STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT-FUNDED CHILD WELFARE PROJECTS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

In Kenya, the Government has developed and implemented policies and enacted laws to protect children. However, thousands are still exposed to violence and abuse, harmful practices, lack of parental care, and sexual exploitation. Children also face specific risks during and after emergencies such as floods, droughts, conflicts, or epidemics. This study therefore sought to investigate the stakeholders' engagement and performance of national government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. Specifically, the study ought to examine the influence of manage stakeholder engagement, and monitor stakeholder engagement on performance of national government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County. The study was guided by stakeholders' theory, and theory of project implementation. This study adopted a descriptive research design. The population targeted for this study was 150 individuals from 6 child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. The sample size comprised of 15 social workers working in child welfare projects in Nairobi City County which was 10% of the target population. In this study, the questionnaire was used to gather and study information. Open-ended questions were used to get answers in the response; close-ended questions was also used to get specific answers. The collection of data was conducted by use of the drop-off and pick-up-later method and the questionnaires were collected after two weeks. This accorded the respondents enough time to answer the questions. Inferential and descriptive statistics were employed for analysis of quantitative data with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25). Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, mean (measure of dispersion), standard deviation, and percentages were used. Inferential data analysis were conducted by use of Pearson correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis. Findings show that a strong significant relationship between manage stakeholder engagement and project performance (r=0.593, p=0.000), and a moderate significant relationship between monitor stakeholder engagement and project performance (r=0.317, p=0.000). The recommendations are; project managers should formulate strategies on how to keep stakeholders motivated during the tenure of the project, and project managers should adopt effective methods to monitor stakeholder engagement in the projects.

Key Words: Stakeholders' Engagement, Manage Stakeholder Engagement, Monitor Stakeholder Engagement, Performance, National Government-Funded Child Welfare Projects, Nairobi County

Background to the Study

Child protection and welfare projects globally are perceived plans that thwart and retort to violence, exploitation, and abuse against children-including child trafficking, neglect, child labor, and harmful cultural practices (United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, 2012). Increased poverty in most developing countries has driven children to abuse and early marriages. However, children ought not to be treated as instruments of public strategy as they too have rights. According to Sepulveda and Nyst, (2012), child protection is a right and state parties are indebted, to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children (ACRWC) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to make it commonly putative. A study in the USA on local child protective services data indicates that 3.3 million children are victims of abuse and negligence. This poses a serious threat as maltreated children /youth present suicide-related behavior. In South Africa, 21% of the child population are orphaned while about 122,000 live in child-headed households and half a million reside in foster care. This has led to child abuse. Rwanda has also had a history of massive massacres that created a ripple effect on most children's well-being that left them Psychological traumatized and abandoned (UNICEF, 2010).

Kenya however, has shown great willingness to fulfilling the rights of children despite many setbacks. There is a great improvement toward recognition of the needs and welfare of children and most funds are allocated to enhance more programs that cater to the welfare of children. According to Xinhua, (2022) Kenyan government has a plan to promote the rights of children and youth in low-income settings. Therefore, Nairobi City County through National government has developed a sound policy and legislative frameworks to boost the welfare of marginalized children and youth. Stakeholder engagement is the systematic identification, analysis, planning and implementation of actions designed to influence stakeholders. A stakeholder engagement strategy identifies the needs of key groups and the sponsor plays a vital role in ensuring those business needs are met (Desai, 2018). Stakeholder engagement helps to maintain stakeholders' interests and achievement of the success of the project (Khan et al.,2021). They also have a right to know the progress of the project, corrective action to be impacted, and the lessons that can be learned from the monitoring and evaluation reports. By being involved, the stakeholder can participate directly in assessing the relevance, performance, and success of the project. Organizations must put in mind individual matters and groups that may influence their activities when making decisions and attaining the goals of the organization (Klaus-Rosinka and Iwko (2021). The performance of a national government-funded project in Kenya will be ascribed to the inputs, processes, outputs, and outcome indicators depending on Nairobi County's goal. Stakeholder engagement in the performance of National government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi county needs to be managed through proper planning and monitoring if project objectives are to be attained (Zhu & Mostafavi, 2017). According to PMBOK knowledge area, project stakeholder engagement process include manage stakeholder engagement, and monitor stakeholder engagement.

Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, the Government has developed and implemented policies and enacted laws to protect children. Kenya has enacted laws and policies to protect children's rights. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya (Article 53) recognises the right of all children to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhumane treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labour. The new Children Act 2022 has taken effect in Kenya. It replaces the 2001 Act and provides enhanced legal provisions to safeguard the rights of children, an important step to better protect the 24 million children in the country. This adds to the country's increasingly strengthened efforts in national planning and action to protect children. However, thousands are still exposed to violence and abuse, harmful practices, lack of parental care, and sexual exploitation. Children also face specific risks during and after emergencies such as floods, droughts, conflicts, or epidemics. According to the 2019 Violence against Children Survey,

implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, 1 in 2 young adults in Kenya experienced violence as a child. Thus 46% of 18 to 24-year-old women faced at least one type of violence either physical, emotional, or sexual during their childhood, as well as 52% of young men in the same age group.

 The prevalence of child marriage among girls stands at 23%. During the financial year, 2019/2020 Child Welfare Society of Kenya has made several gains despite the challenges such as Covid 19 pandemic and opposition from other bodies. It was able to reach out to children, vulnerable young person's families & communities thus creating a positive impact on child protection and enhancing child welfare. Through National Government-Funded child welfare projects in Kenya, 214 children have been rescued and supported with psychosocial support against a target of 15000 children in the entire country. However, the projects have not been sustainable. Performance of child welfare projects in Kenya have been immensely placed under scrutiny. UNICEF (2017) cited that 60% of street children in the government funded rehabilitation programs relapse back to the streets. The Free Primary Education is provided to children living on the streets but they are often sent away due to their low levels of cleanliness, lack of uniforms and inabilities to cope with daily activities. As a result, children living on the streets continue to increase in their numbers, where they face social challenges in their struggle to participate in the wider community.

Several studies have been conducted with a focus on conflicts in child welfare projects around the world most of which have shown that there exists a direct relationship between those conflicts and the performance of these projects. Nevertheless, though most of these studies have focused on child welfare projects' conflicts and they are social, few have looked directly into stakeholder influence on performance of government-funded projects. Despite the government's commitment to realize development through funding of various social protection projects for children; these projects continue to face cost overruns, scope variation, customer dissatisfaction, and delay due to many pitfalls in monitoring and evaluation of projects in Kenya, Hassan (2013). In a number of projects in Kenya, stakeholders are not involved. As a result, this has led to high levels of inclusion and exclusion errors whereby several people who are ineligible are in enrolled the program, and several others who are eligible are excluded. Child welfare projects require many tasks which require monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance with set standards. Poor monitoring of these projects leads to lack of conformity with project plans and as a result, there are subsequent delays.

Objectives of the Study

  i.   To assess the influence of manage stakeholder engagement on performance of national government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya

  ii. To examine the influence of monitor stakeholder engagement on te performance of national government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Stakeholders Theory

Stakeholders Theory was developed by Friedman (2006) and states that the organization in itself is thought of as a group of stakeholders and the purpose of the organization should be to manage their interests, needs and viewpoints. The idea applies to incorporated frameworks including nature and people. The stakeholder theory contends that project supervisors should settle on choices in order to assess the interests of all stakeholders in a project including money related petitioners, yet in addition representatives, clients, networks and administrative authorities (Gareis et al., 2019).

Stakeholders' theory proposes that different groups and an individual would be considered included in the project actors, such as project sponsors, project teams, project communities, project suppliers, project-related government agencies, project users and others, and whoever can impact the progress, outcome, and success and conclusion of the project (Freeman, 2010).

Stakeholders' theory questions the power supposition of interests of investors and advocates that a programme ought to be overseen in light of a legitimate concern for every one of its stakeholders. The theory accepts that values are fundamentally and expressly a part of a project and that project directors need to explain the common feeling of significant worth they make to unite its key stakeholders. At the point when stakeholders get what they need from a project, a feeling of possession and having a place is determined (Tembo, 2016). A projects sustainability relies upon sustaining the relationship with stakeholders; an organization must consider and draw in not only investors, representatives, customers but all the included groups thus, stakeholder connections must be the core principle in making of decisions by management. The whole stakeholder relationship is strategic for the long-haul achievement and survival of an organization; estimation of corporate achievement can't be restricted to the formation of significant worth for just a single stakeholder team (Clarkson, 2015).

The supporters of stakeholder theory do not determine how to make the fundamental tradeoffs among these contending interests; they leave supervisors with a theory that makes it unimaginable for them to settle on intentional choices (Freeman, 2015). Orodho and Nzoka (2019) contends that the decision of maximizing value as the programme scorecard must be supplemented by great practices of management upheld by the vision, procedure and strategies that link members in the programme in its aim of dominating in a competitive environment. A programme can't yield most value if management overlooks the enthusiasm of its stakeholders in the long haul. Disarray and absence of clarity for the organization's stakeholders if the firm don't utilize a successful and clear methodology so as to oversee, assess and report their own execution the distinctive stakeholder teams experience issues in analyzing and valuing the efforts of sustainability.

