

**MANAGEMENT OF STRATEGIC CHANGE AT SAVE THE  
CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL, KENYA PROGRAMME**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other university.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated to my partner, Arch. George Otieno Adede. You have stood with me with me always, and in all ways. Without you this journey would have been just but a dream.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Change in today's business environment is seen as inevitable and organizations will face a difficult task of surviving into the future, unless they are able to find an organizational change management approach that will assist them in navigating the organizational change Landscape for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This study sought to explore the change management practices at Save the Children International Kenya (SCI Kenya), and the challenges of managing change at SCI Kenya. The study which was qualitative in nature, made use of a case study research design methodology for the collection of empirical evidence to support the underlying constructs and research questions posed within the study. The use of data and methodological triangulation, namely research interviews and review of organizational documentation provided the research study with the necessary validity and reliability to support research results, findings and recommendations. The study established that the need for operational efficiency was the major force behind the changes at SCI Kenya. It also was established that changing donor priorities, requirements and increased demand for accountability dictates the funding and the scope of SCI Kenya programming. The study concludes that the changes at SCI Kenya were planned, and recommends that SCI Kenya develops a documented framework for monitoring and evaluating change implementation processes.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The business landscape of the 21st century is characterized by rapid change brought about by technological advances, economic, geopolitical shifts and demographic changes. Regardless of which forces cause organizations to see the need for change, organizational leaders continue to struggle to maintain or increase their organizations' competitive advantage as rapid changes occur both in the external and internal environments (Collin, 2001). Management of strategic change is a task that can either be embraced proactively or reactively. Proactive change can be defined as a change initiated by an organization as a result of its assessment of the anticipated future environment or organizational situation by responding to the change in the external environment. It is an opportunistic change, in which the organization wants to create a strategic advantage because of something present or anticipated in the environment. Reactive change on the other hand is defined as responses to changes in the environment or organizational situation that have already occurred (Kotter, 1996).

Management of strategic change is not a distinct discipline with rigid and clearly defined boundaries. The theory and practice of change management draw on a number of social science disciplines. The three theories that are of interest to this study are Systems theory

(Scott, 2003), Complexity theory (Mason, 2007), and Organization Development (Schein, 2006). Systems theory originates from numerous studies, which explores principles and laws that can be generalized across various systems. Systems theory highlights that organizations are dynamic systems of adaptation and evolution that contain multiple parts, which interact with one another and the environment (Amagoh, 2008). Complexity theory focuses on how parts at a micro-level in a complex system affect emergent behavior and overall outcome at the macro-level. Organization development (OD) is a deliberately planned, organization-wide effort to increase an organization's effectiveness and/or efficiency.

Save the Children International, Kenya (SCI- Kenya) is an NGO working under the Public Benefits Organizations (PBO) banner in Kenya. Over the past few years, SCI's operations in Kenya have been affected by changes in both the external and internal environments. External changes like the Horn of Africa drought crisis of 2011-12, the Kenyan devolution and constitution, insecurity, funding downturns, and Save the Children's internal changes such as the Merlin merger, Country Strategic Planning (CSP) processes, Child Rights Situational Analysis (CRSA) studies, and changes in donor funding and operational presence have necessitated a rethink and change in its operational strategies. It is against this background that this study seeks to establish how Save the Children in Kenya has adapted to the changes in the local and international context to maintain its relevance and impact as the world's leading independent organization for children.

### **1.1.1 The Concept of Change Management**

The available literature provides some key definitions of change management and organizational change, which is relevant to the research questions of this study. Change management is defined as the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of the internal and external customers (Moran and Brightman, 2001).

Kotter (1996) describes organizational change as the process of developing a planned approach to change in an organization. Planned change is defined as a proactive change, initiated by the members of the organization, as well as implemented by them deliberately with a view to anticipating or responding to environmental change or to pursuing new opportunities (Salminen, 2000). The objective is to maximize the collective benefits for all people involved in the change, and minimize the risk of failure of implementing .The goal of the intentional organizational change typically is to make rapid improvements in economic value while simultaneously creating an organization whose structure, processes, people, and culture are tailored appropriately for its current mission and environment and positioned to make the next round of needed change (Beer and Nohria, 2000).

Regardless of the scale of change, change management practices increases the success of organizational change. However, organizations can have a clear vision of the changes they want to implement and a technically and structurally sound foundation for making

these changes, but the change initiatives can still flounder due to obstacles that arise during implementation. Failing to engage employees and to inform them of the reasons, processes and expected benefits of major organizational changes can lead to lack of acceptance of the changes and, ultimately, failure of these initiatives. This can affect not only the organization and relations within the organization, but also clients and the organization's reputation (Nickols, 2010)

### **1.1.2 The PBO Sector in Kenya**

The Public Benefit Organizations (PBO) sector in Kenya is governed by the NGO coordination Board, a state corporation that was established by the Non-governmental organizations coordination Act of 1990. The Board has the responsibility of regulating and enabling the NGO sector in Kenya. The Not-for-profit sector in Kenya comprises of a very diverse grouping of organizations ranging from small welfare and community based associations, to large and international Non-governmental organizations. Organizations and groups that work in the PBO sector use different strategies to achieve their objectives. Some of these organizations were formed to complement state services in response to the declining capacity of the state to carry out development, while some were established to provide alternatives to the state.

