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Bonaventure Hakizimana & Dr. Njenga Gitahi (PhD)

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Stakeholder Engagement Strategies and Performance of Renovation and Extension of Musanze Youth Empowerment Center Project in Rwanda

[1*]Bonaventure Hakizimana, [2]Dr. Njenga Gitahi (PhD)

[1] School of Business and Economics, Mount Kigali University
Kigali, Rwanda
hakibona@gmail.com

[2] School of Business and Economics, Mount Kigali University
Kigali, Rwanda
sngitahi@mkurwanda.ac.rw

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Abstract

This study examined how stakeholder identification and analysis, stakeholder collaboration and partnership, and resource mobilization influence the performance of the Renovation and Extension of Musanze Youth Empowerment Center Project in Rwanda. Youth empowerment centers are widely used to build skills and jobs, yet little evidence shows which engagement strategies explain their performance, and most studies treat engagement as a single construct. The study used a descriptive, correlational, mixed-methods design grounded in Stakeholder Theory and Resource Dependence Theory. Questionnaires were returned by 142 of 148 sampled stakeholders, and project implementers were interviewed. Correlation and multiple regression analyses were based on the 43 sampled project implementers, who are best placed to judge project performance. The three strategies together explained 86.4% of the variance in performance (adjusted $R^2 = 0.854$, $p < 0.001$). Stakeholder identification and analysis ($\beta = 0.529$, $p < 0.001$) and collaboration and partnership ($\beta = 0.399$, $p = 0.003$) had significant positive effects, whereas resource mobilization did not ($\beta = 0.050$, $p = 0.564$). Schedule and budget were rated highly, but only about a quarter of respondents agreed that the project fostered youth self-reliance or income generation. The study concludes that how stakeholders are identified and brought together matters more than the volume of resources mobilized, and that timely, on-budget delivery does not by itself secure livelihood outcomes. It recommends mapping stakeholders at inception, institutionalizing coordination among institutional partners, extending participation to monitoring, and adding income support to youth centers.

Keywords: *stakeholder engagement, project performance, youth empowerment, resource mobilization, collaboration, Rwanda*

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1. Introduction

Stakeholder participation is widely treated as a cornerstone of effective development practice. The World Bank (2020), UNDP (2022) and the United Nations (2021) argue that involving governments, communities, donors and private partners across the project cycle improves accountability, resource use and community ownership, and raises the likelihood that projects reach their intended outcomes. The issue is pressing in Africa, where more than 60% of the population is under 25 according to the African Union. Youth unemployment, limited access to skills training and inadequate facilities and funding persists across the continent, and evidence suggests that collaboration, resource mobilization and beneficiary involvement strengthen youth-focused projects (African Development Bank, 2020). In East Africa, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have introduced youth programmes in vocational training, innovation and entrepreneurship, but results vary because of weak stakeholder coordination, limited resource mobilization and insufficient involvement of beneficiaries in planning and implementation (World Bank, 2020).

Rwanda treats youth empowerment as a strategic national priority. Vision 2050 and the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) stress skills, employment and entrepreneurial capacity (Government of Rwanda, 2020), and the Ministry of Youth and Arts, the Ministry of Public Service and Labour and the National Youth Council coordinate programmes in vocational training, entrepreneurship and leadership. These programmes need physical infrastructure. The Musanze Youth Empowerment Center offers space for community-based training, mentorship and skills development, and its renovation and extension aim to widen its capacity to serve young people. The need is real: the youth unemployment rate was 14.1% in 2025, against 11.7% nationally (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2026). A facility can help close this gap only if its works are delivered on time, within budget and to the expected quality, and if the programmes it hosts then deliver outcomes for young people.

Performance of such projects depends largely on how stakeholders are engaged. Three strategies are prominent in the literature: collaborative partnerships among government, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and communities, which supply technical support and sustainability; resource mobilization, which secures the financial, human and material inputs for implementation; and stakeholder involvement in programmes, which builds ownership through participation in planning, implementation and monitoring (Enabel, 2024).

