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Influence of Project M&E Staff Sapacity on the Performance of Donor-Funded Projects in Informal Settlements in Kisumu Central Sub-County - Kenya

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<p>Chief Editor Web: www.ijcdc.org Email: info@ijcdc.org</p> <p>Editing Oversight Impericals Consultants International Limited</p>	<p>Abstract: The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of project M&E Staff capacity on the performance of donor-funded projects. Social Change Theory guided the study. Convergent Parallel Design was adopted with a sample of 81 respondents purposively selected from 27 donor-funded projects in Obunga and Nyalenda informal settlements. Data was collected from project managers, M&E officers, and field officers. Qualitative data was analysed through content analysis, and Quantitative data using SPSS Software version 27. From the findings, staff across the donor-funded projects had access to training and capacity-building opportunities ($\bar{x}=3.74$, $SD=1.170$), and they were provided with the requisite working equipment ($\bar{x}=3.49$, $SD=.930$). Most of the donor-funded projects were understaffed, with staff capacity built on a need's basis. The study concluded that the project M&E staff influenced donor-funded projects' performance. The study recommended project follow-up, partnerships and collaboration, and investing in project sustainability.</p> <p>Key Words: Donor-funded projects, Monitoring and Evaluation, Staff Capacity, Staff motivation</p>
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1.1 Study Background

Monitoring, according to Segura and Pedregal (2018), refers to the process of observing and recording the actions taking place within a project or program. Project monitoring entails the methodical collection of data on each element of the project. Monitoring includes the provision of feedback on the project's progress to the donors, implementers, and beneficiaries (Ika, Diallo & Thuillier, 2019). Monitoring and evaluation have become crucial instruments in global efforts to attain environmental, financial, and social sustainability (Kusek & Rist, 2020). Monitoring and evaluation are essential at regional and sub-regional levels to evaluate the long-term viability of regional initiatives (Horton, Mackay, Anderson & Dupleich, 2020).

According to Crawford and Bryce (2021), project monitoring and evaluation ensure accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement of projects. The capabilities of M&E personnel encompass a

diverse range of technical and management skills, including the construction of logical frameworks, the establishment of performance indicators, execution of field evaluations, and the application of digital technologies for data analysis (Bamberger, Rugh, & Mabry, 2019). Personnel must also exhibit analytical skills, communication proficiency, and contextual comprehension to convert intricate project data into useful insights.

Ackerman and Heggstad (2019) emphasise that human capital is a critical asset for any organisation, and when effectively utilised, it may substantially improve operational efficiency. In donor-funded initiatives, the capacity of M&E personnel to produce credible evidence can be the decisive factor in project success or failure. A study by Muhammad and Mustafa (2019) in Pakistan on the impact of managerial competence on project performance in large-scale public sector engineering projects confirmed that management competence levels influenced project performance both positively and negatively.

In Kenya, donor-funded initiatives have been crucial in advancing health, education, infrastructure, agriculture, and social welfare. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2023) reported that Kenya obtained about KES 370 billion in official development assistance in 2022, with a substantial allocation aimed at social development initiatives in marginalised regions, including informal settlements. Notwithstanding this significant expenditure, performance evaluations indicate that numerous initiatives fail to achieve their intended impact due to systemic deficiencies, notably the inadequate capacity of M&E personnel (Okinda, 2018).

A significant aspect influencing staff capability is the organisational environment. Even proficient M&E workers may encounter difficulties in environments characterised by insufficient institutional support, ambiguous roles, or limited access to tools and technologies. Kusek and Rist (2020) assert that effective monitoring and evaluation necessitate not just proficient personnel but also an environment favourable to knowledge-sharing, consistent supervision, and performance assessment. This synergy is essential in donor-funded programs, where responsibility to various stakeholders, including funders, implementing agencies, and beneficiaries, requires stringent evidence-based reporting.