In stakeholder theory, governmental management and business ethics address standards and values in managing an organization. It identifies and replicas the groups which are stakeholders of a project, and both describes and recommend methods by which management can give due regard to the interests of those groups, (Freeman, 1984). The role of the stakeholder theory in the project is to address effectiveness and efficiency through relation and participation throughout the project life cycle in a project management organization that includes the project sponsor, project champion, project team, project manager, supplier, end-user, customer, contractors, governments, societies. The theory is applicable to the variable on manage stakeholder engagement study since the involvement and participation of stakeholders in national government-funded child welfare projects may improve the government's performance significantly.

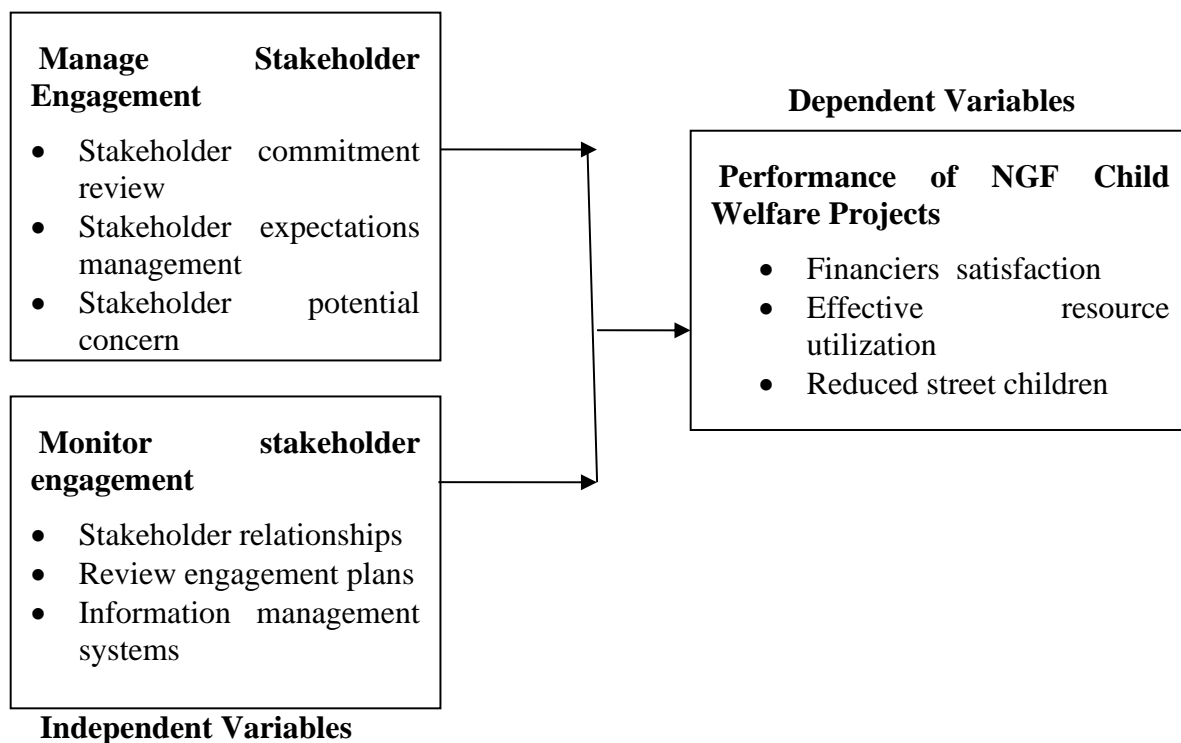**Theory of Project Implementation**

Theory of project implementation was created by Nutt (1986). The author opined that project implementation involves a series of steps taken by responsible organizational agents to plan change process to elicit compliance needed to install changes. Managers use implementation to make planned changes in organizations by creating environments in which changes can survive and be rooted. The purpose of project management is to foresee or predict as many of the dangers and problems as possible and to plan, organize and control activities so that the project is completed as successfully as possible in spite of all the risks. The aim is for the final result to satisfy the project sponsor or purchaser, within the promised timescale and without using more money and other resources that were originally set aside or budgeted. Baker (1998) considered an effectively

implemented project as the project that meets the technical performance specifications and or mission to be performed, and has high level of satisfaction from stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Project implementation strategies have evolved in order to plan, coordinate and control the complex and diverse activities of modern industrial and commercial projects. All projects share one common characteristic – the projection of ideas and activities into new endeavors. (Amachree, 1988). Project managers employ the theory of project implementation to make predetermined changes in organizations by creating environments in which the changes can thrive (Kamau & Muturi, 2015). This theory supports the variable on monitoring stakeholder engagement which guides project managers on how to effectively monitor stakeholder engagement throughout all the project phases.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is an analytical tool with several variations and contexts (Villai, 2015). It is used to make conceptual distinctions and organize ideas, which capture something real and do this in a way that is easy to remember and apply.

