

# Communication and Performance of Non-Governmental Organizations in Garissa County, Kenya

Ruth Ayako Kabala

School of Business and Economics

Department of management

Mount Kenya University-Kenya

Dr. Njeri.S. Ngacha,PhD,OFS

School of Business and Economics

Department of management

Mount Kenya University-Kenya

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## Abstract:

For many years, researchers have explored various perspectives as a means of understanding the influence of communication on project performance. The success of a project depends heavily on effective communication, lack of it significantly contributes to the failure of numerous projects. The purpose of this paper was to ascertain the outcome implementation of communication had on the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations initiatives in the county of Garissa in Kenya. This research delves into the essential tools necessary for effectively managing communication in order to achieve successful project outcomes. Furthermore, it examines the impact of communication on project results. A project is regarded accomplished if its expected outcomes materialize. How a project is carried out and operated has a substantial effect on its success. The researcher wanted to determine the impact of communication on the projects undertaken by organizations that are not affiliated with the government. The study was led by systems theory, stakeholder theory, and theory of constraints. The design of the research was descriptive. The study targeted 156 NGOs working in the County of Garissa. In the study, 50% of the target population was selected through both stratified and simple random sampling thus 78 non-governmental organizations in Garissa County. Questionnaires were used to gather initial data. The survey's validity was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. It was found to be valid at 0.804. The researcher confirmed that all filled data was accurate and used descriptive statistics for analysis. Frequency distributions, measures of central tendencies (mean) and percentages were the descriptive statistics employed. The researcher presented the data using tables and graphs. Qualitative data were coded and evaluated. The study used content analysis to conduct qualitative analysis for the data compiled from open ended questions. Based on the findings of the study, efficient application of communication contributes to an improvement in performance of projects. Specifically, the research highlighted how communication had notable influence on the outcomes of a project, indicating that management and team leaders ought to prioritize establishing and maintaining clear communication structures before beginning any project. The study suggests that organizations should promote active communication throughout the organization to improve project performance and increase awareness among stakeholders and the wider community about the importance of effective communication. The research suggests that stakeholders ought to be incorporated in meetings held before the implementation phase and at the beginning of a project, and their beliefs should be integrated into project formation and execution.

**Key words:** Project Management, Project Performance, Project communication.

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## I. Introduction and Background:

For numerous years, the inability to successfully execute projects has remained a prominent concern for management, with communication being recognized as the primary factor preventing organizations from exerting influence and attaining success in project management. Depending on the project's size, scope, and sector, goals for a project will be met; as a result, completion is anticipated as soon as possible, by utilizing limited resources and achieving outcomes of exceptional quality. From this perspective, only efficient and effective project management practices can yield results because they enhance the management of all the resources required for a project's successful completion. (Mkutano& Sang, 2018). Scholarly literature on project

