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INFLUENCE OF BENEFICIARY INVOLVEMENT ON PROJECT PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF ONE ACRE FUND PROJECTS IN KENYA

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Abstract

Kenyan farmers are abandoning the One Acre Fund due to lack of provision of farm inputs and extension services that the NGO was previously providing to them. The project has lost about 10% of its members due to low satisfaction. Further, beneficiary farmers in Kakamega County are unable to practice farming independently. Instead, the initiative has caused what can be called a "dependency syndrome," that the withdrawal of these agents of development would lead the beneficiaries into the worst destitute people of the county. The Objective of this study therefore was to investigate influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. The study used stakeholder theory, A descriptive research design was used in the study. The study targeted 397 respondents. Stratified random sampling was used to select 124 respondents. The study used primary data which was collected using structured questionnaires. Pilot test was conducted to test validity and reliability of data collection tools. Descriptive and inferential analyses were done by the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23) and were presented through figures, tables and charts. The findings established that there is significant positive influence of beneficiary involvement on project *performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. The study concluded that improvement in beneficiary involvement would results to improved project performance of One Acre Fund. the study recommended that management of One Acre Fund should ensure they provide an opportunity for different beneficiaries to participate in the project.*

Keywords: Beneficiary Involvement, Project performance, One Acre Fund, Stakeholder Theory

INTRODUCTION

Clients in both the public and private sectors are concerned about a project's performance. Project success necessitates the development of a well-thought-out project schedule as well as knowledge of the main success criteria. It assists the project manager and stakeholders in making the best choices and taking action to ensure the project's success. Project mission, top management support, project schedule plan, client consultation personnel technology to support the project client acceptance monitoring and feedback channels of communication troubleshooting expertise are the most popular determinants of project success accepted by the research community (Serrador & Turner, 2014).

Despite the significance and focus on projects, the majority of projects have had disappointing outcomes, with the majority of projects across many nations, industries, and sectors doing poorly (Jugdev & Muller, 2005). According to a World Bank report, Kenya's government gets significant donor assistance from a variety of sources to finance a variety of food security problems and other long-term development objectives (WB, 2013). However, According to World Bank (2017), performance of said projects are inferior in Sub Saharan Africa and Asia due to low implementation success rate. The major causes of failures cited include insufficient implementing capacity, inadequate monitoring and evaluation, lack of standardized methodologies to guide project management, weak project design, insufficient stakeholder participation and political interference (Patanakul, 2014)

By identifying and removing the variables that contribute to poor project performance, quality may be ensured. Monitoring techniques have been a staple and a significant process (organizational activity) in both for-profit and non-profit companies over many decades. Within their limited resources and capabilities, these organizations have developed and used the techniques to better understand problems that they cannot control but have a major effect on their survival and success. Through successful monitoring techniques, it was believed that a company might exercise some positive influence over market dynamics, generate competitive advantages, enhance organizational effectiveness, and improve performance (Zhou, Gao & Zhao, 2017).

Agro-based project success varies by nation, but in Kenya, it has remained insecure, with a significant drop after the post-election violence in 2008. (Anyonge, Holding, Kareko & Kimani, 2011). Kenya has a 10 million bag corn shortfall in the 2016/17 financial year, the primary staple meal for Kenyans. To address the decreasing agricultural performance, the government established community-based groups, which were utilized as the foundation for supporting agricultural initiatives. The community-based projects aimed to empower communities to take advantage of agribusiness opportunities by promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, value addition, access to information, connecting farmers to markets, establishing strategic partnerships, and linking farmers to markets (Kising'u & Kising'u, 2016). Despite the government's efforts via NALEP service extension organizations, the majority of the population in rural areas continues to suffer from chronic food insecurity and poverty (Atela, Quinn & Minang, 2014).

Simiyu (2018) wanted to see whether project management techniques had an impact on the success of agricultural initiatives run by community-based organizations in Bungoma County. The findings revealed that all factors, including project planning, project execution, monitoring and evaluation, and project communication, had a substantial impact on project performance. The connection between project management techniques and project performance was shown to be influenced by environmental enablers (moderating variable).

