INFLUENCE OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION ON WOMEN FUNDED PROJECTS: A CASE OF NAROK NORTH SUB-COUNTY, NAROK COUNTY, KENYA.

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project report is my original work and has not been presented for any award in any other University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my family, my wife Sylvia, my daughters Emma, Seema, Loise and my son Toninio. Thank you so much for enduring my absence during my study period, for praying for me during my endless trips to class in Nairobi and Back to Narok. I also dedicate this project to my parents Kiraposho and Kanyinke Lesaloi, my Brothers Sammy, Solomon, Edward, Sayialel and John, Sisters Margy and Tiyialo Lesaloi and friends who prayed and supported me during my study period at the University of Nairobi.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AfDB	African Development Bank
AVU	African Virtual University
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IS	Information System
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MNP	Multinational Project
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ODeL	Open Distance and eLearning
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PIs	Partner Institutions
PME	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
RBM	Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation
UNDP	United Nations Development Plan
VUCCnet	Virtual University for Cancer Control Network

ABSTRACT

This study was set out to assess the influence of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) on women funded projects. The objective of the study was to establish how defining M&E staff responsibilities, promoting M&E learning at the organizational level, allocating sufficient time and resources for M&E in project design and conducting strategic impact evaluations influence women funded projects. The study relied more on documentary evidence about the women funded projects in Narok North under scrutiny for possible M&E practices–women funded project performance relationship. According to the Narok North women fund records, there are 18 women groups that have been funded to this far. The groups are composed of averagely 12 members. Therefore, the target population was 216 members of these groups. Owing to the research design of this study, and the small population size of beneficiaries, a census was conducted of all institutions that participated in the projects. Appointments with each person who served on the implementation team was scheduled and a questionnaire was administered. Therefore, the sample size was all the 216 respondents. A questionnaire was used for project implementers, funders and beneficiaries. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics including correlation analysis while qualitative data was analyzed using narrative and thematic methods. This helped to identify information relevant to the research questions and objectives. From the findings, it was found out that monitoring and evaluation practice has a direct influence on project performance in that monitoring, is basically 'watching over' the project as it is being implemented while evaluation is 'judging' performance of the project in relation to its target. This means that it is only through monitoring and evaluation that project performance can be assessed and corrections made to improve performance. In addition, the four key practices of M&E in this study need to be implemented in full. From the findings of this study, it was concluded that M&E practice is the blue print of project monitoring and evaluation that lead to influencing project performance. Based on the findings that M&E practice has the highest correlation with project performance, it is here by recommended that a well thought out M&E practice needs to be in place and be fully implemented if project performance is to be enhanced. An information system should be tailor-made in order to make it more user-friendly to data clerks and should be updated as and when data is collected. It should be easy to store and retrieve information and perform data analyses.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1Background of the Study

The concept of women funded projects is gaining a lot of momentum globally. This is done through organized institutions like municipalities, learning institutions and women organizations for investments and development in high priority projects. There is greater interest on gender issues because of some overwhelming evidence that investing in both gender is important as it makes organization stronger and more effective. Otieno (2009) noted that during the International Women Year Conference in Mexico it came out clear that women were given little priority in resource allocation. Several countries have devolved financial recourses to promote women enterprises to change.

United Kingdom (UK) started a devolved Structural Fund for its four nations namely; England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Because of their heterogeneous system of government, each nation had its different degree of devolved responsibilities. Between 2002-2006, UK had devolved a total of 27.2 billion pounds for various women projects. An evaluation of these women projects indicate some substantial change to improve delivery whilst others remained relatively unchanged due to low allocation of Structural Funding.

In the United States of America, the Federal Government provided grants for women to the tune of 20 billion US dollars in 2010. They have identified over 5000 government sources for women entrepreneurs. Every year over 500,000 women in U S A start new business. Two out of every three new business are started by women with 75% chances of success. This is contrary to Kenya where business is male dominated. In Ghana the Local Government Act of 2007 allowed the decentralization of the country's resources.

The program emphasized on micro financing, rural enterprise, peace building and promotion of good governance. These funds are challenged by lack of micro finance, poor roads, and low education especially among girls, inadequate women empowerment and poor practice of reproductive health care.

In Kenya, Women Enterprise and Development Fund was established through the promulgation of (Women Enterprise Fund Regulations) under Sections 25 and 32 of the Government Financial Management Act, 2005, Legal Notice No. 147 of 3rd August 2007 under the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services. Guidelines for Women Enterprise Fund from the ministry outlines that the aim is to address poverty alleviation through Social economic empowerment of women whose population is over 52.9%, and cannot be ignored in any development agenda. In addition, the Fund being a flagship project in the Vision 2030, is a demonstration of the Government's commitment to the realization of the Millennium Development Goal on gender equity and women empowerment by year 2015.

Khalid (2000) defines monitoring as a regular on-going collection and analysis of information about the progress of an enterprise. The information helps to make timely decisions, ensure accountability and form a basis for evaluation. Kunwar and Nyandemo(2004) define evaluation as a systematic objective acquisition and assessment of information to get some useful feedback about relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of a project. It compares results of the enterprise intervention against the intended objectives. Evaluation uses monitoring information to make a judgment about a project. In this context, monitoring and evaluation are done simultaneously. There is no evaluation without monitoring and the vice versa is true.

Common monitoring and evaluation methods used include literature search, questionnaire, documentation review, observation/inspection, focus group, case studies, key informants interview, direct measurement, and use of progress records. Most projects used more than one method to increase credibility of data collected. Inspection, use of focus groups and progress reports as methods in monitoring and evaluation were selected for this study. This is because they are easy, cheap and generate accurate data. Each women group is expected to formulate enterprise objectives in their proposals for funding which are specific, measurable, and attainable realistic and trackable over a period of time (SMART).

The progress of WEDF, like any other public sector, is seen to be consistently performing poorly in some constituencies, leaving the largest impact on the country in terms of what is perceived as poor policy development and lack of strategic planning (Kimenyi, 2005). Narok North has been selected as a case study because it is among sub-counties in Kenya where most women funded projects are monitored and evaluated in its implementation of its projects. Women funded projects have institutionalized monitoring and evaluation of its projects by having a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy.

In view of the forgoing and considering that M&E practice is a key component of women funded project management that gives control over the main parameters that define a project; scope, quality, resources, completion time and cost (Kohli and Chitkara, 2008), this study, in light of the success stories seeks to demonstrate the influence of M&E practice on performance of women funded projects.

1.1.1 Monitoring and Evaluation practices

M&E is made up of two different processes: monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring is the process of regular and systematic collection, analyzing and reporting information about a project's inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Monitoring is therefore a way of improving efficiency and effectiveness of a project, by providing the management and stakeholders with project progressive development and achievement of its objectives within the allocated funds (World Bank, 2011). It therefore keeps track of the project work and informs the management when things go wrong. Hence it is an invaluable tool for good management as well as a useful base for evaluation.

Monitoring is an internal function to a project and it involves: establishing indicators, setting up systems to collect information, collecting, recording and analyzing information, and using the information to inform day to-day management. Monitoring is important since it necessitates the modification of activities if they emerge not to be achieving the desired results (Hunter, 2009 and Shapiro, 2011). Evaluation, on the other hand, is a scientific based appraisal of the strengths and weakness of the project (Hunter, 2009). It is therefore a comparison between the actual and the planned.

Evaluation involves: looking at what the project intended to achieve, assessing progress towards what was to be achieved and impact on targets, looking at the effectiveness of the project strategy, looking at the efficient use of resources, opportunity costs and sustainability of the project, and the implications for the various stakeholders (Hunter, 2009 and Shapiro, 2011).

Organizations are currently in the process of reviewing ways in which M&E can achieve greater consistency and effectiveness (World Bank, 2008), that is, where M&E will enable them to judge the impact of a project as well as obtain recommendations on how future interventions can be improved (UNDP, 2009). However, one shortcoming of the M&E system is that there are no set standards for measuring its quality (Chaplowe, 2008). Organizations implementing projects in developing countries, in many cases, get their funds from donors and development agencies (Hunter, 2009). The Global perspective also shows that 10% to 15% of all aids to development countries are channeled through the self-help groups (Askari, 2011).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Monitoring and Evaluation has in the recent become a necessary requirement for projects. This is evident from the many advertisements for M&E experts and request for expression of interest for M&E consultants in the local dailies. In the developing countries, Kenya included self-help groups are faced with several challenges in addition to inability to resourcefully respond to changing needs.

The Kenya social protection sector review (2012), states that the monitoring and evaluation of social programmes in Narok County is weak, and where it is done the information is not made public. In addition most self-help groups do not have the ability to hire skilled M&E professionals and ICT staff who understand M&E systems and are able to develop appropriate tools; hence they end up with substandard M&E systems that don't meet either the managerial or donor needs.

Monitoring and evaluation, although very essential in improving performance, is also very complex, multidisciplinary and skill intensive processes (Engela and Ajam, 2010). Building a resulted based M&E system is a requirement by the growing pressure to improving performance which is also one of the requirements by the NGO and donor's to check on the effective use of the donor funds, impact and benefits brought by the projects.

