

INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATORY MONITORING AND EVALUATION ON CITIZEN EMPOWERMENT OUTCOMES: A CASE OF KAREMO DIVISION, SIAYA COUNTY, KENYA.

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ABSTRACT

While there is a considerable enthusiasm for participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) in monitoring and evaluation, the claim to its effectiveness has hardly been tested empirically. This study assessed the extent to which PM&E influences citizen empowerment. The empirical investigation took the form of a mixed-methods approach. The study employed a concurrent parallel design, in which samples for quantitative and qualitative components were drawn from the same population and data collected within the same timeframe. Two hundred and twelve participants responded to a self-report questionnaire. Six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted; two with starter group members and four with 4 CBOs randomly selected from each of the locations within the study area. The participants were community members who participated in a World Vision International's PM&E model. Quantitative data were analysed through linear regression analyses while, the qualitative component utilized interpretive technique, coding and recursive abstraction to organize, summarize and give an impression of the causal mechanisms at play in the quantitative data. Both the quantitative and qualitative findings support the notion that there is a positive linear relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. Policies that provide opportunity for citizens to participate in M&E process are therefore advised as worth of investment since they can lead to significant impact on citizen empowerment outcomes.

Key words: Citizen Empowerment; Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

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1. Introduction

Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) emerged primarily because of the limitations of the conventional approach to monitoring and evaluation in reflecting the aspirations of primary stakeholders who are directly affected by development. PM&E involves primary stakeholders, development agencies, and policy makers deciding together how progress in development should be measured, and results acted upon. Hilhorst and Guijit (2006) define PM&E as a process where primary stakeholders – those who are affected by the intervention being examined – are active participants; take the lead in tracking and making sense of progress towards achievement of self-selected or jointly agreed results at the local level, and drawing actionable conclusions. In consonant with this definition is Obure, Dietz & Zaal (2008) who argue that a true PM&E is one in which all the stakeholders take part in all the processes of monitoring and evaluation (M&E). However, as Guijit, Arevalo & Saladores (1998) observe, a key part of understanding PM&E depends on how ‘participation’ is interpreted. Unfortunately, participation has many different interpretations as each process, with its unique purpose and context, involves different groups of people to varying degrees.

The definition of PM&E thus goes beyond involving primary stakeholders in a process of ‘conventional’ M&E, where they are only consulted on indicators and involved in providing information and feedback on the results (Hilhorst and Guijit, 2006). The process as Fraser, Dougill, Mabee, Reed & McAlpine (2006) note, should be as simple as possible so that members who are not as sophisticated can participate in all areas right from the identification of the indicators, decision on data collection methods, interpretation and presentation as well as utilization. PM&E has, therefore, come to be seen as a development theory and practice that occasion power to the marginalized (especially the ‘poor’, women, children and people with disabilities). In this approach a range of stakeholders, especially beneficiaries are engaged in designing and implementing the evaluation, and then acting on its findings (Jackson, 1999). The ideal PM&E situation is one in which all the stakeholders take part in all processes of design, implementation as well as M&E.

PM&E processes are commonly being implemented in communities with the objective of improving social and economic development and the empowerment of citizens. The compelling question that should be asked is, therefore, whether or not PM&E as applied by the NGOs is effective in empowering primary stakeholders. Although there are some exceptions, the gulf between the ideal PM&E and those that are applied by many organizations is often huge. Ideal PM&E demands that stakeholders, particularly at the local level, be involved actively in all stages of M&E. This involves determining the objectives of monitoring or evaluation, identifying indicators to be employed, as well as participating in data collection and analysis (Ezemenari, Rudqvist & Subbarao, 1999; Fraiser et al., 2006). One can use participatory methods not only at project formulation stage, but throughout the duration of the project, and especially for evaluating how the poor perceive the benefits from the project (Ezemenari et al., 1999; Leeuwen et al., 2000; Codd, 2011).

While rhetoric abounds, arguing for participatory approaches to M&E in development programming, the use of such approaches appears to be limited and the claims have hardly been tested empirically (Abbot & Guijit, 1998; Burton, Goodlad & Croft, 2006). The objective of this study was to empirically determine the extent to which PM&E influences citizen empowerment. Subsequently, the study explored the question, "To what extent does PM&E influence citizen empowerment?" The study thus hypothesized that there is a relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment.

2. Literature Review

Empowerment as a construct has been conceptualized variedly by different scholars. This conceptualization also differs across levels of analysis. According to Zimmerman (1990), at the individual level (citizen empowerment), empowerment includes participatory behaviour, motivations to exert control, and feelings of efficacy and control; at the organisational level empowerment includes shared leadership, opportunities to develop skills, expansion, and effective community influence; and empowered communities include opportunities for citizen participation in community decision making, and allow for fair consideration of multiple perspectives. This also resonates well with Laverack and Labonte (2000)

assertion that achieving empowerment objectives would improve the quality of individuals' social relations with each other (social support), their collective and individual experience of capacity and their perception as being important in the eyes of other institutions. Spreitzer (1996), advancing the same argument as Zimmerman defines empowerment as intrinsic motivation manifested in four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his or her work role. The four cognitions are meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. This is well summarized by Hilhorst and Guijit (2006), who note that empowerment is about building the capacity, self-reliance and confidence of citizens, programme staff and other partners to guide, manage and implement development initiatives effectively.

