

INFLUENCE OF PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION ON PERFORMANCE OF YOUTH FUNDED AGRIBUSINESS PROJECTS IN BAHATI SUB-COUNTY, NAKURU, KENYA

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Abstract

Studies have shown that most youth groups planning and execution of the projects is well laid out but most of them do not consider monitoring and evaluation as an important phase in the project. This study therefore sought to determine factors that influence the project monitoring and evaluation performance of youth funded agribusiness projects in Bahati Sub-County, Kenya. The specific objectives were: to assess the influence of training staff and personnel, stakeholder participation, and political interference on monitoring and evaluation performance of youth funded agribusiness projects. To achieve the objectives, a descriptive survey was carried out in Bahati sub-county for six weeks. Then a census was conducted on the target population of 50 agribusiness youth funded group projects. Data was collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS (version 20). Frequency tables and percentages were used to present both descriptive and inferential analysis results. Findings showed that only the training of staff had a statistically significant influence on project monitoring and evaluation performance of youth funded agribusiness projects (p value of 0.01, <0.05). The study concluded that youth fund managers should consider offering short, formal monitoring and evaluation training courses to all youth groups that apply for the funds.

Keywords: Training, Monitoring, Evaluation, Agribusiness, Youth, Stakeholder, Politics

INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has become an increasingly important tool within the global efforts in achieving environmental, economic and social sustainability. At national and international scales, the sustainability criteria and indicators for M&E are very crucial in defining, monitoring and reporting on ecological, economic and social trends, tracking progress towards goals and influencing policy and practices (Behn, 2003). Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) helps those involved with projects to assess if progress is being achieved in line with expectations. Monitoring is the on-going collection and analysis of data that informs project managers if progress toward established goals is being achieved. Evaluation is a comprehensive appraisal that looks at the long-term impacts of a project and exposes what worked, what did not, and what should be done differently in future projects. When planning for M&E, it is vital to consider whether appropriate funds and staff time can be allocated to it, since M&E is an on-going process and requires a significant commitment. Another key consideration is stakeholder participation in design and execution of M&E. While external professionals may bring needed expertise, involving community partners is an excellent strategy for demonstrating accountability (Hettmut, 2002).

In Africa, youth unemployment is part of a much bigger of unemployment and underdevelopment .Most countries are yet to find a way out. Worst still is the youthfulness of the population implying a high dependency ratio for these countries. In Kenya, youth face serious challenges resulting from poverty, unemployment and underemployment. These challenges hinder their social and economic development. The overall unemployment rate for the youth is double the adult. The problem of youth unemployment has become a matter of serious policy concern in the country (Amenya *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund was established in 2006 to address the issue of youth unemployment. The youth account for over 61% of the unemployed population in Kenya (YEDF 2006). The fund targets young aged 18-35 years whose population number is 13 million. Its mission is to increase opportunities for, and participation by Kenyan youth in national building through economic development and strategic partnerships. The youths are encouraged to start new enterprises and projects to create employment for themselves. However, there is little information on how well the projects initiated and completed are able to sustain the delivery of the services over time. There is even less information on the extent to which the projects are able to produce their intended impacts. The need for this information has grown over the years, for the various stakeholders in the projects such as governments, donor agencies and organizations among others (Greer, 2002). The progress of YEDF, like any other public sector, is seen to be consistently performing poorly

in some constituencies, leaving the largest impact on the country in terms of what is perceived as poor policy development and lack of strategic planning (Kimenyi, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Owing to the high unemployment rates among the youth, the Kenya government through the ministry of youth affairs initiated youth projects to create employment for the youth, a constituent that comprise young people aged 18-35 years (NYP, 2007). To date, many of youth projects have been funded in all the 47 counties in the country and Bahati Sub County has not been left out. The government expected that all the youth projects will continue with their operations and thus achieve the objective of employment creation and self-reliance among the youth. However, statistics reveals that out of 50 youth projects funded by YEDF since the year 2007, only 25% of the projects are operational while 75% are non-operational (YEDF, 2012). The high failure rates may be attributed to limited application of project cycle management (PCM) model. This model includes monitoring and evaluation that are reported to significantly improve project success (Westland, 2006). Despite the fact that advocacy in favor of development work continues to increase with new tools, techniques and advances in project management methodologies, many youth projects continues to fail due to lack of proper monitoring and evaluation. Information on the extent of application of monitoring and evaluation of Youth Enterprise Development Funded projects has not had a comprehensive empirical study in place in regard to Bahati Sub County. This information is vital in advocating for adoption of the M&E model by these projects. This study therefore endeavored to establish the contribution of the M&E strategy on the success of YEDF funded youth projects in Bahati Sub County, Kenya.

