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Community Stakeholder Engagement and Operational Sustainability of Kenya Equity in Education Project in Turkana County

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Operational sustainability of education initiatives in under-resourced and crisis-affected contexts depends heavily on meaningful community stakeholder engagement. This study examined the influence of community stakeholder engagement during project execution on the operational sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) in Turkana County. Grounded in the Ladder Theory of Participation and Stakeholder Theory, the research employed a descriptive design. The sample population comprised 194 respondents, drawn using stratified and simple random sampling techniques to ensure representativeness across key stakeholder groups. Specifically, 11 project staff, 26 teachers, and 154 parents were selected through this approach. In addition, purposive sampling was employed to select three key informants, namely, the Project Manager, the KEEP Education Officer, and the Chairperson of the Parent-Teacher Association, to provide specialised insights into project implementation and sustainability. Data were collected through questionnaires, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Questionnaires were administered to parents, teachers, and project staff; Focus Group Discussions were conducted with illiterate parents; and interviews with key informants were conducted. Findings show that while 63.3% of community members contributed labour and 31.6% participated in management committees and received training, there was no community contribution of materials or funds due to widespread poverty. Correlation analysis demonstrated a strong, significant relationship between community stakeholder engagement in project implementation and operational sustainability ($r = 0.641$; $p = 0.000$). However, the project's full reliance on donor funding resulted in limited financial and technical sustainability after project completion, as key activities such as scholarships, remedial classes, and facility construction ceased. Managerial sustainability persisted, as trained committees continued to manage existing facilities. The study recommends making community representation in project management and local resource contributions mandatory funding requirements. It also calls for actively involving community members in project planning, building their capacity in resource mobilisation and management, and adopting participatory approaches throughout project implementation to ensure long-term operational sustainability.

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INTRODUCTION

Efforts to improve the well-being of marginalised communities increasingly emphasise participatory approaches as a pathway to successful and sustainable development projects (Visser & Simpson, 2019). Operational sustainability, defined as the ongoing delivery of benefits after external support is withdrawn, relies on building local capacity to manage and sustain projects independently (Olukotun, 2017). In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the global development agenda now prioritises community-driven models to ensure that project outcomes endure beyond donor funding.

Central to this sustainability is community stakeholder engagement. When community members actively participate in initiating, planning, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating projects, they are more likely to take ownership and maintain benefits over the long term (Kinyata & Abiodun, 2020; Obar et al., 2017). Conversely, externally imposed interventions that overlook local needs and context often fail to achieve lasting impact (Wanyera, 2016). The execution phase is critical, as it is when planned activities are implemented and community members have opportunities to actively participate in delivering

project interventions, thereby influencing project success and ownership.

The Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP), implemented in Turkana County and funded by the Department for International Development, exemplifies these principles. Designed to break barriers to girls' education, KEEP targeted challenges such as gender bias, early marriage, and the high cost of schooling, including the provision of sanitary pads. Interventions included cash transfers for girls' school and personal needs, infrastructure upgrades to create safer and more supportive learning environments, remedial classes, and community capacity-building through the training of parents, teachers, and school management on gender-responsive and effective school governance (Girls Education Challenge, 2022).

Despite these efforts, the sustainability of such education projects remains a concern, especially in areas affected by humanitarian crises like Turkana County, where donor funding is often finite and community needs are complex. This study examines the influence of stakeholder community engagement in project execution on the operational sustainability of KEEP. By critically analysing

community stakeholder engagements and their effects on project continuity, the research aims to identify strategies for embedding sustainability mechanisms within community structures, ensuring that educational gains for girls persist long after donors disengage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the operational sustainability of projects, with a particular emphasis on the role of community stakeholder engagement during project execution. It critically reviews existing research on how community participation influences the long-term viability of projects within the context of education initiatives in marginalised regions such as Turkana County. The review identifies critical gaps in previous studies, including a limited understanding of the quality and depth of community involvement and its impact on sustainability outcomes. Additionally, it outlines the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that inform the present study, establishing a foundation for examining the relationship between community stakeholder engagement and the operational sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP).