The changes in the needs of the NGO target group or a variation in their demand is one of the major external forces that can propel the transformation of an organisation. For example, the spread of HIV/AIDs in Africa forced development cooperation

organizations specializing in health care and working in the continent to reconsider many projects that were being undertaken, and in many cases to actually question the reasons for and types of cooperation in process. The evolution in recent years to the way the illness is treated has meant that in more advanced countries, HIV/AIDS has become an illness which has totally transformed the needs of those suffering from it. This transformation has forced the organizations working with this particular sector of the population to totally alter their type of service and the very profile of their activities. As well as affecting the NGOs target population, any change to the political, social and economic circumstances may represent a clear opportunity or threat to the organization (Nickols, 2010)

In the NGO sector, Lloyd (2010) equates the bargaining power of large suppliers and bargaining power of large customers to the bargaining power of large funders, who are donor organizations or corporate funders. Donor organizations and corporate funders drive change in the PBO sector as they provide the resources, in the form of funds, for the NGOs to carry out their mission. In return the donor organizations lay shared claim to the positive social impact which is achieved through the NGO's activity and the corporate funders are able to include this in their CSR portfolio. Rivalry among existing competitors in the non-profit sector is as a result of increasingly scarcity of resources and the changing environment. Due to the global credit crunch, there are fewer funding sources available to the sector. The donors are now placing an increasing emphasis on measurement and demonstration of the impact of their investment. The threat of new

entrants in this context means that there is increased competition for membership and funds from donors. Barriers of entry in the non-profit sector are however seen as extremely low. The threat of substitute products or services is seen to take the form of competing funding requirements between different development focuses, for example between Health programmes, Education programmes, or Nutrition programmes (Llyod, 2010). The changes brought about by the competition for the limited funding, the stringent donor requirements, and the government requirements, necessitates the need for managers in this sector to adopt change management practices.

### **1.1.3 Save the Children International Kenya**

Save the Children is an organisation fighting to achieve children's rights, particularly for the poorest and most marginalized children, who are most at risk of their rights being denied. The principles, rights and obligations set out in The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provide a framework for all our work. Save the Children is registered as a company and charity in England, and working in 120 countries with annual revenues of over 2 billion USD and 25,000 Staff.

In Kenya, Save the Children is registered with the NGO Board as Save the Children International (SCI Kenya). It has been operational in Kenya since the 1950s, , initially through separate programmes implemented by Save the Children Canada, Finland, Sweden and UK. On Nov 1st 2012, as part of a global restructuring process, Save the Children merged these operations into a single Kenya country programme. Current programming focuses on child protection, child rights governance, education, health,

HIV/AIDS, livelihoods, nutrition and WASH. SCI Kenya has operational presence in Dadaab refugee camp, Garissa, Mandera, Wajir, Bungoma and Turkana, and works through partners in many other parts of the country.

## **1.2 The Research problem**

Successful organizations of the future, whether private or public, must be prepared to embrace change or face extinction. However, there is evidence that change management is hard, and that the change management strategies are not universally applicable to all contexts. Beer and Nohria (2000) state that change remains difficult to pull off and that most organizations have had low success rates, with about 70% of all change initiatives failing.

Numerous studies on management of strategic change have been conducted in both public and private sectors, and both locally and internationally. Internationally, The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2006) conducted a Change Management Survey among HR professionals employed by organizations operating in the United States. The survey asked HR professionals in the United States about their experiences with major organizational changes and HR department's role in change management initiatives. The results of the survey concluded that as the organizational function responsible for policies and practices affecting human capital, HR needs to be involved from the beginning when major organizational changes are being eyed for implementation. The study only focused on one function of the organization, instead of

the entire organization and so methodologically does not relate to this study. Using a multiple case study design methodology to understand the nature of organizational change management in South Africa, Glensor (2000) recommends the need for organizational change management framework and scorecard for the measurement of organizational change Management processes and initiatives. The depth of the study is however beyond the scope of this study.

Locally, there are over 1,000 studies on management of strategic change in various organizations have been conducted by the School of Business of the University of Nairobi. Merete (2010) studied strategic change management practices at GlaxoSmithKline Limited and established that established that the factors that favor the strategic change processes in GlaxoSmithKline Limited includes need for performance improvement, cost reduction and competition. Ochieng (2013) used cross sectional survey design to study strategic change management practices and performance of NGOs in Nairobi. She concluded that that the strategic change management practices are necessitated mainly by the change in stakeholder needs and preference as well as globalization. Wanjiru, (2010) studied management of strategic change management at Action Aid International and concluded that the strategic change management at Action Aid follows the three step model by Lewin.

Arising from the above studies are conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps that this study sought to address. Guided by the importance of replication in strategic

management research, this study was necessary, as there was no documented study relating to change management practices at SCI Kenya.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following questions; what are the change management practices at Save the Children International Kenya? What are the challenges of managing strategic change and how is the management of Save the Children International Kenya addressing these challenges?

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study were twofold:

1. To establish the change management practices at Save the Children International Kenya
2. To identify the challenges of managing change at Save the Children International Kenya

### **1.5 Value of the Study**

The research findings and recommendations will contribute to management practice by providing insight and guidance to the management of SCI Kenya on the importance of effectively managing strategic change, and would also highlight the areas of improvement required in managing organizational change. The study will also guide

change managers in the industry in understanding the local conditions, forces of change and challenges unique to the Kenya NGO environment.

The study will also provide information that will guide in policy development regarding managing of change strategies at SCI Kenya. The information will also provide a basis for future decision making. The information will also be utilized by other Change Practitioners practicing organizational change within a rapidly transforming environment, as it would help to provide information on appropriate change management approaches and interventions.

The study will also contribute to the development of literature by generating information on strategic management in non-governmental organizations, and will set a platform for scholars and business researchers to carry out further research on gaps identified in the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the theoretical perspectives underpinning strategic change management, management of strategic change, the challenges of managing strategic change and the measures to mitigate these challenges.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Foundations**

The theories that anchor this study are the Systems theory, complexity Theory and Organization Development.

##### **2.2.1 Systems Theory**

Systems theory originated in the natural sciences in efforts to understand sets of objects, the relationships between those objects, and the relationship between sets of objects and their environments. Systems theory takes the position that organizations are dynamic systems whose parts impact and are impacted by both external and internal influences; the behavior of the parts and their effects on the whole are interdependent; and while subgroups of the elements all have an effect on the behavior of the whole, none has an independent effect on it (Amagoh, 2008). It follows that any change in one part of the sub

system will have an impact on other parts of the system, and in turn, on its overall performance (Burnes 2009).

