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Community Involvement in Planning and the Success of Rural Development Projects in Rwanda

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Abstract

Community involvement in development of project can significantly lead to the success of such projects. The decision making done during planning process would involve community participation and the benefits of development including employment provision and business opportunities. This was also against with backdrop that rural communities sensitize themselves and community resources aim to improving their welfare through effective planning. The purpose of this paper therefore, was to document the contribution of community involvement in planning to the success of rural development projects in cooperative support project in Burera district in Rwanda. The target population was 226 respondents that provided the sample size of 144 got using Yamane formula. Questionnaire, key informants' interview, focus group discussion and document analysis review were used as data collection instruments. Experimental research design was employed. The findings revealed that the majority of 15-29 community members corresponding to 73.1% indicated to be fully involved. This paper also showed that 72.1% confirmed that they were fully involved in the planning of project success. The effective involvement of community members strengthens the planning of project success. This paper also reveals that engagement level of the community members in project planning is also respective to the intervention of different stakeholders. The study concluded that the use of various channels increases the involvement of the beneficiaries in the project. Communities who are more engaged in the planning phase also in other stages of the project, develop the required capacities to run the project after its phase-out and can sustain the achievements of such projects. The study recommended that government should provide messages, services through the local leaders, cooperative committees and the opinion leaders for a quick and efficient delivery.

Keywords: *Community involvement, Planning, Project success and rural development*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Globally, project management practices in European Countries have been re-shuffled mainly during the period of industrial revolution (Choma & Bhat, 2010). New concepts have been evolving and theories were developed on how better project managers can lead a project towards the intended objectives. According to Ballard and Glenn (2000), Management itself is a key part of our daily life regarding less the level of responsibilities. It involves the coordination, the organization, evaluation, control and much more. Planning is part of the managerial tasks and makes part of the project lifecycle alongside other phases of like execution and phase-out (Choma & Bhat, 2010).

In Sub-Saharan African Countries, governments have been and are still concerned with integrated development which doesn't live behind rural areas (Ahmad, 2012). It is obvious that resources, needs and opportunities are different in the rural and urban areas, and project for socio-economic development of the two catchments are also different. According Galvin *et al.* (2014) rural development interventions fall into different strategic plans of governments and non-governmental organizations with a common goal to boost economic and social behaviors of the people living in these areas. For decades, investments made in-to communities for socio-economic transformation have yield tremendous results but many children across the World are still going to bed hungry (Galvin *et al.,* 2014). Poverty continues to cost lives despite huge investments made in poverty-prone areas, mainly the rural areas (Ahmed, 2012). The problem resides on why communities are found in the same needs that would have resolved by a project concluded one-year past.

In Rwanda, community members in rural areas of Burera District in Rwanda who benefited from the Cooperative Support Programme (CSP), this thesis looks at project management practices that contribute to the success of the project and it [the study] describes what different authors suggest being "project success" (Friend consultant, 2015). Among other practices, this thesis makes attention to the planning phase which is a key parameter to the success or failure of the project. Dalcher (2012) believes that, community-based planning would win the bread. The concept concerns involving in the planning phase different groups of benefiting communities including women, youths, people with disabilities and economic categories like pastoralists and smallholder farmers. The research contributes to the existing knowledge base on project planning and project success with an emphasis on rural development intervention.

According to Choma and Bhad (2010), the planning phase is a critical input to the project because, the plan will determine the destiny and draw the pathway of the project by sequencing the overall idea into manageable activities. Planning has a place in a driving seat towards the sustainability of the project and its overall impact to the beneficiaries in the context of rural development interventions which are the major concern of this study. Aubry, Hobbys and Thuillier (2008) indicated that having a sound project plan requires the project managed to employ an integrated approach. This approach considers the views and expectations of different stakeholders to create a plan which satisfies the sponsor, the workers and the beneficiaries. It is important to engage stakeholders in early stages of the project and conduct mid-term evaluations to inform early decision making before an important portion of resources is engaged (Ahmad, 2012). At some extents, projects will need to be re-programmed or some activities can be re-purposed to fit the context of the field. Planning is not a one-time task of project management; it is an un-droppable ingredient during the lifetime of the project. According to Kerzner (2003), the project plan includes the communication plan as a tool to sink everyone into the project basin. During the

implementation of the project, everyone has a specific contribution to bring on table and individual contributions will lead to a collective success of the project. Sustainability can be assured before the project starts.