THEORETICAL LITERATURE

The theoretical framework for monitoring and evaluation of projects has been described as a frame of reference which helps human beings in understanding their world and learning how to function within it. The concept of evaluation occurred in the US in the 1960 and 70s during the administrations of Kennedy and Johnson with heavy support from the federal government under the policies on 'war on Poverty' and the Great Society (Rossie, Lipsey, Freeman, 2004). The evaluation theory consists of the social; science theory as well as the Program theory. The social theory plays a major part and role in evaluation practice. Such a theory and prior research are instrumental for providing information on the initial needs assessment and program design. A review of available literature is crucial as it provides knowledge on the effective strategies to use in dealing with the problems at hand. Further, they can provide lessons about what is not effective as such saving program designs and other resources (Donaldson, 2001). Lipsey

(1990) argued that program theory on the other hand contributes to evaluation practice through the identification of key program elements as well as providing information on how these elements relate to each other. Data collection plans are then involved in the framework to ensure information to measure the extent and nature of each aspects and their occurrence. Once the data on the elements is collected, it is analysed within the framework.

Program theory is a plausible and sensible model on how a program is supposed to work (Bickman, 1987). Lipsey (1993) stated that it is a proposition with regard to the transformation on input into output and how to transform a bad situation into a better one through inputs. It is also illustrated as the process through which program components are presumed to affect outcomes. Rossi (2004) argued that a program theory consist of an organisational plan on how to deploy resources and organise the activities of the program activities to ensure that the intended service system is developed and maintained. The theory further deals with the service utilisations plan which analyses how the intended target population receives the intended amount of intervention. This is through the interaction of the service delivery systems. Finally, program theory looks at how the intended intervention for the specified target population represents the desired social benefits. Rogers as cited by Uitto (2000) illustrates the advantages of using a theory based framework in monitoring and evaluation. It includes the ability to attribute project outcomes of specific projects or activities as well as identification of anticipated and undesired program consequences. Theory based evaluations as such enables the evaluator to understand why and how the program is working (Weiss, 2003).

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Evaluations need to be undertaken by individuals with the relevant skills, sound methods and adequate resources as well as transparency in order to secure their quality (Jones et al, 2009). This implies the need for the personnel to be highly trained in order to secure the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation. Further, budgetary allocation is required to provide adequate resources for the evaluation. A monitoring and evaluation budget need to be developed and included in the overall project budget in order to provide the monitoring and evaluation function its due recognition in its place in project management (Gyorkos, 2003; McCoy et al, 2005). Apart from the framework provided, politics is also a major element to put into consideration in projects. Rogers (2008) advocates for multi-stakeholders dialogues in the data collection, hypothesis testing as well as in intervention in order to secure greater participation. Monitoring is linked to the project management function and as such is a complex issue which result to confusion in trying to apply them on projects (Crawford and Bryce, 2003). Monitoring as such

enhances the project management decision making during the implementation phase thus securing the success of the project (Gyorkos, 2003; Crawford and Bryce, 2003).

Further, monitoring puts an emphasis on transparency and accountability in the use of resources to the stakeholders such as donors, beneficiaries and the wider community where the project is implemented. Chambers (2009) argue that the starting point in politics as an element of evaluation involves asking who would gain lose and how. This also involves how the results make a difference to the various stakeholders. Evaluation on the other hand provides an assessment of the effectiveness of the project in achieving the goal and the relevance and sustainability of the on-going project (McCoy, 2005). Evaluation compares the impact of the project as set to be achieved by the project plan (Shapiro, 2004).