The Ministry of Gender, Sports, culture and Social Services in 2008 provided a Guideline for governing Women Enterprise Fund. In this guideline, monitoring and evaluation systems are absent and are not yet developed as required by Ministry of Finance. There is scanty information on how the M&E practices: Defining M&E staff responsibilities, promoting M&E learning, allocating sufficient time and resources for M&E in project design and conducting strategic impact evaluations singularly and severally influence women funded project performance. Studies on M&E practices that have been done have seldom focused on women funded project in Narok County. This study therefore sought to establish specifically, the influence that M&E play on women funded project performance in Narok North Sub-County.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on women funded projects: the case of Narok North Sub-County.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the study:

i. To establish how defining staff responsibilities influence performance of women funded projects in Narok North Sub-County.

ii. To assess how promoting learning at the organizational level influence performance of women funded projects in Narok North Sub-County.

iii. To determine how allocating resources for M&E in project design influence performance of women funded projects in Narok North Sub-County.

iv. To establish how conducting strategic impact evaluation influence performance of women funded projects in Narok North Sub-County.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

i. How does defining staff responsibilities influence performance of women funded projects in Narok North Sub-County?

ii. How does promoting learning at the organizational level influence performance of women funded projects in Narok North Sub-County?

iii. To what extent does allocating resources for M&E in project design influence performance of women funded projects in Narok North Sub-County?

iv. To what extent does conducting strategic impact evaluations influence performance of women funded projects in Narok North Sub-County?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Other than to women funded organizations in Narok North Sub-county, this research is important to institutions like local NGOs, international organizations and more especially institutions with questionable project performance and those intending to start practicing M&E to enhance project performance. With this study, it is hoped organizations shall begin to monitor and evaluate projects with the sole aim of improving project performance and not necessarily as an obligation to the funder. This would be as a consequence of evidence that this study will bring to the fore on how M&E influences project performance.

The study also aims at providing empirical literature to project management students as a step for further research that will add to the body of knowledge of M&E. Likewise; this study can find its importance among researchers in M&E as it will offer an opportunity to compare M&E in ICTs in tertiary education with other social sectors.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to 18 women groups in Narok North Sub-County. These groups have benefited from women development funds and they are formally organized and registered by the ministry of Gender, Culture and Social Services. The focus was group members and their leaders namely, the chairperson, secretary and treasurer. The Sub-County Gender, Social Development Officer also purposefully included in the study.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study involved analyzing project reports, which in certain instances did not contain specific information for the research in question. It was also difficult to assess the accuracy of project reports because the researcher did not participate in designing the projects nor did he have control over conditions in which the projects are conducted. That notwithstanding, it envisaged that information so gathered was supplemented with primary data from funders. In a few isolated instances that project officers left the institutions and were not available for interviews, every effort was made to follow them-up to help in getting their feedback on how the projects worked.

Another limitation was the wide geographical distribution of institutions. The beneficiaries are distant apart in different locations. This would not allow for site visits for data collection because of budgetary constraints; however, virtual meetings through e-mails and phone calls for follow-ups were utilized extensively. The willingness to participate in the study is another factor that limited this study. Being an old and forgotten project, the enthusiasm of respondents may be low and thus active follow-ups were done which improved the situation. The researcher overcame this limitation by giving the respondents enough time to remember and reflect on what happened and by assuring them that the research findings will be useful in future projects.

1.9Assumptions of the Study

Assumptions that were considered important in this study were that the documents utilized were original and authentic documents. Other assumption was that respondents answered questions correctly and truthfully.

1.10 Definitions of Significant Terms

Monitoring& Evaluation practices –women funded projects' strategy that defines M&E Staff responsibilities facilitates staff cooperation and increases the consistency and quality of M&E activities.

Women enterprise -Refers to an activity undertaken by women groups aimed to generate income.

Performance-Refers to progress made in the project cycle, monthly income and number of objects achieved by projects.

Women groups-Refers to registered groups by a recognized authority for a common undertaking with 70% women membership.

Women Funded Project- Refers to a revolved fund started by the Kenyan

Government to loan and finance women projects through Constituencies or Micro Financial institutions.

1.11 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter one comprises of the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, assumptions of the study and definitions of significant terms are discussed. It is then followed by chapter two, which presents literature review. In chapter three, the research methodology is presented. Chapter four presents data analysis, presentations, interpretations and discussions of the findings of the study. This is followed by chapter five, which presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on M&E practices and its influence on women funded projects. It focuses on the manner in which the concept of M&E practices has been assimilated into project management. The first part of this chapter sketches out the Evolution of M&E in project management analyzing the types of M&E followed by a discussion on M&E practices, a theoretical framework of this study is then presented followed by the corresponding conceptual framework. An outline of knowledge gaps to be addressed by this study is then presented and lastly, a summary of the Chapter.

2.2Evolution of Monitoring and Evaluation

The emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of projects mirrored the period of discontent around project management in the late 1950s when project management was formally recognized as a distinct discipline arising from the management discipline (Cleland & Ireland, 2007). The focus on M&E sought to concentrate on lived experiences, and give voice to as many stakeholders as possible, which was a secondary goal of a consensus-shaping evaluation process before (Schwandt and Burgon, 2006). At present, it is important to try to resolve the question often asked about whether M&E can be categorized as a field, an approach, or a discipline. It is the very particular manner in which M&E has evolved that has resulted in (Scriven2010) choosing to refer to the field as trans-disciplinary, a concept that is used more in recent times to describe M&E as opposed to the term discipline or field.

The literature reviewed indicates that there is no single, uncontested answer as to what M&E is, which may in turn be attributed to the fact that there is no consensus around its purpose (Khan 2001). The purpose ranges from promoting accountability, to transparency, to organizational learning, and depending on the particular purpose, the approach would vary. It is for this reason that M&E can at times be a nebulous concept. The diversity can be seen in terms of methods used and the subject matter considered including the types of M&E (Jones, 2011).

2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

The most distinguishable views within this spectrum comes from those who see M&E as supporting a purely accountability function. This grouping aligns itself to the field of auditing, compliance and performance management (Cook, 2006). In accountability orientated M&E, high levels of scrutiny are expected, and judgment generally made against clear standards and norms established for a range of performance areas (Cheng, 2007). This would include the proper management of budgets, personnel, legal and regulatory compliance with process and procedures.

Apart from M&E serving the very necessary purpose of accountability, it is also meant to promote the learning organization this would be at the level of M&E, and comes about when results are presented. The assumption is that organizations would become more open and self-reflective when faced with evaluative information, but it is not necessarily the case, as operationalizing learning is not easy, given the complex array of protocols and management culture, which must be, negotiated (PMI, 2006). It has been shown that whilst it is implicit that M&E should lead to learning and reflection, this may not be the case, because the way organizations integrate information may be complex, and not as causal as suggested in classic M&E (Preskill, 2004).

As observed by Kennerly and Neely (2003), utilizing evaluation in organizations is, however, not easy, and is influenced by several factors: contextual (political), technical (methodological) and bureaucratic (psychological). These factors overlap, but what is clear is that unless all the elements are lined up, organizational learning is difficult. Schwartz & Mayne (2005) assess this grouping in terms of how M&E contributes to learning and reflection, and notes that in this mode M&E is seen as one tool that supports management by improving the quality of information provided for decision-making. Whilst most of the research has focused on NGOs, there is growing interest in seeing how M&E helps to build learning organizations in other organizations (Roper & Petitt, 2002).

There is much potential for evaluation to lead to organizational learning, and not just accountability, which has been illustrated by Gray (2009). The point made is that M&E intent is very important, as it could lead to different outcomes – the interest of this study. It should be remembered that M&E has assumed different identities, due to context, and depending on this, it may be used for accountability, promoting a behaviour or practice, or learning, as demonstrated in a series on the subject (Bamberger, 2008). M&E is analyzed to see its influence on project performance, taken to mean degree of project goal achievement. It is important to recognize that monitoring and evaluation are not magic wands that can be waved to make problems disappear, or to cure them, or to miraculously make changes without a lot of hard work being put in by the project or organization.

In themselves, they are not a solution, but they are valuable tools (Verma, 2005). There are various processes involved in the monitoring and evaluation of projects which when done correctly can lead to improvement and good delivery of projects in future (Msila & Setlhako, 2013). Monitoring and evaluation can help identify problems and their causes and suggest possible solutions to problems (Shapiro, 2001). In this way, M&E can have influence on project performance much as there is inadequate information on this (Singh & Nyandemo, 2004). Shapiro (2001) adds that monitoring and evaluation should be part of the project planning process and that there is need to begin gathering information about project performance in relation to targets right from the start.

