



## Community Participation and the Sustainability of Donor-Funded Education Projects in Kajiado County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research was to investigate the role of community participation on the sustainability of donor-funded education projects in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study was guided by Social Action Theory. Descriptive survey research design was used in this investigation. The target population was 648 individuals involved during the implementation of 32 donor funded projects in Kajiado County. The study targeted 123 school board of management (BoM) members, 380 community facilitators and 113 local administrators. In addition, the study targeted 32 project coordinators as the key interviewees. Sample size of 243 comprised of 49 school board of management (BoM) members, 150 community facilitators and 44 local administrators. The selection of study samples was carried out using stratified simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Semi-structured questionnaires along with a key informant interview guide were employed to fulfill the study requirements. Moreover, data was collected and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS version 25. Furthermore, multiple linear regression analysis determined the existing interactions among the variables under investigation. On the other hand, qualitative data analysis was done using content analysis by way of N-vivo software package. Consequently, findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between community participation in decision making process. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that non-participation might result in apathy, animosity, or intentional hindrance from the individuals who were meant to benefit (mean = 4.4464, SD = 0.74156), and that project efficiency is enhanced by the assistance of the community (mean = 4.3004, SD = 0.9891). Respondents also agreed that participation improves the competitive advantage of an organization (mean = 4.1717, SD = 1.0321), and ensuring the attention of stakeholders is crucial to fulfill the needs for procedural fairness, procedural logic, and legitimacy for all those engaged or impacted (mean = 4.1588, SD = 0.65365). This study thus recommends that project coordinators should involve communities in all stages.

**Key words:** Community participation, donor funded projects; schools, project

### 1.1 Background of the study

Community participation is the process by which communities are given the capacity to make successful choices, as described by Harvey and Reed (2017). Brayer, Specht, and Torezyner (2019) define participation as a method for instructing people and assessing their competence. According to Armitage (2019), community participation is the proactive involvement of individuals in resolving public problems, expressing their viewpoints on choices that impact them, and assuming responsibility for

improving the community. In his proposal, Chapel (2019) suggests that including the community in project planning or allowing beneficiaries to participate in project execution would enhance project efficiency. He emphasizes the need of actively involving the community or fostering partnership to ensure long-term sustainability.

Donors refer to foreign organizations or entities that provide monetary assistance to domestic groups that share similar objectives and principles (Scopelliti et al., 2018). Donor finance, as defined by Arthur and Appiah (2020), refers to the provision of official assistance with the specific objective of improving the development and economic progress of lesser developed countries (LDCs). This money is channeled towards funding programs that attempt to alleviate poverty and foster development. In order for sustainability beyond donor funding to be evaluated, it is necessary to carry out sustainability analysis. This is the process of identifying and analysing either the various critical factors that are likely to affect negatively or positively the likelihood of delivering sustainable benefits (Lungo, Mavole and Martin, 2017). Sustainability in donor-funded education projects remains a critical issue in the development sector, particularly in ensuring that the benefits of such initiatives continue after donor support ends. Recent studies emphasize that the success of these projects largely depends on factors such as effective community engagement, robust infrastructure, capacity-building initiatives, and sound governance structures (Smith et al., 2021; Johnson & Lee, 2022). In many cases, the failure to achieve sustainability is often linked to a lack of local ownership, insufficient planning for post-donor phases, and inadequate maintenance of facilities (Brown & Taylor, 2020). Recent evaluations of donor-funded education projects highlight both achievements and setbacks.

Globally, Different scholars hold distinct opinions regarding the factors that determine the sustainability of projects, depending on the scope area of their study. For instance, in countries like the United States of America, the sustainability of federally-funded projects may be influenced by different factors from state-funded projects. A report by the World Bank (2023) identified that although education projects often lead to immediate improvements in school attendance and infrastructure, long-term sustainability is frequently compromised by a lack of ongoing funding and local capacity to manage and maintain resources effectively.

In many African countries, the lack of adequate infrastructure poses a significant challenge to the sustainability of education projects. The AfDB (2018) reports that investing in infrastructure, such as classrooms, libraries, and ICT facilities, is critical for improving education quality and ensuring that projects remain functional and beneficial over time. Literacy levels in Africa vary widely, impacting the sustainability of education projects. Communities with higher literacy rates are more likely to value education and support initiatives that enhance learning outcomes. A report by UNICEF (2017) highlights the correlation between adult literacy rates and children's educational attainment, emphasizing the importance of literacy for project sustainability. Economic diversification is crucial for the sustainability of education projects in Africa. Diversified income sources help families cope with economic uncertainties and invest in their children's education. The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2019) notes that promoting diverse livelihoods is key to reducing poverty and supporting sustainable development in African communities. In a review of education projects in East Africa, Thompson and Green (2022) found that many projects failed to sustain themselves due to a lack of alignment with local cultural practices and insufficient community involvement in the decision-making process. Additionally,

reliance on external funding without developing local financial strategies led to the discontinuation of several initiatives once the funding ceased.

