

# **FACTORS INFLUENCING SUSTAINABILITY OF CHILDREN HOMES PROGRAMMES MANAGED BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN KENYA: A CASE OF MBEERE SOUTH, EMBU COUNTY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors influencing sustainability of children homes programmes. The study was guided by the following objectives; To establish how stakeholder engagement, influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county; To find out how resource mobilization for Donor, influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county. To determine how Capacity Development of NGO Management influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county and finally to determine how self-income generating projects influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county. The study employed descriptive survey design. This design is appropriate because it portrays an accurate profile of persons, events or situations and allows the collection of large amounts of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way. The study targeted a population of 52 respondents which included 44 management staff in children homes, 5 county officials under the department of children service in Embu county and 3 sub county officials under the department of children services in Mbeere south sub county. Since the target population was small the researcher was not sample hence a complete census of target population was carried out to 52 respondents. Data was collected through use of questionnaires which consisted of open ended, structured and unstructured questions. The data was then coded to

enable the responses to be grouped into various categories. As such quantitative data was analysed by descriptive analysis techniques in form of tables to show frequencies and percentages using SPSS, while qualitative data was analysed through content analysis. The study found out that resource mobilization influenced sustainability of children homes programmes most with 49(98%), followed by Stakeholder Engagement 48(96%), then self-income generating project 47(94%) and finally Capacity Development 45(90%). This implies that resource mobilization plays a very key role in ensuring there is sustainability of programmes management by Ngo. NGOs can indeed serve as effective agents of sustainable development. For them to remain valid in this developmental discourse participatory development with other development partners, government included must necessarily be the structure and operational focus to enhance the design and implementation of interventions at all levels. They should increasingly make their organizational structures flat to ensure flexibility and innovations to address the growing developmental changes in the study area. NGOs should continue to focus on the delivery of interventions that helps improve the lives of the vulnerable by rehabilitating street children and also increasing access to water, healthcare, agriculture extension, employable skills, and credit due to the inadequate delivery of these services by the local authorities. To enhance the sustainability of these services, there should be Government-Community-NGO-Donor network during the design and implementation of interventions. This

should be done by adopting participatory management approaches at the organizational and beneficiary levels to ensure greater local community participation such that these development interventions programs widely reflect the needs of beneficiaries to make them sustainable

enough to bring about the needed benefits and to make beneficiaries non-dependent.

**Key Words:** *sustainability, children homes programmes, non-governmental organizations, Kenya, Mbeere South, Embu County*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Globally, Non-Governmental Organization implementing programmes and projects in the health sector have had significant influence in providing homes for street children and this has been global spotlight. Sustainability implies ready to be kept up or the procedure proposed to enhance the nature of human life inside the constraint of the worldwide condition. The problem of street children is universal (UNICEF, 2004). It is estimated that there are 100 million street children in the world (Volp, 2002). The number has plummeted in recent decades because of wide spread recession, political turmoil, civil unrest, increasing family disintegration, urban and rural poverty, natural disaster and rapid industrialization (Mohamed, 2002). The United Nations International Children's Education Funds (UNICEF), estimates that, out of 100 million children who call streets their homes, only 20 million children live in streets, without their families. In South America alone, there are at least 40 million children, in Asia, 25 million children and Europe approximately 25 million. Estimates in most countries have fluctuated widely (UNICEF, 2004).

In Brazil, the exact number of street children is not known. According to unofficial estimates, the numbers range between 200,000 and 1 million. But this number does not necessarily correspond to the number of children who live on the streets. These children fall between ten and eighteen years of age. Most of them work in Brazil streets. These children do what they can to survive ranging from selling candy on street corners, shoe shining and watching parked cars; to drug peddling, petty theft and prostitution (Mitchell, 2003). In Pakistan, there is a population of 135.6 million, where more than 22.5 million are adolescents. In a survey conducted by the National Council of Pakistan, about 1.2 million children are reported to be in the streets of Pakistan's large cities, working as beggars, vendors, or shoeshine boys. Children become homeless because of abuse and poverty and once on the streets, they are exposed to countless hazards, including child labour and sexual exploitation. Cities like Mumbai, Calcutta, Manila, Zenario, Mexico, Bangkok, are some of the examples where street children are found in large numbers (Mohamed, 2002). Due to poverty, abuse and HIV/AIDS, there are thousands of children in the streets in the African region. It is estimated that 450,000 children live on the streets of Ethiopia and 35,000 in Khartoum, Sudan (Save Children Sweden, 2003/2004). Once children are forced on the streets, it is very difficult to resettle them in the society.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have increasingly been recognized today as vital development partners in aid delivery. This recognition is grounded on the fact that they have been able to position themselves before the donor community as credible institutions that seek the interest of vulnerable people in their quest to gain a voice in the social, political, and economic discourse of a nation. NGOs are pronounced in local, national and international scenes where they are engaging in activities as diverse as grass root mobilization, community empowerment, micro-finance, humanitarian relief and emergency assistance. During the 1980s, the number of NGOs across the globe grew significantly marking a new dimension in international development cooperation. The growth in the number of NGOs was a direct response to the negative impacts of certain government policies or issues that have not receive wide governmental attention.