The breadth and intricacy of donor-funded initiatives in Kenya, particularly within informal settlements like Obunga and Nyalenda in Kisumu, necessitate a specialised skill set. These regions experience persistent poverty, substandard housing, political instability, and restricted access to vital services, notwithstanding the presence of several donor programs throughout the years. M&E personnel operating in these environments must manage significant uncertainty, varied cultural contexts, and evolving project goals (Mayne, 2020). The inability to align personnel capabilities with project demands frequently results in delays, substandard reporting, and diminished effect (Muhammad & Mustafa, 2019).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Donor-funded projects have played a pivotal role in driving significant progress in many developing nations, helping to address deep-rooted social and developmental challenges. While it is the responsibility of governments to support initiatives that promote human and community development, mismanagement and misuse of public funds often hinder these efforts. Donors typically aim for their interventions to bring about meaningful change, reduce poverty, and enhance community well-being. The role of project monitoring and evaluation is key in ensuring accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement of projects (Segura & Pedregal, 2018). This role is best executed with staff who have the requisite capacity for the task. Existing literature and contextual background suggest that

many of the donor-funded projects fall short of achieving their intended goals, primarily due to weaknesses in project M&E. In Kisumu's informal settlements, mirroring similar scenarios across Kenya, living conditions have shown minimal improvement despite years of project implementation. This raises a critical question: could deficiencies in project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) staff capacity be a contributing factor? This study, therefore, examined the Influence of M&E staff capacity on the performance of donor-funded projects in informal settlements in Kisumu Central Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya.

1.3 Study Objective

To examine the influence of project M&E staff capacity on the performance of donor-funded projects in informal settlements in Kisumu Central Sub-County.

1.4 Justification of the Study

Monitoring and evaluation are essential techniques employed by project managers to evaluate the advancement of their plans and detect any deviations from the intended path, as well as to acknowledge and address any changes in the current circumstances. Developing countries have primarily profited from donor-funded projects in healthcare, agriculture, education, social welfare, community development, and infrastructure construction. Donor assistance plays a vital role in addressing the intricate challenges faced by developing countries, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa (Gregory & Jude, 2022).

Numerous studies have demonstrated a robust positive correlation between the capacity of M&E workers and the efficacy of donor-funded initiatives. Kanyi and James (2023) identified that technical skills, governance knowledge, and project management competencies among M&E personnel were statistically significant determinants of successful project outcomes in Nairobi County. Their findings align with those of Alcock (2019), who highlighted that extensive training in monitoring tools and evaluation methodology enhances the execution and sustainability of development programs. Conversely, deficiencies in staff training, expertise, or dedication have been associated with misreporting, inadequate accountability, and subpar project performance (Hefley & Bottion, 2021).

Although project managers devote a significant amount of effort to pondering strategies to accomplish project objectives, the majority of projects fail to attain their intended results. The main cause of this issue can be primarily ascribed to a deficiency in the project M&E staff capacity. There is substantial evidence from many regions, particularly the informal settlements of Obunga and Nyalenda in Kisumu, that have a significant number of donor-funded projects. This justifies the examination into the monitoring and evaluation staff capacity and performance of donor-funded projects in Kisumu Central Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya.

1.5 Literature Review

This section presents the theory of social change as proposed by Beisser (1970) as well as the empirical literature on the project M&E staff Capacity on the performance of Donor donor-funded projects.

1.5.1 Theoretical Review: Theory of Social Change

The Theory of Social Change, proposed by Beisser in 1970, advocates a flexible and dynamic methodology for social transformation processes. It provided an alternative to the conventional planning procedures and logics prevalent at that time. Perls (2005) defines change as the many interventions anticipated or desired to yield specific outcomes. According to the concept of social change, the abstract

beliefs of individuals involved in a project may influence the achievement of future goals. The community must provide input on monitoring and assessment to develop their self-improvement capacity, ultimately ensuring the project's successful completion.

Although this concept cannot yield definitive predictions, it enables the articulation of potential modifications that may arise at different stages of a project. This underscores the capacity to effectuate changes through the implementation of strategic intervention strategies, suggesting the feasibility of such modifications. The importance of this theory in the present study lies in its emphasis on a systematic and articulated visualisation method. This technique allows project staff to focus on the critical elements that drive project success.

1.5.2 Empirical Review: Project M&E Staff Capacity and Performance of Donor-Funded Projects

Demographic, technical, and economic factors are thought to impact human resource management strategies, which subsequently affect the progress and advancement of projects (Decastri et al., 2020). Ackerman and Heggstad (2019) contend that proficiently harnessing M&E staff can reduce an organization's expenditures and enhance its operational efficacy. Alcock (2019) asserts that providing comprehensive training to employees on various aspects of project monitoring and analysis significantly impacts the efficacy of community development programs funded by governmental entities.

