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Local Stakeholders' Involvement in Community Development Projects in Kenya

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Walden University
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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Local residents can provide valuable input on the design, implementation, review, and assessment of development projects, but many community development organizations do not involve these individuals in decision-making. There was inadequate knowledge about why community members are not engaged in community development projects in Kenya. With this study, I sought to improve the understanding of why community members are not fully involved in implementing and managing community development projects in Kenya. Stakeholder theory served as the theoretical foundation for this study. Data were collected through interviews with 13 management and program staff members working with an NGO in Kenya. The research question addressed the key factors influencing community members' participation in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects. A constant comparative analysis was used to identify five major thematic categories: strategies to promote and encourage community members' involvement, factors that promote community members' participation, factors that limit community members' involvement, the advantages of community members' participation, and the risks of involving community members in community development projects. The study findings indicate that involving community members in development projects creates trust and community ownership, leading to project sustainability. Community participation may promote positive social change by fostering robust, efficient, and sustained community development saving the organizations' money, increasing project outcomes and impact, reducing poverty, and advancing overall community members' livelihoods and well-being.

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this study to my wife, Joyce, and my sons, Lewis, Duncan, and Samuel, who have sacrificed family time and let me focus on completing my dissertation. Without their support and understanding, I could not have accomplished this dream. When I was unavailable, Joyce had to take responsibility for parenting and other family responsibilities. She encouraged me and provided the moral support I needed to stay focused. I owe her and will forever be grateful. I also want to dedicate this dissertation to my three sons, who never complained when I could not spend time with them while I was writing and studying. They demonstrated great patience when I went to the basement to write while they watched TV and played games.

As a firstborn in my family and the first to go to college, I also dedicate this achievement to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wanjue. Over the years, they have encouraged me and provided the support I needed to go through school, from elementary to high school through college. Their support, encouragement, and dedication instilled in me the importance of higher education. Their parental guidance and support have impacted my personal, family, academic, and professional life. In addition, I will never forget the support my pastor and spiritual father, Reverend Canon Thanji, provided me. His encouragement, mentorship, and prayers kept me motivated. Words cannot adequately represent the difference the spiritual support has made in my life. May God bless him mightily.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank God, who is omnipresent and has seen me grow from a young boy to a grown man, helping to make my dreams conceivable. I also owe thanks to the faculty at Walden University and my friends and family members who have supported and helped me reach this point in my academic career. I appreciate my dissertation committee's support and guidance: Dr. Hyuk Kim (chair), Dr. Jose Perez and Dr. Roger F. Wells (committee members), and Dr. Patricia Polastri (university research reviewer). Each committee member brought an exceptional and esteemed contribution to the process, enriching my proposal and ensuring the final study's quality. I especially acknowledge Professor Augustine Afullo of Brainstorm Management Consultants in Kenya for continually pushing me to be a better scholar and supporting my research study.

I am forever grateful to all my colleagues at my workplace, especially at USAID, who, in one way or another, contributed in some fashion to the successful completion of this dissertation. I would also like to thank the research participants for their time and insights. I am grateful to all those I did not mention but who contributed in some fashion to the successful completion of this dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This study focused on community members' involvement in community development projects managed by a nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Kenya. NGOs are the primary providers of services and development endeavors in most African rural areas (Mutanguha & Kamuhanda, 2021). I examined one of the NGOs providing such services to communities in the rural areas of Kenya and other countries in the East Africa region.

The literature shows that community members' involvement enhances organizational effectiveness, innovation, operational efficiency, and sustainability of local development projects, increasing the impact and potential to reach more beneficiaries (Freeman et al., 2017; Halden et al., 2019; Hendricks et al., 2018; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013). Despite the benefits, community development project managers often do not involve community members or do so effectively. This lack of involvement may lead to the failure of projects. For example, during the 1990s, most community development projects implemented by Shell Oil Company in the Niger Delta failed due to a lack of local community members' participation (Ogula, 2008). Multiple factors influence community members' including limited access to information (Benedict, 2010; Markey et al., 2010). Bolstering community involvement in development projects is challenging for the leaders of humanitarian organizations and rural communities alike (Halden et al., 2020; Kaseje et al., 1987; Susilo et al., 2020). Organizations face the challenge of identifying the best way to implement systematic community members' participation in decision-making (Muthuri et al., 2009).

There is inadequate knowledge about why community members are not involved in the implementation and management of community development projects in Kenya (Kaseje et al., 1987; Munene & Thakhathi, 2017; Muthuri et al., 2009; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013). In this study, I sought to address this gap in the literature by exploring community members' involvement in the operations of community development projects in Kenya. Community participation may promote positive social change by fostering robust, efficient, and sustained community development saving the organizations' money, increasing project outcomes and impact, reducing poverty, and advancing overall community members' livelihoods and well-being.

In this chapter, I provide a background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, research questions, the problem statement, the purpose, the research question theoretical foundation, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope, and delimitations, limitations, the significance of the study, significance to practice and theory. I also describe the topic of the study, the purpose, and the potential social implications of the study.

Background of the Study

The term *stakeholder* means different things to different people (Phillips et al., 2003). Carroll (1996) defined a stakeholder as "any individual or group who can affect or is affected by the actions, decisions, policies, practices, or goals of the organization" (p. 74). In the context of community development, they are persons or representatives of various interest groups or organizations that have a vested interest and involvement in a project and that are affected by the implementation or achievement of the organization's

objectives (Carmin et al., 2003; Clarkson, 1998; Freeman, 1984; Parmar et al., 2010;

Project Management Institute, 2008). They include residents of a project area and those

interested parties who directly or indirectly influence or affect the project process. Some

individuals have decision-making capabilities related to the project's implementation, and

those representing the public can significantly influence public opinion. Depending on

the nature of a project, they might include donors; individuals and families; program

administrators; staff; participants/beneficiaries; and their peers; government officials;

politicians; local leaders; business owners; community groups; religious leaders;

schoolteachers; educators; students; and media figures (Carmin et al., 2003; Carroll,

1996; Freeman, 1984; Parmar et al., 2010). When making critical organizational

decisions, it is prudent that managers try as much as possible to involve relevant internal

and external stakeholders in the decision-making process to tap into their ideas (Spaling

& Vroom, 2007). Getting all participants involved is the true meaning of stakeholder

involvement.

Leaders should identify stakeholders and consider their interests in the decision-

making process (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005). According to Buchholz and Rosenthal

(2005), understanding a business's relationship with its stakeholders depends on how one

views the corporate entity. Those who adhere to the traditional economic view of the

corporation see the marketplace as the only reason for the business's existence. They do

not see stakeholders as independent entities but of primary interest (Buchholz &

Rosenthal, 2005). Managers must balance and coordinate all stakeholders' interests while

directing the organization's activities. The stakeholder theory is a theory of organizational

management and ethics. The theory holds that all stakeholders must be treated equally, irrespective of their varied individual contributions to an organization (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005). Firm leaders should address all stakeholders' interests instead of just being concerned with making profits (Flak & Rose, 2005). Managers should be sensitive to every stakeholder's role and the impact on the organization's operations.

One major obstacle to most projects' sustainability is the need for more involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process (Saadatian et al., 2010). Many community development programs fail or achieve minimal success due to low levels of support from local community members and the members' negative attitudes and lack of information about the programs (Benedict, 2010). According to Benedict, residents of rural communities, on average, have limited expertise and poor access to information, compromising their ability to engage in complex community development planning processes. They are difficult to mobilize and engage and have a limited knowledge base and capacity (Markey et al., 2010). Yet members of rural communities live in resource-based economies that are dependent on donor and public-sector spending (Markey et al., 2010). People living in rural areas of Africa, for instance, might benefit from being informed about vital government development programs in place that are aimed at improving their well-being, but which require their participation and cooperation to succeed.

Globally, companies have treated their stakeholders in different ways. Ogula (2008) noted that Shell Company created corporate social strategies without involving the community in Nigeria's Niger Delta region in the company's oil endeavors. Despite being

the most adversely affected by oil exploitation, company leaders did not include the

area's inhabitants in decision-making regarding operational management and the

allocation of wealth generated from oil. Most planned projects, designed and executed by

the Shell Company, failed because the local community members were uninvolved

(Ogula, 2008). On the contrary, the Victorian Fisheries Authority, an independent

statutory authority established to effectively manage Victoria's fisheries resources,

worked closely with its stakeholders on the delivery of sustainable fishing and

aquaculture; clear resource access; shared arrangements; and increased economic, social,

and cultural values aimed at protecting the unique and diverse marine environments in

Victoria State in southeastern Australia (Carey et al., 2007).

There are several ways of engaging community members and other stakeholders

in the community project planning processes. Community-based natural resource

management (CBNRM) and environmental assessment demonstrate successful

community involvement strategies in addressing contemporary ecological problems and

the success of natural resource management (Berkes, 2008; Laura & Krishna, 2009;

Johannes, 2002). The CBNRM approach acknowledges that it is more effective for an

organization to solve community problems through the active involvement of community

members. It also empowers marginalized resource users in decision-making processes.

The CBNRM values community-generated local solutions for different situation-specific

issues. The method is more accepted locally because it is people-centered and sustainable

(Carey et al., 2007).

Researchers have conducted studies on community members' involvement in community development projects (e.g., Chili & Ngxongo, 2017; Halden et al., 2019; Matipa, 2020; Muthuri et al., 2009; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013; Thorén Hedin & Ranängen, 2017). However, the reasons why community members are uninvolved in the projects has not been explored, according to my review of the literature. There is a gap in the scholarly literature on community members' involvement in community development projects' operations in Kenya.

Problem Statement

The issue that prompted me to conduct this study was the lack of involvement of community members in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects in Kenya (Babalola & Fasokun, 2019; Matipa, 2020). Community members possess some powers and abilities to influence the success of organizational processes (Muthuri et al., 2009). Gender, age, literacy levels, social capital, access to information, and economic status influence community involvement in development programs (Babalola & Fasukun, 2019; Kaseje et al., 1987). Lack of commitment by leaders, lack of information and awareness, corruption, and poor leadership inhibit community participation (Benedict, 2010; Chili & Ngxongo, 2017; Hussain & Minaj, 2017; Markey et al., 2010). Organizational leaders face the challenge of identifying the best way to engage community members in decision-making (Muthuri et al., 2009). Thus, the general problem addressed by this study was the lack of community members' involvement in community development projects in Kenya. The specific problem was a lack of participation by community members and inadequate

knowledge about why community members are not involved in the implementation and management of community development projects in Kenya (Kaseje et al., 1987; Munene & Thakhathi, 2017; Muthuri et al., 2009; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013). The knowledge gap inspired me to undertake this study.

Purpose of the Study

In conducting this qualitative multiple-case study, I sought to improve the understanding of why community members are not fully involved in implementing and managing community development projects in Kenya. There is a gap in the scholarly literature on reasons for limited community member involvement in community development projects (Kaseje et al., 1987; Munene & Thakhathi, 2017; Muthuri et al., 2009; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013). I explored project employees' experiences related to community participation in development projects. The process included gathering and documenting study participants' descriptions of community members' involvement in the decision-making and management of community development project activities in Kenya. The qualitative case study design allowed for a deeper exploration of the extent, means, challenges, and importance of the community members' participation in community development project operations.

Research Question

I sought to answer the following research question: What are the key factors influencing community members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects in Kenya?

Theoretical Foundation

The stakeholder theory provided the foundation for this study's scope and design. In his book, *Capitalism and Freedom* (1962), Milton Friedman presented the stakeholder theory. He defined a stakeholder as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the organization's objectives (see also Stacy, 2019). Involving and securing the commitment of stakeholders at different levels, building local institutions' capacity, and defining communities' and other actors' roles are essential prerequisites for the success of community development projects (Amede et al., 2007). The stakeholder theory suggests that organizational leaders need to be cautious and respond to the interests of various groups or individuals who constitute the organization's stakeholders (Freeman, 1984; Freeman et al., 2017; Stacy, 2019). Individuals' preferences and interests must be observed and safeguarded. The traditional management model prioritizes the owners of a company by putting their needs and preferences at the forefront of its obligations (Omondi & Kinoti, 2020). Stakeholder theory improved this model by advocating for the needs and involvement of other parties, including employees, suppliers, customers, financiers, communities, governmental bodies, political groups, and trade unions (Friedman & Miles, 2002). The involvement of others outside management circles in organizational processes is the foundation of stakeholder theory.

Other researchers have applied stakeholder theory to understand community development activities in different parts of the world. Stakeholder involvement may promote rural community development efforts and commitment by community members in the decision-making and execution of projects. In line with the stakeholder theory,

Muthuri et al. (2009) confirmed that community members' involvement helps build the

communities' self-sustaining capacities through empowerment with the skills necessary to

contribute to projects' outcomes. Stakeholders' participation reinforces the acceptability

of community development initiatives and helps with the coordination of available

resources to meet community needs. This engagement may lead to reduced waste or

duplication of resources and more efficient and effective service delivery, and it may

have an effective and sustainable impact on beneficiary communities' well-being

(Benedict, 2010). Stakeholder involvement also allows community members to take

direct control over local resources management in a way that is more sustainable, cost-

effective, democratic, and socially acceptable than traditional management (Susilo et al.,

2020). The municipal council's participatory budgeting process in Porto Alegre, Brazil, is

an excellent example of an empowered participatory governance process (Wright, 2010).

In summary, stakeholder involvement could lead to sustained efforts and have a

beneficial impact on community projects.

Nature of the Study

In conducting this qualitative study, I explored the factors influencing community

members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing

community development projects in Kenya. In qualitative case studies researchers apply

different detailed information-gathering methods to address the research question

(Walliman, 2005; Yates & Leggett, 2016). I chose one of the NGOs involved in

community development in Kenya to examine in the study. I conducted individual, one-

on-one interviews with participants drawn from the senior management and staff

members working with the NGO. A purposive sampling procedure was used to select

senior management members with leadership responsibility, including the regional

director and heads of departments with experience and institutional memory. Project staff

members with a long history of working with the organization and rural communities

were interviewed. Interviews allowed me to hear from a wide range of participants while

controlling the line of questioning, extending the stakeholder theory to a broad range of

community development projects (Walliman, 2005). I targeted the NGO for its

experience and wide range of activities in various countries, including the Republic of

Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. Drawing participants from

this organization allowed for a deeper understanding of community members'

involvement and reasons for not being involved in the projects.

  In addition, I gathered information from existing studies, documents, and reports

for analysis. Integration of findings from the study, literature review and the NGO's

reports helped overcome the limitations of a single case study and promoted the

generalization of the results. Like other qualitative studies, this study generated a large

volume of data, including interview transcripts, field notes, and voice records, that

needed to be organized and analyzed into manageable sizes (see Miles & Huberman,

1994; Walliman, 2005). I interweaved data collection and analysis; data were collected

and explored throughout the research process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I used hand

coding and electronic data processing procedures to organize the data and interview

transcripts (see Neuman, 2003). For easy management, the data were coded to generate

themes, making it easy to present and compare the data in figures, tables, charts, and

discussions (see Miles & Huberman, 1994; Walliman, 2005).

<div align="center">**Definitions**</div>

Community: A culturally and politically homogeneous social system that is

internally cohesive and harmonious, such as an administratively defined locale or a joint

interest group that operates without physical contact (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Community

refers to people who are living together and interacting with one another. According to

Goel (2014), a community is "a neighborhood, a small town, or a village regardless of the

absence of any cohesion in it." P 2.

Community development: The process by which communities and outside

agencies plan, organize, or implement general improvements of community resources,

facilities, economic conditions, and so forth. (Biddle & Biddle, 1965).

Nongovernmental organization (NGO): A term, also often referred to as a not-for-

profit group that is independent of government; task oriented; and "organized on a local,

national, or international level to address issues supporting of the public good" (the

United Nations Department of Public Information, 2000, as cited in Leverty, 2008). Also

called *civil society organizations* (CSOs), NGOs "perform various humanitarian

functions, bring citizen's concerns to governments, monitor policy and program

implementation, and encourage the participation of civil society stakeholders at the

community level" (United Nations Department of Public Information, 2000, as cited in

Leverty, 2008).

Participation: The process in which one or more tools, or persons are involved in an endeavor. In community development, according to Mansuri and Rao, participation is the active involvement of community members in project design and implementation (Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

Stakeholder: A person, group, department, or organization that is involved in a project and is invested in and affected by its implementation or achievement (Freeman, 1984; Parmar et al., 2010; Project Management Institute, 2008).

Stakeholder involvement: The participation of critical persons, groups, departments, and organizations in strategic decision-making processes and operations (Carmin et al., 2003).

Assumptions

I assumed that community members' involvement in community development projects could increase the quality-of-service delivery and help reduce wastage and duplication of resources. I also assumed that project managers could use the knowledge from this study to encourage increased participation by community members and that community members' involvement in community development activities can help improve the project's efficiency (Benedict, 2010). These assumptions were necessary as they relate to this study. If community members' involvement in community development projects could increase the quality-of-service delivery and help in reducing wastage and duplication of resources, this might ensure the maximum impact of the efforts and investments made into the projects. Similarly, understanding why community members are not fully involved in the community development project could help NGO leaders in

making changes to increase their involvement. Finally, community members'

participation in the community development activities might improve the project's impact

and reduce costs.

Scope and Delimitations

I focused on the key factors influencing community members' involvement in

planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development

projects in Kenya. The population targeted for this study included employees of an NGO

in Kenya and the broader East African region. I used a purposive sampling procedure

with carefully selected information-rich cases that allowed for generalization and an in-

depth understanding of the problem (see Siggelkow, 2007; Yin, 1994). I drew samples

from senior management and project staff members. Drawing participants from this

NGO, known for involving community members in managing their development projects,

provided an opportunity to better understand the study topic. Also, participants for the

interviews were individuals holding specific positions within the organization, adhering

to the purposeful sampling selection criteria (see Singleton & Straits, 2005). I included

informants working in different locations with diverse functional backgrounds, roles, and

understanding of operational processes to minimize perceptual biases linked to

individuals' specific organizational functions. The views of multiple individuals working

with an NGO involved in the community development projects helped me seek common

themes, strengthening my conclusions.