According to Kitivi (2014), numerous small and large donors have carried out various initiatives in the Mwingi Region to address diverse problems like as food security, HIV and AIDS, water, and education, among others. These interventions were intended to assist impoverished local populations; however, substantial effects have not been achieved since most of the initiatives launched ended up failing during the project time, and those that survived ended up collapsing when donor funding was withdrawn. The biggest challenge faced by firms working on donor-funded projects in remote communities under diverse environments in this region is meeting all stakeholders' expectations and steering the project through communication, cultural, linguistic, and perception constraints, and as a result, the poor local community is left in the same state as before the project began.

One Acre Fund (OAF) is an Illinois a not-for-profit organization that was incorporated in December 2005 and is registered to operate in its program countries, including those where Once Acre Fund conducts trial activities. Currently, the primary countries of operations are Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. The mission of OAF is to empower chronically-hungry farm families in Africa to uplift them out of hunger and poverty OAF achieves its mission by working with self-help groups in rural villages to deliberately reach the most severely hunger-affected (OAF, 2021)

OAF has a presence in Kenya. The group, which has its headquarters in Kakamega, Kenya, works with farmers in remote communities throughout Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, and, most recently, Malawi. One Acre Fund supports operations and transactions across the agricultural value chain, including seed sourcing and market assistance, using a market-based approach. Farmers that worked with One Acre Fund saw a 180 percent return on their investment in 2013, as well as a substantial boost in agricultural revenue per planted acre (OAF, 2021)

One Acre Fund provides smallholder farmers with an asset-based loan that comprises seed and fertilizer distribution, funding for agricultural inputs, agriculture training, and market facilitation to optimize earnings. Farmers must join a village group sponsored by a local One Acre Fund field officer to obtain the loan and training from the One Acre Fund. Field officers meet with farmer groups on a regular basis to arrange agricultural input deliveries, conduct trainings, and collect repayments. Farmers may return their loans in any amount at any time throughout the growing season, according to One Acre Fund's flexible repayment structure. One Acre Fund also provides smallholder farmers the opportunity to buy other goods and services on credit, in addition to their main program concept. Solar lighting and reusable sanitary pads are two examples of these products. According to One Acre Fund, it engages in sustainable land management and intensification (OAF, 2021).

Some of the projects been implemented by One Acre Fund include Nutrition Intervention Project - Distribution of Food supplements and Eggs to Expectant Mothers and children under 5 years in Bungoma County; Tree Planting Project - Tree planting in Western province for economic empowerment of Farmers around One Acre Fund Shops in Bungoma, Vihiga and Kakamega County; Improving Access to Clean Water in Western Drilling of boreholes for farmers to Crop Commercialization Project - A project of linking Macadamia farmers to Macadamia processors in Central Kenya ; Soil Characterization Project - Soil testing for One Acre Fund Clients in Western and recommending the appropriate crops and measures to improve yield in Homa Bay County (OAF, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Kenya continues to grapple with challenging food insecurity, poverty and related sustainable development goals despite efforts from state and non-state actors. The national and County Governments, local and international NGOs and other concerned organizations invest large sums every year for the implementation of various sustainable development goals (Okoth, 2016). However, these projects have failed to have substantial impacts on livelihoods. Report from World Bank (WB) reveals that most of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) projects in agriculture, health, water and sanitation have not achieved their objectives. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows that projects implemented in developing countries collapse one year after completion of the projects (OECD, 2018). Further statistics from Government of Kenya (GoK) reveal that 36% of the SDGs related projects fail after a short time after implementation (GoK, 2018).

According to a study done by Muyala (2017) indicated some Kenyan farmers are abandoning the One Acre Fund due to lack of provision of farm inputs and extension services that the NGO was previously providing to them. This has consequently affected the yield of farmers who solely depended on farm production to earn a decent living; problems of low output of agricultural produce are now a common phenomenon to farmers registered by the NGO. The study reported that the project has lost about 10% of its members due to low satisfaction. Further, According to Khalwale (2019), nearly a decade down the line, beneficiary farmers in Kakamega County are unable to practice farming independently. Instead, the initiative has caused what can be called a “dependency syndrome,” that the withdrawal of these agents of development would lead the beneficiaries into the worst destitute people of the county.

