

# Assessing the Influence of Community Participation on Performance of Church Funded Projects in Tanzania

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## ABSTRACT

The study is on Assessing the Influence of Community Participation on Performance of Church Funded Projects in Tanzania a case study of Cardinal Rugambwa Hospital and St Francis Training College in Dar es Salaam. A descriptive survey approach was adopted to gather primary data from a random selection of 370 participants, including project managers and members of the community. The findings indicate that community participation has a less positive impact on church funded projects. The study recommends that church-funded projects prioritise in involving the community in the implementation of its projects as the community is the direct beneficiaries but also play a major role in the implementation, supervision and success of the projects.

Keywords: Community Participation, Performance, Church Funded Projects & Tanzania

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## INTRODUCTION

Community involvement in project creation and execution has grown in popularity over time, and its variations have gained special attention in the policies of bilateral and multilateral development organizations. For example, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) contends that in order to achieve sustainable development, projects must be locally owned and that development cooperation must change to a partnership model in which donor programs and activities function within locally-owned development strategies (Saxby, 2003). Donors were encouraged to respect and promote strong local commitment, engagement, capacity building, and ownership of the project activities in the policy paper. For church development efforts to be effective and long-lasting, community engagement is essential (Muro and Namusonge, 2015).

The Catholic Church is a player and shareholder in promoting socioeconomic development initiatives on a global scale. Local community involvement in projects is a global issue, especially in developing nations like Tanzania. The Church is essential to community growth through its Small Christian Communities (SCCs) (Nthiga & Moi, 2021). Christians who get together for prayers or conversations on church and human development initiatives with a shared commitment and involvement are known as Small Christian Communities (SCCs) (Kang and Na, 2020; Njinu & Majawa, 2021).

According to Ribeiro (2009), the majority of churches view community involvement in projects as a crucial component of their growth and, ultimately, their sustainability beyond the project cycle from the donor's point of view. In civilizations, community engagement helps to strengthen democracy, fight the exclusion of underprivileged and marginalized groups, and empower and mobilize individuals (Bartholomew et al., 2011). Additionally, the legitimacy of any initiative supported by a donor that incorporates the ownership component depends on community engagement (Phillips and Pittman, 2009).

Similar to this, every project that wants to be successful needs to connect planning and action as well as the requirement that community stakeholders show that they own the plan (Sirgy et al., 2011). Although community engagement has received a lot of attention, most development initiatives still struggle to integrate it (Lungo et al., 2017).

Furthermore, about 78.9% of respondents to Alelah and Mueke's (2017) study on the impact of community engagement on the sustainability of the WASH project in Kenya agreed that community participation significantly

affects project sustainability. This indicates that the WASH initiative is likely to succeed if the community is actively involved. Additionally, community members are educated on the value of their involvement in recognizing and addressing issues that impact them and are focused on sustainable development (Alelah and Mueke, 2017).

Mansuri and Rao (2011) state that church-funded initiatives are usually carried out in what is known as a "community." This frequently designates a community of weavers or potters, or it may refer to an administratively designated place like a village, tribal region, or neighborhood. The word is frequently used without much qualification in the literature on development policy to refer to a social system that is politically and culturally homogenous, or that is, at the very least, an internally coherent and generally harmonious organism.

## 1.2 Research Problem Statement

Thirty percent of project failures are attributed to poor project management, according to Thomas, Delisle, Jugdev, and Buckle (2011). The performance of a project is correlated with its identification process (Thomas, Delisle, Jugdev, & Buckle, 2011). They found that over 50% of finished projects end up being up to 190 percent over budget and 220 percent behind time, and that 30% of all projects are canceled midway due to poor management of the original selection phase. When two crucial concerns are properly addressed—stakeholder analysis and participation in the identification process—projects can benefit from the knowledge base of stakeholders (Mitropoulos and Howell 2012). Moreover, integrated project teams need to be established as they would enhance project results (Lahdenperä, 2012; Cohen, 2010). The remaining three main areas of interest in project management are problem analysis, risk management analysis, and goal selection. The purpose of projects is to address issues. If the wrong project is chosen, resources, time, and effort will be squandered.

## 2. LIETRATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Stakeholder Theory

Edward Freeman first presented the idea of stakeholder theory in 1984 and outlined its tenets. This notion states that people or organizations with an interest in community initiatives ought to be involved in their operations from the very beginning. Every genuine participant in an organization's activities benefits, according to the stakeholder theory, albeit it's not always obvious which legitimate stakeholder's requirements come first (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). Internal and external stakeholders—including but not limited to managers, owners, investors, consumers, suppliers, governments, community organizations, and particular interest groups—are equally valued in this paradigm.