Limitations

All data collection methods come with limitations. When collecting the primary data for this study, the challenges included the high cost of data collection, recruitment of participants, having enough time to convene participants for interviews, obtaining informed consent to undertake consultations, and managing interview bias which could come from the interviewers' prior experiences (Maxwell, 2005; Walliman, 2005). Recording and processing the raw data was time-consuming. The interviewer's personal bias could influence the interviewees through nonverbal reactions and subconscious nonverbal cues (Walliman, 2005). I sought clarification by asking follow-up questions during interviews where there was a need for further description or details without suggesting what I was looking for (see Patton, 2002). To minimize the cost of data collection, interviews were done remotely through Zoom video and voice calls.

I sought approval of the interview questions from the Institutional Review Board at Walden University beforehand to protect the participants' rights. I gave the participants considerable control over the interview process to gain their confidence. I set up boundaries for the study, collected information at participants' convenience, and established a protocol for recording information (see Maxwell, 2005). It took much work to record and gather data simultaneously; hence I made brief notes on a notepad and saved a copy of the audio record on my computer for reference to minimize recall problems, especially when I could not take comprehensive notes.

Significance

This study is potentially significant in several ways. This study has the potential to help those involved in managing community development projects understand barriers and strategies for involving community members in project processes. Lessons learned would add to the knowledge base from previous studies on community members' involvement in the community development projects. The study might address the gap in the existing literature by focusing on the critical factors that influence community members' participation in community development projects in Kenya. This study's results may affect social change by fostering community members' involvement in community development projects. This might promote the feeling of ownership necessary to increase projects' sustainability and effectiveness and uplift the lives of residents of poor rural communities. Community members' involvement may reduce wastage and duplication of resources, promote efficient and effective service delivery, and have an effective and sustainable impact on communities' well-being (Benedict, 2010; Stephenson, 2006; Susilo et al., 2020). The knowledge and lessons learned could be shared, encouraging community involvement in development projects in Kenya and other parts of the world.

Significance to Practice

The potential contribution of this study to practice includes,

- identifying efficient and practical community members' involvement strategies,
- improving community involvement processes that lead to improved community development project results,

- increasing the understanding of the role of community members in community

  development projects management to promote the acceptability and efficiency

  of projects, and

- increasing the sustainability of community development projects in Kenya.

This study's results may help NGO personnel, government officials, and managers of

community development projects to recognize the need to partner with community

members in community development projects and to encourage such involvement to the

extent possible. Community development project managers and donors may benefit from

streamlined operations and buy-in from community members who consider themselves

part of the project's stakeholders.

Significance to Theory

Existing literature on community development projects in Kenya focuses on

community participation in public projects (Kaseje et al., 1986; Muthuri et al., 2009;

Nyaguthii & Ogugi 2013). This study further strengthens the stakeholder theory and

helps build a new view of community members' involvement in community development

projects, filling the existing literature gap. I identified critical factors influencing

community members' participation, supporting the current theory. This study may

advance the understanding of community members' participation in community

development by providing empirical evidence about the relationships between

community members' involvement and the effectiveness of the community development

projects. The interrelationship between community members' involvement and the

stakeholder involvement model was established. In this study, I explored and documented

community members' powers and abilities to influence the success of the community development projects, including gender, age, literacy levels, social capital, access to information, and economic status (Babalola & Fasukun, 2019; Kaseje et al., 1987). These findings may further strengthen the argument made by stakeholder theory.

Significance to Social Change

This study holds potential significance for positive social change. Effective strategies for bolstering community members' involvement in development projects might lead to more positive perceptions and acceptance of such projects among rural communities in Kenya. Hendricks (2018) noted that people are likely to respond more positively when they are involved in decisions making and contribute to processes that impact their lives.

Staff members and managers of community development projects might learn a practical framework for fostering community members' involvement in planning and implementing development projects to improve the projects' impact on the community. The staff can learn from members of the local communities who understand the context and can influence the technical design important for the success of the project (Barclay & Klotz, 2019). Donors, managers, and community development leaders may apply the theories and strategies established in their management actions and decisions making about integrating community members' involvement into the implementation and management of the community projects to have maximum impact on the communities.

Through increased involvement and community participation, the community development projects may lead to streamlined processes, saving the organizations'

money, increasing project outcomes and impact, improving well-being, helping reduce poverty, and promoting overall community members' livelihoods (see Barclay & Klotz, 2019). Poor communities, primarily in the rural areas, may be more empowered and appreciated as owners and essential stakeholders in community development project management, promoting increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the projects. Robust, efficient, and sustained community development projects may help uplift the lives of the community members.

Summary and Transition

Prior researchers studying different parts of the world have applied the stakeholder involvement theory (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Littau et al., 2010). This study may fill the existing literature gap on community involvement and community members' participation in community development projects. In Chapter 1, I described the topic of the study, why I needed to conduct the study, and the potential social implications of the study. Literature related to the scope of the study topic was summarized, and an explanation of the gaps in knowledge about community members' involvement in the community development projects in Kenya was presented. The research problem and the gap in the literature were discussed. I stated the purpose of the study, including (a) the research paradigm, (b) the intent of the study, and (c) the concept of interest. The research question was stated, and stakeholder theory, which formed the theoretical foundation of this study, was presented.

In the Nature of the Study section, I provided the rationale for selecting the research design, data collection methods, and data analysis and provided definitions of

terms used in the study were provided. I presented the assumptions, described why the premises were necessary for the study, and I discussed the study's scope and delimitations. Specific aspects of the research problem were addressed, including its particular focus. I explained the boundaries of the study. Limitations of the study related to design and methodological weaknesses were described, including any biases that could have influenced study outcomes and how they were addressed. I described the significance of the study in terms of how this study might fill a gap in the literature, professional application, and positive social change. In Chapter 2, I provide a thorough and detailed review of the current literature that establishes the study's relevance.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Community members' involvement is crucial for the successful implementation and operation of community development projects. The need for more information on community members' participation in community development projects in Kenya (Babalola & Fasokun, 2019; Matipa, 2020) prompted me to conduct this study. The purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to improve the understanding of why community members are not fully involved in the implementation and management of the community development projects in Kenya (see Kaseje et al., 1987; Munene & Thakhathi, 2017; Muthuri et al., 2009; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013). Understanding the factors that influence the lack of community members' involvement may help NGO leaders to identify ways to overcome this challenge and increase members' ownership and participation, which may lead to successful projects.

Various factors impede community members' participation in making decisions. Gender, age, literacy levels, social capital, access to information, and economic status influence community members' involvement in development programs (Babalola & Fasukun, 2019; Kaseje et al., 1987). Lack of commitment by leaders, lack of information and awareness, corruption, and poor leadership inhibit community members' participation (Benedict, 2010; Chili & Ngxongo, 2017; Hussain & Minaj, 2017; Markey et al., 2010). Organizational leaders should understand why community members are not involved in community development projects. In this chapter, I review current literature on the study topic I begin by discussing the literature search strategy and the theoretical foundation of stakeholder theory. The literature review that follows includes

identification of the research gap that I sought to address. The last section includes a summary and conclusions.

Literature Search Strategy

To search for relevant articles in the databases, I first identified the terms pertinent to my study, as stated in the problem and purpose statements. I used the keywords *community participation*, *community development*, *community involvement*, *stakeholder*, *stakeholder involvement*, *Kenya*, *Africa*, and *stakeholder theory* to search the following databases and search engines: SAGE Journals, Google Scholar, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, Science Direct, ScholarWorks, Business Source Complete, Academic Search Complete, and Walden University's Thoreau Multi-Database Search tool. I searched for scholarly, peer-reviewed articles from academic journals by finding items containing at least one keyword published in 2016 and later. I searched for older works on topics with little or no current research articles in the databases. To obtain literature on the qualitative methodology and the stakeholder theory, I searched for and read textbooks written by Friedman (1984), Freeman et al. (2017), Janesick (2016), Maxwell (2013), McCammon and Keene (2017), Miles et al. (2014), Stacy (2019), Walliman (2005), and Yates and Leggett (2016). I read books by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), Siggelkow (2007), and Yin (2014) for information on the research design.

I used the keywords *stakeholder involvement* AND *stakeholder theory* AND *strategy* to search Google Scholar for pertinent articles. The search generated 2,620 articles, some of which were relevant and used for the study. For articles written on

stakeholder involvement in Kenya, I used the *stakeholder theory* AND *community development* OR *community involvement* AND *Kenya* to search the Google Scholar search engine. It generated 1,030 articles, a few relevant to my study. To ensure that I was getting peer-reviewed articles, I did input (*community development* OR *community involvement*) AND (*plan** OR *design**) AND *Kenya* in the Business Source Complete database, which generated 21 articles, most of which were not related to my study. In trying to expand the base, I searched on Google Scholar for *stakeholder theory* AND *community development* OR *community involvement* AND *Africa* to see if there were more articles published on community and stakeholders' involvement in community development around other African countries. It fetched 2,880 articles, most of which were irrelevant to my study.

To obtain articles on community development and community involvement in Kenya, I input *community involvement* AND *community development* AND *Kenya* in Google Scholar, which generated 3,090 articles, with only a handful relevant to my study. I used the same terms in the SAGE Journals, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, Science Direct, Business Source Complete, Academic Search Complete, and Thoreau databases to limit the search to peer-reviewed articles. In addition, I explored the website of the target NGO to learn about its work and history. I had meetings and calls with its regional and country directors in Nairobi, Kenya. Background information about the organization, including its history, size, structure, leadership, membership, and goals, was also explored. Given the limited research articles on the topic, especially on community

involvement in community development in Kenya, there was a need for more studies; hence, I undertook this study.

Theoretical Foundation

The stakeholder theory is a theory of organizational management and ethics. Stakeholder theory implies that all stakeholders must be treated equally, irrespective of their varied individual contributions to an organization (see Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005). It advocates the need to address the interests of all firm stakeholders instead of just minding the interests of management and the stockholders (Flak & Rose, 2005). Stakeholder theory has become a fundamental approach in project management, and its significance is expanding and increasing (see Littau et al., 2010). Community development project managers should learn from this theory and encourage community members' participation in their projects.

I used Friedman's (1962) stakeholder theory as the theoretical foundation for this study's scope and design. Milton Friedman discussed the stakeholder theory in his book, *Capitalism, and Freedom. He* defined a *stakeholder* as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the organization's objectives. Many scholars treat stakeholders as independent entities from the business (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005). However, according to Buchholz and Rosenthal (2005), management should identify stakeholders and consider their interests in making effective decisions. It is important to note that each stakeholder has unique concerns, and managers must consider this as they make decisions. Also, inter-organizational collaboration can provide them a competitive advantage among organizations by allowing them to pool resources, capitalize on

complementary capabilities, achieve economies of scale, and enhance innovation (Savage

et al., 2010). By bringing in multiple skills and abilities, organizations can improve

processes and benefit more; hence stakeholder involvement should be encouraged.

Community members involved in organizational processes could benefit

community development projects and increase their impact. The involvement and

commitment of stakeholders at different levels, building local institutions' capacity, and

defining communities and other actors' roles are essential prerequisites for the community

development projects' success (see Amede et al., 2007). The stakeholder theory suggests

that an organization needs to be cautious and respond to the interests of various groups or

individuals who constitute its stakeholders to achieve organizational success (Freeman,

1984; Freeman et al., 2017; Stacy, 2019). Firms must maximize shareholder profit and

attend to various stakeholders' needs (Freeman, 1984). Attention to all stakeholders can

improve efficiency and increase profits (Laczniak & Murphy, 2012). Community

members would feel part and parcel of the projects by participating in the processes while

meeting their interests.

To connect the theoretical framework and the nature of my study explored the

stakeholder theory in understanding and facilitating community development activities in

different parts of the world. Stakeholder involvement ensures rural community

development efforts and commitment to decision-making and execution among the

community members (Benedict, 2010). Benedict (2010) states that stakeholders help

coordinate and understand community development initiatives, needs, available

resources, and acceptability. As a result, community members' involvement leads to

reduced wastage and duplication of resources, efficient and effective service delivery, and a sustainable impact on beneficiary communities' well-being (Benedict, 2010). It also allows community members to take direct control over a more sustainable, cost-effective, democratic, and socially acceptable local resources management (Susilo et al., 2020). Community members' involvement leads to reduced costs and more benefits to the community.

Previous studies have shown the benefits of stakeholder involvement. Muthuri et al. (2009) conducted a study in Kenya. They confirmed that community members' participation helps build the communities' self-sustaining capacities through empowerment with the skills necessary to contribute to project outcomes. The municipal council's participatory budgeting process in Porto Alegre in Brazil exemplifies stakeholder involvement and empowered participatory governance (Wright, 2010). According to Carmin et al. (2003), stakeholder involvement is integral to many policy-making processes, including information sharing, public meetings, seeking public opinion, and partnership (Carmin et al., 2003). These studies speak to the benefits of involving stakeholders, including increasing the quality-of-service delivery and reducing wastage and duplication of resources among community development organizations.

Although stakeholders' participation is essential, rural communities have limited expertise and poor access to information, inhibiting sustainability planning in complex planning processes. These communities are difficult to mobilize and engage and have a narrow knowledge base and capacity (Markey et al., 2010). Rural communities depend on resource-based economies and donor and public-sector spending and cannot adjust to

change (Markey et al., 2010). The major obstacle to the sustainability of most projects is the lack of involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process (Saadatian et al., 2010). Development programs have either achieved minimal success or failure due to the negative attitude of the people towards the programs due to a low level of information about the programs (Benedict, 2010). For example, people in rural areas of Africa are unaware of government programs to improve their well-being (Benedict, 2010). As a result, community members remain in the dark or misinformed about vital development projects that require their participation and cooperation to succeed. Most people living in these rural areas have limited print or electronic media access; very few own a radio or can afford to buy a daily newspaper to catch up with the news, and they live in an environment characterized by abject poverty and no electricity; hence television viewing becomes luxury and nonexistent (Benedict, 2010). Community development managers should ensure that community members know the project activities to help make an informed decision about their participation.

Most development initiatives in Africa need to pay more attention to the full and effective participation of the people in favor of a bureaucratic approach. Benedict (2010) proposed that governments and organizations working in rural areas should create an enabling environment for effective communication and awareness among the rural poor on community development programs in place. This might encourage their participation. Community members' involvement would, in turn, enhance a more positive attitude and responses toward development issues among all stakeholders. Community participation in health services development, implementation, and evaluation in high and upper-

middle-income countries contributes to successful and sustainable service provision

(Halden et al., 2019). The local governments' approach can enhance coordination efforts

and the involvement of stakeholders, including local governments, frontline workers, and

the local community, in implementing local water and sanitation projects (Susilo et al.,

2020). Ogula (2008) noted that corporations in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria did not

involve community members in creating corporate social responsibility strategies. The

area inhabitants were not involved in the operation and in deciding the allocation of

wealth generated from oil, despite being the most hit by the destructive effects of oil

exploitation. Most of the planned, designed, and executed community projects by the

Shell Company in the Niger Delta had no success, mainly due to the local community

engagement.

Lack of community involvement is the norm in most other parts of Africa. In the

Mwense constituency in Zambia, councilors and the area members of Parliament do not

include community members in planning for constituency development fund (CDF)

projects (Matipa, 2020). Most project area residents in Kenya do not participate in the

management of CDF projects leading to failure in implementation (Nyaguthii & Ogugi,

2013). The lack of community members' involvement in development projects has

become an acceptable way for NGOs working in Africa.

Stakeholder involvement is a significant challenge for most managers of for-profit

and not-for-profit organizations. Building stakeholder relationships toward a

collaborative initiative is complicated, especially involving multiple stakeholders with

varying interests and goals (Savage et al., 2010). Patience is essential as desirable

stakeholder involvement takes time, delaying decision-making processes. It is also costly since including many people in intense discussions can lead to higher financial and personnel costs (Carmin et al., 2003). However, when applied effectively, stakeholder involvement bears fruits, as shown by Australian Victoria Park management. The management works closely with stakeholders to deliver sustainable fishing and aquaculture to protect the park's unique and diverse marine environments (Carey et al., 2007). In U.S. voluntary environmental programs, sponsors have the authority to decide whether to use stakeholders in decision-making; some are willing to involve a variety of stakeholders in program design and implementation, while others only embrace this move to gain credibility or adhere to government regulations (Carmin et al., 2003). The water sector in Kenya is an excellent example of community-based management practice (Leino, 2008). In a study about water infrastructure maintenance in rural Kenya, Leino (2008) examined how gender advocacy can boost women's participation in projects in adherence to government efforts to promote community involvement. Managers find it challenging to shift their focus from achieving a profit or organizational mission to balancing their attention to ensuring genuine and deliberate stakeholder involvement in their business processes.

The research question was, What are the key factors influencing community members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects in Kenya? The question relates to the challenges described above and builds upon the existing stakeholders' theory. There have been studies on community members' involvement, but the reasons why community members

are uninvolved in the community development projects remain unexplored (Chili &
Ngxongo, 2017; Halden et al., 2019; Matipa, 2020; Muthuri et al., 2009; Thorén Hedin &
Ranängen, 2017). Thus, there is a gap in the scholarly literature on the lack of community
members' involvement in community development projects in Kenya.

Literature Review

I explored prior research studies on community members' involvement in
planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing the community
development projects in Kenya. I reviewed articles about the lack of community
members' participation and why community members are not involved in implementing
and managing the community development projects in Kenya. The articles reviewed
included those written on community participation, community development, community
involvement, stakeholder, and stakeholder involvement. Researchers have studied and
published articles on the impact and benefits of community and stakeholders'
participation in research, land management, and land rehabilitation programs. There have
been studies on community involvement and challenges and the role of community
participation in community development, health care, rural development, tourism, and
public projects in various parts of the world. Other studies emphasize the importance and
factors influencing community participation in development programs. Researchers have
also explored the relationship between literacy level, social capital, gender, economic
status, and involvement in a community development project.

Articles on the evidence of community participation and the effect of community
participation at both the community and individual levels in high and upper-middle-

income countries were also published. There were studies on the impact of the community-driven development approach, which encourages the involvement of the marginalized community in collaborative planning and budgeting for sustainable socio-economic development. There were articles published on how communities are involved in identifying, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating community-based projects that affect the successful implementation of CDF projects in Kenya. Other studies were on CSOs promoting community participation in governance.

Researchers have studied the benefits of community involvement, community development, and stakeholder involvement. While some have focused on stakeholder or community involvement in health care, research, and development activities in other parts of the world, only a few have documented why community development project managers do not involve community members in their organizational processes in Kenya. I explored articles on community involvement in other parts of the world, including different African countries. Given the gap in the scholarly literature on the lack of community members' participation in the community development projects, I explored community development projects' employees' experiences.

