

## Critical Success Factors in the Implementation of Donor Funded Projects in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

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### Abstract

*Donor supported projects play a very important role towards the development of the lower parts of Tharaka-Nithi County, one of the Kenya's marginalized areas. For several decades now, they have relentlessly supported mainly the poor in the County by providing better health care, water and sanitation, shelter, education, environmental care, income generating activities among others. Despite these invaluable functions donor funded projects continue to play, there exists numerous unmet expectations among them as well as pre-mature project termination wasting a lot of resources. Minimal outcomes have been realized in the county which prompted this study that sought to explore the critical factors in the implementation of donor funded projects. Specifically, the study investigated the effect of stakeholder involvement, financing, monitoring and evaluation and technology on the implementation of donor supported projects. This study employed a descriptive research design targeting 34 donor funded projects operating in the county. A total of 102 project staff formed the key respondents for the study. Data was gathered by use of a semi- structured questionnaire. Data analysis encompassed both qualitative and quantitative techniques. SPSS 20 aided in generating descriptive statistics while data was presented using tables. To determine the relationship in the study variables, correlation and regression analysis was employed. The study established a positive effect of stakeholder involvement, financing, Monitoring and Evaluation and Technology on implementation of donor funded projects in Tharaka Nithi County. The study recommends the promotion of stakeholder involvement by donors and sponsoring organization, enhanced financing through resource mobilization and continuous use of monitoring and evaluation. The study further recommends a boost in technology through internet and up-to-date software in project implementation.*

**Keywords:** Critical Success Factors and Implementation of donor funded projects

### 1. 0 Background of the Study

Donor funded projects mainly exist to provide help or resources to targeted beneficiaries with specific need (David, 1995). Donor funded projects according to Kamaara and Ouma, (2018) refer to development projects carried out by Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with goals that focus on changing lives through empowerment and social justice. Donor funded projects have continued to support poor communities in many parts of this world by providing services in important areas such as health care, provision of shelter, supporting income generating activities, education, environmental care among others. Despite these important functions that donor funded projects perform, and just like all other projects, they are faced with the pressure to show their impact which according to Ebrahim and Raigan, (2010) is driven by funders who are keen to see their funds make a difference, or otherwise they spend it elsewhere. Donors in most instances stop supporting a project in the event they feel that their resources are not properly utilized. Gregory and Darene, (2007) argue that the working environment for the donor funded projects is dynamic and very risky, which requires a high level of effectiveness to meet the various stakeholders' demands.

Everyone involved with a project wants it to be a success (Koelmans, 2004). Performance is considered to be a priority for every project management team, who work at improving projects' functions for more results (Mohammed, 2015). The advantages of having successful projects implementation in developing countries is in ensuring that there are active elements in present society (Kamaara and Ouma 2018). The implementation of a project determines whether it succeeds or not (Damali and Shukla, 2016). Well implemented donor funded projects attract their continued funding (Khan and Moe 2008), as their success determines the socio-economic progress in the recipient countries. Project implementation process according to Damali and Shukla, (2016) is complex and presents an ongoing challenge for managers. Majority of donors consider proper project implementation as the key area of consideration in their decision on where to invest their philanthropic dollars.

Tharaka Nithi County, which is situated in the former eastern province of Kenya is composed of three constituencies: Maara, Chukaigambang'ombe and Tharaka. The lower part of the county is semi-arid, with numerous challenges among them poor communication and infrastructure, low agricultural production, environmental degradation as well as border conflicts. Poverty levels in these areas is very high, with high school dropout rate and retrogressive cultural practices like FGM. Many donor funded projects, most of them supported by international organizations have set in the county to support the community in various sectors of humanity which define their differences in terms of their objectives. Projects serving in child development and sponsorship mainly offer education related support to children mostly from very needy families. Their aim is to alter the cycle of poverty in needy communities by empowering their children through development and support. Some projects in the county are not specialized in their area of operations but offer to support the residents based on their most pressing needs. Other donor projects support environmental, and wild life conservation in TharakaNithi County by offering training on conservation and other such related engagements. To a greater extent, there has been numerous issues in the implementation of projects supported by the donors in the county. This study endeavored to ascertain the influence of stakeholder participation, project financing, monitoring & evaluation and Technology on the implementation of donor financed projects in TharakaNithi County, Kenya.