The research by Abdelmasseh Bassioni and Gaid (2022) investigated the possible correlation between project managers' proficiency and the overall success of building projects in Egypt. The research entailed gathering data through questionnaires from 104 proficient engineers with comprehensive knowledge of the building industry. It was determined that specific management skills, including budgeting, risk management, and conceptualisation, impacted project performance. The research, which solely examined the construction sector in Egypt, cannot be extrapolated to other donor-funded projects, particularly within the unique setting of Kisumu. This study examined humanitarian initiatives financed by donors in Kisumu, Kenya.

Hefley and Bottion (2021) conducted a study examining the influence of the competency of young graduates working as project managers in Brazilian companies on project performance. The study indicated that a considerable percentage of graduates demonstrated insufficient competence in project management duties, namely in project planning and risk mitigation. The lack of experience presented significant challenges to the comprehensive execution of plans. This research identified the lack of these specific talents; nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that they were not the sole cause leading to the project's subpar performance. The study largely highlights management competence, which is only one component of the project team. This study analyses the influence of various criteria associated with monitoring and evaluation (M&E) personnel on the effectiveness of donor-supported projects in Kisumu, Kenya.

Kanyi and James (2023) conducted a study to assess the influence of capacity development on the results of donor-funded projects in Nairobi County. The study used a descriptive survey approach to collect data from 55 activities financed by donors. The study's results demonstrate a strong and positive correlation between expertise in technical, managerial, and governance skills and the effectiveness of donor-funded projects in Nairobi County. The research, however, only focused on a single statistic used to assess the effectiveness of project personnel. This research assesses several factors of employee involvement in project success within donor-funded projects in Kisumu.

Additionally, Okinda (2018) performed research to assess the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Kisumu County in managing donor funding and demonstrating accountability. The study used a descriptive survey approach to collect data from 49 non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The study revealed that the amount of donor funds received was contingent upon the accountability mechanisms used by local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as evaluated by Spearman rank correlation. This research aims to assess the influence of four factors, project people, organisational policy, organisational learning, and stakeholder engagement, on the success of donor-funded projects in Kisumu. The current research used a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative procedures.

1.6 Methodology and materials

This research used a Convergent Parallel design, a mixed methods technique, to investigate the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and the performance of donor-funded projects in the informal settlements of Kisumu Central Sub-County, Kisumu County, Kenya. The study specifically focused on initiatives executed in the Obunga and Nyalenda villages. The Convergent Parallel design allowed for the concurrent collecting and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, promoting a thorough comprehension of the investigated issue (Creswell, 2014). The study achieved a comprehensive analysis by utilising findings from both qualitative and quantitative data.

Target Population and Sample Size

Kisumu Central Sub-County is mostly an urban constituency situated within the confines of Kisumu County. According to the latest census data, the constituency is 32.7 square kilometres and with a 168,892 people. This study was conducted in Nyalenda and Obunga, two informal settlements located within Kisumu Central Sub-County. These settlements represent the usual characteristics of informal settlements. The two towns have garnered a significant influx of donor-funded projects. The KNBS 2019 puts the population of these settlements at the population of Nyalenda (A & B) was 63,203, while that of Obunga is 30,000.

Data from the Creditor Reporting System (CRS, 2022) indicate that Kisumu Central Sub-County has 102 active donor-funded projects, with 27 of these being humanitarian. The study target population was therefore 81 respondents drawn from the 27 humanitarian projects and will comprise the 27 project managers, 27 project M&E staff, and 27 field officers, purposively selected.

The researcher conducted a census sampling of all 27 donor-funded projects that were running in these two informal settlements. Project managers (27), 27 M&E Officers, and 27 field officers were purposively selected based on their possession of specific information relevant to the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected from 27 M&E officers and 27 field officers through the administration of questionnaires by the researcher. The surveys consisted of carefully designed questions that aimed to facilitate the collection of quantitative data. The Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were utilized to gather qualitative data from the 27 project managers.

1.7 Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section presents findings on how project M&E staff capacity influences the performance of donor-funded projects. The study assessed various indicators, including staff duration of service, number and adequacy of project staff, remuneration, motivation, capacity building, and accountability.