Community

A community may refer to people living in a place with physical contact and face-to-face interaction (Goel, 2014). It could be a culturally and politically homogeneous social system or implicitly internally cohesive and harmonious, such as an administratively defined locale or a joint interest group without physical contact (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Others still see community as people living in a neighborhood, settlement,

or village regardless of their relationship. A community development context includes

people living in an area and others brought together by common interests. This is a case

of an emerging web community, where people interact with others distance away in

diverse and unknown locations (Goel, 2014). Modernization is changing how we see and

define community. Technology has changed how we communicate and relate; hence

community transcends physical boundaries and distance now that people connect

virtually, fulfilling most of the functions of the community.

There are different theoretical explanations about what community is. Luloff and

Krannich (2002) used three theoretical approaches – human ecology, systems theory, and

field theory – to explain what constitutes a community. They defined a community as a

structure of relationships whose members are interrelated and function through social

interaction. With the human ecology theory, the community plays a crucial role in

supporting members' daily needs through a relationship of care among members in a

localized area. On the other hand, in the systems theory, people with different statuses

play different roles in achieving shared community goals by combining different units or

sub-systems. At the same time, the field theory describes social interaction as the single

most critical feature of the community. Hence community relationships are based on

shared identity derived from a place, ethnicity, culture, interest, or ideology (Luloff &

Krannich, 2002).

Community Involvement

Hussain and Miraj (2018) studied the importance and factors influencing

community members' participation in development programs in Pakistan through a

literature review. Goel (2014) sought to understand what community means in community development. Herdiana et al. (2018) used the descriptive qualitative method through observation, interview, and document reviews to study community participation in rural development planning and rural development planning in Kertawangi Village, Russia. Using qualitative methodology through household surveys, Saguin (2018) studied the impact of the community-driven development approach and sought to understand how it encourages the participation of the marginalized community in collaborative planning and budgeting for sustainable socio-economic development. Barclay et al. (2019) studied the role of community members' involvement in green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) development in Atlanta, Georgia. They used a qualitative case study to answer the research questions. Thorén Hedin and Ranängen (2017) undertook a case study using interviews and documents review to understand why and how a Swedish mining company and its representatives are committed to community involvement and community development. They wanted to see how this could be enhanced. Ndungu and Karugu (2019) used a grounded study on the theory of social change, the stakeholder theory, and the resource-based view theory to examine the influence of community participation on the performance of donor-funded youth projects in Korogocho, Nairobi County. They wanted to understand the impact of community participation in the entire project cycle, from project identification, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Babalola and Fasokun (2019) used a descriptive survey research design and qualitative study methods to examine the relationship between literacy level, social

capital, and women's involvement in a community development project. They also explored the relationship between rural women's literacy level, social capital, and participation in community development projects in Southwestern Nigeria. Chili and Ngxongo (2017) used a qualitative study to investigate the challenges of community members' involvement in tourism development in Bergville, South Africa. Haldane et al. (2019) examined the evidence on community members' participation outcomes in high and upper-middle-income countries. Haldane et al. (2020) looked at the effect of community members' participation at both the community and individual levels in high and upper-middle-income countries. They conducted a literature desk review, screened articles for the study, and conducted a narrative synthesis to report on the community involvement processes used across mental health programs.

Kaseje et al. (1986) examined community members' participation and leadership in initiating and implementing a health development program in Saradidi, Kenya, and Matipa (2020) assessed community members' involvement in CDF project identification in the Mwense constituency of Mwense District in Zambia. Matipa employed a descriptive survey research design. Nyaguthii and Ogugi (2013) studied how community involvement in identifying, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating community-based projects affects the running of CDF projects in Kenya. They applied descriptive research methodology using primary and secondary data and descriptive statistics for data analysis. Through a survey, focus group discussions, and in-depth face-to-face interviews, Munene and Thakhathi (2017) studied the role of CSOs in promoting community members' participation in governance. Muthuri et al. (2009) examined

community members' involvement in the corporate community involvement (CCI) governance undertaken by Magadi Soda Company in Kenya. They used a case study and an inductive approach with multiple data collection methods, including archival analysis of external reports in the public domain, internal reports, and minutes of MSC-community/partners meetings, interviews with community members, NGOs, MSC, and government officials, participant observation of MSC-community/partners meetings, and focus groups with general community members.

The research question—What are the key factors influencing community members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects in Kenya?—relates to the challenge and builds upon existing theory. Although researchers have investigated community members' involvement, there is very little or no literature on the lack of community members' participation in the community development projects in Kenya and why they remain uninvolved (Kaseje et al., 1987; Munene & Thakhathi, 2017; Muthuri et al., 2009; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013). There needs to be more scholarly literature on the need for more community members' involvement in the operations of the community development projects in Kenya.

Community members' participation is essential to the design thinking process and ensures equitable participation in the project decision-making. People are likely to respond more positively when they make decisions and contribute to processes that impact their lives (Hendricks, 2018). The use of community advisory boards is a successful strategy for building and integrating stakeholder involvement in community

interventions (McCarron et al., 2019). To achieve an organization's objectives, it is prudent that the managers be cautious and respond to the interests of its stakeholders, comprised of various groups or individuals (Freeman, 1984).

Hussain and Miraj (2018) studied the importance, need, and factors that hinder and promote community participation in developing development programs in Pakistan. Flexibility in financial incentives, material, and non-material benefits, and linkages with the community encourage their involvement in promoting the sustainability of developmental programs, traditional leaders, and external and internal influence. Community members should be actively involved in decision-making, planning, implementation, and monitoring for the sustainability of the projects. Governments should also implement policies that require donors to only provide funding to organizations that involve community members in all decisions that affect their lives (Hussain & Miraj, 2018).

Lack of community knowledge, lack of openness of the village government apparatus to accept community members' participation, lack of regulatory support, and paternalistic behaviors have limited community members' participation in community development planning (Herdiana, 2018). According to Herdiana (2018), there are (four) factors affecting community members' involvement in Kertawangi Village's development planning, including limited regulatory factors restricting members' participation, low level of education, lack of knowledge of the rural development planning process, and restrictive government policies, and cultural factors which limiting community members' involvement in village government boards. As per Saguin (2018), the community

empowerment activity cycle follows four stages: social preparation, subproject

identification, development, selection, approval, and implementation.

In the Philippines, the government introduced a community-driven development

project with funding from the World Bank to reduce poverty in 2003. It aims to empower

poor rural communities to identify community needs, planning, budgeting, and

implementation so that project resources and efforts impact their lives most (Saguin,

2018). However, Saguin (2018) found no evidence of the community-driven

development project promoting community members' involvement among people with

low incomes. The marginalized should be part of their design and all project processes.

Community members' involvement leads to informed decisions, acceptance,

social learning, enhanced democracy, social capital, trust, increased ownership,

information, and understanding (Barclay & Klotz, 2019). Local communities know the

context and can influence the technical design if involved in the early stages. They have a

good understanding and meaning of specific characteristics, circumstances, events, and

relationships that affect the project's success or failure (Barclay & Klotz, 2019).

Community members will more likely participate if they believe that the process can help

to enhance the quality of their life.

The level of community members' participation could decrease due to various

factors. Halden et al. (2019) found that participatory approaches and health

improvements do not happen as a linear progression. Community members' participation

contributes to an equitable and rights-based approach to health that benefits the

organization, the community, and individuals (Halden et al., 2019).

Community members' participation is critical to the sustainability of development programs. Hussain and Minaj (2018) found that flexibility in the overall participation process, financial incentives, material and non-material benefits, and community linkages can promote community participation. However, traditional leaders, external and internal influences, and co-option of the involvement by developmental organizations are the critical factors that hinder community participation. Strong community involvement at all grassroots levels in the project cycle stages (decision-making, planning, implementation, and monitoring) ensures the sustainability of the development projects.

When development agencies work closely with community members, they successfully identify the needs and resources of the target communities. The councilors and the area member of Parliament make decisions about CDF projects, including identifying the development needs in the Mwense constituency of Mwense district in Zambia, not the community members. CDF projects should be community-driven; hence, it is essential that community members' participation identifies needs and prioritizes the projects to be funded (Matipa, 2020). Community members should be treated as important stakeholders and be fully engaged in decision-making processes.

To promote increased community members' participation, local government councils should establish ward development committees to work closely with the community members during all project processes, including project identification, regular stakeholders' meetings, project implementations, evaluation, and training (Matipa, 2020). Leaders of community development projects should establish community involvement

objectives and key performance indicators to monitor progress toward enhancing community members' participation (Thorén Hedin & Ranängen, 2017).

Equity and inclusiveness are essential in county governance. All stakeholders, including men or women, poor and rich, need to be involved and feel part of the decision-making process. Participants should be fully informed of their role and organized for meaningful participation of community members so they feel free to state their views. Exchange tours to other countries where successful community participation could help and be a good opportunity for training and exposure to good governance models (Munene & Thakhathi, 2017). By involving all actors who bring in differing views, the process helps build consensus and ends with a decision that meets the best interest of all stakeholders. Membership makes the community feel part and parcel of CSOs. It builds support from individuals who contribute financially and actively to the projects (Munene & Thakhathi, 2017).

In Kenya, local government officials do not trust CSOs and see them as a threat, disrupting members' participation in meetings and weakening their capacities. Local authorities demand allowances to attend CSO meetings or invite CSOs on short notice to government forums, discouraging members and community members (Munene & Thakhathi, 2017). CSOs lack clear guidelines on beneficiaries' involvement, inclusion (persons with disabilities and people experiencing poverty), poor internal policies, and poor accountability to beneficiaries. Community is difficult to identify since it can mean different things to different people, including a population living in a locality, a group

with common interests, collective action, or even multiple actors with similar expectations and practices (Muthuri et al., 2009).

The degree of stakeholder consultation depends on the complexity of issues for negotiation. The higher level of complexity, the more time is spent in talks and delayed actions, which could cause tension and mistrust among stakeholders. The participatory approach to project management could have negative consequences, including the high cost of doing business, delayed actions, and increased resource demand. If done correctly, community members' involvement could reduce dependency among community members and increase their sense of responsibility. Some argue for and others against community members' participation and defining the community members' role as development partners. Others, especially the elite, see community members' involvement as threatening their power while promoting the community's interests.

Some managers undermine efforts geared towards community members' involvement, seeing it as an avenue to open the opportunity for power distribution. They see no possibility for an approach for community members' participation that does not compromise the company's decision-making autonomy. Like in many companies, community participation at Magadi Soda Company in Kenya is seen as an avenue that allows the company to invest in fostering, trusting, and understanding community relationships. However, companies face the challenge of making systematic decision-making processes that promote community development. For successful engagement and meaningful community members participation, there is a need for a commitment to building community members' capacities through training. All actors should understand

their roles and the principles and value of collective action that ensures sustainable

community development.

The lack of community members' involvement in decision-making, the dominant

role played by the government, and the transnational oil corporations have led to poor

relations between the community and the oil companies (Ogula, 2012). The companies

and government officials are insincere and manipulate the system to undermine

community involvement efforts. Communities possess little power than oil corporations,

which have substantial resources to access decision-makers, land, government security,

and other special concessions. The communities cannot influence or engage the

corporations with political power (Ogula, 2012). In primary health care, users'

involvement promotes health, reduces service delivery inequalities, and promotes

primary care groups' participation in decision-making. Community water and sanitation

projects in two local districts in Indonesia demonstrated successful stakeholder

involvement by involving community leaders, voluntary groups, neighborhood residents,

and civic associations in the projects' management processes. The NGO leading this

project and the health center staff played a pivotal role in communicating and assessing

the water and sanitation conditions at the household level (Susilo et al., 2020). The health

centers conduct regular home visits and monthly meetings with local government and

community leaders. The local (district) government's vital role in program

implementation cannot be underestimated, including setting up policy framework,

communication, and program delivery (Susilo et al., 2020). The local government and

other stakeholders are pivotal in implementing the project activities.

Community members' involvement should be a prerequisite in project identification, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The project identification involves community members' participation in prioritizing and selecting the most appropriate development project. The identification process analyzes the options and settles for the ideal one, while project planning executes the activities. Project monitoring collects information about an ongoing project to ensure it is on track to meet set objectives. In contrast, project evaluation involves evaluating the completed projects against the intended project deliverables (Ndungu & Karugu, 2019). Donor-funded projects should include government officials in selecting projects to ensure the alignment of the project with government plans and initiatives. Donor agencies funding these development projects should strengthen community members' involvement in all stages of the project cycle, from planning, identification, and implementation. These projects drive the community's economic growth, employment creation, and poverty eradication in developing countries. Community development projects are a means to realize accelerated economic growth and rapid industrialization (Ndungu & Karugu, 2019). They found a strong relationship between community participation in identification and planning and project performance.

Mutanguha and Kamuhanda (2021) conducted a descriptive design study to assess community participation and the effects on sustainable development in Rwanda. After donor funds are exhausted, NGOs should promote community members' involvement in the entire project cycle to achieve ownership, project sustainability, and continuity. Cost-sharing, participation in activity management, and community members' involvement in

the project's initiation contribute positively to the water projects' sustainability. Community members' contribution to the project's cost has the most impact since it promotes ownership among the community members, encouraging them to seek solutions to any problem. When community members are uninvolved, the projects can only serve for a few years and struggle to attain sustainability after donors withdraw their funds (Mutanguha & Kamuhanda, 2021).

Mang'atu et al. (2021) reviewed studies on community participation. The study confirmed that community members' participation in a project is a vital factor that positively influences the success of donor-funded project projects in low-resource countries. Participatory techniques - including participatory planning and design and participatory need assessment - promote community members' participation in the entire project cycle from their inception to closure and handover of donor-funded projects. Community members' commitment to the project cycle should be emphasized and encouraged. Community members' training in participatory practices, proper communication, and a clear definition of roles for all stakeholders promotes successful participation. Community members or beneficiaries require consistent training to empower and increase their understanding of project sustainability or program maintenance (Mang'atu et al., 2021).

Musyoki et al. (2020) reviewed articles published on participatory project planning approaches in community development initiatives in low-resourced countries. Government and development partners should promote community participation for community development projects to succeed. The challenges in implementing the

participatory planning approaches at the inception have hindered community members' involvement in low-resourced countries. Community participation approaches should involve key stakeholders (project developers, bilateral, multilateral agents, banks, and project beneficiaries) and focus on project planning, design, and implementation (Musyoki et al., 2020). Musyoki et al. (2020) recommended that governments in low-resourced countries review their policy framework and mainstream community participation at all levels of the project cycle.

Moyo and Tichaawa (2017) explored the extent of community involvement and participation in tourism development in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. They found that community members needed to be adequately involved in planning, decision-making, and participation. Community members do not own the benefits of tourism and believe they are for business owners and government officials. For a sustainable tourism economy, community members and other stakeholders require capacity building through their active involvement and education on how to be involved in planning, policy formulation, and implementing tourism development in Zimbabwe (Moyo & Tichaawa, 2017). The government should ensure that comm members are involved in tourism development and have strategies to promote participation and involvement, including domestic and community-based tourism.

Community Development

Community development is planning, organizing, or implementing general improvements of community resources, facilities, and economic conditions by communities and development agencies (Biddle & Biddle, 1965). Community

development is undertaken independently of the government and practiced through

NGOs, nonprofits, voluntary organizations, community-based organizations, and civil

society. In most underdeveloped countries like Kenya, community development promotes

communities working together to affect their well-being to improve their quality of life

(Goel, 2014). The primarily donor-funded projects complement the government's role by

providing services geared towards meeting societal developmental needs and promoting

employment and economic empowerment of local communities (Ndungu & Karugu,

2019). Where the national and international policies have failed to address some of the

challenges of broader socioeconomic and political institutions, community development

can be a better alternative in playing that role. In Kenya, community development

approaches to address community needs range from the water crisis to food insecurity,

food production, and public service provision (Goel, 2014).

Benedict (2010) explored how information and communication technologies and

traditional media could become practical tools in the campaigns and mobilization to

adopt innovations central to rural development in Africa. Benedict reviewed documents

such as books, journals, periodicals, case records, and others documented by the

government, individuals, and organizations to gather data. Ogula (2012) conducted a case

study to examine the influence of traditional, political, and administrative systems on

community expectations of corporate social responsibility in the Niger Delta region.

Additionally, Susilo et al. (2020) used surveys and in-depth interviews to study policy

implementation and how the low-income communities in Eastern Indonesia are

attempting to address water and sanitation issues.

According to Ndungu and Karugu (2019), community development projects help promote community welfare, industrialization, and economic growth and create employment geared towards poverty eradication in developing countries. Successful community development projects require active community members' involvement and ownership. When community members get involved in community development projects, it enables them to control their life, decisions, and responsibility for the success of the projects. Government agencies should also be closely involved in project identification and the execution of the project activities (Ndungu & Karugu, 2019).

Stakeholder

Stakeholders are individuals or groups interested in the project, including customers, investors, interest groups, communities, employees, suppliers, and government regulators (Ogula, 2012). The stakeholder concept is not recent and can be traced back to the 1930s. It was heavily boosted by the work of Freeman (1984) on stakeholder theory. Freeman (1984) wanted to outline an alternative way of strategic management to respond to increased competitiveness, globalization, and the complexity of business operations. He acknowledged that organizations are composed of stakeholders who must actively engage in organizational business processes to ensure profitability and sustainability (Flak et al., 2008).

The term *stakeholder* means different things to different people (Phillips et al., 2003). Freeman defined stakeholders as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by achieving the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Stakeholders are persons, representatives of different interest groups, or organizations that have vested

interest and are involved in a project and can affect or are affected positively or negatively by the implementation or achievement of the organization's objectives (Carmin et al., 2003; Clarkson, 1998; Freeman, 1984; Parmar et al., 2010; Project Management Institute, 2008). Carroll (1996) defined a stakeholder as "any individual or group who can affect or is affected by the actions, decisions, policies, practices, or goals of the organization" (p.74). They include residents of a project area and those interested parties who might have direct or indirect influence or impact over the project process. They are not only local, but they can be foreign.

Some individuals have the decision-making capabilities related to implementing the project, and those representing the public can significantly influence their general opinion. Depending on the nature of a project, they might include donors, individuals, and families, administrators of programs, staff, program participants and their peers, government officials, politicians, local leaders, business owners, other organizations, community groups, religious leaders, schoolteachers, educators, students, and media groups (Carmin, 2003; Carroll, 1996; Freeman, 1984; Parmar et al., 2010). When making critical organizational decisions, it is prudent that managers try as much as possible to involve relevant internal and external stakeholders in the decision-making process to tap into their ideas (Spaling & Vroom, 2007).

Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory is a theory of organizational management and ethics. Leaders should identify stakeholders and consider their interests in the decision-making process (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005). In defining stakeholder theory, many scholars

assume that stakeholders are independent entities. According to Buchholz and Rosenthal (2005), a business's relationship with its stakeholders depends on how one views the corporate entity. Those who adhere to the traditional economic view of the corporation see the marketplace as the only reason for the business's existence. They do not see stakeholders as independent entities but of primary interest (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005). Managers must balance and coordinate all stakeholders' interests while directing the organization's activities. Stakeholder theory implies that all stakeholders should receive equal treatment irrespective of their varied individual contributions to an organization (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005). Managers should address all stakeholders' interests in a firm instead of just minding the management's interests in making profits (Flak & Rose, 2005). They should be sensitive to every stakeholder's role and the impact of the organizations' operations on them. Firms should serve and coordinate the interests of their stakeholders, and managers have a moral obligation to strike an appropriate balance among stakeholder interests while directing the firm's activities.

Stakeholder theory is becoming a fundamental approach in project management, and its significance is expanding and increasing (Littau et al., 2010). Donaldson and Preston (1995) pointed out important distinctions, problems, and implications associated with the stakeholder concept following their observation that the concepts of stakeholder, stakeholder model, stakeholder management, and stakeholder theory are explained and used by several authors in very different ways. Sometimes the ideas are even supported with diverse and contradictory evidence and arguments. Stakeholder theory helps to describe and explain organizations' characteristics and behaviors. It shows the presence or

lack of evidence of a direct relationship between stakeholder management and organizational success in meeting its objectives. The theory is also used to interpret the corporation's function. Donaldson and Preston (1995) noted, "The stakeholder theory is "managerial" and recommends the attitudes, structures, and practices that, taken together, constitute a stakeholder management philosophy" (p. 87).

Stakeholder theory can be categorized into three categories:

- descriptive or empirical (where specific corporate characteristics and behaviors are described and explained by the theory),

- instrumental (where the connections or lack of relationships between stakeholder management and the achievement of traditional corporate objectives are defined), and

- normative - the theory interprets the function of the corporation (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

Stakeholder theory describes and explains organizations' characteristics and behaviors and shows evidence or lack of evidence that there is a direct relationship between stakeholder management and organizational success in meeting its objectives (Littau et al., 2010).

Freeman (1984) argued that firms must maximize shareholder profit and attend to various stakeholders' needs to be more competitive. Paying greater attention to multiple stakeholders can improve efficiency and increase profits (Laczniak & Murphy, 2012). For successful stakeholder management, managers must consider the interests and concerns of different groups and individuals while making critical management

decisions. That way, the essential stakeholders, if not all, are satisfied concerning any given issue. The purpose of a firm is to serve and coordinate the interests of its stakeholders, and the managers have a moral obligation to strike an appropriate balance among stakeholder interests in directing the firm's activities. It is important to note that each stakeholder has unique motivations, and managers must consider this as they make decisions. Also, between organizations, inter-organizational collaboration can provide them a competitive advantage as it enables them to pool resources, capitalize on complementary capabilities, achieve economies of scale, and enhance innovativeness (Savage et al., 2010). According to Littau et al. (2010), "stakeholder theory is applied mainly in the project strategy context and the project evaluation context, which includes project success, project risk, and project performance topics" (p. 25). Stakeholder theory is becoming a fundamental approach in project management, and its significance is expanding and increasing (Littau et al., 2010).

Stakeholder Involvement

The stakeholder model explains the need for the participation of all stakeholders for successful organizational efforts in identifying gaps and implementing its strategic plans. According to Carmin et al. (2003), stakeholder involvement has become integral to many policy-making processes. It can include information sharing, public meetings, seeking public opinion, and partnerships. Natural forms of stakeholder involvement are embedded in processes accessible to a wide range of people, reflecting the interest of many. Critical persons, groups, departments, and organizations actively participate in strategic decision-making processes and operations (Carmin et al., 2003).

According to Freeman, effective stakeholder relations create a favorable environment for a business to enjoy superior financial performance over a longer time and help those performing poorly improve more rapidly (Parmar et al., 2010). Stakeholders offer valuable insight during every phase of the project cycle (planning, implementation, and evaluation). They offer insight into their needs and identify who should benefit and get involved at the initial stages of the project cycle. They also provide feedback and support to the project with skills, experience, and expertise at the implementation stage. Failure to engage with stakeholders poses the risk of sabotaging the process and can be mitigated only by providing all stakeholders with a forum for constructive dialogue. Stakeholders influence firms' strategies to fit into their stakes and power sources.

Studies on stakeholder and community involvement have provided a good framework for this study. The term *stakeholder* means different things to different people (Phillips et al., 2003). Stakeholder theory calls for managers to pay attention to the interests and well-being of all, including those who facilitate or hinder the achievement of the organization's objectives. It goes beyond paying attention to shareholders whose goal is to make wealth and requires acknowledging the interests and well-being of some non-shareholders (Phillips et al., 2003). Managers can create stakeholder-oriented control systems and tools to ensure stakeholder involvement (Freeman et al., 2018). There is a need to bring different constituents of an organization together to ensure synergy and maximum benefits as they meet their distinct self-centered goals and objectives (Stacy, 2019).

There have been studies on stakeholder involvement in various parts of the world. McCarron et al. (2019) focused on stakeholders' engagement and the benefits of utilizing community advisory boards in research and intervention development. Amede et al. (2007) focused on stakeholders' involvement in promoting Ethiopia's land management practices and rehabilitation programs. Omondi and Kinoti (2020) investigated the influence of stakeholders' participation on the performance of road construction projects in Kilifi County, Kenya, to determine the effect of project identification on the performance of road construction and the impact of project planning.

To achieve an organization's objectives, it is prudent that the managers be cautious and respond to the interests of its stakeholders, comprised of various groups or individuals (Freeman, 1984). In health care provision, integrated stakeholder participation in the design thinking process in health innovation and patients' involvement in making decisions about their health led to better health outcomes and sustained health (Hendricks, 2018). In 1978, the World Health Organization made the Alma Ata Declaration acknowledging the importance of stakeholder participation in equitable and sustainable health solutions (Hendricks, 2018). Stakeholder engagement should go beyond stakeholders contributing to the project to include involvement in the holistic decision-making processes of the project. Hendricks et al. (2018) found that this kind of stakeholder participation, where stakeholders contribute resources and inputs in the decision-making process about their lives, leads to ownership of decisions made and better health care outcomes in the health industry. This stakeholder involvement approach could also benefit any development project outside the health care industry.

A sustainable participatory community development approach ensures that stakeholders are the critical health activity decision-makers, planners, and managers. Medical professionals play a facilitator's role and are supportive resources with their technical expertise and service. With a bottom-up or people-centered approach, community members can gain knowledge, skills, and confidence to make decisions about their health and well-being (Hendricks, 2018). To promote innovation and the project's sustainability, project managers should involve stakeholders - who bring their varied expertise and knowledge - in design, implementation, and decision-making (Hendricks et al., 2018).

Omondi and Kinoti (2020) learned that the performance of road construction projects in Kilifi County, Kenya, strongly depends on stakeholder participation at all stages of project implementation, including project identification, planning, execution, and monitoring. Stakeholders participate in assessing, analyzing, and selecting road projects that are viable, tenable, and beneficial to most people in the region. To a moderate extent, they were involved in the planning and recommended an increased sensitization of relevant stakeholders about the benefits of their participation. Road construction projects should be society or citizen-centered to effectively address the needs and expectations of the citizens (Omondi & Kinoti, 2020). Omondi and Kinoti (2020) recommended that road construction projects in Kenya take an inclusive approach by ensuring that nontraditional stakeholders, including development partners and faith-based organizations, are educated about the project cycle. Including external stakeholders

encourages their involvement and sustainability of the projects, which become part of the society and citizens' priority.

Porto Alegre, Brazil's municipal participatory budgeting process, is an excellent example of empowered participatory governance and democracy. Citizens of Porto Alegre are involved in the decision-making process while undertaking budget discussions to ensure decentralization and devolution of power (Wright, 2010). This process is a demonstration of what stakeholder involvement is.

Community members in rural areas are not engaged in complex planning processes inhibiting the sustainability of the projects. They have limited expertise and poor access to information. They are difficult to mobilize and engage and need more knowledge base and capacity (Markey et al., 2010). Rural communities have limited ability to adjust to change. They depend on resource-based economies, donors, and public-sector spending (Markey et al., 2010). The major obstacle to the sustainability of most projects is the need for more involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process (Saadatian et al., 2010). Development programs have either achieved minimal success or failure due to the negative attitude of the people. This negative attitude is partly due to their lack of adequate information about the program. For example, people living in rural areas of Africa must be aware of government programs to improve their well-being. Community members must be more informed about vital development projects requiring participation and cooperation to succeed. Most people living in these rural areas are not accessible to print or electronic media – very few own a radio or can afford a newspaper. The communities live in an environment with no electricity,

characterized by abject poverty; hence, television viewing becomes luxury and nonexistent, giving them no access to current news (Benedict, 2010).

Most development initiatives in Africa have neglected community members' full and effective participation in favor of bureaucratic approaches. Benedict (2010) has proposed that governments and organizations working in rural areas should create an enabling environment for effective communication and awareness among the rural poor on program activities. This environment would enhance all stakeholders' positive attitudes toward development issues. Stakeholder involvement is a significant challenge for for-profit and not-for-profit organization managers. They find it challenging to shift their focus from achieving a profit or organizational mission to balancing their focus on specific goals to tackle a social problem and building stakeholder relationships towards a collaborative initiative are very complex, especially when it involves multiple stakeholders with varying interests and goals (Savage et al., 2010). Patience is essential as effective stakeholder involvement takes time in completing decision-making processes. It is also a costly exercise as including many people in intense discussions can lead to higher financial and personnel costs (Carmin et al., 2003).

Ogula (2008) noted that corporate social strategies are created without community involvement in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The area's inhabitants are not involved in deciding the allocation of wealth generated from oil despite being the most hit by the destructive effects of oil exploitation. The majority of the planned, designed, and executed projects by Shell Company finally failed since they did not involve the local community (Ogula, 2008). Sponsors of U.S. voluntary environmental programs are the

sole decision-makers with regard to stakeholders' involvement in program operations. Some might be willing to involve a greater variety of stakeholders than others in program design and implementation. Others will only embrace this move to gain credibility or follow government regulations (Carmin et al., 2003).

Stakeholder participation allows organizations to invest in fostering, trusting, and understanding community relationships. The involvement of stakeholders helps create awareness and confidence in the organization responsible for managing development projects. The organization might also benefit from a wide range of context knowledge from the local experts about specific project areas or sites. Program managers can understand and address stakeholders' concerns by involving a more comprehensive range of stakeholders, winning their support and confidence. This involvement increases the program's legitimacy by reflecting societal expectations (Carmin et al., 2003). The Victoria Parks' marine protection program in Australia used a series of roundtable workshops and a consultative management planning process to educate stakeholders on the project's activities in the park (Carey et al., 2007).

Organizations face the challenge of identifying the best way to implement a process of systematic stakeholder participation in decision-making. The process involves building the communities' capacities through training to empower them with the skills necessary to make a meaningful contribution to the organization (Muthuri et al., 2009). Voluntary environmental programs require the development of environmental standards through an open process, encouraging public participation (Carmin et al., 2003). The partnership leadership model, a characteristic of the Earth community, promotes human

potential and emphasizes the human capacity for caring, compassion, cooperation, partnership, and community in the service of life. Community members are valuable stakeholders whose opinion promotes greater productivity and sustainability (Korten, 2006). However, local stakeholders are unlikely to be united in their views about issues of concern (Carey et al., 2007)**.**

There are several ways of engaging community members and other stakeholders in a community project planning process. An example of CBNRM and environmental assessment has been used to express successful community involvement strategies in addressing contemporary ecological problems (Laura & Krishna, 2009). Scholars and other development actors have realized that active resource-dependent local user communities' participation is essential for natural resource management (Berkes, 2008; Johannes, 2002; Laura & Krishna, 2009). CB NRM approach acknowledges that the communities can solve their problems cheaper than the top-down approach. It also empowers marginalized resource users in decision-making processes. CB NRM values community-generated local solutions for different situation-specific issues. The method is more accepted at a local level, people-centered and sustainable. The authors relate the Common Property Theory to CBNRM by stating that proper resource management is complex without adequate support for resource users and multiple stakeholders' support and cooperation. Intense community involvement in protecting marine national parks in Victoria (Australia) is considered an essential asset for the long-term well-being of the sites (Carey et al., 2007). In a study about water infrastructure maintenance in rural Kenya, Leino (2008) studies how gender advocacy can boost women's participation in

projects. The water sector is one of the critical sectors where community-based management is promoted and practiced, Leino noted.

Magassouba et al. (2019) examined the influence of stakeholder involvement in organizations' management processes ranging from project identification, planning, implementation, and monitoring in Guinea. Government ministries and international institutions, including the United Nations Development Program, World Bank, Africa Development Bank, construction and manufacturing companies, and NGOs, were the stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement is critical for the success and development of a country and organization. Their level of involvement and influence ranges with the context, size, and type of the project, determining the nature and number of stakeholders involved. Their involvement takes different forms and sizes, and their influence varies (Magassouba et al., 2019). Stakeholder involvement is a process where people and communities cooperate and collaborate in a development project as both a means and an end. Stakeholder involvement contributes to the project's success (Freeman, 1984).

Stakeholders' involvement helps alleviate time constraints, costs, and quality associated with project management, and managers' choice to involve or not involve other stakeholders could determine projects' success or failure. The commitment of all stakeholders is essential for the project's success and for addressing any problems that may arise during the implementation (Magassouba et al., 2019). Stakeholder involvement is crucial in identifying, planning, implementing, and monitoring means achieving the organization's goal and promoting the project's success. Participatory Development is a theory that explains how stakeholder involvement is a powerful means of understanding

firms, their environment, and their influences on the performance of development projects within organizations. Where properly implemented, the stakeholder involvement approach defines each stakeholder's strategic role and could manifest itself differently in its process, concept, and criteria depending on the nature of the project (Magassouba et al., 2019).

Summary and Conclusions

The literature review focused on community participation, development, and stakeholder involvement. The importance and factors influencing community participation, the benefits of community involvement, and, to a limited extent, why community development project managers do not involve community members were explored.

As evidenced in the literature review, prior research studies focused on understanding community involvement and its importance. However, the gap in the scholarly literature necessitates the need to add to the growing literature on community members' participation in community development projects in Kenya.

The next chapter describes the research methodology informed by the problem statement, purpose, and research questions. It consists of research design, data collection methods, population and sample description, data collection procedures, data analysis, and expected outcomes of the study. Chapter 3 discusses research methods, including research design and its rationale, the role of the researcher, and the methodology used, including participant selection logic, instrumentation, pilot study, recruitment procedures,

participation, data collection, and data analysis plan. I discuss trustworthiness issues,

including credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical practices.

Chapter 3: Research Method

I conducted this qualitative case study to improve the understanding of community members' involvement in implementing and managing community development projects in Kenya. There was a gap in the scholarly literature on community members' involvement in the community development projects. To address the study's research question, I interviewed community development workers about their experiences of engaging with local residents. The process included gathering and documenting study participants' descriptions of their approaches to involving community members in decision-making and managing the community development project activities in Kenya.

In this chapter, I describe the research methodology and how it was informed by the problem, purpose, and research question. I discuss the research methods; the research design and its rationale; the role of the researcher; and the methodology used, including the participant selection logic, instrumentation, recruitment procedures, participation, data collection, and data analysis plan. I also discuss trustworthiness issues relating to credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical practices.

Research Design and Rationale

As discussed in Chapter 1, I sought to answer the following research question: What are the key factors influencing community members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects in Kenya? There needs to be more information on community members' participation in planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating community development projects in Kenya (Babalola & Fasokun, 2019; Matipa, 2020). Community members

possess some powers and abilities to influence the success of organizational processes

(Muthuri et al., 2009). Gender, age, literacy levels, social capital, access to information,

and economic status influence community involvement in development programs

(Babalola & Fasukun, 2019; Kaseje et al., 1987). The lack of commitment by leaders,

lack of information and awareness, corruption, and poor leadership inhibit community

participation (Benedict, 2010; Chili & Ngxongo, 2017; Hussain & Minaj, 2017; Markey

et al., 2010). Organizations face the challenge of identifying the best way to implement a

process of systematic community members' participation in decision-making (Muthuri et

al., 2009). There was a gap in the existing literature on community members'

involvement in implementing and managing the community development projects in

Kenya.

I conducted a qualitative case study to examine community members'

involvement in organizational operations and decision-making. I applied a detailed

information-gathering method and addressed the research question in this qualitative

study (see Walliman, 2005; Yates & Leggett, 2016). I used one-on-one interviews as the

primary data source. A purposive sampling procedure that only targeted relevant

individuals, allowing generalization and an in-depth understanding of the problem, was

used. Senior management members with leadership responsibility, including the regional

director, heads of department with long experience and institutional memory, and project

staff members with a long history of the organization and work with communities, were

interviewed. By interviewing senior management and representatives of the project staff,

I was able to gather historical and targeted information and an in-depth understanding of community members' roles in the community development projects funded by the NGO.

I chose the qualitative method because it provided more depth and detail than quantitative studies. The data collected encompassed a sustained period, which provided a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon. Qualitative researchers generate rich and detailed data and have more flexibility in the timing, location, and strategies of research, giving more confidence in the study results (Patton, 1987). One major strength of qualitative studies is that they focus on natural settings, capture events in natural environments, and provide the researcher with an opportunity to see as they happen (Maxwell, 2005). Qualitative studies allow participants to share their perceptions, assumptions, and understanding of issues (Patton, 2015). However, quantitative studies are not able to engage participants in discussions and, hence, have a limited ability to probe answers (Neuman, 2003). At the same time, one-on-one interviews offer an opportunity to engage with the participants compared to mail or phone (Mberman,1994). There is great potential for bias in quantitative studies; the sample group might present a unique characteristic that does not represent the entire population (Neuman, 2003).