2.3.1Definition of M&E staff responsibilities and Performance of Women Funded Projects

Most scholars of project monitoring and evaluation argue that planning for M&E should be done just at the very point of project planning (Kohli & Chitkara, 2008) while a few contend that it should be created after the planning phase but before the design phase of a project or intervention (Nyonje*et al* 2012). Despite this difference in opinion however, almost all scholars agree that the plan should include information on how a project should be assessed (Cleland & Ireland, 2007). Of great importance to this study, is what the M&E plan outlines that influences project performance.

From the studies reviewed, it has been noted that an M&E plan generally outlines the underlying assumptions on which the achievement of project goals depend, the anticipated relationships between activities, outputs, and outcomes the logical framework. Other contents of an M&E plan are well-defined conceptual measures and definitions, along with baseline data needed; the monitoring schedule; a list of data sources to be used; and cost estimates for the monitoring and evaluation activities. Most plans also include a list of the partnerships and collaborations that will help achieve the desired results; and a plan for the dissemination and utilization of the information gained (Olive, 2002). Literature also reveals that there are important considerations for an M&E plan: Brignall& Modell (2010) categorizes these considerations into resources - how much money and time will be needed to conduct the activities.

2.3.2 Promotion of M&E learning and Performance of Women Funded Projects

Regardless of how experienced individual members are, once a team to implement a project has been identified, training and capacity building for M&E reporting is important. This, it has been observed, enhances understanding of the project deliverables, reporting requirements and builds the team together (Wysocki & McGary, 2003). Generally, everybody involved in project implementation is also involved in the implementation of M&E, including partners, and should receive training (Acharya *et al*, 2006). Training of implementers in M&E is deliberately participatory to ensure that those responsible for implementing and using the system are familiar with its design, intent, focus, and how to use the M&E tools.

Regarding M&E training, M&E resource and capacity assessment carried out earlier during project planning helps identify initial capacity gaps in M&E as well as the resources needed to conduct M&E training. Thereafter, training needs assessments can be informal based on knowledge of staff experiences and performance or can be a more formalized process (Pfohl & Jacob, 2009). The route to choose depends on the size and complexity of the project being implemented. On larger projects with more staff, it is important to be sure the training plan is very well tailored to staff capacity gaps, as there will be a limited number of opportunities to engage with individual staff members.

With training needs identified, there is need to develop an M&E training and capacity building plan that include topics to be covered and persons to be trained (Alcock, 2009). It is important to note that not all management and staff members need training in all the topics or at the same level of detail. Similarly, some training will occur periodically and will include initial training for management and staff at M&E system inception and in-service training over the life of the project in order to improve practice (Gray, 2009). This aspect definitely contributes to influencing project performance. Topics covered in M&E training are very important in shaping up the entire process of data collection.

They include, at a minimum, the M&E system to be followed, the key performance indicators for the project information gathering methods and tools and data analysis (UNDP, 2006). Such content of training significantly refocuses the implementation team in M&E data collection, which contributes to understanding of how a project is performing at any given time hence can be influenced positively. It is important, particularly for those responsible for collecting and sharing information for the M&E system that they understand the rationale behind the system and their role in it (UPWARD, 2011). This is yet again another hallmark of how M&E contributes to influencing performance of a project, the purpose of this study.

M&E training should also include a review of key performance indicators to be collected. Issues covered in the review include the definition of each indicator, how the indicator is measured, how data on the indicator will be collected, the timeline for collecting and reporting the indicator, and how the indicator satisfies client needs (Alcock, 2009). In essence, such information enables implementers to understand more how M&E will contribute to project performance. The bulk of literature on M&E training also reveals that data collection methods and tools are an important element (Wysocki & McGary 2003).

According to Woodhill, (2012), M&E training should include topics on roles and responsibilities. At the conclusion of the training, management and staff should have a clear understanding of: their individual role and responsibilities in ensuring the effective operation of the M&E system; and where their role fits in relation to the roles of other managers and staff members. On the sequence of events in M&E training, it has been observed that, normally it is tailored towards the needs of the project in terms of how complex and hence tend to vary from one project to another (Reviere*et al*, 1996).

The most important part of the training is however, the development of M&E tools using the project log frame matrix which, it has been argued by many researches should involve would-be users (Narayan-Parker & Nagel, 2009). Development of M&E tools through a participatory method enhances the understanding of project indicators and their importance in tracking project performance during implementation (Marsden, David, & Oakley, 2001). This understanding is critical as it enhance the chances of collecting M&E data on schedule allowing for timely detection of errors and their possible correction if needed (PAMFORK, 2007) – ultimately leading to improvement in project performance.

From the forgoing, it can be deduced that training in M&E is critical. Sending untrained staff to gather information on outcomes and impacts can result in serious compromises to the validity of information resulting in complete invalidation in some cases. It is typically best to start with trainings on the monitoring components of the system and build to evaluation pieces and the capacities needed to be built within the team.

2.3.3Allocation of Sufficient Time and Resources for M&E and Performance of Women Funded Projects

Collecting information on project performance during monitoring and evaluation eventually leads to accumulation of data depending on how complex the project is. If this large amount of information has to add value to project management, there is need to decide how to make sense of it or to analyze it. As stated by Shapiro (2001), data analysis is the process of turning the detailed information into an understanding of patterns, trends and interpretations. The starting point for analysis in a project is to have an organized set of data – thus the concept of information system as an M&E activity (Technopedia, 2013).

Essentially, Information Systems (IS) or database is a data handling system that provides information that is needed to manage projects efficiently and effectively (Beynon-Davies, 2008). Information systems involve three primary resources: people, technology, and information or decision making as in the case of M&E data. It is in this vein that M&E data is captured in a user-friendly database that can be used by project staff to store, retrieve and analyze data.

In the light of this study, it can be seen that an M&E information system is a contributing factor to influencing project performance, as it is a tool for organizing important information collected about a project. According to Hailey & Sorgenfrei (2009), the importance of developing an information system is that it is a readily available source for requisite information at each level of project management on which performance can be assessed. Information in the system also helps in highlighting the critical factors for the successful functioning of the project (Cheng, 2007).

One feature of an information system that make it a valuable component of M&E is that it is management oriented- the development of IS should start from an appraisal of management needs and overall project objectives and should be designed from the top downwards. As Olive (2002) writes, it is important to ensure that whatever information is stored in the information system is credible information that will eventually find use in information project implementation. Another feature of an information system is that it is integrative- it is holistic in its approach. It covers all the functional areas of the project. It blends information from all areas of a project. Clearly, these features make an information system a backbone of M&E that holds information.

The most important benefit of having an information system is that in its own rights, it acts as a communication, planning and re-planning tool. An information system facilitates recording, organization, retrieval, and dissemination of knowledge, which may include documents, reports, procedures, practices and skills (Beynon-Davies, 2008). For the purposes of this study therefore, it can be said that a database of this nature is a source of valuable information that can be used to inform the performance of the project

2.3.4 Conducting strategic impact evaluations and Performance of Women Funded Projects

Monitoring and evaluation planning has been done well and information about a situation has been collected at the beginning of the intervention, then one has baseline data (Hogger*et al*, 2011). A baseline survey, simply put, is a study that is done at the beginning of a project to establish the status *quo* before a project is rolled out (Estrella &Gaventa, 2010). In a baseline survey, values for the identified performance indicators are collected as well.

The baseline survey, which aims at collecting baseline data about a situation, is an early element in the monitoring and evaluation plan whose information is used to systematically assess the circumstances in which the project commences (Frankel & Gage, 2007). It provides the basis for subsequent assessment of how efficiently the activity is being implemented and the eventual results achieved (Armstrong & Baron, 2013), a very big contribution to influencing project performance. A baseline survey gathers key information early in a project so that later judgments can be made about the quality and development results achieved by the project.

Focusing on how project performance can be influenced by M&E, particularly by the baseline survey, a number of authors on M&E have given an account about the importance of baseline surveys. According to Action Aid (2008), baseline surveys are important to any project for the following reasons: It is a starting point for a project - One important and recommended way of starting a project is to carry out a baseline study. Through its results, a baseline serves as a benchmark for all future activities, where project managers can refer to for the purposes of making project management decisions: Establishing priority areas/planning - Baseline studies are important in establishing priority areas for a project. This is especially true when a project has several objectives. The results of a baseline study can show how some aspects of a project need more focus than others (Action Aid, 2008).

On a point of attribution, Krzysztof *et al* (2011) argue that without a baseline, it is not possible to know the impact of a project. A baseline study serves the purpose of informing decision makers what impact the project has had on the target community. These writers also add that M&E tools used during a baseline study are normally the same tools used during evaluation as this is important for ensuring that project management compares apples to apples Krzysztof *et al* (2011). As such, conducting a baseline means that time and other resources for designing evaluation tools are minimized or even eliminated altogether and there is a real opportunity to detect along the way if the project is performing or not.