1.1 Problem Statement

From the past two decades, Northern province and Burera district in general hosted many projects that targeted to enhance the living standards and conditions of the rural communities mostly the farmers in that area. Some projects were from the Government, others were introduced by NGOs and others from charity organizations (Aubry, Hobbs & Thuillier, 2008). Even though there have been a tremendous improvement in the areas of agriculture, food security and social welfare, the communities show the need of the support that they have benefitted in the past few years and many are yet to graduate from such a need (Friend consultants, 2015). Some infrastructure that was left by projects are not maintained and are not valorized as during the lifetime of the project. This is the same to the knowledge-based provided by some projects and training materials which indicate a low level of sustainability of the interventions (Archibald & Voropaev, 2013). Some objectives were reportedly achieved during the lifetime of the projects, but the targeted communities remain in poverty or a few graduated whilst sustainability and scalability would bring a long-term development. This is linked to a non-involvement of the grassroot planning level, the communities that make beneficiaries not to own created assets and not valorize the skills developed during the lifetime of the projects (Eckert and Clarkson, 2010). The present study aims to bridge the gap between the planning and exit phases of the project through documenting recommendations that would contribute to a more engagement of the communities during the planning phase towards execution and phase-out of projects.

1.2 Objective of the paper

Objective of this paper was to document the contribution of community involvement in planning to the success of rural development projects in cooperative project support in Burera district in Rwanda.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The concept of a project

A project doesn't necessarily require having heavy and complex documents and tools. Gibson *et al.* (2006) revealed that day-to-day work is a project being working in office or just being a technical engineer or a casual laborer working for a daily wage. Starting a master's programme is a two years project same to launching a multi-year environmental restore programme which would take up to 20 years. Preparing lunch is also a project despite taking just minutes. This is the theory behind a project, it is an occupation, an activity that engage one person or thousands of people, and in general, a project has a starting and end points, milestone (s) to achieve and employment of different knowledge and skills (Galvin *et al*, 2014). From this concept, we can say that the administration and management of projects is a daily practice for each of us despite different level of organization and investment.

Many books and articles have been published on the concept of a project and project management. João Varejao and Caroline Dominguez (2014) look a project in a perspective of value chain development with initiation, completion and achievements in-between which for them establish the line between projects hence creating differences amongst millions of projects. An output of a

project can be a material like a steel bar produced from the raw materials or a maize flour as a result of processing maize grains. The general parameter is that there might be an input, an output and a set of procedures that were followed. An academic research is a project which goes through the design of tools, interviews, data analysis and produces a report and recommendations. Even though there is an adopted theory about project phases, but projects are different in terms of segments they pass through required resources at each stage (Flyvberg, Holm, & Buhl, 2002). Some projects will need a complex planning while a small tweak is enough for other projects but at the end, every project will produce a result being tangible, hard or soft. The specificities in the design, implementation and outputs will define a project from another being in the same industry or not, projects will be always different. They are as well different in time, geographical locations, innovative features and the personnel implementing the project. "A project is a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product or service" (PMI, PMBOK Guide, 2000). Nilsson and Söderholm (2005) said a definition of a project lies in its design. The design will detail all the parameters of the project inclusive of detailed activities and their respective timelines in a project logical framework. The planning phase will also inform the monitoring and evaluation, budget details, personnel and expertise needed and risks and mitigation among others.

2.2 Project Planning

Different literature show that project planning is the very early and critical phase of the project. This was maintained by the PMBOK (2008) by making this phase itself a group of activities. "The Planning Process Group consists of those processes performed to establish the total scope of the effort, define and refine the objectives, and develop the course of action required to attain those objectives" (PMBOK, 2008, p. 46). Other authors including Thomas, Jacques, Adams and Kihneman-Woote (2008), entirely associate project success to a well performed planning phase. This means that there is a sounding relationship between the planning and achievement of project objectives in a framework that the level of effort furnished in the planning will be reflected by its success. For a manager employing much time in the planning, he is likely to succeed in the journey of project management. "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." Benjamin (2016). This means that less the percentage of planning time, more chance to fail at a number of stages during the execution of the project. This reflects into a collective failure of the entire project. A failure project itself is a misuse of resources.

In the context of this study, planning doesn't necessarily mean a once-in a time planning before the start of the project (Benjamin, 2016). However, we mean to plan, plan and plan. This principle will be successful if a manager considers every single segment of the project as a project itself. The planning phase is a project with clear pathways and deliverables hence, it needs to be planned. The mother project will need a Monitoring and Evaluation plan. Failing to plan for Monitoring and Evaluation, will make evaluators to assess different indicators than the baseline which translate into misleading recommendations (Duncan, 2005). The project closure must be considered as well as a complete project that needs a proper plan, execution and termination. This study takes a look to development interventions in rural areas. Failure to plan the project closure, will wash-away all the ground-level achievement of the project simply because, the project was noted handed over to the host community and post-project management structures were not planned before stepping-out (Duncan, 2005).