As people grow to value collaborating with others and organizations, social cohesion improves as they become more involved in their community. Additionally, by encouraging charitable contributions for community development and skill development, which improves employment prospects and raises community wealth, this involvement adds economic value while also giving locals the connections and skills they need to overcome social isolation. Community-based organizations (CBOs) must make sure that people in the community are willing and involved right away.

The advantages that community members experience as a result of their involvement are also highlighted by this notion. CBOs must make sure that community people participate in decision-making, that its staff members are educated in successful community engagement, and that the community's interests are taken into account. We can better understand how community engagement contributes to CBO project success by using this idea.

### 2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Participation in the community is a social method where local people come together to organize and engage at the neighborhood or community level to enhance their everyday living conditions, including access to water, sanitation, health, and education. This process involves various degrees of involvement from individuals or groups, both financially and physically, as well as their commitment socially and politically, throughout the project's lifecycle. This is because it suggests that the community forms groups to oversee the equipment (Moningka, 2010). The aim of community participation, as Moningka (2010) points out, is to empower the community to maintain the services developed during the project even after the organizations providing support have departed. Community members can participate at different stages and with varying levels of engagement. Involving the community at every stage of the project, from its inception to its sustainability and evaluation, ensures that the community's needs and priorities are reflected in its activities and encourages the community to continue managing operations related to the project after its completion.

To enhance the understanding and awareness of local communities in developing community-based tourism initiatives, the Asian Centre for Tourism Planning and Poverty Reduction (2008) initiated a capacity-building program focused on community-based tourism projects in Thailand. As part of this program, training sessions for the local community were conducted. These sessions not only led to changes in knowledge and attitudes but also provided an opportunity for the community to conduct a SWOT analysis and contribute to the development of a community vision, direction, and plan (Asian Centre for Tourism and Poverty Reduction, 2008). Projects funded by churches are often carried out within a group referred to as a "community," which can include groups of weavers or potters, or a defined geographical area like a village, tribal region, or neighborhood. The term "community" is frequently used in development policy literature to describe a social system that is politically and culturally uniform or one that, at least implicitly, is cohesive and harmonious.

Maduagwu (2009) argues that the Nigerian government should not presume to know better than the poor what will most effectively help them. Furthermore, Maduagwu (2009) suggests that initiatives should be initiated based on the demand from the public rather than external pressures from builders. The community should identify its own priorities and needs. Capra (2011) believes that fostering a sense of community cohesion requires active participation. This participation enables members to live together, share norms, values, fears, and challenges, and to embrace the idea of partnership with the dynamic forces of change and development that lead to democracy and personal empowerment. It also encourages the community to associate, build connections, live within each other, and collaborate.

Mulwa (2008) suggests that a lack of a common goal and diverse interests within a group can make it hard to achieve objectives, while insufficient knowledge can lower the quality of a project. Simplistic views on concepts like social capital and community involvement can hide significant differences that affect project results. These differences can arise from regional dynamics, authority structures, gender roles, social divisions based on caste, race, or ethnicity, varying interests in specific public goods or services, or economic disparities (Mansuri and Rao, 2011).

Mosse (2011) examined participatory projects and found that, even with high participation, the use of "local knowledge" as a way to understand the planning context often obscured the politics behind knowledge creation and use. UNESCAP (2009) points out that participatory practices have roots in the 1940s in Nigeria, with a colonial District officer advocating for self-help development to enhance Nigerians' ability to identify their needs and improve their circumstances. The RRA and PRA methods, which Chambers (2010) describes as approaches to help rural communities share, enhance, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, have popularized participatory approaches.

Cleaver (2009) highlights that participatory methods can lead to greater sustainability, ownership, and collaboration. However, the argument that no single study has definitively shown a link between project outcomes and participatory efforts has led to criticism of this approach. Additionally, the idea of individual empowerment and the depolarization of empowerment have faced criticism. It's noted that defining who is empowered—whether it's individuals, communities, or various groups—is challenging, including women, the disadvantaged, or those marginalized.

Mansuri and Rao (2011) discuss a rich and varied theoretical literature on collective action and coordination that explores how diversity affects the ability to act collectively. This literature, produced by economists, sociologists, and anthropologists, looks at the conditions that favor or hinder collective action. The success of a project at the community level hinges on community involvement. By engaging in projects funded by churches, community members aim to address issues that directly impact them. Therefore, without community participation, there's a risk that the project won't be truly owned, making it difficult to sustain.