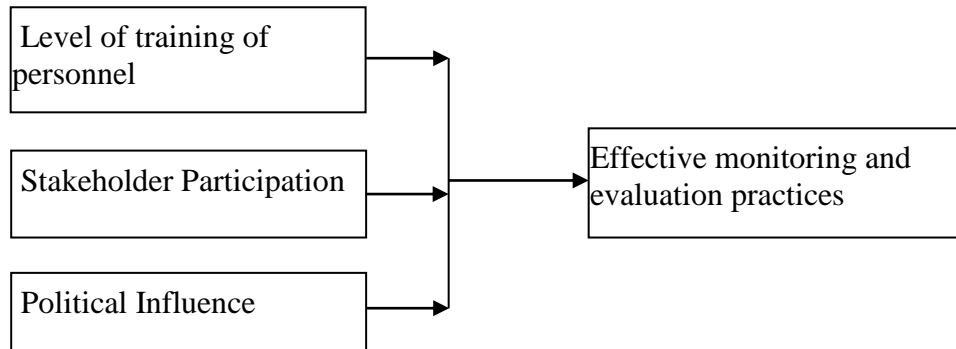
Human resources management are very important in project management. Particularly, they are crucial for an effective monitoring and evaluation. The technical capacity and expertise of the organisation in conducting evaluations, the value and participation of its human resources during the decision making process as well as their motivation in implementing the decision can hugely impact on the evaluation. (Vanessa and Gala, 2011). Foresti (2007) further illustrate that this should not be just mere training by undertaking learning approach which are best practice and have a positive effect on the evaluation process within the organisation. Despite the fact that the Youth Enterprise Development Fund disbursement is growing at an increasing rate, only a small percentage of the budget is given to capacity building whereby the Monitoring and Evaluation of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund projects is included.

Donaldson (2003) reports that management of stakeholders in discussion on how, why and what project activities empowers them to effectively understand the needs of the various stakeholders as well as promote inclusion and meaningful participation. Stakeholder involvement must be included in the early stages/planning stages of the evaluation process. This includes support of high profile individuals and political agents who may be interested in learning and using instruments to demonstrate effectiveness (Jones, 2008). Produlock (2009) also found out that the process of impact evaluation in particular analysis and interpretation of results can be improved through the participation of intended beneficiaries who are the primary stakeholders and the best judges of their own situation.

However, stakeholders engagement requires to be managed with caution as too much stakeholder involvement could lead to undue influence on the evaluation process while too little could result to evaluators' domination on the process (Patton, 2008). Mapesa and Kibua (2006) reported that majority of politicians takes the government funds such as the Youth Development Fund as their own development gestures to the people. With this kind of approach such elements as embezzlements and misuse cannot be accounted for. The local people may not

know how to channel their grievances. To a larger extent, politicians have a key role in the identification as well as implementation of the projects and their choices are influenced by political maximisation (Mwangi, 2005).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Critique of Existing Literature Relevant to the Study

Monitoring an evaluation is crucial part of the management cycle including in planning and design of projects (Gyorkos, 2003). Project planners should align monitoring and evaluation activities into the project plan with such elements included as persons to carry out the evaluations, frequency, budget for the activities as well as specification on how to report and use the findings. Evaluation is a tool which is used for providing knowledge in order to allow continued implementation. Ex-post evaluation can also be used for impact assessment. Jody and Ray (2004) identified complementary roles of the two functions. Information from monitoring feeds evaluation in order to acquire an understanding and acquire lessons in the middle or at the end of the project with regards to what went right to wrong for the learning purpose. This could aid in the redesigning of the project.

There is a rich body of literature that examines factors that influence monitoring and evaluation activities in projects. However, none of these studies have focused on monitoring and evaluation activities of Youth Funded projects in Kenya. In recent years, the government of Kenya has channelled billions of shillings as part of empowering the youths of this country. Monitoring and evaluation of projects in which these youths engage is critical to ensuring that the fund created by the government achieves its objectives. It is not clear whether youths implement monitoring and evaluation activities whenever they undertake projects because little studies have focused on this area. The current study sought to fill this gap in knowledge.