Manage   Stakeholder Engagement

- Stakeholder commitment review
- Stakeholder expectations management
- Stakeholder potential concern

Dependent Variables

Performance of NGF Child Welfare Projects

- Financiers satisfaction
- Effective resource utilization
- Reduced street children

Monitor   stakeholder engagement

- Stakeholder relationships
- Review engagement plans
- Information management systems

Independent Variables

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Manage Stakeholder Engagement

Manage Stakeholder Engagement is the process of communicating and working with stakeholders to meet their needs/expectations, address issues as they occur, and foster appropriate stakeholder engagement in project activities throughout the project life cycle. Managing stakeholder engagement entails carrying out the stakeholder management plan that was developed in the Plan Stakeholder Management process. The Manage Stakeholder Engagement process seeks to influence and manage expectations and the engagement of groups of stakeholders and individual stakeholders. Successful stakeholder management could lead to easier project closures, a better representation and empowerment of marginalized stakeholders and better relationships between

stakeholders. These factors influence stakeholder satisfaction with the decision-making process, which could impact project success (Silvius & Schipper, 2019).

Three key aspects of stakeholder management play a role in determining stakeholder satisfaction with the decision-making process. First, the right marginalized stakeholders should be selected and involved (representation). Second, marginalized stakeholders should be empowered (influence). Third, orderly relationships should be developed and maintained between stakeholders (social cohesion) (Vorobjeff, 2018). Manage stakeholder engagement include; stakeholder management plan, communications management plan, change-log and organizational process assets. The communications management plan includes a documentation of stakeholders needs for communication requirements. Every stakeholder needs information for a specific purpose and thus, the formats, level of detail, content and language might need some alteration from stakeholder to stakeholder. All of this need to be taken into consideration as inputs when managing stakeholder engagement (Nair, 2020).

Monitor Stakeholder Engagement

Monitor stakeholder engagement is the process of monitoring overall project stakeholder relationships and adjusting strategies and plans for engaging stakeholders. This process compares the stakeholder management plan with the results from engaging stakeholders. Monitoring is the systematic collection and analysis and information as a project progresses.

Stakeholder monitoring involves inspection, progress measurement and continuous monitoring (Kusek & Rist, 2022). One way to help satisfy stakeholder concerns and promote transparency is to involve project-affected stakeholders in monitoring the implementation of mitigation measures or other environmental and social programs. Such participation, and the flow of information generated through this process, can also encourage local stakeholders to take a greater degree of responsibility for their environment and welfare in relation to the project, and to feel empowered that they can do something practical to address issues that affect their lives. Participatory monitoring also tends to strengthen relationships between the project and its stakeholders

Besides managing stakeholder engagement, project managers should assure that they and their teams monitor stakeholder relationships, and modify engagement strategies and plans during the project when needed. As is the case for all knowledge areas, project managers have a critical responsibility to track, review and regulate the progress and performance of the project, and accordingly to identify areas where modifications are required in the plan, and to perform corrective and preventive actions if needed. Stakeholders' interests and power levels may change during the project. This leads to a change in strategies to engage them. Moreover, a stakeholder's support of the project objectives and outcomes may change in an opposite direction. It may move from supportive to resistant due to various factors. Supporting stakeholders may find new information that isn't in favor of their interests, and even may give harm. In our rental vehicle booking case, assume that one of the insurance companies that we work with is not included in the new system as an insurance provider (Project Management Institute, 2017).

Empirical Review

Manage Stakeholder Engagement and Project Performance

Mantey (2023) examined the nature of communication and engagement processes adopted by the internal stakeholders of UL and PPRC in the light of efficient management. Data was collected through conducting interviews and secondary data. Results showed communication; engagement opportunities and dialogue are extensive. Evidence suggests that internal stakeholder interactions

are far-reaching and that barriers to formal and informal communication have not endangered the engagement process. Accordingly, the study concludes that communication among the internal stakeholders is indeed facilitating an effective and efficient management of the programme commending its initiators for their foresight. Since the partnership is laudable, it needs support for its long-term sustainability.