2.3 Success indicators

Project success has been seen in different perspectives by different authors which shows that, success is subjective and that there is no one common way to define the success of a project. Some authors link the success of the project to the satisfaction of project beneficiaries while other theories will merge the success to achievement of objectives in a numerical with less view on the perception of the beneficiaries (Flyvberg, Holm & Buhl, 2002). This also because, the perception of beneficiaries can be in some cases subjective and cannot be linked to the judgment of success or failure. "Examples abound where the original objectives of the project are not met, but the client was highly satisfied. There are other examples where the initial project objectives were met, but the client was quite unhappy with the results" (Thomas, Jacques, Adams & Kihneman-Woote, 2008). For the authors, neither the quantitative nor the qualitative side can define the success. Fresh literature on project management go further to state that the success of the project will depend on the perception of the donor. In this context, projects will be implemented with no or less consideration of community needs and priorities. The plans and evaluation results will be twisted to praise the donor with the sake securing future funding.

Dvir, Raz and Shenhar (2003) cited that "all four success-measures (Meeting planning goals; End-user benefits; Contractor benefits; and Overall project success) are highly inter-correlated, implying that projects perceived to be successful are successful for all their stakeholders". A project will be more efficient if the manager uses minimal resources to achieve project objectives and the latter are interpreted by the customers/beneficiaries through an impact evaluation or outcome survey. The business case of a project is linked to its problem statement, its reason for investment and any project plan should put much emphasis on how better project achievements both hard and soft will be maintained after the project closure (Shenhar, Dvir, Levy & Maltz, 2001).

2.4 The Management structures

The Management structure is another parameter towards the success of the project. The way a project is coordinated, division of labor, allocation of resources and delegation of responsibilities are all key inputs to the success of the project. According to Assem Al-Hajj and Mario Zraunig, (2014), the managerial performance will play a primordial role in employee satisfaction which brings-in commitment and loyalty of all the workers towards the objectives of the project. Besides Human resources, both small and big aspects and corners should be considered by the management if success is a driving force of the company. Visibility, branding, messaging and other little managerial components like workplace culture are all ingredients to the success. This shows that there is no single project management practice to adopt, the styles will differ depending on the nature of the project itself, the team in place, the sponsor of the project and even key players like the government (Assem Al-Hajj & Mario Zraunig, 2014). Project management methodologies are not designed to be generic but applicable to all projects at any given time, as they need to be adapted to individual project objectives, in order to achieve consistent project management success (Assem Al-Hajj & Mario Zraunig, 2014).

Projects are different in size, so is the required level of management and managerial skills. For larger projects, each activity is a set of numerous operations all leading to the result (Lock, 2003). Specific managerial skills are needed at every stage of the production in the industry and all the plans are established to complete one another. The loading of raw materials will need a mechanical engineer who determines the capacity of a processing machine but a staff manager to assign

important personnel on the production and packaging lines. Project management in industrial projects will not much differ in concept with the same aspect is rural development interventions. For a project targeting to build socio-economic recovery for a community that was affected by a shock, managerial skills to be employed as well depend on the size, the complexity and the nature of the project (Diallo & Thuillier, 2003). Good targeting should be employed to minimize the cases of inclusion (non-eligible people benefiting the project) and exclusion (eligible beneficiaries not registered to benefit the project). A pre-project feasibility study will be required and a baseline survey to be conducted to inform the Monitoring ad Evaluation plan. Competent human resource has an important role to play same as other inputs, material and tools. The management body is structured to champion all the aspects of the project and decide otherwise to adjust the initial plan if it doesn't work mid-way implementation. Kerzner (2003) project management is seen in the lens of managerial tasks as "the planning, organizing, directing, and controlling of company resources for a relatively short-term objective that has been established to complete specific goals and objectives". Some literature suggest that the influence of the tools and techniques depends on users and the set of operations making the human resources be more important in the success of a project than tools (Al-Hajj & Sayers, 2014).

2.5 The set of operations

Every organization has their respective set of goals and that can be achieved by combined efforts put in by every employee of that organization and that includes work distribution based on need and specialization (Rishipal, 2014). The author feels that for any organization, to attain its goals, it should have a proper and suitable organization structure. According to him, there are changes happening every now and then in the emerging organizational paradigm due to which the traditional perspectives of the organization is not enough to compete and cope up with the fast-changing business environment (Collyer et al, 2010). In today's business environment, the management needs to plan and re-plan to cope with the dynamics of fast-changing environments. Organizations exist for a purpose and each has a set of goals to achieve which define its structures and departments. In the past, organizations were structured in departments that should be there but today, the organizational structure goes with the strategy of the organization to achieve its goals. The structure changes when the institution changes a vision, a mission or direction and a new project can totally change the way the structure is organized. The structure in a manufacturing company differs from the structure in the not-for-profit organization with a focus on socio-economic development.

