

# Influence Of Social Heterogeneity On Performance Of Development Projects In Lugari Sub County, Kakamega County, In Kenya

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**Abstract-** This study explored how social heterogeneity influenced the performance of three specific development projects, namely Western Kenya Community Driven Development and Flood Mitigation Project, National Agricultural and Livestock Extension Programme & Small Dairy Commercialization Programme within Lugari, Kakamega County. Many studies have raised alarm on the poor performance of donor funded projects and have advanced different reasons as being responsible and so is this study. The findings from this study aim at providing insight into the subject of study and furthermore add new knowledge to the existing body in the field of social development and more specifically on the place of social interactions. The study employed a descriptive research design where 94 households were sampled through cluster sampling technique. It adopted a questionnaire as the tool for collecting required data from the respondents. Data reliability was ensured through administering a test and re-test on a pilot scale to a group of individuals who exhibited similar characteristics to the actual sample which brought out the same results. Opinions were then sought from experts/lecturers in the department of Social and Development Studies to establish the validity of the adopted research instrument. Descriptive statistics was used for analyzing the collected data. The collected data was organized and analyzed through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and MS Excel which supported to determine the Sum, Mean and Standard deviation. The analyzed results were presented in tables. It also confirmed level of influence for each of the variables through a correlational test using Pearson product moment which analyzed the data and p-value tested the significance level. The analysis established that three variables; economic, educational, and social capital diversities positively influenced project performance while ethnic diversity had both a positive and negative influence. This study also revealed that these projects' benefits accrued only to fewer people and still were not long-lasting making the projects unsustainable. The study makes the following recommendations: that ethnic diversity need to clearly be understood and factored into the design and implementation of projects if they are to achieve desired results. Secondly, that deliberate effort by development agents should be made to ensure the wealth status of project members does not take over to undermine the desire by those from the lower economic strata to express themselves and participate in collective initiatives within their communities. Thirdly, that development agents be

cognizant of the twin role education levels play in shaping the direction of a project where it could aid or thwart collective action. Finally, that social capital building in its different forms is vital to enhancing project performance, so this should be harnessed.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Development agenda, which connotes transforming a state of a society from one lower level to a better one has been and remains a global going concern with the developing countries-better known as third world being the major focus and has registered significant rise annually. In 2022 alone for instance, combined aid channeled towards development within the developing world was \$204 billion, being an increase from \$186 billion recorded in 2021 (OECD, 2023). While this is the case, multiple studies have indicated that development efforts by diverse agencies across the globe have generally failed to achieve expected benefits or they were rated as performing below the expectations. This low or negative score on project poor performance has kept pricking the minds and conscience of development practitioners as well as scholars throughout development history (Yalegama, et. al, 2015). To which Barakat, Bendou, and Martin, (2015) are categorical and say this remains a grey area. This worrisome situation has to a large extent characterized the level of donor fatigue that is commonplace.

Apparently, the documented failures are noticeable globally, regionally, and locally. A sample of recorded project failure include within the USA, where a study documented that only 32% projects were reported to have succeeded, 44% were challenged and 24% of projects failed (Standish Group, 2013). It is so within Japan whose Community-Based Disaster Management programs were reported to have underperformed despite multiple donors and government resources pumped into it. Other example are cases of the improved stove project in South America, the World Bank assistance programs in Haiti (1986 to 2002), the Spanish funded water pump project in Afghanistan, as well as community forestry programs in Nepal. All these failed the sustainability test or were rated unsatisfactory (Bryan et al. 2009). This review at the global arena demonstrates a painful reality that a high percentage of development projects are recorded failures.

With this challenge being such rampant, is the reason why many experts, scholars and practitioners are disturbed.

### THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The government of Kenya with support from diverse development partners has been carrying out development programmes aimed at reducing poverty and improving the living standards and welfare of the majority rural poor populations. Yet little is available to show for these efforts. Three programmes-National Agriculture Livestock Extension Programme (NALEP-SIDA), Small Holder Dairy Commercialization Programme (SDCP) and World Bank's Western Kenya Community Driven Development and Flood Mitigation Project (WKCDD/FMP) have been implemented at different points in time in the last 15 years within Lugari and Matete divisions of Lugari Sub- County, Kakamega County for the goal of transforming communities and raising much of the poor out of their situation. Documented evidence indicates that only between 30 and 50 percent projects are rated as completed from these interventions (Philippe, 2013). Besides, completion rate, it is recorded that the challenge arises at the rate of projects' operationalization which is very low (OPTO, 2006, Bonilla, et al (2017) since many beneficiary communities are still suffering from food insecurity (Philippe, 2013).