### **2.2.1 Organization Development**

The basic underlying theme of organizational development (OD) is that developing an appropriate organizational culture will generate desirable changes in strategy. Beckhard (1969) defined Organizational Development as effort which is planned, organization-wide, and managed from the top, designed to increase organizational effectiveness and health through planned interventions in the organization's processes, using behavioural science knowledge. Organized Organizational Development programmes involve activities such as team building and collaborative decision-making, bringing managers together and encouraging them to share and discuss problems and issues. The thinking is that when managers learn more about the problems facing the organization as a whole, and about other managers who may have different technical or functional perspectives, they become more aware of the impact of the decisions that they make. While one aim is to change the attitudes and behaviour of people in organizations, OD can also allow and encourage the same people to initiate and implement changes (Murphy, 2003).

### **2.2.3 Complexity Theory**

Complexity theory focuses on how parts at a micro-level in a complex system affect emergent behavior and overall outcome at the macro-level (Hiatt, 2006). Complexity is defined as the measure of heterogeneity or diversity in internal and environmental factors

such as departments, customers, suppliers, socio-politics and technology (Sullivan, 2004). An essential feature of the complexity theory paradigm is the concept of complex adaptive systems (CAS). Systems that absorb information from their environment and create stores of knowledge that can aid action are called complex adaptive systems (Mason, 2007). The concept of CAS tries to explain how learning and innovation happen in living systems, and is used to describe nonlinear systems whose behavior is determined by the interaction of its adaptive parts. While each part of a complex system acts according to its own best interest, collectively they cause the system to move in a certain direction. The parts are constantly seeking to improve performance by driving the system away from equilibrium. Overtime, the extensive interaction between the parts determines the behavior of the overall system within its environment. The parts learn from these interactions and restructure themselves to better adapt to the environment (Cao and McHugh, 2005). Since organizations are complex systems, the implication is that the organization is able to learn from its environment and change its internal structure and its functioning over time thus changing the behavior of individual elements. Managers aware of complex interactions are in a better position to understand the dynamics and behavior of an organization, and to guide change processes.

### **2.3 Management of Strategic Change**

There are two dominant approaches to management strategic change: planned approach to change and emergent approach to change. Planned change approaches rely more on the assumption that the organization's environment is known (Burns, 2009). Kurt Lewin

(1951) the father of planned change in organisation studies, developed the three stage model that has become the classic way of thinking about change in organizations. The first stage is unfreezing where unhelpful behaviour needs to be made explicit and disconfirmed. The next stage is change or 'moving', where through trial and- error, the change slowly gets implemented. Once a suitable change is identified and implemented, the refreezing stage begins; its objective is to embed the new changes in a state of quasi equilibrium so they are learned and assimilated enough to be maintained in the future (Schein, 2004).

The rationale of emergent approach to change management stems from the belief that change should not be, and cannot be solidified, or seen as series of linear events within a given period of time, instead it is characterized by unforeseen events, disruptive breakdowns and opportunities that emerge within that period. The emergent approach to change emphasizes the need to be responsive and adaptive. It stresses that change is an open-ended and continuous process of adaption to changing conditions and circumstances, and sees process of change as a process of learning, and not just a method of changing organization structures. Emergent change occurs in real time and therefore fosters ongoing re-alignment with the environment, ongoing learning and strategy making. (Burnes, 2009)

## **2.4 Challenges of Managing Strategic Change**

Leadership and communication are often hailed as the most important factors in any change process, but can also be a challenge in managing any strategic change process. Muller (2006) points out that employees can read into heightened tensions, and every management action that is part of the communication process should be done in order to build credibility and trust, therefore all communication in the form of words, actions and outcomes must be aligned. Duck (2001) points out that during periods of organizational change, informal networks of communication are often disrupted or destroyed and that it takes longer for people to do their work and to figure out whom to talk to as networks need to be rebuilt. These communication gaps create opportunity for uncertainty of interpretation. Muller (2006) argues that during high risk/low trust situations in the various stages of a strategic change in an organization, significant emphasis should be placed on communication that is frequent, simple, consistent and relevant.

Resistance to change is another challenge face in managing strategic change. Resistance can be systemic or behavioural. Coetsee (1999) argues that obtaining stakeholders' commitment and managing resistance to change successfully are two key pre-requisites for effective management of change. George and Jones (2001) argue that change efforts should be focused on an individual level as change is initiated and implemented by individuals, despite organizations being collective entities. Managers interested in successfully managing change must therefore learn how to encourage individuality, and need to respect, and value diverse individual experiences. This includes being aware of

the abilities and strengths of each individual and the capacity to capitalize on these in the context of a work team (Steiner, 2001). In managing resistance to change, first-line managers should be able to support employees on an individual basis to deal with the envisaged change, as dealing with the concerns of employees will help identify the reasons for resistance and enable managers to deal with these proactively. The effectiveness of change interventions in organizations will thus largely be determined by the competence of first-line managers to facilitate the desired change with employees on an operational level (Moran and Brightman, 2001). This view is supported by Bechtel and Squires (2001) who stress that the most difficult aspect of the change efforts lie in changing people and their skills, knowledge and behaviour.

## **2.5 Measures to Mitigate the Challenges of Managing Strategic Change**

In support of the organizational of challenges of managing strategic change, Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) encourage the Change leader to consider the following methods for managing resistance to change: Where the resistance to change is as a result of an employee's lack of information, the change leader should use education to communicate the reasons for the desired change thereby encouraging greater support for the change initiative. The authors point out that this method can be time consuming as it involves larger groups of stakeholders. In those instances where the change leader requires more commitment towards the change initiative from employees, participation should be encouraged by requesting the employees to become involved in the design or implementation of the change initiative. They state that participation helps to increase

grassroots support for change. However, it could also lead to problems if the employees lack the necessary expertise to develop effective plans.