1.1 Problem statement

Despite broad agreement on the value of engagement, three gaps remain. First, most evidence on Rwanda comes from community, donor-funded or institutional projects such as road building, crop intensification and cross-border trade (Nziyumvira & Amolo, 2024; Ruhumuriza & Dushimimana, 2023; Ahwiragiye & Bazimya, 2025); little concerns youth centres that combine infrastructure with skills development. Second, many studies treat engagement as a single construct (Nshunguyinka, 2020; Ndikumana, 2024; Nziyumvira & Amolo, 2024), so the separate contribution of each strategy stays hidden. Third, cross-sectional survey studies rarely test statistically how strongly each strategy explains performance, and young beneficiaries are mostly treated as recipients rather than as a source of evidence.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The general objective was to assess the effect of stakeholder engagement strategies on

the performance of the Renovation and Extension of Musanze Youth Empowerment Center Project in Rwanda. The specific objectives were:

(i) to determine the effect of stakeholder identification and analysis on project performance;
(ii) to establish the effect of stakeholder collaboration and partnership on project performance;
(iii) to assess the effect of resource mobilization on project performance; and
(iv) to establish how much of the variation in project performance the three strategies explain together.

1.3 Contribution and organisation of the paper

This study addresses these gaps for the Renovation and Extension of Musanze Youth Empowerment Center Project. Performance is measured through schedule adherence, budget compliance, quality of deliverables and economic outcomes for young people. The study contributes context-specific evidence from a youth infrastructure project, separates the effects of three engagement strategies, and shows a gap between delivery performance and beneficiary outcomes that time-and-cost indicators alone would miss.

The question extends beyond one centre. Many publicly funded and donor-supported projects deliver physical assets whose value depends on the programmes they later host, so the link between how stakeholders are engaged and what the project achieves is a general project management concern that this case illustrates.

The rest of the article is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the theoretical and empirical literature and sets out the conceptual framework and hypotheses, Section 3 describes the methodology, Section 4 presents the results and discussion, Section 5 summarises the findings, Section 6 gives the conclusions and Section 7 the recommendations.

2. Literature review

2.1 Theoretical literature

Stakeholder Theory holds that a project should consider the interests of groups that can affect or are affected by its objectives (Freeman, 1984). Applied to a youth centre, it directs attention to young beneficiaries, communities, government agencies, development partners, trainers and private actors, whose different needs can shape design, delivery and outcomes. Identifying them, understanding their interests and influence, and defining their roles are therefore the first steps of engagement (Mitchell et al., 1997).

Resource Dependence Theory views organisations as dependent on their environment for funding, expertise, equipment, legitimacy and networks (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). It explains why relationships with government bodies, funders, training providers and employers matter for programme delivery, and warns that heavy reliance on a single funder exposes a project to shifts in that partner's priorities. Together the two theories imply a sequence: stakeholders are first identified and analysed, collaboration then coordinates their contributions, and resources are mobilized and used through those relationships. These are proposed relationships. The theories do not by themselves establish that engagement causes better outcomes.

2.2 Empirical literature

Studies from Rwanda and elsewhere link collaboration among stakeholders to better

project performance (Ndayizeye & Munene, 2022; Nziyumvira & Amolo, 2024; Ghuzdewan et al., 2023). They share the explanation that collaboration aligns stakeholders with project goals and limits conflict, delays and cost overruns, but they differ on the active ingredient: consultative planning and participatory monitoring, reduced conflict and satisfaction, or coordination led by the project owner. Nziyumvira and Amolo (2024) also combine collaboration, involvement and empowerment in one measure, which hides the separate contribution of partnerships.

Evidence on resource mobilization comes mainly from Kenya and links it to sustainability and efficiency (Kiberenge & Osoro, 2024; Mwaniki, 2024). The studies agree on the direction of the effect but not on whether mobilization is an independent driver or a by-product of good stakeholder management, and none relates it to schedule, cost and quality in a construction setting. The literature on stakeholder involvement is the most consistent: studies of an education and empowerment project, an agricultural programme and donor-funded projects report significant positive links between participation and performance (Ngwabije & Njenga, 2023; Ruhumuriza & Dushimimana, 2023; Ruwa, 2017). They disagree on the stage at which involvement matters most, rely on cross-sectional surveys that establish association rather than influence, and generally treat young beneficiaries as respondents rather than as a distinct group.