Previous on the determinants of project performance has yield mixed outcome therefore making it impossible to generalize the findings and recommendations. For instance, Inda and Moronge (2015) as well as Kirui (2016) found that fund management and stakeholder participation is significant determinant. However, Osedo (2015) indicated that stakeholder participation has weak and not statistically significant influence of successful project implementation. Omondi and Jagongo (2018) failed to isolate stakeholder participation as a significant determinant of effective project implementation. This leaves a significant knowledge gap which this study filled. This study hence aimed to fill the missing link by investigating the influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance, a case of One Acre fund projects in Kenya.

Hypothesis of the Study

$H_{0:}$ There is no significant relationship between beneficiary involvement and project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder theory guided the research. According to the stakeholder hypothesis, a firm's significance is determined by different partner groups involved in the organization's everyday operations. As a result, Freeman (1994) proposed the Stakeholder Theory, which said that managers in a company had a responsibility to ensure that consumers, business partners, suppliers, and contractors maintained cordial relationships. Customers, suppliers, communities, and financiers might all benefit from a value chain created by a stakeholder who controlled them. The depiction and representation of all partner groups on projects was thus critical for the organization's successful and efficient performance (Gibson, 2000). The stakeholder model was crucial since it outlined the different stakeholders' roles, rights, and obligations (Freeman, 1999). Stakeholders owned a greater percentage of the company and anticipated the best results (Friedman & Miles, 2002). Stakeholder theory was therefore relevant to this study because beneficiaries' involvement is vital for project performance through ensuring proper management of the potential project management risks. The theory aided in investigating the influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya.

Conceptual Review

A conceptual framework is a collection of general concepts and principles drawn from a relevant area of study that are used to organize a later presentation. The conceptual framework for evaluating influence project performance is discussed in this procedure. Figure 1 depicts the connection between the independent factors and the dependent variable.

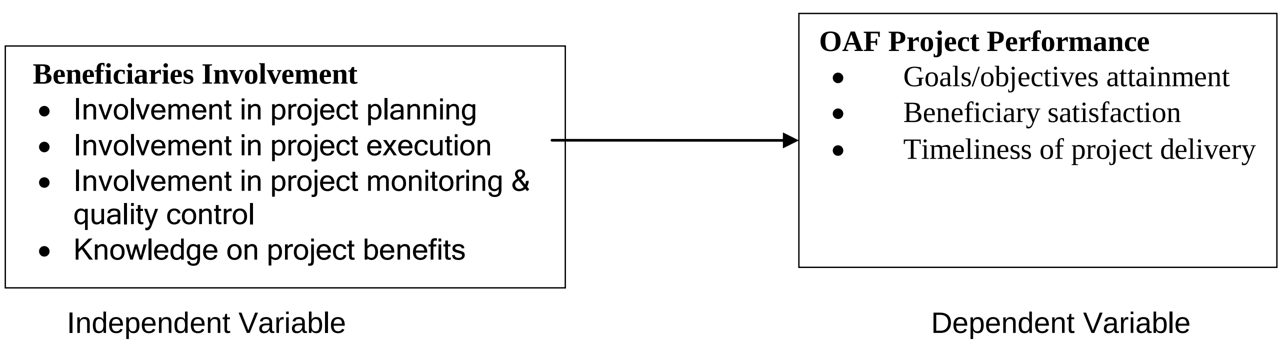

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Concept of Project Beneficiaries Involvement

According to the Project Management Institute (PMI) standards committee, project beneficiaries are individuals or persons as well as institutions who derive advantage or feel the impact of a project. It is important to note that beneficiaries can affect the running and operations of an organization, goal(s) development and even both short and long term survival. This is beneficial in the sense that they help a project to achieve its goals and on the other hand they are antagonistic when they oppose an endeavor, hence the need for public participation in policy making (Manikutty, 2007).

Beneficiaries involvement is key since it involves the mutual kind of a symbiotic relationship in that there is ‘give and take’ in service uptake and support working together to devise, plan and develop solutions to a situation thereof (Aga, Noorderhaven & Vallejo, 2018). Participation is where a manager allows all stakeholders’ views to be tabled when it comes to project implementation, thus participation process is a key approach to engagement of the beneficiaries and it has to be designed in a way that makes beneficiaries realize the effect of their input. This can be achieved by establishing a strong relationship of trust and mutual understanding. Project beneficiaries may feel discouraged if they participate halfway or even are not involved in some of the processes and therefore their views not incorporated on the final decision or impact.