Okafor (2022) analyzed community stakeholder satisfaction in the Nigerian construction project industry. The study relied on secondary data from existing literature. Interviews were used to collect data, with the resulting data serving as the baseline for examining and improving community stakeholder satisfaction in the construction project industry. In conclusion, the findings identify stakeholders' engagement, relationship management, and satisfaction factors as critical nodes for establishing the community stakeholder satisfaction framework. Sarpong (2019) studied stakeholder management strategies for information technology projects in mdas in the Greater Accra Region. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The results of the analysis indicated that, sponsor is the most ranked stakeholders followed by customers. Developing of project plan as well as recruiting of staff as a role of project manager are the most ranked for the roles played by project manager. The communication and interrelationships among stakeholders mostly determine the total performance of an IT project, and have the critical responsibility for bringing a project to a successful completion. IT project involves processes of planning, scheduling and controlling. Proper management of all these will lead to a successful completion of the project.

Karama, Iravo, Kagiri (2019) sought to determine effect of stakeholders' engagement on delivery of devolved services in selected counties Kenya. The study used structured and open-ended questionnaires to collect data from 384 drawn from a population of 35,444 staff from 8 counties. findings showed that stakeholder's engagement enhances positively and significantly contribute to delivery of devolved services in selected counties in Kenya. Stakeholder's engagement is a strategic approach to management, which equips managers, employees and stakeholders at various levels with a set of tools and techniques to regularly plan, continuously monitor, periodically measure and review performance of organization or projects in terms of indicators and targets for efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

Ngumi and Senelwa (2021) studied the role of stakeholders' involvement on the implementation of ICT projects in Kenya. This study was restricted to the KAA Head Office and will focus on 128 staff. It applied a descriptive research design. The study used self-administered questionnaires on 128 respondents. Results showed that stakeholder engagement management had the strongest positive correlation with implementation of ICT Projects. The organisation understands the requirements and roles that each stakeholder can play in the organization. Statistics of stakeholder engagement management indicated that although the organisation understands the requirements and roles that each stakeholder can play and the complexity of ICT projects has pushed it to hire consultants, it has been unable to: exceed the performance expectations of stakeholders; establish the use of CSR as a strategy for meeting stakeholder expectations; classify stakeholders according to their characteristics in order to improve the management of their expectations; and study how ICT is spoken in the planning phase so as to better understand potential stakeholder concerns.

Monitor Stakeholder Engagement and Project Performance

Tengan and Aigbavboa (2017) studied level of stakeholder engagement in project delivery and participation in monitoring and evaluation of public construction projects in Ghana. Both structured interview guide and questionnaire schedule were used to collect relevant data for the study. A desk review of journal articles, books, conference proceedings, published and unpublished thesis work from the institutions' database and internet sources relevant to the study ware adopted to underpin the study. . Six key stakeholders were identified in local government project delivery in Ghana. Results showed that there was a high level of stakeholder engagement in project delivery whiles participation of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation of public

projects at the local government level was very poor. The poor participation of stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation of local government project delivery may have contributed to the many challenges faced in local government project delivery in Ghana. These challenges included procurement lapses which resulted in bad payment schedules, non-conformity to project specification, delayed project delivery, lack of health and safety compliance, client's dissatisfaction, and corrupt practices in the construction industry.

Zaman, Ford, and Zagt (2023) studied stakeholders' participation in monitoring & evaluation and performance of water supply projects in Australia. The study adopted the descriptive research design. The target population was 250 stakeholders in Water Supply Project (Cotter Dam) in Australia . Questionnaires were used to gather the data. The study underscores the critical importance of stakeholder participation in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for the successful execution of water supply projects. Active involvement of stakeholders, including government bodies, environmental organizations, local communities, and consumers, leads to improved decision-making, transparency, and accountability throughout a project's lifecycle.

Ngumi and Senelwa (2021) sought to determine the role of stakeholders' involvement on the implementation of ICT projects in Kenya. This study was restricted to the KAA Head Office and will focus on 128 staff. Findings showed that there was a strong positive agreement amongst the respondents that the organisation had implemented all the aspects of stakeholder control under review except participatory monitoring and evaluation, which only received a moderately positive endorsement. Kotut and Sakataka (2018) sought to investigate effective communications strategies on stakeholder's involvement. The study targeted both the project management team and the users of the projects identified. A sample Primary sources and secondary sources of data were employed during the data collection process. The questionnaires and the interview schedules formed the main primary data collection instruments. The findings of the study indicated that formal organized meetings has enabled management team to devise strategies, make decisions and implement action and that projects with high stakeholder participation are never rejected by citizen. The study concluded that successful completion of construction projects is dependent on meeting the expectation of stakeholders and managing relationships with stakeholders, thus need for regular formal meetings between the contractor, project client and stakeholders. The study concluded that public relations and communication department are very significant in project implementation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive research design. Creswell (2017) defines the descriptive research design as an approach to undertaking research that involves describing the relationships and the nature of variables in a study context. According to the State Department for Social Protection, there are six street children programs in Nairobi County with a total of 150 social workers. The population targeted for this study was the social workers from 6 child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study used census survey therefore all the 150 social workers were considered as the study sample size. In this study, the questionnaire was used to gather and study information.