Empowerment has also been defined as a construct that links individual strengths and competencies, natural helping systems, and proactive behaviours to matters of social policy and social change (Kasmel and Tanggaard, 2011). According to Kasmel and Tanggaard, empowerment is associated with feelings of competence to change a situation (self-efficacy) and with expectations of positive outcomes for one's efforts (locus of control). This is elaborated further by Gigler (2004) who identifies outcome indicators for the psychological empowerment. These he claims include: (1) the improved ability to analyse and solve problems; (2) to enhance a person's self-esteem; and (3) a sense of participation in the modern world. According to Gigler, the psychological dimension of empowerment is relevant for strengthening a person's ability to influence strategic life choices – human agency, one of the core concepts of empowerment (Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland, 2006).

PM&E advocates that the ultimate beneficiaries of a development intervention – the poor, the disadvantaged, the disempowered – can, and should, lead the effort among other stakeholders to define the results to be achieved by a given intervention (Ezamenari et al., 1999; Jackson, 1999). This has the implication of the primary stakeholders taking part in defining what change should look like (indicators of intervention); participating in the monitoring and implementation where the progress towards the realization of the change is tracked and reports

generated (reports in this case capture the stories as told by the beneficiaries); and involvement in the evaluation to establish whether the desired change has occurred.

A study conducted by Prestby, Wandersman, Florin, Rich, and Chavis (1990 cited in Zimmerman, 1990) observes that analysis of the effects of perceived benefits and costs of participation provides a unique understanding of psychological empowerment. In their study, Prestby and others observed that the most highly involved individuals reported more benefits of participation – learning new skills, gaining information, helping others, increasing social contact, and fulfilling obligations – than less involved individuals. Samah and Aref (2011) also note that people who are involved in setting up community groups and organizing their activities learn and gain knowledge. These are all considered outcomes of empowerment in literature. Papineau and Keily (1996), for instance, operationalize the construct to include aspects like: (1) perception of self-efficacy and control: the transformation from a self-perception of powerlessness to viewing oneself as efficient, competent at carrying out activities to attain goals, and in control of one's life; (2) acquisition of resources, knowledge and skills needed to accomplish personal and collective goals; (3) participation in collective action to effect change leading to improved quality of life and sustainable development.

According to Abbot and Forward (2000), participation affirms dignity and self-respect; it develops political and moral awareness and responsibility; it develops community cohesion; and it empowers communities, community groups and individuals to pursue their own interests and to challenge existing power structures. However, according to Strandberg (2001), for empowerment to be transformative it must be seen as a process existing on all levels – individual, group and societal. Leeuwen et al. (2000) also argue that PM&E is an indispensable means for ensuring that NGOs and aid agencies are accountable, not only to their supporters and donors, but also to the poor, for whom PM&E may serve as a basis for self-reliance and empowerment. As a matter of fact, the adoption of participatory methodologies in evaluation has been argued from different perspectives, but commonly from the perspective of citizen's empowerment (Fetterman, 2001).

This idea of empowerment is emphasized further by Papineau and Kiely (1996) who argue that the issue of promoting stakeholders empowerment goes beyond the

notion of shared control over the evaluation process to a focus on changing larger social structures through a process of grass-roots empowerment. Empowerment thus is the essence of stakeholder participation in an M&E process (Obure et al., 2008). Allowing primary stakeholders to plan their own interventions, make their own decisions and take part in monitoring and evaluation and policy formulation empowers them (Codd, 2011). Codd argues that empowerment of the user generates confidence, independence and greater social inclusion. Similarly, Hillhost and Guijt (2006) argue that, empowerment is about building the capacity, self-reliance and confidence of citizens, program staff and other partners to guide, manage, and implement development initiatives effectively.

2.1 Theoretical Foundation of Citizen Empowerment

The concept of citizen empowerment is influenced by the theory of human development, social capital theory, empowerment theory and social cognitive theory.

2.1.1 Human Development Theory

Human development is a trans-disciplinary theory which integrates ideas from ecological economics, sustainable development, welfare economics, and feminist economics. It focuses on measuring the well-being and social welfare or quality of life of people. The most notable proponents of human development theory are Amartya Sen and MahbubulHaq (Fukuda-Parr, 2003). According to human development theory, development is an expansion of human capabilities achieved through expanding the range of things that a person can do. These include health and nourishment, acquiring knowledge and participating in community life (Fukukda-Parr, 2003; Chimni, 2008). Chimni (2008:7) observes that Sen's theory offers a conception of development that goes beyond the 'technocratic fixes' as it draws attention to the need to consult and deliberate with the subjects of social policies, consistent with participatory paradigms.