Lugari sub county which is the location of this study has two distinct socio-cultural and economic set of characteristics with Lugari division being a quasi-rural setup but cosmopolitan settlement scheme with less traditional and cultural ties but instead occupied by diverse social-cultural groups and communities co-existing together. On the other hand, Matete division is purely a rural setup that is characterized by indigenous and near to homogeneous socio-cultural groups sharing strong cultural and traditional beliefs and practices but differentiated only by their clans. This study is interested in examining how social heterogeneity's ethnic, income, educational and social capital diversities have contributed to the performance rate of the above listed projects.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study was based on the following research objectives:

- I. To determine the influence of project beneficiaries' ethnic diversity on the performance of development projects in Kakamega County.
- II. To examine the influence of project beneficiaries' income diversity on the performance of development projects in Kakamega County.
- III. To determine the influence of project beneficiaries' educational and capacity diversity on the performance of development projects Kakamega County.
- IV. To assess the influence of project beneficiaries' social capital diversity on the performance of development projects in Kakamega County.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was based on the following research objectives:

- I. How does project beneficiaries' ethnic diversity influence the performance of development projects in Kakamega County?

- II. What influence does project beneficiaries' income differences have on the performance of development projects in Kakamega County?
- III. Do project beneficiaries' educational differences have an influence on the performance of development projects in Kakamega County?
- IV. Do the existing differences in social capital among project beneficiaries have any influence on the performance of development projects in Kakamega County?

### THEORITICAL REVIEW

#### 2.3.1 Social Development theory

The Social development theory provides an explanation for the qualitative changes taking place within the social fabrics of a particular group which help it achieve its goals (Jacobs, et.al,1999). This theory argues that development is a process of social change occurs when there is increasing awareness within the membership of a respective society and often results in a better organization of the said social system. This is so in the sense that when society senses and foresees new and better opportunities which can catapult it into some new level of progress, the said society will endeavor to develop new organizational structures that can support it to exploit the anticipated openings successfully. According to Jacobs, et al (1999), these restructured organizations stand better chances of harnessing the available energies, skills, and resources towards the identified opportunities to ensure they are well utilized to achieve those anticipated results.

There are basic elements that propel development to occur according to this theory. First, a motive driving the social change plus relevant preconditions which provide for the said change to occur. Secondly, is society's organizational capacity of the resources in a manner that counters the challenges and meets the opportunities. In essence, there must be pioneers who introduce and run with the innovations, new practices, or habits that are often resisted in their formative stages by the conservatives but will ultimately accept, imitate, organize, and use these innovations which eventually get full community's acceptance. This theory supports the study to analyze how the different capacities through the different aspects of social heterogeneity which is exhibited within the two communities and how they impact on levels of adoption and performance in projects.

#### 2.3.2 Social Change and Human Development Theory

This theory explains how changes in the socio-demographic state of a social system reshape the cultural values and environments which are responsible for learning that eventually shift pathways that direct a society's developmental journey (Greenfield, 2009). In this case, cultural values are reorganized by adaptive processes leading to individualism while its developmental outlook moves more toward independent social behaviour as any ecological variable attempts to move in a "society" direction. The theory asserts that socio-cultural environments are not stagnant for both the developed and developing world which by implication ought to be treated as a dynamic process in developmental research. To Greenfield, this theory explains how changes occur in socio-demographic conditions and push further transformations within cultural values and developmental patterns across many generations. The

differences in the developmental levels and /or rate of adoption of development initiatives that are witnessed within the study area can be attributed to the different stages of development the two communities are. This theory becomes relevant as it helps to look at the two sampled communities with a keen interest to establish to what extent this noted variable influences the dynamics witnessed.

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

In this review, ethnic diversity will also be referred to as socio-cultural diversity. Seen as a key element within social heterogeneity, the review of the role of socio-cultural heterogeneity in determining the direction of a community's developmental direction is of paramount essence. Two opposing arguments have been advanced regarding the role of this element to development projects. There is one strong assertion that where socio-cultural heterogeneity exists, there exist challenges in managing of common public resources since differences in ethnicity, social class, or caste propagate differences in preferences and interests amidst the group making any effort to build agreements as well as enforcing social norms difficult. The argument further goes that such heterogeneity is responsible for distrust, resentment, discrimination, superiority or dominance of one over the other (Shiferaw, Kedebe, & Ratna, 2009; Shiferaw, Tewodros, & Reddy, 2009; Andersson & Agrawal, 2011;). At the global stage, this is confirmed from studies regarding access to local Common Public Resources and decision-making forums in India, infrastructure maintenance of irrigation structures in Mexico and South India, community led water projects within India and Nepal as well as on US localities (Bardhan & Dayton-Johnson, 2001) and Alesina & Ferrara, 2002).