I could have used the mixed method, but there was a great potential for problems if I combined qualitative and quantitative studies. Using hybrid approaches can also be time-consuming, labor-intensive, and expensive, and it is challenging for one researcher to undertake a mixed-method research study (Walliman, 2005). Compared to case studies that go into great depth to identify information-rich cases for an interview, narrative research focuses on exploring an individual's life; hence was not appropriate for my

study. Phenomenology could have been better suited, too, since it is mainly meant to

understand or describe the essence of a lived phenomenon. The grounded theory is used

to develop a new theory and ethnography to explain or interpret how a cultural sharing

group works; hence, both were unsuited for this study. Case studies were relevant since

they helped capture individual perspectives, unique experiences, and case variations

(Patton, 1987).

Role of the Researcher

My primary role as a data collector was to maintain an ethical and objective

viewpoint while conducting this research. The Institutional Review Board at Walden

University approved my study proposal (including a review of interview questions

beforehand), which ensured I did not put vulnerable participants at risk. Before the

interviews, I had discussions about my proposed study with the regional director of the

NGO seeking permission to conduct the interviews among employees of the organization.

I offered the interviewees considerable control over the interview process to gain their

confidence. I had them provide me with informed consent and set up boundaries for the

study before engaging in the research. I collected information and established a protocol

for recording data. I ensured the interview session did not disrupt the physical setting or

flow of their daily activities (Maxwell, 2005).

To ensure a diverse source of information, I planned to have between 12 to 20

interviews, allowing me to hear from a wide range of participants while controlling the

line of questioning (Walliman, 2005). By replicating each interview and procedure, I

ensured the results could be generalized. By integrating findings from various interviews

and literature, I overcame the limitations of a single case study and promoted the generalization of the study (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

All data collection methods come with limitations. Potential barriers to collecting the primary data included the high cost of data collection, recruitment of participants, choosing a time to convene interviewees, obtaining informed consent to undertake interviews, and interview bias (Maxwell, 2005; Walliman, 2005). I used emails to obtain permission to participate in the study and conducted virtual interviews with participants from my home in the United States to avoid travel costs.

A researcher's personal bias could have influenced the interviewees through nonverbal reactions and subconscious cues (Walliman, 2005). To minimize my biases, I sought participants' clarification by asking follow-up questions during interviews where there was a need for further description or details without suggesting what I was looking for (Patton, 2002). It can be challenging to record and gather data simultaneously; hence I made draft notes on a notepad. To minimize recall problems, especially when I could not take notes while talking, I waited and wrote down discussion records soon after the interviews when my mind was fresh since waiting would risk forgetting (Walliman, 2005). Alongside taking notes, I also used audio records. In addition, I used the hand coding technique to preserve participants' anonymity and electronic data processing procedures to organize the data and interview transcripts (Neuman, 2003).

Researchers need to be more balanced which could be influenced by their experiences or background when researching their place of work or undertaking research among colleagues, relatives, or friends, reducing the validity of the data. The conflict of

interest and power dynamics compromise the researcher's ability to get the interviewees disclose information (Patton, 2002; Walliman, 2005). During this research, there were no threats of a conflict of interest since I had no relationship with the organization, its employees, or the communities they serve.

Methodology

A qualitative study was conducted among the employees of an NGO. An unstructured questionnaire (interview guide; see Appendix A) was used in gathering the data/interviews. The design of the interview guide allowed me to gather information on specific areas while simultaneously allowing for a free flow of discussion by enabling participants to bring up other unexpected but enriching information, which the moderator can explore for further insights.

Given the geographical location and the COVID-19 restrictions on movement and interaction, computer aided telephonic interviews were adopted as the interview medium. Discussions were recorded and later transcribed, word for word, to ensure capturing of all the information. I assured the study results could be generalized by replicating each interview and site procedure (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Interviewing multiple individuals with diverse backgrounds provided a greater chance of generating more in-depth insights into how beneficiaries can be involved in project processes and the motivation behind this project management approach (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). This approach strengthened my study results by bringing diverse ideas, which helped triangulate the results.

I researched and referred to different studies to gather information from previous studies and articles on community members' and stakeholders' involvement. I collected and analyzed data throughout the research process. I used pseudonyms/code names and electronic data processing procedures to organize the data and interview transcripts (Neuman, 2003). The coding helped preserve and protect the respondents' identity and privacy, while electronic data processing saved time managing data.

I saved text data in transcripts and audio data into audio clips. For easy management, data can reduce into themes by condensing the codes, which makes it easy to present and compare the data in figures, tables, charts, and discussions (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Walliman, 2005). I used a computer program, Nvivo, which offers an organized storage system to seek, manage, and classify the raw data for easier access (Patton, 2015). Electronic systems helped group key factors into categories, planning and organizing themes, which helped write summaries and reports.

Participant Selection Logic

Participants were purposefully selected only to target individuals involved in program management and operation and could provide relevant responses to the study questions. I chose a diverse sample that allowed generalization and an in-depth understanding of the problem and helped extend the theory to various organizations. The target population for this study was the employees of an NGO in Kenya. I picked a sample of 10 senior management team members and 10 project staff members for individual interviews. I ended up having interviews with six senior management and seven project staff members who shared their in-depth understanding of community

members' roles in the community development projects funded by the organization. The staff members were selected to participate since they could elaborate on the project management processes (Siggelkow, 2007; Yin, 1994), given their extensive experience and willingness to share their experiences.

The purposeful sampling method was the best way to select specific individuals who could elaborate on how community members are involved in the project's processes. The informants were from diverse functional backgrounds and held different responsibilities minimizing the perceptual biases linked to individuals' specific roles and understanding of organizational policies, procedures, and operations. This sampling method helped bring in participants who provided in-depth feedback and relevant responses to the study (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008) and avoided talking to individuals with no background in the study area.

I worked with the organization's regional director in Nairobi to identify participants among the management and staff members. I only selected staff members who had served in senior management or an operational function at the NGO-supported projects in Kenya or neighboring countries, irrespective of gender. I chose senior managers with experience in a leadership position at the headquarters, regional, or field locations for at least 1 year. For the staff, I selected those members serving as program managers, program officers, or field officers with at least 6 months of program operation management experience.

Being introduced by the organization's management helped the participants have confidence in me. Through an introductory email (see Appendix B), I explained the

nature and purpose of the study before selecting the study participants. The basis for choosing the interview participants was their role in the project implementation. After identifying the interview participants, I sought their consent before engaging them in the interviews. The population targeted for this study was relatively homogenous; after meeting with 13 participants, I stopped my interviews when I felt I had exhausted the ideas and reached saturation.

I targeted the NGO for its experience and wide range of activities in various countries, including the Republic of Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. Established in 1991, the organization uses community-based and participatory approaches as its guiding principle. Community members are involved in assessing, planning, and implementing project activities. Gender balance is mainstreamed in all operations and uses the local staff to ensure the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of projects. These community-based development-oriented approaches were relevant to my study.

Instrumentation

I used a self-developed interview guide with preset interview questions to collect data (see Appendix A). The interview guide was useful in answering the study's research question, which was, what are the key factors influencing community members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects in Kenya? Moreover, its use helped generate a more in-depth understanding of how community members can be involved in project processes and the motivation behind their involvement (see Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

Case studies involve an in-depth description and analysis of the case or cases within a bounded system. Over time, one can explore a topic through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observation, interviews, audiovisual material, documents, and reports). By replicating each interview session and procedure, a researcher ensures that the results are generalized (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

While conducting an interview, recording, and gathering data simultaneously can be challenging, so I used a notepad to write draft notes. After the interview, I transcribed the discussions quickly to reduce recall problems, especially when I needed help taking detailed notes. Alongside taking notes, I used the computer to save the audio records, which allowed me to concentrate on taking strategic and focused notes rather than attempting verbatim notes. I checked the recording immediately after the interview to ensure that the recording was saved correctly.

I sought clarification by asking follow-up questions during interviews where I needed further description or details without suggesting what I was trying to get. Patton (2002) observes that an immediate post-interview of notes helps record details about the interview; Where did the interview meeting occur? Under what conditions? How did the interviewee react to questions? How was the rapport? The review would also check the quality of the information received; Did you find the information needed in the interview? If not, what was the problem? Poorly worded questions? Wrong topic? Poor rapport? Answers to these questions help reflect on the interview quality while the

experience is still fresh. The reflection and elaboration guarantee that the data obtained would be helpful, reliable, and authentic.

The advantages of individual one-on-one interviews are many. According to Nachmias and Frankfort-Nachmias (2007), individual interviews allow flexibility in the questioning process, hence requiring less structure. The interviewer can probe for more or change the order or questions to fit the interview scenario. The interviewer has control of the interview situation, including the sequence the respondents answer the questions. Unlike the mail questionnaire, interviews have a higher response rate as respondents do not have time to read the questions and write their responses. Equally important is controlling supplementary information about the respondent, including their characteristics and the general research environment. This action is helpful during data analysis and interpretation (Nachmias & Frankfort-Nachmias, 2007).

Individual interviews' main limitations are the high data collection cost, interview bias, and lack of anonymity. Discussions involve traveling to the interview sites and recording and processing the raw data, which can be expensive. The flexibility of the interviewer noted above presents room for personal influence and bias. The interviewer can also indirectly influence the respondent's answers through their nonverbal reactions and subconscious nonverbal cues. Sometimes the respondents may feel threatened because the interviewer already knows so much about them, and this can be a problem when respondents are sensitive to some questions or the topic of study (Nachmias & Frankfort-Nachmias, 2007).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

For this qualitative study, data were collected from study participants through interviews. I conducted one-on-one interviews through Zoom calls with interviewees from the United States to collect data. The plan was to have one session with each interviewee, not lasting more than an hour. A semi-structured interviewing technique is the best to explore issues within a social context to develop a thorough understanding of the problem being examined (Babbie, 2007). I used in-depth interviews to investigate the interviewees' opinions on how community members are involved in organizational processes and operations. The purposeful sampling procedure was used to identify the interviewees (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Each interviewee was asked the same questions, in the same order, including standard probes. This approach kept the interview highly focused and allowed efficient time management, and analysis, as it facilitated faster interviewing and simplicity in finding and comparing responses during data analysis (Quinn, 2003). I undertook 13 one-on-one interviews with six members of the management team and seven staff members directly involved in the organization's decision-making processes for the NGO's supported projects. The interviews ranged from 45 min to an hour.

Careful selection of interview methods and whether to use video during the calls gave participants the freedom to communicate without compromising the data quality I collected. I let them identify the interview time, location, and method where the interviewees were free to speak out without fear of retribution. Getting the same information from each participant separately promotes credibility since each person is

treated as a unique informant with a unique perspective (Babbie, 2007; Patton, 2002). I

tried to be as non-directive as possible in my instructions. I was careful about introducing

my views and understanding of the issues into the study by allowing participants to

describe their experiences and viewpoints (Patton, 2002). Consistent with qualitative

study methods, the interviews were immediately recorded and stored electronically

(computer files) for quick retrieval.

Qualitative research is interpretative research, where the researcher is typically

involved in a sustained and intensive experience with the participants. As a researcher, I

was responsible for dealing with unethical issues during the study. I gathered information

about past experiences to keep my audience informed. I tried to be as non-directive as

possible in my instructions. I encouraged participants to give a complete description of

their experiences, including their thoughts, feelings, images, sensations, and memories of

organizational processes. During the investigation, I employed various strategies of

validity check to create readers' confidence in the accuracy of the findings. I conducted

self-checking, also known as member checking, a tool used to validate information

collected during interviews and help build the credibility of the results (Birt et al., 2016).

To protect the rights of the participants, I presented the interview questions to the

Walden Institutional Review Board for review beforehand. Before the study commenced,

I sought permission from the participants to collect data. With my guidance, the senior

management at the NGO helped identify the study participants and introduced me before

the interviews. The process involved submitting an introductory letter that detailed the

purpose, the study's procedures, and a consent form that participants needed to review

and accept before the interviews commenced.

I gave participants considerable control over the interview process and created

confidence (Corbin & Morse, 2008). I was responsible for setting up boundaries for the

study, collecting information, and establishing a protocol for collecting and recording

data to avoid the risk of imposing personal views and interpretations (Walliman, 2005).

Before conducting the study, I familiarized myself with the participants' settings,

routines, and patterns (Neuman, 2003). It stems from the need to capture the flow of

information from the natural environment and determine participants' behaviors (Hoyt &

Bhati, 2007). I planned the interviews at times that were separate from the participants'

work schedules. I conducted the discussions when the participants were free and could

freely provide their responses without pressure from work. The participants were free to

participate in the call and request the interview to stop at any time. I explained the

probability of a follow-up call if the need arises after the interview.

Data Analysis Plan

Like other qualitative studies, this study generated a large volume of data,

including interview transcripts, notes, and voice records, all of which had to be analyzed.

The data were qualitative, making NVivo an appropriate program to use for data analysis.

Miles and Huberman (1984) recommend analyzing data using various devices, such as

tabular displays and graphs, to manage and present data without destroying the meaning

of the data through intensive coding. Data is arranged through descriptions and themes,

while tables and diagrams are tied clearly to the text to present a visual theory (Yin,

2003). I undertook qualitative data analysis to make sense of the wide range of data collected from semi-structured interviews. I employed various data analysis methods as per Miles and Huberman (1994), who presented the following standard practices to analyze data:

- Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from interviews.

- Noting reflections or other remarks in the margins.

- Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and familiar sequences.

- Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities, and differences and taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection.

- Gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the data.

- Confronting those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories (Lester & Lochmiller, 2020, p. 9).

I interweaved data collection and analysis from the start. Data were collected and analyzed throughout the research process. I used the hand-coding technique to organize the data and interview transcripts into Word documents containing responses to each of the questions asked of the participants (Neuman, 2003). I saved text in transcripts and audio in audio clips. These data were reduced into themes through coding for easy management. Coding makes it easy to present and compare the data in figures, tables, charts, and discussions (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Walliman, 2005). Thematic analysis is

used to sort and sift through the data set to identify similar phrases and relationships

(Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data analysis was structured in phases creating a transparent

process for the qualitative researcher and (ultimately) the report's reader (Lester &

Lochmiller, 2020). These phases included preparing and organizing the data, transcribing

the data, becoming familiar with the data corpus, memoing and coding the data, and

producing categories and themes from underlying coded passages (Lester & Lochmiller,

2020).

I prepared and organized the data into themes. I kept all audio records and Word

files electronically for easy storage. I used a structured naming protocol for each file, and

a master data catalog was created listing each interview, the name of the interviewee, and

the date of its collection. This exercise was helpful when importing the data into NVivo.

In preparation for further analysis, audio or video data was transcribed into verbatim

transcripts, which helped capture every participant's utterance as an accurate interview

record. Transcription served as an opportunity to become familiar with a data set,

accelerating the analysis. When determining how I would transcribe the data set, I also

considered technological innovations related to transcription. Transcription helped create

awareness of the limitations or gaps in the data and identified areas that required further

data collection or defining areas for further research.

I generated memos that described initial reflections about the data and any

emergent interpretations. These memos helped capture emerging understandings and

analytical importance and spelled out potential biases which could have influenced the

data analysis. These memos allowed for the retrieval of segments of data during interpretation.

Codes of simple, short, descriptive words or phrases that assign meaning to the data related to the focus of the study were used to reduce the data size. This coding exercise was in three phases. I first assigned codes to the entire data set, identifying important statements, experiences, and reflections. I revisited the passages and data segments to give additional edits to the focus of the study. To finalize the last coding phase by making explicit connections to the study's theoretical ideas reaching the highest level of inference. (Lester & Lochmiller, 2020). The thematic analysis involves inductive engagement with the data to translate isolated cases into broader interpretations by applying codes, developing categories, and producing themes (Patton, 1980). Individually, the codes do not tell the entire story; hence require an understanding of how they (inter)relate and contrast with one another. Codes were categorized analytically, which helped produce themes in response to the study's primary research question and focus. To ease the process, I created an analytical process map showing moving from codes to categories to themes allowing outside readers/evaluators to discern how I made critical analytic choices (Lester & Lochmiller, 2020).

I used Microsoft Word to sort, organize, and classify raw data for easier access. The computer program also helped store the voluminous data and made it easily accessible through the codes I created (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The computer program presents an organized storage system and easier access to the data (Patton, 2015). Data were analyzed as it was collected. I interweaved data collection and analysis

from the start, and I organized the data for easy analysis throughout the research process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I compared information recorded on transcripts with the audio recordings to ensure no discrepancy. Where any difference was noted, I asked probing questions to understand the disparity and maintain credibility.

To analyze the data, I used NVivo software. According to access Patton (2015), the software,

- puts all the transcripts on one screen, making it easier for the analyst to view and identify them through unique codes.

- Allows for coding of similar words or phrases directly on each transcript.

- Allows for highlighting phrases within each transcript, which helps exemplify the codes.

- Helps the researcher, after sifting through the various transcripts and identifying the codes and phrases, to sort and filter through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and familiar sequences.

- Allows the analyst to conduct simple frequency counts across all the transcripts by counting similar codes across all the transcripts.

Furthermore, help bring together all the similar phrases relating to a particular analysis which otherwise requires much time to go through the data.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I used multiple data sources, including interviews with diverse respondents -
senior management and program staff members working in various project areas
managed by the NGO. Before kicking off the interviews, I had calls with the
organization's leadership to familiarize myself with the organization while ensuring I was
not immersed in its culture. Engagement with potential participants before the interviews,
risks influencing the researcher's professional judgment on the case under investigation
(Shenton, 2004).

I reflected on the respondents' opinions during the interviews, capturing the
interviewee's perspective and engaging numerous information sources, such as one-on-
one interviews with informants from diverse responsibilities and locations. I cross-
checked with findings from my literature reviews and other secondary data sources as a
means of triangulation (Halcomb & Andrew, 2005). To maintain credibility, I asked
probing questions whenever I detected any discrepancy to ensure the information
received was consistent.

I informed participants that their participation was voluntary and independent of
the organization and could withdraw from the interview at any point if they chose to do
so. I used an interview guide with scripted questions and examined previous studies'
findings to suppress any bias I might have had as a researcher (Miles & Huberman,
1994). Ensuring participants participated voluntarily and controlling any temptations to
make my conclusions helped build the study's credibility.

Transferability

External validity refers to the generalization of the meta-analysis results, which includes using various studies with different study participants from varied geographical locations and backgrounds (Cooper et al., 2009; Patton, 2002). I employed a qualitative multiple-case study and got data from numerous participants. To ensure consistency in the study results, generalization, and transferability to other contexts or settings, I conducted interviews with participants working with the NGO in different locations. I thoroughly described the research context and the assumptions central to the study to enhance the transferability of the study results.