Other reasons why a baseline survey would be conducted are that it is a donor requirement as part of the project process (Abeyrama, 2008). Since M&E is integral for any donor to establish future project success, they always compel implementing organizations to carry out baseline studies. In essence, this helps the donor in future, to compare the realization of results as the project progresses. Unfortunately for some organizations, donor requirement of an M&E becomes the only reason, missing the real reasons why there is need for M&E (Nyonje*et al* 2012). Like for other activities of M&E, a few issues need to be considered before conducting a baseline survey. In their Paper, Monitoring and Evaluating Urban Development Programs, A Handbook for Program Managers and Researchers, Bamberger *et al* (2008) point out that just as the name suggests, baseline surveys should be carried out at the very beginning of a project and for obvious reasons.

Any manager wants to ensure that any possible impact of a project is captured at evaluation. Where a baseline study is conducted after project activities have already been initiated, the accurate picture of the initial status cannot be reflected since the project is already having some impact, however little. It is therefore always best practice, to conduct a baseline before project implementation (Bamberger, 2008). Other important considerations to be made before a baseline survey is conducted are the identification of indicators, which are essentially measurable or tangible signs that something has been done or that something has been achieved (UNDP, 2009).

They help in the designing of the questionnaire and in determining evaluation questions – dictating the type of data to collect and analyze. One other consideration to be made is the target population (Gosling, 2009). Like for any other activity in project implementation, for one to carry out a baseline survey, funds are needed. Almost all researchers of M&E identify funds as a requirement for conducting a baseline survey. Availability of funds will dictate the intensity and scope of the baseline study. More funds might also mean that both quantitative and qualitative methods are adopted, while limited funds might imply that an organization only goes for quantitative methods (Armonia*et al*, 2006)

After the baseline survey, subsequent monitoring of project progress gathers and analyses data using the same logical framework matrix and tools to compare progress made in achieving the set results of the project. In this way, baseline surveys contribute to influencing project performance if the project manager is able to interpret the results of M&E correctly.

2.4 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is guided by the theory of change and the realistic evaluation theory. The theory of change, first published by Carol Weiss in 1995, is defined quite simply and elegantly as a theory of how and why an initiative works. It focuses not just on generating knowledge about whether a project is effective, but also on explaining how and what methods it uses to be effective (Cox, 2009).

The theory of change provides a model of how a project is supposed to work. In other words, it provides a road map of where the project is trying to reach. Monitoring and evaluation tests and refines the road map while communications helps in reaching the destination by helping to bring about change. Further, the theory of change provides the basis for arguing that the intervention is making a difference (Msila & Setlhako, 2013). This theory suggests that by understanding, what the project is trying to achieve, how and why, project staff and evaluators will be able to monitor and measure the desired results and compare them against the original theory of change (Alcock, 2009).

This theory however falls short since project success is much more complex (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). It is important to understand success beyond just knowing “what works”.

Experience has shown that blindly copying or scaling an intervention hardly ever works (Mackay, 2007). An important task for monitoring and evaluation is to gather enough knowledge and understanding in order to predict – with some degree of confidence – how a project and set of activities might work in a different situation, or how it needs to be adjusted to get similar or better results, hence influencing project performance (Jones, 2011).

On the other hand, the realistic evaluation theory, first published by Pawson in 1997, provides a model centered on finding out what outcomes are produced from project interventions, how they are produced, and what is significant about the varying conditions in the which the interventions take place (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). Realistic evaluation deals with ‘What works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?’ (Pawson& Tilley, 2004). The model allows the evaluator to understand what aspects of an intervention make it effective or ineffective and what contextual factors are needed to replicate the intervention in other areas (Cohen, Manion, & Morison, 2008). Realistic evaluation seeks to find the contextual conditions that make interventions effective therefore developing lessons about how they produce outcomes (Fukuda-Parr, Lopes, & Malik, 2002). This theory can greatly aid in understanding how project deliverables are produced, however it falls short, as it is not explicitly about what influences project performance the concern of this study.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows a conceptual framework of the relationship between monitoring and evaluation and project performance. It is a symbolic representation of concepts and their relationship.

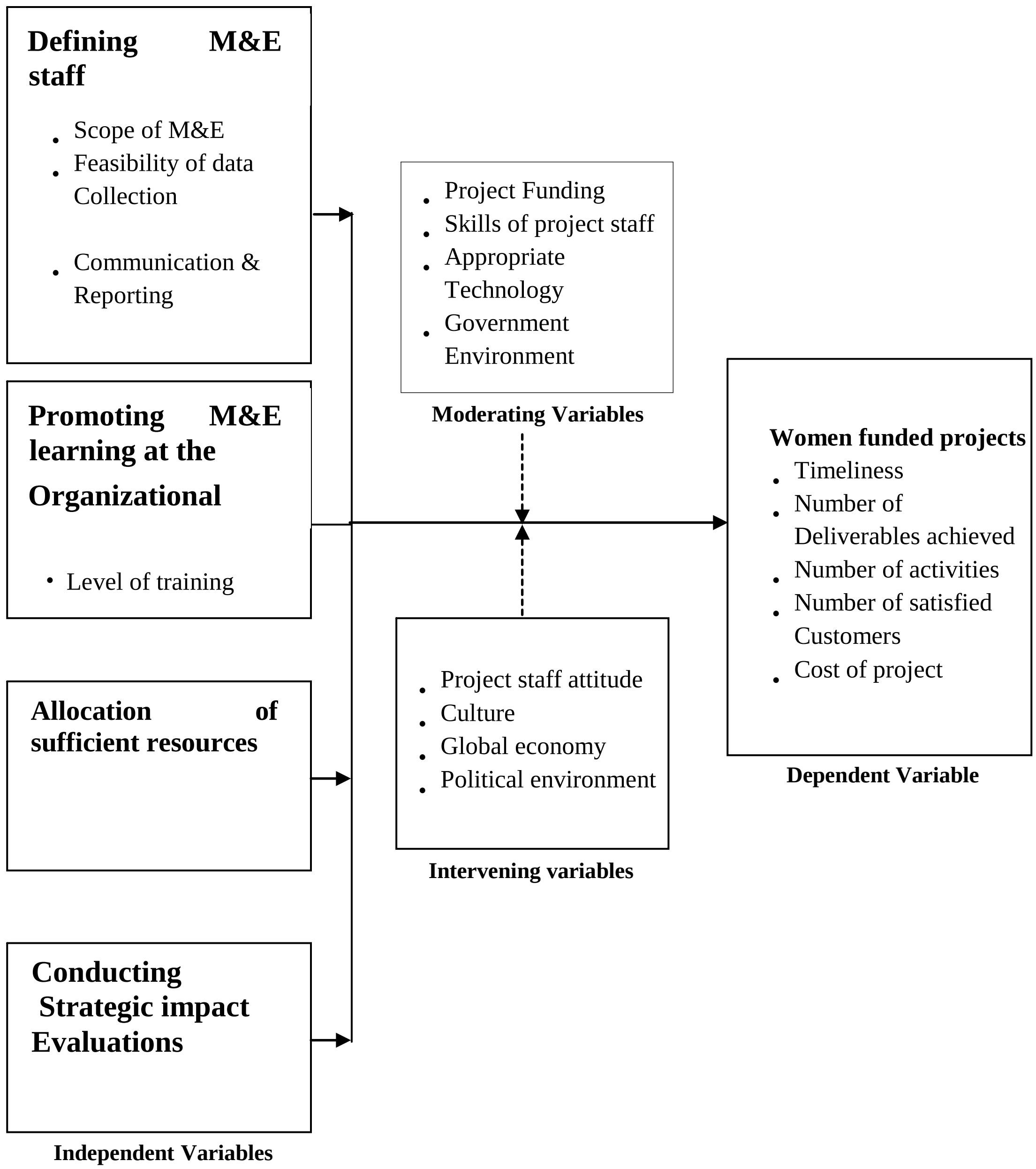

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

In this conceptual framework of the study, the independent variables are considered to have a directly proportional influence on women funded projects. By implication, if something goes wrong with M&E practices, or is indeed absent, women funded projects is negatively affected and the converse is true. This implies that all activities of M&E should be as credible as possible so that necessary information on how the project is progressing is provided. Overall, through M&E practices, status of various parameters of project performance are continuously provided, availing an opportunity to make necessary adjustments to achieve project objectives.