2.3 Conceptual framework and hypotheses

In this study, stakeholder identification and analysis covers mapping stakeholders, assessing their interests and influence, and clarifying roles, and it is the entry point of participation in the project cycle. Stakeholder collaboration and partnership covers joint planning, communication, coordination and public-private partnerships. Resource mobilization covers financial, technical and material support. The hypotheses, stated in alternative form, are:

- **H1.** Stakeholder identification and analysis has a significant positive effect on project performance.
- **H2.** Stakeholder collaboration and partnership has a significant positive effect on project performance.
- **H3.** Resource mobilization has a significant positive effect on project performance.

The conceptual model (Figure 1) is a single equation in which project performance (schedule adherence, budget compliance, quality of deliverables and economic outcomes) is the dependent variable and the three strategies are the independent variables.

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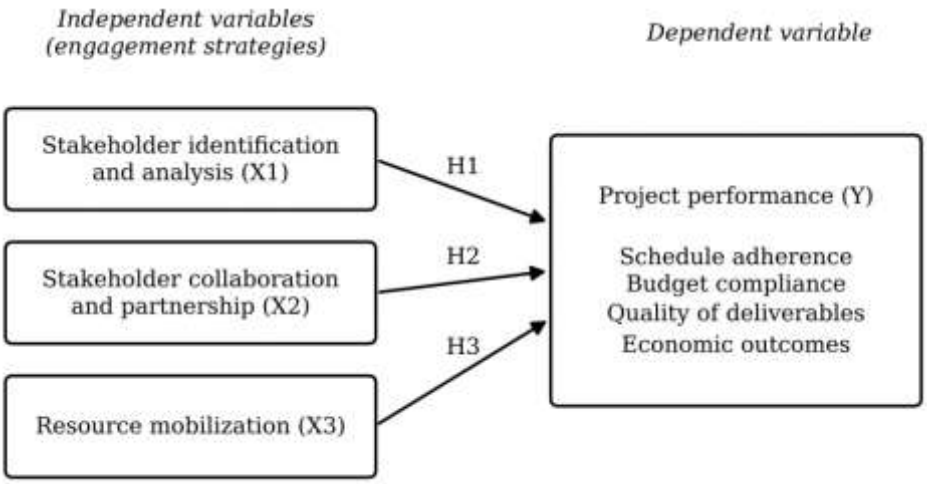


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

The study used a descriptive and correlational design within a mixed-methods approach. A structured questionnaire supplied the quantitative data and interviews with project implementers the qualitative data; project documents supplied contextual and secondary information. A correlational design suits the study because it examines naturally occurring relationships in a real project setting without manipulating variables. It establishes association, not causation.

3.2 Study site

The study was conducted at the Musanze Youth Empowerment Center in Musanze District, Northern Province, Rwanda. The district is mountainous, hosts most of Volcanoes National Park, and relies on potato farming and tourism; its large young population needs skills and jobs. The centre, in the middle of Musanze town, was renovated and extended through a partnership between Musanze District and Enabel, the Belgian development agency, under Enabel's UrbanDev project. The works took about a year and were completed in 2023. The campus was built with local materials and includes training halls, a Fab Lab and a knowledge lab, a library, artist workshops, IT services and sports facilities. It forms part of the National Youth Council's 2021–2025 Strategic Plan as a hub for skills, creativity and entrepreneurship.

3.3 Population and sample

The target population was 235 stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in implementing, managing and overseeing the project: 68 project implementers (government, donor, contractor, community group representatives, project coordinators, supervisors and trainers) and 167 beneficiaries of the first phase. Yamane's (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error gave a sample of 148. Stratified random sampling allocated the sample across strata, and simple random sampling selected participants within each stratum (Table 1). The sample comprised 43 project implementers and 105 beneficiaries.

