

An Investigation into NGOs' Projects Sustainability beyond Donor Support: A Case Study of World Vision and Chongwe Child Development Agency in Chongwe District

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ABSTRACT

This is an exploratory study on the determinants of NGO's project sustainability beyond donor support; a case study of World Vision and Chongwe Child Development Agency in Chongwe district, Zambia. With the coming of Millennium Development Goals in 2000, the need for Sustainable Development has been a theme under discussion by the world leaders and major international institutions. Furthermore, in 2015, the United Nations replaced the MDGs with Sustainable Development Goals which hinged on three pillars; Social Progress, Economic Growth and Environmental Protection, with a call to action for all stakeholders including Civil Society Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations. NGOs play a major role in supporting the livelihood of people especially the vulnerable rural, in areas where government is not able to adequately provide for the needs of its citizens. It is a concern of every policy maker to ensure that people's livelihoods are enhanced in a sustainable manner. However, beneficiaries and stakeholders of NGOs managed projects have usually been disappointed due to the failures and challenges with continued enjoyment of benefits when donors pull out.

The objective of the study was to investigate the determinants of project sustainability beyond donor support in Chongwe district. To achieve this objective, the study examined how community participation, financial systems, income diversification and governance affect and influence project sustainability through the study of two NGO projects in the district. Through a mixed-methods research approach, this study, involved one quantitative instrument; a structured self-administered questionnaire and two qualitative instruments, a guided interview and a

question guide for Focus Group Discussions. A purposively selected sample of 98 respondents from World Vision Chongwe Office and the Chongwe Child Development Agency involving the staff, project volunteers, beneficiaries and stakeholders participated in the research.

*The study established that the stakeholders and beneficiaries were greatly involved in the activities of the donor funded projects. In addition, they were also directly involved in decision making processes of the projects. The study further concluded that financial systems had an effect on project sustainability and the research revealed that the projects financial systems were adhered to by the NGOs. The study also revealed that income diversification influences the sustainability of projects to a very great extent. NGOs that have several sources of funding are often able to successfully implement sustainable projects. The study further established that the dominant management style adopted in the targeted projects was *laissez-faire* management style. This meant that employees worked with minimum interference from the management. This management style was however seen as effective by the community, who believed that a management style has a lot of influence on project sustainability. Despite the high participation of beneficiary's and stakeholders, they displayed mixed reactions on the effect of donors pull out, with the majority thinking that the projects would experience a lot of challenges. They however, counted on the capacities, knowledge and skills they had acquired in order to carry on enjoying the benefits.*

Key words: Non-Governmental, Organizations, Project Sustainability, Donor Support

I. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter looked at the background of the study, highlights of the literature review, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, conceptual frame work, definition of terms and organisation of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Sustainable development is one general concern which has captured the attention of society. It is therefore an issue which has been streamlined by various development actors at various levels, hence the need for an investigation into NGOs projects sustainability at a local level. Sustainable Development was initially expressed through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed at eradicating poverty in all its forms (United Nations, 2015). In September 2015, the leaders meeting at the United Nations realized that the gains achieved through the implementation of the MDGs were still not sufficient in ending poverty. To this end, a new set of goals called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were set. These hinged on three pillars; being Social Progress, Economic Growth and Environmental Protection (UNDP, 2019) and as a result, all governments and International agencies have changed course and are now discussing and promoting sustainable development. This agenda required a revitalized global partnership to ensure its implementation, bringing together governments, the private sector, civil society, the united Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources (United Nations, 2015). According to Barclay, among the functions of Civil Society in the implementation of SDGs would be to spur government action through persistent advocacy and to act as watchdogs holding governments accountable to their commitments as well as

directly supporting implementation through the role, they often play in service delivery and can have an important role in supporting data collection efforts, including on marginalized groups (Barclay et al 2015). The implementation for the Agenda of the SDGs therefore is crosscutting to all stakeholders including Civil Society and certainly the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who are actors within the Civil Society. And according to the United Nations Civil Society Unit, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. This study also falls well within the framework of Sustainable Livelihoods, which concept according to Krantz, (2001), is an attempt to go beyond the conventional definitions and approaches to poverty eradication. The conventional definitions which focus on certain aspects or manifestations of poverty such as low income because they did not consider other vital aspects of poverty such as vulnerability and social exclusion. In this study, an NGO will be taken as 'any grouping of people who have a common mission to meet a particular need in their society or community, and are not formed or controlled by government (Mazibuko, 2000). This study is also cognisant of the Zambian legal framework's definition of an NGO. According to the 2009 NGO Act, an NGO is defined as a 'private voluntary grouping of individuals or associations, whether corporate or unincorporated, not established or operated for profit, partisan politics or any commercial purposes, and who or which have organized themselves for the promotion of civic education, advocacy, human rights, social welfare, development, charity, research or other activity or program for the benefit or interest of the public, through resources mobilized from sources within or outside Zambia while an 'international non-governmental organization' means a non-

governmental organization with the original incorporation in one or more countries other than Zambia’.

Notwithstanding the contribution of NGOs, Muzibuko (2000), observes one characteristic of NGO’s which is the dependency on donations for the resources required to perform their functions. The donations may come from the community, from businesses, from the government of the country in which the NGO operates, or from foreign governments, foundations and businesses. Murray and Overton (2011) as quoted by Banks and Hulme (2012) observes that Sustainability is another concern in relation to NGO programmes, given their reliance on short- and medium-term project-based funding. Projects with defined timescales, measurable outputs, and an emphasis on physical capital development are not well suited to long-term structural change, particularly when implemented by multiple and competing small-scale. Further, according to Fowler (1992), the basic premise of developmental NGOs is that they serve a client group that is not in a position to meet the full cost of the services they receive. While the market provides for those who can afford it, those who cannot must look for services from the state or other institutions such as an NGO who obtain their income from other sources. The work of NGOs is therefore critically dependent on economic processes external to the client group.

Therefore, for every policy maker, sustainable projects are a priority both in national as well as international development. These development projects have been noted to play a vital role in offering basic social services which fill development gaps where many governments, especially in third world countries, fall short. However, the disappointment of beneficiaries and stakeholders has been prevalent and common in most of these projects due to their poor

performance (Mazibuko 2007) especially on projects implemented in the 1980s which did not perform satisfactorily. Hawkins and Mann (2007) noted that most of the projects were mainly affected by the project overruns and the sustainability challenges which became and still is a concern for key donors including the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, as well as bilateral aid agencies. Khan (2000) noted that the trend on projects implementation was showing significant improvement but post implementation sustainability was still disappointing as fewer projects were sustainable beyond donor’s support. This unsustainability meant that despite massive expenditures incurred towards implementation of development projects especially in third world countries, poor sustainability was denying the beneficiaries expected returns. This further meant that the despite increases in development expenditure debts, intended gains were either not imminent or were accruing at a dismal rate.

This case study was undertaken in a predominantly rural district of Chongwe which is serviced by a number of NGOs. Among the NGOs servicing the district are World Vision Zambia (WV) and Child Fund which operates through the Chongwe Child Development Agency.

II. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

The objective of this chapter is to discuss a summary of the literature review in relation to the conceptual framework under which the assumption of this study is based. The chapter briefly highlights a summary of the five parts which include; concept of Project Sustainability and the four factors influencing project sustainability; being Community Participation, Project Financial Systems, Income

Diversification and Project Governance. Finally, it addresses the knowledge gap from the literature and provides a summary of the literature reviewed.

