
ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES ON ITS SUSTAINABILITY AFTER ITS CLOSURE: A CASE STUDY OF PROBA NGORORERO DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the effect of project Activities on its sustainability after its Closure, using a case study of PROBA (Proximity Business Advisory) project, Ngororero District Rwanda. The study is set out to identify how the finances from PROBA business counselling, coaching and trainings organized lead to the sustainability of young entrepreneurs. Rwandan local government project or organizations have taken it upon themselves to support young entrepreneurs through offering them finances, training on how to run the business, however the problem of sustainability has remained chronic where young entrepreneurs fail to run their business when the supporters' mission is over, because of the end of project funds. The study was set out to find out how PROBA encourage its members to work as a team to sustain their activities and to establish the relationship between the contribution of PROBA of Ngororero District and youth entrepreneurship sustainability after its closure. In this research a total of 60 respondents were chosen from 148 members of Ngororero District. The study used a descriptive design using case study method for analyzing research objectives. Stratified random sampling technique was used to divide respondents into groups. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire that was prepared and administered by the researcher. Data was than analysed and tested using descriptive statistics to test the relationship between the variables. Study found that finances provided by PROBA enabled the beneficiaries to start their entrepreneurial initiatives. Indeed the initiatives were attributed to the finances from PROBA; there is still need for more finances to strengthen the businesses further. There was evidence that despite the fact that the finances were sufficient to start the initiatives, there was still need for more finances to sustain and strengthen the initiatives further.

Key words: Sustainability, Finances, Entrepreneurs.

1. Introduction

Youth definitions are contextual, depending on the social, cultural, political and economic environment. According to Durham, Deborah (2000), the concept “youth” is a “social shifter”, it is a relational concept situated in a dynamic context, a social landscape of power, knowledge, rights, and cultural notions of agency and personhood. The experiences of youth in various socio economic and political conditions and their outcomes largely define youth.

In African countries, the participation of youth empowerment in small and medium enterprises is very encouraging and viewed as one of the prime contributor to the Gross development product (GDP) (Gurneet S., Rachel B, 2008). However, researchers revealed that youth entrepreneurs face many problems in establishing their own businesses; they lack abilities, skills and expertise in certain business matters. Many of the issues mentioned appear to relate to youth’s relative lack of exposure to the world of business (Amzad H. Kamal N. Asif Z.Rana N. (2009). However, many countries, especially developing countries can no longer be the sole supporter and ensure the sustainability of youth projects due to the increasing demands on governments to meet the needs of their citizens.

The government of Rwanda has not sufficient economic ability to solve all social and economic problems that is the reason why several local and international non-government organizations and government projects have been conducted and called upon for assistance to improve the welfare of its citizens, (Private Sector Federation 2008). PROBA is a scheme designed to reach out to rural micro and small enterprises with the support of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) through PPPMER II Project (Project pour la Promotion des Petites et Micro Entreprises Rurales).

In this regards, Rwandan Project organizations have taken it upon themselves to support youth empowerment through offering them finances, training, and materials among others.

The training has been a blend of civic education and business Skills organized and delivered through collaboration with “Itorero ry’Igihugu” and other partners like the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the Rwanda Development Board, the Ministry of Defence, the Rwanda National Police, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, the Business Development Fund, the Association of Microfinance in Rwanda (AMIR) and the Rwanda Cooperative Agency

The Proximity Business Advisory (PROBA) Program has been developed as part of the PPPMER II project in MINICOM supported by IFAD to further develop and institutionalize technical, business and cooperative development activities developed by PPPMER.

2. Statement of the Problem

In African countries, the participation of youth empowerment in small and medium enterprises is very encouraging and viewed as one of the prime contributor to the Gross development product (GDP) (Gurneet S., Rachel B, 2008). Researchers revealed that youth entrepreneurs face many problems in establishing their own businesses; they lack abilities, skills and expertise in certain business matters. Many of the issues mentioned appear to relate to youth’s relative lack of exposure to the world of business (Amzad H. Kamal N. Asif Z.Rana N. (2009). However, many countries, especially developing countries can no longer be the sole supporter and ensure the sustainability of youth projects due to the increasing demands on governments to meet the needs of their citizens. That is why the PROBAS are taking active and complementary role in supporting youth entrepreneurs (Lekorwe and Mpabanga, 2007). Consequently, the interest in youth empowerment projects has grown in many developing countries because the persuasion is that youth empowerment projects are more flexible, adaptive and quick to respond to peoples’ needs than governments (Likorwe and Mpabanga, 2007). PROBA is one of the project which supported young entrepreneurs. Therefore the researcher in this study tries to explore the sustainability of activities of PROBA after its closure.