METHODOLOGY

This research study employed a cross-sectional research design. This research strategy was preferred because it permits the collection of data through questionnaires administered to a sample. The data collected by this design will be used to suggest reasons for particular relationships between variables (Saunders & Thornhil, 2007) to determine the influence of performance on project monitoring and evaluation of youth funded agribusiness projects. The use of the research design facilitated the collection of a considerable amount of data quickly, efficiently and accurately (Oso&Onen, 2005). The research design employed quantitative methods. Shao, (1999) defines a population as an aggregate of all the elements. Kitchham (2002) argues that target population involves a group or individuals whom the research design applies to. The target population was 50 registered youth funded agribusiness groups in Bahati Sub-county that have been operating from 2012-2014 in implementing agribusiness projects. Since the population of study was small, the researcher conducted a census where data was collected from all youth funded agribusiness projects in Bahati Sub –County, Kenya.

The study used structured questionnaires to collect data. This selection was informed by the nature of data to be collected and the objective of the study the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on performance of youth funded agribusiness project Bahati Sub-county. Such information is best collected by questionnaires Mugenda and Mugenda, (1999); Saunders *et al.* (2009). The pilot study was carried out two weeks prior to the research. For credibility of research (Patton 2002) states that validity and reliability are two factors that a researcher must consider while designing a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study. The Cronbach's Alpha Test was conducted on all measures for the independent and dependent variables with a threshold of 0.7. All the variables gave a Cronbach's alpha of more than 0.7 and therefore were retained for further study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to examine factors that influence the project monitoring and evaluation performance of Youth Funded Agribusiness projects in Bahati Sub-County. Specifically, the chapter presents the pilot test results, response rate, demographic characteristics of the sample, and descriptive and inferential analysis of the data.

Pilot Test Results

A pilot study was conducted to examine the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. A sample of 5 youth groups was picked and the return rate was 100%. The Cronbach's Alpha Test was

conducted on all measures for the independent and dependent variables with a threshold of 0.7. All the variables gave a Cronbach's alpha of more than 0.7.

Table 1: Cronbach's Test Results

Variable	N	Cronbach's Alpha
Monitoring and Evaluation	5	0.847
Staff Training	5	0.903
Stakeholder Participation	5	0.815
Political Interference	5	0.816

Response Rate

A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents, who were officials of the Agribusiness Youth Groups. All the 50 questionnaires were duly completed and returned marking a response rate of 100%. The high response rate is attributed to the researchers close link with the youth groups prior to the study.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The study sought to establish the demographic characteristics of the respondents. 62% of the respondents were males while 38% were female. However, the gender composition is not expected to have an impact on the statistical power of the data. 38.8% had attained the secondary level education, 30.6% college level education, and 20.4% had university level education while 10.2% had primary level education. According to Murphy and Myors (2004), education level determines the respondents' ability to comprehend the survey questions. Many of the respondents 56% were within the 20-30 years age bracket, 18% were below 20 years of age while 13% were between 31 and 35 years.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristic of the Sample

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Gender of Respondent	Male	31	62.0	62.0
	Female	19	38.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	
Education Level of Respondent	Primary	5	10.2	10.2
	Secondary	19	38.8	49.0
	College	15	30.6	79.6
	University	10	20.4	100
	Total	50	100	
Age of the Respondent	< 20 years	9	18.0	18.0
	20-30 years	28	56.0	74.0
	31- 35 years	13	26.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	

Descriptive Analysis

Training of Staff

The study sought to establish the extent to which the training of staff on monitoring and evaluation affects the Youth Fund Projects' performance in relation to monitoring and evaluation activities. A majority of the respondents (60%) indicated that staff training is a huge determinant of how M&E is carried out. This finding is consistent with the findings of Venessa and Gala (2011) who found that the technical capacity and expertise of the staff in conducting evaluations hugely impacts the M&E process. Training gives employees the knowledge of the principles, methodology, and tools applied in M&E. It improves the organization performance of M&E activities. Further, majority of the respondents (49%) reported that their project employees are properly trained in M&E, 24.5% said they were not sure. A majority of the respondents 63.3% felt that their project employees have the necessary skills and competence to conduct M&E activities. However, majority of the respondents 55.1% reported that they were either not sure that project staff have undertaken a course in M&E or that project staff had no formal training in M&E. This result suggests that most youth groups rely on informal knowledge of M&E.