## 2. Statement of the problem

Donor resources are given out with the main objective of boosting the sustainable social and economic progress and welfare of the targeted recipients (Kiara, and Luketero, 2018). Developing countries are the key recipients of donor funds (Otengei, Kasekende and Ntayi, 2015). Though donors have devoted a lot of funds to support development projects in many parts of this world, many of these projects have not met their expectations. In Kenya, donor funds contribute up to 11 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Kisilu, Kiane and Munyao, (2016), which is significantly a huge amount earmarked for the support of numerous projects spread in various parts of this nation where poverty level is regarded as high. Despite these huge donor investments, minimal improvements have been witnessed, an indicator of underperformance which has ended up frustrating the donors of many development projects (Kiara and Luketero, 2018)? Tharaka Nithi County is one such area with a significant number of donor funded projects yet has high cases of children malnutrition with 26% - 35% of children under 5 years old having stunted growth or being too short for age (Areri and Mwitii, 2018). According to (Areri and Mwitii), the county is among the 15 poorest counties where as Ameru, Odero and Kwake, (2018) notes, 40% of its population live below the poverty line. Tharaka Nithi County Development Plan (CIDP 2018-2022), record that an approximately 7.7% of the county's total budget in the financial year 2018/2019 is from the donor grant. Huge donor funds earmarked for the advancement of the living standards of the county's population has borne minimal fruits mainly due to poor implementation, leading to projects failure. Upper Tana water project in Tharaka North Sub-county for instance spent millions of shillings in a project that stopped half way, disappointing thousands of beneficiaries of that water project. Ten of the county's donor funded projects are supported by compassion international. A whopping 28% of projects supported by this donor funding agency have either been terminated or are poorly performing after spending quite a lot of resources which include but is not limited to finances, facilities and human resources (Mary and Lucy, 2018).

The consequences of failed donor funded projects over the years have been so numerous. They include: reduction of their relevance, withdrawal of donor funding mid-way, loss of jobs for the project staff, loss to the donors whose value for money goes unrealized and pain to the deserving beneficiaries whose hopes are prematurely terminated. Even though not all donor funded projects end up becoming a failure, the slow take up and failure of many of these projects suggests that there exist some implementation issues. The purpose of this study therefore was to explore the critical success factors in the implementation of donor funded projects in TharakaNithi County, Kenya. Specifically this study sought to:

- i. Investigate the effect of stakeholder involvement on the implementation of donor funded projects in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.
- ii. Find out the effect of project financing on the implementation of donor funded projects in TharakaNithi County, Kenya.
- iii. Investigate the role of monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of donor funded projects in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.
- iv. Determine the effects of technology use on the implementation of donor funded projects in TharakaNithi County, Kenya.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on three theories: The earned value analysis theory, the resource based theory and the theory of constraints.

The Earned value analysis model was coined by US Department of Defence in 1967 as a format for its contractors to report on the construction progress. The model has since become very instrumental in project management and form part of the 2000 edition Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge. (Scott, 2016) describes Earned Value Analysis as a standard procedure of evaluating the progress in a project at a defined period of time. It compares the planned work load with the work that has actually been done, to find out if the cost, schedule, and the completed work is progressing as planned. According to Scott, Earned value analysis can be used by a project management to serve as an early warning tool to detect deficiency or a risky progress. Earned value analysis works best when the project is broken down into an organized Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) which is the basic steps in the planning process of a project. Work breakdown structure helps to break the entire scope of work into small bits for planning, budgeting, scheduling, costing, assigning duties, measuring the progress, and effective management and control. Most donors are very concerned in the event that the cost of managing the projects swells as it means lesser funds are directed to the primary mission. This model is very instrumental in guiding monitoring and evaluation and ensuring success during the execution of various donor projects activities. Breaking down of the voluminous task into smaller units help in easing monitoring and evaluation process. It's easier to track the progress of tasks when it's broken into bits.