2.1 The concept of project sustainability

It has been noted that over the years, the concept of project sustainability has varied widely and broadened in scope. According to IFAD (2007), project sustainability ensures that institutions supported through projects, the benefits are realized, maintained and continue after the end of the project. Within the development community, the notion of sustainability comes to be applied to financial resources, including project funds, indicating that projects and donor support are not limitless and must be used efficiently in ways that local actors support so that benefit flows are sustained. Scheirer (2005), looked at sustainability from an NGO perspective as continuing to perform and deliver project benefits to the primary target group after the funding from a donor terminates. Closely related to the project sustainability in the context of lasting effects of project benefits is the livelihood approach. In his critical exploration of the approach, De Haan (2012), quotes Chambers and Conway's definition as; 'A livelihood system [that] comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base' (Carney 1998, p.2).

2.2 Factors influencing project sustainability

2.2.1 Influence of community participation on the sustainability of projects

On stakeholders' ownership, Pollnac and Pomeroy (2005) revealed that many projects fail to bring sustainable benefits because of lack of

good will by the stakeholders; they do not show ownership and commitment. Some practical steps to achieve sustainability suggested by Pollnac and Pomeroy (2005) include ensuring that the design phase is given adequate time and resources and is regarded as an investment in a successful outcome and ensuring that the design involves activities required in the implementation of participatory strategies.

A study by Chizimba (2013) on the Sustainability of donor funded projects in Malawi, three projects were analysed to find out whether they were sustainable or not. All these projects were trying to address the problem of household food insecurity in their specific areas of implementation. One of the projects had a number of challenges and limitations which affected its sustainability. Institutional strengthening was done towards the end when it should have been done first prior to the provision of additional infrastructure. One other challenge was that technology chosen by the implementers could not be maintained by the farmers themselves after the end of the project. As Laah (2014) observed, community participation has long been associated with rural development. Regional developers believe that for projects to succeed, communities need to actively partake in designing, implementing and sustaining the projects that affect their condition of living. Another aspect is the NGO collaboration with the local communities. Rose (2014) focused on need for community knowledge to have a collective impact in Canada. Rose encouraged NGOs to engage members of the community in their operations in order to address the community needs better and promote financial sustainability. Further, in a case study on scaling up HIV/AIDS and TB Home base care; lessons from Zambia, two institutions namely, Family Health Trust and the Ndola Catholic Diocese Home Based Care

programme were compared. It was observed that the community participation and ownership appeared to be greater in the Ndola Home Based Care than the Family Health Trust Home Based Care as judged from the degree of the involvement of Volunteers due to greater responsibilities assigned and therefore more active. (Blinkhoff 1999, p.243)

2.2.2 Influence of financial systems on project sustainability

Projects financial systems refer to accounting records and financial statements showing performance and cash flow projections that determine financial sustainability of donor funded projects. Nturibi (2004) states that for a development project to be financially sustainable, it requires a sound financial base arising from reliable sources of funding, financial systems to facilitate accountability and cash flow projections and development of marketable products to generate excess income over the expenditure of the project. Aid therefore should be part of the process of change and donors should ensure that their assistance is not delaying progress towards sustainability but actually supporting it. According to Theewaterskloof municipality conference (2011), financial sustainability is the capacity to generate sufficient and reliable revenue to finance short-, medium- and long-term financial obligations in response to community and group demand for services in terms of the constitution. In another similar study, Kinyua and Mwangi (2013) observed that prudent financial management in any community project involve understanding, identification and estimation of project operation and maintenance costs.

Financial systems play a very critical role in enhancing sustainability initiatives. According to the Catholic Diocese of Ndola (2004), the Social Housing Project is one programme that was able to demonstrate the effects of financial systems on sustainability. At the start of the project, it was

agreed that members would pay back the materials subsidies over time to form a revolving fund for ongoing maintenance and more house construction (Dunckley, 2004). However, after a while, and with several months of members' contributions, it was discovered that the revolving fund was misused and this made it difficult to achieve its purpose of sustaining the project to enable more beneficiaries to enjoy the benefits. Financial systems are therefore very important in every project and the systems ensure that there is transparency and accountability in the manner resources are utilized in a project.

2.2.3 Effect of income diversification on project sustainability

One of the main factors impacting effective management and sustainability of NGOs is the nature of their dependability on donor funding (Layton, 2006). The concepts "financial sustainability" and NGOs usually go hand-in-hand since NGOs' legal status as a "non-profit" entity [is] located at the mercy of donor organisations whose inconsistent funding priorities remain the biggest threat to NGOs' financial and operational future (Layton, 2006). NGOs are required to fundraise and to generate an income to become sustainable. Income diversification refers to an increase in the number of sources of income or the balance among the different sources (Jenkins and Yakovleva, 2006). Thus, an organization with two sources of income would be more diversified than an organization with just one source, and an organization with two income sources, each contributing half of the total, would be more diversified than an organization with two sources, one that accounts for 90 percent of the total (Joshi et al. 2002; Ersado 2003).

The Integrated AIDS Programme is one of the demonstrable cases of programmes who enjoyed

the advantages of diversified funding. The programme was able to survive the financial hiccups compared to other programmes in the Diocese of Ndola basically because their funding sources were diversified and each of the donors counted on the support of each other to cover both programmatic and administrative costs. The programme has thus survived through the various periods while maintaining its key support areas.

2.2.4 Effect of governance on sustainability of projects.

According to Narayan et al (2,000), Governance, is a widely-used term which ranges in definition from electoral arrangements to institutional structures. Budgeting, accounting, financial reporting and management control, on the other hand, are the most essential tools for responsible governance, accountability, planning and management in non-profit organisations (Ott, 2001). Good financial practices will help managers make effective and efficient use of resources to achieve objectives and fulfil commitments to stakeholders, help NGOs to be more accountable to donors and other stakeholders, gain the respect and confidence of funding agencies, partners and those served, give the NGO the advantage in competition for increasingly scarce resources, and help NGOs prepare themselves for long-term financial sustainability (Alin et al., 2006). The financial sustainability of an organisation depends to a large extent on its financial management practices. With regard to Governance within the Community Based Organizations' structure; Governance relates to processes and decisions that seek to define actions that grant power and verify performance (Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services, 2005). In CBOs, governance plays a key role in project sustainability but has had several shortcomings.

Poor Governance has been recognized not only in CBOs but also within NGOs. Knowledge of good governance varies widely in Africa, with some countries not aware why CBOs are required to have committees or what their roles and functions should be. Speer and Perkins (2006) cite that it is difficult to achieve good governance with founders who wished to own their CBOs for their own purposes. On the other hand, Fisher (2002) attributes good governance to a crucial fundamental of CBO accountability and transparency. The influence of political leaders affects the running of CBOs, funding and the entire implementation of projects. In Kenya, the political leaders may influence the funding from Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and other donors in and outside the locality. This in turn affects ongoing projects and future projects (Wanjohi, 2010).

In a study conducted by Kabungo on the sustainability of agricultural revolving loans in Zambia, it was revealed that a World Vision animal project to increase livestock among the people of Lucena, through a pass on system, became sustainable because the project was entirely left in the hands of community members. The community partnered with the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture at the local level for the provision of material and technical support (Lungo 2017).

