

Examining the Factors Influencing the Adoption of Monitoring and Evaluation System among Non-Governmental Organisations in Murang'a County, Kenya

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Abstract:

The main purpose of this study was to examine the factors influencing the adoption of monitoring and evaluation system among NGOs in Murang'a County, Kenya. Descriptive survey design was used to carry out this study. The study used a sample of 100 respondents. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted to find the reliability of the instruments, where a Cronbach alpha of 0.78 was obtained, thus the tool was considered reliable as the alpha value exceeded the threshold of 0.7. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of means and frequency and percentages. Inferential statistics was also used in the data analysis. The study concludes that most NGOs disregarded the tenets of having a monitoring and evaluation framework in place. The study recommends that for a successful adoption of M&E, skilled people should be hired and regular training to be conducted, NGOs to be flexible in order to incur low costs in operations and to fully involve all the stakeholders. The study findings are expected to help in areas of project management, monitoring and evaluation of community based projects implemented by NGOs.

Keywords: *Monitoring and Evaluation adoption, Non-Governmental Organisations, M&E adoption, M&E adoption issues, M&E adoption factors*

Introduction

The Kenya social protection sector review (2012) states that most NGOs have not adopted monitoring and evaluation and where adopted, it is very weak and the information is never used as decision making tool by the bureaucratic managements in place who view them as controlling. For most NGOs, emphasis is put on physical infrastructure rather than methodological and conceptual training (Koffi-Tessio, 2002). Monitoring and evaluation is also viewed as a donor and not a management requirement (Shapiro, 2011). In Murang'a County, only a few NGOs have adopted a monitoring and evaluation system which has led to very little impact being felt on the ground from the twenty NGOs in place.

According to a study by Kenya National Bureau of statistics (KNBS) in 2013, education levels in the county are still low with only 25% of residents having attained a secondary level education. Only 41% of the population use improved sources of water like piped, borehole or collected rain water. Further, many orphans do not access education and not all HIV/AIDS patients receive help from the NGOs concerned. These shortcomings can be attributed to a lack of adopting a

monitoring and evaluation system by the NGOs in the county. Donors blame poor monitoring and evaluation by NGOs for unsuccessful achievement of their set objectives (Serite, 2006). A Monitoring and Evaluation system plan by NGOs in Murang'a County, Kenya is crucial since a lot of government and donor resources are provided to the NGOs to execute the various projects. There is also the need to improve the livelihood of Murang'a County residents than it is at the moment (Shapiro, 2011). They need to experience the benefits from the NGOs in full according to the resources the NGOs have at their disposal. This calls for the projects to be monitored for the purposes of accountability and transparency of use of resources and its impact, project performance and organizational learning to assist future projects.

Previous evaluations of NGOs projects have shown that M&E is still very weak in Kenya and other countries. For most NGOs, M&E is not definite throughout the project cycle. Monitoring mainly focuses on financial and organizational aspects. This has arisen not only due to the limited capacity of programme implementers but also a matter of lack of methodological precision on adoption of M&E system for project management. In Kenya, notwithstanding the vast resources provided to NGOs for implementation of the projects, it is still not clear whether M&E system has been adopted in the projects being implemented by them. Thus, this study sought to examine the factors influencing the adoption of monitoring and evaluation system among NGOs projects in Murang'a County, Kenya.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was used in this study to investigate adoption of monitoring and evaluation system among NGO projects in Murang'a County, Kenya. The target population consisted of all the 100 employees from all twenty (20) NGOs carrying out twenty (20) NGO projects in Murang'a County. The study used a sample of 100 subjects that was comprised of 20 project managers, 20 monitoring and evaluation officials and 60 project implementer staff. The study made use of questionnaires as primary data collection tools. The questionnaires included both closed and open ended questions. The tool helped to reveal more about practices of the particular projects and the way monitoring and evaluation was conducted in the projects.