52.1% reported that their groups do not outsource M&E activities to external experts. This result collaborates with the findings of Karanja (2014), who found that M&E in most youth projects is done by the project leaders. Only 23% of the projects were being evaluated by M&E experts. Moreover, majority of the respondents said that their groups do not have full-fledged M&E sections. This result shows that most of the youth groups do not regard M&E as an essential function in the management of their projects. Majority (75%) agreed that M&E should be incorporated as a core funding requirement for agribusiness groups.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Staff Training in M&E

Statement	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Staff training is a huge determinant of how M&E in carried out	50	22%	50%	10%	14%	4%	100%
Project staff are properly trained on project M&E	50	12.2%	36.7%	24.5%	20.4%	6.1%	100%
Project staff exhibit skills and competence in M&E	50	12.2%	51.0%	14.3%	20.4%	2.0%	100%
Staff have undertaken short courses on M&E	50	2%	42.9%	16.3%	28.6%	10.2%	100%
M&E is not a core staff function but has been done by external consultants	50	4.2%	20.8%	22.9%	43.8%	8.3%	100%

There are fully fledged M&E sections in the group.	50	6.3%	45.8%	14.6%	31.3%	2.1%	100%
Youth Fund should incorporate M&E training as a core funding requirement for agribusiness projects	50	27.1%	47.9%	12.5%	10.4%	2.1%	100%

Stakeholder Participation

Many of the respondents (59.2%) reported that project stakeholders are known and documented, 34.7% said that their project stakeholders are not known and documented while 6.1 % were not sure. The stakeholder dimension is essential in project management as some stakeholders have high stakes in the project while others have significant influence over the project deliverables (Kenon, Howden & Hartley, 2010). Stakeholder documentation enables the project team to assess the stakeholder and know who really matters to the project. 69.4% reported that they involve stakeholders, 16.3% said that their groups do not involve stakeholders in M&E activities while 14.3 were undecided. Majority of the respondents (57.1%) also felt that the participation of stakeholders was critical to the successful implementation of M&E. Njuki, Kaaria,, Chetsike and Sanginga (2013) found that participatory monitoring and evaluation strengths learning and change at both community and institutional level. It also enhances the success of M&E activities by promoting negotiation of outcomes that different stakeholders expect from the project. Stakeholders' participation in M&E also facilitates the assessment of project from multiple perspectives.

On whether stakeholders had knowledge of M&E practices, 51% agreed while 26.5% disagreed and 22.4% were undecided. Only 42.9% of the respondents reported that their stakeholders had been adequately trained on M&E. Majority of the respondents (42%) reported that their M&E activities had not been dominated by stakeholders, 18% were not sure while 40% said that stakeholders had dominated their M&E activities. Projects often have numerous stakeholders with competing interests in the project. Dominance of the activities of the project can lead to negative outcomes as each stakeholder will tend to advance his or her interest at the expense of others leading to conflicts (Verma, 2008). It's important for project teams must take control of all project activities including M&E.

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis of Stakeholders Participation in M&E

Statement	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Project stakeholders are known and documented	50	20.4%	38.8%	6.1%	30.6%	4.1%	100%
Stakeholders are involved in M&E activities	50	16.3%	53.1%	14.3%	12.2%	4.1%	100%
Participation of stakeholders is crucial to successful implementation of M&E	50	12.2%	44.9%	22.4%	12.2%	8.2%	100%
Stakeholders have knowledge of M&E practices	50	14.3%	36.7%	22.4%	22.4%	4.1%	100%
Stakeholders have capacity and have been trained on M&E	50	14.3%	28.6%	24.5%	22.4%	10.2%	100%
Stakeholders have dominated M&E activities resulting to a negative influence	50	12.0%	28.0%	18.0%	26.0%	16.0%	100%
Projects should involve stakeholders in M&E activities	50	22.0%	38.0%	14.0%	22.0%	4.0%	100%

Political Influence in M&E Activities

The researcher sought to understand the level of political interference in the youth groups M&E activities and how it affected the performance of M&E. A majority of the respondents (63%) said that there was political interference, 10.5% were not sure while 26.5% reported that there was no political interference. This result is consistent with the findings of Nyaguthii and Oyugi (2013), who found that the discretionary nature of most sources of funds for development projects in Kenya make these projects susceptible to political interference. Projects are often attached to political symbolism rather than being evaluated for their economic and social benefits. Further, a majority of the respondents reported that there was no internal political interference. Only 46.9% of the respondents said that there was internal political interference in M&E activities. Internal politics can also be a significant barrier to the effective implementation of M&E activities. Therefore, groups need to manage and minimize internal politics by focusing on the objectives of their projects.