Operational Sustainability of Projects

Operational sustainability is a central concern in development initiatives, referring to the capacity of a project to maintain the delivery of benefits and services after donors or external partners withdraw their support (Wanyera, 2016; Luvenga et al., 2015). Wanyera (2016) defines sustainability as the ongoing provision of community benefits without detrimental effects, even after managerial, technical, and financial assistance has ended. Luvenga et al. (2015) further argue that a project can only be deemed sustainable if community members themselves continue to produce outcomes independently, emphasising long-term self-reliance. Akumu and Onono (2017) expand this perspective by identifying four interrelated pillars of sustainability: financial, technical, managerial, and

social. Their model suggests that a holistic approach, attending to all these aspects, is essential for achieving enduring project impact.

Comparing sectoral studies, it is evident that capacity-building is widely regarded as a key driver of project sustainability. Nyakwaka and Muronga (2019), in their examination of a water project in Kisumu County, show that sustainability improved when project management committees received targeted training in areas such as technical maintenance and financial management. The study reports that while 45% of residents were trained in financial management, 27% learned pump repairs, and 100% received training in monitoring water levels, illustrating a comprehensive attempt to build local capabilities. This approach aligns with Akumu and Onono's (2017) multidimensional sustainability framework.

However, a critical contrast emerges in the sufficiency of such interventions. Nyakwaka and Muronga (2019) found that, despite extensive training, financial strategies, such as community water fees, were inadequate to cover ongoing repair costs. As a result, the majority of the projects failed after external support ended, with only six out of twenty-five remaining operational due to community innovation in funding mechanisms. This outcome highlights a key critique in the literature: community engagement and capacity-building, while necessary, are not sufficient if robust financial management and resource mobilisation mechanisms are lacking. The over-reliance on donors or well-wishers for operational costs left communities vulnerable (Wanyera, 2016).

Connecting these insights to the context of KEEP in Turkana County, it is clear that achieving operational sustainability requires more than just technical and managerial training. Financial self-sufficiency and resource mobilisation must be prioritised alongside other forms of capacity-building. The literature suggests that for KEEP to remain viable post-donor exit, strategies must be implemented that empower the community to

generate and manage resources effectively, ensuring the continuity of educational benefits.

Community Stakeholder Engagement in Project Execution

Community stakeholder engagement is widely recognised as a critical factor during the execution phase of projects, directly influencing their sustainability. Olukotun (2017) emphasises that effective project implementation depends on the active involvement of all stakeholders, community members, project staff, donors, and management committees. This engagement is seen as essential for translating project plans into action and for ensuring that community members acquire the skills needed to sustain the project after external support ends.

Comparative studies across sectors converge on the positive effects of participatory implementation. Luvenga et al. (2015) and Wanyera (2016) argue that involving community members in project activities builds practical skills, nurtures a sense of ownership, and increases the likelihood of long-term sustainability. Empirical evidence reinforces this view: Obar et al. (2017) demonstrate that community participation in decision-making, resource contribution, and monitoring is significantly correlated with project sustainability in social development projects. Similarly, Auma and Mulonzi (2017) found that community involvement accounted for 67% of the variation in sustainability outcomes for a food security initiative, while Onjolo (2015) reported strong positive correlations between community participation and sustainability in education projects.

However, the literature shows that how much and how well communities are involved often differ. Obar et al. (2017) observed that, while communities participated moderately in meetings and some financial contributions, their involvement in project leadership and material supply was limited, which undermined the development of managerial sustainability. Ousman (2018), studying NGO

projects, similarly found that community participation was largely confined to voluntary labour, with minimal engagement in resource mobilisation or financial planning. This points to a wider critique: superficial participation fails to develop the community's capacity for independent project management and weakens the prospects for sustainability. A further critique is that existing studies often overlook power dynamics and barriers that prevent equitable participation. There is a tendency to measure the quantity of participation rather than its quality, with insufficient attention to inclusivity or the distribution of responsibilities among community members. This can result in marginalisation of certain groups and ultimately limit project sustainability.

