Monitoring and Evaluation Training on Implementation of Community Projects; Case of Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority, Kenya

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Abstract:-Monitoring and evaluation is vital for any project to be implemented effectively. In order to enhance the achievement of this effectiveness, certain factors have to be put into consideration. In Kenya, monitoring and evaluation is a new concept especially in the public sector and is slowly gaining momentum. It is for this reason that this study sought to investigate theeffects of monitoring and evaluation training on project implementation in Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority.The study was anchored on the Participatory Development Model and the Interdependence Theory. In a bid to attain the set objectives, the study adopted descriptive survey design. The target population for the study was 392 staff members of Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority. The study employed stratified and simple random sampling techniques to select a sample of 72 respondents sampled from members of staff from the sampled organisation and purposive sampling technique was employed to select 7 key informants who were heads of different departments in the organisation. Qualitative data was analysed thematically in narrations and descriptions while quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics, especially frequencies and percentages, with the assistance of the Statistical Data Analysis Package for Social Sciences. Analysed data was presented in tables of frequencies and percentages, graphs and charts. Analysed data indicated that 88.6% of respondents in the sampled organisation had not received training in monitoring and evaluation.The study recommends M&E training to be offered and highly prioritized and should be offered to all members of staff in the organisation regardless of the department they belong to and the position they hold in the organisation and proper structures need to be put in place. This will contribute positively to monitoring and evaluation in practice, policy and theory in the organization and elsewhere.

Key words: Monitoring and Evaluation; Training; Project Implementation

I. INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) strategies are essential components of any project and are crucial to its success. The challenge is not the making of an M & E system or framework but to perform an effective monitoring and evaluation (Nyabuto, 2010). Several studies have been carried out with an aim of determining the critical success factors which contribute to project success. Nyabuto(2010) posits that many countries especially the developed ones have pursued results orientated development initiatives by adopting more effective monitoring and evaluation practices. As part of the broader efforts to institutionalize Managing for Development Results (MfDR), most Governments such as Sri Lanka, Canada, and United States of America among others have taken specific steps to strengthen Results-based M&E System at their national level.

In assessing the role of training of M&E implementers, Naidoo (2011) indicated that monitoring and evaluation related factors such as M&E knowledge and supportive leadership are critical. According to Okello & Mugambi (2015) determinants of effective monitoring and evaluation system for projects, factors influence project performance include support from project sponsors, skilled project staff, availability of M&E tools and resources. But despite the knowledge that effective M&E may contribute to project performance, some organization still register poor performance of projects though majority have an M&E framework, plan or system in place. A study by Kamau and Mohamed (2015) on efficacy of monitoring and evaluation function in achieving project performance pointed out that key monitoring and evaluation factors/drivers including M&E feedback, availability of M&E resources, skilled staff as well as role of management/leadership contribute greatly to some level of good project performance.Therefore, the issue of skilled staff comes out clearly since training must be done to enhance a skilled staff.

Problem Statement

Implementation of many community projects within the public sector does not meet timeliness, it is inefficient and ineffective which among other factors is dependent on the effectiveness of its monitoring and evaluation systems.According to Naidoo (2011), though there is increasingly lots of information on implementation of Monitoring and evaluation in project management, there appears to be limited empirical evidence as to what extent Monitoring and Evaluation related factors or drivers influence performance of projects. Successful implementation of a project is therefore highly dependent on the efficiency of its monitoring and evaluation. Despite the numerous achievements that have been made under NIMES, Kenya's

M&E system still faces challenges in the implementation (CLEAR, 2012).

The facilitators of M&E require sufficient training on how to carry out M&E, sufficient funds are required for the exercise and information needs to be acquired, properly stored, frequently updated and shared among all facilitators to inform on the implementation of the projects. This study therefore sought to investigate the effects ofMonitoring and Evaluation training oncommunity projects in public sector.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to assess the effects of M & E training on implementation of community projects in Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Participatory Development Model: The participatory development model is a bottom-up approach that involves extensive stakeholder dialogues, capacity building and decision making. The approach has been used by various development partners to bring on board the primary beneficiaries in development projects since its emergence in 1970's (World Bank, 2010). The participatory model is guided by various principles including; Participation, negotiation, learning and flexibility. ADB (1996) onFramework for Mainstreaming Participatory Development Processes into Bank Operations notes that Participatory development is a process through which stakeholders can influence and share control over development initiatives, and over the decisions and resources that affect themselves. Malcolm (2003)argues that local people, project managers, project staff and other people with interest in the project are the stakeholders. They should all be involved in project development and given a platform to make decisions on project resources.

