 postulate that any failure is strongly related to a stakeholder’s perception of project value and their relationship with the other project stakeholders. The key to forming successful project relationship is understanding that different stakeholders have different expectations of the project and different definitions of project success. Thus a project’s success or failure is strongly influenced by how well it meets its stakeholder’s expectations and their perceptions of its value (Greenwood, 2003). Stake holder expectations and perceptions can be influenced by the capability and willingness of project manager to engage effectively with the project’s stakeholders and manage organizational politics.

Local stakeholders in Rwanda have almost been involved in all UNDP related projects during planning and designing for instance like the Gikongoro Agricultural Development Project but still big challenges exist for the project success (IFAD, 2010). . It is believed that sometimes stakeholders fail to fully understand the complexity of contexts which sometimes is believed to fully retard project success. From Sensitization of stakeholders down to the financial management and resource allocation, Projects still need proper implementation for their success. Stakeholders have been attributed to playing an important role to the success of every activity being run in the project as stated by (Bourne, 2006) It is for these reasons that the researcher seeks to find out the actual importance of local stakeholder involvement in planning and designing of locally based UNDP projects.

1. Objectives of the Study

1.1 General Objective

To find out the importance of local stakeholder involvement in planning and designing of locally based UNDP projects.

1.2 Specific Objectives

- i) To find out how UNDP related projects carry out planning for their projects.
- ii) To find out if UNDP related projects involve stake holders in the planning process
- iii) To identify if there is any relationship between a project success and stake holders involvement in planning.

2. Research Questions

- i) How do UNDP related projects carry out planning?
- ii) Do UNDP related projects involve stakeholders in the planning process?
- iii) Is there a relationship between project success and stakeholder involvement in the planning process?

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research Design

According to Grinnell and William (1992:41) a research is a careful systematic study or investigation in some fields of knowledge, undertaken to establish some facts or principles. The research design adopted for this study is a case study design. According to Larry B. Christensen (1971), a case study is an intensive description and analysis of single individual, organization or events based on information obtained from a variety of sources such as interviews, documents, tests results and archival records. This study will be undertaken using a cross-sectional survey which will be descriptive in nature.

3.2. Target population

Population is a group or category of human beings, animals and other objects that have one or more characteristics in common as the target population, Kenneth (2000). Under this section the research specified on the target population, the sampling technique and the sample size. The total population of this study was composed of around 150 employees in the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR).

3.3. Sampling Techniques and Sample size

As the number of population was finite, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula. Cochran (1963) quoted by Neerchal, Lacayo & Nussbaum, (2007), the sample size determination using Cochran's formulas assumes alpha level at 0.05, acceptable error at 5%, and estimates the standard deviation 0.5. Using the formula;

$$N_o = \frac{t^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where t = value for selected alpha level of 0.025 in each tail = 1.96 the alpha level of 0.05.

- a) N_o is the sample size;
- b) t^2 is the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area at the tails (1 - equals the desired confidence level, e.g., 95%), the value for z is found in statistical tables which contain the area under the normal curve;

- c) d^2 is the desired level of precision;
- d) P is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population;
- e) q is $1-p$.

$$N_o = \frac{1.96^2(0.5)(0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384$$

Because a given sample size provides proportionately more information for a small population than for a large population, the sample size N_o has been adjusted using the following equation:

$$N_1 = \frac{N_o}{(1 + N_o/\text{Population})}$$

- a) N_1 is the adjusted sample size,
- b) N_o is the sample size from formula 1
- c) where population size =

$$N_1 = \frac{(384)}{(1 + 384/56)} = 49$$

As $N_1 = 49$. Now adjusted sample size is **49**, which was the final sample size used in this study. *Source; Neerchal, Lacayo, and Nussbaum, (2007).*

Concerning the components of the sample, the researcher used purposive sampling technique for data collection and this enabled him acquire much data from respondents during the research study. The sampling design will be stratified (to take care of the different strata) and simple random sampling to pick respondents without bias. The respondents will be randomly selected in order for the target population to be equally represented.

The sample size of 49 out of 56 total population will be used in the study. The individuals under study are the employees of MIDIMAR. The population used totals to 56 individuals upon which a sample was made to represent other members of the ministry.

3.4. Research Instruments

During this research two data collection instruments will be used and these are Questionnaires and interview needed to get the information.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire will be used to collect the needed information. It is an information gathering technique that gathers the information about attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and characteristics from several respondents, organizations that may be affected by a given phenomenon or a system.

In this method a researcher will prepare questions which are in line with the research objectives and those questions included: open-ended questions, multiple-choice questions and closed-ended questions.

Open-ended questions: This will give freedom to respondents of offering any replies that seem appropriate in light of the questions.

Multiple-choice questions: A list of possible answers will be given for which the respondents will choose from.

3.5.2 Interview

This is an information gathering technique where the moderator asks questions to the interviewee in order to get the information needed at his satisfaction. This is a face to face method of data collection which involves interactions between two or more people with a specific purpose (Kumar, 2005). Specific questions will be asked in relation to the topic and responses will be expected and noted down. They will be structured questions designed in form of an interview guide.