management emphasizes the significance of proficient communication and its influence on the results of projects (Fortune & White, 2011). Different channels, including technology and face-to-face interactions, are employed to effectively convey specific messages to internal stakeholders, depending on the message type and the intended audience. Internal communication takes place more frequently compared to external communication due to the continuous involvement of internal project stakeholders in project management responsibilities. As a result, internal communication inherently holds significant importance for the successful execution of a project. It is important to note what Mkutano and Sang (2018) observed. Communication levels, that are regarded as critical factors influencing performance, were found to affect the performance of projects managed by NGOs, according to Mkutano and Sang. Similarly, in the context of multiple projects overseen by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Nairobi, Kenya, communication, for instance, fosters collaboration among project team members charged with developing implementation strategies for projects of various sizes. In Kiambu County, Kenya, a study by Gathoni & Ngugi (2016) on the elements impacting the execution of programs run by National Government Constituency Fund found that communication with stakeholders in various projects, public participation, and the dissemination of crucial information on the status of various CDF projects are all insufficient. There haven't been many studies or surveys conducted in Garissa County Government to examine how communication affects NGOs' success. This represents the study's primary goal. It attempts to show the substantial effects of practices related to the management of projects on NGO projects in Garissa County in Kenya. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been active in the larger Garissa County since the early 1990s, supporting populations of disadvantaged and marginalized communities and offering various services in their rural areas. From then on, a number of project activities have been supported by collaborations with a number of sectors, including education, water, sanitation, and hygiene, health, children's rights, women's rights, etc. It is crucial to keep in mind that the United Nations, European Union, USAID, World Vision International (WVI), international, government partners, Red Cross, and private donors are just a few of the organizations that have provided the majority of the funding for these initiatives. For their success, NGOs have evolved techniques to collaborate with various populations and mobilize resources in the most unstable circumstances. In order to succeed, NGOs have created strategies to link themselves with the various communities and mobilize resources in what is considered to be a volatile environment. Regrettably, the majority of NGOs in Garissa County still encounter significant difficulties in their strategic planning and objective realization (Rotich, 2015). The most significant setbacks and challenges that NGOs in this region face are timely project management to achieve organizational goals and internal and external public support during difficult times. In collaboration with the Garissa County Government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are contributing significantly to the improvement and support of the lives of its residents through a variety of projects. There are one hundred and fifty-six (156) operative NGOs in Garissa County, according to the NGOs' 2019/20 annual sector report. The presence of the Dadaab refugee camp has exacerbated the influx of NGOs and other organizations. In order for all project stakeholders to comprehend the project's development, communication throughout project implementation comprises the exchange of project information (Ruuska, 2016). The researcher also demonstrates how an effective exchange of project information fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership among all project stakeholders, improving the working environment and enabling all project team members to complete their tasks without being directed or coerced. Communication makes project management tasks easier, fosters teamwork and involves all project stakeholders. As a result, communication is crucial for both the project team members and the other employees working for the company. In research conducted by Abdi (2014), within the context of Kenya, more than half of the projects were deemed underperforming or substandard. When the NGOs' projects are included, this number actually grows even higher. The fact that NGOs projects face difficulties in every part of the world is supported by every geographical approach. Therefore, the researcher will work to determine how communication affects the success of NGO initiatives in Garissa County. Currently, the NGO Coordination Board oversees NGOs' operations in Kenya. It is a State-owned Corporation formed through legislative enactment, Non-Governmental Organizations Coordination Legislative Act number 19 of 1990. All NGOs functioning in Kenya must be registered, governed, coordinated, and facilitated by the board. Various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have offices in Garissa and work in the fields of "refugees, health, gender, education and critical aspects of international development." Internal and external circumstances have an impact on how well NGOs perform; State departments, Economic-donors, political, beneficiaries, the law, and the founders make up the operational environment.

### **Objectives of the study**

This study's goal was to find out how communication affect the success of non-governmental organization projects in Kenya's Garissa County.

### **Specific Objectives**

To determine the influence of communication on the performance of non-governmental organizations in Garissa County, Kenya.

