

# Utilization of Non-Governmental Organisations Funds in Planning and Development of Primary Schools in Mtito-Andei Division, Makueni County, Kenya

Dr. Enock Gongera<sup>1\*</sup> Oddillia Nabwire Okoth<sup>2</sup>

1. Dean Post Graduate Studies, Mount Kenya University, P.O. BOX 342-00100 Thika Main Campus, Kenya
2. School of Business and Public Management, Mount Kenya University P.O. BOX 42702-80100 Mombasa Coast Center, Kenya

\*gongerageorge@gmail.com

## Abstract

The study was designed for the purpose of establishing the extent of partnership between primary schools and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on development agenda and any challenges resulting from the partnership in regard to planning and implementation of school projects. The partnership is based on the support given by NGOs which comes in form of funds and expertise in Mtito-Andei Division. The study was a descriptive survey. Systematic sampling was used to select the schools to participate in the study. All the Head teachers of the sampled schools participated as respondents in the study. Stratified sampling by proportional allocation was employed to ensure participation of respondents by gender. Simple random sampling was then used to select 50% of the selected schools' teacher population (excluding Head teachers) to participate in the study as respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the head teachers and teachers who participated in the study. The questionnaire was subjected to a pre-testing process to ensure validity and reliability. The researcher presented the questionnaires to the respondents after seeking and acquiring permission from the management of the institutions where they worked and the respondents answered the questions. The researcher filled in data on a checklist about the observable physical structures in the schools studied. Data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics; frequencies and percentages. The study findings revealed that, schools partnered with NGOs in the project planning stage toward utilization of NGO funds. Utilization of Non-Governmental organization funds in planning and development of primary schools evidenced by different projects with construction of latrines (health and sanitation), construction of water tanks, provision of school uniform, capacity building and in-service training being prominent programs in which respondents indicated partnership. Other areas of school development that did not seemingly attract such kind of partnership included construction of classrooms, provision desks and provision of instructional materials. A positive perception was established from teachers and head teachers as far as time spent and non-interference with systematic school planning and management was concerned, Head teachers however raised issue with parents' ability to sustain the NGO – school partnership through their contribution towards the partnership. Results on physical observable structures indicated that majority of the schools examined did not have most of the structures indicated in the checklist. The researcher recommended the need for school stakeholders to create a favourable partnership environment between them and Non-Governmental organizations. Sustainable parent contribution to NGO/school partnership was recommended by firstly carrying out needs and capability assessment among parents in order to ensure that their contribution emanates from their ability to provide rather than what is allocated to them by development partners. A further study should be carried out on the factors affecting effective

partnerships between NGOs and primary schools in facilitating sustainable school development.

**Key Words:** Non Governmental Organization (NGO), Fund Utilization and Implementation Challenge.

## 1. Introduction

The history of non-governmental organisations may be traced back to at least from 1775 when people started grouping themselves to address issues on slave trade, peace movement, labour rights and humanitarian relief for war victims and refugees. According to Becker (2011), International non-governmental organisations have a history dating back to at least 1839. It has been estimated that by 1914 there were 1,083 NGOs.

Becker (2011), further states that, “Non-Governmental Organisation” only came into popular use with the establishment of the United Nations Organisation in 1945 with provisions in Article 71 of Chapter 10 of the United Nations Charter for a consultative role for organisations which are neither governments nor member states. The term was used to distinguish between the participation of international private organisations and inter-governmental specialized agencies. NGOs; also known as Non-profit organisations (NPO) and Private Voluntary organization (PVO) are the most commonly used definitions of the term - interchangeably used. To this end, NGOs may be referred to mean Non-profit making organisations that are objectively constituted or any organisation that is not founded by any treaty to address challenging issues in the society.

According to Ngumuta (2008), NGOs operate in all levels - grassroots, national, regional and international. They respond to emerging needs in the fields of health, education, refugees, environment, human rights, and other key aspects of development. For instance, in the recent past, NGOs have been endeavouring to address the Millennium development Goals (MDGs) which includes eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, improvement of equity and access to basic education, promotion of gender equity and empowerment of women and reduction of child mortality. Others include combating HIV and Aids, Malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.

The NGOs operate on set programs of activities that address their interests and have often partnered with schools to finance projects in the education sector. It remains unclear whether the two entities; NGOs and the public primary schools consult or plan together for the developmental projects they undertake in the institutions. A project requires careful planning in terms of scope, time and finance and therefore, involvement of all stakeholders in the planning process is paramount in order for the project to realise success. Schools often incorporate NGO funded projects (more than one project at times) even when the projects were not initially factored in the school development plans.