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Table 1: Target population and sample by stratum

Stratum	Population	Sample
Government institutions	6	4
Development partners / donors	2	1
Private sector / implementing contractors	12	8
Community and beneficiary groups	6	4
Project coordinators	2	1
Supervisors	8	5
Trainers	32	20
Sub total (project implementers)	**68**	**43**
Beneficiaries (phase one)	167	105
Total	**235**	**148**

3.4 Instruments and measures

A structured questionnaire was developed based on relevant literature on stakeholder management and project performance, particularly Abolghasemi et al. (2024). The questionnaire used five-point Likert-scale items to measure stakeholder identification and analysis, collaboration and partnership, resource mobilization, and project performance in terms of schedule adherence, budget compliance, quality of deliverables, and economic outcomes.

Content validity was assessed by expert review of the questionnaire by project implementers, and construct validity by aligning items with the objectives and conceptual framework. A pilot with 20 coordinators, supervisors and trainers gave a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 for the full instrument and 0.81 for collaboration, 0.76 for resource mobilization, 0.84 for stakeholder involvement and 0.86 for project performance, all above the 0.70 threshold (Cronbach, 1951). The lower value for resource mobilization reflected that trainer, who are not financial staff, found financial items less applicable.

3.5 Data collection and analysis

Questionnaires were administered in person during a pre-scheduled group assembly, with follow-ups to raise response. Of the 148 sampled stakeholders, 142 returned usable questionnaires and six did not, a response rate of 95.9%, above the 70% threshold suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). Data were coded and analysed in SPSS version 29. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) summarised respondents and items. Pearson correlation measured the strength and direction of association, and multiple regression estimated the effect of the three strategies on performance:

$$Y = \beta 0 + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 + \varepsilon \qquad (1)$$

where Y is project performance, X1 stakeholder identification and analysis, X2 stakeholder collaboration and partnership, and X3 resource mobilization. Descriptive results use all 142 respondents. The correlation and regression models were estimated only on the 43 sampled project implementers (Table 1). Implementers planned, managed, supervised and delivered the project, so they are best placed to judge project performance and to assess whether the three engagement strategies contributed to it. Beneficiaries' views are reported descriptively but are not part of the inferential models. Normality of residuals, multicollinearity (tolerance and variance inflation factor) and

heteroskedasticity (residual plots) were checked before interpretation. Interview data were analysed thematically and compared with the survey results by theme to identify convergence, divergence and complementarity.

3.6 Ethics

The researchers obtained an introduction letter from their university and permission from the institutions concerned. Participation was voluntary and based on informed consent, with the right to withdraw at any time. Responses were anonymous and confidential, were used only for research, and were stored in line with Rwanda's Data Protection Law (No. 058/2021 of 13/10/2021). [Government of Rwanda, 2021]

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Respondent profile

Of the 142 respondents, 82 (57.7%) were male and 60 (42.3%) female. Half were aged 20–30 years (51.4%), 25.4% were 41–50, 17.6% were 31–40 and 5.6% were 51 or older. Half held a bachelor's degree (50.0%), 16.9% an advanced diploma, 9.2% a master's degree and 2.8% a diploma; 21.1% reported other levels, mainly youth beneficiaries and trainees in vocational programmes. The age profile reflects the youth orientation of the centre, and the qualifications suggest respondents could understand and answer the questionnaire reliably.

4.2 Descriptive results

Respondents rated stakeholder identification and analysis highest among the three strategies, and delivery performance (schedule and budget) higher than quality of deliverables and economic outcomes (Table 2).

Table 2: Mean ratings by construct (five-point scale)

Construct	Items	Mean of item means	Item means range	Average agreement
Stakeholder identification and analysis	7	4.06	3.96–4.16	76.1–93.7% per item
Stakeholder collaboration and partnership	6	3.53	2.60–3.97	65.6%
Resource mobilization	8	3.77	2.54–4.07	73.9%
Schedule adherence	5	4.00	3.82–4.12	84.9%
Budget compliance	5	4.05	3.98–4.17	88.7%
Quality of deliverables	5	3.61	2.44–3.95	69.0%
Economic outcomes	4	3.52	2.43–3.99	64.0%

Note. Agreement = share answering agree or strongly agree. Mean of item means computed from the item means reported for each construct.