Applying these lessons to the KEEP project in Turkana County, it is apparent that successful project execution and sustainability depend on fostering deep, meaningful engagement among all community stakeholders. This involves empowering community members not just to participate, but to take on leadership roles, contribute resources, and manage project activities independently. Addressing barriers to engagement, such as skill gaps or lack of access to decision-making, will be essential in ensuring KEEP's long-term success. For KEEP, the literature underscores that moving beyond participation as a mere formality to genuine empowerment and capacity-building is vital for achieving operational sustainability and lasting educational outcomes in Turkana County.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Ladder Theory of Participation (Arnstein, 1969) and Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) to explore the relationship between community stakeholder engagement and the operational sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) in Turkana County.

The Ladder Theory of Participation conceptualises community involvement as a continuum, with levels

ranging from non-participation and tokenism to genuine partnership and citizen control. Higher ranks on the ladder, such as delegated power and full citizen control, are associated with increased agency, ownership, and influence over project outcomes. Within the context of KEEP, this framework provides a lens for analysing not just whether communities participate in project execution, but the extent and quality of their involvement, from passive information receipt to active participation in decision-making and oversight.

Complementing this, Stakeholder Theory underscores the importance of systematically identifying, engaging, and aligning the interests of all project stakeholders: parents, teachers, learners, project staff, donors, and the broader refugee and host communities. The Stakeholder Theory posits that project sustainability is enhanced when diverse stakeholders are meaningfully involved throughout the project lifecycle in fostering mutual accountability, resource mobilisation, and responsive management (Mitchell et al., 1997; Brugha & Varvasovszky, 2000). In the context of education in emergency settings, where multiple actors bring unique perspectives and resources, Stakeholder Theory highlights the necessity of broad-based engagement.

Integrating these two theoretical perspectives, this study proposes that the sustainability of education projects like KEEP depends on the depth of community participation and the breadth of stakeholder involvement. Specifically, it is anticipated that higher levels of community engagement in project execution, active monitoring, feedback provision, and involvement in assessment will lead to stronger local ownership, improved accountability, and better alignment of project activities with community needs, thereby enhancing the project's sustainability. Conversely, superficial or limited participation, or the exclusion of key stakeholders, is likely to undermine the project's capacity to endure beyond the donor funding period.

While the Ladder Theory has been critiqued for its linear and hierarchical assumptions, and Stakeholder Theory for its broad and sometimes ambiguous definitions, their combined application offers a robust framework for analysing how different forms and levels of participation contribute to project sustainability. This integrated framework guides the current study in assessing participation patterns within KEEP and informs recommendations for strengthening community and stakeholder roles to ensure lasting educational impact in humanitarian contexts.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is grounded in the hypothesis that stakeholder community engagement in project execution plays a critical role in determining the operational sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP). Stakeholder community engagement in project execution is conceptualised as the independent variable and is measured through several indicators: the number of community members involved in project management committees, training of project management committees, community contribution of materials and labour, and community contribution of project funds. These indicators capture the breadth and depth of stakeholder community engagement in processes fundamental to project implementation and execution.

The dependent variable, operational sustainability of KEEP, is assessed using multiple indicators that reflect the continuation of project benefits and the maintenance of project outcomes beyond the initial funding period. These include the number of girls who continue to receive scholarships after project completion, the number of girls who participate in remedial classes post-project, evidence of ongoing funding for school construction, scholarships, and remedial classes, and the continued operation of school facility construction, scholarship provision, and remedial class initiatives. Furthermore, the effective management and maintenance of

constructed classrooms, dormitories, and washrooms provide tangible evidence of sustained project impact.