2.2.5 Summary of the Literature Review

Some projects have demonstrated capacity to continue while others have been challenged with continuity. However, from the literature review it is not clear how the knowledge gained through the execution of the donor funds, particularly at the wrap-up review stage is ploughed back to benefit and refine the solution already provided. There is also no evidence of proper knowledge on how well management teams should behave to pave

way for projects which will be sustainable in being able to have continuity of benefits to stakeholders beyond donor support. This research therefore seeks to relate the factors contributing to project sustainability in the case of World Vision and Chongwe Child Development Agency as NGOs operating in Chongwe District.

2.3 Statement of the problem

According to Makoba (2002), NGOs are heralded as important vehicles for empowerment, democratization and economic development because of targeting and being responsive to marginalized groups in society. Both World Vision and Chongwe Child Development Agency through the activities they are implementing in Chongwe district, are seeking to improve the well-being of the people in the targeted communities. In its Kapululwe Bimbe Zone, World Vision is transitioning such that by 2023, the NGO will be out of the area (WV, 2017). To this effect, World Vision in consultation with the target communities needs to assess and work out sustainability and exit strategies so that the gains achieved so far are maintained and there is no disproportional change in the livelihoods of the people. Further, according to its 2018 Annual Report, Child Fund expressed the need to sustain its development gains by enhancing its advocacy for social change alongside its programmes. At the local, national and global levels, Child Fund's work to protect children from violence is strengthening communities and changing lives but still have a long way to go. The organization is therefore focussed on making the interventions sustainable by addressing the root causes of violence against children, such as inequality, poverty and harmful social norms. While acknowledging that NGO projects have limited life spans, the question this study wants answered is whether the targeted communities are able to continue enjoying the current benefits once an NGO ceases its operations, in this instance

through a case study of the two organizations. To facilitate the above issues, it was important for the study to investigate the key determinants of project sustainability beyond the donor funding for the targeted communities.

2.4 Objectives of the study

2.4.1 General objective

The objective of the study will be to investigate the determinants of project sustainability beyond donor support in Chongwe District.

2.4.2 Specific objectives

1. To examine the influence of community participation on the sustainability of projects.
2. To investigate how financial systems, determine project sustainability.
3. To examine the extent to which income diversification determines project sustainability.
4. To establish the extent to which governance determines the sustainability of projects.

2.4.3 Research questions

1. Does community participation influence sustainability of projects?
2. How do financial systems determine project sustainability?
3. To what extent does income diversification determine project sustainability?
4. How does governance determine sustainability of projects?

2.4.4 Significance of the study

The results of this study would also be useful in providing information to assist in advocating for planning programs that mainstream community project management capacity building for project sustainability and possibly entice other scholars to do further research on the subject matter. The

study would ultimately contribute to strengthening the roles of Non-Governmental Organizations and Community Based Organizations in contributing to the realization of the goals of the Vision 2030, through the 7th National Development plan and finally contribute to a body of knowledge highlighting how community participation, income diversification and governance influence project sustainability.

2.4.5 Limitations

The research was particular to Chongwe District hence findings could not be generalized to other projects in other Districts. Further, the approach used was a case study whose findings cannot be replicated. Furthermore, due to distances involved between the targeted areas, the research limited himself to the areas within affordable distances. As such direct views of stakeholders living far away from the central business district could not be covered.

2.4.6 Conceptual frame work

The problem under investigation in this study was to investigate the determinants of project sustainability beyond donor support in Chongwe District. It was based on the conceptual framework defined below. In this framework, four variables formed independent variables which included; community participation, financial systems, income diversification and governance. These variables were used to predict the dependent variable which is project sustainability. However, the factors likely to influence the predicted relationship included government policy and community values. The conceptual framework of the variables under investigation is as shown in figure below;

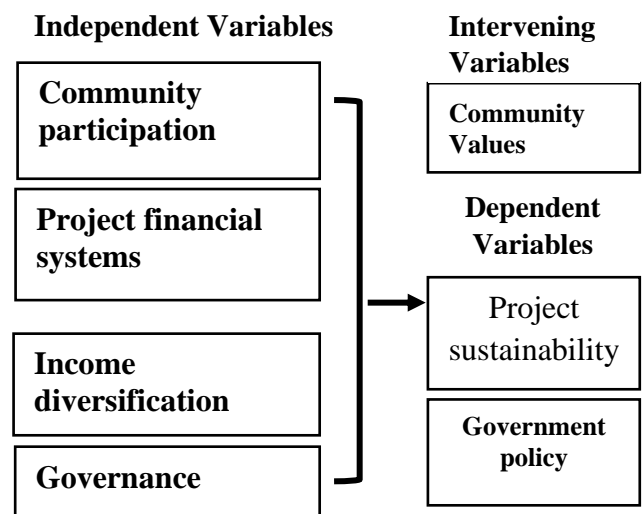


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.4.7 Operational definition of concepts

The operational definitions were also defined as outlined below;

Sustainability: This is defined as the ability of an organisation to maintain resources deployed to pursue its mission effectively and efficiently over the long term.

Project Sustainability: This is the ability of a project and its benefits to continue over a long period of time even after the end of the donor funding.

Project Financial Systems: Refer to accounting records and financial statements showing performance and cash flow projections that determine financial sustainability of donor funded projects.

Community Participation: This refers to the efforts and actions of volunteers and stakeholders in a given social unit. It includes collaboration between sectors, programs, disciplines, governments and organisations.

Income Diversification: Refers to an increase in the number of sources of income or the balance among the different sources.

Governance: This relates to processes and decisions that seek to define actions that grant power and verify performance.

III. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter addressed the research methodology that was employed in the study. This included research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations. The study adopted a case study design which utilized a mixed approach integrating both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population included all the staff and beneficiaries of the two targeted Non-Governmental Organizations with a sample size of 98 respondents. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling method.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a Case study research design which allowed the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance (in this study, the case of selected communities in Chongwe District) or situation and to identify, or attempt to identify the various interactive processes at work. The study also utilized a mixed method approach which

utilizes both qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

3.2 Target Population

The target population of this study included all projects ran by NGOs and all employees working in the selected donor funded projects in Chongwe district. These included; World Vision Zambia Projects, and Chongwe Child Development Agency Projects. A total of 110 stakeholders were engaged; being 8 senior managers, 20 middle level managers 30 programme staff and 52 beneficiaries from both projects.

3.3 Sample Size

A sample of 110 respondents was drawn from all categories which represented 20% of the target population.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

The purposive sampling technique was used in this study. This was appropriate due to the non-homogeneity of the donor funded projects in terms of management sizes, number of staff in each project and nature of products offered by the projects. The study focused on the following personnel in each project: project managers, finance managers'/ project accountants, human resource managers, technical staff and IT staff where applicable.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The data for this study was collected using two types of instruments: questionnaires for NGOs' Management, Programme and field staff and in addition, interview guides for senior and middle level managers and community members (beneficiaries). Questionnaires for NGOs staff and beneficiaries were structured and were self-administered. Semi-structured questionnaires were used for the interviews and Focus Group Discussions for community members.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher collected primary data through field research. Afterwards, the interviews and Focus Group Discussions were conducted to obtain an in-depth understanding of the variables under study. The data for this study was collected within a period of two months.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. For the quantitative data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to generate descriptive statistics and to establish the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables of the study. This resulted in generating data which was analysed and presented as percentages and measures of central tendency through the graphs and pie charts. The qualitative data obtained from the interview guide was analysed and discussed thematically to qualify the data generated by the questionnaire.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

To facilitate the protection participants, permission was obtained from Chongwe District Commissioner before the field work was embarked on. During the administration of the interview schedule, the researcher identified himself to the respondents to avoid impersonation. The purpose of the study and the nature of the interview schedule was made known to the respondents. Participation in the study was not by force but on the willingness of respondents to participate. Further, all forms of identification of respondents including names, addresses and telephone numbers of respondents was avoided. Respondents were informed that it was within their rights to discontinue the interviews if they felt compelled to do that.