3. Research Objective

3.1 General Objective

The General objective of the study is to assess the sustainability of PROBA project activities after its closure in Ngororero District.

a. Specific Objectives

- i.** To identify how the financial support given by PROBA contribute the sustainability of activities after its closure in Ngororero District.
- ii.** To establish the effects of training and coaching organized by the PROBA on youth entrepreneurs sustainability.
- iii.** To find out how working in groups contribute to sustainability of PROBA activities
- iv.** To establish how business counselling and mentoring contribute to sustainability of activities after closure of project

4. Research Questions

- i.** How do supports given by PROBA contribute the sustainability of its beneficiaries to run their business after its closure at Ngororero District?
- ii.** Does the training and coaching organized by the PROBA lead to entrepreneurs' sustainability by the beneficiaries?
- iii.** How does working in groups lead to sustainability of PROBA activities after closure of project?
- iv.** Does business counselling and mentoring lead to sustainability of project activities?

5. Research Design

Study used descriptive research design using case study method. Both quantitative and qualitative analysis is done used for the data collected.

6. Target Population

The target population of this study was total number of 148 beneficiaries of PROBA in Ngororero District

7. Sample Design

The sample size of this study was 60 respondents calculated on the base of Solvin's method.

7.2 Sampling Techniques

The selection of the respondents was based on probability sample random sampling where each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected was used while conducting the research.

8. Data Collection

8.1 Data collection Instruments

To make this research successful, the data to be collected was include both primary and secondary data.

To collect primary data, the researcher used a questionnaire as data collection instrument to obtain the information that relates to the opinions, perceptions, intensions, and thoughts of beneficiaries of the PROBA about the effect of project activities on its sustainability after closure of PROBA.

Secondary data from text books, journals, magazines, reports, dissertations of other students and internet materials is also used to make this research factual and complete.

12. Data analysis

The raw data collected from primary sources by the researcher is edited and coded, is statistically treated and drafted in tables, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) is used to produce results that are further interpreted.

13. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Financial support given by PROBA and Sustainability of its Activities

13.1 Financial support sufficiency

Table 1: Respondents Views on Finances were Sufficient

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	48	48%
Agree	47	47%
Not Sure	1	1%
Disagree	2	2%
Strongly Disagree	2	2%

Source: Field data (2015)

Respondents were asked if the finances provided by PROBA were sufficient. Findings reveal that 48% strongly agree that the finances were sufficient, 47% agree that the finances were sufficient. This implies that the finances were sufficient as only 2% of the respondents disagree.

10.2 Financial support helped establish business

Table 2: Respondents Views on Finances helped to establish business

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	32	32%
Agree	50	50%
Not Sure	15	15%
Disagree	1	1%
Strongly Disagree	2	2%

Source: Field data (2015)

The researcher inquired on whether the finances provided by PROBA helped the beneficiaries establish their businesses. Beneficiaries were asked whether they agreed to the statement that the finances provided by PROBA were sufficient. Findings reveal that 32% of the respondents strongly agree to the statement, 50% agree, 15% were not sure while only 1 % strongly disagreed. This means that clearly the finances provided were sufficient.

Respondents generally attributed the institution of their businesses to the financial provision by PROBA. This means that the project was effective in enabling the beneficiaries to establish their businesses.

10.3 Need for more financial support

Table 3: Respondents Views on need for more financial support

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	13	13%
Agree	27	27%
Not Sure	37	37%
Disagree	13	13%
Strongly Disagree	10	10%

Source: Field data (2015)

The researcher sought to find out if there was need for more funding for the businesses according to the respondents view. Respondents were therefore asked to give their views on whether there was need for more funding. Findings from the study show that; 27% agree that there was need for more funding while only 13% disagree that there was need for more funding.

Generally extra money is needed majority of respondents were however not sure if they needed more money or not. However extra money would be a welcome for the expansion of a business.

10.4 Business survival

Table 4: Respondents Views on Business Survival after Funding from PROBA

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	32	32%
Agree	36	36%
Not Sure	13	13%
Disagree	17	17%
Strongly Disagree	2	2%

Source: Field data (2015)

Respondents were asked if they believe that their business would survive after the funds from PROBA ended. Findings from the study show that; 32% of respondents strongly agree, 36% agree and only 17% disagree.

This finding clearly means that the respondents are hopeful of the continuity of the projects after the funding from PROBA.