According to Chambers (2003) some of participatory Approaches include; Participatory Rural Appraisal which entails groups of local people analysing their own conditions and choosing their own means of action through methods that seek to observe and document phenomenon being observed as they occur. There is also Participatory Action research which acknowledges people through involving them in carrying out research in order to make informed decisions and Appreciative Inquiry which entails appreciating development ideas, strengthening and fulfilling them by utilizing the available approaches. Tools such as maps and diagrams are used with the support of a trained facilitator which implies that in whichever approach applied facilitators require sufficient training.

The participatory model, though highly effective, is seen as slow and time consuming since all people must be brought on board before any development initiative is undertaken. Kerzner (2009) note that time is a critical component of any project as it determines among others things; project cost and project completion period. The model is also said to be too

expensive as people must be engaged in all processes. Due to this factor some of the people may withdrawal from the process feeling their inputs are not relevant or biasness in engagement of stakeholders. The process can as well be said to be a rubber stamp to decisions made on top by the local leaders (Abugah, 2011).

*Interdependence Theory:*Interdependence theory was first used in Psychology where interdependence was seen as the mutual reliance between two or more groups. Later it was adopted and used in other fields such as managing resource interdependencies (Engwall&Jerbrant, 2003). It has been used in assessing interdependencies in organizational structures, multi project environment interdependencies (Killen, Kjaer, & Durant, 2009). Projects contain various interrelations. Reviewed literature indicates that projects are seen to be interdependent when the performance of a project depends upon variables that together contribute to the overall success in performance (Stare, 2011;Tengan,2014;Zoufa & Ochieng, 2014; Nzekwe & Emoh,2015). For instance there may be resources interdependencies which is the need to share financial and human resources to achieve certain project objectives; outcome dependencies which is the need to use results from one variable to improve a future process; learning dependency whereby information or knowledge gained from monitoring is used in evaluation or for taking corrective action (Killen, Kjaer, & Durant, 2009). There are various benefits gained from an interdependent perspective. Many organizations implementing projects prefer this approach as it promotes the aspect of mutuality among project teams. Interdependencies between project variables need to be understood and managed for best projects and outcomes.

Projects variables are said to be interdependent when the success of one variable depends upon other variables Muller &Jugdev, 2012).For example, projects may experience resource interdependencies, market or benefit interdependencies, outcome dependencies, learning dependencies and financial dependencies including budgets are shared across various activities (Killen, Kjaer, & Durant, 2009). In reference to this study, it assumed that variables under the study are interdependent.

This study was guided by Participatory Development Model and Interdependence theory. For effective monitoring and evaluation of implementation of any community project, all the facilitators need to involved and for them to participate adequately they require M&E training, sufficient facilitation in terms of funding for conducting the exercise and require to be furnished with frequent and current information on the project. In practice, Monitoring and Evaluation requires participation and involvement of all stakeholders especially the project facilitators. To conduct effective implementation of community projects, the effects of Monitoring and Evaluation on this study are all necessary.The ability by TARDA to understand their necessity and interdependence willensure there is effective project implementation.Skills and training in M&E will improve the application and use of

information available, gathering or processing while availability of funds for M&E will allow for access/purchase of improved technology and information processing, storing and sharing. Availability of funds will also enable for frequent visits to projects sites for monitoring of the implementation and training of all the facilitators on carrying out the exercises of monitoring and evaluation.

Empirical Review

The M&E system cannot function without skilled people who effectively execute the M&E tasks for which they are responsible. Regardless of how experienced individual members are, once a team to implement a project has been identified, training and capacity building for M&E reporting is important. This, it has been observed, enhances understanding of the project deliverables, reporting requirements and builds the team together (Wysocki&McGary, 2003). Training of implementers in M&E is deliberately participatory to ensure that those responsible for implementing and using the system are familiar with its design, intent, focus, and how to use the M&E tools. According to UNAIDS (2008) framework for a functional M&E system, it is noted that, not only is it necessary to have dedicated and adequate numbers of M&E staff, it is essential for this staff to have the right skills for the work. Moreover, M&E human capacity building requires a wide range of activities, including formal training, in-service training, mentorship, coaching and internships.