Stakeholder identification and analysis was rated consistently high. Between 76.1% and 93.7% of respondents agreed with the individual statements, the highest for identification of relevant stakeholders at initiation (93.7%) and regular assessment of their influence (92.3%), and the lowest for stakeholders' clear understanding of their responsibilities (78.2%).

Ratings were more divided on collaboration and resource mobilization. In both constructs, most items scored between 3.79 and 4.07, but a few items scored far lower (Table 3). Only 26.8% of respondents agreed that government institutions, donors and private partners collaborate effectively (mean 2.60), while 50.7% disagreed. Only

45.8% agreed that partnerships improved coordination of youth training (2.96). On funding, only 24.6% agreed that adequate funding improves youth empowerment activities (2.54), while 50.0% disagreed, even though 85.2% agreed that stakeholders contributed financial resources and 85.2% that the project received adequate technical support.

On performance, 85.2% to 88.0% agreed that delays were minimized and milestones met, and 94.4% that funds were used efficiently. Perceptions of beneficiary outcomes were weaker. About 81% agreed that the project gave young people practical skills and improved employability, but only 26.1% agreed that it contributes to self-reliance (2.44; 52.1% disagreed) and only 25.0% that it enabled youth to create income-generating activities (2.43; 53.3% disagreed).

Table 3: Items with low agreement

Item	Mean	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Government, donors and private partners collaborate effectively	2.60	26.8	50.7
Partnerships improve coordination of youth training	2.96	45.8	29.6
Adequate funding improves youth empowerment activities	2.54	24.6	50.0
The project contributes to self-reliance among young people	2.44	26.1	52.1
The project enabled youth to create income-generating activities	2.43	25.0	53.3

4.3 Diagnostic tests

The regression residuals were approximately normal, with a mean close to zero and a standard deviation of 0.964 (n = 43), and plots showed no funnel-shaped pattern, indicating constant error variance. Multicollinearity was acceptable: tolerance values were 0.270, 0.216 and 0.480 and variance inflation factors 3.702, 4.626 and 2.085, below the conventional limit of 10, although the two strongest predictors are highly correlated (r = 0.854).

4.4 Correlations

All three strategies correlated positively and significantly with project performance (Table 4).

Table 4: Pearson correlations (n = 43)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Stakeholder identification and analysis	1			
2. Stakeholder collaboration and partnership	0.854*	1		
3. Resource mobilization	0.632*	0.721*	1	
4. Project performance	0.901*	0.887*	0.672*	1

Note. * $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

4.5 Regression results

The model was significant and explained most of the variance in project performance ($R = 0.930$, $R^2 = 0.864$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.854$, standard error of the estimate = 0.235; $F(3, 39) = 82.763$, $p < 0.001$). Table 5 gives the coefficients.

Table 5: Multiple regression of project performance on engagement strategies (n = 43)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	Tol.	VIF
Constant	−0.157	0.306		−0.512	0.611		
Stakeholder identification and analysis	0.581	0.125	0.529	4.659	< 0.001	0.270	3.702
Stakeholder collaboration and partnership	0.395	0.126	0.399	3.148	0.003	0.216	4.626
Resource mobilization	0.051	0.089	0.050	0.582	0.564	0.480	2.085

Note. Dependent variable: project performance. Tol. = tolerance; VIF = variance inflation factor.

H1 and H2 are supported: identification and analysis (β = 0.529) and collaboration and partnership (β = 0.399) each had a significant positive effect. H3 is not supported: resource mobilization was positively correlated with performance (r = 0.672) but had no significant independent effect (β = 0.050, p = 0.564) once the other two strategies were controlled.

4.6 Interview findings

Interviews with project implementers agreed with the survey on four themes.

- **Collaboration.** Government supplied policy guidance and institutional support, donors and partners technical and financial help, and private actors skills development, employment links and practical training. Coordination was sometimes constrained by differing institutional priorities, delayed communication and limited harmonisation of responsibilities.
- **Participation.** Stakeholders, including youth representatives and community organisations, were consulted in planning meetings, needs assessments and activity design, which strengthened ownership and fit with beneficiary needs. Involvement was stronger in planning than in monitoring and evaluation.
- **Resources.** Donors, partners and government supplied funds, infrastructure, equipment and expertise, but several interviewees said funding did not always meet operational and expansion needs.
- **Challenges and remedies.** Inadequate coordination among institutions, limited funding, uneven participation across project phases and communication barriers were named, with proposed remedies of regular stakeholder meetings, better communication systems, diversified funding and broader participation.