Having considered the reviews on the role of socio-cultural diversity, this section now delves into the contribution of Income diversity as another key aspect of social heterogeneity. This is simply about a situation where there is wealth inequality between members of a social group. In their study of this subject within the US, Alesina and Ferrara, (2002) found that low trust among people within certain communities was resulting from income heterogeneity. It further revealed that people within such groups were interested in pursuing social activities which were dominated by people from their own income bracket. Other studies give similar results as reported in Nepal and India as well as twenty-nine African and Latin American communities. This scenario was also recorded within the study on the participatory projects and social funds for Jamaica, Malawi, Nigargwa, and Zambia. The common theme among all these is the domination of the process by "prime movers" (Swati N. et al, (2018). Apparently, it is

coming out as a fundamental principle that differences in incomes determines how people within a social group relate to one another and more importantly how they cooperate towards a common goal that requires a pronouncement or contribution of resources.

Many studies opine that education and capacity differences within any given community play a significant role in how they perceive, respond to and decide to participate in socially conceived projects. It was for instance reported that the more years of schooling one had directly contributes to their higher level of participation within socio-economic initiatives. This is because more education enhances one's level of social interaction as well as the quality of socio-political outcomes. This implies that a civic participation process can only be built if those who participate have a higher level of education as well as information regarding the issue. This was the case in the studies conducted both in the US and in India (Alesina, 2000). In their study on Nigeria, Muhammad, et.al, (2011) found out that educational level was a positive and significant factor in influencing beneficiaries' participation within a social collection agenda or project. This is in concurrence, Bisrat and Kassa (2016) in their study within Ethiopia.

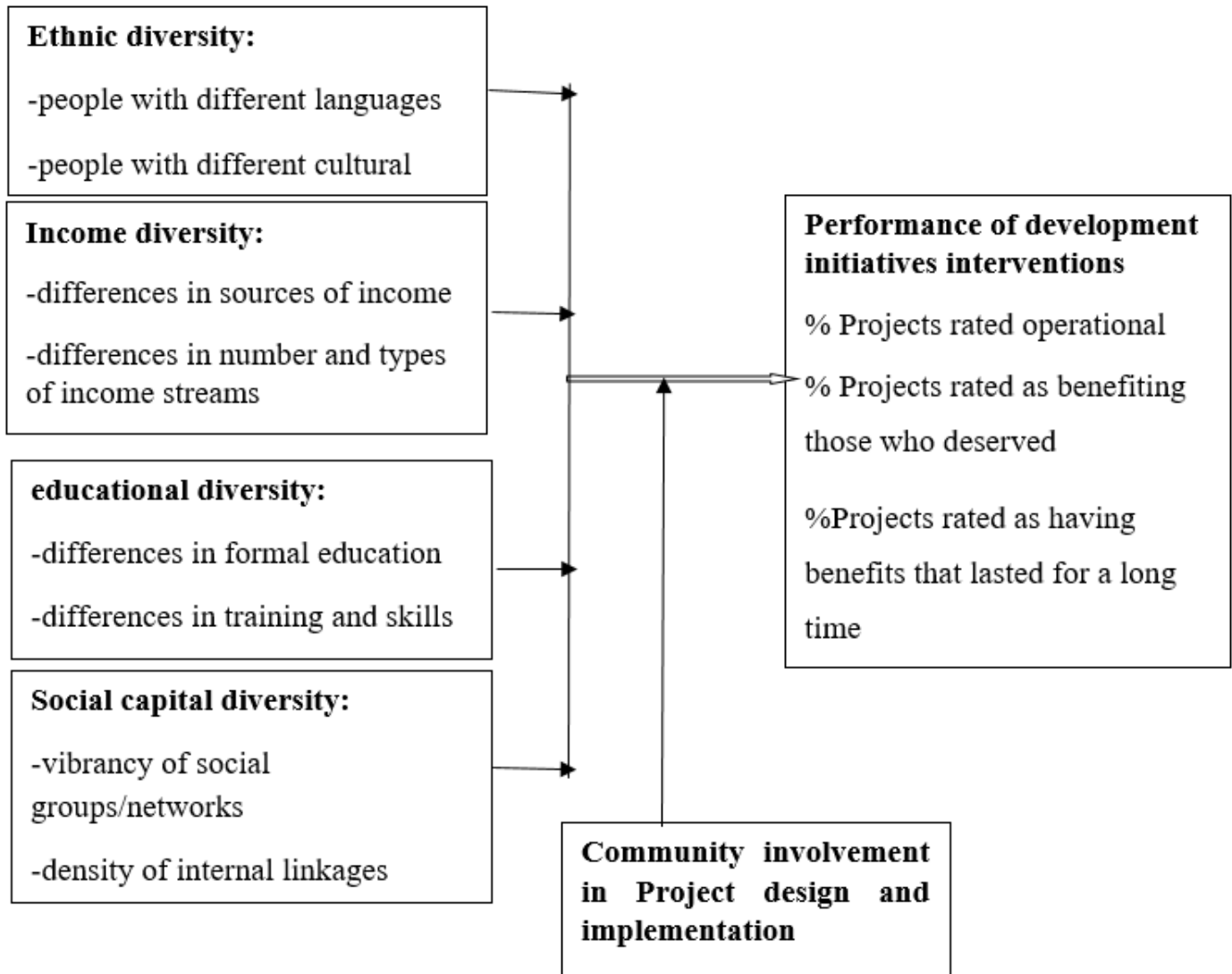
Social capital has been projected, advocated for and accepted as a critical form of resource that plays a key role in determining the direction and pace of social mobilization and development. This being the case, experts agree that social capital plays a very pivotal role in building communities' common approach to the social challenges and seeking for solutions. This was the case as documented from the study on the 60 villages in India involved in watershed management as well as in 48 American States (Krishna (2001). The foregoing review has confirmed a positive link between social capital, household welfare, and poverty.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), a conceptual framework is a hypothesized model identifying the concepts under study and their relationships). It presents in a diagrammatic form the way the researcher has conceptualized the relationship between the independent and the dependent and the confounding variables. This section provides a structural description of the relationship between the four identified elements forming social heterogeneity that are under this study on the performance of development projects. The framework below is an illustration of possible underlying social heterogeneity aspects which influence the performance of development projects. On the left side are grouped the independent variables but not in any order of importance while the dependent variable sits on the right hand and in between they are linked through an arrow as a sign of direct relationship.