When the employees fear that they cannot make the necessary adjustments needed to support the change initiative, then the change leader should provide further skills training and emotional support. Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) state this approach works the best with employees who are unable to make adjustments, although it can be time-consuming and expensive. When powerful groups or stakeholders resist the change because they may lose out as a result of the change; the change leader should make use of negotiation or even offer incentives to those employees who comply with the change. The authors confirm that this is a relatively easy but expensive way to defuse major resistance to change. When the time required for change is limited and timing is essential; the change leader could make use of coercion by threatening potential job loss, either transfer or loss of promotion opportunities for those employees who do not comply with the change initiative; however Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) mention that while this method may help to override resistance quickly, but may lead to intense resentment of change leader.

## **2.6 Summary of Knowledge Gaps**

The change management strategies discussed in the literature review are still relevant and can be used as they have been in the past, but with one exception- the speed at which the steps, stages, or phases of the models occur. This era is one of rapid change, sophisticated communication and technological systems and variables that make preparation for the

future complex and fast-paced. In order to be able to be a winner in this type of environment, processes and relationships must be streamlined, non-value-added activities must be eliminated, and people at all levels in organizations must be empowered to rapidly make decisions and held accountable for those decisions.

Today, change is taking place at such speed that is nearly impossible to align new behaviours to environmental demands before they actually change (Nicholson, 2000). Due to its focus on group involvement and trial-and-error testing, planned change initiatives are often criticized as slow, static and only suitable for times of stability. Planned change management approach assumes smooth sailing from the current state to the desired without significant disruption from the internal and/or external factors.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section sets out the research methodology that will be adopted to meet the research objectives and answer the research questions. The research setting, data collection instruments and data analysis techniques are discussed.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study adopted a Case study research design. A case study is an in-depth investigation of a 'case' for exploratory, descriptive or explanatory research purposes, or a combination. The purpose of case study research is to describe that particular case in detail and take learning from that and develop theory from that approach - it is particularistic and contextual.

According to Yin (2003) a case study is a very powerful form of qualitative analysis that involves a careful and complete observation of a social unit whether it is a person, family, institution or even an entire community. This design is appropriate because it allows for a deeper understanding about a phenomenon about a particular subject of study. It is also appropriate because it involves a careful and complete observation of social units. Other

studies (Ochieng, 2013; Otieno, 2014; Marete, 2010; Wanjiru, 2010) have successfully adopted this research design.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Case study as a method is very versatile, as it uses various methods of data collection, from observation to interview to testing. In this case study, both primary and secondary qualitative data was collected. Yin (2003) suggests using multiple sources of data as a way to ensure construct validity. The data collection instrument for primary data will be an interview guide, which will be administered through semi-structured interviews. This method is appropriate as it enables the researcher to collect views, backgrounds, opinions, interest and feeling about the subject of study. One of the criticisms of the case study method is that the case under study may not be representative of a wider social setting and therefore it is argued that the results of the research cannot be used to make generalizations.

The target interviewees were the Senior Management Team (SMT) at SCI Kenya. Secondary data was collected from internal document reviews such as SCI Kenya's country strategic plans, performance reports, internal memos, and any other documentation that was be deemed resourceful for this study.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

For each objective, the data collected was edited for accuracy, standardization, consistency and completeness and arranged to enable coding and tabulation. Content analysis was used to analyze the interviewees' views. Content analysis is a qualitative research technique used to interpret meaning from the content of text data. In content analysis, the researcher evaluates the frequency and saliency of particular words or phrases in a body of original text data in order to identify keywords or repeated ideas (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). Cooper and Schindler (2008) describe content analysis as a technique for objective, systematic and qualitative description of the manifest content of a communication.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter details the findings and analysis of data as set out in the research methodology. The study had two objectives to achieve: To establish the change management practices adopted by SCI Kenya, and to identify the challenges of managing strategic change initiatives at SCI Kenya. Primary data was gathered exclusively using an interview guide, through in-depth interviews with five heads of departments at SCI Kenya. The interviewees were the Country Director (CD), Director of HR, Admin& IT, Director of Programme Operations (DPO), Country Logistics Manager (CLM), and the Head of Child Survival (HCS). The interviewees are members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and are directly involved in decision making and implementation of programmes at SCI Kenya.

Secondary data was collected through desk reviews of organizational documents. The qualitative data was subjected to content analysis, and the researcher made inferences in order to come up with this report. To this extent, there is a reliance on the use of graphical displays to illustrate the nature and outcome of the findings. The focus of the chapter is captured in three sections: The Strategic changes at SCI Kenya, the Change management process, the challenges of change implementation and discussion of

findings. The chapter also includes theoretical and empirical comparisons by linking the findings to theory and previous studies.

## **4.2 Strategic Changes at Save the Children International Kenya**

All the interviewees were aware of and listed the following two major strategic changes initiatives that have taken place in the organization. These are; the transition to Save the Children International and the merger with Merlin, a British INGO. The DPO mentioned the introduction of Key Performance Indicators (KIPs) for performance measurement as an important strategic change that took taken place in the operations and programmes department. The Country Director regarded the formulation of the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2016-2018as a huge strategic step in terms of strategic preparedness.

### **4.2.1 Transition to Save the Children International**

All the interviewees identified the transition from Save the Children member countries to Save the Children International as the most momentous change the organisation has gone through since its inception. In Kenya, Save the Children has had programmes and operations for over 25 years, working with partners and the government to ensure that every Kenyan child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

At the end of 2009 at a Member's meeting in London, 30 Save the Children member organizations agreed on a new five-year strategy that would merge and transition all their international programmes. Effective November 2012, all the Save the Children members

who were working in Kenya- SC Canada, SC Finland and SC UK-merged their operations, programmes and presence to become one entity: Save the Children International (SCI). The purpose of this transition into one entity was to create a more efficient organization that speaks with one voice for children in Kenya and to achieve results at scale. The Country Director remarked,

“In terms of strategy, each of those members had started to harmonize their strategies but still approached their work very differently. For example, SC Finland worked exclusively through the national partners and with a very strong focus on child protection and child rights governance. TSC UK had a very different approach, mainly focusing on humanitarian response interventions, working in Dadaab refugee camp, drought response work, and a strong focus in Health and Nutrition. SC Canada on the other hand had worked consistently in Kenya since 1984, and worked exclusively in Meru on HIV/AIDS programme”