2.7 Knowledge Gaps

This study will generate knowledge in several areas, but most importantly, it will provide insight in how M&E as a global practice has been absorbed into the Kenyan women funded projects, modified and used in pursuit of achieving global standards of service delivery. It will analyze M&E practices and demonstrate the influence of each one of them on women funded projects. Table 2.1 shows specific knowledge gaps addressed:

2.8 Summary of Literature Reviewed

This chapter has presented a review of literature, which has shown among others, the evolution of M&E, and illustrated that given its ability to address progress of projects, it has a wider application on women funded projects. Under the section on types of M&E, this chapter shows that M&E serves several purposes, and uses different methodologies for attaining its goal of improving project performance. In the section on M&E in women funded projects however, M&E remains a strategy and tool for the promotion of project management, and the results generated need to be applied through a management hierarchy. The section presenting how M&E practices influence women funded projects brings out a number of issues: defining M&E staff responsibilities, promoting M&E learning at the organizational level, allocating sufficient time and resources for M&E in project design and conducting strategic impact evaluations ensures that collected data is organized in a usable manner to generate knowledge.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology of the study, and justifies the research methods and choices by presenting an objective research process. The topics discussed included research design, target population, sample size, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations and operational definition of the variables.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for this study was a mix of ex-post facto and survey. In the context of social and educational research the phrase ex-post facto research design means after the fact and refers to those studies which investigate possible relationships by observing an existing condition or state of affairs and searching back in time for plausible causal factors (Kerlinger & Rint, 2004). More formerly, Cohen, Manion, & Morison (2008) defines ex-post facto as that research in which the independent variable or variables have already occurred and in which the researcher starts with the observation of a dependent variable. The researcher then studies the independent variable or variables in retrospect for their possible relationship to, and effects on, the dependent variable or variables (Cohen, Manion, & Morison, 2008). This study considered practices of M&E as independent variables because they are considered to have influence on the dependent variable, women funded projects. However, moderating variables like political environment, and intervening variables like the culture of people on the project team, were also considered in that they affect the relationship between M&E practices and women funded project performance.

In addition to ex-post facto, this study employed a survey research design to gather primary data from various participants in the women funded projects. A survey allows gathering of self-reported data from study participants. A survey may focus on information about a phenomenon, or it might aim to collect the opinions about what has been observed.

3.3 Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) defines the target population as the population the researcher studies, and whose findings are used to generalize the entire population. The researcher conducted interviews in all institutions that were involved in the projects. According to the Narok North women fund records, there are 18 women groups that were funded in 2014/2015 financial year in Narok North sub-county. The groups are composed of averagely 15 members. Therefore, the target population was 270 members of these groups.

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Essentially the interviews were designed to get more information about the projects in the area of M&E practices and women funded project performance and their individual views on the projects. Appointments with each person who serves on the implementation team were scheduled and a questionnaire was administered. The sample size for this study is 216

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

For each of the projects, one questionnaire was used for project implementers, funders and beneficiaries. The questionnaires focused on M&E practices and women funded projects. Section A of the questionnaire gathered general information about the self help groups. This included the name and nature of the group, and contact information for possible follow up. Section B collected brief information about the project, such as when the project was implemented, what the objective was and the role the group played. Section C of the questionnaire gathers information on the monitoring and evaluation aspects of the project. This being the main part of the questionnaire, it surveyed the possible role groups played in monitoring and evaluation as it relates to the various practices. Section D of the questionnaire, on the other hand gathered information on project performance.

This was measured in terms of timeliness, activities implemented, and cost of the project and general satisfaction of the customers. For document review, a tool for content analysis was drafted which essentially was a procedure to follow when reviewing project documents. The steps in content analysis tool lead to identifying and highlighting sections that answer research questions and later reviewing them.

3.6 Validity of instruments

Validity is described as the degree to which a research instrument measures what it intends to measure and performs as it is designed to perform (Cherry, 2015). As a way of ensuring validity, the researcher discussed the questionnaires with the supervisor. A content validity, consisting of a match between test questions and content of the subject area of M&E practices and women funded project performance were used.

3.7 Reliability of instruments

Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results (Cherry, 2015). It contributes to standardization of research instruments. Standardization is important so that the results of a study can be generalized to the larger population. To ensure reliability, the researcher pre-tested the questionnaires on an institution similar to the ones studied. This process offered hope of improving some questions and the style of questionnaire administration. In this study, a sample of 14 respondents was used and then the results split into old and even numbers. The outcome was interpreted in accordance with Eisinga *et al*, (2013); If the questionnaire is reliable the results in the two halves would be correlated. Where the reliability coefficient is 0.0 the test is totally unreliable and 1.0 means perfectly reliable test. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the Spearman-Brown prophesy formula as indicated here below:

Reliability of scores on total test $r = 2\overline{1 + x\, reliability reliabilit} or f or 12 test test$ or $r = 1 \underline{\quad} 2 + \gamma\,\gamma$

The reliability coefficient was found to be 0.6 and the questionnaire was considered reliable. To further improve reliability of the questionnaire, three questions on one half of the test which had a correlation of less than 0.25 were re-written.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

This study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data. Most of the qualitative data was obtained from the review of women funded project documents. This was supplemented with data from interviews with project implementers, funders and beneficiaries. Quantitative data was obtained from the survey. When the proposal to conduct this research was approval by the University of Nairobi, permission to conduct this research was sought from the National Council of Science and Technology. Specific reports requested for were the project appraisal reports, inception reports and end of project reports. On the other hand, primary data was collected through interviews with identified respondents. These interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis in a few cases, was self-administered. Responses of interviews were captured using questionnaires and were utilized by the researcher in data analysis. Confidentiality was assured to the respondents.

3.9 Methods of Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics including correlation analysis while qualitative data was analyzed using narrative and thematic methods. This helped to identify information relevant to the research questions and objectives. In analyzing data qualitatively, the researcher aimed at cross checking the M&E practices implemented and at what time, in either project or the resultant effect. It was also of particular interest to compare the trends, patterns and relations of project performance during implementation for both projects.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In this research, respondents were informed about the nature and purpose of the study in order to secure consent from interviewees. All the respondents' information and identity were kept confidential and the information gathered was used only for the purposes of this study. The respondents participated in the study voluntarily.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents results of interviews with the respondents. These interview results were analyzed in light of documentary evidence from appraisal reports, inception reports and end of project reports regarding the influence of M&E practices on project performance. Data was analyzed according to procedures outlined in the previous chapter, methodology, and according to interpretations made based on the research questions outlined in chapter one.

4.2 Response rate

The response rates for the projects were 96%. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents.

Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents by category and by project

Category of Respondent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Response	207	96
Non-response	9	4
Total	**216**	**100.0**

96% of the targeted respondents participated in the study.

4.3 Findings on the General Information

This section covered the general information of the respondents. This was an important aspect of the study as it helped to establish the views and perspectives of the various respondents with the given biographic details.

4.3.1Period of existence and primary objective of organizations

The primary mandate of beneficiary institutions however was only in two categories: provision of secondary education and provision of health care services (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Period of existence of institutions in the study

Years of Existence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
10-15	11	5.3
5-10	171	82.7
3-5	6	2.9
Less than 3 yrs	19	9.1
Total	**207**	**100.0**

Table 4.2 shows that majority of the respondents indicated that their projects had been in existence between 5-10 years at 82.7%. Particularly, it was noted that 5.3% had been in existence for 10-15years, 2.9% for 3-5 years and 9.1% existed less than 3 years.

4.3.2Respondents' roles and responsibilities

All respondents in the survey played a role in monitoring and evaluation of the projects under review. The roles and responsibilities of individuals varied according to the group they represented. Every group had three officials who included: Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer who are in charge of the group act ivies implementation, records management and safekeeping of group assets and money.

There is an Executive committee that ensures that all activities have been implemented according to the plan and reports to the members in case of any deviation from the plan. Group meetings are conducted on monthly basis but officials can meet from time to time based on urgent group issues that needs to be attended to

Table 4.3: Role of respondents in the projects

Category	Role in the project	Frequency	Percentage
Implementer	Project planning	12	5.6
	Project financing	12	5.6
	Data collection and documentation	23	11.1
	IT coordination	12	5.6
	Administration & logistics	12	5.6
	Liaison and communication	12	5.6
Funder	Project financing & project planning & Liaison and communication	12	5.6
Beneficiary	Liaison and communication, Data collection and documentation & Administration & logistics	115	55.6
Total		**207**	**100**

Respondents stated that their role was supervisory and project planning and financing and also to act as contact persons. The various beneficiary institutions, for the projects had the role of reporting data to funders on project implementation. Thus the roles of the respondents for the beneficiary institutions were liaison and communication, progress report preparation and documentation.

4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

This section covered the findings according to the study objectives. This was an important aspect of the study as it helped to establish the views and perspectives of the various respondents with the given objectives.

4.4.1Defining staff responsibilities and performance of women funded projects

Table 4.4 shows the proportion of respondents who said monitoring and evaluation contributes to the success of the project. Out of the 207 respondents interviewed, 190(92%) reported in the affirmative while only 8%, either did not know whether M&E contributes to project performance or thought otherwise.

Table 4.4: Role of M&E in project success by number of respondents

Perception about M&E	Frequency	Percentage
Contributes to success	190	92
Doesn't contribute	8	4
Don't know	8	4
Total	**207**	**100.0**

The respondents who said M&E contributes to project success gave a number of reasons. Most of the respondents said monitoring and evaluation promotes 'evidence based decision-making': M&E strengthens the production and use of objective information on implementation of project. It also enhances the basis for decision making, to enable managers make evidence-based project decisions in the interest of achieving project results. This was followed by those who said monitoring and evaluation 'promotes accountability': through M&E project staff are held accountable based on agreed outputs and expectations and assessed through the control, monitoring and evaluation systems. M&E also addresses compliance with norms and procedures, and physical and financial implementation of the project. The rest of the respondents said monitoring and evaluation promotes managing for results: monitoring and evaluation of projects focuses on measuring results as planned at any particular instance and generates lessons for improving planning of future projects. Evaluation results also offer opportunities to correct project mistakes early enough.