In this study, the researcher conducted a pilot with 10% of the sample as recommended by (Kultar, 2017). Therefore, 15 social workers were used for piloting. The social workers were selected randomly from the organizations. The pilot respondents did not take part in the actual data collection. This study used both inferential and descriptive statistics to analyze the data. Pearson R correlation was used to measure strength and the direction of linear relationship between variables. Multiple regression models were fitted to the data in order to determine how the independent variables affect the dependent variable.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The sample size of study was 150 social workers drawn from six street children programs in Nairobi County. The pilot test respondents were 10% of the total hence 15 respondents. The researcher distributed 135 questionnaires to the respondents and 118 were successfully filled and returned. Thus the response rate of was 87.4 which is adequate as recommended by Baruch and Holtom (2008) that a response rate of least 70% is an excellent good response rate.

Manage Stakeholder Engagement

The first objective sought to assess the influence of manage stakeholder engagement on performance of national government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. Social workers were asked to tick on the extent to which they agree/disagree with statements related to manage stakeholder engagement. Findings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Manage Stakeholder Engagement

Key: SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA= Strongly agree, M=Mean.

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
The organisation understands the requirements and roles that each stakeholder can play in the organization	6	5.1	14	11.9	2	1.7	15	12.7	81	68.6	4.28
The organisation has been able to exceed the performance expectations of stakeholders	18	15.3	7	5.9	4	3.4	19	16.1	70	59.3	3.98
The organisation has established the use of social work as a strategy for meeting stakeholder expectations	21	17.8	9	7.6	4	3.4	17	14.4	67	56.8	3.85
The organisation classifies stakeholders according to their characteristics in order to improve the management of their expectations	19	16.1	6	5.1	2	1.7	37	31.4	54	45.8	3.86
The organisation frequently assess stakeholder's commitment	79	66.9	18	15.3	4	3.4	11	9.3	6	5.1	2.30
The organization hires consultants to improve its ability to address potential stakeholder concern	3	2.5	6	5.1	2	1.7	15	12.7	92	78.0	3.69
The stakeholder expectations are managed effectively	17	14.4	2	1.7	6	5.1	21	17.8	72	61.0	4.02
Stakeholders concerns are addressed on time	85	72.0	12	10.2	2	1.7	10	8.5	9	7.6	2.26

N=118

Findings show that the respondents strongly agreed that; the organisation understands the requirements and roles that each stakeholder can play in the organization (m=4.28). Respondents also agreed that; the stakeholder expectations are managed effectively (m=4.02), the organisation has been able to exceed the performance expectations of stakeholders (m=3.98), the organisation has established the use of social work as a strategy for meeting stakeholder expectations (m=3.85), the organisation classifies stakeholders according to their characteristics in order to improve the management of their expectations (m=3.86), and he organization hires consultants to improve its ability to address potential stakeholder concern (m=3.69). Social workers disagreed that the organisation frequently assess stakeholder's commitment (m=2.30) and stakeholders concerns are addressed on time (m=2.26).

Findings imply that the organizations make great efforts to manage stakeholders. They clearly understand the roles of each stakeholders which ensures that roles are not duplicated among the stakeholders. The expectations of the stakeholders are also managed effectively which has enabled the organizations to meet and exceed the expectations of the stakeholders. Social work is an effective strategy to the expectations of the stakeholders since during social work the social workers interact with stakeholders closely and are able to understand their needs and priorities. Organizations also hire professionals to improve the ability to address stakeholder concerns. There is however poor assessment of stakeholder commitments and stakeholders concersna re not addressed on time. Findings are in support Ngumi and Senelwa (2021) that understanding the requirements and roles that each stakeholder can play in the organization enhances project performance and hiring consultants helps to understand the requirements and roles that each stakeholder can play.