#### **4.2.2 Merger with Merlin**

All the interviewees clearly identified the merger with Merlin as the second biggest strategic change they are aware of. In 2014, as part of a global reorganization process, SCI completed a second transition which saw it merge forces with the British INGO, Merlin. According to a report sourced from Save the Children’s website, Merlin approached Save the Children in early 2013 seeking a strategic relationship. Merlin’s approach offered SC a way to accelerate movement towards that goal, as Merlin’s expertise in health and humanitarian health response was broader in range than Save the Children’s, and its ways of working appeared to be more agile and nimble particularly in terms of emergency response. Save the Children welcomed this opportunity to grow their ambitious humanitarian and health programmes and significantly scale up their frontline

health capabilities for children and their families. The merger with Merlin saw SCI Kenya take over Merlin’s health programme in Turkana County. The health programme in Turkana expanded Save the Children’s coverage of children in vulnerable situations, reaching them with life-changing health and nutrition services.

### 4.2.3 Introduction of Key Performance Indicators

The DPO informed the study that 15 core KPIs were established by SCI Center in January 2015. They were introduced to improve the organization’s ability to monitor the performance, manage critical operational risks, and ensure on time, on budget delivery of projects & programs in Country offices. The 15 KPIs are listed on Table 4.1

**Table 4.1 Key Performance Indicators for SCI Country Offices**

#	Key Performance Indicator	Measurement	Frequency
1	Financial Performance against Forecast	Overall % variance against latest	Monthly
2	Outstanding Audit Findings	% of cat A & B findings beyond	Quarterly
3	Funding Gap against Latest Budget	\$ Value of funding gap	Change of Budget
4	Loss on Donor Commitment	% of awards value underspent	Monthly
5	Disallowances (not yet built in to Dashboard)	\$ value lost to disallowances	Monthly
6	NCE Proportion	% of awards on NCEs	Monthly
7	On Time Reporting (to Member)	% of donor reports submitted on	Monthly
8	Quality of Donor Reporting (not yet built in to Dashboard)	% of reports meeting quality benchmarks	Monthly
9	Awards closed out on time (subj. to audit)	% by value closed within 90 days	Monthly
10	FS in place before implementation starts	% by value of programs starting	Monthly
11	Security Management	CO threat level x non-	Quarterly
12	Vacancy rate of Key Positions	% of key staff positions vacant	Quarterly
13	Staff Retention of Key Positions	Key staff retention (%) (turnover)	Semi-Annually
14	Supply Chain Efficiency	% of orders processed within	Quarterly
15	Purchasing Efficiency	% of supplies purchased through	Quarterly

**Source: Save the Children KPI overview training guide, 2015.**

#### **4.2.4 Development of Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2016-2018**

One of the big changes that Save the Children has had to adapt to is the reduction in humanitarian funding since 2011. According to the Country Director,

“In 2011 ,Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia were the center of everyone’s’ attention, with the Horn of Africa drought, a declared famine in Somalia, and big refugee crisis that a led to lot of humanitarian funding from donors like DFID and ECHO, with the international donor community seeing the horn of Africa as a key priority. Those funds however dried up very quickly. Being an organization that is very donor dependent, SCI Kenya has had to be very flexible with their strategy and to refocus its work towards longer term development programmes, while sticking to the ever changing donor priorities.”

It is with this in mind that in February 2015, the SCI Kenya embarked on the Country Strategic planning process for the period 2016 to 2018. The Kenya programme CSP for 2013-15 was necessarily an interim, transitional strategy that incorporated the work of four SC members. By applying the ‘Big Tent’ principle of the SCI Transition completed in Kenya in November 2012, the country office maintained all funded member programmes and incorporated them into a single strategy. With the CSP 2016-18, the country office has taken the opportunity to undertake a critical review of its current programming, in order to assess their quality, the extent to which they deliver on the ‘Theory of Change’, their alignment with global priorities and their impact on Kenya’s most marginalized and deprived children. The theory of Change is a framework developed by Save the Children in 2009 to reflect how it would create impact for children. It offers guidance to the organisation when examining options for interventions and programme development, and it helps in conversations with partners and donors to consistently explain its approach as presented in Figure 4.1

**Figure 4.1 Theory of Change**



**Source: Save the Children's Ambition for Children by 2030, 2015**

Figure 4.1 explains how Save the Children will be the innovator by applying evidence-based learning and creativity to produce specific, sustainable solutions that can be implemented at scale. Save the Children will be the voice by leveraging on its' international experience and child-focused expertise to advocate for policy changes at all levels to positively impact children. To fulfil its' aspirations of innovation and achieving results to scale, Save the Children identifies partners and build appropriate relationships and networks for programming, policy, advocacy and campaigns.