Duration the respondents had worked in the project

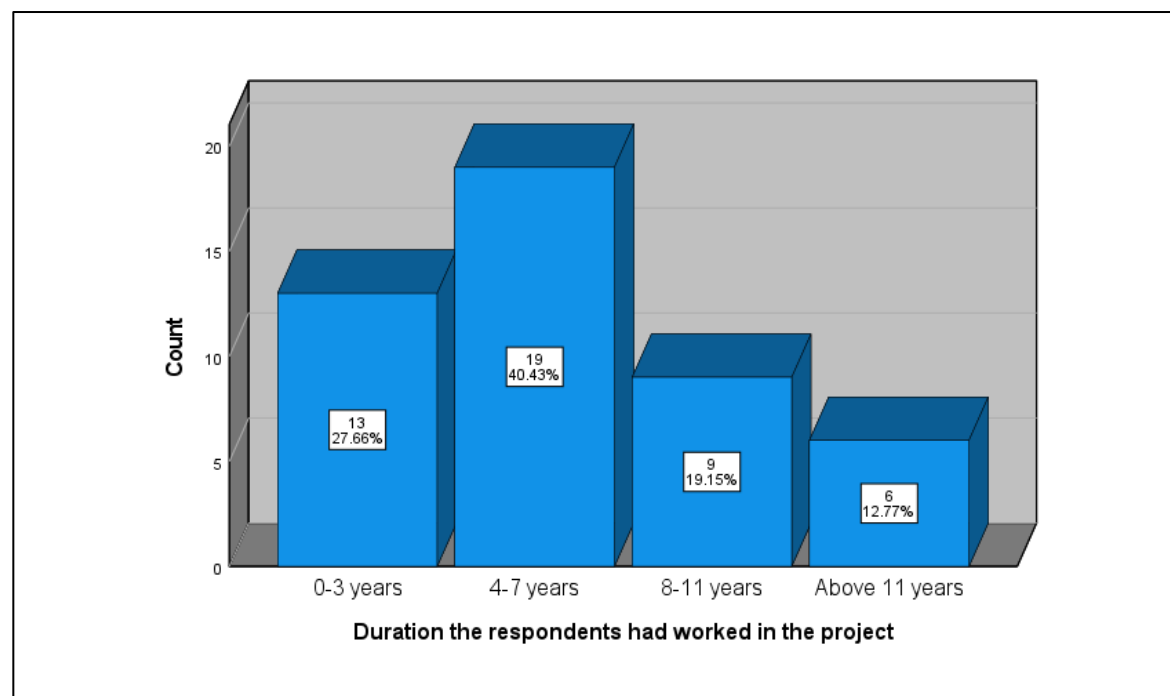


Figure 1: Duration the respondents had benefited from the project

Source: Field Data (2025)

The study respondents were asked to indicate how long they had served the donor-funded projects. From the findings presented in Figure 1, most of the project beneficiaries had worked in the projects for a period of between 4 and 7 years. This was indicated by 40.43% (19) of the participants who took part in this study, with a further 31.92% (15) having worked for more than 8 years on the projects. The project M&E staff and Field officers involved in the study were therefore deemed resourceful to inform the study on all 4 independent variables and the dependent variable by virtue of their experience. The longer the staff had worked on the project, the more disposed they were to understand the role the projects played in transforming lives and some of the factors that hindered the better performance of such projects.

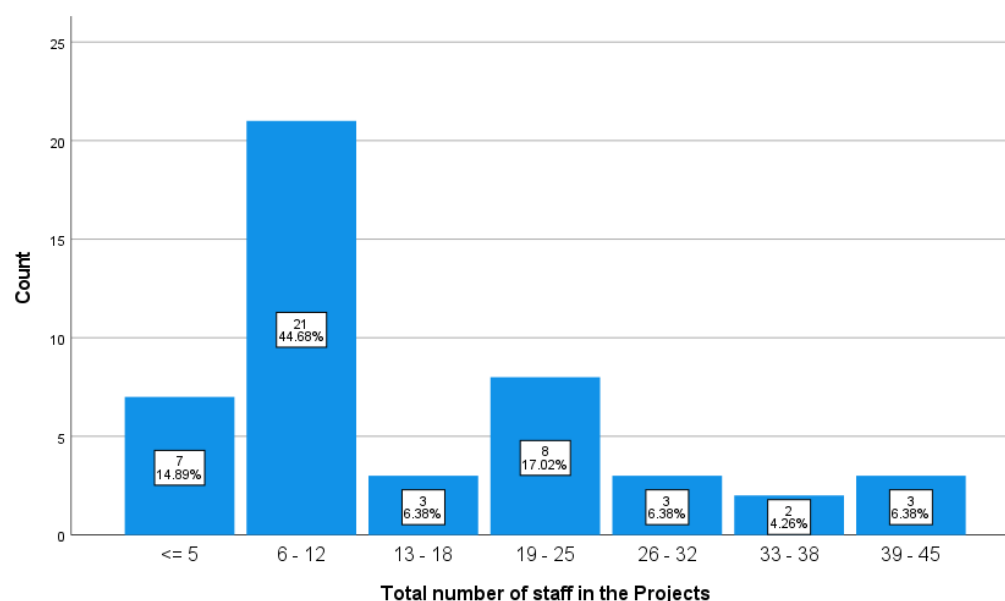


Figure 2: Number of staff in donor-funded projects

Source: Field Data (2025)