Chandler (2003) showed that "the strategies taken by an organization tend to impact the structure of the organization". Within a project, the structure is determined by the set of operations to be performed to achieve the objectives of the project. A manger can choose to employ full time staff or to bring-in part-time consultants depending on the nature of the project, the resources and the direction of the organization. The operational structure of the organization will be determined by the tasks to be performed and strategies to be engaged (Lunenberg, 2012). Strategies are linked to the overall se of the environment, the culture, and the work norms which at the end will vehicle the organization to a desired destination. Linkage between departments has a great impact on the performance (Nelson & Quick, 2011). For a project to succeed, the planning plays a role but the organization sets the ground.

2.6 Project monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

A project is a sequence of operations and activities that are undertaken for specific objectives and in a specific period of time. The implementation goes through phases from the planning and design which build on the concept to the implementation and handover (Carbone & Tippett, 2004). Projects face barriers, problems, risks and shortcoming during the implementation and can hinder the achievement of desired goals. The problems can be related to poor planning, to the management structure or to the uncontrollable external factors among others. It is important to track the progress of the project against milestones/outputs during the course of implementation to make that the resources are being used efficiently and that objectives are being achieved. This is monitoring. The evaluation looks at the impact and the overall execution of the project after its closure. For rural development interventions that take longer periods, a mid-term evaluation is recommended to trace potential problems at time and find solutions. "Monitoring and evaluation can help identify problems and their causes and suggest possible solutions to problems" (Shapiro, 2001). Among other success factors for rural development interventions, the monitoring and the evaluation have its great contribution. Monitoring can suggest a different direction than what was initially undertaken by the managers of the project. New goals can be introduced mid-way and objectives can be revised if, in the first run, they were not formulated to answer the priorities of the communities in a case of rural development interventions.

The Monitoring and Evaluation is designed and planned before the project kicks-off. In the guidance for small project management, UNDP (2009) recommended to plan the activities that will be undertaken for M&E. Early planning for project monitoring and evaluation adopted by other scholars, including (Kohli & Chitkara, 2008) and (Nyonje *et al*, 2012). This activity needs tools that are well structured and customized to the context of the project. M&E tools vary from their complexity, their uses and the results they generate. Some are meant to collect qualitative information while others are designed to evaluate the project via analytical research. In the context of this study, Monitoring and Evaluation should involve, to the extent possible the project beneficiaries taking into consideration different livelihood parameters in the community. Different literature referenced to for this study, mentioned another contribution of Monitoring and Evaluation to the success of the project. The M&E plan brings in connection between various features of the project. It links the root causes to the goal through activities, outputs intermediate outcomes and the outcomes, all features embedded into one tool which is the logical framework.

2.7 Project life cycle

Prince (2002) distinguishes the four phases of a project as "pre-feasibility, feasibility, design, implementation". Archibald &Voropaev (2003) wrote that the Conception, the Planning, the Execution and the Close-out are the main phases of a project hence making the project lifecycle. The first phase is the project concept which refers to the identification of required interventions and selection of activities and geographical areas. The concept phase is followed by the actual Planning whereby a project manager quantifies and at most extent test the required resources being human, material and capital resources. According to Bredillet (2004a), the Execution is the third and the longest and consist of a series of managerial tasks including monitoring the achievement of milestones at certain stages of the project. The closeout, the last phase of the project consists of the evaluation at both outputs and outcomes levels and the establishment of structures for further management of project achievements after phase-out.

Kerzner (2003) mentioned testing in the phases of a project alongside concept development, planning, execution and close-out. The project life cycle can indulge three, four, five or more phases depending on the project and the literature. Each phase of the project is divided into sub-phases with specific deliverables and in some cases, the sub-phases can be classified as phases given the time for termination and resources to invest-in (Kerzner, 2003). For example, the mid-term evaluation can just be an activity for small project and be a section in-to the implementation phase. However, for larger project, mid-term evaluation can be an independent phase which would inform the rest of the life of the project (Blomquist *et al.,* 2010). From this phase, the concept can be revised, the plans are re-visited and, in some cases, the mid-term review can enforce the project closure before the initially planned closing time. Testing is a section lying between the planning and the execution phases but will not be generalized as an independent phase in the context of this study. Although there is a literature which highlights testing as part of the project life cycle (Kerzner, 2003) it doesn't apply in the overall concept of project phases. The sub-phases, like testing are assigned clear outputs, timeline and budget and it is a managerial task to sub-divide, to the extent possible the project during the planning phase. According to Besner and Hobbs (2011) successful sub-phases altogether make the overall fulfillment of project objectives. Vice-versa, failure to meet small milestones of the sub phases will accumulate into a broad failure of the project.