The Resource Based Theory was advanced by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik in 1970's with the publication of the external control of organization: A resource dependence perspective. The proponents of this theory urge that institutions should not concentrate on the competitive environment, but instead should look from within what accord them competitive advantage over others (Jurevicius, 2013). According to this theory, resources are key determinants in project implementation, which also enables it to sustain competitive advantage. The theory stipulates two types of resources and which are: tangible assets and intangible assets. Tangible assets are physical items like land, buildings, machinery, which according to the proponents of this theory confers an organization little advantage. Intangible assets on other hand have no much physical presence and include things like financial resources, brand reputations, trademarks, and technological advancement. These are concealable, which makes it easy for any smart management of an organization or project to have an edge over the rest. Donor funded projects thrives in resources which are mostly donations from philanthropists. Though these projects are not vigor in fight for financial surpluses like normal businesses do David, (1995), they too have a strong desire to grow, and ultimately succeed at their mission (Goggins and Howard, 2009). Donor funded projects seeking to grow and expand has borrowed so much from business sector with a goal of achieving comparative efficiency, increase performance level and consequently achieve in their mission (O'Brien and Marakas, 2008). Many donor funded projects managers are working day and night to strengthen among many other things, their intangible assets, which include; their financial and technological base to ease their implementation process.

The theory of constraints which was coined in 1984 by Eliyahu M. Goldratt recognizes constraints in any management system that challenges the achievement of its goals. Enhancement in project implementation requires focusing on the improvement of the most pressing constraint until it is no longer a constraint. This theory prioritizes on the managerial improvements in tackling the current limiting constraint in pursuit for organizational success. Proponents of this theory argue that without acknowledging the prevailing constraints and laying down proper strategies to counter them, the output of an organization will always be restricted. When these constraints are properly identified and managed, they provide speedy improvement and lay a strong ground for continuous growth. There are numerous obstacles donor funded projects face which limits their implementation just like in business sector (Niksa, Jurica and Liljana, 2014). This theory helps in understanding the role of stakeholders' involvement and financing which apparently happen to be part of the modern project implementation constraints which each and every project should focus on as listed in the Standish report (2018) and 5th edition of Project Management Body Of Knowledge (PMBOK).

## **2.2. Empirical Review**

### **2.2.1 Stakeholder Involvement and the implementation of donor funded projects**

Stakeholders are individuals or entities with vested interest(s) in a project. Freeman, (1984), the proponent behind the stakeholder theory defines stakeholders as those people without whose support a project would cease to exist. Stakeholder participation is vital if donor projects will record any success as it fosters increased ownership by the benefitting community members and ensure project sustainability (Price and Mylius, 1991). They are affected whether positively or negatively by projects and as a result, are very important in the running of a project. A project can never be termed as successfully implemented without considering the stakeholder satisfaction. Their engagement in a project leads to a common understanding especially in the decision making process such as defining project goals and design (Mulwa, 2008).

In their study on community participation in donor funded projects in the pastoral communities Ltumbesi and Okech, (2016) argue that failure to involve the benefitting community members make them to feel under-utilized and may lead to project resistance, which in turn may cause delays during the activity implementation as conceived

by the project donors and implementers. The study revealed that majority of the beneficiaries of the donor funded projects in pastoral communities perceive the projects as purely donor driven and had very little to do with the projects though no statistical figures are given to attest to this. It was also found out that more than seventy five percent of the respondents whose contribution to their projects in terms of planning, and activities implementation was dismal, performed poorly. These scholars believes that project sustainability and development strategies should be developed by recipients who in this case would be the community beneficiaries, in order to reflect on their priorities rather than those of the donors. Their research's methodology didn't give the total of projects included, while the sampling design does have the number of respondents involved in the survey.

Study by Ondongo and Ombui (2019) studied on non-governmental projects in Kibera using a sampled total of 116 respondents in four projects. The study revealed that community participation in the activities of the projects influenced greatly their success. This is in agreement with Ltumbesi and Okech (2016) argument that owners of the projects are the key beneficiaries of the project and as such are keen on its success. Their study used only four non-governmental projects which may be lacking in terms of generalizability.