Poor project performance has been attributed to a variety of reasons. One common reason is related to beneficiaries, both the internal and external. However, this has to be discussed basing on the lack of congruency between project interests, responsibility of the project (Kimaro & Nhampossa, 2005), and those of the targeted beneficiaries. Target group involvement is an essential ingredient in project implementation because it helps build the necessary level of understanding and, whenever possible, consensus (Uwanyirigira & Nasirov, 2017). The concept of involvement has become critical in assessing the needs of target groups and in implementation of donor funded projects. The reasons for target group involvement in project implementation therefore include the desire to effect change in individuals, in projects, or organizations, and, in some cases, in society at large, as well as building the capacity of a group or an institution (Gabissa, 2018).

Communities/citizens must actively participate in the design, implementation, and shaping of initiatives that impact them, according to development practitioners. Stakeholder involvement has become more popular as a consequence of a rising desire to discover and adopt participatory alternatives to top-down policymaking. It is thought that more involvement would increase the efficiency of public policies and that public policies will be influenced by the voices of the people (Gabissa, 2018).

Concept of Project Performance

Project performance affects a project's success, and it is determined by the project's complexity, contractual arrangements, how parties engaged interact with one another, the project manager's talents, and the capabilities of those other parties involved (Sartorius, 2018). According to Sarhan and Fox (2013), a project's performance is often gauged and assessed in terms of the metrics depending on its performance. These are the most popular techniques for obtaining and presenting relevant data in terms of inputs, project efficiency, and effectiveness. As a result, project performance may be evaluated in terms of how much money was spent, how long it took, how well the project performed in terms of quality, and if it met the requirements of the users. According to Atkinson, Waterhouse, and Wells (2009), a project's success is determined by whether all stakeholders involved accomplish their goals jointly or separately.

While completing the project under budget is a critical element in evaluating the project's success, Haponava and Jibouri (2016) highlighted that delivering the project within the time frame is also important. According to Chua et al. (2010), project quality is defined as achieving the necessary set of project performance through guaranteeing improved stakeholder interactions. Improving the quality of results in higher-quality goods and services, which in turn leads to consumer satisfaction. The ultimate goal of project performance is to prevent the project going over budget, failing to satisfy the necessary technical requirements for quality, functionality, fitness for purpose, safety, and environmental protection, and failing to stay on schedule for approvals, design, and occupancy (Oladele, 2004).

Project performance guarantees that businesses maximize profits, minimize the effects of risky and uncertain occurrences on the project's goals, and grasp the opportunities for risky events to occur (Kululanga and Kuotcha, 2010). The advantages of project risk management for small companies are in terms of project time and money. It's reasonable that there are as many project risk management models as there are risk management methods in general.

Empirical Review

In Kirinyaga county, Mwea constituency, Nyaguthii and Oyugi (2013) wanted to see how beneficiary participation in community-based project performance impacts the effective execution of Constituency Development Fund projects. To increase project success, the research suggested that community people, whether influential or not, be engaged in project selection, implementation, monitoring, and assessment.

In Kanyekini ward, Kirinyaga central constituency, Ngondo (2014) studied the impact of beneficiary involvement in project performance as one of the contributors to timely project completion. The study discovered that during the planning and implementation of the project, project beneficiaries were not approached directly to join any of the project activity teams; however, where participation did occur, it was valued fairly well, and implementation deadlines were met to help stay on schedule, budget, and credibility. According to the research, project managers and their teams should have regular meetings with project beneficiaries and set out time in their schedules for them.

Osedo (2015) sought to examine the determinants of effective implementation of county construction projects in Kenya. The target population of the study was all the 2,048 approved county construction projects in Nairobi City County in year 2015. The study adopted random sampling technique to select a sample size of 241 approved building projects from the total of 2,408. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data. The findings of the study concluded that beneficiary involvement influence the effective implementation of county construction projects in Kenya. From the study results it was concluded that the effect of beneficiary involvement relationship on the Effective Implementation of County Construction Projects in Kenya is weak and not statistically significant.

Chesiyna and Wanyoike (2016) investigated the factors that influence the success of CDF-funded projects in Kenya's Baringo Central Constituency. The research used a descriptive design with quantitative methods. In all CDF-funded projects, the target population included all 150 project recipients, management committees, and constituency planning and development officials. The research showed that all four variables had an impact on successful implementation, with beneficiary participation having the largest impact.