For instance, a school may undertake to do a project like water tank construction in partnership with an NGO while at the same time, another NGO assists financing the construction of latrines with specifications of a completion time frame. It is important for this study to investigate the extent to which they work together in planning for these projects. Again, it is a requirement by the Ministry of Education that schools have priorities well set out in their School Development Plans (SDPs) to facilitate good management of primary schools (Education Act, Cap. 211 Orders under sections 9 and 37 and Legal Notice

190/1978). It is not clear to what extent the NGO priorities are incorporated within the school development plans. Ownership of the projects is an issue of concern. A lot of the funds come from the NGOs and perhaps, stakeholders' perceptions as a result of their level of involvement in planning, funding and implementation of the projects or programs is another issue of concern. Again, good management entails involvement of all stakeholders in the process of planning and implementation of projects (Tammer, 2009). However, the extent in which schools and NGOs work together in project cycle and more especially in planning and implementation of the projects is not known.

NGOs have outstandingly been concerned with the welfare of schools and enhancing harmonised relationship between schools and the NGOs. Considering that good management is all about involving stakeholders in the process of planning and implementation of projects, there has not been well co-ordinated scientific approach on how to plan and implement projects funded by NGOs to concerned schools. This study therefore seeks to analyse whether NGOs and primary schools plan together, consult or take time to reconcile the plans of the projects undertaken in primary schools in Mtito- Andei Division, Makueni County, Kenya.

## **2. Non Governmental Organisations**

Worldwide, Non-governmental Organisations have played a leading role in attending to global problems especially in the developing countries. In the real world there has been a huge change in emphasis, with increased involvement of private agencies in the delivery of education especially in regard to access equity and retention of learners in school. This has been particularly so in developing countries where NGOs now supplement and in some cases have displaced the traditional role of the state. Other than NGOs, agencies such as national and international organisations have been very active in providing assistance for the improvement of human life.

### *2.1 International organizations*

International organizations are made up of members from numerous countries and are sometimes called "multilateral" organizations. The membership is usually governments and includes international organizations such like the Council of Europe, the European Union (EU), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations (UN) organizations, and the World Bank (Bassler and smit.1997).

International organisations often have large resources, technical expertise, and legitimacy with governments and any country partnering with them can yield a substantial co-funding, Professionalism, access, legitimacy, influence, and recognition from governments and the donor community. These organizations often play a leading role in donor coordination. Their staff are being increasingly encouraged and even required to cooperate with NGOs in the countries they serve. The NGOs get a substantial amount of funds from these organisations. The funds have the capacity to empower the organisations to stamp their authority on the decisions to be made regarding the initiation of programs or project in the institutions and communities where NGOs partner with for development, (Ebrahim, 2004). The concern is whether the influence is considerate of the beneficiaries' way of life including their developmental planning and management of their projects.

## 2.2 *Bilateral donors*

Bilateral donors normally act as agents used by donor governments to fund or deliver country-to-country development assistance. They may be ministries; for example, the donor country's ministry that deals with development cooperation, foreign affairs, or education. Or, they might be bilateral agencies that are government-owned and funded, such like the British Council, the Swedish International Development cooperation Agency (SIDA), or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Bassler and Smit.1997).

Bilateral donors have resources, technical expertise, formal diplomatic access, and legitimacy with recipient governments. They consult with the recipient government on defining their programs and usually have regular contact with other bilateral donors and international organizations based in a country. Bilateral agencies sometimes consult with the NGO community in the recipient country. They often fund NGOs from their own country and capacitate them to partner with recipient communities on development projects. It is in this connection that at times, donor countries dictate their terms through the NGOs they fund to the recipients. The school community benefit from the funds by way of partnering with the NGOs to initiate projects and programs that in most cases aim at boosting health and sanitation, access and retention of the disadvantaged learners in learning programs in schools. However, considering that planning and development entails prioritization of needs, it is not established whether the NGOs consult with individual schools on the choice or the order in which to implement projects and programs.

## 2.3 *Types of NGOs*

NGOs may operate in two types which includes the national, or multinational while the second type is the local or indigenous NGOs; also known as CBOs (Community Based Organizations). CBOs often have low income, and work in aid recipient countries with low development. The National NGOs are intermediary and bureaucratic organizations with a professional staff; nationally based educated middle class and externally funded. CBOs on the other hand are Community oriented with membership of Small self-help organizations and run by locally based volunteers. According to Bassler and Smit (1997), NGOs are attractive partners because they are easily approachable, relatively flexible, and usually less bureaucratic than other types of donors. NGOs might offer grass-roots and rural implementation capacity and expertise that are better developed than that of the state. However, Bassler and Smit's argument does not content with the fact that NGOs are not found all over and that; their operation in a certain place is not permanent. Another concern is whether the NGOs consult or work with governments and school management committees on strategic planning of school development.

