

# Contribution of Partnership Management to Project Performance in Non-Governmental Organizations: the Experience of War Child Holland Livelihood Project

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## Abstract

Partnership building is a popular and sometimes required approach for addressing complex and systemic societal issues that cannot be comprehensively addressed by any single person, organization, or sector. The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of partnership management on the performance of projects among nongovernmental organizations in Uganda. The study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature where data was collected through self-administered questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. The data collected was analyzed using custom tables. Correlation analysis was used to establish the relationship between partnership management and project performance. The study established that Planning was generally fairly done especially human resource planning but the partners could not freely make decisions. There was adequate coordination within the consortium as evident in the frequency of review meetings, clarity on reporting line and efficiency of communication but the failure of organization heads to attend coordination meetings, as required, affected implementation of action points. The study recommends that there should be respect and trust in the partnership such that Partners are allowed to make decisions freely. Action points from meetings should be followed up to ensure implementation by members of the consortium.

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## Introduction

Public and private entities have made considerable investments in collaboration and partnership building, making this a popular and sometimes required approach for addressing complex and systemic societal issues that cannot be comprehensively addressed by any single person, organization, or sector (Riggin et al., 1992; Lasker et al. 2001; Brinkerhoff, 2002; Kegler et al, 2003; Gajda, 2004). In response, organizations increasingly are collaborating to accomplish common goals, marshaling their unique capabilities to more fully serve the needs of their clientele

According to Fowler (1997), the history of partnerships can be traced right from the early 1970s among non-governmental development organizations. He emphasized that non-governmental development organizations maintain diverse interactions with each other, either because they want to or because they have to and that a medley of names are used to describe different types of relationships between non-governmental organizations and the mechanisms used to bring them about. Common are: partnerships, networks, alliances, coalitions, consortia and coordination (bodies).

Partnerships are assumed to enable parties share risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies in the short and long-term. The importance of partnerships to project success was endorsed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002 and has been at the forefront of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Namara and Bergh, 2011).

There is growing requirement for partnerships to be based on mutual trust, respect and shared vision (DFID, 2005; Guler, 2008; Warner, 2002) as cited in Kukundakwe, et al (2013). One of the underlying problems has also been the difficulty of establishing and maintaining regular contact between NGOs with the increasing numbers (Hammamet, 2002) and this call for the need for NGOs to collaborate and bond under networks and alliances.

Bray (2000) in studying community partnerships in education emphasized the need for partnerships to be genuine and involve key ingredients such as willingness to respect the viewpoints of other partners, identification, and collaboration to achieve a common task. There is no mention of distinct linkages to organizational performance and how this will result into provision of high quality and timely services to the people, as well as the cost-input ratios arising in a partnership.

Many funders, public and private alike, believe that partnerships promote effectiveness and therefore encourage or require them of grantees (Ostrower, 2005). Partnership leads

to resource- pooling, division of labor and ultimately positions service organizations to better serve their current clientele, reach a larger clientele, or address larger and more complex social issues (Austin & The Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management, 2000; Wohlstetter et al., 2005; Skelcher & Sullivan, 2008) as cited in Stuart et al (2011).

In the Ugandan perspective, partnerships are becoming a recognizable approach to work in the public, private and NGO sector. The National Development Plan (2010) for instance recognizes the importance of public private partnerships for effective service delivery and addressing the development needs. Networks and alliances have continued to take centre stage in achieving development needs.

Project performance in this study was defined as the overall quality of a project in terms of its impact, value to beneficiaries, implementation effectiveness and efficiency with regard to cost and time It was conceptualized in terms of; quality, timeliness, and cost of the project

### *Statement of the Problem*

Many funders, public and private alike, believe that partnerships promote effectiveness (Ostrower, 2005). It has been noted by several scholars that partnership can lead to resource- pooling, division of labor, and ultimately positions service organizations to better serve and reach a larger clientele, or address larger and more complex social issues (Austin & The Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management, 2000; Wohlstetter et al., 2005; Skelcher & Sullivan, 2008) as cited in Stuart et al (2011), since the goals of partnership are generally premised on the need for organizations to combine their resources and strengths to produce client or community outcomes (Andrews, 2010) as cited in Stuart et al (2011).

War Child Holland received funding from European commission to implement a three year livelihood project for youth empowerment through the help of partnership. Partner organizations were strategically selected to help in the implementation of this multi-dimensional project. Joint planning, monitoring and review meetings were planned and conducted by the consortium to ensure that implementation is done as planned with respect to schedule, quality and cost.