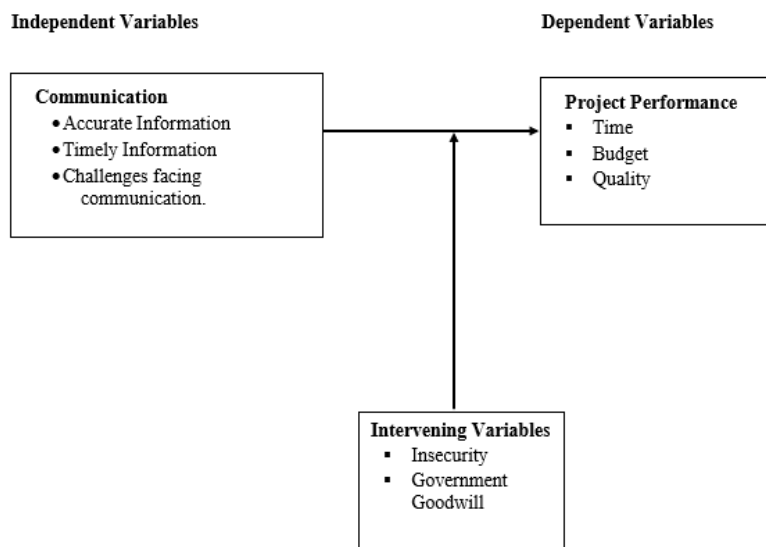
## II. Literature Review

As part of his research, Mkutano (2018) examined the impact project management practices had on the success of non-governmental organization initiatives in the County of Nairobi in Kenya. Through use of questionnaires, data was collected for the study. He analyzed quantitative data using inferential and descriptive statistics. Based on the study, efficient implementation of project management techniques, including communication resulted in improved performance of projects. Naqvi and Aziz (2011) investigated how stakeholders' communication affected project performance. The selected group of participants comprised 70 information technology projects chosen from 24 software companies. In a sectional manner, the data was collected by means of survey questionnaires that assessed the quality of communication among stakeholders and its effects on Information Technology projects. Linear regression, Pearson correlation, and frequency distribution were applied to analyze the data. Outcomes of the research showed stakeholder communication and project outcome dependencies are strongly correlated. In Ghana, Affare (2012) assessed managing communications for building projects. 97 professionals with D1K1 classification who work with specialists, project clients, and contractors were included in the research sample. The study found that the Ghanaian construction industry has a high awareness of the significance of communication and its place in the sector. As a result of ineffective communication, projects have been delayed, cost overruns have occurred, and projects have ended. In their 2017 study, Afroze and Khan looked at how well-executed communication approaches and project complexity influenced the execution of global development projects. A survey method was used to gauge the impact of project complexity and communication strategies on project performance. 60 international agencies engaged in similar programs received questionnaires. The study's findings demonstrated that while the complex nature of a project has a small effect on the relationship between communication and performance, these techniques have a large and favorable impact on the performance of projects.

### Conceptual Framework

The link between the dependent and independent variables is depicted in the model below, which demonstrates the way communication, impact success of NGO projects.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



Source: Researcher 2023

### **III. Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study used descriptive research design, a data collection method by providing interviews or questionnaires to selected individuals. Descriptive survey design provides a suitable technique for collecting data relevant to research variables on project management practices. Descriptive research is ideal as reliability is maximized and bias is prevented (Kothari 2012).

#### **Target Population**

The study's population under investigation was 156 NGOs in Garissa.

#### **Sample size and sampling procedure**

There were 156 NGOs, varying in magnitude from one-man operations to hundred-person operations. In order to sample the NGOs and the participants for the study, stratified random sampling was employed because it was not viable to study every NGO functioning in Garissa County and because they manage different numbers of projects each year. According to the stratified sample technique, several organizations from the strata; Health, Refugee, Relief, Education, Gender, and Children were selected. A total of 78 NGOs project managers were selected as a sample, representing 50% of the population, with the selection being made from each stratum.

#### **Research instrument**

Research data was gathered via the administration of surveys. The supervisor and the researcher used their expert judgment to evaluate the research instruments' validity to make sure there was no risk for questionnaire item bias. The instrument's reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, which measures the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability of 0.70 at a confidence level of  $\alpha=0.05$  was deemed satisfactory.

#### **Data Collection Procedure**

Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher sought appointment with the management teams of the different NGO's. Due to the busy schedules of the target respondents, the questionnaires were administered using a drop-off and pick-up approach. By doing this, the organization was less susceptible to interference with its everyday activities and operations.

#### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

For better assessment, data was coded and segmented. In order to analyze quantitative data, descriptive statistics were used.

### **IV. Results**

#### **Response Rate**

A sum of 78 questionnaires was distributed to all respondents. Out of the total, 70 questionnaires were duly completed and returned. The achieved rate of response of 90% in the study exceeds the threshold suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), who state that any rate of response of more than 50% is regarded as suitable for extrapolating the results.