According to a report by UNDP (1993), there were more than 50,000 NGOs working at the grass-roots level in developing countries by the year 1993 whose activities had affected the lives of more than 250 million individuals. The last 20 years in Kenya has been characterised by an explosive growth in the number of NGOs. For instance, while in 1993 there were 250 NGOs registered with the NGO Council of Kenya, ten years later (2003), the number increased to 2,232. The increase may be attributed to donor frustration in the early 1990s at government corruption which resulted in the channelling of funds directly to NGOs and civil society organisations in order to promote democratisation and good governance which was a New Policy Agenda (Liston. 2010).

In regard to education, Rose (2007), attributes renewed focus on expanding primary schooling particularly since the 1990 Education for All (EFA) commitments and in line with the education Millennium Development Goals (MDG), with greater attention being paid by some donors and governments to the role that non-state providers are and could play in supporting the state in achieving targets, while continuing to view the state as the main provider.

NGOs have significantly been used by donors as agencies of improving equity and access to basic education. Because many NGO programs are financed by bilateral and international donors, they often engage in policy discussions between government and NGOs in order to resolve implementation problems of varying scale but the collaborative approach at local levels remain unresolved. All programs that have supported organizational capacity building at local levels, however, have been confronted with issues of representation.

Welmond M. and Wolf J., (2002), argue that, most programmes that attempt to empower the school community in the process of development partnership only deals with the issue of whether the interaction between NGOs and communities in fact strengthens communities or whether the NGO is only mobilizing the community to attain certain immediate educational goals. However, in the study, Welmond and Wolf, (2002) established that, local stakeholders (schools) have not been engaged in policy change efforts, and in most cases were unaware of policy change strategies implemented on their behalf, particularly at national levels. This lack of involvement is problematic as they are supposed to be the beneficiaries of policy change. Moreover, stakeholders that have been neglected can constitute a potential threat for NGO strategies to change policy. The question therefore remains; what is likely to happen in the absence of proper coordination of the NGOs activities at school levels?

NGOs have been found to keep on changing strategies, goals, objectives and approach to their interests in funding programmes, projects and activities in the areas they work, Yoder K. & Miller Y. (2002). The concern is whether the NGOs' interests are considerate to the cultural, socioeconomic, political and technological changes in the dynamic society where they undertake to finance projects.

#### *2.4 Local Level Partnership*

According to Bassler and Smit (1997), Partnership is created when two or more individuals or organizations find it in their common interest to work together toward a specific outcome. In this case, finding a common agenda is a fundamental starting point. Partners can bring different things to their partnership. These might be funds, goods, services, technical assistance, technology transfer, training opportunities, implementation capacity, legitimacy, publicity, access, or information. But then in the case of schools, how practical has it been that such "gifts" from NGOs have been coming without causing any challenges to the schools? Some school policies are made at national level and school managers are there only to implement them. However, the NGO funded projects may be locally planned for, which is good to the the beneficiaries in terms of ownership of the projects. At the same time, NGOs will in most cases seek to profill the will of their financiers (donors). A gap therefore exist on how implimentation of the projects funded by NGOs is done.

Again, NGOs have always worked on a time frame within which they implement programmes and projects and thereafter may move to other areas. Schools that partner with the NGOs in financing school projects may benefit before the NGOs wind up their programmes. However, the untimely exit of the NGOs leaves the schools disillusioned on the next source of funds and expertise for the unfinished projects as per the school development plan. The over-reliance of



the NGOs by schools is likely to jeopardise the schools' ability to initiate and plan for projects.

### *2.5 Planning*

As goes the saying, "Failing to plan is planning to fail." Perhaps, most of the conflicts and wrangles in learning institutions are the consequences of poor or no planning at all for programmes and projects that are implemented. Planning is the first and perhaps the most important role of a school manager. Indeed, planning entails a variety of processes, from the analysis of the present situation, the generation and assessment of policy options, to the careful preparation and monitoring of policy implementation, eventually leading to the redefinition of a new policy cycle. A variety of players intervene in these processes and if their interests are not carefully assessed and taken care of, then the policy or the plan will have every chance of failing (Haddad, 1995).

According to Ojo (2008), planning involves the development of strategy and procedure for effective realization of goals. It entails determination of control, direction and methods of accomplishing the overall organizational objectives. It may also be referred to mean an 'organisation of a series of actions to achieve a specified outcome' and is one of the fundamentals of modern life which is widely used by Institutions to approach development in a "strategic planning" (Schmidt and Laycock. 2009).