**Table 4.2 Summary of SCI Kenya Country Strategic Plan 2016-2018**

<p><b>Our value proposition</b></p>	<p>Save the Children aims to be the leading independent organisation for children in Kenya. We will work with and for the most marginalized and deprived children in the country and will have the largest operational presence of any agency in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of the North-East and North-West. Children in refugee camps will remain a key priority and we will develop our programming with children living in urban informal settlements. Together with children themselves, Save the Children will leverage a broad range of partnerships to develop localized, innovative programming approaches that can be replicated at scale. We will use our unique positioning to ensure that children’s rights are protected through the allocation and effective use of resources by national and county government. In terms of our thematic focus, we aim to be Kenya leaders in the following fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maternal, Newborn and Reproductive health</li> <li>• Accountability for child rights</li> <li>• Child protection systems</li> </ul>										
<p><b>Which contexts</b></p>	<p>We will specifically target children living in the following contexts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arid and Semi-Arid Land areas (ASALs)</li> <li>• refugee and IDP settings</li> <li>• urban informal settlements</li> </ul>										
<p><b>Which geographies in my country (domestic programming for members)</b></p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="573 1264 711 1402">Maintain &amp; Scale up:</td> <td data-bbox="719 1264 1437 1402">ASAL Counties: Mandera, Wajir, Turkana, Garissa, Western Kenya: Bungoma, Busia Urban informal settlements: Nairobi Coast: Kwale, Kilifi</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="573 1411 711 1444">Maintain:</td> <td data-bbox="719 1411 1437 1444">Dadaab refugee camps and host communities</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="573 1453 711 1507">Exit:</td> <td data-bbox="719 1453 1437 1507">Meru, Thika, Naivasha</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="573 1516 711 1591">Possible Entry:</td> <td data-bbox="719 1516 1437 1591">West Pokot, Kakamega, Mombasa</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="573 1600 711 1661">Monitor:</td> <td data-bbox="719 1600 1437 1661">ASAL Counties: Tana River Western Kenya: Siaya, Vihiga, Homa Bay, Migori</td> </tr> </table>	Maintain & Scale up:	ASAL Counties: Mandera, Wajir, Turkana, Garissa, Western Kenya: Bungoma, Busia Urban informal settlements: Nairobi Coast: Kwale, Kilifi	Maintain:	Dadaab refugee camps and host communities	Exit:	Meru, Thika, Naivasha	Possible Entry:	West Pokot, Kakamega, Mombasa	Monitor:	ASAL Counties: Tana River Western Kenya: Siaya, Vihiga, Homa Bay, Migori
Maintain & Scale up:	ASAL Counties: Mandera, Wajir, Turkana, Garissa, Western Kenya: Bungoma, Busia Urban informal settlements: Nairobi Coast: Kwale, Kilifi										
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Possible Entry:	West Pokot, Kakamega, Mombasa										
Monitor:	ASAL Counties: Tana River Western Kenya: Siaya, Vihiga, Homa Bay, Migori										

**Source: Save the Children Kenya Country Strategic Plan for 2016-2018**

### **4.3 Change Management Practices at Save the Children Kenya**

All interviewed interviewees played a role in the change programmes by providing leadership and guidance to their teams. The study established that the Country Director has in all instances played the roles of a change strategist and a change implementer, depending on the level the change is initiated from. For the changes that are rolled out from the SCI Center, the Country Director said he plays the role of an implementer by ensuring the Country office meets the requirement of the change initiatives. He does this by working with the Senior Management Team (SMT), by communicating the overall purpose and objectives of the change initiatives. The SMT in turn cascades the same to their teams. The Director of Programme Operations remarked;

“As a member of SMT I have to support any general decisions made on change even if I do not necessarily fully support them. I have to use my voice to challenge such decisions before they are made, giving the perspective in particular of the staff in the field who are actually implementing the programmes. As change is being effected, I have to encourage buy in from my colleagues and raise any challenges faced up to the SMT to seek best ways to go forward”

All the interviewees were in agreement that the Senior Management Team is in the forefront in providing leadership to enable change implementation processes. The study established that the SMT does so by jointly agreeing on decisions and leading by example. The SMT members also regularly go on field location support visits, to reinforce their commitment on supporting the programmes.

Regarding the factors that necessitated the changes in the organization, all the interviewees mentioned various factors that contributed to the changes. It was however unanimous with all the interviewees that the overall need for efficiency and

accountability in SCI's operations is the overriding factor that has necessitated most of the changes, the main reference being the transition from member SC to SCI.

The Country Director mentioned that the organization is highly dependent on donors whose priorities and requirements are ever changing, and as such SCI has had to be very flexible and adaptive in its strategies in order to meet these requirements. Devolution in Kenya is another factor identified by the Head of Child Survival as a factor that has contributed to SCI Kenya changing how it works in the areas it operates. She said;

“We are now working much closely with the County governments particularly in Health and Nutrition. They are the key players, the decision makers and they hold the budgets. This has led us to adopt more partnership approach through systems strengthening, where we provide capacity building and technical expertise to the health and nutrition systems in the counties, as opposed to direct implementation of the programmes”

As to how the organization is responding to the changing environment, the Country Director acknowledged that they have to keep realigning themselves in light of the changes in the environment. It is for that reason that SCI Kenya embarked in a Country strategic planning process which he said was broad, but also grounded on reality, ambitious but acknowledged the challenges. Given donors are now de-prioritizing Kenya as a developing country, he said;

“Kenya is now ranked as a middle income country, it is now perceived differently and the international donors are now considering funding the national partners or working with the government directly...”

The study also established that a formal process was followed in the communication and implementation of the SCI transition process. The Director of HR, Admin & IT (DHR)

mentioned that the HR department assisted the employees in the transition by serving as the contact for questions and concerns that arose during the planning and implementation of the change. Communication champions were appointed in all field offices for purposes of creating staff awareness and explaining any impact the change might have on them. An impartial international Change Manager was also appointed by the East Africa Regional Office (EARO) to oversee and Save the Children International Kenya transition process. Legally, Kaplan & Stratton were the appointed legal advisors. They offered legal advice and direction on all transition matters including employee separation and contracts for those retained by SCI. In terms of the organizational structure, the DHR informed the study that prior to the transition, Save the Children UK Kenya programme had the largest workforce of 265 employees. Save the Children Canada and Finland had 16 and 4 staff respectively

With the downsizing of Save the Children UK's humanitarian response programme in 2012, not all staff were transitioned into SCI. Subsequently, the organization structure changed significantly with several roles being re-profiled, translating into completely new roles. Staff had to reapply for jobs within the structure, and recruitment was only limited to internal candidates. Employees retained by SCI were issued with replacement contracts, whereby their length of service was deemed as continuous with their original date of hire by their respective Save the Children member. In cases where staffs were not retained by SCI, the individual Save the Children members paid out the terminal dues that were owed to their employees in accordance with the Kenyan labour laws and the

employment contracts. As at November 27<sup>th</sup> 2012, the staff count in at SCI Kenya was 222.