Considering the implementation of the projects, a structural set-up of the institution was examined which revealed that most projects have no fulltime M&E officer who is accountable for all monitoring and evaluation matters of projects hence making M&E of activities difficult. The projects according to the respondents also had no clear M&E Strategy document that would have guided groups on M&E issues.

Secondary data analysis, revealed that the roles of the M&E Unit at the projects are to: Ensure effective planning and management of monitoring and evaluation systems; Evaluate project progress and performance on activities based on indicators outlined in project logical framework; Conduct beneficiary impact assessments and assess project effectiveness from the perspective of the beneficiaries served by the project; Make necessary recommendations on the way forward to improving project outputs; and Ensure donor regulations are met in implementation of project activities.

According to the project implementation team, M&E activities have significant bearing on the success of the projects because the periodic reporting on the project by various players allows opportunities to gauge project performance against project plans. Such opportunities allowed for adjustments in implementation which otherwise would have been impeded by various situations in beneficiary institutions.

4.4.2 Promoting Learning at the Organizational Level and performance of women funded projects

All respondents in the survey participated in trainings for monitoring and evaluation, which were convened by the National Government soon after the start of each project. From the data analysis, 88.9% of respondents affirmed that promoting M&E learning indeed influence the performance of a Project as shown in Table 4.5

Table 4.5: Response from participants who attended M&E training and their feedback on the importance of promoting learning and the influence on performance of women funded projects

Training on M&E	
Yes	88.9%
No	11.1%
Total %	**100**

Respondents, by frequency of answers they gave, reported that M&E trainings covered a number of issues, which included project indicators, M&E reporting using reporting tools, communication strategy and deliverables. However when asked, most respondents (85%) said the main focus of the training was on how to use the data collecting tools while the rest said the focus was on project indicators. Those who said the focus was on data collecting tools elaborated further by saying that it was important to understand the tools and how to use them so that the funders could be given accurate data in order to tell if the project was on course. In each case of the project, respondents confirmed that M&E training provided an opportunity to enhance their understanding of project deliverables and why it was important to report accurately and on time. The reason for this was that, accurate and timely reporting would inform the implementing institution on the status of the project and "afford chance to correct mistakes if any" according to a number of responses.

Document review for either project showed that training programs were tailored to meet staff capacity gaps. According to frequency of responses, the topics of M&E training covered included a review of each key performance indicators to be collected, definition of each indicator, how the indicator is measured, how data on the indicator will be collected, the timeline for collecting and reporting on the indicator, and how the indicator satisfies client needs. In essence, such information enabled implementers to understand more on how M&E would contribute to project performance.

A look at the records of M&E training revealed that the meeting was held for a day where the M&E plan was shared and roles and responsibilities of the beneficiary groups explained i.e. reporting performance indicators according to the templates provided. In each case of the projects, the logical framework matrices were discussed for purposes of developing common understanding and possible revision. Further, review of M&E training documents showed that each beneficiary institution was encouraged to develop an M&E plan that fits their respective groups. This was meant to allow institutions to work according to their mandates and on respective projects in harmony.

4.4.3 Allocation of Resources for M&E in project implementation and how it influence women funded projects

The study sought to find out from the respondents whether M&E has been allocated resources in the course of Project implementation and how allocation of resources influence performance of women funded projects. The findings from the respondents were as shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Influence of Allocating Resources for M&E in project implementation

Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	195	94.4
No	12	5.6
Total	**207**	**100**

From the study findings in Table 4.3, majority 94.4% of the respondents indicated that allocating resources to M&E have a significant impact on project implementation which will greatly influence on the project performance.5.6% of the respondents indicated that allocation of resources for M&E does not affect the performance of a project. From the analysis, it was noted that majority of the respondents agreed that they have participated in the allocating of sufficient resources for M&E activities.

The study sought to find out from the respondents their role in allocating sufficient resources. Table 4.4 shows how the respondents responded.

Table 4.4 Respondent's role in allocating sufficient resources for M&E activities

Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Designing research tools	139	67
Data collection	68	33
Total	**207**	**100**

From the study findings in Table 4.4, majority 139(67%) of the respondents indicated that their role in allocating sufficient time and resources was designing research tools while 68(33%) of the respondents indicated that their role in allocating sufficient time and resources was data collection. From the analysis the researcher noted that majority of the respondents' role in allocating sufficient time and resources were designing research tools.

The study sought to find out from the respondents whether allocation of sufficient time and resources help in understanding project expectations. Table 4.5 shows the response from the respondents.

Table 4.5 Influence of allocation of sufficient time and resources in understanding project expectations

Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	120	58
No	87	42
Total	**207**	**100**

4.4.4 Influence of conducting impact evaluation on Project Performance

The study sought to find out from the respondents whether their projects conducted impact evaluation. The findings were as shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Conduct strategic impact evaluation

Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	139	67
No	68	33
Total	**207**	**100**

From the study findings in Table 4.6, majority 139(67%) of the respondents indicated that their projects conduct impact evaluation while 68(33%) of the respondents indicated that their projects do not conduct impact evaluation. From the analysis it was noted that majority of the respondents agreed that their projects conduct impact evaluation.

The study sought to know from the respondents whether conducting strategic impact evaluation help in understanding project expectation. Table 4.7 shows how the respondents responded.

Table 4.7 whether conducting impact evaluation help in understanding project performance

Category	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	149	72
No	58	28
Total	**207**	**100**

From the study findings in Table 4.7, majority 149(72%) of the respondents indicated that conducting impact evaluation help in understanding project performance while 58(28%) of the respondents indicated that conducting impact evaluation does not help in understanding project performance. From the analysis the researcher noted that conducting impact evaluation help in understanding project performance.

Additional information gathered from the questionnaires used in strategic impact evaluation show how critical it was to have reference points for project performance in all key indicators. Both projects set out to increase counts in these indicators besides many others, through various interventions. This information functioned to give impetus to project implementers towards achieving set targets. All respondents from beneficiary institutions confirmed participating in the impact evaluation.

4.11Correlation analysis between M&E and Project Performance

To further determine the influence of M&E on project performance statistically, the relationship that exists between these two variables was statistically assessed using correlation analysis. A correlation analysis is a form of descriptive statistics concerned with making comparisons between two or more variables in a single group. Correlation analysis provides estimates on how strong the relationship is between two variables. This is measured by the coefficient of correlation or coefficient of determination (γ), an index that shows both the direction and the strength of relationships among variables, taking into account the entire range of these variables. The sign (+ or −) of the coefficient indicates the direction of the relationship. If the coefficient has a positive sign, it means there is correlation, when one variable increases, the other also increases and the converse is true. To compute correlation between the study variables and their findings, Spearman Coefficient of Correlation at 95 percent confidence interval was used.

Data collected showed positive correlation between defining of M&E staff responsibilities and project performance with a correlation coefficient of 0.745. M&E learning, allocation of sufficient time and resources and conducting strategic impact evaluations also showed positive correlation with project performance of 0.697, 0.465, and 0.473 respectively (Table 4.11)

Table 4.11: Spearman Correlation for the MNP project

		Project performance	Defining M&E staff responsibilities	M&E Learning	Allocation of sufficient resources	Conducting strategic impact evaluation
Project performance	Spearman Correlation	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
M&E Planning	Spearman Correlation	0.745*	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.025				
M&E Training	Spearman Correlation	0.697*	0.301	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.034	0.417			
Baseline survey	Spearman Correlation	0.465	0.198	0.688	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.311	0.623	0.056		
Information system	Spearman Correlation	0.473	0.218	0.220	0.631	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.301	0.601	0.605	0.088	

Positive relationship indicates that there is a correlation between the M&E activities and project performance. The significant values for the relationship between the M&E activities; defining of M&E staff responsibilities, M&E learning, allocation of sufficient time and resources and conducting strategic impact evaluations; were 0.025, 0.034, 0.311 and 0.301 respectively. Thus at 5% confidence level and at p-value ($P<0.05$), only

M&E planning and M&E planning were significantly correlated to project performance. From this, it can be deduced that with an M&E plan in place and M&E training conducted, project performance can be positively influenced significantly.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an abridged version of overall findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study. It also presents suggestions for further research. The first section is a summary of the general findings of the study. It is drawn from interviews as well as from secondary data analysis of the projects. It centers on findings on individual M&E practices: defining employee responsibilities, M&E learning, allocating resources for M&E and conducting strategic impact evaluations. The next section presents conclusions of the study based on the study findings. It is followed by the section on recommendations drawn from conclusions. Suggestions for further research are presented in the last section of this chapter.