The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) sector report for Kenya in 2020 revealed that NGOs allocated a total of Ksh 78.8 billion towards projects throughout all regions of the country, with Ksh 9.4 billion specifically directed towards the education sector. The majority of these projects are carried out in arid and semi-arid(ASAL) counties such as Garissa, Baringo, Isiolo, Marsabit, Mandera, Tana River, Samburu, Turkana, Kajiado, Wajir, Kilifi, Embu, Kitui, Laikipia, Kwale, Makueni, Lamu, Narok, Meru, Taita Taveta, Nyeri, West Pokot and Tharaka Nithi (Chege & Bowa, 2020). Through the provision of/improvement of physical facilities, direct assistance to students and parents, sensitization of stakeholders and other initiatives, these education projects aim to play a vital role in advancing access, quality, equality and relevance of basic primary education.

Although the usefulness of assistance from these NGOs is unquestionable, there is still ambiguity over the long-term sustainability of the advantages they provide, after the donor has withdrawn their funds. Numerous scholars have expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of achievement in numerous community development programs. An example of this is the constituency development fund (CDF) initiatives, which have shown little or partial community involvement, resulting in a low rate of success (Nyanguthii & Oyugi, 2013). This study focused on Kajiado County. Even though ASALs account for over 80% of Kenya's total land area and provide sustenance for nearly a third of Kenya's human population and 70% of the national livestock herd (KNBS, 2017), there are still significant gaps in education opportunities amongst pastoralist areas. This is mostly attributable to deteriorating infrastructure, entrenched rural customs, and vicious poverty cycles. According to Timoi (2019), Kajiado County is arid with relatively harsh and isolated environments characterized by low population with few and distant schools, outdated cultural practices (FGM and early marriages), dependency on livestock keeping as the only source of income thus creating constant movements in search of livestock grazing and water. Kajiado's Ministry of Education (MoEST, 2018) reports that, although males make up 60% of primary school enrollment, girls make up just 40% (11,688). The majority of the population (60.1%) must travel between 1.1 and 4.9 kilometers to go to the nearest public elementary school.

According to an impact assessment done by Aidlink in 2018, there has been an observed improvement in the rates of enrollment and retention in schools within Kajiado County. However, according to the assessments made by head teachers and the schools' boards of management (BoMs), a significant proportion of students, ranging from 30% to 50%, are not attending school and are instead staying at home. The key factors contributing to the absence of children from school, as indicated are the challenges encountered by the community, particularly in relation to culture, poverty, and illiteracy (Aidlink, 2018).

The need for this study is underscored by the persistent challenges faced by donor-funded education projects in achieving sustainability. While numerous projects have been implemented in Kajiado County, there is limited empirical evidence on how these socio-economic factors influence their sustainability. By focusing on community participation, this study aims to fill the gap in the existing literature and provide actionable insights. These insights will not only benefit policymakers and project implementers but also enhance the strategic planning and execution of future education projects. Understanding these dynamics will also help create more resilient and self-sustaining educational systems, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of equitable and quality education for all.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Kajiado County, Kenya, have been carrying out education projects heavily funded by donors with the aim of providing quality education and expanding education opportunities to underprivileged communities (USAID, 2020). Despite the significant investment in donor-funding, the sustainability of these projects remains a critical challenge. Education disparities within the County still exist with an estimated 30-50% of children not attending school (Aidlink 2018). The long-term success of their endeavors is thus open to debate. While various studies have explored the sustainability of donor-funded projects in other sectors, such as health, poverty reduction and agricultural development (Kabungo, 2019; Nyanguthii & Oyugi, 2013), few have focused on education projects, particularly in the context of arid and semi-arid regions like Kajiado. Several recent academic works (Ouda, 2019; Muthomi, 2019) have identified leadership, organizational structure, and culture as the crucial factors in the long-term viability of projects. Mutimba (2013) looked at what variables affect the sustainability of donor-funded programs in Ganze Constituency- Kilifi County, Kenya, and the research examined a subset of the projects there. The study identified a significant and positive association between management accountability, donor policies, and regulations, and the long-term survival of projects financed by donors. While executing projects funded by donors, the researcher also stressed the importance of donor participation in projects, government efforts, and management practices. Kajiado County is characterized by low population with few and distant schools, poor infrastructure, gender disparities, outdated cultural practices (FGM and early marriages), dependency on livestock keeping as the only source of income and a nomadic lifestyle. Most existing studies have not comprehensively examined the interplay between community participation, and the sustainability of education initiatives. This gap suggested a need to focus research on community participation and the impact this has on sustainability to inform better policy and practice for sustainable education outcomes in Kajiado County and similar contexts.

## **1.3 Study Objective**

To assess community participation input on the sustainability of donor-funded education projects in Kajiado County

## **1.4 Justification of the Study**

The research was conducted among Kajiado County's non-governmental organizations, specifically those working on donor funded education initiatives. The extent to which indicators of community involvement affect the long-term viability of education projects were of primary interest. The research aimed to unlock the process of project sustainability so that future generations reaped the benefits of present donor-funded projects in education, which was especially crucial in arid and semi-arid locations like Kajiado County. This will enhance access, retention rate and quality of education for the school going children not only today but also for the future. NGOs involved in improving the accessibility and quality of education are also geared towards enhancing their operational efficiency so that their current benefits to the education sector extend to the future of the county and the country at large.

