ABSTRACT

The NGO sector in Kenya has made enormous contributions to the development process. NGOs are in all development sectors of the economy providing basic services that include education, economic employment, environment and natural resource conservation, agriculture, health, training and credit facilities, technical co-operation, training and awareness. Kameri-Mbote (2002) reported that NGOs agenda and existence has been multifaceted and the following specific societal changes have spurred the formation, growth and development of NGOs: worldwide economic recessions, emergence of new diseases, recurrence of armed conflict, environmental degradation and climate change and dwindling job opportunities due to population explosion. Jillo and Kisinga (2008) agreed that NGOs have experienced increased economic importance in Kenya as providers of health, educational, social and environmental services. In addition Fowler (1997) agrees that NGOs have a lot of potential that had been exploited and unexploited. They are seen as better able to enable the people to produce their own development than the state.

The study carried out a survey of the factors influencing the performance of projects undertaken by community based NGOs in Marakwet District in various sectors that include enormous investment in: micro credit finance and agri-business, HIV / AIDS awareness, Girl-child education and anti-FGM programmes, community counselling centres, vocational skills training, primary health care and family planning, poverty eradication and peace building initiatives, education and early childhood development programmes. The objective of the study was to establish factors influencing the performance of community based NGO projects in Marakwet District with a focus on project managers' perceptions.

Stratified random sampling method was used to select NGOs that comprised the study sample. The NGOs which operate in the District were stratified sectorally, assigned random numbers and proportionate sample was then picked randomly. 52 individual NGOs which represent 25% of the sampling frame were studied. The study found out that projects were central in delivering NGOs aims but still projects fail in Community based NGOs. The study revealed that evaluation of NGOs was highly valued but there was need to involve all the stakeholders. Bottom-up approach in strategic planning and beneficiary participation was highly encouraged. The critical factors influencing NGOs projects were: need for project management skills; participatory evaluation and beneficiary participation and partnership with government, NGOs and the funding agencies.

The study attempted to establish critical factors influencing the performance of community based NGO projects and inform donors and NGO managers to develop effective strategies for their organizations.
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