### **2.2.2 Financing and the Implementation of Donor Funded Projects**

Financing a project is to have an assurance that the amount of financial resources needed is available (Pinto, 2009). Financing incorporates fundraising which can be defined as an endeavor to generate finances for a cause. Many donor projects in marginalized areas are supported by international organizations, which have the potential to create dependency as many of these projects do not endeavor to source for extra donors. Many donors put a restriction on the percentage of their financial resources that should be spent on overhead costs. Charity navigator, a non-profit watch dog believes that those charities that are spending less than a third of their budgets on program expenses are not living up to their mission. Epstein and Buhovac, (2009) defines program efficiency as the percentage of the total expenses spent directly for the charitable purposes. To the donor world, non-core activities, also known as overhead, are administration costs (staff salaries, training expenses, rent, and water and electricity expense) that a project management has to pay to run a project. The effects of this dependency among the donor funded projects are enormous and is mostly felt when their funding organizations withdraws their support, consequently affecting their missions delivery. This forces donor funded projects to always be on the lookout for extra sources of finances, while seeking to maintain the already acquired donors, which is far much cheaper than finding new ones.

Study by Wachira and James (2018) in Kiambu, Kenya found that keeping proper financial records, good budgeting and funds mobilization greatly influence the community based projects implementation. The study further revealed that budgeting and keeping proper financial records plays a significant role in ensuring transparency that give donors confidence in the projects and continue donating more, which contribute to making their implementation process successful. The study majored on the management of the availed funds but did not shed light on donor projects fundraising and the effects of program efficiency which is associated with donor funds restrictions common to the majority of donor development projects.

The issue of financing among the projects supported by multi-sectoral international organizations is not adequately researched. This study therefore built on the projects financing knowledge from a much broader perspective. An aspect of great importance to most of the donors is an issue of the percentage of their donations that is spent to cater for the projects' administration costs commonly known as overheads. Whether this has an effect on project financing and subsequent influence on the donor funded development projects, was not known and this study intended to find out.

### **2.2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation and Donor Projects Implementation**

Monitoring is an ongoing function used by the management and stakeholders to indicate the progress or lack of it, in the attainment of results (UNDP, 2002). Evaluation on other hand, according to (UNDP, 2002) is a systematic and an objective exercise to assess the impact or the progress towards the attainment of an intervention. Monitoring and evaluation are integral and individually distinct part of program preparation and implementation (UNICEF, 2003).

Kamaara and Ouma (2018) strove to understand the determining factors for the successful implementation of donor financed projects using pathfinder international as their case study. The purpose of the study was to find the effects of resource allocation, project planning tools, teamwork and monitoring and evaluation on the successful implementation projects funded by donors in Kenya. Their research adopted an empirical approach using quantitative design with a sample size of 100 respondents. The study found monitoring and evaluation to be of great importance in the implementation of donor projects in Kenya.

Wachira and James (2018) did a study that targeted the community based projects in Kiambu County, Kenya using a sampled total of 43 projects.

The intention of the study was to find out how the community participation, funds management, institutional capacity and monitoring and evaluation affects community based projects implementation. Monitoring and Evaluation was found to be very key in the implementation of community based projects. It was found to foster transparency, accuracy while ensuring time is managed well in the implementation of community projects. Their study used purposive sampling with likelihood of biases from the researchers affecting the quality of data collected.

#### **2.2.4 Technology and Donor Projects Implementation**

Technology use is becoming increasingly important for projects undertaken by international development organizations (Baark and Heeks, 1999). This has risen out of pressures by their management to meet stated goals (Carol and Fleming, 2001). Donor funded projects have not been left behind in embracing software, hardware and communication technologies among other technologies to make their operations efficient and faster. The drastic changes in communication technology have continued to affect organizations and projects and donor funded projects have not been left behind. The extent to which donor projects can benefit from technology is largely unexplored Carol and Flemming(2001), yet it's becoming an important prerequisite in projects implementation (Shenhar, 2007). Donor projects are using considerable amount of technology to support their work, but there are possibilities it being overlooked and underutilized (Bernard, Wagner, Andtei, and Quinn, 2012). According to (Baltzan, 2009), understanding the direct impact of information technology on an organization is very important for its success

(Kiara and Luketero, 2018) did their research that targeted donor financed sanitation projects in Embu county in Kenya. Their study was done in order to understand how technology influence various aspects of sanitation projects supported by donors. Their research used a descriptive design in a study that comprised of all the 48 respondents in the targeted population. The study established that most of the participants were aware of water and sanitation technology and that technology used influenced positively how donor supported projects performed. No statistical figure however is given to ascertain this. Technology has become a very important asset for many projects, yet little has been done in the field of research to ascertain its influence on the execution of donor financed projects activities.