Human development theory has, however, been criticized for being ambiguous. According to Chimni (2008), the concept of development is not as attentive to social structures and processes that inhibit its realization. The theory fails to deal adequately with the questions of power and social conflict. It thus does not advance

a theory of practice commensurate with its own perception of development as creation of capabilities. It is this absence of any strategy to achieve the goals of development that undermines its utility. The theory also neglects the subject of political economy that offers valuable ideas into social processes and structures necessary for the realization of development goals. Furthermore, the theory does not explore specifics in the context of real world situations and how these could undermine goal achievement. Similarly, while the theory views the individual as the key agent of social change, it does not explore the role of collective action (social capital) in the shaping of social processes. Because of its inadequacies, other scholars have advanced supporting theories.

2.1.2 Social Capital Theory

In order to produce improvements in quality of life and social cohesion as ascribed by human development theory, people often need to be linked through social capital (Bramley, et al., 2006). Social capital has been described as the “networks, together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups” (Cote and Healy, 2001:41). Drawing from this definition, Dugdale (2011) concludes that the main aspects of social capital should therefore include citizenship, neighbourliness, social networks and civic participation. Social capital, as observed by Perkins and Long (2002) is important to the functioning of community life. The theory views sustainability as an asset, occurring naturally and with varying degrees within societies, which allows them to maintain coherences and overcome change and hardship (McKenzie, 2004).

Social capital, according to Bramley, et al. (2006) is the product, intentional or unintentional, of social processes aimed at the building and reproduction of durable and useful social relationships necessary for both material and symbolic benefits. Consistent with Bramley and others’ definition is McElroy (2008) view that social capital consists of shared knowledge and related organisational networks that enhance the potential for effective individual and collective action in human social systems. These relationships are believed to help enlarge individual or collective actors’ action of capabilities and can be extended to social system’s action of capabilities too. Social capital is measured at various levels, namely: individual, community, country or organizational.

While social capital theory has gained acceptance across different disciplines, it has been noted to be having a number of serious weaknesses. The main weakness in social capital theory is that, “it produces descriptions that retain unresolved tensions” (Haynes, 2009:16-17). The theory thus lacks a framework that explains its contribution as more than the sum of the various kinds of relationships. Consequently no consensus exists as to what it is in reality. It is because of these that its critics claim that despite its vast mention in literature, social capital fails to provide a coherent concept at all; making it an elusive concept. According to Hynes (2009), some of the critics, for instance, Ben ĩne have argued that theory is highly political in both neutralizing dissent, but systematically disregarding key questions and issues concerning the social problems it is meant to address. This raises questions on its implications as a theory, as well as the type of explanations it advances. Furthermore, there still exist some unresolved methodological and conceptual issues related to the concept and measurement of social capital (Tzanakis, 2013).

2.1.3 Empowerment Theory

PM&E processes are usually implemented in communities with the objective of empowering citizens (Bailey, 2009). The origin of empowerment as a form of theory is traced back to the Brazilian humanitarian and educator, Paulo Freire (Hur, 2006). Paulo Freire’s, “*The pedagogy of the oppressed (1970)* provided the conceptual base for the debates on empowerment. However, according to Bodja (2006), Ernst Friedrich Schumacher’s ‘*Small is Beautiful*’ (1973), which came into circulation at a similar time with Freire’s piece, is also known to have influenced the debate on empowerment. According to Zimmerman (1990), empowerment theory postulates that participation in decision making may enhance individual’s sense of empowerment and that empowered individuals are likely to be active in community organisations and community activities.

Empowerment as a construct is multifaceted. Theories of empowerment touch on different dimensions of life. Hur (2006) argues that empowerment theories are not only concerned with the process of empowerment, but also with results that can produce greater access to resources and power for the disadvantaged. An empowering intervention is that which builds capacity of individuals to

positively influence their wellbeing outcomes. Rappaport (1995) in support of this argument observes that the goals of empowerment are enhanced when people discover, or create and give voice to, a collective narrative that sustains their own personal life story in positive ways.

Just like social capital, empowerment is operative at various levels: personal or individual, interpersonal, organisational, community, and collective (Hur, 2006). Zimmerman et al. (1993) observes that the focus of both empowerment theory and practice is to understand and strengthen processes and context where individuals gain mastery and control over decisions that affect their lives. Thus, interventions that provide genuine opportunities for individuals to participate may help them develop a sense of psychological empowerment (Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman et al., 1993). Typically therefore, an empowering development process might begin with an environmental assessment of the opportunities to participate and develop strategies to include participants in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

Empowerment, however, is not a panacea for all individual and social illness. It has been criticized as “overly individualistic and conflict-oriented, resulting in an emphasis on mastery and control rather than cooperation and community” (Speer, 2000:58 cited in Hur, 2006). According to Hur (2006), although the practice of empowerment is effective for the removal of powerlessness, certain factors still exist that may inhibit the manifestation of empowerment. He cites organisational aspects, such as an impersonal bureaucratic climate, supervisory styles described as authoritarianism and negativism as well as arbitrary reward systems as hindrances to empowerment.

The other argument against the empowerment theory is the ‘loose’ manner in which empowerment as a concept is framed. According to Lincoln, Travers, Ackers and Wilkinson (2002), empowerment is a highly elusive theoretical concept. This is because, as a concept it has no single guru, nor does it have a clear definition. The same view is held by Bodja (2006), who argues that at a broader level, the concept of community empowerment is short of a strong theoretical foundation. Consequently, the term is attractive, loose and ambiguous enough for it to gain superficial initial acceptance by most people (Lincoln et al., 2002).