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study is bound to be of benefit to the project managers, policy makers, researchers and scholars.

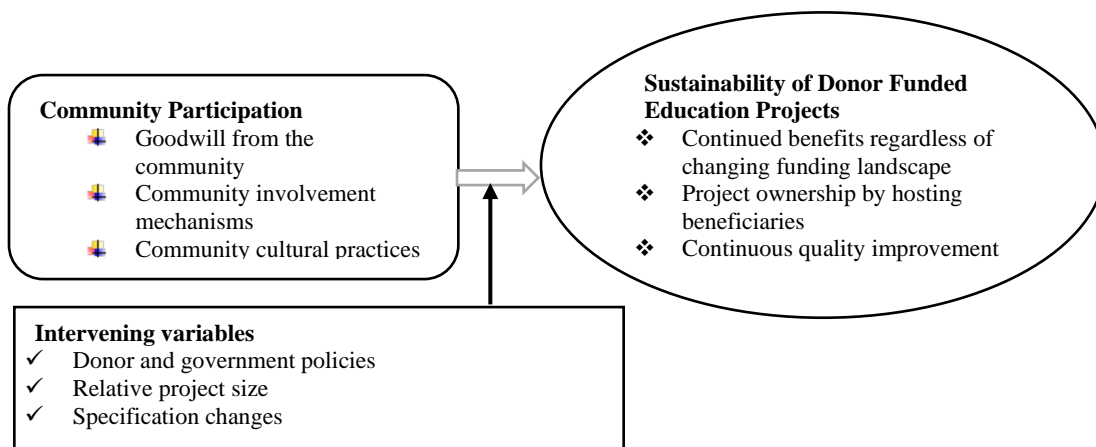
### 1.7 Limitations of the study

The study was faced with several limitations that could impact negatively the quality of the findings. One significant limitation was the scarcity of previous studies on the sustainability of education projects. The documentation and scholarly literature on this specific area are generally limited, making it difficult to compare findings or build on a substantial body of existing research. Additionally, accessing grey literature on the determinants of sustainability in donor-funded education projects proved challenging. Despite retrieving numerous references, there were few documented empirical studies directly addressing the determinants under investigation. Many of the available studies were descriptive case studies that did not adequately respond to the key research question posed in this study. This limited the ability to conduct a comprehensive literature review and draw comparisons with other empirical findings.

### 1.8 Conceptual Framework

*Independent variable*

*Dependent variable*



**Figure 1: The Conceptual framework**  
 Source: *Own Conceptualization, 2024*

### 1.9 Literature review

Theoretical and empirical literature reviews are presented and discussed in this section.

#### 1.9.1 Theoretical review

##### *Social Action Theory*

Max Weber and Tuomela (2012) argue that it is useful for analyzing the relationship between human behavior and its social consequences. Human behavior and activity, according to this theory, are impacted by the preexisting social conditions and the possible effect on others, therefore it takes these factors into consideration. When a person realizes that they are likely to get a negative reaction, they will make changes to their behavior in attempt to increase the likelihood of a positive response (Martin, 2011). According to this theory, human beings are the main and sole determinant of their own goals, interests, and desires (Adler, 1924). Jane Nelson's thesis on personality development makes use of psychoanalytic methods to correct dysfunctional patterns of conduct. This is done by first recognizing

and appreciating the individual's desires and objectives (Nelson, 1996). This suggests that people's bad habits may have something to do with their unmet needs and desires.

Social Action Theory plays a crucial role in understanding the social dynamics within communities, which directly impacts the sustainability of donor-funded education projects in Kajiado County, Kenya. Social Action Theory highlights the importance of community members' capacity to engage meaningfully in social and economic activities. In the context of this study, literacy is a critical factor. Higher literacy levels empower individuals to participate more effectively in project activities, communicate their needs, and advocate for necessary resources and changes. Literate community members are more likely to understand the project's objectives, contribute innovative ideas, and engage in decision-making processes. Social Action Theory also supports livelihood diversification as a vital variable in this study. By diversifying their sources of income, community members reduce their economic vulnerability and increase their financial resilience. This diversification provides a safety net that allows them to cope with economic shocks and uncertainties. In the context of sustaining education projects, diversified livelihoods enable community members to contribute financially and materially to the projects, reducing reliance on external donor funding. This increased economic independence empowers communities to take greater control over their development initiatives, ensuring that education projects are adequately supported over the long term. Thus, livelihood diversification enhances the community's capacity to sustain education projects by fostering economic stability and reducing dependency on external resources.