Mobilization is the process of arranging people into associations, organizations, crowds, and groups to work toward shared goals. Many resources are needed to launch a business, such as labor, money, organizational structure, social acceptance, and legitimacy. It's not always the best practice to combine these resources. Stinchcombe (2010) asserts that organizational development seems to occur in brief spurts, interspersed with extended stretches of stability.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive survey design (Kothari 2009). In order to gather data from a sizable number of subjects at any given time, the researcher employed a descriptive survey design in this study. The purpose of the study was to gather data on project management from participants regarding the effectiveness of projects funded by Tanzanian churches.

a simple random sampling method was utilized to choose participants, which included members of the management team, facilitators, and individuals from the community.

In this study, all 370 respondents were administered with the same questionnaire. For this research, a 5-point Likert scale was chosen because it was more efficient for participants, especially those who might be very occupied. Therefore, the survey was crafted to accommodate the respondents' schedules. The highest rating was 5 for 'strongly agree,' and the lowest was 1 for 'strongly disagree.'

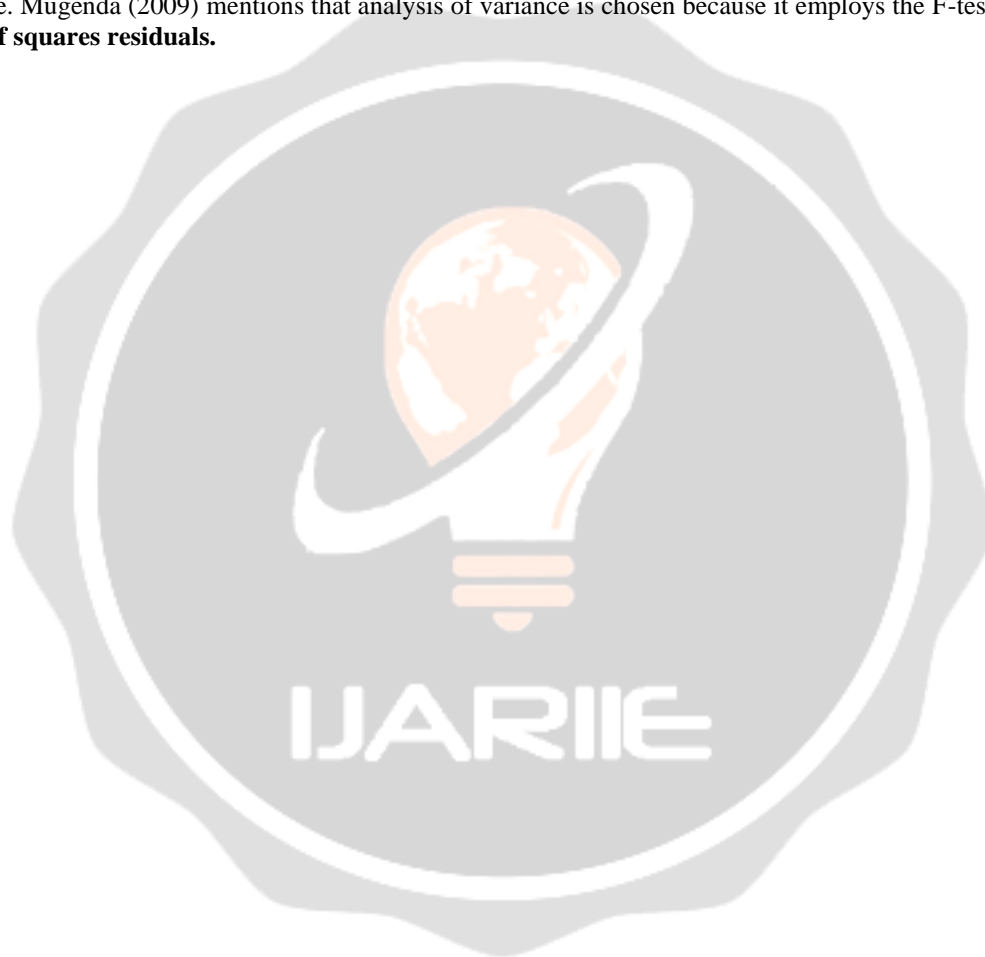
The questionnaire was pilot-tested to make sure it was clear and the information collected was thoroughly examined in connection with the research questions, using the same questionnaire for all participants. This involved testing (10% of the total sample size, which equates to 40 participants) that had traits similar to those of the study area. Following the pilot test, modifications were implemented to tackle any issues identified.