Despite the above efforts, there seems to be performance problems in the implementation of this project and the cause is not yet clear. For instance, several performance gaps have been observed by field officers and beneficiaries, like late implementation of activities, distribution of poor quality inputs and over expenditure (War Child Holland (WCH), 2014). To this note, the implementation of two partner organizations was put on hold to enable auditing. With the current state of affairs, there is doubt as to whether the project will achieve its intended goals let alone continuing to the end, hence the need to conduct a study. Existing literature has found a correlation between the dimensions of partnership and project performance; for instance (Kakundakwe, 2013) found out that planning is key to the performance of a project since without a plan, managers tend to encounter errors, waste, and delays. However, majority

of the studies were done in developed countries and none of them were done on livelihood projects.

### *Purpose of the study*

To establish how NGO partnership management affect the performance of projects among NGOs in Uganda.

## **Literature Review**

### *Management of partnership and project performance*

Partnership relations entail both individuals spearheading the partnerships and the organizations in general, thus the need to manage people relationships in NGO-partnerships. This study focuses on two functions of planning and coordination between War Child Holland and its partners and how this affects organisational performance. This therefore requires that partnerships should not be looked at as a one-off event or arrangement witnessed with the signing of Memorandum of understanding and giving grants but rather as a mechanism of work that involves frequent interaction and participation.

### *Planning in partnerships and NGO Performance*

Planning is a very important aspect in management and NGO partnerships in general and it is believed that “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. Without a plan, managers are set up to encounter errors, waste, and delays. A plan, on the other hand, helps a manager organize resources and activities efficiently and effectively, gives an organization a sense of direction, helps to anticipate problems and cope with change, and provides guidelines for decision making to achieve the organizations goals that relates to performance (Kakundakwe, 2013).

Among the NGOs, planning is envisaged to be a participatory process that involves all the different stake holders ensuring accountability at all levels (Action Aid International Uganda (AAIU), 2005). However, this process is not always as participatory but rather manipulative (Advocate Coalition for Development (ACODE), Policy Brief N0 7). From the findings of the study “Towards increased involvement of NGOs in the NAADS programme”, it was noted that NGOs were closer and had rapport with the people and were also using participatory approaches to involve communities. It was also mentioned that NGOs have created competition for communities’ time and duplication of services and programs that may not necessarily address community needs. Due to the procession nature of partnerships, cooperation development in most organizations is usually occasional and sporadic rather than systematic and purposeful and this influences the performance of organisations (Fowler, 1997). This impacts more on the work of Non-Governmental Organisations based on the nature of their work.

Walsh (2004) cautions against focusing management on the quality of partner relationships at the expense of the planning the quality of development work which these

partnerships are ultimately aimed at carrying out. Notably, this is in line with the major Accountability, Planning, and Learning Systems (ALPS) that aims at creating opportunities for continuous learning and strengthening both upward and downward accountability systems.

Ashman, (2001) noted the importance of understanding the complexities involved with partners bringing complex systems together and how this hinders mutually beneficial partnership arrangements and NGO performance. Crewe and Harrison, (2002), contend to this and noted that some local organizations with which donors work are treated as passive recipients who are unable to manage their own affairs. This hinders the ability of local organizations to mobilize other resources to increase income inflows, make independent decisions and implement relevant programs for addressing the identified needs in these partnerships.

### *Coordination in partnerships and Organisational Performance*

According to Katz and Khan, (1978), as cited in Cheng (1983), coordination involves bringing together the different elements and parts of an organisation and its strategic fit in the internal and external environment. This tally with the open systems approach that look at organisations as interrelated units and a sum of its parts. It requires functional feedback system and communication cycle that allows for sharing of information and managing complexities that come with bringing systems together and may hinder mutually beneficial relationships (Ashman, 2001). While there are diverse views that exist on partnerships, Fowler (1991), Susan, (2009) concur with the need for mutually enabling inter-dependent interactions that are built on trust and shared vision for sustainable NGO partnerships. Absence of mutual interactions will result into lack of focus on the purpose of partnerships and failure to meet the expectations of the different stakeholders in an efficient and effective way.

AAIU'S midterm review report in 2007 highlighted six areas of strategic change management to improve organisational performance. Objective 4 of AAIU's change management plan has been: "Improving organizational effectiveness through strengthening the management role in ensuring organizational health with specific attention to re-definition of staff roles and enforcement of performance management systems. The 2010 CSP III evaluation report mentions that this has been partially achieved with relatively high levels of efficiency and less effectiveness.