### **1.9.2 Empirical review**

#### ***Community Participation and Sustainability of Donor Funded Education Projects***

Kirigha (2016) investigated the impact of community involvement on the long-term viability of initiatives sponsored by donors, specifically focusing on the Kenya Coastal Development Project in Kilifi County, Kenya. The research aimed to examine the impact of community engagement at several stages of the project life cycle on the sustainability of donor-funded initiatives, including project selection, planning and design, project execution, and project monitoring and evaluation. The research aimed to include a total target population of 770 individuals, from which a sample size of 170 was chosen. Among the 770 recipients, 750 were families and 20 were members of the WTL Youth group that benefited from the initiative supported by the donor. A simple random sample technique was used to choose 150 houses, while a census approach was utilized to choose the 20 members of the WTL youth group. The key informants were two Kilifi County Liaison officers from KCDP who were also questioned to provide supplementary information. A total of 170 questionnaires were distributed, and 151 of them were returned. The acquired data was analyzed using cross tabulations, frequencies, percentages, and tables. The Chi square technique was used to test the hypothesis. The results indicate that the participation of local residents in project planning, design, monitoring, and assessment has a considerable impact on the long-term viability of donor-funded initiatives in Kilifi County. Nevertheless, the participation of local residents in the process of selecting and implementing projects does not have any impact on the long-term viability of initiatives sponsored by donors in Kilifi County.

Lelegwe, Ltumbesi and Okech (2016) conducted research on the involvement of the local community in initiatives supported by donors in pastoral villages. The primary method of data collection was surveys, supplemented by in-depth interviews and concentrated group discussions with important informants. The research indicates that the area has persistently faced a range of difficulties throughout time, such as

recurring drought that negatively impacts agricultural and livestock rearing. Additionally, the region has limited availability of social services, substandard infrastructure, instability, conflicts, and cultural concerns, among others. Additional results included little community engagement in the development and execution of the programs, deficiencies in project management capabilities, and limited community support in terms of resources and active involvement in donor projects.

Osman (2018) investigated the impact of community engagement on the long-term viability of development initiatives implemented by non-governmental organizations in Kenya. An instance involving the SHOFSCO Organization in the Mathare informal community. The study used a descriptive research methodology, including both theoretical and empirical investigations. Data was collected via the use of questionnaires and an interview guide, targeting both community members and officials from Shining Hope for Communities. The study results confirm a direct correlation between community engagement and the long-term viability of the initiatives. The study recommends that community participation plays a crucial role in the success of sustainability projects. Therefore, any project aimed at benefiting informal settlements should involve community participation during planning meetings and include locals through labor contribution. Additionally, there should be effective communication channels between the organization and other stakeholders, including community members. Lastly, capacity building should be considered both during and after the project, as it greatly influences the project's sustainability.

Community engagement plays a crucial role in ensuring the long-term viability of programs supported by donors across all sectors and locales. Research conducted by Johnson et al. (2018) and Smith (2020) indicates that initiatives including active community interaction and participation are more likely to achieve long-term sustainability and impact. Participation from the community encourages individuals to take ownership, be accountable, and promote openness. This creates a sense of shared responsibility among those involved and increases the likelihood of project success. Studies conducted by Patel et al. (2019) and Brown (2021) highlight the positive impact of community involvement on project outcomes, resulting in improvements in social, economic, and environmental aspects. Projects that engage community members in decision-making, planning, execution, and monitoring are more aligned with local needs, goals, and aspirations. This enhances the importance, effectiveness, and longevity of therapies, leading to beneficial and long-lasting results.

Khan's (2018) research emphasizes the significance of community involvement in fostering social cohesion, trust, and solidarity among communities, which are essential for the long-term viability of projects. Projects that are inclusive and participatory enhance the capacity of disadvantaged groups to advocate for their rights and interests. According to Wang (2020), community participation improves social capital and resilience, creating a favorable environment for sustainable development projects. Chen et al. (2017) and Gupta (2021) identified power imbalances, inadequate resources, and limited capacity as barriers to achieving effective community participation. In order to address these issues, it is crucial to build trust, improve abilities, and create favorable conditions for meaningful engagement and collaboration among all parties involved.

When managing and developing an international workforce, it is crucial to recognize and address diversity and the difficulties that come with it (Higgs, 2017). Bartlett and Gorshal (1989) emphasized the difficulties that organizations face while trying to operate efficiently in global environments. The

receiving nations are deficient in the technical and administrative expertise necessary for the effective execution and administration of the project (Mohammed & White, 2017). Hence, several financial institutions seek foreign expertise to aid in the process of project design and execution (Kwak, 2020). Foreign experts may lack familiarity with local resources, socio-cultural context, and may be used to alternative project management methodologies (Duc & Martins, 2020). According to Freeman (1984), managers are responsible for developing and executing procedures that meet the needs and expectations of all individuals and groups involved in a project.

In order to meet the requirements of procedural fairness, procedural rationality, and legitimacy, as outlined by Eden & Ackermann (2018), Suchman (2017), and Alexander (2020), it is crucial to ensure stakeholder satisfaction. It is essential to clarify that it is not necessary for all stakeholders to be pleased or involved, just the primary stakeholders. Identifying crucial stakeholders entails making a strategic decision that has moral implications and requires discernment. Each successive degree of involvement offers distinct advantages and expenses. Greater engagement necessitates a higher initial capital outlay. According to Charles, Antoine, and Haarman (2018), corporate participation improves its competitive advantage. Engaging in community involvement might potentially provide benefits. Non-participation leads to several expenses. The primary expense arises from the lack of stakeholder ownership and support, resulting in low uptake of project services, limited long-term viability of benefits, inadequate maintenance, and restricted cost recuperation for initiatives. Opting out of participation may result in apathy, animosity, or intentional hindrance from those who were expected to benefit from it. Nevertheless, promoting community involvement entails expenses and potential hazards.