Kulkalni *et al.* (2004) suggested only three phases for the project life cycle which maintains that there is no global concept on the number of phases for a project life cycle. For the Author, "the projects, especially the ones having a longer lifecycle, could be categorized into many phases depending on the functions. For convenience and simplicity points of view, the three commonly known phases utilized, are the procurement phase, the execution phase and the operation and handover phase (Besner & Hobbs, 2011). This applies mostly in engineering projects, whereby all initial activities are covered by the procurement phase. It is in this phases that experts are recruited, agreements with the government are reached, tenders are published and bids selected and insurances are secured. In other terms, the procurement phase sets the ground and prepares the starting of actual activities. This is followed by the execution phase, from which the operations are undertaken. Experts will be on field, materials supplied, casual laborers recruited and respective managerial tasks. Monitoring takes a sit in this phase, the mid-term review, joint sites visit with stakeholders and regular reporting. The completion of the project is marked by the closure and is handed over to the users.

PMI suggested the simplest four-phase life cycle model of a project, the conception, The planning, the Execution and the close-out (PMI, 2008). The four phases can be subdivided into sub-phases which leads to standalone tasks that are undertaken in each of the phases. Some literature starts the project life cycle with the planning and others recommend having a pre-planning phase. In all the context and for this study, the project lifecycle has got four phases. The close-out can be combined with the handover. As maintained by Russell D. Archibald, Ivano Di Filippo, Daniele Di Filipp (2012) in a paper entitled "The Six-Phase Comprehensive Project Life Cycle Model Including the Project Incubation/Feasibility Phase and the Post-Project Evaluation Phase", the project manager performs more work during the project execution phase. This is where more of resources are engaged and budget tracking is undertaken to limit the over or under consumption of some budget lines. More personnel is deployed in the execution phase than other phases of the project cycle and control and delegation are engaged by the managed not only for the project performance but for team building and capacity strengthening of subordinates (Besner & Hobbs,

2006). The manager doesn't need to wait for the execution phase to conclude to evaluate the achievements. This phase is a host to numerous sub-phases inclusive the assessment on the accomplishment of inter-mediate outputs. Progress reporting and update of the logical framework are maintained on regular basis during the execution phase to inform the overall progress of the project.

2.8 Project management tools

The management body employs one or several tools to simply the complexity of the project. Project management tools vary from planning tools to evaluation and even handover tools and templates (Dalcher, 2012). Hundreds of tools have been developed and are still being customized to different aspects of the project. Gantt Chart is one of the famous tools for project management from the second decade of the 20th centery. For decades, this tool uses bars in a horizontal manner and helps to track the progress of activities. It is an important asset for planning and coordination and evaluation of intermediate progress of the project. Without writing heavy reports, a snapshot of the Gantt chart is enough to provide real time information of the project and can inform decision making and performance management of different activity-leads (Dalcher, 2012). Scoro is another project management tool and is known for its features of dividing the project into sub-tasks and respective deadlines. It has a dashboard which indicates the progress on Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and it is featured with an end user page for managing the important contacts of the project.

According to Diallo and Thuillier (2003), project management tools are employed at different stages of the project life cycle. There are tools for the conception and design including databases and software like Ona software which helps to manage field activities for data collection. SPSS and STATA are database-based tools important for project management on the side of assessments, data collection, progress monitoring and evaluations. This study adopts the concept of dividing tasks into subtasks and activities into small, non-complex sub-activities. The Work Breakdown System (WBS) was developed to ease this function for project managers (Diallo & Thuillier, 2003). On the other hand, Dalcher (2012) revealed that WBS uses the hierarchy style to provide a simplified structure of the project and it is used to budget for frontline activities which simplifies the division of labor whereby personnel or a team of staff can be assigned a specific activity for a pre-determined budget for a certain period of time.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed the experimental research design. The target population was 226 respondents and Yamane formula was used to get sample size of 107 members of cooperative societies, 27agri BDS network and 10 CSP stakeholders yielding to 144 respondents. Questionnaire, key informant interview and document analysis review were used as data collection instruments. Stratified sampling was also used as sampling technique.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to document the contribution of community involvement in planning to the success of rural development projects in cooperative support project done in Burera district in Rwanda. Therefore, this paper was in a need to make an experimental study in order to find out the involvement of community members in the planning process of the project.