IV. CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the key findings of the determinants of project sustainability beyond donor support in Chongwe District among the selected projects; the World Vision and Chongwe Child Development Agency. The findings in this chapter are in three sections; characteristics of the respondents, quantitative feedback from the questionnaires and interview guides which were the data collection instruments employed in the study.

4.1 Biographical Data of Respondents

4.1.1 Characteristics of Respondents

The characteristics of respondents included gender, age, level of education, main occupation and average income per month. The response rate for the survey was 89%. Out of the 110 questionnaires distributed, only 98 questionnaires were received.

4.1.2 Gender of Respondents

Gender was used as a variable to determine men and female views on the determinants of project sustainability beyond donor support in Chongwe District. As shown in the table below; female respondents were 48 and male respondents were also 48. In this way, the gender was well balanced.

4.1.3 Age Group of Respondents in percentage

Age was used as a variable so as to find out what the young and old people knew about the determinants of project sustainability beyond donor support in Chongwe District. As outlined in the figure below; respondents whose age was from 20 to 24 years were 18 (18%). Majority 32 (33%) of the respondents' age was in the range of 30 to 34 years followed by 22 (22%) whose age ranged from 25 to 29 years old. 16 (16%) of respondents had years from 35 to 39 while

respondents with 40 years and above were 11 (10%).

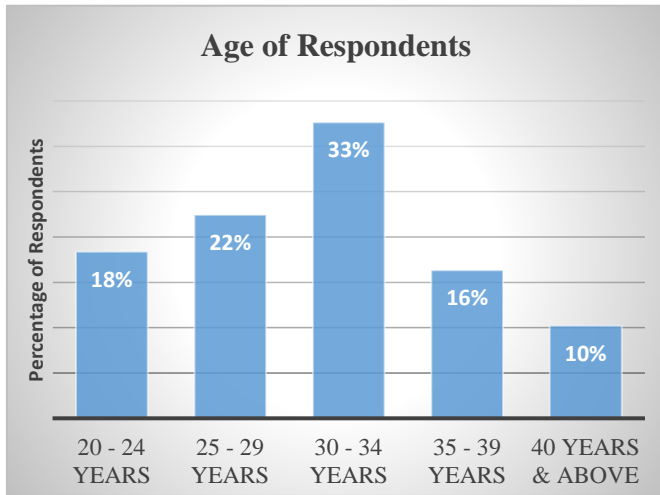


Figure 2: Age Group of Respondents Source: Field Data 2019

4.1.4 Educational level number of respondent's percentage

In order to determine respondent's knowledge about the determinants of project sustainability among Non-Governmental Organizations, their level of education was assessed as shown in this figure.

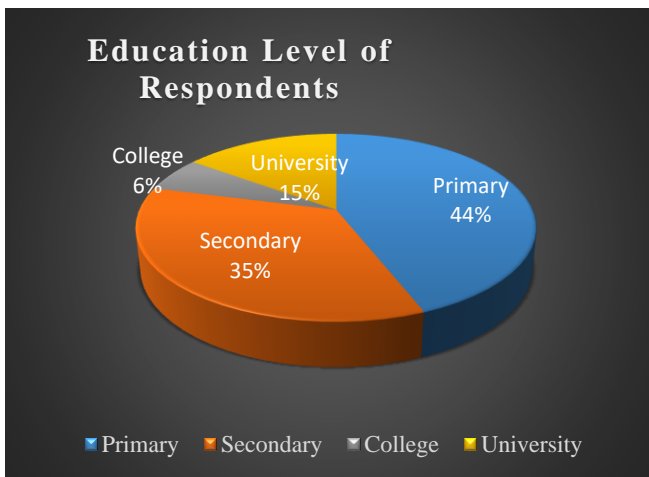


Figure 3: Education Level of Respondents Source: Field data 2019

Respondents whose education level was up to primary level (43) who were 44% were the majority. 34 respondents, culminating to (35%) had gone up to secondary. Only 6 respondents at 6% reached college level of education while only 15 (15%) had university education.

4.1.5 Main occupation of respondents

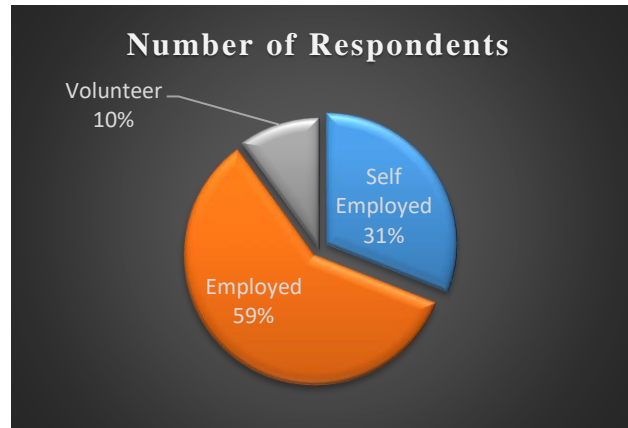


Figure 4: Main Occupation of respondents Source: Field Data 2019

Respondents' occupation variable was used to determine the impact of project sustainability beyond donor support. According to figure below, majority 58 (59%) of the respondents were employed, 31 (30%) of the respondents were self-employed while 10 (10%) were volunteers.

4.1.6 Average income of respondents per month in Zambian Kwacha

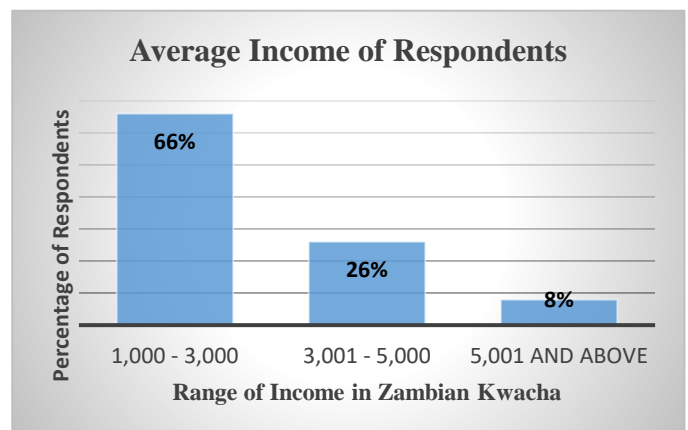


Figure 5: Average Income of Respondents Source: Field Data 2019

Figure 5 shows that 65 (66%) of the respondents had their monthly income from K1000 to K3000 while those respondents whose monthly income was from K3001 to K5000 were 25 (25%). Only

8 (8 %) of the respondents had K5001 and above per month.

4.1.7 Number of years' respondents had lived in the area

The other variable examined by this study related to the length of stay by respondents in the area. Length of stay was deemed to be important for this study because the respondents gave different views on the sustainability of the projects. The problems given varied between those who had lived there for a short period of time and those who had lived in Chongwe for a longer period.