Githenya and Ngugi (2014) examine the factors that influence the success of housing developments in Kenya. The research used a descriptive approach. Questionnaires for project managers were used to gather data. The study's target audience was project managers working on housing projects in Nairobi. The project managers were selected using random sampling. Beneficiary participation has a significant impact on the execution of housing projects in Kenya, according to the research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used descriptive research survey design. This study design helped the researcher report situations as observed and produces statistical information which can be useful to relevant stakeholders in decision making process (Saunders et al., 2012). The study targeted 397 respondents from One Acre Fund comprising of Clients (Group Leaders), Program Managers, Finance Managers, Field Operations Coordinators, Customer Engagement managers and M&E Managers. The stratified sample method was used in this research, and respondents were chosen using simple random sampling. The sample size for the research was calculated using Nassiuma's (2000) method. Nassiuma (2000) claims that in most surveys or experiments, a coefficient of variance of 21 to 40% and a standard error of 2 to 5% are typically appropriate. Nassiuma's formula is a stable measure of variability that does not require any probability distribution. As a result, a coefficient variation of 40% and a standard error of 2% were utilized in this research. The greater limit for coefficient of variation and standard error was chosen to guarantee that the sample had more variety and to reduce the degree of error. The model is stated as:

$$n = \frac{[N \times (C_v)^2]}{[(C_v)^2 + (N-1)e^2]}$$

where:

n= Sample size

N= Study Population,

C_v= Coefficient of Variation (0.4)

e =Standard error (0.02).

Basing on the above data, n was computed as follows:

$$\mathbf{n} = \frac{397\,(0.4)^2}{0.4^2 + (397-1)0.03^2} = 123.943662$$

From the calculation, 124 respondents were used for this study as the sample size, where respondents were randomly selected from each strata as per table 1.0

Table 1: Sample Size

Category	**Target Population**	**Sample n= (N/Target Pop.) x Sample size**
Clients (Group Leaders)	201	62
Program Managers	30	9
Finance Managers	4	2
Field Operations Coordinators	150	47
M & E Managers	6	2
Customer Engagement Managers	6	2
Total	**397**	**124**

Structured questionnaires with closed-ended questions were utilized by the researcher. The questionnaires were created in accordance with the study's goals, emphasizing the four variables that were assessed using a Likert scale. The surveys were self-administered using a pick-and-drop method, which is critical for gathering primary data. During the data collecting procedure, two research assistants were requested. A pilot study was conducted to determine the research instruments' reliability and validity. The pilot study participants were not included in the final research participants. For the pilot research, ten people were utilized. In this research, descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The regression and correlation analyses were based on the association between two (or more) variables. SPSS version 23 is the computer analysis tool that was used in this study. Analyzed data was organized into models and tables for easy reference.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The objective of this study was to find out the influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. To achieve this, the researcher sought from the respondents' information about the beneficiary involvement. The responses are as shown in Table 2. To describe a distribution of the scores of measurements using indices or statistics, the study entailed use of descriptive statistics to present findings using percentages where 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Undecided, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Table 2: Descriptive Results: Beneficiary involvement

Beneficiary involvement	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Mean**	**SDV**
1. The structures established for beneficiary involvement enables effective implementation of OAF projects	19 (20)	57 (60)	10 (10.5)	5 (5.3)	4 (4.2)	3.863	.9409
2. Implementation of OAF projects is a collective responsibility that involves all stakeholders including beneficiaries	13 (13.7)	36 (37.9)	36 (37.9)	4 (4.2)	6 (6.3)	3.484	.9985
3. OAF involve beneficiaries in monitoring of various projects	12 (12.6)	61 (64.2)	9 (9.5)	10 (10.5)	3 (3.2)	3.726	0.9276
4. Beneficiaries hold frequent consultative meetings to deliberate on the progress of the project implementation	17 (17.9)	42 (44.2)	25 (26.3)	6 (6.3)	5 (5.3)	3.632	1.0216
5. Generally beneficiary involvement in planning, implementation and evaluation of OAF project influence their performance	26 (27.4)	7 (7.4)	44 (46.3)	11 (11.6)	7 (7.4)	3.358	1.2109
Composite Mean						3.613	1.0199

As indicated in Table 2, majority of the sampled respondents (60.0%) agreed that the structures established for beneficiary involvement enables effective implementation of OAF project and 20% strongly agreed on the same with a mean of 3.86. Few of the respondents (37.9%) agreed that implementation of OAF projects is a collective responsibility that involves all stakeholders including beneficiaries although the same index were undecided with a mean of

3.48. However, 64.2% of the respondents agreed that OAF involve beneficiaries in monitoring of various projects and further 12.6% strongly agreed with a mean of 3.72.