### **Methods**

The research was a case study of War Child Holland's Livelihood project. This design was enabled the researchers to obtain in-depth information about the partnership and project performance.

The study was descriptive in nature as it intended to capture the effects of different partnership sub variables to project performance. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted in the study. Combining numerical and textual information helped the researchers to enrich the interpretation of findings of the study.

The respondents included project managers, Project officers, accountants and project beneficiaries including the local leaders. A total of one hundred fifty four (154) respondents out of one hundred eighty eight (188) were contacted.

Purposive sampling was used to select the project staff targeting those who possess the required knowledge on the subject matter (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Simple random sampling was used to select the project beneficiaries and the local council leaders. Project staff, including managers, project coordinators, project officers, and accountants were given structured questionnaires. Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data from the Project Manager, Local leaders and beneficiaries. Focused group discussions were also used to collect information from the project beneficiaries involving four groups in each of the two districts.

A validity test was carried out prior to the administration of the research instruments. The average Content Validity Index obtained was 0.77 which was good enough for the researchers to go ahead with data collection.

Descriptive statistics were used to characterize partnership management and project performance Correlation analysis was used to establish the relationship between partnership management and project performance. The qualitative data from interviews were reviewed thoroughly, sorted and classified into themes and categories, in order to support the quantitative data.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Background of the respondents*

Table 1: Background of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	20 – 30	20	33.3	33.3
	31 – 40	37	61.7	95.0
	41 – 50	3	5.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	
Gender	Male	45	75.0	75.0
	Female	15	25.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	
Highest educational attainment	Certificate	1	1.7	1.7
	Diploma	5	8.3	10.0
	Bachelor's Degree	47	78.3	88.3
	Post Graduate Diploma	4	6.7	95.0
	Master's Degree+	3	5.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	

Data concerning the background information of the respondents was collected and presented in this section. Details concerning their age, gender and level of education were collected and are presented in the sections that follow.

### Age of the Respondents

The age of the respondent has over the years been identified with the efficiency with which a person executes their duties. Younger employees are known to be productive, faster both in thinking and practice, adaptable to technological changes and are less resistant to change (Banner & Padilla, 2011) While younger employees might be faster, they are likely to make more mistakes because of the speed they use and their lack of experience in the area of duty. The information on age was gathered from employees of all the implementing partners to establish the status quo and how this affects overall organisational performance. The results from table 5 above shows that most staff (61.7%) were from the age category 31-40 years followed by those in the age group 20-30 years with 33% and 5% above 40years old. The results mean that majority of the staff were mainly young people. This is likely to improve the overall project performance since younger employees are likely to be more efficient at executing their duties as compared to the older ones.

### Gender of the Respondent

It was a requirement by War Child Holland to have gender balance as an area of focus during the recruitment process. This was aimed at improving organisational performance in the departments where ladies are generally known to perform than men. The results concerning gender of the persons involved in the project was presented in table 5

As seen from table 5, statistics show that majority (75%) of the respondents were male while the rest (25%) were female. The results imply that the consortium had more male employees as compared to their female counter parts. This suggests that the level of project performance attempted to reflect the productivity of both males and females though the males were the majority. This can be explained by the fact that much as WCH emphasized gender balance, other members of the consortium (organisations) did not put emphasis on gender balance in recruitment. The demographic data of the center local leaders (4) and beneficiaries (57) were not captured by the interview guide because it was not found useful in the analysis as compared to the data on staffs.

### Level of education

Coupled with other factors like work experience, education qualification has often times been taken as a critical factor in the recruitment process at work places. This is because education contributes to ones performance. In this study, questions were asked on the level of education of the respondents and the following statistics were obtained. From table 5 above, majority of the respondents had attained bachelor's degree (78%), with 8% having ordinary diploma, 7% Post graduate diploma, 3% had Masters degree and 2% had an ordinary certificate. This implies that the work force had adequate educational qualifications needed to execute their roles in the project.

### *Partnership Management under War Child Holland's Livelihood project*

This objective was set to examine the management of partnership under War Child Holland project. The researcher sought to understand whether management of partnership was adequately done under this livelihood project.