An interview guide will be designed to obtain in-depth information from key respondents. Interviewees will be probed and information obtained to help supplement data from questionnaires. The Head of departments, deputies and coordinators will be interviewed by the researcher since they will be at the focal point of managing the appraisal process. Interviews will help to test for areas hard to investigate by the use of the questionnaire approach. Interviews further will help test for variations in responses as suggested by Amin et al (2003)

4. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The interpretation, discussion and assessment of the data were carried out in relation to the objectives of the study and in comparison with the cited literature review.

Major findings of the study are summarized in the following subsections organized according to the objectives of the study.

The respondents were asked a number of questions that sought to determine the practices related to the design of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plans for the projects they implemented. The findings are shown in the table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Mean scores for questions on design of M&E plans

Question	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
1	19	11	consistently done
2	16	16	consistently done
8	87	86	consistently done
9	16	17	consistently done

Primary Data

Baseline studies

Question 1 sought to determine how often the MIDIMAR conducted studies to establish the baseline data or condition of the communities before they implemented their projects. With a mean score of 2.19 it is evident that this practice was inconsistently done by the respondents. The standard deviation of 1.11 is interpreted to mean a wide variation amongst the respondents.

Whereas some of the respondents conducted baseline surveys consistently, others never conducted any on the projects they implemented. The inconsistency in carrying out baseline studies by the institution means that the projects they implement cannot be adequately evaluated. This finding is consistent with the studies by Mansfield, (1996): Riddell *et al.* (1997) as cited by Rick, (2001) who found failure to obtain baseline data to be very prevalent.

The baseline study facilitates determination of the condition of the community prior to the implementation of the project in order to compare with condition after implementation (Webb and Elliot, 2002: and Gyorkos, 2003). This can help assess the impact of the project in achieving the set objectives. In absence of data about of the baseline condition of the community, the MIDIMAR would find it very hard to measure the impact of their projects (Hughes-d' Aeth 2002).

Question 2.2 sought to determine whether the respondents had a plan that guided monitoring and evaluation of the projects they were implementing. With a mean score of 2.63, this practice was inconsistently done by the respondents. The standard deviation of 1.16 implies a wide variation between the respondents. Whereas MIDIMAR consistently had plans guiding monitoring and evaluation, the others never had any plans.

The inconsistency in having monitoring and evaluation plans implies that not all the projects implemented by the respondents are effectively monitored and evaluated. Projects without monitoring and evaluation plans are not effectively monitored and evaluated (PASSIA, 2004: and McCoy *et al.*, 2005). This is because monitoring and evaluation will only be done at the whims and discretion of the project manager without any prior laid out procedure and plan.

Logical framework approach

Question 2.8 sought to determine how often the respondents used the logical framework approach (log frame) in aiding the monitoring and evaluation of projects. With a mean score of 1.87 this practice was consistently done on the projects implemented by the respondents. The standard deviation of 0.86 implies that a minimum variation amongst the respondents meaning that majority consistently used the logical framework approach in aiding monitoring and evaluation.

Using the logical framework approach (LFA) aids in identifying the logic behind project elements and performance measurement, how they are related and the underlying assumptions. Use of the LFA makes the planner's of the project to think from the onset in terms of measuring performance i.e. monitoring and evaluation, by identifying the measures and criteria for success during the planning stage (Vannopen, 1994: as cited by Aune, 2000). This finding can be explained by the fact that majority of the donors insist that the NGOs use the LFA to design their projects as condition to funding (Aune, 2000: Reidar, 2003: and Kaplan and Garent, 2005).

Project schedule

Question 2.9 sought to determine whether monitoring and evaluation activities were part of the project schedule. With a mean score of 2.10, it is evident that this practice was inconsistently done by the respondents. A standard deviation of 1.17 implies a wide variation between the respondents. Whereas some respondents consistently included monitoring and evaluation activities in the project schedules, others did not.

Inconsistence in the practice of scheduling monitoring and evaluation activities may have an implication of having the activities missed out. This is because the activities are done at the discretion of the project manager. This would result in ineffective and inadequate monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Stakeholder involvement

The respondents were asked which stakeholders were involved in the design of the monitoring and evaluation plans for the projects they implemented and how often they were involved. Table 4.2 shows the findings were involved. Table 4.2 shows the findings

Table 4.2: Mean scores for the involvement of stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Donors	1.55	0.81	Inconsistently done
Staff	2.81	0.98	Inconsistently done
Community	3.22	0.96	Consistently done
Beneficiaries	2.58	1.31	Inconsistently done

Primary Data

Donors

Table 4.2 shows that the involvement of the donors in the design of the monitoring and evaluation had a mean score of 1.55. This means that donors were consistently involved on all projects in this process and with a standard deviation of 0.81 implies a small variation within the respondents. This can be explained by the fact that since donors finance the project activities of these NGOs to a large extent then they always dictate how the projects should be monitored and evaluated. This is as a way of tracking the use of their resources.