According to Cavaye (2020), rural and regional areas are undergoing significant social and economic transformations. The communities' responses to these changes are contingent not just on the provision of services, upkeep of infrastructure, and stimulation of economic growth. Additionally, it depends on using local resources in novel ways, fostering collaboration, enhancing connectivity, harnessing existing knowledge, and executing new concepts. The benefits include employment opportunities, monetary profits, improved infrastructure, and the cultivation of resilient and flexible communities.

Engaging the community in conversations about every aspect of the program's activities empowers them and promotes inclusivity. The concept of considerable involvement from various stakeholder groups is introduced (Donaldson, 2019). Community participation involves empowering those who benefit from development by including them in the identification of resources and needs, the planning of resource allocation, and the implementation of development programs. Active involvement, engagement, and interpersonal interactions enhance the community's vibrancy, adaptability, and effectiveness in managing change. These activities foster the development of more robust networks, improved organizational efficiency, enhanced skills, leadership, and enthusiasm. The sustainability of development in rural areas depends on intangible factors such as community ownership, local leadership, proactive measures, reassessment, and motivation (Cavaye 2020).

According to Hofisi (2017), rural communities struggle to maintain progress in initiatives financed by donors unless they get sufficient empowerment from the program. Donor-funded projects may attain sustainability by using participatory methodologies across the whole project lifecycle, starting from the early identification phase until project completion. Participatory initiatives effectively addressed the community's fundamental requirements by including them, however too ambitious programs may lack



long-term sustainability. Hence, the project design must ensure that the coordination of all collaborating institutions is attainable. He suggests that the project design should explicitly delineate exit possibilities and the ownership of project assets upon the project's completion. Furthermore, it is important for the communities to possess a comprehensive comprehension of the project's many potential departure strategies. Tot (2017) contends that the effective execution of community projects requires equitable exertion and engagement from both the project team (provider) and the beneficiaries in order to cultivate ownership and ensure enduring sustainability.

**1.10 Research design and methods**

This study used a descriptive survey research design and a mixed method approach. The Study Population was based in Kajiado County. The population of Kajiado County is 1,117,840, with females accounting for 50.1 percent and males accounting for 49.8 percent (The Kenya Population and Housing Census of 2019). This signifies a population surge of 62.6 percent during the last decade. The study's target population was 648 individuals involved during the implementation of the 32 donor funded projects in Kajiado County. Specifically, the study targeted 123 school board of management (BoM) members, 380 community facilitators and 113 local administrators. In addition, the study targeted 32 project coordinators as the key interviewees. The research focused on observing the population consisting of members of the school board of management (BOM), community facilitators, and local administrators, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Target Population**

| Category                                 | Population Size |
|--|-----------------|
| School Board of Management (BoM) members | 123             |
| Community Facilitators                   | 380             |
| Local administrators                     | 113             |
| Project Coordinators                     | 32              |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>648</b>      |

**Source:** *Annual NGO Sector Report (2018/2019)*

The research used stratified simple random sampling and purposive sampling procedures to select study samples. Simple random sampling was used to select School Board of Management (BoM) members, Community Facilitators and Local administrators, while purposive sampling procedures was used to select the Project Coordinators as key informants. The sample size formula proposed by Yamane in 1967 was used to calculate the sample size for School Board of Management (BoM) members, Community Facilitators and Local administrators. Based on the given formula,

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n is the sample size

N is the target population

e is the error = 0.05

$$n = \frac{616}{1 + 616(0.05)^2}$$

= 243.

Thus the sample size comprised of 49 School Board of Management (BoM) members, 150 Community Facilitators and 44 Local administrators totaling to 243.

The distribution of sample size was as indicated in Table 2;

**Table 2: Sample Size**

|  | <b>Population</b> | <b>Sample Size</b> |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| School Board of Management (BoM) members | 123               | 49                 |
| Community Facilitators                   | 380               | 150                |
| Local Administrators                     | 113               | 44                 |
| Project Coordinators                     | 32                | 32                 |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>648</b>        | <b>275</b>         |

**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

Information was collected via the use of questionnaires and interview guides. Questionnaire: It was administered to the board of management (BoM) members, community facilitators and local administrators. It was semi-structured and included questions that were either closed-ended or open-ended, using a Likert scale style. Questionnaires were developed using the indicators used to evaluate the variables, from which relevant statements were formed. Participants were obligated to express and provide more details on their levels of agreement with these statements using a 5-point Likert scale. The scale spanned from 1 to 5, with 1 representing significant disagreement and 5 indicating great agreement. The qualitative data was collected by using an interview guide, with the project coordinators serving as the key informants. The guide was used to gather data on the experts' opinions about the role of community participation on long-term viability of education projects supported by donors in Kajiado County, Kenya.

The researcher obtained quantitative data by using a self-administered questionnaire. The researcher notified the participants that the instrument being used was only for research purposes and that the replies provided by the participants would be treated as confidential. The researcher acquired a research permit to gather data from the participants. The questionnaire was delivered via personal visits made by the researcher or her research assistants to the exact sites where the initiatives were being investigated. The purpose of this was to deliberately optimize the quantity of information gathered from the research area. The researcher administered the questionnaires and then retrieved them using a drop-off and pick-up procedure.