With regard to the level of external political interference, 55% said that there was external political interference while 14.3% were not sure. Majority of the respondent 55.1% felt that it is the nature Youth Funded agribusiness projects that make their project susceptible to political interference. The Youth Enterprise Development Fund is managed by a state corporation whose employees have significant discretion over the allocation of these funds to youth groups (Okoth, Okelo & Aila, 2013). The nature of this fund has made youth groups that are dependent on this fund susceptible to political influence. A majority of the respondents

(74.5%) felt that political interference was hampering the effectiveness of M&E activities in the agribusiness projects. This finding is consistent with theory and expectations. When there is political interference in M&E activities, political consideration take precedence during the assessment of the projects rather than objective measures of project performance (Gyorkos, 2003). 66.7% of the respondents said they were able to reduce political interference and protect their integrity.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Political Influence in M&E Activities

Statement	N	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
There is political interference in Project M&E activities.	50	22.4%	40.8%	10.3%	26.5%	0%	100%
There is internal political interference in project M&E	50	16.3%	30.6%	28.6%	22.4%	2.1%	100%
There is external political interference in project M&E	50	20.4%	34.7%	14.3%	28.6%	2.0%	100%
The nature of Youth Fund makes the projects prone to political interference.	50	20.4%	34.7%	18.4%	24.5%	2.0%	100%
Political interference hampers project M&E activities	50	19.1%	55.3%	12.8%	8.5%	4.3%	100%
Youth groups have mechanism for reducing the impact of political interference on M&E	50	18.8%	47.9%	22.9%	6.3%	4.2%	100%
The structure of Youth Fund should minimize political interference	50	27.1%	56.3%	6.3%	6.1%	4.2%	100%

Monitoring and Evaluation Performance

68% of the respondents said that their groups conduct an evaluation after completion of projects. This finding is congruent with the findings of Karanja (2014): most youth projects are evaluated twice a year. However, frequency of evaluation activities need to be increased to give these youth groups proper feedback and advice. Sanginga (2013) also found evidence of monitoring and evaluation in CDF projects but questioned the quality of the M&E practices. The study pointed out that M&E activities were conducted as part of regulatory requirement rather than being conducted with a focus on improving the project delivery process.

Table 6: Descriptive Analysis of M&E Performance
Evaluation was carried out after Project Completion

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	9	18.0	18.0
	Agree	25	50.0	68.0
	Not Sure	6	12.0	80.0
	Disagree	7	14.0	94.0
	Strongly Disagree	3	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0

Inferential Analysis

Influence of Training of Personnel on Project Monitoring and Evaluation

The researcher conducted the ANOVA tests in order to compare the strength of the relationship between personnel training and the effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation activities. In Table 4.7, the P value 0.01 is less than 0.05, the relationship between training of personnel and M&E performance is statistically significant. This outcome is congruent with the findings of Vanessa and Gala, 2011 and Foresti (2007), who found that training helps employee to develop a positive attitude towards a given task. Ebeto and Justin (2013) also found that M&E training improves the quality of project's monitoring and evaluation practices by equipping the employees with requisite skills and knowledge.

Table 7: ANOVA of Training of Personnel and M&E Performance

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19.695	6	3.283	4.477	.001
Within Groups	31.525	43	.733		
Total	51.220	49			

Influence of Stakeholders' Participation on Project Monitoring and Evaluation Performance

The study further examined the influence of stakeholder participation on project monitoring and evaluation of youth fund agribusiness projects. Table 4.8 shows that there is no significant relationship between stakeholder participation and the monitoring and evaluation performance of the agribusiness projects. The test yielded a P-value of 0.222, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This contradicted with the findings of Produlock (2009), which suggested that stakeholders' participation in M&E activities improves the analysis of data and interpretation

of evaluation results. Stakeholders also introduce diverse perspectives into the evaluation process. Patton (2008) also found that too much stakeholder involvement can lead to undue influence on the monitoring and evaluation processes.