When asked to indicate the number of staff in the projects, 44.68% (21) of the participants indicated that they had between 6 and 12 staff, with the implication that this was the modal number of staff in most of the projects. The mean number of staff in the projects was 16, with the project with the lowest number of staff having 5 staff, while that with the largest number of staff had 45 staff. Human resources were deemed essential in contributing to the success of any project. Projects that had a lower number of staff were deemed to perform decimally as compared to those that had an adequate number of staff. For most of the donor-funded projects in Obunga and Nyalenda, the staff in the projects varied depending on the project size, budget, and scope of coverage, although most of the respondents felt that the available number of staff ought to have been more for the effectiveness of the projects. This was presented in Figure 2 above.

Table 1: Adequacy of staff in the projects

Were Adequate	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	21.3
No	37	78.7
Total	47	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

Based on the staff experience of the work in projects, the project M&E staff and field officers were asked for their opinion on whether the project staff were adequate for project implementation. The findings are as illustrated in Table 1. From the findings, most of the respondents felt that the projects were understaffed. This was indicated by 78.7% (37) of the participants who took part in this study. This implied that the available staff were not adequate to meet the project implementation needs. This affected the quality of implementation and, hence, the performance of donor-funded projects, especially in achieving the project goals and objectives. A further 21.3% (10) of the respondents affirmed that their

projects had an adequate number of personnel to implement their mandate. The latter, therefore, contended that the available staff significantly contributed to the success of their projects.

Table 2: Frequency of staff capacity building in projects

Capacity Building	Frequency	Percent
Weekly	4	8.5
Monthly	4	8.5
Quarterly	4	8.5
Semi annually	4	8.5
Annually	3	6.4
On needs basis	23	48.9
Not applicable	3	6.4
Other	2	4.3
Total	47	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

Staff continuous capacity building is essential in both the delivery of individual staff and personal development. Projects tend to embrace capacity building as a way of enhancing performance. Given this, therefore, the respondents were asked to indicate how often they were capacity built. The findings are as illustrated in Table 2. From the findings, it was evident that most project staff were capacity built on a needs basis. This was indicated by 48.9% (23) of the Project M&E staff and field officers involved in the study. The respondents pointed out that this often occurred when the projects needed particular staff to understand specific concepts. The projects would organize capacity-building sessions for a few days to a week in most cases. Very few projects had opportunities for educational capacity building, since, according to some of the projects, the available budget was mostly for project implementation. This, therefore, meant that if there was no need for the staff to be capacity built, the staff would not be capacity built. This ideally had a negative implication on the performance of donor-funded projects, since the staff who only relied on the training from campus would recycle the same knowledge, which would not add much value to the project. A further 34.0% (16) indicated that they were capacity built on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and biannually. All these had a significant influence on the performance of donor-funded projects, for capacity building improved the creativity, innovation, and approach of the project M&E staff.

Table 3: Staff Motivation in Projects

Staff Motivation	Frequency	Percent
Rewards	2	4.3
Recognition	14	29.8
Positive reinforcement	21	44.7
Promotion	2	4.3
Bonuses	2	4.3
Salary Increment	2	4.3
No Motivation at all	3	6.4
Other	1	2.1
Total	47	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

Staff motivation is vital for the success of any given project. The study, therefore, sought to establish the various methods that the donor-funded projects involved in the study used to motivate their staff. The analysis revealed that the most influential motivators were positive reinforcement (44.7%) and recognition (29.8%), indicating that non-monetary approaches had been significantly more effective than financial incentives. Traditional motivators such as rewards, promotions, bonuses, and salary increment each accounted for only 4.3%, suggesting they had played a minor role in driving staff engagement. A small percentage of staff reported no motivation at all (6.4%), while 2.1% cited other unspecified factors. These findings highlighted the importance of fostering a supportive and appreciative work environment where feedback and recognition had been prioritized over purely financial incentives. Addressing the concerns of unmotivated staff through personal engagement could have further enhanced overall morale and productivity. This was as presented in Table 3.