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods like counting occurrences and calculating proportions. The general multiple regression equation for the project performance model was expressed in equation 1  
$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots 1$$

Where  $\beta_1 \dots \beta_4$  = regression coefficient of four explanatory variables

$\epsilon$  = Error Term

Categorical statistical methods, including the nonparametric test that includes the analysis of variance (ANOVA), were also utilized to evaluate the importance of the entire model with a 95% confidence level and a 0.05 level of significance. Mugenda (2009) mentions that analysis of variance is chosen because it employs the F-test **concerning the sums of squares residuals**.



## 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.1 Response Rate

The researcher administered 370 questionnaires, of which 350 filled correctly and fully completed questionnaires were returned. This resulted in a response rate of 94.6%, which was within the value prescribed by Hussey and Collis (2009) as a significant response rate for statistical analysis and set a minimum value of 50%.

**Table 4.1 Response Rate**

Response	Frequency	Response Rate (%)
Response	350	94.6
Non-response	20	05.4
Total	370	100.0

A reliability analysis was then performed using Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency by noting whether certain items within a scale measure the same construct. Malhotra (2015) set the alpha value threshold at 0.7 and thus formed the benchmark of the study.

### 4.2 Influence of Community participation on Project performance

Participants were requested to rate how much involvement from the community influences the success of projects funded by the Church. Their responses are displayed in Table 4.11. For every project to succeed, the backing of the community is essential, as they are involved in the decision-making, execution, oversight, and long-term maintenance of the project. It's recognized that many projects have failed due to insufficient community involvement. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to determine the level of community engagement in Church-funded projects and its impact. Below is a table illustrating the degree of community involvement in the chosen Church-funded projects.

**Table 4.2: Extent Community Participation Influence Performance of Church Funded Projects**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Low extent	35	9.8
Moderate extent	126	36.6
Great extent	140	39.0
Very great extent	49	14.6
Total	350	100.0

Participants reported that involvement from the community significantly affects the success of projects supported by the Church, with 39.0% considering it to have a major effect and 36.6% seeing it as having a moderate effect. Participants also noted that community involvement had a very strong (14.6%) and weak (9.8%) effect on the success of these projects. This indicates that community involvement plays a crucial role in the success of projects supported by the Church. Furthermore, participants were requested to assess how different elements of community involvement impact the success of these projects.

**Table 4.3: Community Participation Aspects Influencing Performance of Church Funded Projects**

Aspects of community participation	Mean	Std. Dev.
Information sharing	4.148	.826
Knowledge sharing	3.671	.832
Faster feedback	2.427	.497
Combined efforts	4.049	.859
Talent combinations	4.134	.812
Quick decision-making	2.866	.582

Based on the findings, participants reported that the exchange of information (average 4.148), merging skills (average 4.134), joint initiatives (average 4.049), and the sharing of knowledge (average 3.671) significantly impact the execution of projects funded by the Church. Moreover, participants mentioned that rapid decision-making (average 2.866) somewhat affects the success of projects funded by the Church and that prompt feedback (average 2.427) somewhat affects the success of projects funded by the Church.

#### 4.3.5 Performance of Church funded projects



The study also asked respondents to indicate trends in various performance aspects of Church-funded projects over the past five years. Their answers are shown in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.4: Trend of Performance of Church Funded Projects Aspects**

Performance of Church funded projects	Mean	Std. Dev.
Project completed within schedule.	2.539	.589
Project completed within cost	3.646	.636
Desired Quality & Safety	4.159	.808
Customer satisfaction	3.939	.866
Budgetary completion	4.220	.770

According to the results, participants said that reaching financial objectives was given an average score of 4.220, while logistics operations' flexibility was given an average score of 4.204. Customer satisfaction was tested at 3,939, and the average rating for the significance of quality and safety was 4.159. In addition, the median score for completed projects has improved over the past five years, coming in at 3,646. However, with an average score of 2.539, participants said that their ability to complete assignments on schedule has been consistent throughout the same time period.

#### 4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

This was used to determine the importance of information sharing, knowledge sharing, faster feedback, combined efforts, talent combination and quick decision sharing in relation to the performance of Church funded projects.

**Table 4.5: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.858	0.735	0.722		1.876

The outcome of Table 4.16 showed that the modified R-square figure stands at 0.722, suggesting that the factors under consideration (information sharing, knowledge sharing, faster feedback, combined efforts, talent combination and quick decision sharing) explain 72.2% of the differences in how well Church-funded projects perform. This means that there are additional elements responsible for 27.8% of the impact on the performance of these projects.

**Table 4.6: Analysis of Variance**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	782.451	4	195.613	53.494	1.7321
Residual	281.566	77	3.657	0.0	0.0
Total	1064.017	81	199.260	53.494	1.73E-21

The data presented in Table 4.17 indicated that the p-value was 0.000 and the computed F value was 53.494. Since the p-value was below 0.05 and the computed F value exceeded the critical F value (2.4904), the entire model specification was deemed statistically significant. The coefficients in the model offer both unstandardized and standardized values to elucidate the direction of the regression model and determine the significance of the variables in the study. These findings are outlined in Table 4.18. The coefficients derived from the regression analyses are displayed in Table 4.18.