Bodja (2006) attributes this 'vagueness' in empowerment theory to the non-academic origin of the concept. The concept has its origin in 'conscientization' and 'gift of knowledge' both of which to a larger extent have their origins in practical development work and not academia. The other deficiency, according to Bodja is that there is no single model of empowerment. There exist diverse empowerment instruments, which are used in different contexts by development practitioners.

The issue of construct measurement also comes to mind. Brook and Holland (2009) identify three challenges that make the measurement of the empowerment construct difficult: (1) measuring empowerment captures processes and relational changes that are less predictable, less tangible, more contextual, and more difficult to quantify. This raises challenges of meaning, causality, and comparability; (2) changes in power relations (empowerment) are not single-event outcomes, but dynamic, process-based tied up with bargaining, cooperation, conflict, co-option, rent seeking, and other forms of contracting; (3) empowerment often involves relative rather than absolute changes in states of being: an observable move towards empowerment by one person or group cannot be assumed to apply to other individuals or groups, both within and across communities or countries. Hence, empowerment as a concept can best be understood under the complexity framework.

2.1.4 Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory is a learning theory developed by Bandura in 1977 as a direct response to behaviourism to describe how behaviours are learned. The theory is founded on the model of causation, in which behaviour is depicted as being shaped and controlled by environmental influences or by internal dispositions (Bandura, 1989). The internal disposition, also referred to as 'self-influence' in Bandura (1991), encompasses the self-efficacy which is an outcome of empowerment, as it plays a central role in the exercise of personal agency. Personal agency is generally considered as one of the factors that influence empowerment (Alsop et al., 2006; Bandura, 1991). Self-efficacy is the individuals' beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives (Bandura, 1991). Self-

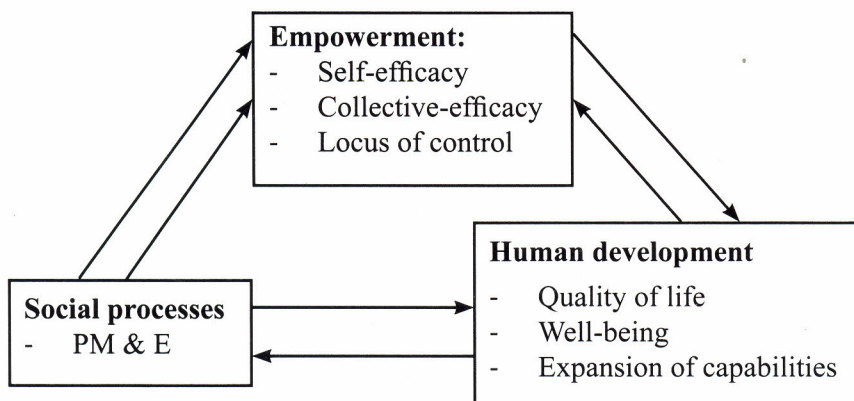
efficacy beliefs are not only confined to judgments of personal capabilities, it also encompasses perceived collective efficacy representing shared beliefs in the power to produce desired effects by collective action (Bandura, 2002). The latter resonates with social capital.

Critical to the understanding of social cognitive theory is self-regulated behavior. Bandura (1989) defines self-regulated behavior as the process of using one's own thoughts and actions to achieve a goal; identify goals and adopt and maintain their own strategies for reaching the goals. Self-regulation also encompasses self-efficacy, a component of empowerment (Papineau and Keily, 1992; Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman et al., 1993; Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland, 2006; Bandura, 1991). Self-efficacy is people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives. Bandura (1991) argues that people's beliefs in their efficacy influence the choices they make, their aspirations, how long they persevere in the face of difficulties and setbacks, the amount of stress they experience in coping with challenging environmental demands, and their vulnerability to depression. Self-efficacy beliefs are not only confined to judgments of personal capabilities, it also encompasses perceived collective efficacy representing shared beliefs in the power to produce desired effects by collective action (Bandura, 2002).

Social cognitive theory is based on a number of assumptions, namely: people learn by observing others; learning is internal; and that learning is a goal directed behavior. The theory therefore assumes that values and behavior patterns arise from diverse sources of influence and are promoted by institutional backing. It highlights the idea that much human learning occurs in a social environment. However, social cognitive theory alone is insufficient to explain why there is often substantial variation in values and behavior patterns, even within the same community segments. The other limitation is about how to measure the related constructs such as general self-efficacy. Chen, Gully and Eden (2001) argue that commonly used generally self-efficacy (GSE) measures have low content validity and multidimensionality. This is worsened further by the confusion with the related constructs such as self-esteem. Chen et al. (2001) note that the utility of GSE for both theory and practice is low due to the confusion as to whether GSE is a construct distinct from self-esteem.