Table 4: Compliance of the projects with the established legal frameworks

Compliance	Frequency	Percent
Yes	45	95.7
No	2	4.3
Total	47	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

Respondents, specifically project M&E staff and field officers, were asked to indicate whether the projects adhered to the legal and statutory requirements set by the government. The results, as shown in Table 4, revealed that a significant majority, 95.7% (45 respondents), confirmed that the projects met most, if not all, of the legal criteria necessary for operation in Obunga and Nyalenda. Participants acknowledged that these projects were making a positive impact on the community by improving lives. However, some expressed concerns about the long-term sustainability of project implementation. Only a small portion, 4.3% (2 respondents), indicated that their projects did not fully comply with the required legal standards.

Table 5: Respondents' rating on the project level of accountability

Accountability Level	Frequency	Percent
Very poor	2	4.3
Poor	2	4.3
Average	6	12.8
Good	29	61.7
Very Good	8	17.0
Total	47	100.0

Source: Field Data (2025)

Accountability is a key ingredient to donor funding and, hence, project implementation and success. Most funding partners tend to assess the previous history of projects to ensure that there is no history of misappropriation of funds. The respondents were therefore asked about their opinion on how they viewed the accountability of the donor-funded projects in the area. From the analysis, the majority perceived accountability in the organization positively, with 61.7% rating it as good and 17.0% as very good, totalling 78.7%. A smaller portion, 12.8%, considered the accountability level to be average, reflecting a moderate or inconsistent experience. Meanwhile, 4.3% rated it as poor and another 4.3% as very poor,

indicating that 8.6% of the staff had negative perceptions. These results suggested that while most staff members had confidence in the organization's accountability systems, there remained a need to address concerns of those who perceived it as lacking. This was as presented in Table 5.

Participants in the study were requested to indicate their level of agreement with several statements related to project staff remuneration, organizational culture, employee motivation, and workplace relationships, among other aspects. Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "strongly disagree," 2 "disagree," 3 "neutral," 4 "agree," and 5 "strongly agree." A score of 1 reflected complete disagreement with the statement, whereas a score of 5 indicated strong agreement. The results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Assessment of selected indicators of project staff

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Remuneration/ Salary and other allowances meet my expectations	4 (8.5%)	24 (51.1%)	5 (10.6%)	11 (23.4%)	3 (6.4%)	2.68	1.125
There is a Work-Life balance	11 (23.4%)	20 (42.6%)	10 (21.3%)	3 (6.4%)	3 (6.4%)	2.30	1.102
There is a good relationship with other staff	5 (10.6%)	5 (10.6%)	7 (14.9%)	22 (46.8%)	8 (17.0%)	3.49	1.214
The organization motivates its staff	4 (8.5%)	8 (17.0%)	20 (42.6%)	8 (17.0%)	7 (14.9%)	3.13	1.135
I work for the working hours stated in my contract	2 (4.3%)	30 (63.8%)	11 (23.4%)	2 (4.3%)	2 (4.3%)	2.40	0.825
I don't relate well with the project management	11 (23.4%)	30 (63.8%)	2 (4.3%)	2 (4.3%)	2 (4.3%)	2.02	0.921
I have the required working equipment	3 (6.4%)	3 (6.4%)	11 (23.4%)	28 (59.6%)	2 (4.3%)	3.49	0.930
The working environment is not conducive	17 (36.2%)	22 (46.8%)	4 (8.5%)	2 (4.3%)	2 (4.3%)	1.94	1.009
The organization's culture does not meet my expectations	23 (48.9%)	16 (34.0%)	4 (8.5%)	2 (4.3%)	2 (4.3%)	1.81	1.056
Team building activities are not held periodically	19 (40.4%)	12 (25.5%)	12 (25.5%)	2 (4.3%)	2 (4.3%)	2.06	1.111
Training and capacity-building opportunities are offered by the organization to its staff	4 (8.5%)	4 (8.5%)	3 (6.4%)	25 (53.2%)	11 (23.4%)	3.74	1.170
Composite Mean & Standard Deviation						2.64	1.05

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results revealed that most donor-funded projects provided opportunities for training and capacity building, as shown by a mean score of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.170. This is supported by the fact that 53.2% (n=25) of respondents agreed with this statement. The mean score was higher than the composite mean of 2.64, suggesting a relatively strong consensus among participants. The higher standard deviation also indicates a wide, yet generally positive, agreement.