The results also revealed that slight majority of the respondents (44.2%) agreed that beneficiaries hold frequent consultative meetings to deliberate on the progress of the project implementation although 26.3% of the respondents were undecided with a mean of 3.63. Lastly, few of the respondents (27.4%) strongly agreed that generally beneficiary involvement in planning; implementation and evaluation of OAF project influence their performance although 46.3% were undecided with a mean of 3.35. Averagely, the level of beneficiary involvement at the One Acre Fund was at 72.2% mean response (mean=3.613, std. dev. =1.019) rated high as shown in Table 2.0. This is an indication that the way in which beneficiary involvement in project planning, project execution, project monitoring & quality control Knowledge on project benefits influences project performance. Chesiyna and Wanyoike (2016) agree, stating that the stakeholder engagement approach creates a proactive two-way interaction between the business and the stakeholder. Communication, views, and ideas flow in both ways, with the organization being able to alter its behavior as a result of stakeholder engagement, which has an impact on program success.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis for Project performance

Project performance	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Mean**	**SDV**
1 One Acre Fund projects are implemented within the budget	18 (18.9)	33 (34.7)	31 (32.6)	7 (7.4)	6 (6.3)	3.526	1.0802
2 One Acre Fund projects are implemented within expected timelines	7 (7.4)	45 (47.4)	21 (22.1)	15 (15.8)	7 (7.4)	3.316	1.0645
3 Implemented Once Acre Fund projects are sustainable	14 (14.7)	47 (49.5)	21 (22.1)	12 (12.6)	1 (1.1)	3.642	0.9216
4 Project beneficiaries are satisfied with performance of One Acre Fund Projects	17 (17.9)	37 (38.9)	23 (24.2)	17 (17.9)	1 (1.1)	3.547	1.0186
5 One Acre Fund projects are implemented and evaluated according to set objectives	5 (5.3)	32 (33.7)	37 (38.9)	18 (18.9)	3 (3.2)	3.189	0.9144
6. Beneficiaries of projects wants the project activities to continue	19 (20)	30 (31.6)	30 (31.6)	12 (12.6)	4 (4.2)	3.505	1.0805
Composite Mean						**3.454**	**1.0133**

From table 3, few of respondents agreed (34.7%) One Acre Fund projects are implemented within the budget while 32.6% were undecided with a mean of 3.526. The results also revealed that 47.4% of respondents agreed that One Acre Fund projects are implemented within expected timelines while 22.1% were undecided with a mean of 3.316. More so, 49.5% of respondents agreed that implemented Once Acre Fund projects are sustainable although 22.1% of the respondents were undecided with a mean of 3.64. The study also established that 38.9% of the respondents agreed that project beneficiaries are satisfied with performance of one Acre Fund Projects although 24.2% were undecided with a mean of 3.645.

In regard to One Acre Fund projects are implemented and evaluated according to set objectives, 33.7% of the respondents agreed and 38.9% of the respondents were undecided with a mean of 3.189. Lastly, 31.6% of the respondents agreed that beneficiaries of projects want the project activities to continue with 31.6% of them remaining undecided. The mean of 3.5 indicated that the beneficiaries of projects want the project activities to continue. Averagely, the project performance at One Acre Fund was at 69.1% mean response (mean=3.454, std. dev. =1.0133) rated high as shown in Table 3.

Inferential Statistics

This was computed to test the percentage and unit contribution of each of the independent variables (beneficiary involvement) on the dependent variable project performance of One Acre Fund, This tested the direct influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund. The results are shown in table 4.