Dependability

To ensure the dependability of the study results, I ensured consistency across the data collection tools and methods. I provided consistent interview questions throughout the interviews and ensured the approaches were consistent and reliable. I listened to audio records and cross-checked to ensure transcripts were free from mistakes during transcription. I triangulated data from different sources and perspectives while cross-examining them for coherence. To promote the integrity of the data and the findings, I demonstrated the dependability of this study by using case study protocols and a database (Yin, 2013). The database contained: (a) notes taken during the review of documents and interviews; (b) copies of documents, interview audio files, and transcripts; (c) tables of codes and thematic elements resulting from the analysis; and (d) initial (draft) narratives written during the analysis and summary of findings.

Confirmability

Consistent with other qualitative research, I ensured the confirmability of the

study outcomes. I employed various techniques to improve confirmability, including

checking the data during the entire research study process to eliminate any contradictions

in the findings. I did a data audit, which involved inspecting the data collection and

analysis procedures to identify potential biases or distortions. I confirmed that my bias as

a researcher did not influence the study outcomes by presenting participants' experiences

only. The triangulation of multiple data sources helped me in the establishment of the

confirmability of the study. I ensured peer review and a reflexive analysis to highlight

any personal influence on the data.

Ethical Procedures

As stipulated in Walden University's ethical guidelines, I kept this study as

credible as possible. Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) articulated standards of ethical

guidelines that include: (a) sound moral values, (b) research rooted in a concept of care,

(c) shared governance, (d) neighborliness, (e) love, (f) kindness, and (g) moral good.

Walden University advocates for this as it prepares students to be scholar-practitioners

through a value-based research system that provides the basis for ethical research. In line

with these moral guidelines, I followed and protected these values by creating an

environment of mutual trust and respect and protecting participants' confidentiality.

To protect the participants' rights, I sought approval of the study (including

interview questions) from the Institutional Review Board at Walden University (approval

no. 05-04-22-0199999). I emailed each informant before the interviews explaining when

and approximately how long it would take to complete a session. I explained that, with their permission, I would take notes and record the interviews for reference as I compile my notes.

I followed Walden's code of ethics, which requires the researcher to demonstrate the commitment to individual autonomy by allowing the participants to contribute without physical or psychological coercion and facilitating decisions based on complete and open information without deception (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I gave participants considerable control over the interview process to gain confidence from the participants. I set up boundaries regarding information collection and established a protocol for recording information (Maxwell, 2005). I let the participants know their participation was voluntary, and they were free to refuse to answer any questions and withdraw at any time during the interviews.

There was a temptation to stray from the purpose of the interview, be empathetic, and bring my opinions and feelings into the discussion. Interviewees might seek the interviewer's opinion, approval, advice, or confirmation, making them vulnerable to falling into that temptation (Patton, 2002). I refrained from getting into this position by being an active listener without feeding into their opinions.

It can be challenging to record and gather data simultaneously; hence I made brief notes on a notepad. I waited and recorded discussions immediately after the interview sessions to minimize recall problems, especially when I could not take notes. Alongside taking notes, I also used audio recording on my computer. To maintain confidentiality, I did not identify the participants by name but assigned them numbers and codes. I cross-

checked the audio records to help clarify gaps and questions from the interview notes. After transcription, I ensured no one else had access to the documents by deleting the original recordings and creating a master record. This master record will remain in my custody (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Janesick, 2011). l will destroy the records 3 years after publishing my dissertation.

Summary

This chapter built on the literature review in Chapter 2, detailing the research processes used. Chapter 3 highlighted the study methodology used to explore why community members are not involved and why such involvement is essential for the success of community development projects (i.e., implications and impacts of lack of involvement). The research methodology is informed by the problem statement, purpose, and the study's research question. It discussed the research method, including research design and its rationale, the role of the researcher and the methodology used, data collection methods, participant selection logic, instrumentation, recruitment procedures, participation, data collection, and data analysis plan. Issues around trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical practices, were discussed. Chapter 4 presents the study findings following the data collection and analysis. The research setting, demographic, data collection, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, are discussed.

Chapter 4: Results

In this study, I sought to improve the understanding of community members' involvement in community development projects in Kenya, focusing on why they are not fully involved in implementing and managing them. The research question was, what are the key factors influencing community members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects in Kenya? I explored employees' perceptions of community members' involvement at an NGO. In this chapter, I present the study findings and discuss the research setting, participant demographics, data collection, and data analysis. I also provide evidence of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Setting

I conducted my study among employees of an international NGO that implements humanitarian assistance and community development programs in Kenya. The organization was targeted for its geographic location and community development experience in the region where the study was undertaken. The staff and leaders of the organization use community-based and participatory approaches as their guiding principle. Community members play an active role in assessing, planning, and implementing project activities. Drawing participants from this organization allowed a deeper understanding of how community members are involved and why some community members forego involvement in the projects. Also, most staff members in the study shared insights from their work in neighboring countries where the organization spreads its activities.

I undertook data collection in the Fall of 2022, when travel was limited and due to

the risk of contracting COVID-19 virus. The Covid-19 pandemic presented challenges in

regard to meeting with participants in person since they most of time were working

remotely; hence all the interviews were done virtually from the United States. The virtual

nature of data collection called for flexibility and sometimes presented delays due to

scheduling conflicts. However, this did not negatively affect the gathering and

interpretation of the data.

Demographics

I purposely selected managers and staff members involved in program

management and operation because they could provide relevant responses to the

interview questions. Although all respondents were from the same organization, I

deliberately chose a diverse sample that allowed generalization and an in-depth

understanding of the problem. Six interviews were conducted with senior management

and seven with the project staff members.

To reach out to managers and staff members in different countries, I worked with

the NGO's regional director in Nairobi to identify participants among the management

and staff members. To avoid biased participant selection, I targeted the staff members

who had served in senior management or an operational function at the NGO-supported

projects in Kenya and neighboring countries, irrespective of gender. Furthermore, I

limited eligibility for study participation to only (a) senior managers with experience in

leadership positions at the headquarters, regional, or field locations for no less than 1 year

and (b) staff serving as program managers, program officers, or field officers for no less

than 6 months in their current position. Six interviewed employees had worked for the

organization for over 9 years, while the rest had worked between 3 and 8 years. Table 1

shows the position of the participants, years worked, and gender.

Table 1

Participants' Positions, Number of Years Worked, and Gender

Participant	Position	No. of years worked	Gender
P1	Management	17	M
P2	Program staff	4	M
P3	Management	17	M
P4	Program staff	10	M
P5	Management	6	M
P6	Program staff	4	F
P7	Program staff	7	F
P8	Management	18	M
P9	Program staff	10	F
P10	Program staff	6	F
P11	Management	9	M
P12	Management	6	M
P13	Program staff	3	M

Data Collection

For this case study, I collected data from 13 participants. I conducted one-time,

semi-structured interviews with the participants who were employees of the NGO,

ranging from country and regional office directors to program managers and other staff

members. Data were collected via conference calls conducted through Zoom (an internet-

based communication platform used to connect with video, audio, phone, and chat) from

my house in the United States. The participants were in their offices and work locations

and were able to pick a time and place they felt free and safe to sit for their interview.

Individual interview sessions lasted 45 min to an hour. Using an interview guide, I posed

the same questions, in the same order, including standard probes, to each interviewee. The use of an interview guide was helpful in keeping the interviews focused. I was also better able to compare responses when analyzing data.

I wrote draft handwritten notes during the interviews and recorded the conversations on my computer using the Zoom application. After each interview, I used the recordings and draft notes to make transcriptions notes on my laptop using Microsoft Word. The audio recordings helped capture clarify any points I might have missed during the interview sessions. The transcriptions were backed up in a password-protected folder on Google Drive. The notebooks with the handwritten notes were stored in a locked cabinet in my house.

All interviews were uninterrupted, with no unusual events occurring. However, data collection took longer time than I had planned. The process of acquiring consent and conducting interviews took 11 weeks, given the back and forth between the participants and me. The interview sessions were spread over 6 weeks, determined by the availability of each participant.

Other than conducting the interviews virtually while I had planned to have them in person, there were no variations from the original data collection plan; The zoom calls were clear, and all interview sessions were uninterrupted. One participant had issues with his internet connection, necessitating rescheduling to complete the interview questions later. I had also planned on interviewing 10 senior management members with leadership responsibility, including the regional director and heads of departments with long experience and institutional memory, and 10 project staff members with a long history of

the organization and work with communities. However, I interviewed six management and seven staff members (after reaching a saturation point), beyond which additional interviews would have yielded no new information, hence there was no need for additional interviews.

Data Analysis

I collected data collected to answer the research question of the study, which was, What are the key factors influencing community members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects in Kenya? The one-on-one interviews helped generate a more in-depth insight into how community members can be involved in project processes and the motivation behind their involvement. I undertook a qualitative data analysis to make sense of the wide range of data collected from semi-structured interviews. I employed data analysis methods as per Miles and Huberman (1994), who presented the following standard practices to analyze data (Lester & Lochmiller, 2020):

- Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from interviews.

- Noting reflections or other remarks in the margins.

- Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and familiar sequences.

- Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities, and differences and taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection.

- Gradually elaborating a small set of generalizations that cover the consistencies discerned in the data.

- Confronting those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories.

I interweaved data collection and analysis from the start. I collected and analyzed data throughout the interview process. Like other qualitative studies, interviews from this case study generated a large volume of data, including interview transcripts, interview notes, and voice records, all of which had to be analyzed. Miles and Huberman (1984) recommend analyzing data using various devices, such as tabular displays and graphs, to manage and present data without destroying the meaning of the data through intensive coding. Overall, given that the data collected was descriptive, analysis required a method that identifies patterns and themes behind textual data, allowing for inductive data analysis. I recorded direct quotes and excerpts in participants' words, which helped drive themes and findings. I kept a running memo of these quotes and excerpts from the interview notes, capturing emerging issues or findings. I made descriptive notes to keep track of critical evidence and wrote a detailed explanation whenever an issue was unclear.

I first used deductive coding methods to organize data and sort it into categories relevant to the study. I inductively analyzed the data by reading the interview transcripts and allowing codes to emerge. NVIVO software performed the content analysis and helped with the following:

- Organizing and structuring data into themes for ease of analysis.

- Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from interviews.

- Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and familiar sequences. These specified phrases were allocated to some codes.

- Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities, and differences and taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection.

- Confronting those generalizations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories.

Since every interview was audio recorded, a word-for-word transcription was conducted. The transcription was guided by the discussion guide used while interviewing to ensure no information loss. The word-to-word transcription also allowed capturing of verbatims as stated by the respondents. The transcripts were captured in Word format. For each transcript, a pseudonym was allocated instead of the interviewee's name to protect their identity and ensure data confidentiality.

Based on the transcribed data, I maintained quotes from the interviewees, identified common themes, and put them in different categories. For each response, I performed content analysis, which helped evaluate common patterns, and similar words or phrases. I inductively identified the key themes emerging from the interview. I put the data into five categories: strategic effort, external factors, limiting factors, benefits, and risks associated with community members' involvement.

For strategic effort, needs identification, budgeting, implementation, and impact assessment emerged as actions the organization uses to enhance community involvement

in the projects. For example, P1 stressed the need for strategic effort and said, "If you are

serving people, you must consult them. You cannot assume to understand all their needs."

To identify them, you must undertake a baseline survey to identify the needs and allow

community members to provide the information". Community participation "is not

random – it is organized, and the roles of the community members are defined ahead of

time." P3 noted that the organization is deliberate and "For a project that runs for more

than 12 months, the first quarter of the grant is dedicated to community consultations and

awareness creation about the project". He retaliated that one must "get down to the

lowest local levels and not bring community members out of their village to discuss

project activities to ensure their participation and contribution in all aspects of the project

cycle (needs identification, budgeting, implementation, and impact assessment)."

Trust, partnership, inclusiveness, empowerment, and organizational

policies emerged as external factors that help promote community members'

participation. Participants highlighted the need for policies that support community

participation. P3 stressed that organizations create policies that support this approach".

He added, "Creating community awareness where the community members are given

information about an ongoing project" helps build trust and empower the community.

According to P12, once trust is established, community members will always want to

participate in the project activities. He said, "when people see the outcome of their

feedback, it encourages them to continue engaging and participating because they know

that their input will always be treated seriously." There is a need for having structures put

in place for feedback loops. P12 stated that "they ensure feedback mechanisms are

communicated clearly to the stakeholders, so they know it is a right, not a favor, to

participate in the project" hence feel motivated to engage with the project.

For the factors limiting community members' involvement, cultural barriers,

illiteracy, internal conflict, personal and corporate interest, and natural

calamities emerged. P1 indicated that "low literacy level significantly limits the

community members' participation forcing the organization to use other means to make

decisions." He stated, "Policy and regulation frameworks can also limit their

participation." P3 noted that a language barrier (due to illiteracy) can be a problem where

a translator is needed, and some contents are lost. Most materials are in foreign languages

and are hard to translate into local languages. "Even local staff we hire cannot speak all

the languages in the project areas." P2 eluded that "Some cultures can limit the

involvement of women willing to participate because they are supposed to submit to

more immense forces culturally." P13 eluded that in the Turkana community where he

works, "women should not act as chairpersons when there are men. Women are not

welcome to lead even in water management, where it is the primary role of women, most

committees are men." P12 noted,

> Traditional practices and artistic tendencies work particularly against women. So,
>
> unless you have a gendered approach ensuring gender equity and social inclusion
>
> in how people participate, contribute, and engage, you are leaving out a huge
>
> population segment. Because you go to meetings under the trees, in schools or
>
> church, women sit very far or are not in the compound.

Personal and corporate interest can be an issue. P3 cautioned that "the culture of the community members might conflict with the project approaches." According to P13, organization and donor priorities might not be the community's priority and could restrict community participation. The culture of the community members might conflict with the project approaches. According to p11, if calamities (e.g., the death of a member) befall the community at any given time in the life of a project- attention gets shifted to solving the problem at hand. If this coincides with a planned project activity, then the activity must be rescheduled.

Community ownership and participation, sustainability, smooth implementation, efficiency, capacity enhancement, publicity, and donor confidence emerged as the benefits of community participation. There is a smooth implementation of the project because the community accepts and participates. "You have their buy-in, acceptance, and participation." "No delay, timely implementation, and outstanding outcomes," said P1. P12 indicated that "when people are part of the formulation, identification, and dissection of the problem when you implement and assign them different roles, they take significant ownership of every step. By the time the project ends, you do not struggle with how to exit and how they would sustain the results beyond the project's life cycle." The projects are efficient, said P2; "Community participation helps with the contribution of ideas by the community members, especially during the design stage "–most projects involving community members are more successful. He indicated that "Successful projects engage their beneficiaries." According to P9, "When communities are involved, and the projects are well rooted, the organization promotes donor confidence and funding."

Finally, for the risks category, delays in project implementation, conflict of interest, high expectations, skewed implementation structures, and demand from local leaders were the common themes identified. P9 noted, "Migration of the pastoralists in search of pasture and water during a drought makes tracking beneficiaries challenging and time-consuming, taking more time delaying project implementation and delivery of services." According to P2, a mismatch might arise between the project's priority and the community's wants. A project might address a need in the community, but the community does not appreciate it because their priorities differ. "It might take forever to get community buy-in, sometimes leading to rejection." There might be a risk of skewed selection of project beneficiaries, stated P11: "Sometimes, committee members charged with selecting beneficiaries tend to select and register mainly their relatives/friends irrespective of the set criteria." At times it might also promote corruption where, according to P11, there is a "demand for favors by those involved directly in project implementation on behalf of community members." I derived my findings from the categories. All the interviewees' responses were synced, with no discrepancies or contradictions in their opinions.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I interviewed a diverse group of respondents from senior management and program staff. Through calls with the regional director and a literature review (about the organization), I familiarized myself with the organization and its operations and how they work with community members before I started collecting data. While engaging with the

organizational leadership and literature, I avoided having a preconceived perception that would influence my judgment of the phenomena during the interviews.

I only captured the opinions of the interviewees and reflected on their perspectives without making personal conclusions. When transcribing the notes, I cross-checked my handwritten notes with the voice recordings to make sure everything was evident while taking notes. To maintain credibility, I asked probing and follow-up questions whenever I detected any discrepancy to ensure the information received was consistent. I triangulated the data with my literature review and the organization's annual reports.

To ensure that the participants provided their thoughts freely, I informed them about their right to participate voluntarily, their independence from the organization, and their freedom to withdraw from the interview at any point if they chose to do so. I told them before the interview sessions that I would not use their real names in the reports.

Transferability

To ensure consistency in the study results, generalization, and transferability to other contexts or settings, I purposefully selected study participants who met the eligibility criteria from varied geographical locations and backgrounds. I interviewed managers and staff working with the organization in different project areas in Kenya and neighboring countries. Interviewing participants from diverse contexts and checking out the consistency in responses helped promote transferability concerning how the results of qualitative research could be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Patton, 2002). This approach provides managers of other organizations, readers, and

researchers with evidence that this study's findings could be generalized, transferred, and applied to other populations and contexts within and outside the catchment areas of this organization.

Dependability

To ensure the dependability of the study results, I maintained consistency across the data collection process. I used an interview guide with scripted questions to make sure I asked the same questions to all the participants. I listened to the audio recordings and cross-checked to ensure transcripts were error-free during transcription by analyzing my notes, emerging themes, and patterns multiple times. I triangulated data from different sources and perspectives while cross-examining them for coherence. To promote the integrity of the data and the findings, I demonstrated the dependability of this study by using case study protocols. I established a database with notes taken during the review of documents and interviews, audio files and transcripts, tables of codes, thematic elements resulting from the analysis, and a summary of findings.

Confirmability

To ensure consistency with the outcomes of other qualitative studies, I employed various techniques to improve confirmability, including checking the data during the entire collection and analysis process to eliminate any contradictions in the findings. I conducted a data audit and thorough inspection of the data collection and analysis procedures to identify potential biases or distortions. This audit helped me avoid personal influence on the study outcomes by presenting participants' experiences only. The triangulation of multiple data sources helped me in the establishment of the

confirmability of the study. I used peer review from other Walden University Ph.D.

candidates and a reflexive analysis to highlight any personal influence on the data.

Results

The results have been grouped into five main categories: strategic effort, external

factors, limiting factors, benefits, and risks. The themes emerged from the data analysis.