According to the figure above, 7 (6%) of the respondents, stated that they had lived in Chongwe for 1 year. The biggest number of respondents 40 (41%) stated that they had lived in area from 2 to 6 years while 18 (18%) lived in the study area for 7 to 11 years. Some respondents 22 (22%) reported that they had lived in Chongwe for 12 to 16 years and 12 (12%) indicated that they had lived in the study area for 17 years and above.

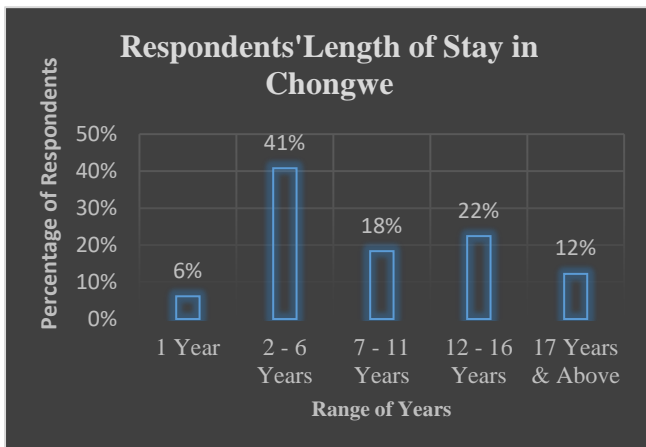


Figure 6: Respondents Length of Stay Source: Field data 2019

4.2 Responses from self-administered questionnaires by respondents

4.2.1 Stakeholder participation influence sustainability of project

4.2.1.1 Does stakeholder participation influence sustainability of projects?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		%	%	%	%	%
1	This project is fully owned by the target beneficiaries of the project	11.1	13.3	3.33	44.4	27.8
2	This project is fully owned by the stakeholder of the project	33.3	48.9	5.6	6.7	5.6
3	The target beneficiaries of the project are involved in key decision-making	20	25.6	12.2	23.3	18.9
4	The project stakeholders are involved in key decision-making	27.8	25.6	16.7	22.2	11.1

Table 1: Stakeholder participation and the Influence on Project Sustainability Source: Field Data 2019

The study sought to assess the level of participation of stakeholder and target beneficiaries in the project. The findings presented in the table above shows that (82.2%) stakeholder participation influenced sustainability of projects. Target beneficiaries committed in the project implementation accounted for 24.4% of the respondents. The target beneficiaries of the project involved in key decision-making accounted for 55.6 % while the project stakeholders involved in key decision-making were 53.4%. A distinction was made between the stakeholders and the beneficiaries.

The guided interviews which targeted managers revealed that the two organizations were very categorical about the Community Based approach in initiating and implementing programmes and projects. They indicated that it was critical for communities to be involved right from the start of the project so that they are able to appreciate its focus and the role the community and its leaders would be expected to play in the programme or project.

4.2.1.2 Level of commitment of stakeholders and target beneficiaries to the project

The study sought to assess the level of commitment of stakeholder and target beneficiaries in the project. The findings presented in figure below shows that 78.9 % of the respondents said that stakeholders and target beneficiaries were committed in the project implementation very committed were 22.2%, committed were 56.7%, less committed responses accounted for 11.1% and 10.0% were responses for not committed at all.

From the discussions held with stakeholders, it was mentioned that on average commitment was very evident among stakeholders and beneficiaries. For each of the beneficiaries, there was a direct benefit that could be drawn from the project.

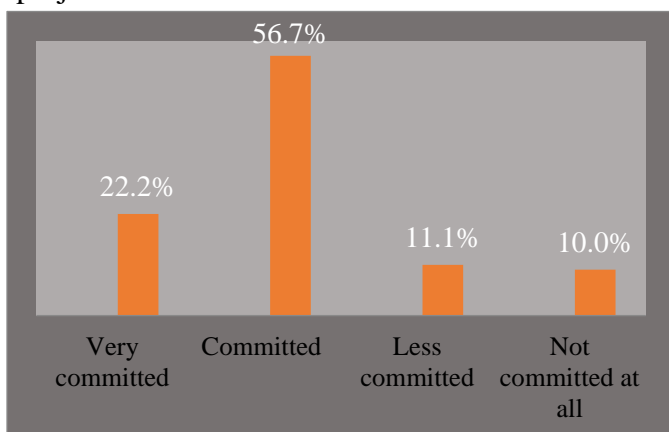


Figure 7 : Level of Commitment by Stakeholders
Source: Field data

4.2.1.3 Effect of withdrawal of donor funding to this project

The study sought to establish the views of the respondents on the likely effect of withdrawal of donor funding to the project or in the vent that that an NGO ceases its operations in the area. The figure 8 below shows the responses from the field. According to majority of the respondents (64.4%), withdrawal of donor funding would affect significantly the running of project. Continue normally and cease operation responses accounted for 17.8% and 13.3% respectively as shown in figure above. This showed that most projects were not self-sustaining after the withdrawal of the donor funding hence the need to design mechanisms to enhance project sustainability. On the same, the respondents through the discussions indicated that the effects would not be very severe as both organizations were closely working with line ministries in the very thematic areas the line ministries are promoting. Thus, it was seen that the line ministries would be able to continue. It was however acknowledged that the effects would not be so much because firstly capacity has been developed in the beneficiaries and most of them have also benefitted from the Entrepreneurship activities which have been tailored towards strengthening their financial capacity to support their families. This has been done through the livestock support programmes.

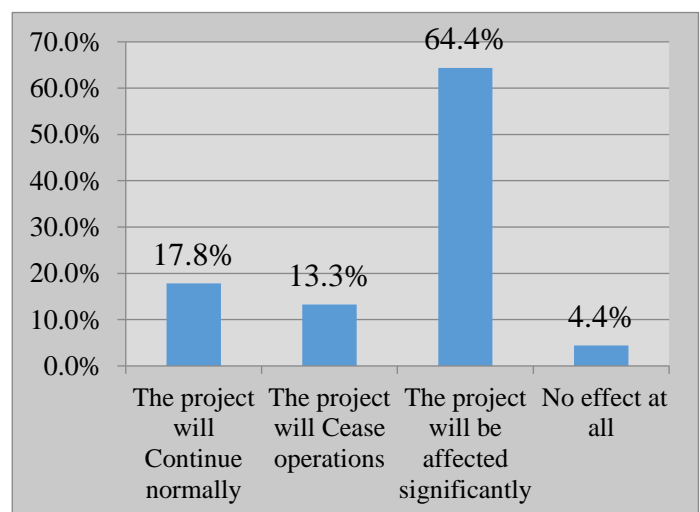


Figure 8: Effect of Donor Funding withdrawal on the project Source: Field Data 2019

4.2.2 How financial systems determine project sustainability?

4.2.2.1 Status of Financial Reporting

The study sought to establish the status of financial reporting. According to majority of the respondents, as shown in the figure below, most projects followed Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) accounted for 96% and 91% of the respondents respectively.