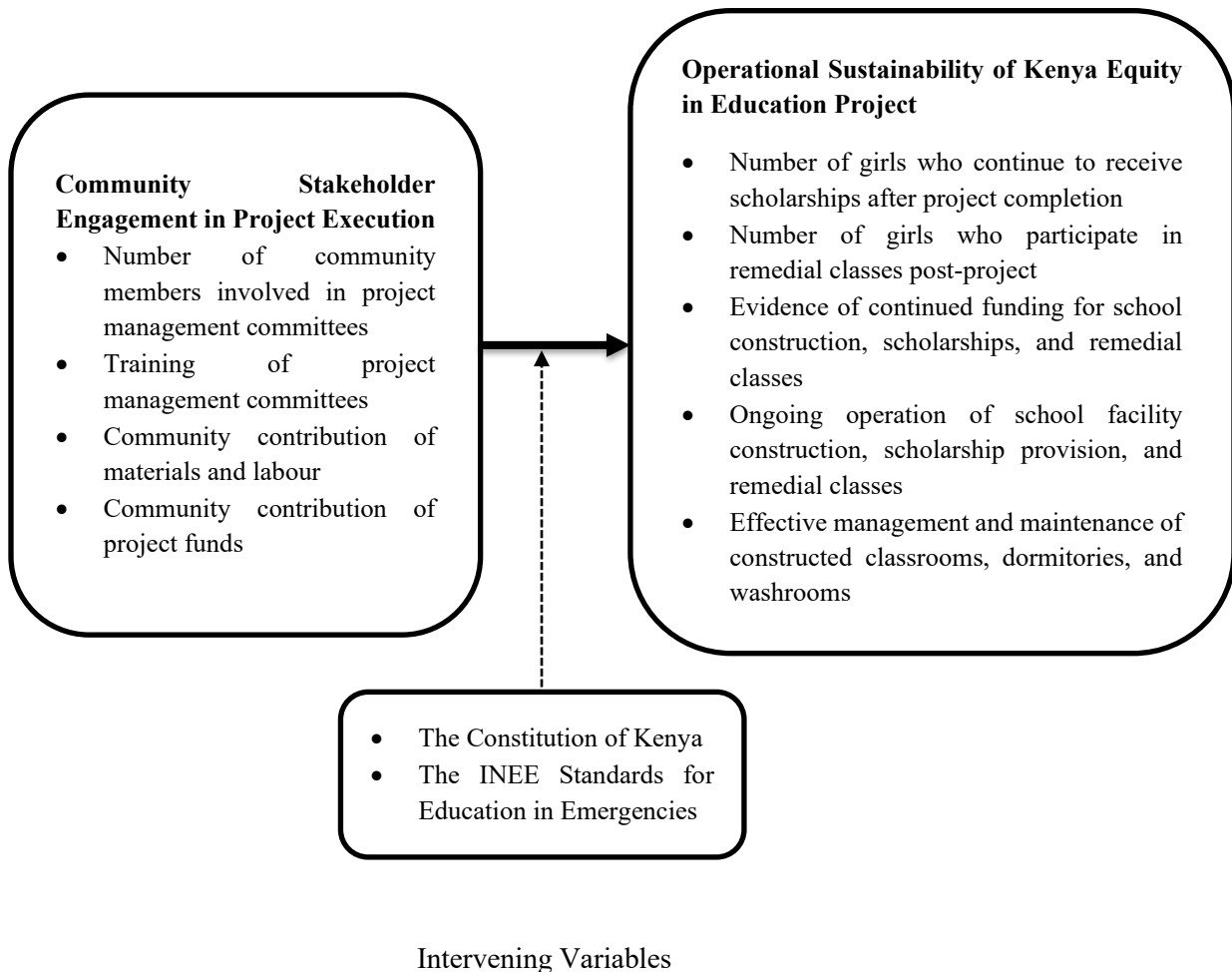
The relationship between stakeholder community engagement in project execution and operational sustainability is influenced by important intervening variables, most notably the Constitution of Kenya and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Standards. The Constitution of

Kenya mandates public participation in governance and development processes, thereby providing a legal framework that supports and legitimises stakeholder engagement in educational projects. Similarly, the INEE Standards offer a normative foundation for community involvement and accountability in education, particularly in emergency and education in crisis-affected areas like Turkana County. Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive research design, which collects and reports information to provide a

snapshot of the state of the phenomenon under study as it is. The design was appropriate for this study as it sought to collect both qualitative and quantitative information to describe the influence of

participation on the sustainability of education projects. Quantitative techniques enhanced the collection of data from a representative sample to obtain statistically valid results that were generalised to the wider community in Kakuma Refugee Camp.