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

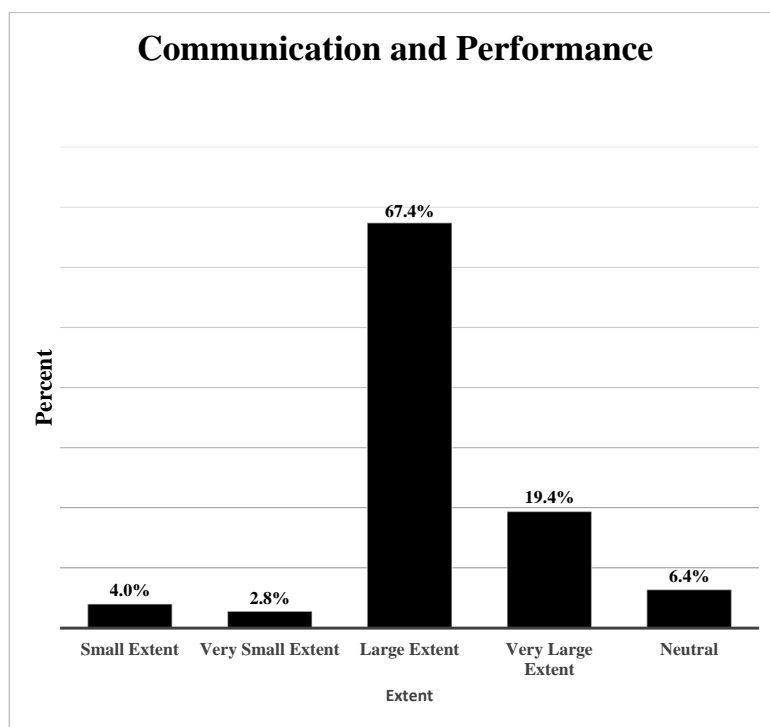
##### **Communication and Project Performance**

The study sought to determine the extent to which communication influences project success.

Figure 2 presents the study findings, indicating that 19.4% of the participants stated that communication had a very large extent of influence on project success, while 67.4% indicated that communication had a large extent of influence. A neutral response was given by 6.4% of the respondents, while 4.0% indicated that communication had a small extent of influence. Only 2.8% indicated that communication had a very small extent of influence on project success.

Figure 2

Communication and performance



Source: Survey Data (2023)

Table no 1: Response on Communication

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
Communication connects every member of the project team to a common set of strategies thereby leading to high project performance	2.7%	4.6%	18.6%	15.3%	58.8%	4.23
Exchange of information among stakeholders	2.7%	6.3%	8.7%	66.6%	15.7%	3.86
Feedback to/from project staff to/from users	1.35%	6.3%	16.6%	74.3%	1.45%	3.68
Availability of information for decision making	2.7%	2.7%	7.6%	85.1%	1.9%	3.81
Application of project management tools	0.0%	2.7%	5.0%	83.3%	9.0%	3.99
<b>Aggregate Score</b>	1.9%	4.5%	11.3%	64.9%	17.4%	3.91

Source: Survey Data (2023)

According to the data presented in Table 2, a significant proportion of the respondents expressed agreement with several statements relating to the importance of communication in project performance. Specifically, 74.10% agreed that communication facilitated the alignment of project strategies among team members, resulting in better project performance. Moreover, 82.30% of respondents agreed that information exchange among stakeholders contributed to higher project performance, while 75.75% agreed that feedback from project staff and users was beneficial for project success. Additionally, a large majority of respondents (87%) agreed that the accessibility of information for the purpose of making decisions was crucial for project success, and an even greater majority (92.3%) expressed agreement that the use of project management tools significantly influenced the performance of NGO projects. The data analysis reveals that the mean score for responses in this section was 3.91, suggesting that a significant number of the respondents held the view that effective communication played a crucial role in determining the success of NGO projects in Garissa County, Kenya. The results obtained in this study align with those of Naqvi and Aziz (2011), whose research revealed a strong correlation between the dependence on project outcomes and effective communication with stakeholders. Delays in project completion, exceeding budgetary limits, and the abandonment of projects were identified as consequences of insufficient communication, according to Affare's (2012) research. The results of the study conducted by Afroze and Khan (2017) demonstrated that project management practices have a significant and advantageous impact on project performance.

**Inferential Statistics**

**Correlation Analysis**

To assess the presence of a linear relationship between the variables under investigation, the study employed the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. The findings demonstrated a positive and statistically significant correlation between project performance and communication. This implies that an increase in effective communication leads to improvement in project performance.