#### Planning

Planning is a very important aspect in management in general and NGO partnerships in particular. Without a plan, managers are set up to encounter errors, waste, and delays. A plan on the other hand, helps a manager organize resources and activities efficiently and effectively, gives an organization a sense of direction, helps to anticipate problems and cope with change, and provides guidelines for decision making to achieve the organizations goals that relates to performance (Kakundakwe, 2013)

Under planning, several questions were asked to establish how planning was done under this project and table 2 gives the descriptive statistics showing the view of the respondents

Table 2: Descriptive statistics on planning

Indicators	Percentage response					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Agreed
Partners are consulted on issues that affect the partnership with War Child Holland.	0.00	18.33	0.00	71.67	10.00	81.67
Partners are involved in planning processes	0.00	10.00	8.33	71.67	10.00	81.67
The partners organizations can easily make decision within the partnership without fear and hesitation	0.00	80.00	1.67	18.33	0.00	18.33
The organization provides a framework for monitoring progress of the project under partnership	11.67	38.33	1.67	31.67	16.67	48.33
Planning is regularly done on the best use of the available human resource under the project.	0.00	5.00	3.33	90.00	1.67	91.67
Average	2.33	30.33	3.00	56.67	7.67	64.33

The findings revealed that Planning was generally fairly done especially human resource planning (92% agreed). Similarly, partners were found to be involved in the planning processes and were consulted regularly on issues that affected the partnership (82% agreed). One of the key informant noted that; “*Planning for the project was done together by the consortium, for instance, on bimonthly basis; planning and review meetings were done by the consortium*”. However, decision making within the partnerships was a very big problem since partners could not freely make decisions. Monitoring Progress of projects was also found facing some challenges since 52% disagreed to having a monitoring framework.



## Coordination

Coordination is seen as key in ensuring the success of partnerships. This requires functional feedback system and communication cycle that allows for sharing of information and managing complexities that come with bringing systems together and may hinder mutually beneficial relationships (Ashman, 2001). The focus here was on the assessment of how coordination was done in the project and table 3 is the descriptive statistics reflecting the findings.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on Coordination

Indicators	Percentage response					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Agreed
Review meetings are conducted by Partners under this partnership	0.00	1.67	0.00	76.67	21.67	98.33
Action points from review meetings are taken seriously by the partners	1.67	78.33	1.67	15.00	3.33	18.33
There is efficient communication with the partners under the project.	1.67	40.00	1.67	55.00	1.67	56.67
There are clear reporting guidelines for the recipient organizations in the partnerships.	1.67	3.33	0.00	81.67	13.33	95.00
There is always feedback on reports submitted by the recipient organizations.	0.00	13.33	13.33	71.67	1.67	73.33
Average	1.00	27.33	3.33	60.00	8.33	68.33

From table 8 above, it was observed that generally coordination was done well within the consortium as evident in the frequency of review meetings, clarity on reporting line within the partnership and efficiency of communication as confirmed by regular feedback on reports submitted by the members of the consortium to the lead agency. Statistically, 98% of the respondents agreed to have regular review meetings, 95% agreed to have clear reporting guidelines with 73% agreeing to have feedback on reports they submit. Despite the above, it was found that much as review meetings were regularly done, action points from these meetings were not taken seriously by some members of the consortium where 80% of the respondents noted that action points were not taken seriously. This concurs with the finding from a key informant who had this to say; “much as review meetings were done, some organisation heads persistently did not attend this meetings and instead delegated junior officers, contrary to the requirement of this meeting. This greatly affected unanimous decision making and implementation”.

### *Project Performance*

This section looks at the dimensions of project performance with focus on timeliness, quality, cost and impact

#### Timeliness

Here questions are asked to ascertain whether timeliness was observed by the partners during the implementation of this project. Table 4 provides the descriptive statistics.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics on timeliness

Indicators	Percent					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Agreed
Project activities were implemented on time	0.00	86.67	0.00	11.67	1.67	13.33
Employees promptly get the information they need to execute tasks on time	0.00	33.33	0.00	66.67	0.00	66.67
Timely financial reports are submitted by partners.	1.67	75.00	0.00	23.33	0.00	23.33
Time management is highly esteemed by staff in this project.	0.00	45.00	1.67	53.33	0.00	53.33
Financial supports were submitted timely to partners	16.67	71.67	1.67	10.00	0.00	10.00
Average	3.67	62.33	0.67	33.00	0.33	33.33