**Independent variables**

**Dependent Variable**



**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to experts, a population comprises a group of individuals or objects which depict characteristics that are similar (Mugenda and Mugenda,2003). Target population is about the wholesome of cases meeting certain specifications or defined elements which are included or excluded. In this study, the target population are all those households living within the two selected divisions (Matete and Lugari) who benefited from or participated in either of these three projects :- Western Kenya Community Driven Development and Flood Mitigation Project (WKCDD/FMP) which was funded by the World Bank; National Agriculture and Livestock Extension (NALEP) that was funded by the Swedish International Development Agency(SIDA) or Small Dairy Commercialization Programme (SDCP) which was funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development. The table below gives the breakdown of the households that form the target population:

**Table 3.1: Beneficiaries of the projects under study**

[1] Division	[2] Sub-location	[3] No. of beneficiaries
[4] Matete	[5] Maturu	[6] 30
	[7] Mabuye	[8] 22
[9] Lugari	[10] Marakusi	[11] 35
	[12] Lugari	[13] 38
[14] Total	[15]	[16] 125

These 125 beneficiary households are the ones that formed our target population. This beneficiary information was derived from three reports: - Bonilla, J. et al (2017). IFAD impact assessment - Impact evaluation of the smallholder dairy commercialization programme in Kenya. International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie); OPTO (2006). National Extension and Livestock Agriculture Programme (NALEP) Phase I (Impact

Assessment). Stockholm: OPTO International AB; lastly, Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Planning and Devolution (2014). Household Impact Survey for Western Kenya Community Driven Development and Flood Mitigation Project.