Interviewees linked engagement to better communication, resource sharing, timely execution, skills development and wider outreach. They did not address youth self-reliance or income, so the weak survey result on those outcomes rests on one data source.

4.7 Integration of survey and interview findings

The two sources converge on early identification and consultation, on collaboration as a strength weakened by institutional coordination gaps, on funding adequacy as the main resource constraint, and on a link between engagement and performance. They differ in emphasis on resources: interviewees stressed their importance, while the regression showed no independent effect. The interviews also add that participation was weaker in monitoring, which the questionnaire did not measure directly.

4.8 Discussion

How stakeholders are identified matters most. Stakeholder identification and analysis was the strongest predictor of project performance (β = 0.529). This agrees with Stakeholder Theory, which makes recognising who holds a stake, and what they want and can influence, the basis of engagement (Freeman, 1984; Mitchell et al., 1997), and with Rwandan studies that find early participation improves results (Ahwiragiye & Bazimya, 2025; Nshunguyinka, 2020). Interviewees offered a plausible mechanism: early consultation in planning meetings and needs assessments built ownership and fitted activities to youth needs. The slightly lower scores for clarity of roles, and the interview remark that participation faded during monitoring, suggest that analysis done at initiation needs to be kept up through the project.

Collaboration helps, but the weak link is among institutions. Collaboration and partnership had a significant independent effect (β = 0.399), consistent with Ndayizeye and Munene (2022) and Nziyumvira and Amolo (2024). Yet the survey and interviews both locate a weakness in the partnerships that matter most for a centre like this one: only 26.8% agreed that government institutions, donors and private partners collaborate effectively. Interviewees traced this to differing institutional priorities, delayed communication and limited harmonisation of responsibilities. Strong communication and joint planning with stakeholders at large therefore coexisted with weak alignment among institutional partners, which Resource Dependence Theory would expect where several resource holders pursue different priorities.

Resources are necessary but do not explain performance on their own. Resource mobilization correlated with performance (r = 0.672) but had no significant independent effect (β = 0.050, p = 0.564). Two readings are consistent with the data. The first is the sequence suggested by the theories: identification and analysis creates the basis for collaboration, and collaboration lets resources be mobilized and used well, so that resources work through the other two strategies. The correlations fit this reading (identification with collaboration, r = 0.854; collaboration with resource mobilization, r = 0.721), but correlations cannot test a sequence, and path analysis or structural equation modelling on a larger sample is needed. The second reading is statistical: the predictors share much variance (VIF up to 4.6), which leaves little unique variance for resource mobilization in a model with only 43 cases. The finding also differs from Kenyan studies that link mobilization to performance (Kiberenge & Osoro, 2024; Mwaniki, 2024), although those studies measured sustainability and efficiency rather than schedule, cost and quality, so they are not directly comparable. The weak funding-adequacy rating shows that a null statistical effect does not mean funding is unimportant.

Delivery performance and beneficiary outcomes diverge. Respondents rated schedule adherence (4.00) and budget compliance (4.05) highly, yet only about a quarter agreed that the project fosters self-reliance or income generation. Engagement that secures timely and cost-effective delivery does not by itself turn skills into livelihoods. Beneficiaries may lack start-up capital, mentorship and market links that the engagement strategies measured here did not address. Because the interviews were with implementers and did not touch on this outcome, the gap is supported by one data source, and interviews with young beneficiaries are needed to explain it. The result also supports assessing youth empowerment projects with outcome indicators, such as self-reliance and income generation, alongside time, cost and quality.