**1.11 Data Analysis, Presentations, and Interpretations**

***Introduction***

The research sought to investigate the relevance of community participation on the sustainability of donor-funded education projects in Kajiado County, Kenya. This section presents the response rate, demographic characteristics respondents, findings of the study and interpretation of the results.

***Response Rate***

Out of the 243 questionnaires sent to the respondents, 233 were completed and returned for data analysis. Consequently, the rate of return showed a value of 95.88%. The return rate was deemed acceptable for the study's objectives. In the realm of social sciences research, a minimum rate return of 50% is deemed satisfactory for doing research (Saunders et al., 2009). The obtained response rate of 95.88% for data analysis aligns with the conclusions drawn by Cooper and Schindler (2006) as well as Nachmias and Nachmias (2015). The return rate aligns with the aforementioned results. Babbie (2010) states that a response rate of 70% or more is considered satisfactory for any study.

**Table 3: Questionnaire Return Rate**

| Category                    | Frequency  | Percentage  |
|-----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Questionnaires Returned     | 233        | 95.88%      |
| Questionnaires Not Returned | 10         | 4.12%       |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>243</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Source: *Field data, 2024*

**Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

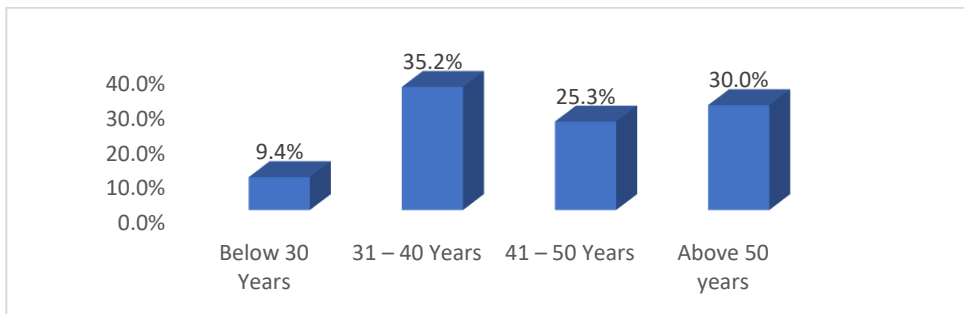
The distribution of respondents based on certain demographic factors was necessary so as to incorporate opinions from a sufficiently large variety of stakeholders into the research undertaking. Therefore, this study aimed at finding out about participants’ demographic data.

**Gender of the Respondents**

Findings from the research confirmed that, 54.5% of the respondents were male and 45.5% were females an indication that although majority of the respondents were males, there was no bias as both genders were allowed to participate in the study.

**Age of the Respondents**

The study participants revealed their age groups as shown in figure 2



**Figure 1: Age of the Respondents**

Source: *File data, 2024*

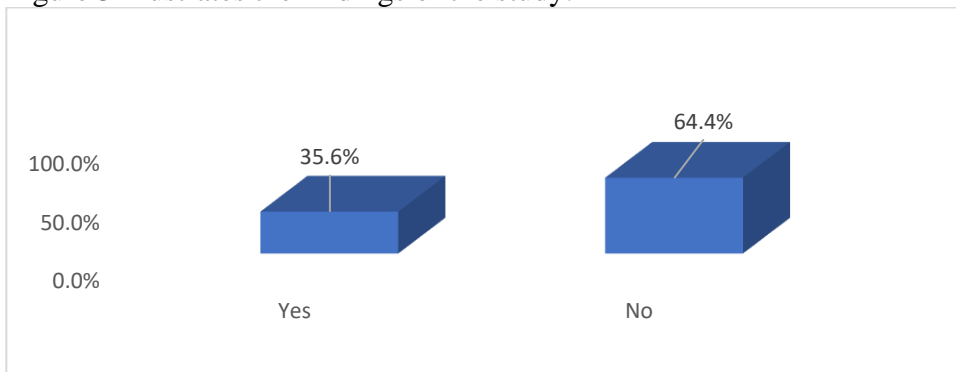
The data shown in figure 4.2 indicates that the largest proportion of respondents, accounting for 35.2%, fell within the age range of 31-40 years. This was followed by respondents aged beyond 50 years, comprising 30.0% of the total. The proportion of individuals who reported their age as being between 41 and 50 years was 25.3%, whilst 9.4% specified their age as below 30 years. The results demonstrate heterogeneity within the response group, indicating the wide range of replies and diversity in the findings. This suggests that participants were able to comprehend the survey questions and effectively complete the questionnaire.

**Community participation Input to Sustainability of Donor-Funded Education Projects in Kajiado County**

Objective of this study was to assess the role of community participation on the sustainability of donor-funded education projects in Kajiado County. The findings of the study are as shown in subsequent subheadings.

**Descriptive Statistics**

Participants were requested to affirm if this society engages in the continuity of the donor sponsored educational programs that are carried out by Non-Governmental Organizations within Kajiado County. Figure 3 illustrates the findings of the study.