As to whether SCI Kenya has a documented framework of monitoring and evaluating change implementation process, all the interviewees agreed that there is no framework to monitor the change initiatives. The Country Director noted that;

“It is unfortunate to note that very little formal analysis or studies were done by Save the Children before proceeding with the roll out of Save the Children model globally- and I have not seen an evaluation study of the SCI transition process. The same could be said of the Merlin transition process. In both cases, the process was seen as brave, bold and largely successful, but it is striking that for a learning organization like ours, we have very little documentation to share with colleagues or external parties who would like to know more”

All interviewees agreed that the organizational structure has a considerable, if not outright the largest impact on implementing changes in the organization. Further they agreed that a prevailing culture can impede or assist the endeavors for changing. The Head of Child Survival pointed out the importance of respectful relationships, which in her opinion is significant for the welfare of all employees and thereby affects their creativity and good performance.

#### **4.4 Challenges of Managing Change at Save the Children International Kenya**

The study established that the biggest challenges in managing changes during the SCI transition and merger with Merlin, was the bringing on board people to a team of people

who had different work ethos and culture. According to the Director of HR, It was very together people of different culture to form the organizational culture that is there today.

All the interviewees cited funding of transitioned programmes and activities as the main challenge of implementing the strategic changes that took place at SCI. The Country Director specifically attributed this to a big cut in humanitarian funding since 2012, which has seen humanitarian organizations compete for scarce funds. The high dependency on donors and a tendency to shift interventions to match donor priorities has led to financial instability for some of the programmes.

The study also established that devolution in Kenya has presented a challenge for SCI in the areas in terms of political interference from the County government officials in the areas it implements its programmes. The Head of Child Survival gave an example of Wajir County, where a programme for adolescent girls delayed to start up because the area politicians wanted to influence and dictate the recruitment process for the vacant positions in the programme.

Resistance to change was considered passive, as some people took time to get used to the change to a new organization and very few staff left the organization after the changes. According to the Country Director who joined SCI Kenya after the transition, he took up the job in Kenya because he had been part of a similar change process that had happened in Indonesia, and since this process did not turn out well, he took with him the lessons learnt like importance of communication and having staff involved in the process.

## **4.5 Discussion**

From the study, the magnitude or scale of the changes at Save the Children International can be viewed as transformational. Balogun et al. (2008) defines transformational change as involves significant change in organizational size, and the development of management systems such as planning, organizational structure, management development, and performance management. Upon transition from Save the Children members, SCI became one big organization with a new CEO, and completely new reporting lines for its programmes. The study also established that change at SCI was driven top-down. The change strategists who were responsible for identifying the need for change, creating a vision of the desired outcome and deciding what changes are feasible, were from SCI leadership in London or the SCI East Africa Regional Office in Nairobi.

The study established that changes in SCI were mostly planned, but there were instances where the changes were emergent. The merger with Merlin, the transition to SCI and formulation of the CSP for 2016-2018 were planned initiatives. However, there were instances where the change were emergent. The study established that the introduction of KPIs for Country offices was after push by donors for improved accountability.

The changes at SCI were not one-off activities, rather processes with various phases. The development of the Country Strategic Plan for 2016-2018 was done in phases and through consultative meetings and feedback sessions. The first phase of the process involved developing the non-thematic section of the plan, whereas the second phase

involved the development of the thematic sections. This confirms the view held by Kotter (1996) that strategic change management as a process goes through a series of different phases.

One aim of Organizational Development is to change the attitudes and behaviour of people in organizations by promoting openness, engagement and commitment. The premise of this approach is that if an organization's employees share common values, this will manifest in desirable behavior at all levels of the organization. The study established that post-merger with Merlin, SCI arranged welcome meetings with Merlin Staff that were absorbed into the organization. Information on the merger was communicated clearly and as regularly as possible in order to keep all staff and relevant parties informed.

An essential feature of Complexity theory is that complex systems tend to be deterministic in nature and evolve through a phase of instability, which makes it impossible to plan for the long term and therefore such organizations tend to exhibit creativity and produce new and innovative behaviors at the level of the whole system (Rhee, 2000). Save the Children before were following different strategies and having different priorities. As donor priorities were also changing and funding for humanitarian aid is shrinking, the transition from separate Save the Children member programmes to one international programmes operation was driven by the need coherence and coordination in service delivery and repositioning in face of changing competitive conditions in the development sector. The same can be said for the reason behind the merger with Merlin.

It is evident from the findings that SCI was formed in order to improve operational efficiency and respond to changes in the global operational context. The Rwanda genocide of 1994-1995 ushered a ten year boom for humanitarian organizations. However, humanitarian crises towards the beginning of the 2000s occurred more and more in countries where Save the Children was not well established or was faced with aggressive competitors, and that meant that its formula of working in countries where it had programmes and offices was not relevant to the changing humanitarian context. This finding agrees with Marete (2010) who in her study of strategic change at GlaxoSmithKline confirms that rapid and constant changes in the environment require appropriate strategic action from management.

SCI Kenya embraces the idea of proper communication before, during and after change processes. This is evident by how the Country Director and the Human resource took lead in all the communication to ensure all staff were involved. This view is held by Mwanza (2012) who in her study of change management at the High Court of Kenya asserts that proper communication of the desired change provides an opportunity that enables people to become accustomed to the idea of change. One of the challenges identified by SCI Kenya in the implementation of strategic change is the reduction or scarcity in funding. Scarcity in funding of the Health and Nutrition projects in Turkana acquired from Merlin was a major challenge that SCI had to deal with. This challenge is confirmed by Munjua (2012) who in her study of strategic change management at ACORD, cited lack of funding as a major impediment in implementing change in the PBO sector.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the summary of the findings from chapter four and also it gives the conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice based on the objectives of the study. It also suggests areas for further research and acknowledges the limitations of the study.

#### **5.2 Summary of findings**

The study sought to find out how SCI Kenya manages change and its challenges. All the interviewees identified the transition from Save the Children member countries to Save the Children International as the most momentous change the organisation has gone through since its inception.

The study established that most of the change initiatives were as a result of the need for Save the Children to improve operational efficiency and adapt with to changes in the global operational context. Changing donor priorities and requirements is the main reason SCI adopts strategic change as it is a donor dependent organization. Strategic alignment to these donor requirements is on also identified as one of the major challenges in implementing change initiatives.