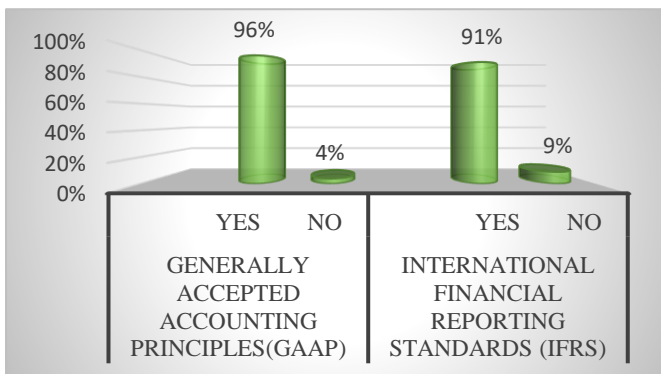


Figure 9: Status of Financial Reporting Source: Field Data 2019

4.2.2.2 Auditing books of accounts

On the auditing of the books of accounts, the findings in figure below that majority of the projects were audited annually and accounted for by 60%. Those audited Monthly, Quarterly, Semi-Annually and occasionally accounted for 6%, 10%, 20% and 4% respectively.

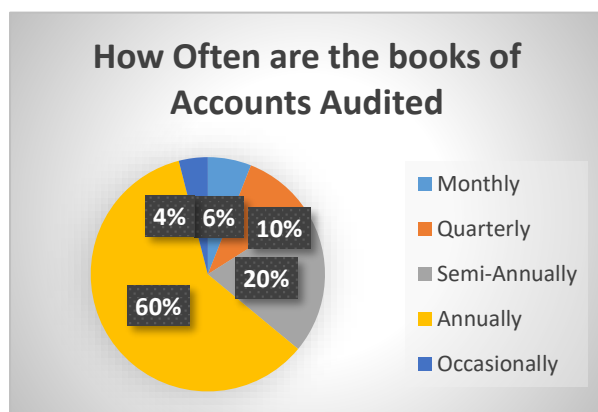


Figure 10: How Often Books of Accounts are Audited Source: Field Data 2019

In addition, the guided interviews revealed that financial reporting were requirements by the partners and it was also a requirement in terms of project governance.

4.2.2.3 Extent to which financial systems affect the sustainability of this project

On the question of whether financial systems affect sustainability, Majority (60%) of the respondents indicated that financial systems affected the sustainability of projects. 5% and 3% accounted for those who disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Other respondents (7%) could not tell whether financial systems affected the sustainability of projects or not.

On the question of whether financial systems affect the project sustainability, the respondents from interviews indicated that indeed financial management has an effect. This is because financial systems and management has lot to do with the way donors and communities support the projects.

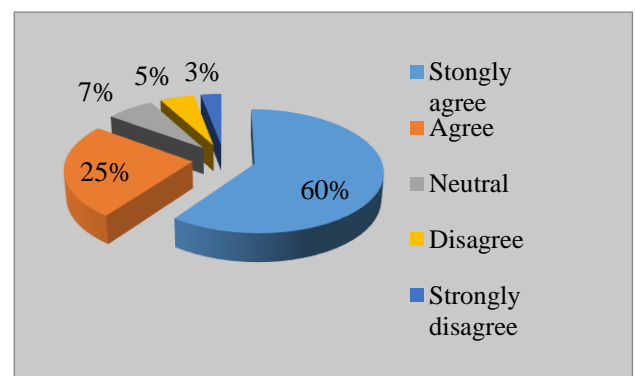


Figure 11: Do Financial Systems affect Project Sustainability? Source: Field data

4.2.3 Income diversification and project sustainability among selected NGOs

4.2.3.1 Extent to which income diversification determine project sustainability

This section presents the respondents responses on the influence of income diversification on

project sustainability among NGOs. The researcher sought to establish the extent to which income diversification influences project sustainability among NGOs. The responses were given a five-point scale namely; very great extent, great extent, moderate extent, little extent and not at all. The responses were ranked in such a way that very great extent was given value 1, great extent was given value 2, moderate extent was given value 3, little extent was given value 4 while no extent was given value 5.

	Very Great Extent	Great Extent	Moderate Extent	Little Extent	Not at all
An NGO with an operational fundraising strategy	30%	36.7%	15.6%	13.3%	4.4%
Diverse international funding streams	26.7%	22.2%	12.2%	26.7%	12.2%
Corporate donor sourcing	43.3%	46.7%	0%	5.6%	4.4%
NGOs should own and managing business	27.8%	25.6%	8.9%	21.1%	16.7%

Table 2: The extent to which Income diversification affect sustainability of projects Source: Field Data 2019

The results from the table below shows that an NGO with corporate donor sourcing is an effective method of ensuring sustainability of projects by NGOs was most likely to implement sustainable projects (90%). An NGO with an operational fundraising strategy in place was most likely to implement sustainable projects (66.7%). Other respondents showed that (53.4%) NGOs

should own and manage business to ensure their sustainability. Finally, the results (48.9%) show that diverse international funding streams by NGOs could ensure sustainability of projects by NGOs. Generally, the respondents were of the idea that diversified sources of income is an important component in ensuring the sustainability of projects. Reference was made to current instability and the changing trends and needs among donors as a source of concern.

4.2.4 Management styles

4.2.4.1 Management styles adopted for the project

The findings presented in figure 13 below shows that majority of the project's managers (42%) adopted a laissez faire management style which means that most employees worked with minimum interference from the management. Democratic responses accounted for 35%, autocratic (14%) and open-door policy (9%). This show that most managers adopted laissez faire management style as shown the figure below;

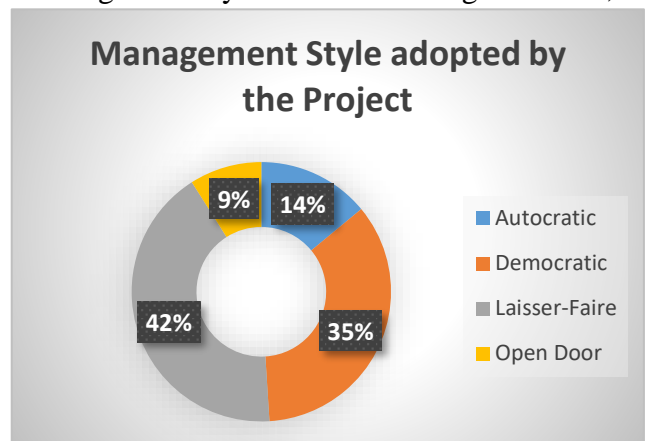


Figure 12: Management styles adopted by the project Source: Field data 2019

4.2.4.2 Extent to which management styles adopted in this project would affect the project sustainability after withdrawal of donor support?

Respondents were asked the extent to which they 'agreed or disagreed with the management styles adopted in the project affected the project sustainability after withdrawal of donor support. 52% strongly agreed and 19% agree with the

above assertion. 11% of the respondents were neutral, 12% disagreed and 6% strongly disagreed.

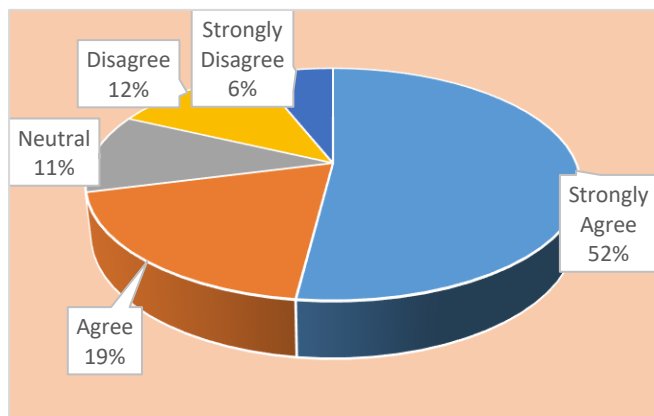


Figure 13: Effect of Management styles on the project. Source: Field Data 2019

4.2.4.3 Rating the effectiveness of the management systems adopted in the project

The study assessed the effectiveness of the management style adopted by the project managers in the various donor funded projects. The findings presented in the figure show that the Management Style adopted was ineffective to the running of the project as accounted by 2% and 12% of the Respondents respectively. Those who said that the management style adopted was effective were 76% and 10% said the style was very effective.