M&E capacity building should focus not only on the technical aspects of M&E, but also address skills in leadership, financial management, facilitation, supervision, advocacy and communication. Building an adequate supply of human resource capacity is critical for the sustainability of the M&E system and generally is an ongoing issue. Furthermore, it needs to be recognized that "growing" evaluators requires far more technically oriented M&E training and development than can usually be obtained with one or two workshops. Both formal training and on-the-job experience are important in developing evaluators with various options for training and development opportunities which include: the public sector, the private sector, universities, professional associations, job assignment, and mentoring programs (Acevedo et al., 2010).

Nabris (2002) argues that Monitoring and evaluation carried out by untrained and inexperienced people is bound to be time consuming, costly and the results generated could be impractical and irrelevant. Therefore, this will definitely impact the success of projects. In assessment of CSOs in the Pacific, UNDP (2011) discusses some of the challenges of organizational development as having inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems. The lack of capabilities and opportunities to train staff in technical skills in this area is clearly a factor to be considered. During the consultation processes, there was consensus among CSOs that their lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and skills was a major systemic gap across the region. Furthermore, while there is no need for CSOs to possess extraordinarily complex monitoring

and evaluation systems, there is certainly a need for them to possess a rudimentary knowledge of, and ability to utilize reporting, monitoring, and evaluating systems.

According to Gosling and colleagues (2003), there is a constant demand for training in planning, monitoring, review, evaluation and impact assessment for both program staff and partners in projects. Skills for numeracy, literacy, interviewing and monitoring in qualitative and quantitative methods, for management information systems are necessary for participatory monitoring and evaluation (Adan, 2012). Staff need to be trained not only on collecting descriptive information about a program, product, or any other entity but also on using something called "values" to determine what information and to draw explicitly evaluation inferences from the data, that is inferences that say something about the quality, value or importance of something (Davidson, 2004).

Players in the field of project management like project and programme managers, M & E officers, project staff and external evaluators will require specialized training not just in project management and M&E; but specifically in areas like Participatory monitoring and evaluation and results based monitoring and evaluation (Murunga, 2011). According to a study by White (2013) on monitoring and evaluation best practices in developmentInternational Non Governmental Organizations(INGOs), indicate that INGOs encounter a number of challenges when implementing or managing M&E activities one being insufficient M&E capacity where M&E staff usually advises more than one project at a time, and have a regional or sectoral assignment with a vast portfolio.

Furthermore, taking on the M&E work of too many individual projects overextends limited M&E capacity and leads to rapid burnout of M&E staff whereby high burnout and turnover rates make recruitment of skilled M&E staff difficult, and limits the organizational expertise available to support M&E development. Mibey (2011) study on factors affecting implementation of monitoring and evaluation programs in *kazikwa vijana*(Work for the youths) project, recommends that capacity building should be added as a major component of the project across the Kenya, and this calls for enhanced investment in training and human resource development in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey design appropriate for describing theeffects of M & E of community projects in TARDA, Kenya. Descriptive survey is appropriate where the study seeks to describe the characteristics of certain groups, estimate the proportion of people who have certain characteristics and make predictions (Churchill, 1991). Further, descriptive survey design was employed for its ability to produce statistical information about aspects of M&E on community projects that interest policy makers and researchers.

According to Given (2008),the research setting can be seen as the physical, social, and cultural site in which the researcher

conducts the study. TARDA is a Regional Development Authority that was incorporated in 1974 through an Act of Parliament in Kenya. TARDA was manadated to manage the Tana and Athi River Basins for sustainable socio-economic development. Its activities cover 19 countiesbut its headquarters are in the Central Business District of Nairobi County. Tana and Athi Rivers Basin covers an area of approximately 138,000 Km^2, comprising 100,000 km^2 of the Tana Basin and 38,000 km^2 of the Athi Basin. The region traverses the 19 Counties of Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Nyandarua, Murang'a, Embu, TharakaNithi, Meru, Isiolo, Kiambu, Nairobi, Machakos, Kajiado, Makueni, Kitui, Garissa, TaitaTaveta, Tana River,Lamu and Kilifi. The 2009 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) census reported a population of 14.3 million people living in the region, which is about 37% of Kenya's population. The region is inhabited by a diversity of communities, is endowed with natural resources and has good infrastructure; all providing good opportunities for development. Major Urban centers in Kenya including Nairobi are located in this region.