This section presents the method this study used to determine the size sampled for the study from which data is collected. It also describes the sampling techniques used in selecting elements that are included as the subjects of the study sample. Sampling is described as a process that is employed for systematically selecting the target group in a manner that it forms a very representative of the population being studied (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2013). The researcher adopted cluster sampling procedure for this study. In this procedure, clusters or groups are created through a process of dividing a whole population. Thereafter, a sample is randomly taken from each of the identified clusters and then used in the final sample (Wilson, 2010). Each of the selected sublocations formed a cluster and so these four sublocations represented four clusters. From each cluster/sublocation, random beneficiary households were selected based on a formular described below. Each random sample per cluster was aggregated together for the four clusters and therefore became the study sample. This sample was arrived at using this formula from Krejcie and Morgan (1970):

$$S = \frac{X^2NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)}$$

$$d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)$$

Where:

S=sample size

X=Z value (1.96 for 95% confidence level)

N=population size

P=population proportion expressed as a decimal (assumed to be 0.5 (50%) – this provides the maximum sample size).

d=degree of accuracy (5%) expressed as a proportion (0.05)

$$S = \frac{1.96^2 124 \times 0.5(1-0.5)}{0.05^2(123-1) + 1.96^2 0.5(1-0.5)} = 93.92665$$

$$0.05^2(123-1) + 1.96^2 0.5(1-0.5)$$

This is rounded off to 94 people.

In the table below, it is demonstrated how the study arrived at the relevant sample for each of the 4 clusters that was ultimately consolidated to form the final sample size.

**Table 3.2: Sample size distribution table**

S/no.	Sublocation	No. of project members	Sample per project
	Lugari	38	38/124*94=29
	Marakusi	34	34/124*94=25
	Maturu	30	30/124*94=23
	Mabuye	22	22/124*94=17
	Total	125	94

The consolidated total that formed our sample size is= 94 households

A sample refers to a subgroup of the large population which the researcher intends to study and whose results will be for generalizing about that target population (Creswell, 2012). Deriving from the above calculations, the study’s sample size is as follows: - Mabuye (17), Maturu (23), Marakusi (25) and Lugari (29) which brings to total of 94 beneficiary households.

This study adopted a questionnaire as its instrument for collecting data. According to Creswell (2012) it is a form employed for a survey design where the participants being studied complete and return it to the researcher. Its key purpose is to obtain specific facts or opinions regarding a phenomenon from people who have a deeper understanding regarding a particular issue under investigation (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). For this study, every sampled project beneficiary was given a questionnaire to fill under the guidance of the research assistant who was there to help and clarify any area that wasn’t clear and especially due to anticipated different educational levels that respondents possessed. Since the intended data was similar across the respondents, the questionnaire with uniform content was administered. It was filled at the pace of the respondent and so the research assistants exercised enough patience. Due to the superb cooperation from the respondents, all questionnaires (100%) were filled and received by the research assistants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

An inquiry into whether clans and subtribes co-exist cohesively while carrying out development initiatives, the results from the above table show that slightly above one third of respondents (37.3%) in the projects felt they coexisted well but another 30.8% refuted this claim while still another 31.9% remained neutral. Since a consolidated score from the last two groups form the majority (62.7%), it may be an indication that the majority don’t believe there is harmony and peaceful coexistence by the various members when they carry out development initiatives. Later attempts will be made to test this parameter to determine if it could be quite significant when advancing a development agenda in this region. With some earlier finding indicating that majority of participants stopped participating in projects, it is highly likely that challenges of managing clan/subtribe coexistence could be a contributor to this situation. This finding agrees with a previous study by Miguel E. (2004) who found that there were difficulties raising funds from a section of the community for provision of school infrastructure in western Kenya due to existing inter community socio-cultural differences. From the results, only 28.7% agreed that majority members in the projects were poor while 60.6% chose not to confirm whether majority of project members were poor. This automatically raises a key concern on why they chose to remain mum. It is this study’s proposition that likely, the respondents didn’t want to declare their economic status, or alternatively the projects were hijacked at some point leaving out the rightful beneficiaries a revelation which they would not want to come out. If this latter position holds then it could be concluded that those who are economically able often overshadow the poor when it comes to looking for opportunities and grabbing them. Earlier studies by Bremer & Bhuiyan (2014), Yau (2011), Chengcai et al. (2012), and Plummer (2000) seem to reinforce this position where they take note that people with higher incomes are usually very interested in developing their neighbourhood.

The results from the table indicate that only 18.1% of leaders had attained post-secondary education while 36.1% had attained less than that level of education but a significant portion (45.7%) held a neutral position. The researcher opines that this group didn’t have a very clear picture on levels of education their

leaders had attained which may be inferred to mean that although they worked together as a group, the membership of these groups didn't have an in-depth knowledge of each other as is expected. Otherwise, the ratio of leaders with at least secondary education recorded in the above table should be closer to (51.1%) as self-reported earlier when respondents were providing their socio-economic data.