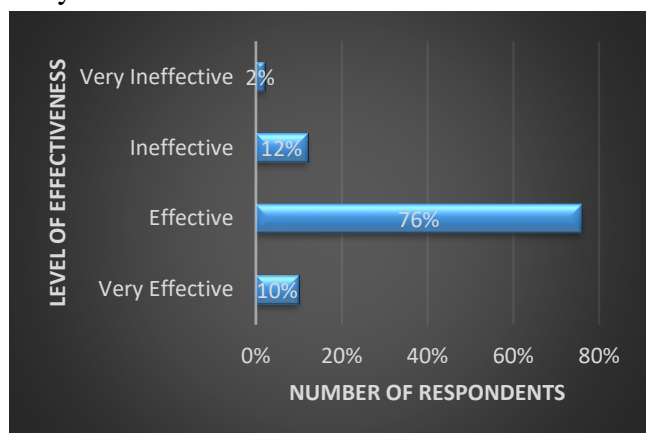


Figure 14: Effectiveness of Management styles Source: Field Data

4.2.4.4 Overall level of competency of the staff working in the project

The respondents rated the overall staff competency in the project. The findings showed that most project staff were competent in their work as accounted for by 92% cumulative responses, integrating Very competent (21%) and Competent (71%). Respondents who rated incompetent were only 2% while respondents who could not rate were 6% as shown in the figure below.

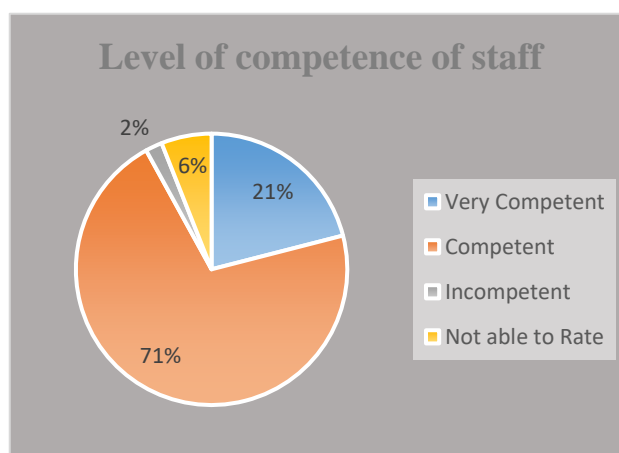


Figure 15: Overall Competence of Staff on the project Source: Field Data 2019

4.2.4.5 Extent to which the current levels of staff training affect the sustainability of this project?

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree whether current levels of staff training affected the sustainability of this project. Majority (40%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 31% agreed, 11% were neutral and 12% disagreed. Only 6% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

The group discussions revealed that both the project staff training was sufficient to ensure sustainability of the interventions. It was however noted mentioned that project staff do their best but what is important is the capacity building of the community leaders and volunteers who ultimately would remain to handle the project activities after the organizations pull out.

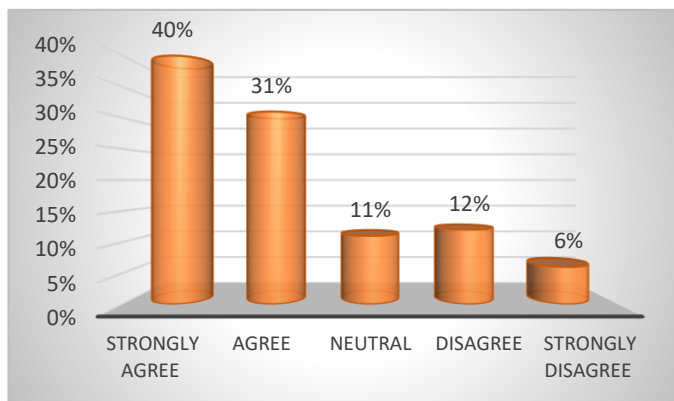


Figure 16: Current levels of staff and Sustainability of projects Source: Field Data 2019

4.3 Responses from focus group discussions

In general, the respondents from the Focus Group Discussions, who mainly were volunteers and When they make these plans, then the organization support them through the donor funds that the organization receives. Children are the mode through which funds are channelled to the organization. Plans are made on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. The Organization as a unity's needs. Their approach is always to help the communities to identify the problems, state what they have been able to do about the stated problems, what they can do. The respondents at community level further stated that community participation requires creating awareness among the people so that they know. They reported that participation in their zone was very good. They further reported that in the projects they had undertaken, people in the villages have been very helpful because they know that is not for government, but theirs. As part of enhancing community participation, both organizations considered capacity building as important. The organizations are also involved in advocacy for the Youth and with the Youth so that what they are entitled to is given to them either by the community or the Government. Youth are also assisted with start-up capital. They are empowered and

beneficiaries of the projects managed by the two organizations displayed adequate knowledge on the purpose and goals of the organizations they were identified with. The knowledge however, was limited to the specific activities which were taking place in the specific target area.

4.3.1 Influence of community participation on the sustainability of projects

The findings of the research from the targeted organizations revealed that communities are engaged and do the programmes themselves in terms of planning. They identify issues affecting them in the thematic areas of the organization.

whole has been working with a strategic plan which was developed over a period of 10 years but broken down to 3 years' life span.

The respondents further indicated that when they do community engagement, they thrive on comm capacitated so that they are able to lobby the authorities on issues affecting them.

Regarding the capacity of beneficiaries, the organizations stated that it is usually dependent on the nature of the programme. At community level, the respondents stated that when donors pull out, they did not expect to have a lot of problems. This is so because they felt that the community had acquired a lot of knowledge and skills which cannot be taken away. In order to promote community participation, the organization's respondents indicated that they were trying to use the identity of volunteers and not necessarily the organizational name.

4.3.2 Influence of financial systems on the sustainability of projects

The researcher was informed that each community makes the plans and develops the budgets and therefore they are aware of the funding that is

available because they are also involved in the allocations and additionally, they raise their own resources as contributions of 20% to the projects. In terms of accountability, the respondents stated that measures are in place for the donors to have the confidence in us. The fact that the representatives of members participate in the meetings and decision making, it helps them to be transparent.

They further stated that both internal and external Audits, are conducted every year and the reports are taken to the funders, donors and also to the government for them to renew operating licences and certificates. It was stated however that the community members were mostly limited to accountability for resources at their level. This did not include the project finances at the offices.

4.3.4 Effect of income diversification on the sustainability of projects

Respondents stated that each of the children in the programme have sponsors. So, the money the sponsors send is for addressing the needs of Children the communities have identified in those thematic areas. The respondents further indicated that they make proposals to other donors to fund the thematic areas and the government also comes through to support the programmes. They stated that problems of finance are everywhere but it is the mode of funding that made them stable. They stated that they have been experiencing fluctuations in the funding. Some sponsors pull out while other come on board. Generally, the respondents stated that their experience was positive because they have diversified funding. It was further noted that the NGOs at district level writes proposals apart from the funds they receive from the national office. They further indicated that as a local office, they are ones who identify the needs and as such they are expected to do the proposals while the national office supports them. They also indicated that it is common that one

budget is taken up by one anonymous donor may be for the next five years etc.