4.1 Interconnection of incentives got in the cooperative and personal rating of involvement in project planning

Table 1 presents the outcome of interconnection of incentives got in the cooperative and personal rating of involvement in project planning

Table 1: Interconnection of incentives got in the cooperative and personal rating of involvement in project planning

Involvement	Loan		Agro production		Access to market	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Fully involved	49	57.0%	38	63.3%	38	74.5%
Involved	10	11.6%	9	15.0%	5	9.8%
Partially involved	14	16.3%	7	11.7%	5	9.8%
Not involved	13	15.1%	6	10.0%	3	5.9%
Total	**86**	**100%**	**60**	**100%**	**51**	**100%**

Data in Table1 reveals there is a linkage between the benefits that a member has got in a cooperative and how the member feels has been involved in the planning process of the project. Facilitating beneficiaries to get small loans, linkages to markets and improved agricultural production were among the outputs of the CSP adding to advocacy, cooperative management, trainings and entrepreneurship. Table1 represents figures on the three outputs namely loans, markets and agro-production and how each is linked to the participation of the beneficiaries in the planning activities of the CSP. From the table, 49 out of 86 respondents who got loans representing 57.0% have responded that they were fully involved in the planning as only 15.1% of the members who got loans responded to have not been involved in the planning activities of the project. A high ranking was observed to the beneficiaries who benefited from the CSP activities that were targeting the increase of agricultural production. Out of 51 beneficiaries, 38 representing 74.5% respondent to have been fully involved in the planning compared to only 5.9% that responded a non-involvement despite benefiting the increased agricultural production.

Incentives are one of the pulling factors for community participation in the project management cycle inclusive of the planning as shown in Table1. The community members who got loans, got linkages to markets and have increased agricultural production respondent to have been involved in the planning activities to the rate as high as 57.0%, 63.3% and 74.5% respectively compared to the ranking of non-involvement for the same benefits which are 15.1%, 10.0% and 5.9% respectively. Collected qualitative information revealed that the more the members were feeling that they are benefiting from the project, the more they have been responsive to the initiatives and activities of the project including planning sessions. During the course of CSP implementation, cooperative societies were advised to introduce incentives to members as a way to increase their participation in the activities of the cooperative, to raise up their willingness to support the cooperative and their loyalty towards the vision of the cooperative.

4.2 Contribution of community involvement in planning to the success of rural development projects

Table 2 illustrates the findings concerning the number of meetings attended and perception of the respondents on a successful involvement in the planning

Table 2: Number of meetings attended and perception of the respondents on a successful involvement in the planning

Sessions attended	Fully involved		Not involved		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0-14	14	26.9%	15	78.9%	29	40.8%
15-29	38	73.1%	4	21.1%	42	59.2%
Total	**52**	**100%**	**19**	**100%**	**71**	**100%**

Table 2 indicates the perception of the respondents on involvement in the planning as compared to the number of meetings attended. From the table, 14 out of 52 respondents representing 26.9% of the fully involved respondents have attended between 0 and 14 planning sessions while the percentage is very high for the respondents who responded to not being involved in the planning. Out of 19 respondents that were not involved in the planning, 15 representing 78.9% also participated in fewer meetings between zero and 14 which indicates the correlation between the number of meetings attended and perception of the respondents on the success of the project for the component of community engagement. 38 from 52 representing 73.1% of the respondents who responded to be fully involved in the planning have as well attended many planning sessions that are between 15 and 29. On the contrary, only 4 respondents representing 21.1% of the respondents who responded to not be involved have participated in 15 to 29 planning sessions.

One of the approaches of the CSP was a proximity coaching and outreach to the individual members of the targeted agricultural cooperatives making the perception of being or not being involved in the planning sessions a strong mark for the programme. Data in Table1 revealed that the more a community member participates in planning sessions the more the members appreciate respond positively to the outcomes of the project.

4.3 Project achievement counted on the project outputs by committees and members

Table 3 depicts the results of the perception of project achievements counted on the project outputs by the committees and the members

Table 3: Perception of project achievements counted on the project outputs by the committees and the members

Options	Committee		Members	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Got loan	28	82.4%	58	83%
Paid back overdue loan	21	61.8%	25	36%
Increased agricultural production	19	55.9%	33	47%
Increased membership contribution	22	64.7%	32	46%
New organs were elected	22	64.7%	41	59%
Signed market agreements	26	76.5%	32	46%
Total	**34**	**100.0%**	**70**	**100%**

Table 3 shows how the two patterns have responded to the achievement of the core outputs of the programme. The analysis of data will look at how the involvement of committees in many planning sessions has contributed to the success of CSP as compared to the responses of the regular members

who participated in fewer planning sessions. There is an equal response for both committee members and the regular members on the access to loans component which was an individual-focus output of the CSP. Data are different for the outputs that targeted the development of the cooperative as a whole like payment of the overdue loans, increase of agricultural production on cooperative land, increased commitment of the members to pay the membership contribution, election of new organs and signing market agreements for aggregated agricultural produce. In total, 61.8% of the leaders appreciated that CSP has facilitated the cooperatives to payback the overdue loans compared to 36% of the regular members. This is because overdue loans though they are a liability of the cooperative in general but committees feel the more responsibility to payback and have got the challenge to raise the awareness of members to contribute money for repaying the loans. CSP documents show that some cooperatives were about or have collapse due to the failure of paying back the loans but they were revived as per the intervention of the programme