**Figure 3: Community Participation in Sustainability of Donor Funded Education Projects**  
**Source: Field data, 2024**

According to the study findings, majority of the respondents (64.4%) indicated that the community did not participate in Sustainability of Donor Funded Education Projects implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations in Kajiado County while 35.6% indicate that the community participates in Sustainability of Donor Funded Education Projects implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations in Kajiado County. The high percentage (64.4%) of respondents indicating a lack of community participation suggests that there may be challenges in involving the community in sustaining these projects. This could be due to various factors such as a lack of awareness, insufficient engagement strategies by the NGOs, or potential cultural or socio-economic barriers. Community participation is often critical for the long-term sustainability of projects. The perceived lack of involvement might imply that the projects are at risk of not being sustained once the donor funding ceases. Without active community involvement, the ownership and maintenance of the projects might not be assured.

In addition, participant 1 indicated that;

*“Community participation in our donor-funded education projects in Kajiado County is integral to our approach. We actively engage local stakeholders, including community leaders, parents, and teachers, right from the project planning phase. Their involvement ranges from identifying needs and priorities to providing feedback on project design and implementation. This collaborative process ensures that our initiatives are culturally appropriate, responsive to local challenges, and sustainable in the long term” (PAT01, 2024).*

The respondents were prompted to state how much community participation contributes so that Donor Funded Education Projects carried out by Non-Governmental Organizations in Kajiado County are sustainable enough.

**Table 4: Descriptive results of Community Participation and Sustainability of Donor Funded Education Projects**

| Statements  | SD           | D | N             | A              | SA             | Mean          | SD            |
|---|--------------|---|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Project efficiency is enhanced by the assistance of the community.  | 12<br>(5.2%) | 0 | 17<br>(7.3%)  | 81<br>(34.8%)  | 123<br>(22.9%) | 4.3004        | 0.9891        |
| Managers must develop and execute procedures that meet the needs and expectations of all stakeholders involved in a project.  | 10<br>(4.3%) | 0 | 81<br>(34.8%) | 51<br>(21.9%)  | 91<br>(39.1%)  | 3.9142        | 1.0592        |
| Ensuring the attention of stakeholders is crucial to fulfill the needs for procedural fairness, procedural logic, and legitimacy for all those engaged or impacted.   | 0            | 0 | 34<br>(14.6%) | 128<br>(54.9%) | 71<br>(30.5%)  | 4.1588        | 0.65365       |
| Participation improves the competitive advantage of an organization.  | 16<br>(6.9%) | 0 | 11<br>(4.7%)  | 107<br>(45.9%) | 99<br>(42.5%)  | 4.1717        | 1.0321        |
| Non-participation incurs several expenses. The primary expense is the lack of stakeholder ownership and support, which may result in low adoption of project services, diminished sustainability of benefits, inadequate maintenance, and restricted cost | 0            | 0 | 69<br>(29.6%) | 91<br>(39.1%)  | 73<br>(31.3%)  | 4.0172        | 0.78216       |
| Non-participation might result in apathy, animosity, or intentional hindrance from the individuals who were meant to benefit.   | 0            | 0 | 35<br>(15.0%) | 59<br>(25.3%)  | 139<br>(59.7%) | 4.4464        | 0.74156       |
| Engaging the community in talks about all aspects of the program activities empowers them and promotes inclusivity.   | 0            | 0 | 67<br>(28.8%) | 115<br>(49.4%) | 51<br>(21.9%)  | 3.9313        | 0.70985       |
| <b>Composite Mean and SD</b>  |              |   |               |                |                | <b>4.1343</b> | <b>0.8525</b> |

**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

According to the study findings, the majority of respondents strongly agreed that non-participation might result in apathy, animosity, or intentional hindrance from the individuals who were meant to benefit (mean = 4.4464, SD = 0.74156), and that project efficiency is enhanced by the assistance of the community (mean = 4.3004, SD = 0.9891). Respondents also agreed that participation improves the competitive advantage of an organization (mean = 4.1717, SD = 1.0321), and ensuring the attention of stakeholders is crucial to fulfill the needs for procedural fairness, procedural logic, and legitimacy for all those engaged or impacted (mean = 4.1588, SD = 0.65365). They further acknowledged that non-participation incurs several expenses, such as a lack of stakeholder ownership and support, which may result in low adoption of project services, diminished sustainability of benefits, inadequate maintenance,

and restricted cost reduction (mean = 4.0172, SD = 0.78216). Additionally, respondents agreed that engaging the community in talks about all aspects of the program activities empowers them and promotes inclusivity (mean = 3.9313, SD = 0.70985), and that managers must develop and execute procedures that meet the needs and expectations of all stakeholders involved in a project (mean = 3.9142, SD = 1.0592). The composite mean (4.1343) and composite standard deviation (0.8525) imply a strong overall agreement among respondents regarding the importance of community participation for the sustainability of donor-funded education projects, with some variability in the degree of agreement across different aspects. This implies that non-participation might result in apathy, animosity, or intentional hindrance from the individuals who were meant to benefit, project efficiency is enhanced by the assistance of the community, participation improves the competitive advantage of an organization, ensuring the attention of stakeholders is crucial to fulfill the needs for procedural fairness, procedural logic and legitimacy for all those engaged or impacted and that non-participation incurs several expenses. The primary expense is the lack of stakeholder ownership and support, which may result in low adoption of project services, diminished sustainability of benefits, inadequate maintenance, and restricted cost reduction.