Ngundo and James (2018), in their study in Machakos on the implementation of projects run by the government in the area, found use of technology to be a significantly determining factor in project implementation. Key among the areas aided by technology as found out in the study is monitoring and evaluation, project documentation and communication. The study concentrated on the government supported projects only and as such did not capture the uniqueness in donor funded projects.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

A descriptive research design was used in this research. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected interpreted and analyzed to describe the four critical success factors in the implementation of donor funded projects. The target population in this study comprised of 34 donor funded projects in TharakaNithi County comprising of 20 child supporting projects, 11 projects that support the communities in general, 2 that work to support environmental and wild life conservation and one project in the field of HIV/AIDS control. Though all the projects in TharakaNithi County work to infuse local ownership and eventual independence at some point in their operations, majority of them are supported by donors through international organizations. Since the population of the donor supported projects in the county is manageable, this study conducted a census of all 34 donor projects in the county. According to Kothari (2010), a census involves a complete enumeration of all items in the population. Kothari point out that when the population is a small one, there is no need for sampling urging that covering all the items eliminates the chances which ensure the achievement of the highest level of accuracy. Pandey and Pandey (2015) argue that census method provides a more precise and exact information as no unit in a population is left out as is in the case with sampling. Specifically, the study targeted 102 respondents who comprised of the project staff in each of the donor funded project who collaboratively work to ensure successful donor project implementation.

Primary data was gathered via the administration of questionnaires containing both closed and open - ended questions that permits free responses from the respondents. A questionnaire consists of several questions printed or typed in a defined format on a form or set of forms (Kothari, 2004). Questionnaires were selected to collect data due to their ability to gather large amount of information in a large area within a short period. These questionnaires were given out and collected by the researcher himself together with research assistants. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed in the analysis of the data. The first step was to check and correct the errors in the data. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) aided in generating descriptive statistics that included, average and standard deviation, while tables were used to present the data. To measure the strength and the direction of the linear relationships between each of the independent variable and the dependent variable, Pearson correlation was run using SPSS. According to Kothari (2010), Pearson's coefficient of correlation is the most widely used method to measure the extent of relationship between variables.

The study employed a multiple linear regression analysis which helped to establish the numerical importance of each independent variable with respect to the implementation of donor funded projects.

#### 4.0 Research findings

##### 4.1.Descriptive Results

##### 4.1.1 Stakeholder Involvement and the implementation of donor funded projects

The study sought the respondents' view concerning various statements regarding stakeholders and their participation among the donor funded projects in TharakaNithi County.

*Indicators of Stakeholder Involvement and the implementation of donor funded projects*

Stakeholder Involvement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Engaging the project beneficiaries in major project activities is necessary in project implementation.	3.76	.873
Having a regular stakeholder analysis is necessary for the success of a donor funded project.	4.58	.625
Grievance management is necessary for donor funded project's success.	4.44	.827
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>4.26</b>	<b>.775</b>

Generally, the respondents' view regarding stakeholder involvement with keen emphasis on community engagement, stakeholder analysis, and grievance management to a great extent affect the implementation of donor funded projects as demonstrated with an average mean of 4.26. The findings contends with Bhatta (2019) that the process of complaints handling play an important role in the accountability and overall effectiveness in non-governmental organizations. Heravi, Coffey and Trigunarysyah, (2014) urge that effective stakeholder system is vital for the success of donor funded projects. This is similar to Nzekwe,Oladejo and Emoh (2015) who also found that to a great extent, that client commitment in projects activities is quite vital in their implementation.

##### 4.1.2 Project Financing and implementation of donor funded projects

To find out the extent to which various financing aspects are of importance during the process of implementation of donor supported projects, various questions were asked that touched on, planning, budgeting, financial record keeping and fundraising.