Whilst fewer regular members have appreciated the contribution of CSP to the increase of agricultural production on cooperative land (47%), the appreciation of committee members on this output is as high as 55.9%. Difference in responses on agricultural production is marked by the ownership of the responsibility of the cooperative assets. This indicates that the more the communities are involved in the planning like the cases of committees, the more the responsibility on community assets increases and the more the valorisation is appreciated. Next, Table4 indicates that the more the participation in the planning the more the commitment to the growth of a cooperative society which was a core goal of the Cooperative Support Project. Committee members representing herewith more participation in he is planning have reported more on the success of the project to the indicator of increased membership contribution. (64.7%) compared to 46% that was reported by regular members who also recorded fewer participation in the planning sessions. The same scenario continues for all the common interest outputs of the CSP. Committee members as high as their participation in the planning responded as a core achievement to have the new organs elected at 64.7% compared to the regular members who reported the output at 59%. Election of new organs was one of the success indicators of the CSP as cooperatives were coached on leadership and fair management. Another success factor of the CSP was the linkage to formal markets marked by the signing of market agreements between farmer cooperatives and the buyers. On this component, committee members answered it as a benefit at the rate of 76.5% compared to the regular members (46%). This is because committees have been involved more in the meetings with buyers and have participated in contract negotiations towards the signing of agreements which looks not to be the case for the non-committee members.

4.4 Capacity needs on the cooperatives

The findings presented in Table 4 include the responses on capacity needs of the cooperatives per meetings attended

Table 4: Responses on capacity needs of the cooperatives per meetings attended

Capacity needs	0-14		15-29		Total
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Cooperative Management	22	40.0%	33	60.0%	55
Records keeping	22	44.9%	27	55.1%	49
Entrepreneurship	20	39.2%	31	60.8%	51
Farm practices	20	38.5%	32	61.5%	52
Access to finance	19	38.0%	31	62.0%	50
Financial literacy	19	40.4%	28	59.6%	47
Trainings	22	41.5%	31	58.5%	53
Coaching sessions	12	31.6%	26	68.4%	38
Advocacy	4	14.3%	24	85.7%	28

The results in Table 4 illustrate the responses of the respondent on the capacity needs of their cooperatives and variables were made on the number of meetings attended being the lower attendance of 0-14 planning meetings and the higher attendances of 15-29 sessions. The stakeholders of the Cooperative Support Project answered in the qualitative data collection that capacity building of a cooperative is a continuous process hence the knowledge of the needs of a cooperative by the members is regarded as positive. Data in Table4 show that the more the number of planning sessions attended the more a respondent get to know the capacity need of the cooperative. Out of 55 responses on the need of cooperative management, 33 respondents representing 60% of the total responses on this component were from the respondents with high participation level in the planning sessions while the rest quantile have answered the cooperative management as need at 40%. Records keeping and coaching on entrepreneurship are the continuous needs of farmer cooperatives and this need is more recognized by respondents who attended more meetings (55.1% and 60.8% respectively) compared to the respondent who attended fewer meetings (44.9% and 39.2% respectively).

Moving down in Table 4, two other indicators mark how the participation in meetings has contributed to the success of the Cooperative Support Programme as reflected by percentages on the knowledge of the capacity needs of the cooperatives in terms of the need of more coaching sessions and the need of advocacy. Respondents who attended 15-29 meetings recognized the two core capacity needs at 68.4% and 85.7% respectively to the opposite of the respondents who participated in 0-14 planning sessions. The later answered the capacity need of the cooperative on coaching sessions at 31.6% and only 4 out of 28 respondents representing 14.3% responses on the need of advocacy were from the lower participants showing as well how the more involvement in planning the more the beneficiaries will assess the capacity needs of their cooperatives even after the closure of the project.

4.5 Involvement perception and knowledge of the core component of CSP

Table 5 illustrate the involvement perception of the respondents and their responses about the core component of the Cooperative Support Project

Table 5: Involvement perception and knowledge of the core component of the CSP

Involvement perception	Responses	Percentage
Fully involved	44	72.1%
Involved	11	18.0%
Partially involved	4	6.6%
Not involved	2	3.3%
Total	**61**	**100%**

Among others, stakeholders of the CSP answered that what made it a good project is the approach of community engagement through proximity to beneficiaries. Out of 61 respondents who answered positively that proximity to beneficiaries has made it a good project, 44 representing 72.1% have also respondent that they were fully involved in the planning activities of the Cooperative Support Programme as shown in Table 5. From this table, 11 respondents representing 18.0% were involved in the planning activities, 6.6% partially involved and the lower response on the knowledge of the core component of the project (3.3%) were also self-ranking as not involved at all in the planning activities of the CSP. The figures in Table 5 show a positive correlation between the involvement of community members in the planning activities of the project and the extent to which the beneficiaries will know the objectives of the project, its approaches and activities.