The findings revealed a positive and significant correlation ( $r=0.481$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) between communication and performance. This suggests that as the effectiveness of communication improves, project performance also experiences significant improvement. Consequently, it emphasizes the importance of establishing strong communication structures for the success of any project.

**Table no 2:** *Correlation Analysis*

		<b>Performance</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>Performance</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.481**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	70	70
<b>Communication</b>	Pearson Correlation	.481**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	70	70
	N	70	70

Source: Survey Data (2023)

**Regression Analysis**

In order to assess the statistical significance of the predictor variable on the dependent variable (project performance), the study employed regression model analysis. The findings, as displayed in Table 3, demonstrate that the regression of independent variable on project performance yielded a satisfactory goodness of fit.

The R-squared value of 0.708 suggests that around 70.8% of the variations in project performance among NGOs can be attributed to the influence of communication.

Using the model, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.69 reveals that around 69% of the variances in project performance can be accounted for by communication.

The correlation coefficient of 84.1% indicates a robust and positive association between the predictor variables and project performance. This suggests that any alterations in the essential drivers of project performance, namely communication, planning, stakeholder involvement/participation, and monitoring, have a substantial positive effect on project performance.

**Tableno.**

**3:Regression Model Fitness**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change
1	.841 <sup>a</sup>	.708	.690	.244	.708
a. Predictors: (Constant) Communication					

Source: Survey Data (2023)

The findings shown in Table 3 demonstrate the significance of the model suggesting that communication serve as a powerful predictor of project performance. According to the findings, the independent variable was statistically significant in elucidating variations in project performance. This is evidenced by a p-value of <0.001, which is lower than the accepted critical value of 0.05.

**Regression Coefficients**

The initial regression model used in the study was represented as

$$Y_i = f(X_i, \beta) + \epsilon_i$$

The correlation between communication and performance was found to be positive and statistically significant (beta = 0.049, p-value = 0.033). This suggests that enhancing communication effectiveness by 1 unit corresponds to a rise in performance of NGO by 0.049 units.

In line with Ssenyange (2015), effective communication plays a crucial role in providing clarity to project tasks, fostering teamwork, and engaging all stakeholders in project management.

**V. Discussion**

Results of the findings revealed that communication plays a vital role in the success of initiatives of NGOs in the County of Garissa in Kenya. Analysis of the data show that the average rating for responses in the communication category was 3.91 out of the possible 5, suggesting a significant number of the respondents held the view that successful and efficient communication played a crucial role in determining the accomplishment of projects. According to descriptive statistics, the respondents concurred that exchange of information was crucial in linking the project team to a common strategy. The study demonstrates that effective communication is crucial for the efficient dissemination of information to all stakeholders, thereby enhancing the success of the project overall. In light of the study's findings, it can be argued that the implementation of effective communication has a positive impact on enhancing and improving the performance of donor funded projects. The study concludes that successful communication is essential for the success of non-governmental organizations' projects. The findings highlight the significance of communication in determining project outcomes and underscore the importance of establishing and managing a robust project communication structure prior to project initiation. The study recommends that efficient communication can improve project outcomes, particularly when dealing with considerable risks during the initial phases of the project.

## **VI. Recommendations**

The study suggests that to facilitate and streamline the operations of NGOs in Garissa County, the county and national governments should focus on improving infrastructure and security in the area. The research suggests that stakeholders and the community be educated about the significance of communication at all levels of the organization. The study recommends prioritizing and enhancing communication within the organization. It recommends providing various opportunities for stakeholders, project teams, and staff to express their ideas and participate in decision-making processes. This could lead to making informed decisions that benefit the organization in different ways. Active involvement of stakeholders in all pre-implementation and initial meetings during the planning and execution stages is crucial. By considering their opinions, projects can become more acceptable, generate social investment, and benefit from additional ideas. The study recommends adopting this approach as a means to enhance project performance. The study focused exclusively on non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and researchers in the future can consider conducting a comparable study in other areas to examine potential variations in reactions. It will be intriguing to find how the findings from this study translate when the same methods are applied in diverse contexts, such as the public or private sector. The study suggests that it would be valuable to replicate the research in other counties to compare the findings and validate the conclusions.

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