Development and management in a school situation requires Strategic planning which is a major step that schools can use to address challenges of development and may be used as a tool for a school to find its competitive advantage and place within the environment. Organizations conducting strategic planning typically commit themselves to a formal process in which a group of "planners" articulates a mission statement, sets goals and objectives, audits the organization for internal strengths and weaknesses, assesses the external environment for opportunities and threats, evaluates strategic options, and then selects and operationalises an organizational strategy (Miech E.J., 1995)

Again, schools may meet challenges when they plan projects with the hope that NGOs will chip in to assist with funds only to get a rude shock when the NGOs time of operation in an area elapses. Or else, in reference to a case in Bangladesh,- NGOs have often been subjected to satisfy the political will of the day so as to get contracts failure to which, those that are well established relocates to other countries that are accommodative, (Groundwork, Inc. 2002). The big question in such a case is the fate of the schools whose dependence on NGO funds is high. Otherwise, who takes part in planning? When is the project plans made? Do schools and NGOs endeavour to harmonise their project proposals before embarking on implementation?

### *2.6 Management*

According to Gareth R.J and Jennifer M.G. (2011), management is a process that seeks to address Values, attitudes, emotions, and culture in an organisation and a manager as a person is bound by ethics that guide in decision making, learning, creativity, and entrepreneurship. In this regard the manager designs organizational structures that facilitate Planning, strategise, control, make positive change and acquire competitive advantage in the organization. Further, effective team management is characterised by building and managing human resources and promoting systems that facilitate Communication and information technology management. A manager is perceived as a leader whose leadership is evidenced in managing vital operations and process. The suggestion by Gareth and Jennifer is that, management involves a process of planning, organising, directing, coordinating and reporting. It is therefore the responsibility of

any management to design, initiate and control the implementation of school projects in a collaborative manner amid challenges and conflicts which may cause failure or a drive for positive development.

In this regard, a NGO fund is not exceptional and therefore, is it a normal practice with school projects that are NGO funded? Conflict is inevitable in any project implementation environment (Verma, 2011). Project team members interact during the course of completing their tasks and responsibilities, and there is always a potential for conflict. Project managers must identify, analyze, and evaluate conflicts which may be both positive and negative in terms of their values and effect on performance. NGOs and schools interact in the management of projects. The question of focus is the extent to which they conflict and whether the conflicts (if any) are harmful to their intended goals.

On management, Taylor (1911), Verma, 2011) and Tammer (2009) stresses on the importance of focused and collaborative management which involves planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting amid conflicts. This research is out to determine the gap or the level of collaboration (if any) between schools and NGOs in regard to the implementation of the projects they undertake to do together.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### *3.1 Research design*

This study adopted a survey research design. A survey research design is a way of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaires to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2009). In a survey design, a situation is studied as it is, unlike an experimental design in which variables are manipulated and controlled in order to give desired results. This design was particularly useful in establishing the impact of NGOs partnership with primary schools in regard to planning and development of projects in primary schools. The survey was conducted in schools of Mtito-Andei Division, Makueni County. Since this study covered several institutions, a survey design was best suitable.

#### *3.2 Research sample and sampling design*

According to Chandra (2004), surveys are relatively inexpensive (especially self-administered surveys), Surveys are useful in describing the characteristics of a large population and no other method of observation can provide this general capability. The target population for this study was teachers and head teachers of schools within Mtito-Andei Division. Mtito-Andei Division has 76 public primary schools with a total teacher population of 586. In this population 340 are male teachers while 246 are female teachers. Each school has a head teacher and a deputy head teacher whom for the purpose of this study was termed as school managers. The researcher used systematic sampling technique to select the schools to participate in the study and every  $k^{\text{th}}$  case in the sample frame was selected for inclusion in the sample. A list of all schools within Mtito-Andei Division was randomized out of which 20% giving a sample of 15 schools of the total population which were sampled to determine interval (K). Every  $K^{\text{th}}$  element was selected to represent the school that participated in the study. This was done using the following method:

$$K = N/n$$

Where n is the desired sample size and N is the population size  
 $= 76/15 = 5.07$

Thus 5 is the sampling interval. A school to participate in the study was picked after every 5<sup>th</sup> school in the random list. This gave a total sample size of 15 schools.