Regarding timeliness, the study shows that timeliness was not esteemed by staffs under this project. Much as employees got information needed to execute task on time (67% Agreed), time management under this project was generally poor. This was evident by the fact that only 13% of the respondents agreed that project activities were implemented on time while 87% noted lateness in the implementation by partners. Other than late activity implementation, late submission of financial reports was also noted by 75% of the respondents and this explains the late remittance of financial support as noted by 72% of the respondents since timely accountability was a precondition for timely remittance of funds to partners. This is in line with the findings from the interviews where it was realized that the partners did not observe implementation schedule for instance one group of respondents pointed that they completed building the houses of their poultry in time but the distribution delayed for over two months for it to be done. Similarly, another group of respondents were noted missing of trainings by the trainers all of which delayed completion of activities.

## Quality

The study also sought to establish the extent to which the partners in the project observed quality during the course of implementation. Questions were asked on the quality of reports, services offered and level of satisfaction of beneficiaries with the services offered.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on quality

Indicators	Percent					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Agreed
Reports prepared on the project are always accepted with minor changes.	0.00	1.67	1.67	93.33	3.33	96.67
The quality of services offered under this project is high.	0.00	53.33	10.00	35.00	1.67	36.67
High quality reports are submitted by partners	0.00	63.33	5.00	31.67	0.00	31.67
There are quality control measures to guide the project	0.00	70.00	13.33	15.00	1.67	16.67
Beneficiaries are satisfied with the quality of services offered by the project	1.67	60.00	15.00	21.67	1.67	23.33
Average	0.33	49.67	9.00	39.33	1.67	41.00

On quality, the findings shows that generally the quality of services rendered were low (noted by 53%) where 60% of the respondents noted dissatisfaction of the beneficiaries with the quality of the services offered. This could be explained by the fact that quality control measures were inadequate as noted by 70% of the respondents. This is in agreement with the findings from interviews where much as the quality of training was found good, the quality of start-up items given to beneficiaries was found wanting. One beneficiary for poultry commented; *“some of the hens given were too young to be kept and this was made worse by the fact that they were not vaccinated”*.

## Cost

From table 6 above, the findings shows that cost management was poorly done with an average of (54% disagreeing) and only (23% agreeing). For instance evidence of over expenditure was seen when 67% of the respondents disagreed to the question of whether costs were made within approved budgets. Similarly, only 8% of the respondents agreed that greater percentage of the budget was spent on beneficiaries with 72% disagreeing. The poor cost management could be explained by the fact that the partners did not have their cost sharing funds readily available since over 90% of the respondents pointed this and as such partners could not ensure value for money during implementation. Similarly,

findings from interviews found that partners did not have their match funding available and to that note, one respondent had this to say “*we accepted to contribute the match funding not because it was there but rather to enable us get this funding*”.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics on cost

Indicators	Percent					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Agreed
Expenditure are made within approved budget	0.00	66.67	1.67	31.67	0.00	31.67
Cost sharing funds from organizations are readily available for implementation	68.33	23.33	0.00	6.67	1.67	8.33
Value for money was highly esteemed by implementing partners	0.00	43.33	11.67	45.00	0.00	45.00
Greater percentage of the budget is spent on beneficiaries	20.00	71.67	0.00	3.33	5.00	8.33
Proper financial reports are submitted by partners	0.00	68.33	11.67	20.00	0.00	20.00
Average	17.67	54.67	5.00	21.33	1.33	22.67

### Impact

Regarding the impact of the project, the findings reveals a high level of benefits realized by the beneficiaries for instance 92% of the respondents noted that the project provided livelihoods for the youths under the project and this was further supported by 58% of the respondents who agreed that the beneficiaries under the project can now support their families as they were found to be using their skills according to 93% of the respondents. This is contrary to the findings from interviews where beneficiaries stated that much as they got the skills and knowledge in the various trades, it was not adequate for them to become independent and support their families. A number of them noted that all their hens died shortly after distribution because they were not vaccinated. Some beneficiaries for apiary also said that they did not get their beehives (start-ups) after the training and this incapacitated them from actualizing what they have learnt from the training

Table 7: Descriptive statistics on impact

Indicators	Percent					
	Strongly disagreed	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree	Agreed
The project has provided livelihoods for the youths under the project	0.00	6.67	1.67	88.33	3.33	91.67
The youths under the project can now support their families	1.67	13.33	26.67	58.33	0.00	58.33
The youths under this project are using the skills gained from the project	0.00	33.33	3.33	63.33	0.00	63.33
The youth can continue using the gains from the project even after the project	0.00	5.00	1.67	93.33	0.00	93.33
Average	0.42	14.58	8.33	75.83	0.83	76.67