This study collected numerical data on the number of community members who participated in different phases of the Kenya Equity in Education Project; estimation of the community's contributions to the KEEP project; determining the number of girls accessing scholarships, attending remedial classes and school projects undertaken. Quantitative analysis was used to determine the correlation between community participation and project sustainability. Qualitative techniques were useful in collecting data on the community's subjective experience in participation in the KEEP and in-depth descriptions of how participation affects sustainability.

Interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires were used for collecting data. Questionnaires were administered to parents, teachers, and project staff. Focus group discussions were conducted among illiterate parents, while interviews were conducted with key informants.

The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (1967), which is appropriate for a finite population and allows for a 5% margin of error. The formula is as follows: $n = \left\{ \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \right\}$, where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the margin of error. Applying this formula to a target population of 364 (excluding the three purposively selected key informants) with a margin of error of 0.05 resulted in a sample size of 194. The sample allocation across respondent categories is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Population and Sample Size

Respondents Category	Target	Sample	Percentage (%)
Project Manager	1	1	0.0
Chairperson PTA	1	1	0.0
Education Officer	1	1	0.0
Project staff	20	11	5.5
Teachers	50	26	13.7
Parents	294	154	80.7
Total	367	194	100

To ensure a representative sample, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used. Community members were stratified into project staff, teachers, and parents, with sampling frames obtained from school records. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was applied to select proportionate numbers of project staff, teachers, and parents, ensuring all groups were adequately represented. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants, including the project manager, PTA chairperson, and education officer, due to their specialised roles in KEEP. This approach maximised representativeness and diversity among the study's respondents.

The inclusion criteria for this study required participants to be actively engaged in the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) as key education stakeholders within Kakuma Refugee Camp during the study period. Respondents were selected based on their direct involvement in the administration, implementation, or oversight of the project, and included the project manager, chairperson of the Parents Teachers Association (PTA), education officer, project staff, teachers, and parents with children enrolled in participating schools. These roles were chosen as they provided diverse yet complementary perspectives on project processes, community engagement, and

sustainability outcomes. Individuals not occupying these specific roles, or those unavailable during data collection, were excluded to ensure that the data reflected firsthand knowledge and direct experience with KEEP activities. This approach ensured that the final sample represented a comprehensive cross-section of the stakeholders most knowledgeable and relevant to the study objectives.

Study Limitations

This study faced several limitations. First, since it was confined to the KEEP project in Turkana County's Kakuma Refugee Camp, the findings may not be generalizable to other regions or education initiatives with different socio-economic contexts. To address this, the researcher clearly defined the study's scope and contextualised the findings within the unique characteristics of Turkana County. Second, reliance on self-reported data from questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups introduced the risk of response bias. To mitigate this, the researcher triangulated data sources, collecting information from diverse respondent groups (parents, teachers, project staff) and using multiple data collection methods to enhance credibility. Third, measuring community engagement primarily through quantitative indicators may have overlooked the depth and quality of participation. The researcher

supplemented quantitative data with qualitative insights from focus group discussions and key informant interviews to capture nuanced perspectives. Additionally, the exclusion of stakeholders not directly involved in KEEP limited the breadth of viewpoints. This was addressed by purposively selecting key informants who held oversight roles, ensuring that strategic perspectives were included. Finally, language and literacy barriers during discussions with illiterate and semi-illiterate parents may have affected data richness. The researcher resolved this by using translators familiar with the local language and culture, facilitating more accurate communication. Despite these limitations, the study's methodological rigour and triangulation efforts helped strengthen the reliability and validity of its findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of this study was to examine how community stakeholder engagement during project execution influences the operational sustainability of the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) in Turkana County. Community members were asked to indicate their level of engagement during the implementation/execution phase and to describe how their involvement affected KEEP's operational sustainability. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Areas of Community Engagement in KEEP's Implementation Phase

Activity /Aspect of Project Implementation	YES		NO	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Member of the project implementation/management committees	56	31.6%	121	68.4%
Training on management of school projects	56	31.6%	121	68.4%
Contribution of labour during the construction of school facilities and amenities	112	63.3%	65	36.7%
Contribution of materials for use in the construction of school facilities and amenities	0	-	0	-
Contribution of funds for girls' scholarships	0	-	0	-
Contribution of funds for the construction of school facilities and amenities	0	-	0	-

Table 2 shows that the primary forms of stakeholder community engagement in the implementation of

KEEP were the provision of labour (63.3%) and participation as members of project management

committees (31.6%), including receiving training on school project management. Notably, there was no recorded community contribution of materials or funds, either towards girls' scholarships or the construction of school facilities.