Strategic Effort

The first and most dominant theme that came out of data analysis is a strategic

effort by the person or an organization. According to most of the respondents (both in

operations and management), implementing any project involves various stages such as

needs identification, budgeting, performance, and impact assessment, all of which require

direct or indirect community involvement to be served. P12 summarized their

organization's community involvement by stating, "The NGO has grassroots

consultations; this could either be ad-hoc or be structured through a service needs

assessment that brings the grassroots communities to answer particular questions and

describe a specific situation using structured tools such as quick household survey or

through some focus group discussions."

In addition to that, another participant, P1, opined, "We engage those grassroots

communities in different forums. A typical rural community has regular leadership

meetings, cluster meetings, sector coordination meetings, school meetings, and church

meetings. The organization takes advantage of all those windows whenever things require

stakeholder consultation or dissemination." Another way of engaging the communities is

through direct employment or participation in the projects affecting them. In summary,

given the organization's role in serving the vulnerable in the communities, there was

concurrence among all respondents that serving people necessitates consulting them and

not assuming that their needs can be understood without doing so. The organization

conducts baseline, mid-term, and end-term surveys to gather community feedback.

External Factors

External factors came in five subsets: trust, partnership, inclusiveness,

empowerment, and organization policies. The respondents identified the following

external factors as key in promoting communities' participation in the project.

Trust. Most respondents believe trust must be cultivated from the beginning to

implement any project successfully. According to the respondents, some ways of

building trust include identifying common interest and sharing it with society through

community structures such as women leaders, youth leaders, government representatives,

and religious leaders. Another way of inculcating trust is by hiring locals to carry out

several tasks during the project implementation.

Partnership. The majority suggested this as a way of building ownership of

projects by the locals. According to one of the survey participants, "community-based

organizations which involve the local community leaders or society projects and other

Organizations a positive image during implementation. For example, Kenya Red Cross

calls upon the NGO staff whenever there is a disease they can handle for the human

resource and mobilization of funds to address the problem."

Inclusiveness. According to the respondents, communities usually feel included if

they interact with their own (in terms of culture and language). According to one of the

respondents, they prefer a local who understands the community's culture and language if they collect data from a particular community. This makes the community members share more on more profound issues which would otherwise be heard to be disclosed to strangers - "when a local community member collects information from their own, there is confidence in them as they are embraced as one of them, unlike someone from a different culture, which the community members do not know the background leading to a lack of acceptance."

Empowerment. According to most respondents, empowering the local communities through training and educating them on the benefits to be accrued makes implementing projects easy to undertake, even under hostile conditions. One of the respondents indicated that "creating community awareness where the community members are given information about an ongoing project allows them to participate fully."

Organization policies. Respondents also observed that for an organization to implement community-related projects successfully, it is imperative to have policies intentionally directed at co-opting the communities as stakeholders. This, in return, would result in the project enjoying community goodwill. According to one of the directors interviewed, 'The organization has derived goodwill during their project implementation by having policies directly aimed at co-opting the locals, especially in planning for projects logistics. This directly promotes the involvement of the community in the projects." Table 2 summarizes factors that help promote community members' involvement in the organization's project implementation.

Table 2

Factors That Help Promote Community Members' Involvement

Factor	f (N =13)
Trust	8
Partnership	6
Inclusiveness	6
Empowerment	5
Organization policies	5

Limiting Factors

I identified limiting factors as another significant theme during data analysis. The participants highlighted factors limiting community members' involvement in the project implementation. A wide range of factors were mentioned, including natural and artificial elements. I subdivided the theme into five subthemes based on factors that were felt to largely influence the community's lack of participation or support in project implementation, which included: cultural barriers, illiteracy, internal conflict, personal/corporate interest, and natural calamities.

Cultural barriers. Irrespective of organizational policies and the willingness of the organization to directly involve the community, some cultures limit the involvement of women and youth in participating in some project activities. For instance, one of the study participants lamented, "There are Cultural barriers that limit the participation of the women and youth in productive activities, especially the pastoral communities, e.g., women are not allowed to own major stocks like camels and cattle, which are drought resilient. Some women are not allowed to engage in trade and fisheries. Men own

productive assets such as land, money, and livestock, which limits women's ownership and control of household resources."

Illiteracy. The majority mentioned this as a significant barrier to effective engagement of the local communities in project implementation, especially for the NGOs who generally target their projects to the pastoralists' communities, who hardly access formal education owing to their culture of migration from one place to another in search of pasture for their animals.

Internal conflicts and political interference. Most participants listed interferences that lead to human displacement as a pivotal detractor to community involvement in the project implementation. According to the employees, conflicts limit access to beneficiaries. According to one of the survey participants 'the conflicts disorient the planning and eventual involvement of the community on the project, eliminating or minimizing room for interaction between the organization and the targeted community."

Personal/organizational interests. Survey participants also believed that some humanitarian workers come with their interests, which limits community acceptance of the project. Others stated that some community development workers enforce their ideas, ignoring any community thinking or feeling the community does not know. This leads to repeating things for ages without different outcomes. Another respondent pronounced that some organizations define community participation by what they pay them and not seeking community members' input. "They recruit to pay instead of encouraging their participation as project owners."

Natural calamities. According to the staff, natural disasters like drought, dry spells, and floods disrupt community involvement in project implementation. The calamities generally make it hard for their team to locate the whereabouts of their target community owing to the displacement caused by the calamities. Table 3 summarizes factors that hinder community members' involvement in project implementation.

Table 3

Factors That Limit Community Members' Involvement

Factor	f ($N = 13$)
Cultural barriers	9
Illiteracy	6
Internal conflicts/political interference	6
Personal interest/organization interest	6
Natural calamities (e.g., draught, floods)	5
Limited access to community/poor infrastructure	3
Project technicalities	2

Benefits

The respondents outlined the key benefits of community participation in project implementation. Community ownership and participation topped the list of community engagement benefits. According to the respondents, when community members understand the genesis and breadth of the project, they own it.

Other key mentions included project sustainability, smooth implementation owing to local support assurance, capacity enhancement through community engagement, improved project publicity, and donor confidence in the implementing organization, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Advantages of Community Involvement

Perceived benefit	$f(N = 13)$
Community ownership/participation	11
Improved project sustainability	8
Smooth implementation/efficiency	7
Capacity enhancement	6
Improved project publicity	5
Donor confidence	3

Risks

I identified risks as the other theme of the data analysis. Participants were asked to mention why they would not involve the community members given an opportunity. The majority believed only if it is within the organization's policy, and it does more harm than good not to involve the community.

However, despite the positives, the risk of delays and conflict of interest is among the key challenges community involvement brings. "The more community members are engaged, creates other layers of decision-making that lead to the creation of gatekeepers. You can fall into traps of not reaching the beneficiaries requiring certain skills to understand how to navigate and triangulate information and to correct it," stated one of the respondents regarding some of the drawbacks of engaging the community. According to 6 out of 13 respondents, conflict can polarize the entire approach until the focus is lost. Another risk cited is the creation of high expectations among community members against competing resources which may create disinterest in future projects. Table 5

shows the distribution frequency of the issues associated with community involvement in

project implementation.

Table 5

Risks Associated With Community Involvement

Risk	$f(N = 13)$
Delays in project implementation	8
Conflict of interest	6
The creation of high expectations as these can negatively affect future projects	5
Skewed implementation structures	3
Demand for favors from local leaders	3

Summary

In Chapter 4, I have presented the study findings following the data collection and

analysis. The research setting, demographic, data collection, data analysis, and evidence

of trustworthiness, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability, were discussed. The perceptions of managers and members of staff of an

NGO on community members' involvement in implementing and managing community

development projects in Kenya are examined. Participants provided a detailed description

of their experiences with community members in implementing humanitarian and

development projects. I analyzed their responses into five themes emerging from data

analysis. Overall, there was a consensus among the participants that involving the

community members in implementing projects is paramount as it creates trust and

community ownership, likely leading to project sustainability. Also, organizations that

engage community members were perceived to achieve effectiveness and smoother

implementation because of local ownership and community members participating. All

the employees believed community members' engagement in project implementation should be the norm across all humanitarian organizations and development partners if favorable results were expected. The positives override all the risks likely to be encountered by involving the community in the project.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In this chapter, I interpret the case study's findings, informed by the stakeholder theory of organizational management and ethics by Milton Friedman and the literature review. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to improve the understanding of why community members are not fully involved in implementing and managing community development projects in Kenya. The study was undertaken to fill the gap in the scholarly literature on the lack of community members' involvement in community development projects in Kenya (Kaseje et al., 1987; Munene & Thakhathi, 2017; Muthuri et al., 2009; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013). Key themes emerged from the interview. Strategic effort, trust, partnership, inclusiveness, empowerment, and organization policies emerged as factors that promote community involvement. In contrast, cultural barriers, illiteracy, internal conflict, personal/corporate interest, and natural calamities emerged as factors that limit the lack of participation or support in project implementation. Project sustainability, smooth implementation, capacity enhancement, project publicity, and donor confidence emerged as key benefits of community participation in project implementation. Community ownership and participation topped the list of community engagement benefits. The study's results indicate that involving community members in implementing projects creates trust and community ownership, leading to project sustainability. Participants perceived organizations that involve community members in their projects as being more effective and having a smoother implementation of projects, given local ownership and community members' contribution, than organizations that do not have this involvement.

Interpretation of the Findings

In Chapter 2, I reviewed existing literature on community members' involvement in community development. In this section, I describe how this study's findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline by comparing them with what has been found in the peer-reviewed literature.

Barriers to Community Members' Involvement in Community Development Projects

The study's findings of various factors that impede community member involvement in development projects is consistent with the literature. According to Herdiana (2018), low levels of education, lack of knowledge of the rural development planning process, restrictive government policies, and cultural factors limited community members' involvement in the development planning of government boards in Kertawangi Village in Indonesia. In their study, Munene and Thakhathi (2017) in Kenya concluded that local government officials do not trust CSOs and see them as a threat. Local authorities demand allowances to attend CSO meetings or invite CSOs on short notice to government forums, discouraging members and community members from participating (Munene & Thakhathi, 2017). CSOs lack clear guidelines on beneficiaries' involvement and inclusion and have poor internal policies and accountability to beneficiaries. Similarly, in Nigeria, transnational oil corporations and government officials are not sincere and manipulate the system to undermine community involvement efforts (Ogula, 2012). Community members possess little power compared to oil corporations, which have substantial resources to access decision-makers, land, government security, and

other special concessions; hence community members cannot influence or engage the corporations (Ogula, 2012). The lack of community members' involvement in decision-making and the dominant role played by the government have led to poor relations between the community and the oil companies (see Ogula, 2012).

The participants in this study identified many factors limiting community members' involvement in the project implementation. The top 5 elements that influenced the community's lack of participation in or support of project implementation included cultural barriers, illiteracy, internal conflict, personal/corporate interest, and natural calamities. This is line with the findings of studies cited in chapter 2.

Cultural Barriers

Irrespective of organizational policies and the willingness of the organization to directly involve the community, some cultures limit the involvement. For example, among the nomads, the dominant communities the NGO serves, women, girls, and youth are prohibited or restricted from participating in some project activities. Participants eluded that some cultures could limit the involvement of women willing to participate because they are supposed to culturally submit to more immense forces. For example, among the communities where the project is, women should not act as chairpersons when there are men. Women are not welcome to lead even in water management, where it is women's primary role; most committees are men. Traditional practices work particularly against women leaving out a huge population segment from participating in the project activities. According to Herdiana (2018), community members do not see themselves as qualified members of village government boards. Cultural factors play a significant role

in limiting community members' involvement in the operations and management of development projects.

Illiteracy

Illiteracy among the local communities was mentioned by most participants as a significant barrier to effective engagement of in project implementation, especially for this organization that generally target their projects to the pastoralists' communities, who hardly access formal education owing to their culture of migration from one place to another in search of pasture for their animals. The study participants noted that a language barrier (due to illiteracy) could be a problem since most project materials are in foreign languages and are hard to translate into local languages. Some contents are lost during translation. It is also a challenge since the local staff can only speak some local languages and dialects in the project areas making it hard for most members of the local communities to understand. The low levels of education hinder community members ability to participate in the planning processes (Herdiana (2018).

Internal Conflicts

Most participants stated that conflicts among communities that lead to human displacement are critical distractors to community involvement in the project implementation. When conflicts occur and community members move from their local residences and project sites in fear for their lives in search of peace and safety which limits the interaction between the organization and community members.

Personal/Organizational Interests

Participants stated that some humanitarian workers have their own interests, which limits community acceptance of the project. To protect their interests, they isolate the community members who would otherwise influence project goals, and activities if empowered and actively involved. Other participants stated that some community development workers enforce their ideas, ignoring any community thinking or ideas. having the feeling that the community does not know. For example, in other places, example as Shell Company in Nigeria's Niger Delta region, the management created corporate social strategies without involving the community in the company's oil endeavors to protect the corporate interest. Despite being the most adversely affected by oil exploitation, company leaders did not include the area's inhabitants in decision-making regarding operational management and the allocation of wealth generated from oil (Ogula, 2008).

Natural Calamities

According to the participants, natural disasters like drought, dry spells, and floods disrupt community involvement in project implementation. These disasters generally make it hard for their staff to locate the whereabouts of their target community owing to the displacement they cause. Because the projects these NGOs support are in arid and semiarid areas, communities face extended periods of droughts forcing them to migrate to other areas in search of food, water, and pasture for their animals. The community members devote their time attending to their basic needs taking away their time committed to the projects supported by the NGOs.

Strategies for Encouraging Community Members' Involvement in Community Development Projects

Community members should be actively involved in decision-making, planning, implementation, and monitoring for the sustainability of the projects. Governments should implement policies that require donors to only provide funding to organizations that involve community members in all decisions that affect their lives (Hussain & Miraj, 2018). To promote increased community members' participation, local governing councils should establish ward development committees to work closely with the community members during all project processes, including project identification, regular stakeholders' meetings, project implementations, evaluation, and training (Matipa, 2020). Leaders of community development projects should establish community involvement objectives and key performance indicators to monitor progress toward enhancing community members' participation (Thorén Hedin & Ranängen, 2017).

Equity and inclusiveness are essential in county governance. All stakeholders, including men or women, poor and rich, need to be involved and feel part of the decision-making process. To feel free to state their views, community members should be fully informed of their roles and organized for meaningful project participation. Exchange tours to other countries where successful community participation is happening, and exposure to good governance models could help and provide a good opportunity for training (Munene & Thakhathi, 2017).

Community members should be treated as important stakeholders and be fully engaged in decision-making processes. For successful engagement and meaningful

community members participation, there is a need for a commitment to building community members' capacities through training. All actors should understand their roles and the principles and value of collective action that ensures sustainable community development. Community participation approaches should involve key stakeholders (project developers, bilateral, multilateral agents, banks, and project beneficiaries) and focus on project planning, design, and implementation (Musyoki et al., 2020). Musyoki recommend that local governments review their policy framework and mainstream community participation at all levels of the project cycle.

Moyo and Tichaawa (2017) explored the extent of community involvement and participation in tourism development in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. They found that community members needed to be adequately involved in planning, decision-making, and participation. For a sustainable tourism economy, community members and other stakeholders require capacity building through their active involvement and education on how to be involved in planning, policy formulation, and the implementation of tourism development. The government should ensure that community members are included in tourism development projects and have strategies to promote participation and involvement. Mang'atu et al. (2021) reviewed studies on community participation in the entire project cycle from their inception to the closure and handover of donor-funded projects. Community members' commitment to the project cycle should be encouraged through training in participatory practices, proper communication, and a clear definition of roles for all stakeholders to promote successful participation.

Most participants echoed the sentiments above and expressed that any project implementation involves various stages. These include, needs identification, budgeting, performance, and impact assessment, all of which require direct or indirect involvement of the community to be served. Several factors were outlined as key in promoting communities' participation in the project. The top five factors outlined were trust, partnership, inclusiveness, empowerment, and organization policies.

Trust

Most respondents believe trust must be cultivated from the beginning to implement any project successfully. According to the respondents, some ways of building trust include identifying common interest and sharing it with society through community structures such as women leaders, youth leaders, government representatives, and religious leaders. Another way of inculcating trust is by hiring locals as project staff to carry out several tasks during the project implementation.

Partnership

The majority suggested that community involvement is a way of building ownership of projects by the locals. According to one of the survey participants, "community-based organizations which involve the local community leaders or local society members in their projects and other organizations processes creates a positive image and partnership." For example, Kenya Red Cross calls upon the local NGO staff and local community leaders whenever there is a disease outbreak or a disaster to provide human resources and funds to address the problem. The community members own the

problem and its solutions and see the Red Cross as a partner and not an external

organization to the community.

Inclusiveness

According to the respondents, communities usually feel included if they interact

with their own (in terms of culture and language). According to one of the respondents, if

they are collecting data from a particular community, they prefer a local who understands

the culture and language of the community. "When a local community member collects

information from their own, there is confidence in them as they are embraced as one of

them, unlike someone from a different culture, which the community members do not

know the background leading to a lack of acceptance." This makes the community

members share more profound issues which would otherwise be hard to be disclosed to

strangers.

Empowerment

According to most respondents, empowering the local communities through

training and educating them on the benefits to be accrued makes implementing projects

easy to undertake, even under hostile conditions. They take ownership of the process and

outcome of the project's investments and actions.

Organization Policies

Respondents also observed that for an organization to implement community-

related projects successfully, it is imperative to have policies intentionally directed at co-

opting the communities as stakeholders. This, in return, would result in the project

enjoying community goodwill.

Benefits of Community Members' Involvement in Community Development

Projects

Community members' participation is essential to the design thinking process and ensures equitable participation in the project decision-making. People are likely to respond more positively when they make decisions and contribute to processes that impact their lives (Hendricks, 2018). The use of community advisory boards is a successful strategy for building and integrating stakeholder involvement in community interventions (McCarron et al., 2019).

Community members' involvement leads to informed decisions, acceptance, social learning, enhanced democracy, social capital, trust, increased ownership, information, and understanding (Barclay & Klotz, 2019). Because they know the context local communities can influence the technical design if involved in the early stages. They have a good understanding and meaning of specific characteristics, circumstances, events, and relationships that affect the project's success or failure, adds Barclay and Klotz (2019).