### Influence of partnership management on performance

This subsection focused at the relationship between the dimensions of partnership management and that of performance. A correlation analysis was done and table 8 gives the findings from the analysis

The findings in table 8 above shows that management of Partnership which includes, planning and coordination; and partnership arrangement (contracts and accountability) have a significant influence on timeliness of delivery of services but not quality and impact. Similarly, Personnel and shared values also have a significant influence on timeliness. However generally, it is only planning that has a significant influence on performance. This means that an improvement in this dimension of partnership management would have a corresponding influence on timeliness. On the same note, an improvement in planning brings about a corresponding improvement in performance.

Table 8: Correlation between partnership and project performance

		Timeliness	Quality	Cost	Impact	Performance
Planning	Pearson Correlation	.449(**)	-.074	.194	.215	.268(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.575	.138	.099	.038
	N	60	60	60	60	60
Coordination	Pearson Correlation	.326(*)	-.092	.167	.046	.151
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.483	.201	.726	.250
	N	60	60	60	60	60

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## **Discussion, conclusion, and recommendations**

### *Discussion of the results*

#### Planning

Regarding planning under the project (partnership), the findings revealed that Planning was fairly done especially human resource planning (92% agreed). This finding concurs with the view from Kakundakwe et al (2013) who noted that Planning is a very important aspect in management and NGO partnerships in general. They argue that without a plan, managers are set up to encounter errors, waste, and delays.

Similarly, partners were found to be involved in the planning processes and were consulted regularly on issues that affected the partnership (82% agreed). One of the key informant noted that; *“Planning for the project was done together by the consortium, for instance, on bimonthly basis; planning and review meetings were done by the consortium”*. This finding is also in agreement with views in (AAIU report, 2005) which pointed that planning among NGOs is envisaged to be a participatory process that involves all the different stake holders ensuring accountability at all levels. However, Crewe and Harrison, (2002), contend to this and noted that some local organizations with which donors work are treated as passive recipients who are unable to manage their own affairs. This hinders the ability of local organizations to mobilize other resources to increase income inflows, make independent decisions and implement relevant programs for addressing the identified needs in these partnerships. Similarly, the planning process among NGOs is seen as manipulative rather than participatory (ACODE, Policy Brief N0 7).

Monitoring Progress of projects was also found facing some challenges since 52% disagreed to having a monitoring framework. This finding undermines the importance of monitoring and evaluation as raised by Martens 2002. He voiced the need to insert an explicit evaluation function in foreign aid program if performance problems are to be eliminated.

#### Coordination

From the findings, it was observed that generally coordination was done well within the consortium as evident in the frequency of review meetings, clarity on reporting line within the partnership and efficiency of communication as confirmed by regular feedback on reports submitted by the members of the consortium to the lead agency. Statistically, 98% of the respondents agreed to have regular review meetings, 95% agreed to have clear reporting guidelines with 73% agreeing to have feedback on reports they submit. This finding links to the view of Ashman, (2001) who also emphasized that good coordination requires functional feedback system and communication cycle that allows for sharing of information and managing complexities that come with bringing systems together. While there are diverse views that exist on partnerships, Fowler (2002), Susan, (2009) concur

with the need for mutually enabling inter-dependent interactions that are built on trust and shared vision for sustainable NGO partnerships.

Despite the above, it was found that much as review meetings were regularly done, action points from these meetings were not taken seriously by some members of the consortium where 80% of the respondents noted that action points were not taken seriously.

### Performance of War Child Holland's Livelihood project

#### Timeliness

Regarding timeliness, the study shows that timeliness was not esteemed by staffs under this project. Much as employees got information needed to execute task on time (67% Agreed), time management under this project was generally poor. This was evident by the fact that only 13% of the respondents agreed that project activities were implemented on time while 87% noted lateness in the implementation by partners. Other than late activity implementation, late submission of financial reports was also noted by 75% of the respondents and this explains the late remittance of financial support as noted by 72% of the respondents since timely accountability was a precondition for timely remittance of funds to partners.

This finding undermines the views advanced by Yochum (20116) who argues that the profitability and survival of project depends on the delivery of projects on time and to the budget.