The Figure 1 below illustrates the contribution of community involvement in project planning to the success of the project represented by the self-appreciation of the respondents on the involvement in planning and their knowledge the core activity of the CSP respectively.

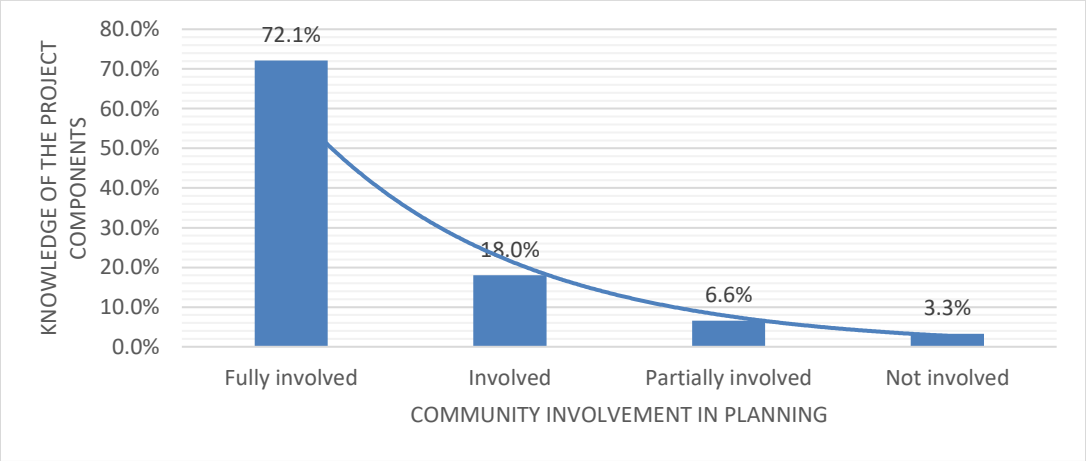

Figure 1: Contribution of community involvement in project planning to the success of the project

4.6 Discussions

From the findings of this study, the involvement of the beneficiaries in the planning had a positive link with the success of the project counted on the perception of the beneficiaries. This confirms the statement of Thomas, Jacques, Adams & Kihneman-Woote (2008) that a project would not be called successful if the client was quite unhappy with the results even though the initial objectives of the project were met. The study found further that the more the communities were involved in the planning the more they perceived the benefits of the project which is a reflection of project

success as mentioned by Dvir, Raz and Shenhar (2003) that end-user benefits are among the four success measures of a project alongside meeting the planning goals, contractor benefits and the overall project success. Interviewed personnel and the focus group discussions admitted the differences in involvement of community members depending on different managerial reasons. In some cases, the project had to invite only the leaders of the cooperatives leaving behind other members in-to some planning sessions with intention that presidents of cooperatives will deliver the message the members. Projects consider the organizational culture as a factor to success but a combination of the culture, the management of risks and inclusive planning lead more to the success (Ahmed, 2012).

The frequency, representation levels, the number of attended planning sessions, and the different incentives and channels used to involve beneficiaries in the project are all part of the human resource management at community level which lead to project success as per some literature. Kerzner (2009) in the book Project Management: A Systems Approach to Planning, Scheduling, and Controlling argue the role of management towards the success of the project and admit that management deal only with resources engagement and organization of project activities which is not an assurance that the project will fulfill its mandate. Same as this study and in this book, it was that: Correct human resource management is required to achieve the maximum commitment of each person within the project but lack of liability, support and focus of project team actors might compromise the overall project outcome.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the use of various channels increases the involvement of the Beneficiaries in the project. Project leaders are the best channels towards community engagement in development projects adding to the full involvement of Government officials and the personnel of the project. The study revealed that some members are constrained by other responsibilities to attend project-related meetings that are organized in hotels so it is important to organize the planning meetings at the proximity of beneficiaries, in their communities to ensure maximum participation. Communities who are more engaged in the planning phase also in other stages of the project, they develop the required capacities to run the project after its phase-out and can sustain the achievements of such projects.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that local official to channel the messages, services through the local leaders, cooperative committees and the opinion leaders for a quick and efficient delivery. The local officials would not reach each individual household and community leaders have got trust by fellow members to deliver services. Moreover, some NGOs would design the projects without considering the views, needs, and priorities of the beneficiaries. To maximize the effectiveness of the project targeting rural communities and reduce the risks of post-project failure, community-based participatory planning is recommended. The study also recommended various channels need to be highly used for dissemination of the information.

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