In terms of workplace relationships, respondents reported positive interactions among project staff, reflected in a mean score of 3.49 (SD=1.214). Approximately 46.8% (n=22) of the respondents agreed that good staff relationships existed within their projects, which again exceeded the overall mean of 2.64.

Additionally, 59.6% (n=28) of participants agreed that staff had access to necessary working tools and equipment, with a mean score of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 0.930. This implies that projects generally prioritized staff support and ensured that they had the tools, training, and motivation needed to implement project activities effectively.

On the other hand, responses around remuneration, work-life balance, and adherence to contracted working hours were less favourable. These aspects were rated at means of 2.68 (SD=1.125), 2.30 (SD=1.102), and 2.40 (SD=0.825), respectively. A significant portion of respondents, 51.1%, 42.6%, and 63.8%, disagreed that they were satisfied with their pay, had a balanced work-life experience, or worked within the stipulated contractual hours. These findings indicate that although many operational needs were met, there was notable dissatisfaction regarding compensation and workload. This could pose a challenge to project success, as literature highlights the importance of motivated and well-supported staff in driving performance.

Interestingly, indicators such as staff relations with management, workplace environment, organizational culture, and team-building activities were rated lowest, with mean scores of 2.02 (SD=0.921), 1.94 (SD=1.009), 1.81 (SD=1.056), and 2.06 (SD=1.111), all below the composite mean of 2.64. These results suggest a generally less favourable perception of these aspects. However, the relatively low means also reflect disagreement with negative statements, meaning respondents might not have major concerns about these areas.

In summary, the variable assessing project M&E staff yielded a composite mean of 2.64 and a standard deviation of 0.94, suggesting that responses were generally neutral. While efforts were made to support staff through tools and training, concerns around compensation and workload indicated room for improvement. Overall, the findings point to the recognition of M&E staff's role in project implementation, albeit with gaps in ensuring their full satisfaction and retention.

The perspective of the community leaders involved in the study on the donor-funded projects indicated that these projects were good, citing the development they brought about. The projects have benefited many, including children, women, and the vulnerable. Some of the respondents felt that the projects could do more than they had already done. This was as presented in the following verbatim.

The research findings are consistent with the current literature, as shown by Abdelmasseh Bassioni and Gaid (2022). Their study examined the relationship between project manager skill and the performance of building projects in Egypt. Their results indicated that certain management competencies, including budgeting, risk management, and conceptualisation, influenced project performance. Hefley and Botton (2021) discovered that a significant proportion of graduates exhibited inadequate proficiency in project management responsibilities, namely in project planning and risk management. The deficiency in

proficiency posed considerable obstacles to the comprehensive implementation of projects. Kanyi and James (2023) identified a substantial and positive correlation between technical, managerial, and governance expertise and the effectiveness of donor-funded initiatives in Nairobi County.

1.8 Conclusion

The project staff in most of the donor-funded projects were inadequate to meet the programming needs. The donor-funded projects embraced staff training and capacity building, there was a good relationship between project staff, the projects provided the requisite working equipment, and the staff were motivated, which were essential in fostering the performance of donor-funded projects. Most project staff were capacity built on a needs basis, and the projects embraced positive reinforcement and recognition for staff motivation. The donor-funded projects were compliant and had most, if not all, the requirements to legally operate in Obunga and Nyalenda. They further exercised financial vigilance, as evident from the study responses. The respondents involved in the study were therefore on the affirmative that indeed project staff influenced the performance of donor-funded projects.

In view of the study findings, donor-funded projects lacked adequate staff to meet the project implementation needs, hence affecting the quality of implementation and performance of donor-funded projects. They tried their best to provide as much of the needs of the staff as possible, although some of the project staff felt quite stretched by the work they were doing, and were not contented with the remuneration they were given. The competence of staff, their numbers, morale at work, and qualifications were vital in determining project performance.

1.9 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the study recommended the following:

- i. The project managers should deliberately offer continuous capacity development to staff to enhance their performance and motivation for their work.
- ii. M&E officers in donor-funded projects should scale up project follow-up to foster community ownership, document impact, and identify gaps in their implementation.
- iii. Project managers of donor-funded projects should foster partnerships and collaboration with other projects to avoid duplication of implementation.

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