To ensure that the instruments were valid, content validity was used. Split Half method was used to estimate reliability of instruments where a Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient value of 0.78 was obtained which is higher than the reasonable threshold of 0.7, thus making the instruments to be considered as reliable. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics in the analysis. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were used to report the findings on the factors influencing the adoption of M&E system among NGOs. Inferential statistics including Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to establish the association between size of budget allocated and M&E, Staff knowledge of M&E systems, Number of staff training on M&E systems, Stakeholder involvement and adoption of M&E systems. Further, the researcher also observed ethical and legal issues in research like the principle of confidentiality, anonymity, and acknowledgement of other people's input throughout the whole study.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Information

The study sought to find out the demographic information of the respondents that took part in the study. These included: gender, professional experience and level of education.

The study established that majority of the employees had worked for between 2 to 6 years while the minority had worked for more than 10 years. The fact that majority had worked for at least two years infers that most of the respondents had the experience on adoption of monitoring and evaluation system among non-governmental organizations and were able to give valid responses.

The study established that over two thirds (70.4%) of the Project implementation officers had a diploma qualification, while 14.8% had an undergraduate degree similar to master's degree. The study also established that nearly half (47.1 %) of the project M&E officers had a diploma qualification, slightly over a third (35.2%) of them were certificate holders, 11.8% of them had degrees and only 5.9% had post-graduate qualifications.

Nearly half (46.1 %) of the project managers had a master's degree and above qualifications, 30.8% of them had gone up to degree level, 15.4% of employees had diploma and only 7.7% of them had certificate qualification. Having the majority of the employees being diploma holders and above indicates that they have capacity, skills and management expertise to conduct the monitoring and evaluation activities required in their institutions.

Types of project implemented by the NGOs projects

The study identified that most of the NGOs were involved in social economic mitigation projects which accounted for 28% of all the 20 projects implemented in Murang'a County. This was followed by HIV/AIDS projects at 22%. This could be due to fundamentals factors that negatively affect competitiveness of social economic outcomes within Murang'a County. Besides, low level of awareness on HIV and AIDS epidemic across different regions like Murang'a County has led to most of the NGOs engaging in the training and sensitization projects on HIV/AIDS issues. Adolescent and reproductive health projects accounted for 17% that was attributed to the fact the majority of the residents in Murang'a County were at this stage of development i.e. youthful stage.

Factors influencing the adoption of Monitoring and Evaluation system among NGOs

The study investigated various factors that influence the adoption of monitoring and evaluation system among non-governmental organizations. These included: Size of budget allocated to M&E, staff knowledge and skills on M&E systems, number of staff training on M&E systems, and stakeholder involvement.

Size of budget allocated to M&E

The study sought to examine the influence of size of budget allocated to M&E on adoption of monitoring and evaluation system among NGOs in Murang'a County. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents by size of the NGO budget spent in the previous year.

Table 1
Size of the NGO budget spent in the previous year

	Frequency	Percentage
Below 10%	16	19
Between 10-20%	62	73
Between 20-30%	3	4
Between 30-40%	3	4
Between 40-50%	0	0
50% and above	0	0
Total	84	100

Majority (73%) of the respondents indicated that the size of the NGO budget spent in the previous year on M&E was between 10-20% in their organization. Another 19% of the respondents reported that only 10% size of the NGO budget spent in the previous year on M&E. The remaining 8% of them said that the size of the NGO budget spent in the previous year on M&E was above 20%. Thus, it is apparent that majority of the NGOs had inadequate funds going to M&E. This study concluded that majority of the NGOs had small budgets for M&E purposes. This can be attributed to lack of funds from donors or recent suspension of funding from the global funds (BOPA, 2006). From the study, a monitoring and evaluation system and what it can offer when adopted in development of an institution is not fully understood and therefore a great deal of the institutions have a small or no budget at all for M&E purposes which in general affects the full adoption of an M&E system (Adhiambo, 2012).