Community labour contributions included parents working as casual labourers during construction and teachers assisting in remedial classes. The school management team, comprising PTA officials and school board members, was trained in project management as part of the project's sustainability strategy. However, the lack of financial or material contributions was attributed to the high poverty levels in the camp and the absence of locally available construction materials. As the project manager and PTA chairman noted, most parents could not afford even basic items such as sanitary pads, making financial contributions towards the project unrealistic.

The project's full external funding, covering tuition, remedial classes, uniforms, and cash stipends, meant that community members were not required to contribute financially. While this ensured immediate support for vulnerable girls, it also risked fostering dependency on donors. Without community financial or material investment, there is concern that local stakeholders may lack the experience or capacity to mobilise resources independently if donor funding ends, potentially threatening the project's long-term financial sustainability. This finding aligns with Obar et al. (2017), who argued that community involvement in resource mobilisation is essential for reducing dependency and enhancing project sustainability. Similarly, Luvenga et al. (2015) found that projects are more likely to be sustainable when community members contribute their resources and are actively engaged in project management.

Consistent with Olukotun (2017), training community members in technical and managerial skills is vital for building capacity to sustain project operations after external support is withdrawn. In KEEP, training the management committee was a

positive step toward sustainability. However, the absence of broader community resource mobilisation remains a significant challenge, emphasising the need for future strategies that can encourage and enable some level of local contribution, even in resource-constrained settings.

The project manager acknowledged that while community contribution of resources during implementation is instrumental in enhancing project sustainability, high poverty levels in the camp meant that parents could not make any financial contribution to the project. The manager explained:

'Contribution of resources from the community towards the implementation of the project is important in inculcating project ownership and reducing dependency. However, this project was established to assist needy students whose parents were unable to afford the high cost of educating girls in secondary schools. Most of the parents in the camp are poor and could barely afford to buy sanitary pads for their daughters, which adversely affected school attendance and performance as the girls had to miss school 4 to 5 days every month. Therefore, the parents could not make any financial contributions towards the project. However, they were employed as casual labourers while some were part of the project management committee. We also trained the school management committee, drawn from PTA officials and the school board of management, on managing school projects.' (KII#1 Project Manager)

Similarly, the PTA chairman corroborated this perspective, stating:

'Most parents in the camp are poor and cannot afford to contribute financially or provide materials for the project. Since there are no locally available construction materials in the camp, the community's role was limited to providing labour and participating in management committees.' (KII#2 PTA Chairman)

These interviews support the quantitative findings, highlighting that while community participation through labour and committee involvement was significant, poverty and lack of local resources limited broader forms of engagement and resource mobilisation. The risk of donor dependency and implications for long-term sustainability remain

critical concerns for KEEP, echoing findings by Obar et al. (2017) and Luvenga et al. (2015), and underscoring the importance of innovative approaches to community capacity building and resource mobilisation in challenging contexts like Turkana County.

Table 3: Stakeholder Community Participation in Project Implementation and Operational Sustainability

Statement	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
Participation of community members in project management committees enhances their capacity to manage projects on their own	4.00	5.00	4.944	.229
Training of the community on management enhances their ability to operate, manage and maintain KEEP	4.00	5.00	4.888	.315
Community resources, such as materials and funds were used in the implementation of the KEEP	2.00	4.00	2.155	.537
Community contribution of resources reduces dependence on donors or government	4.00	5.00	4.511	.501
Community contribution of resources fosters community ownership of the KEEP	1.00	5.00	4.700	.527
Community contribution of resources to the project makes community members more responsible for the success and sustainability of the project	1.00	5.00	4.888	.659
Aggregate Mean & Std. Dev.			4.348	0.461

Table 3 summarises respondents' views on how community stakeholder participation during the implementation phase of KEEP affects operational sustainability. The aggregate mean score (4.348, SD = 0.461) indicates that stakeholder community participation in project implementation is widely regarded as essential for achieving operational sustainability. However, the lack of community resource contributions could limit KEEP's long-term viability, underscoring the need for approaches that build capacity and enable resource mobilisation at the local level.