Monitor Stakeholder Engagement

The second objective aimed at examining the influence of monitor stakeholder engagement on performance of national government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. Social workers were asked to tick on the extent to which they agree/disagree with statements related to monitor stakeholder engagement. Findings are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Monitor Stakeholder Engagement

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Monitoring tools adopted by the organization are effective identifying stakeholder engagement loopholes	69	58.5	21	17.8	2	1.7	20	16.9	6	5.1	2.08
The organisation has been monitoring the risk tolerance of each stakeholder, the levels of support, and project expectations	18	15.3	6	5.1	20	16.9	8	6.8	66	55.9	3.83
The organization has baselines for stakeholder involvement in monitoring its activities at all implementation stages	17	14.4	4	3.4	8	6.8	20	16.9	69	58.5	4.02
The organisation has applied the use of participatory monitoring and evaluation	18	15.3	7	5.9	8	6.8	20	16.9	65	55.1	3.91
The organisation has been reviewing stakeholder engagement plans regularly upon necessity	70	59.3	16	13.6	4	3.4	22	18.6	6	5.1	1.97
Metrics are used to check risks in stakeholder engagement organization	77	65.3	8	6.8	4	3.4	10	8.5	19	16.1	2.05
Government and NGO interactions have been used to inform changes to stakeholder engagement plan	0	0	0	0	18	15.3	57	48.3	43	36.4	4.23

N=118

Findings show that majority of social workers strongly agreed that thegovernment and NGO interactions have been used to inform changes to stakeholder engagement plan (m=4.23). respondents also agreed that; the organization has baselines for stakeholder involvement in monitoring its activities at all implementation stages (m=4.02), the organisation has applied the use of participatory monitoring and evaluation (m=3.91), and the organisation has been monitoring the risk tolerance of each stakeholder, the levels of support, and project expectations (m=3.83). Respondents disagreed that; monitoring tools adopted by the organization are effective

identifying stakeholder engagement loopholes (m=2.08), metrics are used to check risks in stakeholder engagement organization (m=2.05), and the organisation has been reviewing stakeholder engagement plans regularly upon necessity (m=1.97).

Findings imply that the organizations monitor stakeholder engagement though they are efforts to monitor stakeholder engagement are hampered by lack of effective monitoring tools. The risk tolerance are monitoring to keep track on the stakeholders that have high likelihood of abandoning the project mission and the stakeholders that are fully committed to the project implementation. The stakeholders have not been reviewed regularly which may make it hard to keep updated records and activities of the stakeholders. Findings are in agreement with Kotut and Sakataka (2018) concluded that successful completion of construction projects is dependent on meeting the expectation of stakeholders and managing relationships with stakeholders, thus need for regular formal meetings between the contractor, project client and stakeholders.

Project Performance

The researcher further sought to find out how the government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya have been performing. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on performance of the government-funded child welfare projects. Findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Project Performance

Key: SD=Strongly disagree, D=Disagree, NS=Not Sure, A=Agree, SA= Strongly agree, M=Mean.

Statements	SD		D		N		A		SA		M
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Project financiers are satisfied with projects	17	14.4	2	1.7	6	5.1	12	10.2	81	68.6	4.17
Funds are dispersed on time	79	66.9	2	1.7	10	8.5	14	11.9	13	11.0	1.98
Project resources are adequate	48	40.7	17	14.4	23	19.5	12	10.2	18	15.3	2.45
Projects have been effective in reducing street children	17	14.4	6	5.1	4	3.4	13	11.0	78	66.1	3.91
Project funds are well utilized	15	12.7	63	53.4	16	13.6	20	16.9	4	3.4	1.82
The projects are a safe haven for abused street children	14	11.9	5	4.2	6	5.1	37	31.4	56	47.5	4.12
Beneficiaries are satisfied with projects	9	7.6	10	8.5	2	1.7	12	10.2	85	72.0	4.08

N=118

Findings show that respondents agreed that; project financiers are satisfied with projects (m=4.17), the projects are a safe haven for abused street children (m=4.12), beneficiaries are satisfied with projects (m=4.08), and projects have been effective in reducing street children (m=3.91). Findings also show that the social workers disagreed that; funds are dispersed on time (m=1.98), project funds are well utilized (m=1.82), and project resources are adequate (m=2.45). Findings imply that the project managers make great efforts to ensure that the project objectives are achieved. This is proved by the fact that the projects have been effective in reducing the number of street children in the city and the financiers are satisfied with the project outcomes. The children homes are safe haven for abused street children meaning that the projects have achieved their mission of protecting street children. The projects are however strained by resources availability. The project funds are also underutilized and the funds are delayed which delay implementation of the projects.