Further, participant 2 indicated that;

*“We employ several strategies to facilitate community involvement. Firstly, we organize regular community meetings and consultations where stakeholders have a platform to voice their opinions and concerns. Secondly, we utilize local advisory committees composed of community representatives who guide project activities and ensure accountability. Thirdly, we prioritize transparency by sharing project updates and financial information openly. These mechanisms not only foster trust but also empower communities to take ownership of the projects that directly impact their educational outcomes” (PAT02, 2024).*

Also, participant 3 indicated that;

*“Community participation is pivotal to the sustainability of our education projects. When communities are actively involved in decision-making and implementation, they feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for the project's success. This leads to better utilization of resources, increased community support, and ongoing commitment to maintaining project outcomes beyond the donor funding period. By aligning our initiatives with local needs and aspirations through robust community participation, we believe we can achieve lasting impacts on education quality and accessibility” (PAT03, 2024).*

### ***Inferential Statistics***

#### ***a) Correlation Analysis for Community Participation in Sustainability of Donor Funded Education Projects***

The Pearson correlation shows how each of the independent variables mentioned is related to the dependent variable. The value of r for Community Participation was calculated to determine its direction, be it negative or positive. Table 5 contains the specific findings. In order to examine the effects that Community Participation has on different donor-aided educational programs' sustainability in Kajiado County, a correlation analysis was applied. Again, reference to table 5 will suffice. According to this analysis, it was established that there was a positive and strong correlation between community participation and sustainability of donor funded education projects in Kajiado County ( $r=0.567$ ,  $p<0.000$ ).

**Table 5: Correlation Analysis for Community Participation and Sustainability of donor-funded education projects**

|                         |                     | Sustainability | Community Participation |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Sustainability          | Pearson Correlation | 1.000          | .567**                  |
|                         | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0              | 0.000                   |
|                         | N                   | 232            | 232                     |
| Community Participation | Pearson Correlation | .567**         | 1.000                   |
|                         | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.000          |                         |
|                         | N                   | 232            | 232                     |

Source: *Field data, 2024*

**b) Regression Analysis for Community Participation and Sustainability of donor-funded education projects**

Using regression, the function of Community Participation in the sustainability of donor-funded education projects was determined in Kajiado County. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) values indicated that Community Participation accounted for 32.2% of variance in sustainability of donor-funded education projects while 67.8% was due to other factors outside this model as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Model Fitness**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .567 <sup>a</sup> | 0.322    | 0.317             | 0.66964                    |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Community Participation

Source: *Field data, 2024*

The results of ANOVA displayed in table 7 show that there is a significant general model for assessing the relationship between Community Participation and sustainability of donor-supported education projects in Kajiado County. This was corroborated through a significance level of 0.000 less than 0.05 at confidence level (CL) of 95%. Consequently, it implies that Community Participation significantly influences on sustainability of educational projects funded by donors in Kajiado County.

**Table 7: ANOVA Results**

|            | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F      | Sig.              |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| Regression | 29.790         | 1   | 29.790      | 66.433 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
| Residual   | 103.488        | 231 | .448        |        |                   |
| Total      | 133.278        | 232 |             |        |                   |

Source: *Field data, 2024*

The regression coefficient results indicated that Community Participation has a significant and positive relationship with the sustainability of donor-funded educational projects in Kajiado County ( $\beta=0.500$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). This implies that when there is an increase of one unit in community participation, there is an increase of 0.500 in sustainability of donor-financed educational initiatives in Kajiado County.

**Table 8: Regression Coefficients**

|            | Un-standardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|------------|------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|            | B                            | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| (Constant) | 1.639                        | .219       |                           | 7.472 | .000 |

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|                         |      |      |      |       |      |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| Community Participation | .500 | .061 | .567 | 8.151 | .000 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|-------|------|

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**Source: Field data, 2024**

Presented here is the resulting model

$$Y=1.639+0.500X_1$$

Where;

Y= Sustainability of donor-funded education projects

X<sub>1</sub> = Community Participation

### 1.12 Conclusion

The study underscores the critical impact of community participation on project outcomes. Non-participation can lead to apathy, resistance, or deliberate obstruction among intended beneficiaries, while active involvement enhances project efficiency and fosters stakeholder ownership. Stakeholder attention is crucial for ensuring procedural fairness and legitimacy, minimizing costs associated with lack of support, such as low adoption rates, reduced sustainability, and inadequate maintenance.

### 1.13 Recommendations

Project coordinators/managers in Kajiado County should implement structured programs to actively involve community members in all stages of donor-funded education projects. Develop participatory planning and feedback mechanisms, such as regular community meetings and surveys, to ensure their input is incorporated. Provide training on the importance of stakeholder engagement and create incentives to enhance participation. This approach will help mitigate issues of apathy and resistance, increase project adoption, and foster a sense of ownership that supports long-term sustainability.

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