Data available from Human Resource records indicates that TARDA has 392 staff. The studytherefore focused on a target population of 392 out of which a sample of 72 was drawn. The Table below shows the distribution of population in different departments and the sample size.

Table1: Population and Sample Size

Department	Population	Sample
Human Resource and Administration	87	17
Engineering and Technical services	129	25
Public Relations	31	5
Information and Communication Technology	25	4
Procurement	18	3
Planning	60	11
Finance and Accounts	42	7
Total	**392**	**72**

Source: Field Data(2019)

This study employed Simple random sampling technique to obtain a sample of 79 respondents based on Mugenda & Mugenda (2013) who argue that when the study population is less than 10,000 then a sample size of between 10 and 30% is adequate representation of the target population. The 79 respondents make up 20% of the study population which is adequate representation.

This study employed stratified sampling procedure since the researcher targeted different departments with different numbers of staff within the institution's projects, programmes. The population is sub divided into departments and stratified sampling procedure was used and thereafter simple random sampling was applied on the stratus to obtain a sample size of 79 respondents which is 20% of the population

Questionnaireand Key informant interview guide are the tools that were used to collect data so as to get primary data for the research. This study also made use of secondary data obtained from websites. This was done to increase the chance of higher rate of response and lower the chance of unreturned copies.

The data collected using the study questionnaire was categorized according to variables from each question then ambiguous and unclear elements were removed. The data was then edited and coded where it was assigned values suitable for entry into and compatible with the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS V 21.0) which was used for data analysis. The purpose for data analysis was to consolidate observations that made it possible to deduce solutions to the research questions. Simple descriptive analysis was run to get reports on the data status. Descriptive analysis such as frequencies, percentages was used to present quantitative data in form of tables, charts and graphs. Qualitative data mainly obtained from interviews was analysed through descriptions and narratives to support the quantitative data and consequently aid in making conclusions.

IV. RESULTS

Response Rate

This study employed questionnaire and key informant interview guide as tools for data collection. The study targeted 72 respondents. However, out of the 72 questionnaires that were issued, 44 were satisfactorily filled. The study therefore attained a response rate of 61%which was adequate for analysis and reporting (Mugenda and Mugenda (1999).

Presence of a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit

the study first sought to establish from respondents their view of whether there was a specific M&Eunit in the organization. Their responses are shown in

Table 2: Monitoring and Evaluation Unit

Presence of M&E unit	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	79.5
No	5	11.4
I don't know	4	9.1
Total	**44**	**100.0**

Source: Author(2019).

As indicated in Table 2, majority of the respondents (79.5%) agreed to the existence of a specific monitoring and evaluation unit in TARDA while 11.4% gave a contradicting response. More so, 9.1% were unaware whether there was or there was no monitoring unit in the organisation.

Training in Monitoring and Evaluation

The study then sought to establish whether sampled respondents had received any training on monitoring and evaluation. Their responses were analysed and results are presented in Table 3, in which 88.6% of the repondents had not received any training on M & E while 11.4% of the

respondents alluded to haveto have received training. The study also established that majority of the respondents who claimed to have received training were those that held management positions in the organisation.

Table3:Receiving Training on M&E

Received M&E training	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	11.4
No	39	88.6
Total	44	100.0

Source:Author (2019).

Those that affirmed to have received training were asked to establish the kind of training that they had received. The study established that they had mainly received training on data collection and evaluation, funding allocation, procedures, indicators to be measured and expected outcome.

Effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation Training

the study sought to establish from those that had received training whether they deemed the training helpful in performing their duties. Responses obtained were analysed and are presented in Figure 1. Figure 1, in which out of 11.4% who had affirmed to have received trainingin M&E, only 37% of them deemed such training helpful in performing their duties while 63% did not find it helpful. There is very few numbers of TARDA personnel who have undergone training and even more alarming is the fact that majority of those who had undergone the training did not find it so helpful. The study was therefore concerned in establishing respondents' views on what they deemed helpful and worth learning. Respondents were of the idea that they needed to be trained on what M& E entails, how to carry out M& E, the role M& E plays in achieving the organisation's objectives and how M& E would be of benefit to them.