Table 8: ANOVA of Stakeholder Participation and M&E Performance

ANOVA					
M&E Performance					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.978	4	1.495	1.487	.222
Within Groups	45.242	45	1.005		
Total	51.220	49			

Influence of Political Interference on Project Monitoring and Evaluation Performance

The study also assessed the influence of politics on project monitoring and evaluation of youth fund agribusiness projects. Table 4.9 shows that there is no significant relationship between political interference in M&E activities and the M&E performance of the Agribusiness project. The test yielded a P-value of 0.859, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This result is not consistent with expectations that political interference would have a significant impact on M&E performance in the group. However, the result may be attributed to the fact that most of the group reported having mechanisms for reducing political interference in M&E activities. This contradicts the findings of Pordulock (2009), that political interference has a significant influence on M&E activities of all government funded projects because the funds are under the control of politician. The agribusiness projects in Bahati are financed by the Youth Fund, which is controlled by the area member of parliament and other local politicians. It was expected that politics would have a central role in the projects M&E activities, but findings of this study suggest otherwise.

Table 9: ANOVA of Political Interference and M&E Performance

ANOVA					
M&E Performance					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.268	4	.317	.326	.859
Within Groups	42.732	44	.971		
Total	44.000	48			

Correlation between Study Variables

The correlation analysis between M&E performance of agribusiness project and all the three independent variables (staff training, stakeholder participation, and political interference)

supported the results of ANOVA tests. Only the training of personnel was significantly correlated with the projects' M&E performance at the 0.01 level of significance. The correlation coefficient was +0.53, which shows a moderate positive correlation between staff training in M&E and the youth group's M&E performance. The positive correlation implies that when the level of staff training is increased the projects' M & E performance also increases. Table 4.9 also shows a weak positive correlation between staff training in M&E activities and stakeholders' participation in M&E activities at the 0.01 level of significant. The positive correlation between these two variables may be attributed to the fact that employees who receive training in M&E appreciate the importance of involving stakeholders in M&E activities. This result is consistent with Vanessa and Gala (2011) findings, which revealed that training of staff improves the technical capacity and expertise of the organization in conducting monitoring and evaluation leading to better M&E performance. OECD (2002) also found that training increases the independence of project team members when it comes to monitoring and evaluation.

Table 10: Correlation between Study Variables

Correlations

		M&E Performance	Staff Training in M&E	Stakeholders Participation in M&E	Political Interference in M&E activities
M&E Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.530**	.264	.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.064	.458
	N	50	50	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Summary of Findings***Influence of Training of Personnel on Project Monitoring and Evaluation***

The study examined the extent to which personnel of the youth-funded agribusiness projects were trained in M&E and how the level of training affected the monitoring and evaluation activities of the projects. Findings revealed that majority of the personnel involved in the agribusiness project had some knowledge and skills in M&E. However, a majority of the personnel had not undertaken any formal training course in monitoring and evaluation. Hence, their M&E activities are primarily based on experiential knowledge. Findings also revealed that very few projects consider hiring the services of external monitoring and evaluation experts. Results of the inferential tests showed that there is a significant relationship between the level of personnel training, and the M&E performance of the agribusiness project. Correlational analysis further revealed that the relationship between these two variables is possible, which means an

increase in the level of personnel training is associated with an increase in monitoring and evaluation performance of the projects.

Influence of Stakeholders' Participation on Project Monitoring and Evaluation Performance

The study investigated the extent to which the agribusiness project involved stakeholders in M&E activities. It also considered how the level of stakeholders' involvement affected the M&E performance of these projects. Findings revealed that majority of the agribusiness projects know and have documented their key stakeholders, and involve them in M&E evaluation activities. The researcher found that a majority of the projects had involved stakeholders with adequate knowledge and skills in Monitoring and Evaluation. However, many of the respondents were not sure. The inferential analysis revealed that there was no significant relationship between stakeholder's participation in M&E activities, and the projects' monitoring and evaluation performance.