While the study was mainly influenced by human development theory, the inadequacies exhibited by the theory created demand for an alternative theoretical framework to respond to these limitations. The study was based on a framework that integrates human development, social capital, empowerment and social cognitive theories. From literature, human development theory emerged as a trans-disciplinary theory that integrates certain ideas resident in the other three theories. Human development theory, for instance, describes development as an expansion of capabilities (Fukukda-Parr, 2003), a phrase used to describe empowerment (Also P et al., 2006). Empowerment itself can also be explained by social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991). Besides, to produce improvement in quality of life and social cohesion as described by human development theory, people need to be linked through social capital (Bramley et al., 2006). The interrelationships are further explained by Perkins and Long (2002), who distinguish four distinct dimensions of social capital, namely: sense of community; efficacy of organized collective action (empowerment); informal neighboring behaviour, and formal participation in community organisations. Citing from Chavis and Wandersman (1990), Perkins and Long observe that over time, sense of community may lead to greater self and collective efficacy (empowerment), which results in increased participation. Participation, in turn, enhances sense of community, which has also been related to community satisfaction and collective efficacy. Empowerment is thus seen both to lead to participation in community organisations and to result from it (Perkins and Long, 2002). The schema in Figure 1 illustrates these interrelationships in the theoretical underpinnings.

Figure 1: *Theoretical Framework*



3. Methodology

The study employed a mixed-methods approach involving concurrent parallel design, in which samples for quantitative and qualitative components were drawn from the same population and data collected within the same time frame. Taking mixed methods approach allowed for relevant design components that offered the best chance of responding to the objective of the study to be selected. In a mixed methods approach, data arising from different methodologies can be used not only to verify findings from elsewhere through processes of triangulation, but also to extend and to problematize findings and models arising from different methodologies (Tikly, 2010:20). Mixed methods approach was also considered for its relative advantages. The approach has the ability to ensure dependable feedback on a range of questions; improve the depth of understanding of particular interventions; give a holistic perspective; and enhance the validity, reliability, and usefulness of the findings (Stufflebeam, 2001; Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib and Rupert, 2007; Creswell, 2009).

Mixed methods was also found to be useful in empowerment studies. With reference to strategies for researching empowerment, Zimmerman (1990) argues against the use of methods that are primarily quantitative. He observes that qualitative approaches such as in-depth case studies, investigative reporting and participant observation among others can equally be instructive. He argues for a method that integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods. He commends studies that have integrated the quantitative and qualitative methods, arguing that in such studies the qualitative aspects reinforce the quantitative data presented and as a consequence, further strengthen the research. It is for these reasons that this study applied a mixed methods approach.

The study targeted known individuals who participated in a World Vision International driven PM&E model. With the list available, the completeness of the sample frame was guaranteed. This notwithstanding, the size of the sample is informed primarily by the research objective(s), research question(s), and subsequently, the research design (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). The study was based on 17 functional/starter groups – sub-locations based units, with a population of between 6 and 15 members each. In total the study had a target

population of 240. Given the small size of the population, census was applied in the quantitative component.

Taking into consideration the complexity of issues related to PM&E and empowerment, the study opted to go beyond the quantitatively generated data to understand what is behind the statistics. To do this, simple and stratified purposive sampling design was used to select participants for the qualitative phase of the study. On one hand, 2 locations out of 4 in the study area were randomly selected where two sets of between 12 to 15 participants who participated in the World Vision's design process were selected to participate in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). On the other hand FGDs were conducted with 4 CBOs to help generate qualitative data as well as to triangulate findings on community level empowerment outcome. The CBOs were drawn from each of the 4 locations in the study area. A total of 6 FGDs were conducted in the study. These discussions mainly generated qualitative data, which helped explain the causal mechanisms at work in the quantitative analyses.

Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guides to collect qualitative data. The questionnaires were administered to individual members from the starter groups. The questionnaires were designed to help generate a range of measures of dimensions of the study variables as had been operationalized in the study. A number of composite measures were designed to capture each of these dimensions. These dimensions were arrived at through the review of literature. The questionnaires were administered to 212 respondent out of the intended 240 individuals, representing 88.3% response rate. Those who did not participate either declined or were not available to respond to the questionnaire. Other than the questionnaires, the study also utilized FGD guides. The FGD guides were used to collect qualitative

For quantitative analysis, data entry template was prepared from the questionnaire. This was administered to the study respondents, who were all starter group members. Data from the respondents were entered, cleaned and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 17.0 software. The data was then explored for normality, linearity, kurtosis, skewness, homogeneity and factorability to decide on the probable statistics if relevant assumptions were

met. Since most of the assumptions for parametric tests were met, the study utilized both descriptive and inferential statistics amenable to parametric analysis. Whereas descriptive statistics involved the use of central tendency (mean, mode and median), frequencies and proportions; the inferential tests employed the use of Pearson r correlation to test the relationships between the main study variables and the nature thereof; as well as to test the hypothesis.

The statistical tests for measuring the influence of PM&E were based on regression approach and correlation coefficient and their transformation. A standard approach of stating the null hypothesis of zero coefficient of correlation between dependent and independent variables was applied. The empirical analysis was based on the standard regression formula:

$$Y_i = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \dots + b_nX_n + \epsilon_i$$

Where:

Y_i = dependent variable.