Figure 1: Effectiveness of M&E Training, **Source:** Authors(2019).

study sought to establish respondents' rating of training in relation to effective implementation of M& E in an organisation. Respondents were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement to statements provided in the questionnaire. Responses presented in Table 4 indicate that majority of respondents (38.6%) were of the opinion that skills and experience are needed to a very high extent to perform M& E and consequently effective implementation of community projects. Those that felt that the skills are needed to a high extent and moderate extent constituted 22.7% in each case while the least percentage of respondents (6.8%) felt that skills and experience were needed to a very small extent.

Table 4:Rating of Training

Statement	*1	*2	*3	*4	*5
Skills and experience are neededin M&E for implementation of community projects	38.6	22.7	22.7	9.1	6.8
Formal training is needed to effectively carry out M&E	29.6	25.0	25.0	13.6	6.8
Capacity building is needed to be well equipped in performing M&E	34.1	27.3	22.7	9.1	6.8
To what extent are you equipped to perform M&E on project activities?	11.4	6.8	25.0	34.1	22.7

Source:Authors(2019).

Key:*1- Very High Extent, *2- High Extent, *3- Moderate Extent, *4- Low Extent, *5- Very Low Extent

*Figures in brackets are in percentages

The respondents were further asked to express the extent to which they felt the formal trainingto express the extent to which they felt that formal training was required for effective carrying out of M&E, majority of them (29.6%) expressed the need to a very high extent. Another 25.0% of the respondents felt that the skills were needed to a high and moderate extent in each category. However, only 6.8% were for the opinion that formal training was only needed to a very low extent.

Further probe on the need for capacity building in M & E, indicate that most of the respondentsthe need for capacity building in monitoring and evaluation, Table 4.7 indicates that most of the respondents 34.1% of the respondents affirmed that it was required to a very high extent. Another 27.3% affirmed that capacity building was needed to a high extent while only 6.8% were for the opinion that it was only required to a very small extent.

The respondents were asked to express their view of the extent to which they were equipped to perform monitoring and evaluation on project activities. Majority of the respondents constituting 34.1% expressed that they had only equipped to a low extent while 25.0% to a moderate extent. Only 11.4 and 6.8% of the respondents affirmed to have been equipped to a very high extent and high extent respectively. The study was however concerned by the high number of

respondents that expressed a moderate rating in most of the sections in this area.

Contribution of M&E Training on Project implementation

Having established the importance of experience, formal training and capacity building as far as M&E are concerned, the study then sought to find out respondents view on whether M&Etraining contribute to effective implementation of projects. Information obtained was analysed and the presentation appears in Figure 2.
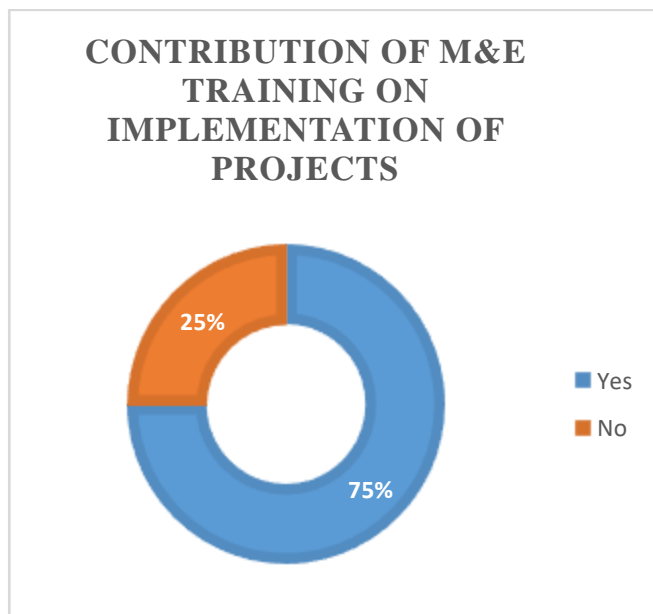

Figure 2: Contribution of M&E Training on Project Implementation,

Source: Authors(2019).

that 75% of the respondents felt that monitoring and evaluation training contributed to effective implementation of projects while only 25% of the respondents felt that it did not. Those who felt that the training in M&E contributed to effective implementation of projects further explained that training gave accuracy in tracking and rating milestones achieved. They also affirmed that it allows one to get technical know-how of what you are expected to do and gives better understanding of a project.Respondents mentioned that it enables make critical decisions and corrections, helps to ensure proper use and management of resources allocated, ensures accountability,enables one track their achievements and progress and know what areas they are failing in the implementation of projects and it helps build capacity on implementers.