**Table 4.7 Regression Analysis Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Information sharing	0.583	0.244	0.612	1.799	.006
	Knowledge sharing	0.518	0.239	0.656	1.004	.004
	Faster feedback	0.596	0.278	0.489	2.144	.035
	Combined efforts	0.614	0.393	0.721	0.071	.042
	Talent combinations	0.614	0.393	0.721	0.071	.042

Using the results in table 4.7, the relationship between variables in the study can be modeled into a multiple linear model.

The model implies that without any of the predictors being in place for project performance of the church sponsored projects, there will be an equivalent amount of performance of up to 0.664 units. However, holding all other predictors constant, an increase in 1 unit of community participation would increase project performance of the church sponsored projects by 0.612 units. Increasing 1 unit of source of funds would increase project performance of the church sponsored project by 0.656 units. Increasing 1 unit of institutional capacity of the church projects would increase project performance of the selected projects by 0.489 units whereas.

Increasing 1 unit of community participation would increase project performance of the church sponsored projects by 0.721. The statistics also show that the above changes would only be significant for changes. The findings further show that changes in community participation, may cause to project performance of the church sponsored projects, the changes the changes are significant at significance levels 0.006, 0.004, 0.035 and 0.042 respectively.

## 5. Discussions of findings

The research also revealed that the involvement of the community moderately influences the success of projects funded by the Catholic Church. It was discovered that when the community is actively engaged, it leads to a mix of skills, sharing of resources, and exchange of knowledge, which significantly impacts the success of these projects. These findings align with Mulwa (2015) who suggests that community input is crucial for projects, as it provides relevant and complete information for decision-making. The purpose of community involvement, as outlined by Moningka (2010), is to enhance the community's ability to maintain the services developed during the project even after the organizations facilitating the project have departed. Community members can participate in the process at different stages and to varying levels of involvement. Including the community at every stage of the project, from its inception to its evaluation, ensures that the community's needs and priorities are reflected in its activities and encourages the continuation of project-related activities after its completion. To better understand and engage local communities in the development of community-based tourism projects, the Asian Centre for Tourism Planning and Poverty Reduction (2008) initiated a capacity-building program focused on community-based tourism projects in Thailand. As part of this program, local community members received training. This training not only led to changes in knowledge and attitudes but also provided an opportunity for the community to conduct a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and contribute to the development of a community vision, direction, and plan (Asian Centre for Tourism and Poverty Reduction, 2008).

Church-funded projects are often implemented within a group referred to as a "community," as mentioned by Mansuri and Rao (2011). This term typically refers to a group of weavers, potters, or a defined geographical area like a village, tribal region, or neighborhood. It's common in development policy literature to use this term broadly to describe a social system that is politically and culturally uniform or one that, at least implicitly, is cohesive and generally peaceful. Maduagwu (2009) argues that the Nigerian government should not presume to know better than the impoverished communities what will be most effective for them. Furthermore, Maduagwu (2009) suggests that projects should be initiated based on the demand from the public rather than external pressures. The community should identify its own needs and priorities. Capra (2011) emphasizes that fostering a sense of community requires active participation. It enables members to live together, share common norms, values, fears, and challenges, and to embrace the idea of partnership with the dynamic forces of change and development that lead to democracy and personal empowerment. This approach encourages members to associate, build connections, live within each other, and collaborate.

## 6. Conclusion

The Church actively participates in project implementation activities that improve community cohesion, according to the study's findings. This makes it possible for project participants to coexist while upholding the standards and principles that are essential to the creation and execution of the project. Members have also guaranteed the ongoing funding of their initiatives, as well as the funds management team's fidelity, accountability, and openness. Participants in the project understand the importance of knowledge and skills in carrying out community-based initiatives. Both project managers and participants are undergoing the necessary training and possess the abilities needed to manage problems associated with the effective execution of projects.

## 7. Recommendations

Development organizations and project managers should work to raise awareness of community engagement in community-based initiatives as it is crucial to the effective execution of projects. Since it affects the projects' successful execution, finances management is an essential component of all community-based initiatives. Project managers and development partners must stress and provide training on effective fund management. To determine the availability of resources, improve community capacities, and help them carry out church-based programs, institutional capacity building is required. To increase their involvement in project sustainability planning, project participants should also be made aware of the many facets of sustainability and its significance.

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