X_1 = the first predictor variable (and b_1 is the coefficient of the first predictor, X_2 is the 2nd predictor variable and b_2 is the coefficient of the 2nd predictor X_2 , b_n is the coefficient of n th predictor X_n . In order to appropriately interpret the ensuing statistics, the following considerations were made:

When: $r = -1$ (a perfect negative linear relationship); $r = -.70$ (a strong negative linear relationship; $r = -.50$ (a moderate negative relationship); $r = -.30$ (a weak negative linear relationship); $r = 0$ (no linear relationship); $r = +.30$ (a weak positive linear relationship); $r = +.50$ (a moderate positive linear relationship); $r = +.70$ (a strong positive linear relationship); $r = +1$ (a perfect positive linear relationship). t -value of greater than 1.96 with less than .05 indicates that the independent variable is a significant predictor of the dependent variable within and beyond the sample. The greater the t -statistics, the greater the relative influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. A t -statistics of less than 1.96 with significance greater than .05 indicates that the independent variable is not a significant predictor of the dependent variable beyond the sample. Coefficient of Determination (R^2): $R^2 = 1$ (perfect fit); $R^2 = 0$ (no variation).

While quantitative phase of analysis involved the use of data analysis software, the qualitative component involved drawing analytical conclusion from qualitative datasets. Qualitative data were summarized into themes. Techniques such as interpretive, coding and recursive abstraction were then employed in order to summarize the dataset into meaningful chunks. Whereas interpretive technique was used to give and report the observer's impression in a structured form, coding was applied in order to organize the data and provide a means to introduce interpretations into certain quantitative methods. To accomplish this, data was analysed to read the data and demarcate segments within it. Each of these segments was labeled with a 'code' – a word or short phrase suggesting how the associated data segments describe the specified research objective. The analysis also employed recursive abstraction, where data was analysed without coding. The technique involves summarizing the datasets several times until the achievement of desirable end results. The process of analysis involved reading of the qualitative data, discovering of significant groupings and coding and the generation of categories, the regrouping of themes and patterns, testing of evolving understanding of the issues and a search on alternative explanations or divergent views which helped in the identification and explanation of key issues which are likely to have influence on the study findings.

3.1 Measures

In this study, PM&E was conceptualized to constitute four processes which formed the indicators, namely: participation in the project design process; participation in reflection during implementation; participation in the implementation of activities; and participation in the M&E of activities. Citizen empowerment on the other hand was operationalized as perception of self-efficacy, perception of increased control, decision making capacity, acquisition of new skills and increased information about the programme. Each of the study variables and their indicators had 5-point Likert-type sub-variables describing them. There, 15 items for PM&E and 36 items for citizen empowerment.

4. Findings

The analysis began by describing the dataset. Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1, which describes PM&E and citizen empowerment by mean, mode, median and standard deviation. These were recorded and analysed in aggregates of individual responses across the various variables and their indicators. Table 1 shows the mean, mode, median and standard deviation for the predictor variable and the outcome variable. The mean for PM&E and citizen empowerment were 3.3 and 3.7 respectively. The standard deviation for PM&E and citizen empowerment were 0.78 and 0.43 respectively, indicating that, across the board there was minimal deviation from the mean. Similarly, the mode for PM&E and citizen empowerment were 4.0 and 3.92 respectively. Median for PM&E and citizen empowerment were 3.5 and 3.7 respectively.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the study variables

	PM&E	Citizen Empowerment
Mean	3.3494	3.6978
Median	3.4667	3.7255
Mode	4.00	3.92
Std. Deviation	.77920	.43131

The study hypothesized that there is a relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis revealed a strong linear relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. Linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which PM&E predicted citizen empowerment. Table 2 shows the results from the linear regression analysis. The analysis yielded $F(1, 210) = 198.25, p < .05$ indicating that PM&E is significantly related to citizen empowerment. The coefficient is also positive with $p < .05$. The correlation coefficient of $r = .70$, suggests a strong linear relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. Similarly $R^2 = 0.486$, shows that PM&E accounts for approximately 48.6% of the variation in citizen empowerment. The regression model showing the influence of PM&E on citizen empowerment can be represented as follows:

$$\text{Citizen Empowerment} = 0.401 + 0.049 \times \text{PM\&E}$$

Table 2: The relationship between PM&E and Citizen Empowerment

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	B	Predictor Variables
1	.697 ^a	.486	.483	.012	.401	Constant Term
				.003	.049	PM&E

- a. Predictors: (Constant), PME
 b. Dependent Variable: Citizen Empowerment

Model 1: $F(1, 210) = 198.246; p < .05$

Indicators of citizen empowerment were also explored qualitatively. The first to be explored was the participants' level of knowledge and understanding of development programmes. The participants across the different focus group discussions cited several examples of development programmes and activities, and also explained the purpose of these programmes. Some participants defined development as a positive transformational change in a community and things that cause change in the community. The examples in the study area included: people tested for HIV are no longer scared if tested positive; people moving from traditional systems of farming to current farming practices; improved school infrastructure; better health facilities are now more accessible than in the past.