*Indicators of Project Financing and the implementation of donor funded projects*

Project Financing	Mean	Std. Deviation
Planning is important in the implementation of donor funded projects	4.63	.902
Budgeting is important in the implementation of donor funded projects	4.52	.798
Financial record keeping is important in the implementation of donor funded projects	4.76	.573
Fundraising is important in the implementation of donor funded projects	2.70	.970
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>.811</b>

Generally, the respondents indicated that financing has a great effect in the implementation of donor funded projects with an average mean of 4.05.Planning, budgeting and financial record keeping are indicators of good funds management which according to Heider, (2017) implies careful use of donor funds, a desired situation which Liu, Suh and Wagner, (2017) terms as the makers of honesty in donor funded project management and an indicator of concerns for the project funders. Whereas aspects of financing were rated high because they include financial management which is a requirement for a continued financial support, many respondents' rated low importance of fundraising in a project. Many projects managers were content with what they were getting from the current donors and supporters which breed overdependence on donor support, and a risk on project continuity in the event donors pull out. Other respondents' lack of enthusiasm on fundraising cited lack of support from the benefitting community members who should be the first category of people to support their own projects.

The study also sought to know the required percentage of donor funds used in administrative duties like salaries, rent, and bills. The study required the respondents to give the percentage amount of donor funds used to meet administration expenses (staff salaries, rent, electricity and water, training) in their project. The summary of their responses is given in table 4.5.

*Respondents' view on the percentage of donor funds used to meet administration costs*

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 10%	2	2.4
10%-20%	16	19.0
20%-30	48	57.1
Beyond 30%	16	19.0
Any other	2	2.4
Total	84	100.0

Capping the percentage of funds used in the administrative expenses to below 30% was found to be an important requirement in many donor projects as was revealed. As shown, 78.5% of the respondents said that they are required to use less than 30% of the total income received from the donors on administration costs. Only 19% of the respondents were using beyond 30% of the donor funds on administration, while 2.4% were not sure of their expenditures. These findings agree with Charity navigator, a non-profit watch dog, which believes that charities should spend more on core program activities failure to which, they will not be living up to their mission. A performing donor funded project keen and focused on their main mission avoids deviating funds to non-core activities, which according to Bierman (2012) is the ideal phenomenon for majority of project donors and supporters

#### 4.1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation and the Implementation of Donor Funded Projects

The study explored the value attached to monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of donor funded projects. The respondents were asked to gauge the various aspects touching on monitoring and evaluation.

##### *Indicators of monitoring and evaluation*

Monitoring and evaluation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Having monitoring and evaluation plan is important for successful implementation of donor funded projects.	4.71	.651
Conducting annual audit is important in the successful implementation of donor funded projects.	4.31	1.006
Yearly staff performance review is important for the successful donor projects implementation.	4.44	.910
<b>Average Mean Score</b>	<b>4.49</b>	<b>.856</b>

The respondents indicated that monitoring greatly influence the implementation of their projects as an average mean and standard deviation of 4.49 and 0.856 respectively indicates. This contends with UNICEF, (2003) arguments that monitoring and evaluation play a critical role in any program's preparation and implementation.

#### 4.1.4 Technology and the Implementation of Donor Funded Projects

The study sought the opinions from the respondents concerning various aspect of technology use in the implementation of donor financed projects as summarized in the table 4.7.

##### *Indicators of Technology and the Implementation of Donor Funded Projects*

Technology	Mean	Std. Deviation
Technology and internet has been useful in the implementation of this project	4.13	.912
Technology use has been effective in minimizing administration costs among the donor funded projects	4.51	.649
Use of technology in the information management is important in the implementation of donor funded projects	4.79	.493
<b>Average mean score</b>	<b>4.48</b>	<b>.685</b>

Technology was generally rated as having a great effect in the implementation of donor funded projects with an average mean and the standard deviation of 4.48 and 0.685 respectively. Minimizing administration costs, another aspect of technological use among the donor funded projects was seen to be very important in the implementation of donor projects. These findings relates with the argument by Back and Moreau, (2001) that a functional information and management strategy will indisputably enhance the implementation of project activities and help contribute towards the achievement of a projects' goals. The findings further contends with Weerawarna, Abeysiri and Madhushan, (2017) that technology plays a very important role in connecting project donors/supporters and the management of the projects who seek the necessary funds for activities' implementation.