Table 4: Direct influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.527[a]	.278	.270	.602356	.278	35.817	1	93	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Beneficiary involvement

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	12.996	1	12.996	35.817	.000[b]
1	Residual	33.743	93	.363		
	Total	46.739	94			

a. Dependent Variable: Project performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Beneficiary involvement

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	1.241	.374		3.323	.001
1	Beneficiary involvement	.646	.108	.527	5.985	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Project performance

The correlation coefficient of procurement outsourcing (R=0.527) in Table 4.0 showed that there is a moderate positive relationship between beneficiary involvement and project performance of One Acre Fund. The model summary shows R^2 =0.278 which implies that 27.8% variation in project performance of One Acre Fund is explained by the beneficiary involvement while other factors not in the study model accounts for 72.8% variation in the project performance of One Acre Fund. Kamau (2017), who conducted a study on the role of beneficiary involvement in successful project implementation, found that their involvement goes a long way in ensuring that the project objectives are met and recommended that the community be involved in project identification to increase ownership, backed up the findings of the study. Stakeholder engagement has a substantial effect on the success of donor-funded projects, according to Kiara and Luketero (2018). The research also highlighted that a strong and clear stakeholders involvement program is critical in guaranteeing the seamless execution of donor-funded projects.

Further, coefficient analysis indicates that there is a positive significant linear influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund; (β= 0.646; at $p<.01$). The coefficient analysis results therefore imply that a single improvement in beneficiary involvement will result to 0.646 unit improvement in project performance of One Acre Fund and the linear regression model equation is;

(iv) = $1.241+ 0.646X_4$

where;

y is project performance of One Acre Fund

X_4 is beneficiary involvement

This sought to find out the influence of beneficiary involvement on project performance of One Acre Fund in Kenya. Descriptive statistics indicated that most respondents were in agreement that the structures established for beneficiary involvement enables effective implementation of OAF projects, OAF involve beneficiaries in monitoring of various projects and beneficiaries hold frequent consultative meetings to deliberate on the progress of the project implementation. More so, inferential statistics found a significant relationship between beneficiary involvement and project performance of One Acre Fund, Kenya. The results imply that a single improvement in effective beneficiary involvement will result to significant improvement in project performance of One Acre Fund. The study rejected the null hypothesis since the significance level was less than 0.05 (P=0.000).

The results are consistent with recent researches which found a significant relationship between beneficiary involvement and project performance. The findings are similar to those of Kamau (2017), who investigated the role of beneficiary involvement in the successful completion of CDF projects in the Imenti constituency and discovered that their involvement goes a long way toward ensuring that the project objectives are met, and recommended that the community be involved in project identification to increase ownership. Aga and Vallejo (2018) investigated the degree of beneficiary participation in project identification and selection by constituents, using the Makadara CDF as a case study, and concluded that all important stakeholders must be included in order for projects to be completed on time.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that project performance in the One Acre Fund is significantly influence by beneficiary involvement. This postulated that that involvement of beneficiaries in project planning, project execution, project monitoring & quality control would improve One Acre Fund Projects Performance. Therefore, implementation of OAF projects is a collective responsibility that involves all stakeholders including beneficiaries'. There was positive correlation between beneficiary involvement and project performance; the study recommended that management of One Acre Fund should ensure they provide an opportunity for different beneficiaries to participate in the project. The beneficiaries need to feel that their opinions are included in the final decisions making process. Project beneficiaries are very important groups whose contribution is priceless in the efforts to ensure project performs as expected and achieves the set goals. The study recommended that management of One Acre Fund should ensure that beneficiaries are involved project monitoring and evaluation regularly. The staff from different departments should be required to submit a report on their areas of operation and responsibility. Also, enough resources should be allocated so as to have the funds availed at the right time and be in the right hands in order to have the monitoring and evaluation processes a success.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study focused on determinants of project performance, a case of One Acre fund projects in Kenya. To begin with, the scope of the study was only limited to projects being implemented by One Acre Fund and therefore the findings may not necessarily reflect same projects being implemented by different organization due to different dynamics, thus there is a need for similar study considering other organization in Kenya. Secondly, the study focused on four determinants which did not fully determined performance of One Acre Fund Projects. This implies there may be other independent, moderating, mediating or intervening variables which may influence performance of One Acre Fund projects such as risk management, organizational structure/culture, and resource management. Therefore, further studies should focus on the said variables.

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