Coefficient of Correlation

The study used correlation to assess the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. The Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation (r) was used and correlation was significant at <0.005 and any value >0.005 was considered insignificant. In addition, r of <0.3 shows weak correlation, 0.31-0.49 moderate correlation while >0.5 shows a strong correlation. Correlation results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Coefficient of Correlation

Variables		Performance	Manage	Monitor
Project performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
Manage	Pearson Correlation	.593[**]	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
Monitor	Pearson Correlation	.317[**]	.037	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.690	

There is a strong significant relationship between manage stakeholder engagement and project performance   (r=0.593, p=0.000). This implies that manage stakeholder engagement has a significant influence on project performance. Results are in agreement with Ngumi and Senelwa (2021) that stakeholder engagement management had a strong positive correlation with implementation of projects.

There is a moderate significant relationship between monitor stakeholder engagement and project performance (r=0.317, p=0.000). This implies that monitor stakeholder engagement   has a significant influence on project performance . Findings concur with Kotut and Sakataka (2018) that regular formal meetings between the contractor, project client and stakeholders have a significant relationship with project performance.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to measure how a unit change in the independent variables would cause a unit change in the dependent variables. Results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 5-7.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	r^2	Adjusted r^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.879	0.773	0.770	.933

Predicators: (constant) manage stakeholder engagement, monitor stakeholder engagement

Results show that the value of R squared was 0.773 implying that there was 77.3% variation of performance of national government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya due to the changes in identify stakeholder, plan stakeholder engagement, manage stakeholder engagement, monitor stakeholder engagement. This means that other stakeholder engagement practices that this study did not focus on contribute to 32.7% of performance of national government-funded child welfare projects.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	146.238	4	36.560	41.996	.000[b]
	Residual	98.372	113	.871		
	Total	244.610	117			

Predicators: (constant) manage stakeholder engagement, monitor stakeholder engagement

Project performance

The ANOVA tests whether the overall regression model is a good fit for the data. The table shows that the independent variables statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, $F(4, 113) = 41.996$, $p < .0005$. The regression model is therefore a good fit of the data.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant/Y Intercept	2.927	.777		3.769	.000
Manage	.810	.100	.676	8.122	.000
Monitor	.520	.067	.522	7.795	.000

Findings show that holders all factors at constant zero, performance of national government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya would be at 2.927. Findings also show that; a unit change in manage stakeholder engagement would cause a unit significant change in project performance by a factor of ($\beta = 0.810$; $t = 8.122$; $p < 0.05$), and a unit change in monitor stakeholder engagement would cause a unit significant change in project performance by a factor of ($\beta = 0.520$; $t = 7.795$; $p < 0.05$). Findings imply that stakeholders' engagement process have a great influence on performance of national government-funded child welfare projects in Nairobi County, Kenya. Findings support Ochieng (2016) that interaction with stakeholders and involvement of stakeholders in evaluation and monitoring are   critical factors for project performance.

Conclusion

Management of stakeholders throughout the project cycle is curial for the success of the project and it involves understanding their influence and addressing expectations or concerns. The management plan lays down the measures that will support positive impact and minimize the negative effects of stakeholders throughout the project life cycle. Different stakeholders have different demands and interests in a project. Management of stakeholders plays a pivotal role to ensure project success. This is because it fosters and opens up communication channels between the project managers and stakeholders; this allows quicker feedback, making it easier to redirect and or change things timeously.

Monitoring of stakeholder engagement helps in keeping the priorities in check and make sure that the stakeholders are fully involved and not overlooked. Monitoring helps in the identification of deviation from the project plan to enable corrective action. In order to effectively monitor stakeholder engagement, the organizations hire consultants to offer professional guidance on the best methods to monitor stakeholders. Social workers are also used as a means of monitoring stakeholder engagement since they work closely with them and are hence in a good position to assess committed and non-committed stakeholders. The expectations of stakeholders are reviewed regularly to ensure that their expectations are met and their roles are as well clearly defined.

Recommendations

Project managers should formulate strategies on how to keep stakeholders motivated during the tenure of the project. Stakeholders should be given the chance to participate in planning as they are better placed in identifying the urgency in the deliverables in the project especially during the implementation stage. Project beneficiaries should have a regular training in order to increase their understanding about the project and gaining skills and knowledge about the project performance

Project managers should adopt effective methods to monitor stakeholder engagement in the projects. This will enable them to effectively monitor the engagement of the stakeholder and improve their relationship with stakeholder. There should be an increased frequency of the meetings with stakeholders in order to satisfy stakeholders' perspective of being part and parcel of the project. Direct engagement of stakeholders rather than going through layers of groups is important for timely decision-making.

Areas for Further Study

A study focusing on other stakeholder engagement process which causes 40.2% variance in project performance.

A similar study in another rural county in Kenya to determine if the stakeholder engagement process influences performance of child welfare projects in rural counties in Kenya

A study on influence o stakeholder engagement on performance of other projects implemented by NGOs in Nairobi County

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