## 4.2 Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was used to ascertain the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.581 <sup>a</sup>	.338	.305	.42930

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Involvement, Financing, Monitoring and Evaluation, Technology

The R value (0.581) in regression model depicts a positive relationship connecting the independent variables (Stakeholder involvement, financing, monitoring and evaluation and technology) and the dependent variable (project implementation). The results also show a relatively low R-square value of 0.338 indicating that 33.8% of the variation in project implementation are explained by the four independent variables (Stakeholder involvement, financing, monitoring and evaluation, and technology) used in this study. The remaining 66.2% can be attributed to other factors that did not feature in this study. The top down approach taken by many organizations and donors that supports the projects has greatly affected the way the projects are implemented at the local level. They for instance have not fully embraced some of the attributes like grievance management, stakeholder involvement and fundraising. This may have led to the respondents varied rating towards some of these aspects that were studied which may have resulted to high data variability.

## 4.3 ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7.398	4	1.849	10.008	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	14.599	80	.185		
Total	21.997	84			

a. Dependent Variable: Project Implementation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Stakeholder Involvement, Financing, Monitoring and Evaluation

The analysis of variance results established that the relationship between the study variables was statistically significant as confirmed by p value =0.000 which is less than 0.05. The F- statistic (10.008) as revealed is more than F-Critical (2.53) which indicate that the model is fit to test the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

## 4.4. Regression coefficients

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.058	.665		1.590	.116
	Stakeholder Involvement	.079	.113	.050	.524	.530
	Financing	.110	.089	.111	1.157	.164
	Monitoring and Evaluation	.285	.097	.305	2.954	.004
	Technology	.326	.110	.317	2.962	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Project Implementation

As established, the regression analysis predictive model thus becomes:  $Y = 1.058 + 0.079X_1 + 0.11X_2 + 0.285X_3 + 0.326X_4 + \mu_i$

Whereby;

Y = Project Implementation

X<sub>1</sub> = Stakeholder Involvement

X<sub>2</sub> = Financing

X<sub>3</sub> = Monitoring and Evaluation

X<sub>4</sub> = Technology

Based on the results, stakeholder involvement had a positive insignificant impacts on the implementation of donor supported projects ( $\beta = 0.079$ ;  $p$ -value = 0.530). This implies that an increase in stakeholder involvement will lead to an improvement in the implementation of donor supported projects. These findings agree with Nzekwe, Oladejo and Emoh (2015) whose study to understand the determining factors that influence projects implementation in Anambra State, Nigeria found that stakeholder involvement effect positively on project success, but with an insignificant effect. Findings in the study done by Ngundo and James (2018) at Machakos involving government projects, however revealed that involving all the important stakeholders in project activities significantly improves their implementation.

Financing, as the results indicated has an insignificant positive impact on the implementation of donor supported projects ( $\beta = 0.110$ ;  $p$ -value = 0.164). It implies that an increase in financing will lead to an improvement in the implementation of donor financed projects. These findings disagrees with Wamalwa and James (2018), who found financing to be significantly important for the survival of projects funded by non-governmental organizations urging that many projects would cease to operate once donor funds are withdrawn.

The results revealed that monitoring and evaluation significantly and positively influence donor projects in Tharaka-Nithi County as indicated with a  $p$ -value  $0.004 < 0.05$ . This agrees with Emmannuel (2015) publication on the state of monitoring and evaluation of NGO'S projects in Africa, who urge that the demand for effectiveness and relevance in donor projects makes Monitoring and Evaluation a key tool in their implementation. Boehmer and Zaytser (2019) found that though there are different purposes and approaches in development projects, monitoring and evaluation is very important in bridging their interests and helps to increase aid effectiveness. Ndombi, Kyalo and Mulwa (2020) found monitoring and evaluation to be very important in donor livelihood projects. According to Simon and Mwenda (2021) who also found monitoring and evaluation to be very important, it helps in unearthing hidden challenges hindering the implementation of projects.