In Africa for instance, the growth in the number of NGOs was to mitigate the social impacts of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) that was being implemented by governments. It was believed that as advocates for the vulnerable in society, they were better placed to address the social impact of SAP that was adopted by countries in Africa. It is reported there are about 1 million NGOs working all over the world. It is however instructive to note that their existence is not only pronounce in developing countries but those that cuts across developed and developing nations where they adopt varying degrees of strategies, objectives and missions to fulfil their developmental agenda. NGO's as facilitators in the field of development acts as providers of basic services to vulnerable individuals and communities in response to inadequacies in the public delivery of such services. In this vain they invariably complement the roles of governments and the collective efforts of individuals towards human development. In an attempt by NGOs to complement the activities of governments in basic service delivery, they come in the form of charities, foundations, associations, non-profit corporations, and voluntary organizations (Lewis and Kanji, 2009).

In Kenya survey conducted in 13 districts under Government of Kenya (UNICEF, 2015) programme of cooperation, estimated that, there were 109, 763 street children. The estimates were as high as 250,000 with 60,000 street children reported in Nairobi but the estimates were not based on a practical survey. It was estimated that over 600,000 children in Kenya were in need of special protection (UNICEF, 2014). A practical headcount of street children in Nairobi identified some 10,000 street urchins (UNICEF, 2004) suggesting the total number may be under 20,000 street children. This could have been as a result of children going back to the streets from rehabilitation centres. There is, at the same time a moral concern for the society to do something to help the street children. According to Asamoah (2013) notes that NGOs are particularly critical in circumstances where state funds are limited, political situations are fluid, natural disasters resulting from both predictable and unpredictable environmental circumstances occur, ethnic strife is rampant, and the level of per capita income severely restricts the ability to purchase needed goods and services.

Kenya can be viewed as a home of increasing numbers of NGOs. There is almost nowhere in Kenya that does not have some kind of contact with NGOs as they have found favor in bodies like United Nations, European Union, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and other bilateral and multilateral organizations who believe they are an important part to put African governments in check on issues of mal administration and human rights (Asamoah, 2013). Non-governmental organization (NGO s) plays very important roles in the society, by supplementing government and foreign missions efforts in the provision of services to her citizens. For NGOs to perform this role it has to dependent on donor funds. In the recent past there has been an enormous growth in the number of NGOs being registered in Kenya and in Embu county. However, some street children Homes in Embu County face some problems like lack of funds and some even to and extent of being closed (NGO council,2016). Despite this problem, no or little study has been done to establish aspects that influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Globally, funding and implementation of various interventions in any projects and programmes have been an integral part of public planning and management. Non-governmental organization (NGOs) plays very important roles in the area of children homes programs in Kenya, by supplementing government and foreign missions efforts in the provision of rehabilitation services to her citizens. For NGOs to perform this role it has to depend on donor funds, in the recent past there has been an enormous growth in the number of NGOs being registered in Kenya especially those in the rehabilitation programs. Most of these street children's rehabilitation programs find difficulty in their sustainability efforts after the donor withdrawal to continue supporting street children and as a result they are unable to continue supporting their operations. This therefore leads to the proliferation of these children back to the same street and becoming a menace creating a vicious circle of the problem. Despite this problem, no or little study has been done in order to establish factors influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by non-governmental organizations in Kenya; a case of Mbeere south, Embu county.

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors influencing sustainability of children homes programmes managed by non-governmental organizations in Kenya; a case of Mbeere south, Embu county.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To establish how stakeholder engagement influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county.
2. To find out how resource mobilization for Donors influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county.

3. To determine how Capacity Development of NGO Management influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county.
4. To determine how self-income generating projects influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

A theoretical framework is a combination of well-articulated ideas that serve to break down a certain phenomenon by giving variables of the laws that then relate the variables to each other (Kothari, 2004). The study was guided by a program theory and a convention approach.