5. Summary of findings

Respondents rated stakeholder identification and analysis highly (mean 4.06) and rated schedule adherence (4.00) and budget compliance (4.05) above quality of deliverables (3.61) and economic outcomes (3.52). Collaboration and partnership (3.53) and resource mobilization (3.77) were rated more modestly, with low agreement that institutional partners collaborate effectively (26.8%) and that funding is adequate (24.6%). All three strategies correlated significantly with performance, and together they explained 86.4% of its variance among the 43 project implementers. Identification and analysis (beta = 0.529) and collaboration and partnership (beta = 0.399) were significant predictors; resource mobilization was not (beta = 0.050). Only about a quarter of respondents agreed that the project fosters self-reliance or income generation. Interviews supported these results.

6. Conclusions

In the Renovation and Extension of Musanze Youth Empowerment Center Project, stakeholder identification and analysis and stakeholder collaboration and partnership were significant predictors of project performance, and together with resource mobilization they explained 86.4% of its variance. Resource mobilization was positively associated with performance but had no significant independent effect, so it appears to play a supporting role. The main weaknesses were coordination among government, donors and private partners, funding adequacy, participation in monitoring, and beneficiary outcomes in self-reliance and income generation.

6.1 Contributions to knowledge

The study makes three contributions to the project stakeholder literature. First, it separates strategies that are usually combined into one engagement construct and shows that they are not equally associated with performance: identification and analysis and collaboration carried significant unique effects, while resource mobilization, the central concern of Resource Dependence Theory, did not once the other two were controlled. Second, it proposes a sequential account in which identifying and analysing stakeholders enables collaboration, and collaboration enables resources to be mobilized and used effectively. The evidence is correlational, so the sequence is a proposition to be tested with path analysis or structural equation modelling rather than a finding. Third, it shows that timely, on-budget delivery and beneficiary outcomes can diverge in a socially oriented infrastructure project, which argues for performance measures that include outcome indicators such as self-reliance and income, beyond time, cost and quality. For practitioners, these contributions translate into an order of priorities (Section 7.2): map stakeholders and clarify roles first, coordinate institutional partners next, and build funding and livelihood support on that base. The evidence comes from one publicly and donor-supported youth infrastructure project in Rwanda, so transfer to other contexts needs testing.

6.2 Limitations

The study examined a single project, so findings cannot be generalised. The design is cross-sectional and correlational, so the results show association, not causation, and the sequential account of the strategies is a proposition for testing. The regression used the 43 project implementers, who are best placed to judge performance, but this sample limits power and the stability of the coefficients, the high correlation between two predictors adds to this, and beneficiaries' views are left out of the inferential models. Performance and engagement were measured by respondents' perceptions in the same

questionnaire, which exposes the results to common-method and social-desirability bias, and schedule and budget were not checked against project records. The questionnaire did not measure involvement in monitoring directly.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations for theory

Researchers should treat stakeholder engagement as several distinct strategies rather than one construct, because they differed in their association with performance. The proposed sequence from identification and analysis, through collaboration, to resource mobilization should be tested with path analysis or structural equation modelling. Performance models for youth empowerment projects should include beneficiary outcomes, such as self-reliance and income generation, alongside time, cost and quality.

7.2 Recommendations for practice

- **Start with the stakeholder map.** Project teams should map stakeholders, assess their interests and influence, and document roles at inception, and update this at set points during the project.
- **Institutionalise coordination.** Partnership agreements, standing coordination committees and regular meetings among government, donors and private partners should clarify roles and speed communication.
- **Build funding on engagement.** Diversified funding, including private-sector participation and longer-term donor commitments, should be planned after the coordination basis is in place.
- **Extend participation to monitoring.** Youth organisations and community groups should have structured roles in monitoring and feedback.
- **Plan for livelihoods.** Youth centres should add entrepreneurship support, business mentorship, financial literacy and routes to start-up capital, and track self-reliance and income as performance indicators.

7.3 Recommendations for policy

- Ministries responsible for youth and local government could require stakeholder analysis and structured collaboration in publicly funded youth infrastructure, with guidelines on stakeholder roles and accountability.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

Future work could use larger and multi-project samples, objective schedule, cost and outcome data, longitudinal tracking of beneficiaries' livelihoods, interviews with young beneficiaries, and added variables such as leadership, governance and risk management.

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