#### 4. Findings

Basically, the study draws findings on utilization of Non-Governmental Organization funds in planning and development of primary schools in Mtito-Andei Division - Makueni County. The level of partnership between schools and NGOs was expected to enhance school development through successfully completed and sustainable projects. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and schools (teachers, parents and pupils) are evidently involved in the project planning stage towards utilization of NGO funds. Most schools have well written School Development Plans (SDP) that is prepared on the basis of their school mission and vision. There was also evidence of consultations between NGO and schools that enhance implementation of school development projects, the results are however not conclusive on the extent to which this partnership facilitates successful completion and sustainability of school development programs.

Majority (37.8%) of teachers agreed that their schools had implemented construction of classrooms with NGOs. On the other hand, 36.4% majority of head teachers disagreed with the same. On latrine construction, 48.9% majority of teachers strongly agree that schools have implemented construction of latrines in partnership with NGOs, while 66.7% of head teachers agree. Again about whether schools have implemented construction of water tanks in partnership with NGOs, 52.1% of the teachers strongly agreed while 60% majority of head teachers also agreed.

There was also agreement among (42.9%) teachers that schools had implemented sponsorship of capacity building programs. Further evidence among teacher respondents indicated that schools had partnered with NGOs to implement other development projects not included in the likert scale. Respondents also confirmed that schools have implemented other projects or programmes in partnership with NGOs with 40% majority of teacher respondents agreeing and 20% strongly agreeing. On the same, at least 75% of head teachers are on agreement. School Head teachers also confirmed that schools had implemented sponsorship of health and sanitation programs (53.8% - strongly agree 15.4% - agree) as well as in-service training of teachers in the schools as indicated by 38.5% and 23.1% agreement response.

However, there was no evidence that desk provision was a determinant in partnership between NGOs and schools in utilization of NGO funds for school development programs. Again, majority of teachers (30.2%) disagreed that the schools had implemented provision of desks in partnership with NGOs. On the other hand, 37.1% majority of head teachers agreed that, the NGOs/schools partnership facilitated provision of desks to schools and therefore casting lack of clarity on whether or not teachers get involved in procurement processes of the desks thereof referred to by the head teachers. On provision of instructional materials, majority of teachers (34.9%) indicated strong disagreement that schools implemented the provision of instructional materials to schools in partnership with NGOs. This was also reflected in the head teachers' responses from which majority (54.5%) disagreed.



## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Utilization of Non-Governmental organization funds in planning and development of primary schools seems to be influenced by different types of programs considered as “determinants in the study”. In cases where there is obvious common understanding between school head teachers, NGOs and teachers, there is a general acceptance that, the particular programme is a determinant of the partnership area noted to elicit common partnership between the NGOs and schools in planning and school development. These include; construction of latrines, construction of water tanks and provision of school uniform, capacity building for in-service training, health and sanitation programmes. Other areas of school development that do not seemingly attract such kind of partnership include construction of classrooms, desk provision and provision of instructional materials.

The perception of teachers as well as head teachers on the partnership between schools and NGOs was considered an important prerequisite for enhancing successful and sustainable school development programs. While positive perception was established from teachers and head teachers as far as time spent and non-interference with systematic school planning was concerned, head teachers raised issues with parents’ ability to sustain the partnership through the contributions supposed to be raised through the partnerships. Evidence of sustainability as far as NGO projects are concerned is an indicator that partnership yields success and sustainability on the projects.

Partnership between NGOs and schools is likely to increase the level of development in primary schools and thus facilitate efficient learning. Results on physical observable structures indicated that some of the schools studied did not have most of the structures reflecting development as per the researcher’s checklist. In cases where availability of such structures was high, it was noted that, in that particular development program both head teachers and teachers agreed on the existence of partnership between NGOs and schools.

The utilization of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) funds impacts positively on planning and development of primary schools in Mtito-Andei Division of Makueni County, Kenya. After successful completion of the study on “Utilization of non-governmental organisations funds in planning and development of primary schools in Mtito-Andei Division, Makueni County”, the researcher recommends that; It is important to create a favourable partnership environment between primary schools and Non-Governmental organizations in order for the schools to increase the level of development for enhanced learning. This could be achieved through offering sensitization training for stakeholders and advocacy for the need to prioritize school development among stakeholders by the school management in partnership with NGOs; In order to achieve sustainable contribution to the partnership between NGOs and schools, there is need to include parents in the needs assessment process in order to ensure that their contribution emanates from their ability to provide rather than what is allocated to them by development partners.

Despite the existence of partnership between NGOs and schools in enhancing development of primary schools within Mtito-Andei Division, the development checklist indicated that there were still various basic programs in the schools that were not available. The effectiveness of planning and management strategy is not clear and therefore a need to carry out further studies on factors affecting effective partnership between NGOs and primary schools in facilitating sustainable school development.

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