### **Program Theory**

The program theory is a proposition with regard to the transformation of input into output and how to transform a bad situation into a better one through inputs (Lipsey, 1993). It is also illustrated as the process through which program components are presumed to affect outcomes. Rossi (2004) argued that a program theory consists of an organizational plan on how to deploy resources and organize the activities of the program activities to ensure that the intended service system is developed and maintained. Uitto (2000) illustrates the advantages of using a theory-based framework in monitoring and evaluation. It includes the ability to attribute project outcomes of specific projects or activities as well as identification of anticipated and undesired program consequences. Theory based evaluations as such enables the evaluator to understand why and how the program is working (Weiss, 2013).

Occasionally, it will also show other incidental factors that contribute to producing results and the context in which this happens. Programme theory provides a conceptual framework used in developing an integrated monitoring and evaluation framework and guiding these two important project functions. Programme theory also helps bring together available information that supports a programme providing clarity about how a programme is understood to work or not to work, thereby aiding to bridge the gap towards optimal performance (Rogers, 2011). Programme theory principles may apply for a single evaluation, planning multiple evaluations of different projects that are funded under program, or to collate data and information from multiple evaluations both midterm and final. A programme theory develops during the planning stage of a new intervention. It may be applied during implementation, close-out and post implementation. When planning for an evaluation, it is particularly useful to review the programme theory applied and review or contextualize as may be necessary.

### **Conventional Approach**

Malunga and Banda (2004) argue that the Conventional Approach of sustainability in organization focuses on the ability to get money so that activities on the ground can continue. Here, money is both the emphases and the target. They enumerate the means to generate the



money as follows: training individuals in proposal writing; diversifying the donor base; identifying local sources of money (for example, social events); and creating endowment trusts.

They explain that staff members approach people or organization that have money and convince them to give some money or material resources to the NGOs. With the ever-increasing number of Non – governmental organizations (NGOs) the competition is becoming fierce for getting money for their field activities. This has compelled some NGOs to change focus and undertake other activities strictly for the sake of money, although their beneficiaries may not need the new activities being offered. Malunga and Banda (2004) predict that it is likely to continue to get more difficult to access development funding as more funds are being diverted to relief efforts that address global crises. They, therefore, conclude that the old methods for getting money into the organization may not work in this difficult environment.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study employed descriptive survey design. This design was appropriate because it portrayed an accurate profile of persons, events or situations and allowed the collection of large amounts of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way. It referred to the way the study was designed; the method used to carry out a research.

### **Target Population**

The study targeted a population of 52 respondents which include 44 management staff in children homes, 5 county officials under the department of children service in Embu county and 3 sub county officials under the department of children homes in Mbeere south sub county. **Sample Size and Sampling Procedure.** According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a sample is a subset of a particular population selected for the purpose of study to make conclusion about a population. This position was also supported by Gupta (2007) who says that if the researcher has enough resources and time he can choose to do a complete census of the study if the population size is small. Gupta gives the advantages of census that it doesn't have any bias that may occur due to sample size selection; therefore, a complete census of 52 respondents was employed.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The study used both primary and secondary data source of data. Primary data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires to the respondent to help come up with data required. The questionnaire further consisted of open ended, structured and unstructured questions. The structured questions provided a set of answers from which the respondents choose the appropriate answers. Unstructured one provided freedom while responding to the subject matter.

## **Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher obtained authorization letter from the university, letter from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation then also obtained a research permit from County government of Embu. The questionnaires were administered to the respondent through drop and pick method. The researcher personally gave the questionnaires to the respondents and gave them a period of one week after which the researcher picked them. An introductory letter was used to introduce to the respondent to the researcher. The researcher opted for the questionnaires because the responses are gathered in a standardized way.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

The data was coded to enable the responses to be grouped into various categories. As such quantitative data was analysed by descriptive analysis techniques in form of tables to show frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data was analysed through content analysis.

## **DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS**

### **Stakeholder Engagement and sustainability of children homes programmes**

The first objective was to establish how stakeholder engagement enhances sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county. The study found out that stakeholder involvement influenced sustainability of children homes programs managed by NGOs as second factor. This goes in line with Gikonyo (2008) who stated that involving the stakeholder's helps in the achievement of common understanding. Monitoring and Evaluation strategies help stakeholders to know the problems and formulate solutions facing the community members or project, their causes, magnitude, effects and implications. Stakeholder involvement enhances accountability.

### **Resource Mobilization from Donors and sustainability of children homes programmes**

The second objective was to find out how resource mobilization strategies for Donors, influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county. The study found out that resource mobilization influenced the most; sustainability of children homes programmes most. Funding any project comes from a range of external sources example sponsors, government agencies, business interest and non-profit organization. Such sponsors issue various types of socializations, announcing the availability of funding to support projects within specific areas of interests. Hen (2007) mentions that for a project to be successful there should be adequate fund allocated to finance its completion. Jackson, (2010) added that project funds availability is an important factor that influences delivery of a project.