5.2 Summary of findings

Findings of this study emerged from responses given by respondents in the survey juxtaposed on secondary data analysis of project documents of the projects studied. This was in response to the study objectives outlined in chapter one. The findings are the basis on which conclusions and recommendations are made in light of how they compare with literature reviewed. With a response rate of 90% and above, this study found out that monitoring and evaluation as a management function indeed has influence on project performance as all M&E practices are undertaken with intent to contribute to project performance.

5.2.1 Definition of staff responsibilities

The first objective of the study was to establish how defining staff responsibilities influence project performance. This study, like backed by empirical literature of Naidoo

I. A., (2011), together with other scholars on M&E, revealed that defining staff responsibilities is considered a grand activity of M&E. Defining staff responsibilities ultimately guides the entire process of project monitoring and evaluation and offers an opportunity to review the entire design of the project for best performance. It also outlines measures for adherence to project design. All respondents in the survey confirmed having being privy to the defining staff responsibilities of respective projects under study.

5.2.2 Promotion of learning at the organizational level

The second objective of the study was to assess how monitoring and evaluation learning influence project performance. For both projects, all respondents from beneficiary institutions confirmed having undergone M&E training. They reported that M&E training is important as it provided an opportunity for team building and most importantly, an opportunity to learn on how to use data collection tools. These tools are very important in capturing accurate project information, which would latter contribute to determining project progress. In essence, M&E training facilitated understanding of roles and responsibilities, which, were, designed to enhance project performance. Training therefore, prepared M&E staff for their tasks ahead and also on how to capture data accurately. Because of this, respondents' rating of how M&E training influence project performance was second to M&E planning (average 7.4 out of 10). Correlation analysis between M&E training and project performance was also second to that of M&E planning (average 0.7).

5.2.3 Allocation of resources for M&E in project design

The third objective of the study was to establish how allocation of resources influences project performance. This particular M&E practice, involves organizing and mobilizing resources in such a way that analyses on project performance can be done in addition to providing a clear picture of the status quo on whose basis re-planning can be done. Statistically, the study showed that there was a positive correlation between allocation of resources and project performance. Among monitoring and evaluation activities, it has been shown that M&E practice and M&E allocation of resources have a significant correlation with project performance.

5.2.4 Conducting strategic impact evaluations

The fourth objective of the study was to determine how conducting strategic impact evaluations influence project performance. As stated by the respondents, the purpose of conducting strategic impact evaluations for M&E in project design at the beginning of a project is to facilitate data on project benchmarks in the target group. Conducting strategic impact evaluations alone mark reference points at the beginning of a project and additionally move the focus of the project team higher, to aim at project objectives. The desire to achieve set targets is stirred up. Conducting strategic impact evaluations are rewarding on project performance in the sense that they give impetus to the project team to move the status quo towards the set targets. Data of conducting strategic impact evaluations is more important to officers charged with responsibility of analyzing it than those merely collecting it. For this reason average rating of how conducting strategic impact evaluations influence project performance was somehow rated lowest 5.5 out of 10. It however still showed positive correlation of magnitude 0.5.

5.3 Discussion of the Findings

The foregoing findings on the projects studied show similarities in the way M&E practices influences project performance. Results of the survey, which correspond with secondary data analysis, show that the M&E practices under study influence project performance individually and severally as detailed in this section.

5.3.1Definion of staff responsibilities and Project Performance

The findings show that defining staff responsibility guided monitoring and evaluation of the projects. Defining staff responsibility was formulated soon after the project was launched. These findings are consistent with Gray (2009). Further, Nuguti (2009), noted that an important content of an M&E practice is the defining of staff responsibility to track project performance during implementation, performance indicators. With all respondents (100%), reporting that they were privy to defining staff responsibility for both projects which contained the identified performance indicators, content of M&E plans are consistent with literature reviewed.

Alcock (2009), noted that during M&E planning a schedule for data collection and allocation of M&E roles and responsibilities is done. These measures set the stage to determine project performance of the two projects studied and are consistent with findings of M&E researchers as shown in literature review in chapter two.

From the studies reviewed, it was noted that defining staff responsibility generally outlines the underlying assumptions on which the achievement of project goals depended, the anticipated relationships between activities, outputs, and outcomes- the logical framework just as described by (Olive, 2002; Wysocki and McGary, 2003; Mackay 2007; Alcock 2009; Nuguti 2009). Brignall& Modell, (2010) noted that some important considerations for defining staff responsibility were resources like money and time needed to conduct project monitoring and evaluation, internal capacity, and whether the proposed activities were realistic. Again, these measures ensured that monitoring and evaluation practice was achievable and consequently influenced project performance.

Out of the 207 respondents interviewed, 190(92%) reported in the affirmative while only 8%, either did not know whether M&E contributes to project performance or thought otherwise.

The respondents who said M&E contributes to project success gave a number of reasons. Most of the respondents said monitoring and evaluation promotes ‘evidence based decision-making’: M&E strengthens the production and use of objective information on implementation of project. It also enhances the basis for decision making, to enable managers make evidence-based project decisions in the interest of achieving project results. This was followed by those who said monitoring and evaluation ‘promotes accountability’: through M&E project staff are held accountable based on agreed outputs and expectations and assessed through the control, monitoring and evaluation systems. M&E also addresses compliance with norms and procedures, and physical and financial implementation of the project. The rest of the respondents said monitoring and evaluation promotes managing for results: monitoring and evaluation of projects focuses on measuring results as planned at any particular instance and generates lessons for improving planning of future projects. Evaluation results also offer opportunities to correct project mistakes early enough.

5.3.2 Promotion of learning at the organizational level and Project Performance

Concerning M&E training, Khan, (2001) observed that it enhances understanding of the project deliverables, reporting requirements and builds the team together. This study noted that what Khan, (2001) stated was very similar to the training program drafted by the interviewed projects. Equally this was revealed by 88% participants who attended the training. It was also observed that training of implementers in M&E was deliberately participatory to ensure that those responsible for implementing and using the system were familiar with its design, intent and focus, and generally how to use the M&E tools as noted by Cheng, Daint, & Moore, (2007). All beneficiary institutions from either projects, and at different times, were trained on how to capture data using reporting templates. They were also acquainted with the monitoring schedule by which they were expected to report. These are some of the points regarding training that are also noted by Khan, (2001). Essentially, M&E training as noted here, prepared participants for the task of ensuring a project performs to expectation.

From the data analysis, 88.9% of respondents affirmed that promoting M&E learning indeed influence the performance of a Project.

Respondents, by frequency of answers they gave, reported that M&E trainings covered a number of issues, which included project indicators, M&E reporting using reporting tools, communication strategy and deliverables. However when asked, most respondents (85%) said the main focus of the training was on how to use the data collecting tools while the rest said the focus was on project indicators. Those who said the focus was on data collecting tools elaborated further by saying that it was important to understand the tools and how to use them so that the funders could be given accurate data in order to tell if the project was on course. In each case of the project, respondents confirmed that M&E training provided an opportunity to enhance their understanding of project deliverables and why it was important to report accurately and on time. The reason for this was that, accurate and timely reporting would inform the implementing institution on the status of the project and "afford chance to correct mistakes if any" according to a number of responses.

5.3.4Allocation of resources for M&E in project design and Project Performance

According to responses gathered, information generated from the baseline studies, just like what was collected during project implementation was captured in information systems (database) developed for each project. Hogger, Kuemochli, Zimmerman, Engler, and okra, (2011), like most literature, observes that allocating resources for M&E in project design is very important necessary for the project to attain its set goals

Allocating resources for the MNP was complicated so was the project design (African Virtual University, 2012). As alluded to it earlier, it required specialized knowledge of a consultant on databases. This database was built in Ms Access and was used to generate reports on all deliverables.

From the study findings, majority 94.4% of the respondents indicated that allocating resources to M&E have a significant impact on project implementation which will greatly influence on the project performance.5.6% of the respondents indicated that allocation of resources for M&E does not affect the performance of a project. From the analysis, it was noted that majority of the respondents agreed that they have participated in the allocating of sufficient resources for M&E activities.

From the study findings, majority 139(67%) of the respondents indicated that their role in allocating resources was designing research tools while 68(33%) of the respondents indicated that their role in allocating sufficient time and resources was data collection. From the analysis the researcher noted that majority of the respondents' role in allocating resources was designing research tools.

From the study findings, majority 120(58%) of the respondents indicated that allocation of sufficient time and resources help in understanding project expectations while 87(42%) of the respondents indicated that allocation resources does not help in understanding project expectations. From the analysis the researcher noted that allocation of sufficient resources help in understanding project expectations.

5.3.4 Conducting strategic impact evaluations and Project Performance

As recommended by literature reviewed, projects conducted strategic impact evaluations studies for the projects prior to commencing implementation. Action Aid, (2008) noted that conducting strategic impact evaluation is the first field activity for M&E that should be conducted to establish the status of the situation before project implementation. Indeed, without a baseline, it is very difficult to determine the difference a project would make at the end.