Respondents further stated that there are also partnerships with Private Institutions such as banks and others who are supporting their work in the district. However, the respondents noted that funding situations have drastically changed. The situation has become unpredictable.

4.3.5 Effect of governance on the sustainability of projects

Data from the interviews revealed that the structure at community level starts with what is called a section which has about 20-25 households. Four sections make a Zone and then Zones form a Catchment area. Every section has volunteers. At every catchment area volunteer are elected to lead the area. So, these are the link between the community and the Office. Their leaders spearhead the planning at community level because they are ones who know the problems they are experiencing and the office is only informed. Further, it was revealed that the participation of volunteers is very high because they are the ones with children who we support. So, every month they meet to discuss the issues affecting them and we only get the reports.

The Community respondents said that governance and leadership affect sustainability. They stated that leadership was very important and it helped them to achieve what they had planned. Finally, the Chairperson stated that were there is poor leadership, there is poor performance.

On what happens if donors were to pull out of the projects, the volunteers and community members in the group discussions indicated that it would not pose a very serious problem. They pointed to the capacities which have been built among the beneficiaries and volunteers in terms of knowledge, the livestock support, entrepreneurship skills and village banking savings which the communities

have been doing would be very supportive. They said that some of the skills learnt especially in the area of water and sanitation and maternal health are something which are for life. They further pointed out to the collaboration which has been happening with Government institutions as all the health and education activities have been implemented closely with government institutions.

V. CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

In order to reach meaningful conclusion, themes that emerged from the study were examined in relation to methodological lenses outlined in chapter two and three in relation to the objectives of the study. This chapter presents the summary of findings on how community participation, financial systems, income diversification and governance influences sustainability of projects. Further, this chapter presents the conclusions and proposes recommendations based on the findings.

5.1 Summary of findings

5.1.1 Community participation in projects

One of the fundamental factors for project sustainability is the participation of beneficiaries who are a subset of community members. In this study, it was revealed that to a large extent, community participation influenced NGOs project sustainability. Probably this finding was an indicator of open organizations attributed to capacity built and empowered people. One of the fundamental indicators of community participation is getting involved not only in doing project work but also taking responsibility in resource mobilization for common good which involve networking, partnership and collaboration. It was evident that the beneficiaries were also actively responsible for mobilizing local resources towards

their projects. This re-enforced that idea that the projects were found to be owned by beneficiaries and stakeholders. In addition, target beneficiaries and stakeholders were directly involved in decision making processes of the projects. The stakeholders and target beneficiaries were found to be committed in the project implementation. This was a step forward toward enhancing project sustainability.

5.1.2 Project financial systems

The study established that most projects had proper financial system since they followed the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) (96%) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) (91%). More than half of the respondent (72%) acknowledged that they did encounter some errors in their financial reporting. The errors experienced in the project financial reporting could be attributed to the low frequency of the audit of the books of accounts of the project. It is however interesting to note that 85% of the respondents think that project financial systems have a huge effect on project sustainability.

5.1.3 Income diversification

This clearly shows that income diversification is one of the major ways in which NGOs can ensure project sustainability. Diversification of funding sources is essential to increase the stability of NGO's income streams and as such project sustainability among the NGOs. This is consistent with the assertion of Boas (2012) who stated that NGOs that want to diversify their sources of funding and make their funding more reliable have to make a decision as to whether they want achieve this long-term goal only through; actions focused on donors and grant makers, potentially with minor self-financing activities or will also be open to consider, starting significant for-profit activities, possibly organized in form of a social enterprise.

The author also emphasizes that organization that focuses their activities on donors and grant makers will try to: diversify international sources of funding, diversify among national sources of funding, find donors and grant makers that have the reputation to be reliable and find donors and grant makers that contribute to overhead costs and start-up costs.

5.1.4 Governance and sustainability of projects

The findings showed that the management of most donor funded projects adopted a *laissez-faire* management style (42%) which means that most employees worked with minimum interference from the management. In addition, the study assessed the effectiveness of the management style adopted by the project managers in the targeted donor funded projects. The findings showed that the Management Style adopted by the management was effective with a cumulative rate of 71% and thus could support the sustainability of projects. However, the findings further showed that most project staff were competent in their work (35%) and had acquired the necessary skills needed for effective performance

5.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to establish the factors affecting sustainability of donor funded projects in Chongwe District in Zambia. The study established that the Government (and community groups were greatly involved in the activities of the donor funded projects. The private sector was however fairly involved in the project. In addition, target beneficiaries and stakeholders were directly involved in decision making processes of the projects.

The study established that most projects had proper financial systems in place since they followed the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

(GAAP) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The projects kept proper books of accounts however the frequency of the audit of these books of accounts was low since it was done annually. The errors encountered during financial reporting were however minimal.

The results of the study indicated that income diversification influences the sustainability of NGO projects to a very great extent. The study therefore concludes that NGOs that have several sources of funding are often able to successfully implement sustainable projects. This is due to the fact that there are ready funds for the completion of projects and when one source of funding is exhausted, then the NGO can use funds from another source to complete on-going projects. This therefore ensures project sustainability among the NGOs. Further, the study concludes that NGOs can diversify their income through putting in place and operationalizing fundraising strategies; diversifying the international funding streams and also through corporate donor sourcing.

The results of the study indicated that involvement of beneficiaries and other stakeholders during the project conceptualisation stage and incorporating sustainability strategies right from project conceptualization stage influences the sustainability of NGO projects to a very great extent. The study therefore concludes that involving various stakeholders and beneficiaries during the conceptualisation of projects and incorporating sustainability strategies right from the project conceptualization not only ensures that the projects are beneficial to the community and that the community buys in to the idea of the project and thus ensuring project sustainability even after the project period comes to an end.

The study further established that the major management style adopted by most of the

management of the projects was *laissez-faire* management style. This meant that employees worked with minimum interference from the management. This management style was however seen as effective by the community.

The research however, revealed that the community; beneficiaries and volunteers had mixed feeling as to how the situation would be once the donors pull out. They however, counted on the capacities, knowledge and skills they had acquired in order to carry on enjoying the benefits.

5.5 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

- i. Collaboration with government line ministries is of critical importance to the sustainability of NGO work in development. This is because of the established structures which are essential to the success of project interventions.
- ii. To this effect, it would be important to have a policy/ practice directive that must encourage the NGOs to involve and engage the key stakeholders and beneficiaries at the commencement of projects and to ensure that most of the activities are led by community members. There is need to educate and empower the local communities' leaders on the sustainability of the projects to ensure that they are able to articulate the goals and objectives of the project and push them forward after withdrawal of donor funding.
- iii. Succession planning is however necessary to ensure that the target beneficiaries and the stakeholders are well prepared to effectively run the project after withdrawal of donor support.
- iv. The donor should assess the target beneficiaries and stakeholder capacity to handle and continue running of the projects. The project handing over should only be

done once the donor is fully convinced beyond reasonable doubt that the target beneficiaries and stakeholder have adequate capacity, knowledge and skills to effectively run the project. This will ensure sustainability of the projects.

- v. The frequency of auditing of the projects books of account need to be increased to either monthly or quarterly. This will ensure rectification of the errors that were found inherent in the projects' financial reports.

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