### **Capacity Development of NGO Management and sustainability of children homes programmes**

The third objective was to determine how Capacity Development of NGO Management influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county Likert scale for rating questionnaires was employed. Based on this factor it was ranked the fourth variable influencing sustainability of children homes programmes. Capacity development helps employees in the organization to have knowledge and skills needed to perform their jobs effectively, take new responsibilities and also be able to manage changing conditions. This goes in line with Jobber (2007) who stated that Training employees helps them in acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs and do it effectively. The findings also show that motivating employees is very important especially through promoting them according to Dessler, (2005) sees promotion as advancements to positions of increased responsibility. He says most working people look forward to promotions, which usually means more pay, responsibility and often job satisfaction.

### **Self-income generating projects and sustainability of children homes programmes**

The Forth objective was to determine how self-income generating strategies of projects influence sustainability of children homes programmes managed by Ngos in Embu county. The studies found out that self-income generating project are very important in children homes. This provides an overview of opportunities to secure resources and beyond those normally provided by financial allocation to the institution. The aim of this Income Generation through self-income generating project is to encourage activities aimed at pursuing increased revenue income. According to De Bruin (2007). Participation in income generating projects and economic growth will take place in those situations where particular economic conditions are most favourable. To achieve the objective of programmes they should be funding income generating programmes and projects for community empowerment. Capacity Development was ranked as the last variable which influenced sustainability of children homes programmes

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The increasing role of NGOs in development and the increasing attention they attract from donors makes them indispensable in the current dispensation of devolved system of governance and the sustainable development as a study area. The rise in levels of under developmental indicators such as falling educational standards, poor agricultural productivity, poverty, diseases and the decreasing role of the state in services provisions will continue to increase the number of NGOs to fill the development gaps that have been created by the current trend.

There is therefore the urgent need to re-examine the way NGOs generally work in the study area to eliminate all tendencies that stall progress in the delivery of their interventions. Far more important is the increase recognition of the complex web of over bearing environmental factors that are likely to make NGO led interventions succeed or fail.

NGOs can indeed serve as effective agents of sustainable development. For them to remain valid in this developmental discourse participatory development with other development partners, government included must necessarily be the structure and operational focus to enhance the design and implementation of interventions at all levels. They should increasingly make their organizational structures flat to ensure flexibility and innovations to address the growing developmental changes in the study area.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of the study revealed a number of issues that influence the sustainability of NGO led development interventions such as children homes programs. In the course of the study the findings also brought out insights that could help improve the sustainability of these interventions. The following recommendations are therefore informed by the findings.

1. NGOs should continue to focus on the delivery of interventions that helps improve the lives of the vulnerable by rehabilitating street children and also increasing access to water, healthcare, agriculture extension, employable skills, and credit due to the inadequate delivery of these services by the local authorities. To enhance the sustainability of these services, there should be Government-Community-NGO-Donor network during the design and implementation of interventions. This should be done by adopting participatory management approaches at the organizational and beneficiary levels to ensure greater local community participation such that these development interventions programs widely reflect the needs of beneficiaries to make them sustainable enough to bring about the needed benefits and to make beneficiaries non-dependent.
2. NGOs in the children homes programs should cooperate more effectively with each other to avoid the duplication of interventions in communities and encourage the participation of stakeholders at all levels of development. There should be development platforms (fora) within the county that enhances NGO-NGO and NGO-State interface or partnership that will ensure mutual understanding between partners with a clear understanding on the necessities and ideals of the partnership grounded on the believe that both players are constrained with resources and must pull these scarce resources together for the developmental good of beneficiaries and the county at large. Significantly, cost effective interventions must be delivered to ensure that maintenance and running cost does not deter beneficiaries from continuing interventions. By this, NGOs managing these children homes programs should introduce interventions that are consistent with local technology and within the capabilities of local artisans such that maintenance and running cost will be within the reach of beneficiaries to ensure that they continuously derive maximum benefits from interventions.
3. NGOs should specialize on their core capabilities to functionally position themselves in the delivery of interventions to meets the needs of beneficiaries. These functional capabilities will over time raise the credibility of NGOs to source funds in that

intervention area rather than amassing series of interventions without any specialty which potentially could lead to the delivery of unsustainable interventions.

4. NGOs should contract independent evaluators that will study specific interventions and their specific sustainability challenges to afford them opportunities to deal with the specific sustainability concerns of each intervention for sustained growth and development.

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