Staff knowledge and skills on M&E systems

The study sought to establish whether there is a correlation between staff knowledge and M&E adoption among NGOs in Murang'a County. The Pearson's correlation matrix was computed and results presented as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Correlation between staff knowledge and M&E adoption among NGOs

		Knowledge and skills	Adoption of monitoring and evaluation
Knowledge and skills	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.071 (.017)
Adoption of monitoring and evaluation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.071 (.017)	1

A Pearson coefficient of 0.071 and p-value of 0.017 show a weak positive and significant relationship between knowledge and skills and adoption of monitoring and evaluation among non-governmental organizations in Murang'a County. Therefore based on these findings, the study concludes that there is a significant relationship between staff knowledge and skills and adoption of monitoring and evaluation.

To determine the role of staff knowledge and skills and its impact on effective adoption of M&E, the percentage of those who had an undergraduate degree was determined. If 50% and above had an undergraduate and above, then it was inferred that the NGO had the capacity to effectively adopt M&E as attributed to the education levels of its staff. Also if the particular NGO had managed at least 3 trainings in a year, it was also presumed to have effectively adopted M&E due to the trainings offered. 14.8% of the Project implementation officers had a degree qualification, while 14.8% of had masters and 70.4 % a diploma qualification. 11.8 % of the project M&E officers had a degree qualification, 5.9% had master's degree. The study also established that 7.7 % of the project managers had a masters and above qualification, 30.8% had degree. From the findings of this study, there is lack of professionalism on the part of qualified practitioners and there are few academically trained evaluators. Those that carry out evaluations do not have any characteristics of expert's evaluators. The support that monitoring and evaluation system can offer when adopted in institutional development is often not fully understood (Adhiambo, 2012). This explains why most of the monitoring and evaluation staff are certificate and diploma holders. This also indicate that human resources on the project should be given a clear job allocation and designation by fitting their expertise, if most of them are certificate and diploma holders the training for the requisite skills should be arranged (Ramesh, et, al, 2002).

Lack of adequate financial resources to carry out monitoring and evaluation was one of the factors that influenced the adoption of monitoring and evaluation system. A good number of NGOs lack adequate funding for their activities; monitoring and evaluation are looked at as an expense that they cannot afford and so employing most of the certificate and diploma holders enabled them to pay low wages than employing the degree and master holders who will require high wages (Gilliam et al, 2003).

Number of staff training on M&E systems

The researcher also investigated the number of training that were carried out per annum. Those that conducted 3 trainings and above annually were deemed to have adequate knowledge impacted to its staff in order to carry out effective adoption of M&E. It was regarded important because the number of trained staff on M&E determines how well adoption of M&E system happens. Respondents were asked if they had attended any training on management of projects, monitoring and evaluation and the duration of training. Respondents were categorized into trained staff and non-trained staff.

Table 3
Number of staff training on M&E system

No. of Training	Frequency	Percentage
None	33	39
1	12	14
2	16	19
3	10	12
4	8	10
Above 5	5	6
Total	84	100

From Table 3, newly a third (28%) of the respondents had 3 or more trainings in the previous year prior to the study. Two thirds (67%) of the respondents had less than 3 trainings in the previous year. It is evident that as regarding trained M&E staff, majority of the NGOs lacked enough trained personnel with them for the adoption of M&E System. The study also reveals that the NGOs had inadequate monitoring and evaluation proficiency amongst them. Adoption of M&E requires particular skills and proficiency for instance, monitoring and evaluation design skills particularly log frame design and indicator setting (Hughes & Gibbs, 2002). M&E being a new concept among the NGOs made them disregard the frequency of training on this area. To rectify this situation, the NGO staff needed training to be well conversant with the concept (Guijt & Gaventa, 1998). In the same line, Hughes (2002) noted that adoption of M&E requires specific skills like M&E design skills in particular log frame design and indicator setting. To improve the impact of the M&E system, trainings need to be frequent to keep the NGO staff abreast with the developments in the sector (Lamy and Lessand, 2001).