There is a strong consensus that involvement in project management committees (Mean = 4.944, SD = 0.229) and management training (Mean = 4.888, SD = 0.315) enhances the community's ability to manage and sustain projects independently. Correlation analysis showed that there is a strong

relationship between community stakeholder engagement in project implementation and operational sustainability of KEEP ($r = 0.641$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). This statistically significant result underscores that higher levels of community engagement are closely linked to improved sustainability outcomes for the project. These findings are consistent with studies by Luvenga et al. (2015) and Olukotun (2017), which highlight the importance of active stakeholder engagement and capacity building for long-term project viability.

Respondents also agreed that community contributions of resources, such as materials and funds, would reduce dependence on external donors (Mean = 4.511, SD = 0.501), foster a sense of ownership (Mean = 4.700, SD = 0.527), and increase responsibility for the project's success and sustainability (Mean = 4.888, SD = 0.659). This

aligns with the work of Onjolo (2015) and Auma and Mulonzi (2017), who found that increased community resource mobilisation positively correlates with project sustainability.

However, there was clear disagreement that such material or financial contributions occurred in the KEEP context (Mean = 2.155, SD = 0.537). Most community members were unable to contribute resources beyond labour and committee participation due to high poverty levels and the lack of local materials. This gap between the perceived value and actual practice of resource mobilisation is consistent with findings from Onjolo (2015) and Auma and Mulonzi (2017), who observed that while community contributions enhance sustainability, socio-economic challenges often restrict such involvement.

Key informant interviews reinforce these results. As the project manager stated, “While we have built strong management capacity within the community, the economic situation prevents parents from making financial or material contributions. This is a major limitation for sustainability.” The PTA chairman added, “Parents want to help, but poverty limits them to offering only labour or joining meetings.” The project manager further emphasised, “Without community contributions, there is a risk of dependency. The next step should be to explore models that help communities mobilise their resources, however small, to ensure project continuity.”

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study found that community stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the Kenya Equity in Education Project (KEEP) in Turkana County was low, with most participation limited to the provision of labour (63.3%) and the involvement of PTA officials and school board members in management committees (31.6%). No community members contributed materials or funds during implementation, mainly due to high poverty levels. The project was fully donor-funded, and this lack of

local resource contribution created a dependency on external support. As a result, when donor funding ended, the community was unable to sustain key project activities such as scholarships, remedial classes, and construction of new facilities, indicating limited financial and technical sustainability. However, managerial sustainability was observed, as trained school management committees continued to manage the existing facilities.

The study recommends the following:

1. Policy Recommendations

- Donors and implementing partners should make it mandatory for NGOs and CBOs to include community members in project management teams as a funding pre-condition to ensure participatory decision-making.
- Require beneficiary communities to contribute a set percentage (for example, 10-20%) of funds or materials towards project costs to build local resource mobilisation skills.

2. Practical Recommendations

- Actively involve community members in project planning to strengthen their capacity for independent project development.
- Provide training on fundraising, proposal writing, and project management to equip communities with skills for resource mobilisation and sustainable management.
- Encourage beneficiary communities to contribute resources: funds, materials, and labour, to foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for project sustainability.

3. Project Planning Recommendations

- Adopt participatory approaches throughout project implementation, ensuring community consultation and involvement in

decision-making for greater ownership and sustainability.

- Require tangible community contributions (funds, labour, materials) during implementation to strengthen resource mobilisation skills.
- Continue to build the technical and managerial capacity of community members to enable independent project operation after donor exit.

4. Recommendations for Further Research

- Assess the impact of KEEP on girls' access to education and academic performance.
- Investigate factors influencing community participation levels in development projects.

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