Training enables one to conduct proper M&E, to keep track of project execution and ensure actual achievement of the project objective, training helps implementers to be able to plan, monitor and evaluate. Those who felt that monitoring and evaluation training did not contribute to effective implementation of projects explained that they had the experience on monitoring and evaluation and that they can learn from going to the projects as well as learn on the job.

V. CONCLUSION

The Key informants interviewed affirmed that they had been trained mainly on Results Based management while others especially those specifically entrusted with carrying out M&E had received training on performance contract targets implementation periodical monitoring and progress reporting against indicators within the NIMES to the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate. Those that affirmed to have received training were asked to establish the kind of training that they had received. The study established that they had mainly received training on data collection and evaluation, funding allocation, procedures, indicators to be measured and expected outcome. Training is vital for successful M&E of community development projects. This was also in agreement with Nabris (2002) who argues that Monitoring and evaluation carried out by untrained and inexperienced people is bound to be time consuming, costly and the results generated could be impractical and irrelevant. The study established that they needed to be trained on what Monitoring and Evaluation entails, how to carry out monitoring and evaluation, the role monitoring and evaluation plays in achieving the organisation's objectives and how monitoring and evaluation would be of benefit to them. This would equip them in carrying out M&E.

This therefore indicates that to be well equipped they require training and capacity building in M&E to be effective in project implementation. Those who felt that the training in M&E contributed to effective implementation of projects further explained that training gave accuracy in tracking and rating milestones achieved. They also affirmed that it allows one to get technical know-how of what you are expected to do and gives better understanding of a project.

Respondents mentioned that it enables make critical decisions and corrections, helps to ensure proper use and management of resources allocated, ensures accountability, enables one track their achievements and progress and know what areas they are failing in the implementation of projects and it helps build capacity on implementers. Training enables one to conduct proper Monitoring and evaluation, to keep track of project execution and ensure actual achievement of the project objective, training helps implementers to be able to plan, monitor and evaluate. Those who felt that monitoring and evaluation training did not contribute to effective implementation of projects explained that they had the experience on monitoring and evaluation and that they can learn from going to the projects as well as learn on the job.

This study established that training on monitoring and evaluation directly affects implementation of projects since when not well equipped the respondents felt they cannot be effective. All staff require training for effective implementation since for development to be effective and sustainable it requires to be participatory. This is also

supported by Participatory Development Model and Interdependence Theory since for any M&E implementation to be effective all staff should be actively involved.Community projects are interdependent in nature. The findings therefore indicate that M&E training is a major factor that affects implementation of community projects at TARDA. All facilitators require skills and experience in M&E, formal training and expertise and capacity building in M&E to be effective. The findings are in agreement with (Acevedo et al., 2010) who argue that both formal training and on-the-job experience are important in developing evaluators with various options for training and development opportunities which include: the public sector, the private sector, universities, professional associations, job assignment, and mentoring programs

VI. CONCLUSION

The study aimed at establishing the effect ofM&E training on implementation of community projects. Based on the findings, the study reveals that although training wasdeemed crucial in effective implementation of community projects, the sampled organisation did not seem to append training the seriousness it deserves. Majority of Respondents indicated that they have not received anytraining in line with monitoring and evaluation. From the key informants' point of view, they affirmed that training was actually done. However, they noted that training was mainly on resource based management (RBM) and implementation of performance contract targets. They also indicated that since M & E was a relatively new concept in the public sector, there were no proper structures in place on how it should be undertaken.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study noted that training on M&Ewas not given emphasis in TARDA. The study recommends that for any meaningful success in M&E, training has to be offered and highly prioritized. The study also recommends that training should be offered to all members of staff in the organisation regardless of the department they belong to and the position they hold in the organisation. All staff require training in M&E especially since it is evidence based. The study also recommends that proper structures need to be put in place owing to the fact that monitoring and evaluation remains a relatively new concept in government institutions.

Suggestion for Further Study

Consequently the study recommends further studies in the following areas

i. A study be undertaken on other effects of M & E on community projects in the public sector such as planning and community participation.

ii. A study be carried out in the private sector concerning M & E in a bid to establish similarities and differences of the activities in both the private and public sector.

iii. Research is also recommended in challenges that affect effective M&E in the public sector.

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