#### Quality

On quality, the findings shows that generally the quality of services rendered were low (noted by 53%), where 60% of the respondents noted dissatisfaction of the beneficiaries with the quality of the services offered. This could be explained by the fact that quality control measures were inadequate as noted by 70% of the respondents. This is in agreement with the findings from interviews where much as the quality of training was found good, the quality of start-up items given to beneficiaries was found wanting. One beneficiary for poultry commented; *"some of the hens given were too young to be kept and this was made worse by the fact that they were not vaccinated"*. This finding undermines the argument raised by Evans (2000), where customer-driven quality is seen as fundamental to high-performing organisations. Similarly, Deming (2000) states, that maintaining a higher quality leads to a long term comparative strength. This is because improved quality leads to reduced costs because of less re-work, fewer mistakes, fewer delays and better use of time and materials.

Juran & De Feo (2010) views the concept of quality from two perspectives; the mission of the company to achieve high quality products and the mission of the individual department to achieve high production quality. Therefore it is important to raise awareness among employees in the company regarding quality (Krishman, 2006)

## Cost

The findings show that cost management was poorly done with an average of (54% disagreeing) and only (23% agreeing). For instance evidence of over expenditure was seen when 67% of the respondents disagreed to the question of whether costs were made within approved budgets. Similarly, only 8% of the respondents agreed that greater percentage of the budget was spent on beneficiaries with 72% disagreeing. This is contrary to arguments from Lewis & Kanji (2009), who pointed that for a project to be efficient, as much money as possible should be spent on reaching project-beneficiaries. Mowles et al., (2008) however contends to this by saying that exceptions may be possible when such support clearly enhances the ability of local counterparts to 'deliver' the targets towards the success of the project.

The poor cost management could be explained by the fact that the partners did not have their cost sharing funds readily available since over 90% of the respondents pointed this and as such, partners could not ensure value for money during implementation. Apart from cost sharing factor, it is argued that cost overruns in association with project delays are frequently identified as one of the principal factors leading to the high cost of construction (Charles and Andrew, (1990) as cited by Bowen (2000)

## Impact

Regarding the impact of the project, the findings reveals a high level of benefits realized by the beneficiaries for instance 92% of the respondents noted that the project provided livelihoods for the youths under the project and this was further supported by 58% of the respondents who agreed that the beneficiaries under the project can now support their families as they were found to be using their skills according to 93% of the respondents. This is contrary to the findings from interviews where beneficiaries stated that much as they got the skills and knowledge in the various trades, it was not adequate for them to become independent and support their families. This is in agreement with Ashong et al (2015), who argued that the impact of livelihood activities on the welfare of beneficiaries should be looked at from their ability to meet their basic needs including food, cloth, education, medical care for members of the family.

A number of them noted that all their hens died shortly after distribution because they were not vaccinated. Some beneficiaries for apiary also said that they did not get their beehives (start-ups) after the training and this incapacitated them from actualizing what they have learnt from the training. Similarly, in their study, Ashong et al (2015) raised the question of whether opportunities are equally tapped by the different members of the communities. They noted variation in the strength of communities to tap the opportunities within the project a factor that had implications for the various livelihood activities and welfare of the beneficiaries, though the general picture of the impact of the project on the welfare of the people was found positive to a large extent

## Influence of partnership on performance of War Child Holland's Livelihood project



The findings established that management of Partnership which includes, planning and coordination have a significant influence on timeliness of delivery of services but not quality and impact. This agrees with several studies that found a positive correlation between education and core task performance. In two major studies, Hunter & Hunter, (1984); Schmidt & Hunter, (1998) found that cognitive ability was strongly related to job performance and was an important contributor to success on virtually every job.

### *Conclusion*

Non-Governmental Organizations have a lot to gain in working together if they improve on the management and coordination of their activities especially in timely delivery of services by sharing resources and competencies. Top management of partner organizations, however, have to be directly involved in the coordination of the activities to facilitate implementation of agreed positions

### *Recommendations*

The organization should also have in place a monitoring and evaluation plan as this will ensure regular collection and analysis of information on performance, making it possible for corrective measures in case of poor performance.

There should be respect and trust in the partnership such that Partners are allowed to make decisions freely

Action points from meetings should be followed up to ensure implementation by members of the consortium

The partners organizations should adopt and include aspects of time in their contracts with service providers since most of the delays were caused by late delivery of start-ups by the service providers.

The partner organizations should also put in place quality control measures so as to ensure that the quality of goods and services are acceptable.

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