Effect of Training and coaching organized by the Proba on young entrepreneurs sustainability

10.5 Sufficiency of the training received

Table 5: Respondents Views on Sufficiency of the Training

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	47	47%
Agree	40	40
Not Sure	18	18
Disagree	5	5
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Source: Field data (2015)

Respondents were asked about the sufficiency of the trainings received by the beneficiaries from PROBA. Findings reveal that: 47% strongly agree that the trainings provided were sufficient for the survival of the beneficiaries initiatives, 40% agree that the trainings were sufficient. Only 8% were not sure while 5% strongly disagreed that the trainings were sufficient.

Trainings offer skills for respondents to sustain their businesses. This is true with the fact that the respondents are satisfied with the trainings received and believe that the trainings will enable them to sustain their business.

10.6 Importance of the training received

Table 6: Respondents Views on Importance of training received

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	15	15%
Agree	42	42%
Not Sure	13	13%
Disagree	20	20%
Strongly Disagree	10	10%

Source: Field data (2015)

The researcher desired to find if the trainings provided were important to the beneficiaries. The researcher therefore asked if the trainings were important or not. Respondents revealed that: 15% strongly agree that the trainings were important, 42% agree that the trainings were important, 13% were not sure whether the trainings were important or not, 20% disagree that the trainings were important while only 10% strongly disagreed that the trainings were important.

We cannot underestimate the value of the trainings provided by PROBA and this is also agreed by the respondents in the strongest terms

10.7 Need for more trainings

Table 7: Respondents Views on Need for more training

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	35	35%
Agree	32	32%
Not Sure	11	11%
Disagree	12	12%
Strongly Disagree	10	10%

Source: Field data (2015)

There was also need to analyse whether there was need for more trainings or further trainings. The researcher as a result inquired whether there was need for more training. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the idea of more training or not. Findings show that 35% strongly agree that there was need for more trainings, 32% agree that there was need for more training while only 12% disagreed that there was need for more training.

We note that respondents still felt the need for more training. The needed trainings were intended to help them expand their businesses further.

10.8 Relevancy of the topics for the training

Table 8: Respondents Views on Relevance of the training

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	32	32%
Agree	40	40%
Not Sure	20	20%
Disagree	8	8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Source: Field data (2015)

The relevance of the trainings provided by PROBA was also analysed. The researcher asked if the respondents agreed or disagreed whether the trainings were relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries. Findings reveal that: 32% of the respondents strongly agree that the trainings were relevant, 40% agree that the trainings were relevant, 20% were not sure about the relevance of the trainings while only 8% disagreed with the relevance of the trainings.

Working in group contribute to sustainability of Proba activities

10.11 Support system

Table 11: Respondents Views on support system

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	40	40%
Agree	47	47%
Not Sure	8	8%
Disagree	3	3%
Strongly Disagree	2	2%

Source: Field data (2015)

The researcher further investigated whether the idea of working in groups provided the much needed support system for the group. The researcher therefore asked whether the respondents agreed if the teams provided a support system for the groups. Findings reveal that: 40% strongly agree that the groups provided a support system, 47% agree that the idea of working in groups provided the needed support system, 8% not sure and 2% strongly disagree only 3% disagree.

10.12 Benefits of working in groups

Table 12: Respondents Views on working in groups is beneficial

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	37	37%
Agree	41	41%
Not Sure	10	10%
Disagree	12	12%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Source: Field data (2015)

The researcher asked if there were any benefits in working in groups. Respondents were asked if they though working in groups were beneficial to them. Findings show that: 41% agree,37% strongly agree that working in groups were beneficial ,10% not sure that working in group were benefits while only 12% disagree.

10.13 Need for formation of more groups

Table 13: Respondents Views on need for more groups

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	35	35%
Agree	50	50%
Not Sure	8	8%
Disagree	7	7%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Source: Field data (2015)

The researcher asked if there was need for formation of more groups in the view of respondents. Findings show that: 50% of the respondents agree that there was no need for the formation of new groups, 35% strongly agree, 7% are not sure if there was need for the formation of new groups, while only 8% disagree that there was need for the formation of more groups.

Business counselling and mentoring contribute to sustainability of activities after closure of project

10.14 Benefits of business counselling and mentoring

Table 14: Respondents Views on Benefits of business counselling and mentoring

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	52	52%
Agree	40	40%
Not Sure	3	3%
Disagree	3	3%
Strongly Disagree	2	2%

Source: Field data (2015)

PROBA as an organisation also provided business counselling and mentoring to the beneficiaries. The researcher also set out to find out if there were benefits with business counselling and mentoring. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed whether business counselling and mentoring were beneficial. Findings show that: 52% strongly agree with the notion that business counselling and mentoring was beneficial, 40% agree that business counselling and mentoring is beneficial, 3% are not sure and 2% strongly disagreed while only 3% disagreed that business counselling and mentoring was beneficial.