“Development is moving from one state to another. For instance, if as a person I do not know the importance of putting up a kitchen garden. If I get knowledgeable on the same, then I can consider myself to have developed”
 (Participant, Nyandiwa - Mulaha Starter Group)

In their own words the participants could clearly describe their understanding of development and attendant activities within the study area. Judging from the many examples given, it is clear that their understanding of development is not just limited to hardware-based initiatives like building of schools, development of water infrastructure among others, but spans a spectrum ranging from hardware to acquisition of relevant skills imperative for community wellbeing.

“Community members have become aware of the benefits of initiating groups. Working through groups is easier. Information can then be passed to different groups”. (Participant, Mur Ng’iya Starter Group)

Indeed, the respondents, who in this study also participated in the quantitative phase of the study, affirm the fact that they have up-to-date information about development activities in the area. By exploring this sub-theme, the study established that questions touching on participation in development programmes were well interpreted. The sub-theme also points to the existence of some level of empowerment among the respondents. In this study, knowledge of development programmes has been considered as one of the proxy indicators of citizen empowerment.

The other outcome of citizen empowerment is participation in decision making. The study explored the level of knowledge and understanding about decision making process in programme implementation; and the extent to which community members have opportunities to be involved in, and to influence, decision making. Respondents in the focus group discussions with starter groups could clearly articulate their understanding of decision making process in programme implementation. Some of the respondents appeared well informed, and as such could outline the ideal development planning and decision making processes; right from ideas generation, prioritization of needs and consensus building. Although they recognize the role of the donors in the whole process, they feel that the community has the capacity to define their own development agenda. In which case the donor cannot dictate what needs to be done in the community. There has to be consensus between the donors and the community (beneficiaries).

“The ideas are shared in a group meeting; the options are weighed and prioritized; then by consensus the ideas are agreed; donors cannot come and dictate what needs to be done” (Participant, Mur Ng’iya Starter Group)

This response mirrors the ideal development planning and decision making processes. Some of the participants also expressed their own individual level empowerment. They perceive themselves to have acquired pertinent skills that can be used to bring some transformation in the community. They feel that the skills they have acquired can be harnessed to influence certain things within the

community. For them participation is an obligation motivated by the desire to change situations in the community. This is evidence to the existence of self-efficacy among the individuals.

“Being a trained person, I feel empowered to go and tell the community what needs to be done; I feel obliged to go and hear so as to support what is likely to happen afterwards” (Participant, Mur Ng’iya Starter Group)

Some participants, however, held contrary views. They argued that while it is true that community members are involved, the final decision is made by the implementing agency. Community members or beneficiaries are only involved at the point of ratifying the agency’s decision. They do not think that their felt needs are considered in what ultimately becomes the development blue print for the agency.

“The final decision is made by the agency that is implementing the project. We only endorse. For instance, they are usually not concerned with community needs; they do not look at the priorities” (Participant, Mulaha Starter Group)

From the responses by the community members who participated in the study, there is a general understanding that however limited; opportunities for involvement and/or influence have been accorded. Even in areas where the participants perceived their involvement as passive, for instance Mulaha, individual respondents themselves exhibit some level of self-efficacy. They see themselves as having ability to influence given the opportunity.

“We feel we have capacity to influence, but not given opportunity to do so” (Participant, Mulaha Starter Group).

Finally, the level of knowledge about development programme budgets/resourcing; level of community resource contribution towards programme activities budget; and the extent of involvement in managing programme resource budget were explored. The study established that the sources and approximate levels of budget contributions are known. Most development activities include some community contribution (in-kind or even financial) as well as contribution from other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

“Always we contribute, for example in the construction of the dispensary, we gave out the land; we do ‘harambee’(or communal fundraising) for construction of schools” (Participant, Mulaha Starter Group)

It was apparent from the participants that they understand programme resourcing. Other than narrating instances where the community contributed to a development programme process, they argued that their contribution is equally significant, albeit in most cases it is not being quantified by the development agencies. In their opinion, the community contributes more to the development projects than the funding or implementing agencies.

“According to us the community usually gives more than the agency only that ours (the community’s) is not quantified” (Participant, Mulaha Starter Group)

While the respondents acknowledge that the projects are beneficial to the community, they feel that in most cases they are not involved as much by the different development agencies. Moreover, the development agencies are not accountable to them.

“We see the value of the projects but the initiatives usually do not engage us. For the dispensary we were told the cost afterwards, which was standing at Kenya Shillings 900,000” (Participant, Mulaha Starter Group)

Other than individual level empowerment, the study also explored community level empowerment as reflected in the community-level organizations. The CBOs interviewed seem to suggest that the level of participation in decision making processes – by leaders and members is generally good. The processes of planning and budgeting are thus open to members’ influence. Across the different CBOs, members usually have to discuss issues. These are then forwarded to the executive committee which approves the issue to be included in the next planning phase or implementation.

“When we have money to support OVC; we usually sit down as the members together with the management committee. The information is shared in the community which then send applications. The applicants are then subjected to a vetting process in a meeting where they are picked. The people allocated are then brought again to the members with reasons why their applications were considered” (Participant, OkokShida CBO).

Everything that comes up has to be put forward to the group membership before being considered. Most of the decision making process is, however, vested in the management or executive committee. In all the CBOs interviewed, the management committee is charged with the responsibility of approving plans, budgets and activities.