The results indicate that the majority of respondents (51.1%) agreed there was strong cohesion and cooperation but still quite a significant proportion (41.5%) held a contrary opinion. This second and contrary position could be linked to an earlier finding that indicated that intergroup conflicts still significantly derailed development which could be inferred to have resulted from lack of strong cohesion and cooperation. Some other studies have demonstrated how cohesion plays a primary role towards enhanced project performance. One such example was Backstrom (2006) who argued that all groups require a medium of cohesiveness; otherwise, such a group would disintegrate and cease to exist. Again, Bowles and Gintis, (2002) observe that resource management succeeds to a bigger extent when embedded in social networks which form the platform for negotiating, bargaining, and acquiring dispersed information for monitoring, retaliating and imposing penalties. Supporting this is Stromquist (1995) who found that social support networks are critical for women's ability to participate outside the household and increases their capacity to access utensils, tents, and chairs from the groups' investments in times of need.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing discussions as guided by the objectives, the study has demonstrated the influence of the various social heterogeneity variables on project performance. Key findings include:

That ethnic diversity can positively as well as negatively influence project performance. Elements of inter-ethnic conflicts and dominance of one ethnic group over others and dominating leadership positions, ethnically promoted mistrust, failure to have guiding rules, negatively influence project performance. However, when ethnic diversity is cultivated and rallied around bringing together multiple interests and benefits that members can derive from it, then it propels projects to perform well.

Economic diversity was also confirmed to positively influence project performance. Having the poor well targeted and deliberately prioritized for benefits, encouraging the well-off to be fully integrated into development initiatives and particularly their willingness to make material and/or financial contributions are critical to enhancing project performance. It was also found that the desire by the project participants to succeed economically was a key push factor for their persistence in projects. Given that majority reported that these projects have very direct and immediate financial benefits to the low-income groups, it implies the projects were rightly designed for poverty alleviation.

It has demonstrated that with enhanced education and skills as well as making projects simple enough to be understood and undertaken by the participants as well as encouraging interest from the educated will improve project performance. It is however imperative for project implementers to make deliberate efforts to reduce to the very minimum level the dominance by the more

educated over those less educated, otherwise this will derail projects performance.

Social capital diversity also has a positive influence on project performance. The existence of strong cohesion among project participants, the presence of strong social norms within the group, high levels of trust among group members as well as good relationship across group members and institutions-both internal and external, proved very beneficial and enhanced project performance.

The study finally revealed that the projects under study performed well on some parameters while poorly on others. While over half were operational, the benefits accrued to fewer people and were short-lived. This puts into question their sustainability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that ethnic diversity need to clearly be understood and factored into the design and implementation of projects if they are to achieve desired results. This will mean that inter-group conflicts be deliberately managed including managing power relations to support in diffusing dominance of one ethnic group over others. Clear rules must be in place to guide the process and also ensure mistrust is diffused among the membership of the project groups. Such initiatives will reduce conflicts and fall out by members and save projects from collapse. Further, where there are multiple ethnic groupings in a project area, development agents should make deliberate effort to sensitize and let participant view their diversity as an opportunity to harness the interests and experiences that each participant brings on board beyond their ethnicity so that they can achieve impact.

Secondly, the study recommends that deliberate effort by development agents should be made to ensure socio-economic status does not take over to undermine the desire by those from the lower economic strata to express themselves and participate in collective initiatives within their communities. Effort should be made to have them prioritized when project benefits are due. Of essence is that effort should be made to integrate the two socio-economic strata by encouraging the well-off to fully participate since their role in projects which can come in form of their personal contribution of resources or their higher capacity to mobilize external resources can be leveraged upon to achieve high impact.

The study also recommends that development agents be cognizant of how education levels could aid or thwart collective action. There particularly will be the need to keep a close eye when developing guidelines of group operation to ensure the different cadres are well represented and that their voice counts when making decisions pertaining to the affairs of the respective groups. Technical and management skills should be given their rightful place when selecting teams to lead certain areas of the project. This may also include designing relevant capacity-building sessions to enhance the capacity of those who have low level education and with limited skills but have the potential to do a good job. Projects should also be designed in very simpler ways so that everyone is able to implement easily and successfully.

The study also recommends threat social capital in its different forms is vital to enhancing project performance. Development agents should package this in their curriculum for sensitizing project members to aspire to build strong linkages within and without so that they can enhance their project

performance. All the shortfalls that could fail projects should also be unpacked and sensitized the membership of the respective groups including building of trust among themselves. Efforts should be made at building cohesion, establishing strong social norms, and eradicating mistrust so that they bring out positive outcomes.

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