Use of technology significantly and positively affect the implementation of donor projects in Tharaka-Nithi County as indicated with a  $p$ -value  $0.004 < 0.05$ . These findings agrees with Nzekwe, Oladejo and Emoh (2015) who found technology to be part of the top most important project success factors. Kiara and Luketero (2018), in their study found that use of technology strongly influence the implementation and consequently the overall performance of donor supported projects. According to Ngundo and James (2018), technology contains important tools and software that makes the tasks in project management easy which brings about excellent results. Mutindi and Muthoni (2020) established that use of modern technology in donor financed projects effectively contribute to their success.

## 5.0 Conclusions

Based on the study results, it can be deduced that monitoring and evaluation was ranked as the most effective critical success factor in the implementation of donor projects. Having a monitoring and evaluation plan, doing annual audits and ensuring there is a yearly performance review was found to be very important among the donor supported projects managers.

The study conclude that use of technology is very vital in the execution of all the major activities and processes done by the managers of projects financed by the donors. The role of information management using technology was found to be very key in scaling down the administrative costs, consequently ensuring that the highest percentage of the funds from the donors are channeled to the core program activities in the projects. It was also found that use of internet was very important to many projects in matters of trainings, virtual meetings, and sharing of vital information to the donors and other stakeholders.

On stakeholder involvement, the study concludes that its use in the implementation of donor funded projects in TharakaNithi County is important, but the projects' management does very little in terms of its utilization in the processes of projects implementation. Benefitting community members, in whose purpose these projects are set are largely viewed as spectators in programs and activities aimed at assisting them. Their involvement in key project development activities is low as the project leaders only follow the directives from the main organizations and donors who fund the projects. The government take little of concern on what the donor projects are doing. While government ministries hold vital information for these projects, bureaucracies hinder these donor projects from accessing such information.

The study further conclude that financing has a positive influence on the implementation of donor supported projects. The effect, as the results revealed is insignificant. Majority of donor project staff and mangers only relied on the guaranteed funds from the main project sponsoring organizations and donors. Many project managers do not show much enthusiasm on the issue of resource mobilization/fundraising to garner resources from extra channels, which has continued to create a state of financial dependency syndrome. Most of the financing aspects were only followed because it is a requirement from the donors and sponsors for a project to continue receiving support.

## 5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings that the positive effect of stakeholder involvement among donor supported projects in TharakaNithi County is insignificant, this study recommends that sponsoring organizations and donors open up the projects to involve more the stakeholders especially those that are directly benefitting from the projects. There is also a need to increase the stakeholder training and capacity building and equip them more on the benefits of the projects in order to clear off any negative attitude towards the projects which will as a result enable them to locally own their projects.

On financing, this study proposes that the managers of donor funded projects should improve in fundraising/resource mobilization to seek more funds instead of settling on already found donors. They should also embrace local ownership as part of the donor projects' design so that they can take the frontline steps to meet the project objectives. Project ownership will reduce the over dependency on donor funds and enhance local resource mobilization to minimize the risks of project collapse in the event of donors withdrawal.

This study recommends regular monitoring and evaluation to be taken a notch higher due to its importance in the management of donor projects. The government should make laws that ensure that the reports are shared with relevant government agencies and that there is transparency and accountability in the activities of these projects. By doing so, it will enhance the deliverables to the community and ensure the government embrace these donor projects positively and help where necessary with data and information which will facilitate their implementation, which is currently lacking.

Due to the importance of technology in donor supported projects, this study recommends that projects managers should partner with elected leaders to boost network connectivity which is the biggest challenge in the remote areas where majority of these projects are located. Projects should invest more in important gargets like computers and network boosters as well as necessary software to cut future administrative costs for more visible transformation.

## 5.2. Suggestions for Further Research

This study explored only four critical success factors of Stakeholder Involvement, Financing, Monitoring and Evaluation and Technology, which gave a coefficient determination of 33.8%. There are other factors which the scope of this research did not cover due to constraints of time and financial resources required. This study suggests a study on more other factors especially those that focuses on donor and sponsoring organizations that affect the implementation of their projects at local levels.

Stakeholder involvement and financing attracted a low rating among the management of donor projects in Tharaka-Nithi County. The causes of low rating among donor funded projects should further be investigated by future scholars in this field.

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