Community members' participation contributes to an equitable and rights-based approach to health that benefits the organization, the community, and individuals (Halden et al., 2019). By involving all actors who bring in differing views, the process helps build consensus and ends with a decision that meets the best interest of all stakeholders. Membership makes the community feel part and parcel of CSOs. It builds support from individuals who contribute financially and actively to the projects (Munene & Thakhathi, 2017). In primary health care, users' involvement promotes health and reduces service

delivery inequalities. NGOs should encourage community members' involvement in the project cycle to achieve ownership, sustainability, and continuity when the project ends, and donor funds are exhausted. Cost-sharing, participation in activity management, and community members' involvement in the project's initiation contribute positively to the project's sustainability (Mutanguha & Kamuhanda, 2021).

Participants outlined the key benefits of community participation in project implementation with increased community ownership, and participation topped the list of the benefits of engaging the community. According to the respondents, when the community members understand the genesis and breadth of the project, they own it. They also highlighted project sustainability, smooth implementation owing to local support assurance, capacity enhancement through community engagement, improved project publicity, and donor confidence in the implementing organization.

Risks of Involving Community Members in Community Development Projects

The participatory approach to project management could have negative consequences, including the high cost of doing business, delayed actions, and increased resource demand (Project Management Institute, 2008). Some people, especially the elite, see community members' involvement as threatening their power while promoting the community's interests (Omondi & Kinoti,2020). Some managers undermine efforts geared towards community members' participation, seeing it as an avenue to open the opportunity for power distribution that compromises their decision-making autonomy (Laczniak & Murphy, 2012).

Most participants believed that outside the organization's policy, community members' involvement does more harm than good not to involve the community. However, despite the positives, the risk of delays and conflict of interest is among the key challenges community involvement brings. That conflict can polarize the entire approach until the focus is lost. Another risk cited is the creation of high expectations against competing resources which may create disinterest in future projects.

Limitations of the Study

Like in other data collection methods, this study came with limitations (Maxwell, 2005; Walliman, 2005). When planning to collect primary data, I was faced with the challenges including, the high cost of data collection, recruitment of participants, getting time to convene participants for interviews, obtaining informed consent to undertake consultations, and interview bias. To minimize the cost of data collection, which would have incurred flying into Kenya, interviews were done remotely through Zoom video and voice calls from my house in the US. Another challenge that I was faced with was the fact that I have worked in humanitarian assistance and community development field for over 27 years; hence, my bias as an interviewer could have influenced the interviewees through nonverbal reactions and subconscious nonverbal cues (Walliman, 2005). I was conscious of this and tried to maintain a neutral face throughout the interviews, not to show any approval or disapproval of their responses. To gain their confidence, I gave the participants considerable control over the interview process and set up boundaries for the study. I collected information at their convenience and established a protocol for recording it (Maxwell, 2005). It took much work to record and gather data

simultaneously; hence I made brief notes on a notepad and saved a copy of the audio

record on my computer for reference while transcribing data to minimize recall problems,

especially when I could not take comprehensive notes.

For this study I targeted a relatively homogenous population. I stopped the

interviews after interviewing 13 participants and had reached saturation point and

exhausted the ideas.

Recommendations

Through this qualitative case study, I sought to answers the following overarching

research question, What are the key factors influencing community members'

involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community

development projects in Kenya? Despite addressing the interview questions extensively,

the results did trigger the need for more questions. Other lingering, more relevant

questions remain on my mind. I would have also wanted to explore further the

community members' perceptions about their role and level of participation in these

projects. According to them, I would have liked to know the benefits of their involvement

in these projects.

The population targeted for this study was relatively homogenous. I relied on the

experiences of one organization's employees in community members' involvement in

humanitarian and development projects. Future researchers could include employees

from other NGOs, United Nations organizations, and donor agencies to obtain

perspectives that might be missing or underrepresented in the present study. Because the

primary operations of the study organization were in rural areas, future researchers may want to examine urban-based organizations and county and local governments.

Also, the nature of the study, such as using one-on-one interviews to gather information, was the most well-suited tool for data collection. It would be worth undertaking more studies using other tools, including focus groups, to expand the information base. More extensive research through field visits and observations of the organizational processes could also help future researchers experience first hard and hear from community members on the extent they are involved in the projects. This study focused on rural community projects. Understanding the level of community involvement among Kenya's urban-based organizations would also be worthwhile.

The role of community members and its impact on community development and humanitarian assistance projects continue to evolve. Future research should focus on the dynamic nature of the projects and the role of other actors and include interviews with community leaders and community members who are beneficiaries of these projects. Other players like religious organizations, politicians, and local administrators could be additional data sources, given their role in decision-making about implementing development and humanitarian projects. The organization's policy was cited as one of the significant factors influencing community members' involvement; hence a study on various community development agencies' policies would be helpful in the future.

The fact that the organization used for the study has policies promoting community members' participation could have its own bias; hence, research with other

organizations working in the same region known for not using this model is necessary to understand their point of view.

One of the participants recommended that the findings of this study be shared with people involved in implementing the devolution of power in Kenya. Community engagement can enrich how county integrated development plans are structured and rolled out when you have devolved governance units. Based on the benefits of the community engagement approach highlighted in this study, engagement with the schools teaching community development and humanitarian assistance courses is beneficial as they design training to embrace the participatory community approach.

Implications

Lessons from this study indicate that community members' involvement is varied among stakeholders involved in community development and humanitarian assistance projects. Involving the community members in implementing projects is paramount as it creates trust in the organizations and community ownership, likely leading to project sustainability (Mutanguha & Kamuhanda, 2021). Also, organizations that engage community members were perceived to achieve effectiveness and smoother implementation thanks to local ownership and community members participating (Benedict, 2010; Stephenson, 2006; Susilo et al., 2020). This study is of great significance to positive social change. Poor communities, primarily in rural areas, can be more empowered and appreciated as owners and essential stakeholders in community development project management, promoting increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the projects as in corporate companies (Laczniak & Murphy, 2012). Robust, efficient,

and sustained community development projects can help uplift community members'
lives.

Effective community members' involvement strategies might lead to more
positive perceptions and acceptance of community development projects among rural
communities in Kenya (Benedict, 2010). Community ownership and participation topped
the list of community engagement benefits. According to the participants, when
community members understand the genesis and breadth of the project, they own it and
give their undivided support. Community development projects may lead to streamlined
processes through increased involvement and community participation, saving the
organizations' money, increasing project outcomes and impact, improving well-being,
helping reduce poverty, and promoting overall community members' livelihoods
(Muthuri et al., 2009). The participants also noted project sustainability, smooth
implementation owing to local support assurance, capacity enhancement through
community engagement, improved project publicity, and donor confidence in the
implementing organization.

Researchers have studied the benefits of community involvement, community
development, and stakeholder involvement. While some have focused on stakeholder or
community involvement in health care, research, and development activities in other
parts of the world, there needs to be more literature on why community development
project managers do not involve community members in their organizational processes in
Kenya (Chili & Ngxongo, 2017; Halden et al., 2019; Matipa, 2020; Muthuri et al., 2009;
Thorén Hedin & Ranängen, 2017). Given the gap in scholarly literature, this case study

could be a reference for those aspiring to work in the community development and humanitarian assistance field. In addition, this study could inform other researchers, community development project managers, donors, and beneficiaries of the obstacles, benefits, and strategies for fostering community members' involvement in community development projects, leading to increased participation and the feeling of ownership necessary for projects' sustainability and effectiveness.

Understanding the principal factors fostering community members' involvement in community development projects and the limitations could promote dialogues among stakeholders in community development. Each stakeholder has unique concerns – to be effective, managers should identify them and consider their interests while making effective decisions (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 2005). The suggestions raised by the participants in this study could be used as a basis for discussion and developed as a model for promoting community members' involvement in development approaches. The model could establish policies and guidelines for community engagement and encourage community members' participation in development projects. Staff members and managers of community development projects might learn a practical framework for community members' involvement in planning and implementing development projects to improve their impact on the community. Donors, managers, and community development leaders may apply the theories and strategies established in their management actions and decisions making about integrating community members' involvement into the implementation and management of the community projects to have maximum impact on the communities.

Overall, there was a consensus among the participants that involving the community members in implementing projects is paramount in creating trust and community ownership, promoting project sustainability. Also, organizations that engage community members were perceived by the participants to achieve effectiveness and smoother implementation because of local ownership and community members participating. The lessons from this study could be applied to development organizations' strategies and curricula of schools teaching community development and humanitarian assistance courses. The specific descriptions of participants' experiences and perceptions of community members' involvement provide a practical and clear understanding of how organizations can enhance community members' participation, promoting project impact and sustainability.

Conclusion

Not all community development organizations involve community members in the project design, implementation, review, and assessment. There is a lack of literature about why community members are not involved in the community development projects in Kenya (Kaseje et al., 1987; Munene & Thakhathi, 2017; Muthuri et al., 2009; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013). In this qualitative case study, I explored employees' perceptions of an NGO to understand better community members' involvement in community development projects in Kenya. Some organizations do not involve community members in their projects due to cultural barriers, illiteracy, internal conflict and political interference, personal and organizational interest, disasters, and natural calamities. Organizations that engage community members achieve effectiveness and

smoother implementation thanks to local ownership and community members participating. If favorable results and sustainability are expected, community members' engagement in project implementation should be the norm across all humanitarian and development organizations. Applying community members' involvement in implementing projects creates trust and community ownership, leading to project sustainability.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

I will identify a population that can provide rich, descriptive accounts of the community members' involvement in community development projects in Kenya. These will be people who (a) can provide in-depth descriptions of the topic and (b) are willing to take the time to talk to a researcher about those topics.

Research Question

The following research question will serve as a guide for this in-depth qualitative interview study: What key factors influence community members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, reviewing, and assessing community development projects in Kenya?

Definition of the Phenomenon of Interest

The phenomenon of interest for this study is community members' involvement in community development projects in Kenya. This study will spell out gaps and opportunities for future research and draw attention to the importance of involving community members in community development projects. Community members' involvement may translate into increased impact and more people benefiting from such projects. Community development projects are forces of social change by uplifting poor rural communities' life. Community members' involvement in community development projects may lead to ownership necessary for increasing projects' sustainability and impact.

Review of Literature

I have explored prior research studies on community members' involvement in planning, designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating community development projects in Kenya. I reviewed articles about the lack of community members' participation and why community members are not involved in implementing and managing the community development projects in Kenya. The articles reviewed included those written on community participation, community development, community involvement, stakeholder, and stakeholder involvement. Researchers have studied and published articles on the impact and benefits of community and stakeholders' participation in research, land management, and land rehabilitation programs. There have been studies on community involvement and challenges and the role of community participation in community development, healthcare, rural development, tourism, and public projects in various parts of the world. Other studies emphasize the importance and factors influencing community participation in development programs. Researchers have also explored the relationship between literacy level, social capital, gender, economic status, and involvement in a community development project.

Articles on the evidence of community participation and the effect of community participation at both the community and individual levels in high and upper-middle-income countries are also published. There are studies on the impact of the community-driven development approach, which encourages the involvement of the marginalized community in collaborative planning and budgeting for sustainable socio-economic development. There are articles published on how communities are involved in

identifying, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating community-based projects that

affect the successful implementation of Constituency Development Fund projects in

Kenya. Other studies are on CSOs promoting community participation in governance.

Researchers have studied the benefits of community involvement, community

development, and stakeholder involvement. While some have focused on stakeholder or

community involvement in healthcare, research, and development activities in other parts

of the world, only a few have documented why community development project

managers do not involve community members in their organizational processes in Kenya.

I have explored articles on community involvement in other parts of the world, including

different African countries. Given the gap in the scholarly literature on the lack of

community members' participation in community development projects, I will explore the

experiences of community development workers from the community development

projects.

Community members' involvement is crucial for the successful implementation

and operations of community development projects. The need for more information on

community members' participation in community development projects in Kenya

prompts me to conduct this study (Babalola & Fasokun, 2019; Matipa, 2020). Therefore,

the purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study is to improve the understanding of why

community members are not fully involved in the implementation and management of the

community development projects in Kenya (Kaseje et al., 1987; Munene & Thakhathi,

2017; Muthuri et al., 2009; Nyaguthii & Oyugi, 2013). Understanding the factors that

influence the lack of community members' involvement will identify ways to overcome

this challenge and increase their ownership and participation, leading to successful projects.

Various factors impede community members' participation in making decisions. Gender, age, literacy levels, social capital, access to information, and economic status influence community members' involvement in development programs (Babalola & Fasukun, 2019; Kaseje et al., 1987). Lack of commitment by leaders, lack of information and awareness, corruption, and poor leadership inhibit community members' participation (Benedict, 2010; Chili & Ngxongo, 2017; Hussain & Minaj, 2017; Markey et al., 2010). Organizational leaders should understand why community members are not involved in community development projects.

Theoretical Foundation

The stakeholder theory provides the foundation for this study's scope and design. In his book, Capitalism and Freedom (1962), Milton Friedman discussed the stakeholder theory and defined a stakeholder as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the organization's objectives (Friedman, 1962; Stacy, 2019). The involvement and commitment of stakeholders at different levels, building local institutions' capacity, and defining communities and other actors' roles are essential prerequisites for the community development projects' success (Amede et al., 2007). The stakeholder theory suggests that an organization needs to be cautious and respond to the interests of various groups or individuals who constitute its stakeholders for organizational success (Freeman, 1984; Freeman et al., 2017; Stacy, 2019). Individuals' preferences and interests must be observed and safeguarded. The traditional management model gave the owners of a

company priorities by putting their needs and preferences at the forefront of its

obligations (Omondi & Kinoti, 2020). Stakeholder theory further improved this by

advocating for the needs and involvement of other parties involved, including employees,

suppliers, customers, financiers, communities, governmental bodies, communities,

political groups, and trade unions (Friedman & Miles, 2002).

      The logical connections between the theoretical framework and the nature of my

study include applying the stakeholder theory to understanding and facilitating

community development activities in different parts of the world. Furthermore,

stakeholder involvement ensures rural community development efforts and commitment

to decision-making and execution. It helps coordinate and understand the community

development initiative's needs, resources available, and acceptability. It leads to reduced

wastage and duplication of resources, efficient and effective service delivery, and a more

effective and sustainable impact on beneficiary communities' well-being (Benedict,

2010). It also gives community members direct control over a more sustainable, cost-

effective, democratic, and socially acceptable local resources management (Susilo et al.,

2020). Stakeholder involvement could lead to sustained efforts and more impact on the

community projects.

      Muthuri et al. (2009) conducted a study in Kenya, which confirmed that

community members' involvement helps build the communities' self-sustaining capacities

through empowerment with the skills necessary to contribute to project outcomes. The

municipal council's participatory budgeting process in Porto Alegre in Brazil is another

example of an empowered participatory governance process (Wright, 2010). However,

Benedict (2010) conducted a study in rural Africa. He discovered that those living in those areas were not involved or even aware of the government program to improve their well-being.

Methodological Sources of the Qualitative Interview Study Approach

I will employ a case study to examine the involvement of community members in organizational operations and decision-making. Multiple case studies, where I will apply detailed information-gathering methods, will address the research question in this qualitative study (Walliman, 2005; Yates & Leggett, 2016). The primary data sources are interviews with senior management and program staff members from an NGO in Kenya.

A purposive sampling procedure that only targets relevant individuals, allowing generalization and an in-depth understanding of the problem, will be used. 10 senior management members with leadership responsibility, including the regional director and heads of departments with long experience and institutional memory, and 10 project staff members with a long history of the organization and work with communities, will be interviewed. Interviews with senior management and representatives of the project staff will help gather historical and targeted information and an in-depth understanding of community members' role in the community development projects funded by the NGO.

Purposeful sampling may provide the best method to identify and select information-rich cases (Patton, 2002). The interview will use semi-structured questions leaving room for some flexibility and maintaining a consistent checklist of topics to cover in every interview (Patton, 2015). Questions begin by focusing on participants' experiences with community members' involvement in the community development

project processes, exploring daily project routines, and how involvement is practiced. Using a variety of questions should promote richness and depth of responses.

Interview Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for participating in my study. I am looking forward to learning about your project management experiences at the NGO. As we start, I would like to review the parameters for your participation. You will participate in a one-time individual interview. I will reach out back to you should there arise a need for any clarification. This study is voluntary. Given the measures I have put in place, there are no significant risks or direct benefits to being in the study. However, your participation will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the community members' involvement in community development projects' operations.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Individual Interview Questions

Warm-Up/Beginning

1. Please describe your background:

    i. What is your name?

    ii. What is your role/title?

    iii. How long have you worked with the organization?

2. What is a description of a typical day at work?

Middle

3. How do you promote/encourage community members' involvement in project implementation?

4. What factors help promote community members' involvement in project implementation?

5. What factors limit community members' involvement in project implementation?

6. What are the advantages of community members' participation in project implementation?

7. Describe three things you do not like about involving community members in project implementation.

End

8. Do you have any other information you would like to share?

    Follow-up questions may include clarification or continuation probes.

Closing

Thank you very much for taking the time to share your experiences and project management strategies. Once I conclude the study, I will share a summary of my report with you.

The study aims to help society by fostering community members' involvement in community development projects, leading to increased participation and the feeling of ownership necessary for projects' sustainability and effectiveness.

I look forward to sharing your community members' participatory management strategies to benefit other researchers, community development project managers, and beneficiaries.

Appendix B: Research Recruitment Email

Dear …………,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Management at Walden University in Minneapolis, Minnesota (USA).

I am pursuing my dissertation on Community Members' Involvement in the Community Development Projects in Kenya. This study aims to improve the understanding and promote community members' participation in implementing and managing community development projects in Kenya.

I am requesting to conduct this study within your organization because of your organization's past and current experience in community development work in Kenya. I plan to interview your organization's leadership team and staff members. The interviews will be at a time convenient to the study participants. The interview sessions will be undertaken virtually and should take at most 45 minutes each.

I confirm that:
- I will use interviews to collect data.
- I will record the discussions with the study participants' permission.
- I will always maintain the confidentiality of VSFG and participants. No comments will be ascribed to participants by name in any written document or verbal presentation. Nor will any data from the interview be used to identify participants to a third party.
- You and other participants will be free to withdraw from the research at any time or request that your transcript not be used.
- I will send you and the other participants a copy of the interview questions and the schedule seven days before the interview.
- Upon completing the research, I will send you and other participants a summary of my final report.

I hope that you will help me in pursuing this study. Should you have any queries concerning the nature of the research or are unclear about the extent of your involvement in it, please email me at [email address redacted].

Finally, thank you for taking the time to consider my request, and I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Wanjue

[email address redacted]