“Members generate the issues; issues come to the management committee; it is the management committee which makes decisions in the organisation”
(Participant, EACODEP CBO).

While in most cases, the members first generate the issues before being put for discussion and consideration by the management committee, in others it is the management committee coming up with issues for discussion. The issues or plans are then subjected to members’ approval. The plans or the issues are only adopted once they have been approved by the members, usually in all members meetings; especially annual general meetings (AGMs).

“When there is something to be decided on or done, the management committee sits. They then look at what needs to be done, then invites the group members to come and have a discussion. If the members approve, the plan is implemented”
(Participant, OkokShida).

In some cases, however, members still perceive the chairperson to have the final decision making powers. Once elected as the chairperson, he/she is bestowed with responsibility to provide leadership within the parameters of responsibility and authority that the position attracts. They are therefore expected, by virtue of the position, to have the final say about issues even when the issues have been put under discussions by the members or the committee.

“The activities are run through the chairperson; we have created some responsibility, so people have different roles and have authority over things. In meetings the chairman makes the final resolution” (Participant, YierNgima CBO)

Overall, the study revealed that people who participated in the PM&E process seem to know and understand who makes decision and how they do so in the implementation of development programmes and activities. Besides, there is emergence of empowerment as revealed by some members exhibiting a level

of self-efficacy and understanding of development resourcing processes. Self-efficacy is described in the study as the perceived competency by an individual to change a situation.

5. Discussion of Findings

The study sought to examine the extent to which PM&E influences citizen empowerment. The analysis yielded $F(1, 210) = 198.25, p < .05$ and $r = .70$. The study findings suggest that there is a strong positive linear relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. Similarly, $R^2 = .486$ shows that PM&E accounts for approximately 48.6% of the variation in citizen empowerment. The other 51.4% can be explained by other variables that were not considered in the model. The finding in the current study is consistent with Zimmerman et al. (1992) who argue that there is an association between participation in community organisations or activities and individual empowerment. In their study, Zimmerman and others used perceived control as one of the proxy indicators of individual empowerment. Perceived control has been applied in this study as one of the indicators of citizen empowerment.

The finding confirms most commentators' assertion that PM&E is empowering (Abbot and Forward, 2000; Codd, 2011; Fetterman, 2001; Fraser et al., 2006; Samah and Aref, 2011; Zimmerman, 1990; Papineua and Kiely, 1996). This is also consistent with previous research on the relationship between participation and empowerment. A study conducted by Butterfoss (2006) found that more time spent in activities geared toward effecting change is related to higher levels of empowerment. In consonant with these findings is Lennie (2005) argument that PM&E creates knowledge which is related to power and power gives birth to development. Similarly, Prestby and others cited in Zimmerman (1990) in their study, observed that the most highly involved individuals reported more benefits of participation as reflected in their levels of empowerment.

People who are involved also learn and gain knowledge, which are all indicators of empowerment (Samah and Aref, 2011). Abbot and Forward (2000) emphasizes the same when they argue that participation affirms dignity and self-respect (all outcomes of empowerment); as well as developing community cohesion and

empowering communities to pursue their own interests and challenge their power structure (proxy indicators of empowerment). This explains why the push for the adoption of participatory methodologies in evaluation has been argued mostly from the perspective of citizen's empowerment (Fetterman, 2001; Papineau and Kiely, 1996; Obure et al., 2008). Zimmerman et al. (1992), also in their study concluded that individuals who are involved in community activities (PM&E or otherwise) and organisations reported higher levels of empowerment outcomes. From the same study, Zimmerman and others further observed that participation in community groups and activities increases one's sense of control, which is one of the empowerment outcomes. Thus, higher level of participation in a PM&E process is associated with higher level of citizen empowerment.

The quantitative finding above is also consistent with the relevant indicators from the qualitative phase of the study. Findings on knowledge and understanding of development processes revealed that the participants were fairly knowledgeable. Although opportunities for participation in decision making are limited, they know and understand who makes decision and how they are made. Just like in the quantitative analysis, findings from the qualitative datasets suggest that participants who participated in the initial PM&E process have acquired some important skills, have self-efficacy and are involved in decision making processes. Acquisition of knowledge and skills; self-efficacy and participation in decision making are some of the indicators of empowerment (Papineau and Kiely, 1996); and have been considered in this study as such. PM&E is therefore an important factor in predicting citizen empowerment. This finding is also consistent with empowerment theory. The theory states that participation in decision making may enhance individual sense of empowerment (Zimmerman, 1990). PM&E is therefore an important factor in predicting citizen empowerment. This finding therefore confirms the hypothesis that there is a relationship between PM&E and citizen empowerment. PM&E therefore positively influences citizen empowerment.

6. Conclusion

The study has revealed that PM&E can be integrated in development programming with the promise of influencing empowerment outcomes. This seems to confirm

findings from other previous studies, which have argued for the role of PM&E in influencing individuals empowerment outcomes. Policies that provide opportunity for citizens to participate in M&E processes are thus worthy of investment since they can lead to significant impact on empowerment outcomes.

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