Stakeholder involvement

To determine the stakeholder involvement contributed to adoption of M&E in a given NGO, the percentage of donors, community and beneficiaries involved was determined. If 50% and above of them were involved, then it was deemed that the particular NGO had adopted M&E by way of stakeholder involvement. Table 4 shows distribution of the respondents by mean and standard deviation basing on their opinions on stakeholders' involvement in M&E system adoption among NGOs.

Table 4
Stakeholders' Involvement in M&E system adoption among NGOs

Stakeholder	Mean scores	Standard deviation	Interpretation
Donors	1.45	0.70	Consistently involved
Community	3.03	0.87	Inconsistently involved
Beneficiaries	2.45	1.28	Inconsistently involved

As shown in Table 4, the involvement of the donors in the adoption of M&E system had a mean score of 1.45. This implies that donors were consistently involved on all projects and with standards deviation of 0.70 implies a small variation within the respondents. This can be attributed to the fact it's mainly the donors who fund the project activities of these NGOs to a great scope then they always dictate how the projects should be monitored and evaluated. This is as a means of tracing the use of their resources.

Involvement of the community in the adoption of monitoring and evaluation system had a mean score of 3.03 implying and this was never done and with a standard deviation of 0.87 means that there was a minimum variation between the respondents that majority of the NGOs did not involve the community in the design of their project. The involvement of the beneficiaries in design and adoption of M&E system had a mean of 2.45 implying that it was inconsistently done on the projects done by the respondents. The standard deviation of 1.28 implies a wide variation between the respondents. The implication of this is that the beneficiaries were mostly only a source of monitoring and evaluation data, without any meaningful input.

The study also determined the association between stakeholders' involvement and adoption of M&E systems. Table 5 shows the correlation between stakeholders' involvement and M&E adoption among NGOs projects.

Table 5
Correlation between stakeholder involvement and M&E adoption among NGOs projects

		Stake-holder involvement	Adoption of monitoring and evaluation
Stakeholder involvement	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.011 .825
Adoption of monitoring and evaluation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.011 .825	1

The strength of a relationship is indicated by correlation coefficient (r). The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to +1. The relationship between stakeholder involvement and adoption of monitoring and evaluation has a Pearson Correlation coefficient of .011. This indicates that the relationship between stakeholder involvement and monitoring and evaluation was positive but very weak.

The significance of the relationship is expressed in probability level p (significant at 0.05). The p -value was 0.825 of relationship between stakeholder involvement and monitoring and evaluation. Thus the study results show that there is no significant relationship between stakeholder involvement and adoption of monitoring and evaluation. Thus, we accept the null hypothesis, there is no significant relationship between stakeholder involvement and monitoring and evaluation.

Adoption of monitoring and evaluation meant that the project did not fully demonstrate downward accountability to the beneficiaries (Aune, 2001). It is apparent that a great deal of the stakeholders were not consistently involved in the adoption of monitoring and evaluation system excluding only the donors. Non-involvement of the other stakeholders meant that the project implementers lost an opportunity of fully demonstrating downward accountability to all the other stakeholders most especially the community and the beneficiaries (CORE, 2006; Bradley et al, 2002).

Conclusion

The study results indicated that in today's competitive global market, for the survival of any Non-governmental organization, there is need to be flexible, adaptive, responsive to changes, proactive and be able to produce a variety of products in a short time at a lower cost. The Non-governmental organizations are facing increasing global competition. The NGOs require the right managerial, monitoring and evaluation techniques for competitive advantages in the market. Monitoring and evaluation techniques were regarded as highly productive, thus potentially improves the performance. Majority of the NGOs disregarded the tenets of having a monitoring and evaluation framework in place. It was also clear that many NGOs in Murang'a County either address social economic mitigation care, adolescents reproductive health or HIV/AIDS control. The study recommends that for a successful adoption of M&E, skilled people should be hired and regular trainings to be conducted, NGOs to be flexible in order to incur low costs in operations and to fully involve all the stakeholders. As well, the organizations should set aside enough budget for project M&E so as to ensure consistent implementation of the projects within stipulated timelines.

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