Similar studies on how strategic impact evaluations are conducted show that strategic data can also be collected during needs assessment (Armonia, Ricardo, Dindo, & Campilan, 2006) - This is basically a process of identifying and acquiring an accurate and thorough picture of community problems by collecting, analyzing and interpreting data that would form the rationale for starting any project intervention. In these projects however baseline studies were done well after project plans were in place – a slight contrast of the study findings and available literature.

From the study findings, majority 139(67%) of the respondents indicated that their projects conduct impact evaluation while 68(33%) of the respondents indicated that their projects do not conduct impact evaluation. From the analysis it was noted that majority of the respondents agreed that their projects conduct impact evaluation.

From the study findings in table 4.7, majority 149(72%) of the respondents indicated that conducting impact evaluation help in understanding project performance while 58(28%) of the respondents indicated that conducting impact evaluation does not help in understanding project performance. From the analysis the researcher noted that conducting impact evaluation help in understanding project performance.

Additional information gathered from the questionnaires used in strategic impact evaluation show how critical it was to have reference points for project performance in all key indicators. Both projects set out to increase counts in these indicators besides many others, through various interventions. This information functioned to give impetus to project implementers towards achieving set targets. All respondents from beneficiary institutions confirmed participating in the impact evaluation.

5.4 Conclusion of the study

It has been seen in this study that defining staff responsibilities has a direct influence on project performance in that it is basically watching over the project as it is being implemented and judging performance of the project in relation to its target.

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that promoting learning at the organizational level is the blue print of project monitoring and evaluation that lead to influencing project performance. If an organization cannot promote learning at the organizational level, it would be very difficult to conduct any meaningful project monitoring and evaluation tasks, as there would be no organized way of doing that, no identified key performance data to collect, no schedule to collect data, no delegated responsibilities and no agreed upon method of data analysis.

Based on the findings of the study, allocation of resources for M&E in project design have a positive influence on project performance and also necessitates planning and re-planning to correct wrongs in the course of projects implementation.

Statistically, the study showed that there was a positive correlation between conducting strategic impact evaluation and project performance. Among monitoring and evaluation practices, it has been shown that they have a significant correlation with project performance.

5.5Recommendations of the study

Based on the findings of the study, recommendations have been formulated which if implemented would enhance further the influence of monitoring and evaluation on project performance. They include;

1. Based on the findings that defining staff responsibility has the highest correlation with project performance, its therefore imperative that clear roles and responsibilities should be well spelled out before the start of any project to make it easy to manage and supervise project implementation as reporting lines will be clear hence holding individual responsible for any shortcomings which helps every individual to perform to the best of his/her ability
2. From the research findings, it showed that promoting M&E learning included reviewing of M&E tools, which consequently cements understanding the purpose of data collection in project implementation. This study therefore recommends that proper and detailed training and orientation should be done to the project team before project implementation starts so that the implementation team fully understands and appreciates the critical role played by M&E in project performance. This further helps the team in effective and timely data collection and analysis which is critical for decision making throughout project implementation.
3. On allocation of resources for M&E activities in project implementation, the project managers and designers should consider M&E activities and budgets from the onset and adequate resources and attention should be allocated to M&E components and that clear M&E strategies and plans is clearly stipulated for informed guidance due to the influence M&E has on project overall performance..
4. As revealed by this study, conducting impact evaluation is critical in project implementation as this gives a clear picture of how successful a project has been in order to be able to come up with a plan on how to improve future projects based on lessons learnt. Based on this fact, this study therefore recommends that baseline surveys, mid-term and summative evaluations should be done in order to be able to come up with evidence based plans on how future projects should be designed as this will make project implementation easy and doable.

5.6Suggestions for further research

This study reveals many interesting areas where further research can be carried out. In particular, the following can be considered:

1. The influence of Public participation on government funded projects. This is critical in the sense that the constitution of Kenya 2010 advocates for public participation in all government initiatives in order to enhance community ownership which is very instrumental for projects sustainability. It was also evident from this study that peoples participation is not only important in monitoring and evaluation but in every step of project implementation. This study therefore recommends this as an area that needs further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Transmittal of Data Collection

Dear Respondent,

Re: Participation in a Study on Monitoring and Evaluation practices

I am a student of the University of Nairobi pursuing a Masters' Degree in Project Planning and Management. You are being asked to participate in a study I am conducting on Influencing of Monitoring and Evaluation practices on women funded projects: a case of Narok north sub-county which is part of the requirement for completing my Masters' Degree. Your participation in the research study is voluntary and all information obtained from you during this interview is for academic purposes only. The results will remain strictly confidential. Please answer the following questions as comprehensively and honestly as possible. Use the space provided to write your answer and if you need more space, feel free to add more lines or enclose an additional sheet.

Thank you for your assistance and your precious time.

Yours faithfully,

LESALOI DOMINIC TURANTA

Appendix II: Research Questionnaire for all Project Participants

Dear respondent, please answer all questions objectively and as honestly as possible.

A. General Information

1) Name of organization (optional)____

2) What is the primary objective of the organization?

____

3) When was the organization established?
    a. Less than 10yrs [ ]
    b. 10-15yrs [ ]
    c. 16-20yrs [ ]
    d. 20-30yrs [ ]
    e. 31yrs and above [ ]

4) For how long did you participate in the Project?___________________________________

5) What was your role in the project?
    a. Conceptualization and project planning [ ]
    b. Project financing [ ]
    c. Data collection and documentation [ ]
    d. ICT coordination [ ]
    e. Liaison and communication [ ]
    f. Administration & logistics [ ]
    g. Others (specify) ____

B. Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

6) Do you think monitoring and evaluation contributes to the success of your projects?
    a. Yes [ ]
    b. No [ ]
    c. Don't know [ ]

7) If yes/no, please explain ____

8) Was there an M&E unit for the project?
    a. Yes [ ]
    b. No [ ]
    c. Don't know [ ]

9) If yes, where you part of the M&E unit of the project?

a. Yes [ ]
b. No [ ]

10) If yes, what was the main purpose of the M&E unit the project?

____

____

11) Do you think the purpose of the M&E unit contributed to the success of the project?

a.Yes [ ]
b.No [ ]

12) If yes, please explain?

____

____

13) Are you aware of defining M&E staff responsibilities?

a. Yes [ ]
b. No [ ]

14) If so, briefly describe the defining of M&E staff responsibilities, what are the main parts?

____

____

15) Does defining M&E staff responsibilities help in understanding project expectations?

a. Yes [ ]
b. No [ ]

16) On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest), rate the defining of M&E staff responsibilities on women funded projects. *Enter zero for abstaining*

17) Did you participate in promoting M&E learning for the project?

a. Yes [ ]
b. No [ ]

18) If so, what was the focus of the learning?

a. Indicators of the project [ ]
b. M&E reporting using reporting tools [ ]
c. Communication strategy [ ]
d. Project components and deliverables [ ]

e. Others (specify) ____________________

19) Did the promoting of M&E learning help in understanding project expectations?

a. Yes [ ]
b. No [ ]

20) On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest), rate promoting M&E learning your project. *Enter zero for abstaining*

21) Did you participate in the allocating of sufficient time and resources?

a. Yes [ ]
b. No [ ]

22) If so, what was your role?

a. Designing research tools [ ]
b. Data collection [ ]
c. Participated as respondent [ ]
d. Data capturing [ ]
e. Database design [ ]
f. Others (specify) _________________

23) Does allocation of sufficient time and resources help in understanding project expectations?

a. Yes [ ]
b. No [ ]

24) On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest), rate how allocation of sufficient time and resources influence project performance. *Enter zero for abstaining*

25) Does your project conduct strategic impact evaluations?

a. Yes [ ]
b. No [ ]
c. Don't know [ ]

26) Does conducting strategic impact evaluations help in understanding project expectations?

a. Yes [ ]
b. No [ ]

27) On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the highest), rate how conducting strategic impact evaluations influence project performance. *Enter zero for abstaining*

Thank you.

Appendix V: Self Help Groups in Narok North

NAROK NORTH CONSTITUENCY FUNDED GROUPS		
NAROK NORTH 11	501003830	BIDII YETU SELF HELP GROUP
NAROK NORTH 10	501003831	EMIRISHOI SELF HELP GROUP
NAROK NORTH 10	501003833	ENARAMATISHOREKI WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH10	501003834	HODARI WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 17	50103836	ORMESHUKI MENYAMAL WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH12	501003837	LELESHWA NAROK TOWN WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 14	501003839	MALACHI WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 17	501003842	NABOISHO NKOKOLANI WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 17	501003843	NABOISHO OLOITIP WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 12	501003844	NADUPOI WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 10	501003846	NAMUNYAK OLCHORRO-ORUPA WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 10	501003848	NARAMAT KISARU WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 15	501003849	NARETOI ENDYANI WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH15	501003851	NAROK INTER NALLY DISPLACED WOMEN ASSOCIATION
NAROK NORTH 13	501003852	NEEMA WELFARE WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH12	501003856	OBEY WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 12	501003857	OKIEK WOMEN GROUP
NAROK NORTH 11	501003858	OLMUSAKWA SELF HELP GROUP