The role of leadership and communication is also emphasized in the study. The study also established that the Country Director has in all instances of change, played the roles of a change strategist and a change implementer. It emerges from the study that SCI does not however have a documented framework for monitoring and evaluating change implementation processes.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The overall results indicate that the change management practices adopted by SCI Kenya in its change projects and programmes are effective. SCI Kenya was able to successfully undertake several change initiatives; key among them were transitioning to one entity under one structure, merging with Merlin, measuring of Country Office performance and developing a new strategic plan.

Nonetheless, the management of change in the organization has been affected by the challenges it is currently facing. The findings indicate that SCI Kenya is experiencing problems linked with inadequate or reduced funding, political interference, and a rapidly changing environment. It can therefore be concluded that like other organizations, SCI Kenya is facing change management challenges.

From the findings, the study established that SCI Kenya underwent a transformational change. Its' scope, strategies, structures, systems and processes were redefined and realigned to fit into the changing environment. The study also concludes that the major approach used to manage change was planned approach although there are instances

when emergent change approach came into play. Planned approach was used in the transitioning of Save the Children Members to Save the Children International and development of the Country strategic plan for 2016-2018. Emergent approach is seen in the merger with Merlin and the introduction of KPIs to manage performance of country offices.

The study also concludes that the changes at SCI were for the better. This is exhibited by the large number of beneficiary reach since the two major strategic changes of transition and merger with Merlin. According to the Save the Children Kenya Country Annual Report (CAR) of 2014, the total number of people reached by SCI Kenya directly was 598,836, and indirectly was 2,239,805.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for policy and practice**

The study recommends that the management develops a feedback mechanism that would encourage a bottom-up approach to change issues. This would allow the employees to contribute and feed in to the change management processes, thus capturing all their concerns before, during and after the change processes.

Finally to successfully manage the change, the organization needs to plan more for improvements and link it to create motivation for the employees. Harmonization of the remuneration package with the new structure at all levels could increase acceptance and buy-in and reduce turnover from the employees.

The study also recommends that SCI should develop a framework for monitoring and evaluating change implementation process. A formal change programme should be documented for reference and evaluation purposes when need arises .The tool can also be used to measure performance against set change objectives.

## **5.6 Limitations of the Study**

Conceptually, this case study focused on the management of strategic change and its challenges using a single case study from the PBO sector. There are other aspects and variables of strategic change not explored by this study.

Contextually, the study only focused on the SCI Kenya, the findings are specific to a particular case, a specific location (Kenya) and the period between 2012 and 2015. The findings and interpretations may not be specifically applicable to other situations, as per the limitations of case study research.

Methodologically, this study focused on the views of senior managers within the organization, guided by the belief that they were not only knowledgeable, but contributed actively in strategic change management processes in the organization. There could have been other programme staff who are equally knowledgeable in the field of study, and whose ideas may have further informed the study. An important knowledge group could have been inadvertently ignored by limiting the findings of this study to the views of senior managers only.

## **5. 6 Suggestions for further research**

A similar study can also be carried out in the same organization to investigate the effect of change management on performance or to establish the involvement of employees and other stakeholders in the change process.

The study investigated the change management practices at Save the Children International. Similar studies can be conducted in other NGOs in Kenya working in the same area of programming as Save the Children International.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Request to Undertake Research

February 21st, 2015

To,

The Country Director

Save the Children International, Kenya Programme

P.O. Box 27679 - 00506, Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: **Request To Undertake Academic Research on Save the Children International**

I am a student undertaking an MBA degree course, specializing in Strategic Management at the University of Nairobi. As part of my course, I am request for permission to conduct a research on “Management of Strategic Change at Save the Children International, Kenya programme”


The data/results of the study will be used for educational purposes only.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,

Carolyn Obuya

## Appendix II: Letter of Introduction

  
**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**  
**MBA PROGRAMME**

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Telephone: 020-2059162  
Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi  
Telex: 22095 Varsity

P.O. Box 30197  
Nairobi, Kenya

DATE: 25th September, 2015

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**


The bearer of this letter Carolyne Cathy Obuya  
Registration No. D61/61505/2013


is a bona fide continuing student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate your assistance to enable him/her collect data in your organization.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you.

  
**PATRICK NYABUTO**  
**MBA ADMINISTRATOR**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**



## **Appendix III: Interview guide**

The interview will sought to establish the following objectives:

- (i) The change management practices at Save the Children International, Kenya programme
- (ii) The challenges faced by the management in the implementation of change programmes.

### **Part A: GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Name and Designation of the Interviewee

### **Part B: MANAGEMENT OF STRATEGIC CHANGE**

1. Which are the strategic changes that have taken place at SCI Kenya and in your department over the last few years?
2. What are the major factors that you consider favored the strategic change processes at SCI Kenya?
3. What role do you play in SCI Kenya's change management process?
4. Is the senior management team of the organization in the forefront in providing leadership to enable change implementation process, and how do they ensure their participation?
5. How does the environment influence the operations of SCI Kenya in terms of strategic alignment?
6. How is SCI Kenya currently responding to changing environment?

7. What is your comment on the organizational culture in relation to the change process?
8. What is your comment on Save the Children's organization structures, systems and procedures in terms of its support for change process(es)?
9. Does Save the Children have documented framework of monitoring and evaluating change implementation process(es)?
10. Which are the processes that are employed to ensure significant changes are implemented in an orderly manner?

**Part C: Challenges of change implementation**

11. What challenges did you experience when implementing the change process?
12. Has there been any resistance to the strategic changes at SCI Kenya?
13. If yes to 13 above, to what extent was the following resistance experienced:
  - i. Systemic (caused by organizational design, culture and resource constraints)
  - ii. Behavioral (caused by employees, managers and stakeholders)
14. What specific strategies did the organization employ to create the desire in people to support and participate in the change process?
15. Please give any other comment(s) you may have regarding the subject of this research.