Project staff

The table shows that the involvement of project staff in the design of the monitoring and evaluation had a mean score of 2.81 which implies that their involvement was inconsistent on the projects implemented by the respondents. With a standard deviation of 0.98 there was a small variation between the respondents. The implication of this is that staffs do not have adequate input into this process. All that they do is implement the project activities and collect monitoring and evaluation data as passive participants. The opportunity to incorporate the perspective of the staff that is at the forefront in implementing project activities is not fully optimized.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study investigated the monitoring and evaluation practices and challenges faced by the Ministry implementing disaster projects in Rwanda. The study findings showed that the project implemented were not effectively monitored and evaluated.

The study also unearthed the lack of funding faced in this area of disaster. This was mainly as a result of lack of expertise in this area. Recommendations were made in order to improve the monitoring and evaluation of projects implemented.

This study was undertaken to examine the relationship between the importance of local stakeholders involvement in planning and designing of locally based UNDP projects and level towards quality disaster management. The study specifically aimed at assessing the stakeholders' level of participation in the development/and implementation process.

Stakeholders' involvement during the process leads to better environmental assessment, and thus to the formulation of projects that deliver more social benefits, fewer environmental costs and greater economic and financial benefits. Yet the meaning of stakeholder involvement is peculiar in the degree to which it is used - too often. Stakeholders are perceived synonymously with 'local people', and too often are highly extractive forms of interrogation camouflaged under the cloak of 'participation'. It is one thing to be engaged in a two-way and transparent dialogue, but quite another to be accosted on a street by a clipboard-wielding foreign consultant.

Sadly, the latter remains the norm, and not the exception. Proponents and their consultants continue to avoid engaging meaningfully with different stakeholders, including government agencies and the business community, other than at the most superficial level. Furthermore, they continue to engage with a very narrow range of possible stakeholder groups. Effective MIDIMAR guidance on stakeholder involvement will only emerge from institutional learning processes and critical reflections on past performance.

5.2 Recommendation

The research study was limited to comparing the monitoring and evaluation practices of local NGOs with the best practices in order to determine how effectively the disaster projects were monitored and evaluated. It also determined the challenges the NGOs faced in monitoring and evaluating the projects they implement.

Further research would be required to determine empirically the actual impact on the performance of the projects and hence the fight against disaster by the inadequacies identified in the monitoring and evaluation practices of the NGOs.

Since monitoring and controlling projects and evaluating them should be an integrated with project planning and design. Further research should try investigating the project design and planning practices of the NGOs.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE TO MIDIMAR

Dear Respondent,

I am by names of IRIBAGIZA JOLLY, a finalist at, presently conducting a research on “Stakeholders' Participation in Planning and Designing of Local based UNDP Projects” a thesis to be submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Master’s Degree in of science in project management. The purpose of the research is purely academic, you are requested to respond to all questions as honestly and accurately as possible to enable me make appropriate conclusions and recommendations. I assure you that the information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You may not indicate your name on the questionnaire as the study is anonymous. I sincerely appreciate your contributions in terms of time and effort used to make this research a success.

1.0 Monitoring and evaluation plan

1.1 Before embarking on Disaster project you normally conduct a study to establish baseline data or condition of the community on:

- a) All projects
- b) Some projects
- c) Very few projects
- d) Never

1.2 You normally have a plan that guides monitoring and evaluation when implementing the Disaster projects that you carry out on:

- a) All projects For some
- b) projects
- c) Very few projects
- d)
- e) Never

1.3 If your response above is never what is the reason that prompts not to have the plan?

- a) Projects are too small
- b) We do not know how to design one

Please mention any other reason if not included

1.4 Normally the following stakeholders are involved in planning the monitoring and evaluation of the projects

	All projects	Some projects	Few projects	Never
a) Donors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Project implementation staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Project beneficiaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) We do not involve any stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.5 The following aspects are normally specified in the plan that guides monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

	For all projects	For some projects	For few projects	Never
a) Data to be collected	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Frequency of data collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) An individual in charge of M&E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Schedule of M &E activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Plan for dissemination of findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Individuals for specific M&E activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.6 Monitoring and evaluation activities have:

a) A separate budget with a special vote	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) No special vote arrangement	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.7 Monitoring and evaluation activities are normally allocated a percentage of the total project budget. This is in the region of:

a) Less than 5%	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) 5-9%	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) 10%	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) More than 10%	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) No specific	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.8 Monitoring and evaluation activities are part of the project schedule:

a) For all projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) For some projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) For a few projects	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

2.0 Project monitoring and evaluation process implementation

2.1 The project finances are normally monitored by comparing the planned budgeted expenditure against actual expenditure

- a) Every month
- b) Every 3 months
- c) Every 6 months
- d) Every 12 months
- e) Never

2.2 We normally monitor and control the activities of the field staff (e.g. peer educators)

- a) Every week
- b) Every month Every 3 months
- c) Project end
- d) Never
- e) We don't have field staff

2.3 How often do you compare planned project activities schedule against actual schedule in order to determine project schedule performance?

- a) For all projects
- b) For some projects
- c) For a few projects
- d) Never