Influence of Political Interference on Project Monitoring and Evaluation Performance

The study further assessed the level of political interference in the M&E activities of the agribusiness projects and its effects on M&E performance. Findings show that a majority of the agribusiness projects experience political interference in M&E activities because of the political nature of the Youth Fund. Political interference mainly came from external parties such as local politicians. However, a majority of the agribusiness projects reported that they had put in place mechanism for mitigating the negative effective of political interference on the monitoring and evaluation activities. Results of the inferential test revealed that there was no significant relationship between the level of political interference in M&E activities and the projects' monitoring and evaluation performance.

CONCLUSION

Monitoring and evaluation are critical activities in the project management cycle. Monitoring enables the project to track the performance of project on a continuous basis so as to ensure that everything is implemented as planned. Evaluation enables the project team to determine the effectiveness of the projects in terms of meeting pre-established targets. Monitoring and evaluation activities can enhance the chances of success of youth funded projects enabling the youths to enjoy economic transformation. However, there are numerous factors that affect the monitoring and evaluation performance of youth funded projects.

This study examined the influence of three factors namely personnel training in monitoring and evaluation, stakeholders' participation, and political interference on the M&E performance of youth-funded agribusiness projects in Bahati area, Nakuru. Available data showed that most of the projects have people who are adequately trained in M&E activities, involved stakeholders in M&E activities, and have a high level of political interference in M&E evaluation activities. However, the data only supported the existence of a statistically significant relationship between the level personnel training and monitoring and evaluation performance of the projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications of the Study to Practice

A significant rationale of this study was to generate findings that will improve the way youth projects in Kenya are managed and, consequently, improve the economic impacts of these projects on the youths. Available literature has shown that effective monitoring and evaluation activities can have a drastic impact on the success of youth projects. Therefore, youths can improve the success of the projects by addressing factors that influence M&E performance in their groups. Results of the study showed the presence of a statistically significant relationship between the level of personnel training in monitoring and evaluation, and the project performance in M&E activities. This implies that youth groups in Bahati area can improve their monitoring and evaluation performance by training their personnel in monitoring and evaluation.

Findings also showed that while a majority of the projects had personnel who had knowledge in M&E, most of these personnel had no formal training in monitoring and evaluation. There is no doubt that experiential knowledge has a positive impact on monitoring and evaluation performance. However, the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation can be enhanced when project team learn how to apply technical and systematic methodologies in executing these activities. Formal training program can equip personnel with the knowledge of these methodologies and the skills required to apply these methods effectively. Therefore, the management of the Youth Enterprise Fund should consider offering short, formal monitoring and evaluation training courses to all youth groups that apply for funds.

Implication to the Project Management Discipline

Another rationale of this study was to advance the project management discipline by generating knowledge on the subject of project monitoring and evaluation. The project sought to examine some of the factors that influence the monitoring and evaluation performance of projects. Three factors were examined including personnel training, stakeholders' participation, and political interference. Findings revealed that one of the factors, personnel level of training, has a

significant impact on the monitoring and evaluation performance of projects. This finding implies that the project management discipline needs to emphasize on training project management practitioners on the subject of M&E. This will enhance the performance of projects. Training of personnel increases M&E evaluation performance by changing people's attitude towards monitoring and evaluation. The personnel begin to appreciate the importance of M&E to the project and equip the personnel with the knowledge and skills that are necessary for them to execute monitoring and evaluation activities effectively.

Implications for Future Studies

The present study established was limited to 50 youth-funded agribusiness projects located in Bahati area, Nakuru County. Future researches should consider replicating this study in other youth funded projects located in different areas in order to validate the relationship between the study variables. Similarly, the study was also limited in terms of the number of factors that were examined. The study examined the influence of only three factors (personnel training, stakeholders' participation, and political interference) on the monitoring and evaluation performance of youth-funded projects. There are other numerous factors that have the potential to affect M&E performance of projects including the projects budgets, technology, and projects' policy frameworks among others. Future studies should examine other factors that have the potential of affecting monitoring and evaluation of youth funded projects in Kenya.

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