10.15 Need for more business counselling and mentoring

Table 15: Respondents Views on need for more business counselling and mentoring

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	43	43%
Agree	42	42%
Not Sure	8	8%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	2	2%

Source: Field data (2015)

There was also an analysis on the need for more business counselling and mentoring. The researcher asked the views of the respondents on the whether there was need for more business counselling and mentoring. Findings show that: 43% of respondents strongly agree that there was need for more counselling and mentoring, 42% agree that there is need for more business counselling and mentoring with only 8% disagreeing.

10.16 Availability of the right business counsellors and mentors

Table 16: Respondents Views on Availability of business counsellors and mentors

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	35	35%
Agree	50	50%
Not Sure	7	7%
Disagreed	3	3%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%

Source: Field data (2015)

It is one thing to conduct business counselling and mentoring but it is also another thing to find the right business counsellors and mentors. The respondents were asked if they received the right business counsellors and mentors. Findings show that 35% Strongly agreed that they had the right business counsellors and mentors, 50% agreed, and 7% Not sure while 3% disagreed, only 5% strongly Disagreed.

Continuity of businesses by beneficiaries

10.17 Business can run without external financial support

Table 17: Respondents Views on possibility of business to run without external support

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	35	35%
Agree	52	52%
Not Sure	8	8%
Disagree	2	2%
Strongly Disagree	3	3%

Source: Field data (2015)

In analysing the financial support from PROBA, the researcher was also interested in finding out if the finances provided were sufficient for the businesses to run without external support. Respondents were therefore asked if the finances provided would enable the businesses to operate successfully without external support. It was found out that: 52% agreed that the businesses can run without external support, 35% strongly agreed to the same, 8% were not sure whether there was need for external support or not while only 5% felt there was still need for external financial support.

10.18 Business can run without more training and coaching

Table 18: Respondents Views on business can run without more training and coaching

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	20	20%
Agree	43	43%
Not Sure	30	30%
Disagree	7	7%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Source: Field data (2015)

The researcher analysed if the businesses would operate without more trainings and coaching. Respondents were therefore asked if there was need for more training and coaching for the betterment of their businesses. The research findings show that: 43% agree that there was no need for further training and counselling, 30% agree that their businesses can run without more trainings and coaching, however 20% were not sure if there was need for training and coaching while only 7% felt there was still need for training and coaching.

10.19 Business can run without groups

Table 19: Respondents Views on business can run without groups

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	22	22%
Agree	53	53%
Not Sure	20	20%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Source: Field data (2015)

The researcher was further interested in finding out if the businesses could run without the support of the groups. The respondents were therefore asked if their businesses could run without the groups. Findings elaborate that 22% of respondents strongly agree that there businesses could run without the groups, 53% agreed, 20% were not sure while 5% disagreed.

10.20 Business can run without counselling and mentoring

Table 20: Respondents Views on business can run without counselling and mentoring

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	34	34%
Agree	48	48%
Not Sure	10	10%
Disagree	8	8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Source: Field data (2015)

The respondents were also asked if they still needed business counselling and mentoring for their businesses to survive. Analysis shows that 48% agree that there was no need for further counselling and mentoring, 34% strongly agreed, 8% Disagreed, only 10% were not sure that there was need for more business counselling and mentoring.

10.21 Business has sufficient funds to sustain it

Table 21: Respondents Views on business has sufficient funds to sustain it

Frequency Distribution	Respondent	Percentages
Strongly Agree	30	30%
Agree	40	40%
Not Sure	20	20%
Disagree	10	10%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Source: Field data (2015)

During the study, respondents were asked if they had sufficient funds to sustain their businesses since sustainability was about continuity of the business on its own without external support. Findings show that 40% agree that businesses had sufficient funds for their own sustenance, 30% strongly agreed, 20% were not sure while only 10% disagreed.

14. Conclusions And Recommendations

11.1 Conclusion

Research found that as a result of previous support activities of PROBA, businesses can run without further external support, without more training and coaching, without formation of new groups or even support from the existing groups, without further counselling and mentoring, businesses have sufficient funds to sustain them, the study concludes that project activities like financial support, training and coaching, working in groups and counselling and mentoring have indeed led to sustainability of the project activities after closure of PROBA.

11.2 Recommendations

PROBA can probably advise the groups to recruit some more females' members to benefit from the projects even if the project has officially ended.

There is need for more finances and the best way of getting more finances for the beneficiaries is linking the groups to credit facilities like banks and micro finance enterprises so that they can access credit.

Since there is an indication that there is still need for more training, counselling and mentoring, PROBA can also advise the groups to organise themselves and seek trainings from private consulting firms at their own expense. This is because PROBA has closed the project.

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