The Strategies for Involving Community in Sustaining Government-Funded School Projects in Morogoro Region

[1]Bonephace Gonjo*
Jordan University College
P.O BOX 1787
MOROGORO- Tanzania

[2]Paul Dominic Mushi
Jordan University College
P.O BOX 1787
MOROGORO- Tanzania

[3]Solomon Wachara Omer,
Jordan University College
P.O BOX 1787
MOROGORO- Tanzania

Abstract:- The main objective of the study reported in this study was to determine the strategies for involving community in sustaining government-funded school projects in Morogoro region. The study used case study research design to determine the strategies from a total sample of 23 comprising of 10 headmasters, 1 ward councillor, 2 Ward educational officers and 10 school board chairmen who were selected using interviews (Semi-structured Interview) and documentary review were technique. Both interviws guide and open ended questionnare were used for collecting qualitative data which were then analzyed using thematic approach which allowed identification of key themes and patterns that emerged from the participants' perspectives on the community engagement strategies. Findings have revealed that community involvement in government-funded school projects is critically low in Morogoro region despite the recognized importance of community engagement in enhancing educational outcomes and project sustainability. It is therefore suggested that the formed project committee members should play a vital role in enhancing community ownership, fostering buy-in, and ultimately contributing to the successful achievement of project objectives.

Keywords:- Community, Strategies, Government funded Projects, Sustainability.

I. INTRODUCTION

The determination of strategies for community involvement in sustaining government-funded school projects is crucial, given the historical context of educational policies and the significant role of community participation in enhancing educational outcomes. Since Tanzania's independence in 1961, various policies have been implemented to promote community engagement in education, notably the "Education for Self-Reliance" policy, which emphasized the community's role in constructing educational facilities such as schools and classrooms (Stewart, 2023). The Tanzanian Policy on Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP), launched in 2004, further reinforced this approach by focusing on the development of ward-based secondary schools, thereby highlighting the importance of local community involvement in educational infrastructure projects (URT, 2004).

Research indicates that community participation positively influences educational outcomes, including equitable access to education, improved quality of facilities, and enhanced school performance (Kamau et al., 2021). Furthermore, involving local communities in school projects fosters a sense of ownership and leads to better retention rates and overall academic success. This is particularly relevant in the Morogoro Region, where community engagement can be pivotal in addressing challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and resource allocation. That, the integration of technology in educational management has also been identified as a means to enhance community participation, allowing for more effective communication and feedback mechanisms between schools and their communities (Kurniawan, 2024). However, the challenges for effective community participation cannot be overlooked. Factors such as low socio-economic status, negative attitudes towards education, and inadequate communication between schools and communities can hinder engagement efforts (Godfrey, 2016). Moreover, the effectiveness of community involvement strategies is often contingent upon the capacity and awareness of community members regarding their roles in educational governance (Kamau et al., 2021). For instance, School Management Committees (SMCs) play a critical role in overseeing school activities and encouraging community participation, yet they face obstacles such as political interference and lack of resources (Puri, 2024).

To address these challenges, it is essential to develop comprehensive strategies that promote community involvement through structured frameworks that facilitate community engagement and resource allocation (Musyarapah & Helmiannoor, 2019). Such strategies should also consider the socio-economic dynamics of the Region, ensuring that community members are not only participants but also beneficiaries of educational initiatives. By fostering strong partnerships between schools, parents, and local communities, it is possible to create a supportive environment that enhances educational quality and sustainability (Eden, 2024). Therefore, the exploration of community involvement strategies in Morogoro Region needs to consider both the historical context of educational policies and the contemporary challenges faced by local communities. By leveraging community strengths and addressing barriers to participation, sustainable government-funded school projects can be achieved, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of improving educational outcomes in Tanzania.

The Morogoro Region of Tanzania faces significant challenges in sustaining government-funded school projects, primarily due to insufficient community involvement. Community participation is recognized as a critical factor in enhancing educational outcomes. However, many government-funded initiatives struggle to maintain momentum and effectiveness after their initial implementation. This issue is exacerbated by various socio-economic factors, including low levels of education among parents, economic constraints, and cultural attitudes towards education, which collectively hinder active participation in school governance and project sustainability (Godfrey, 2016). Research indicates that effective community involvement can lead to improved educational quality and resource management. However, the lack of structured strategies to engage local communities in Morogoro has resulted in a disconnect of government funded school projects in their surrounding populations (Musyarapah & Helmiannoor, 2019). Many community members for instance, are unaware of their roles and responsibilities in supporting educational initiatives, which diminishes their capacity to contribute meaningfully (Rahmatullah et al., 2021). The existing communication channels between schools and communities are often inadequate, leading to misunderstandings and a lack of trust, which are essential for fostering collaborative relationships (Kamkwis & Zumo, 2019).

Additionally, the socio-economic disparities prevalent in the region further complicate community engagement efforts. Many families in Morogoro face financial hardships that limit their ability to participate in school activities or contribute to infrastructure development (Machange & Munyogwa, 2022). Consequently, without a clear framework for community involvement that addresses these barriers, government-funded school projects are at risk of failing to achieve their intended outcomes, ultimately affecting the quality of education and the overall development of the region (Sakibu & Kamugisha, 2022). The current study therefore, highlights the urgent need to explore and implement effective community involvement strategies that can sustain government-funded school projects in Morogoro Region. The strategies can be effective if they address the socio-economic challenges, enhancing communication, and fostering a sense of ownership among community members which are critical steps toward ensuring the long-term success of educational initiatives in this area.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study was to determine the strategies for involving community in sustaining government-funded school projects in Morogoro region The following specific objectives were addressed during the study;
- To identify key community stakeholders in sustaining government-funded school projects
- To determine the development of community engagement for sustainable government-funded school projects.
- To highlight community resource mobilization for sustaining government-funded school projects.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Key Community Stakeholders in Sustaining Government-Funded School Projects

The sustainability of government-funded school projects is significantly influenced by the active involvement of various community stakeholders. According to Tibbits et al. (2021) who defined Key community stakeholders as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the school projects. In the context of school projects, this includes not only government entities but also parents, local community members, school administrators, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The engagement of these stakeholders is crucial for fostering a sense of ownership and accountability, which are essential for the sustainability of educational initiatives (Cottafava et al., 2019). Moreover, the concept of community engagement emphasizes the importance of local knowledge and participation in decision-making processes. This approach aligns with the principles of participatory governance, which advocate for the inclusion of diverse community voices in the planning and implementation of projects (Ross, 2018). Such engagement not only enhances the relevance of educational programs but also builds local capacity and resilience, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustained outcomes (Gunawan et al., 2023).

Therefore, the sustainability of government-funded school projects in Morogoro Region relies heavily on the active involvement of key community stakeholders, including parents, local government, school administrators, NGOs, and community members.

B. Fostering Community Engagement for Sustainable Government-Funded School Projects

Community awareness is often framed within the context of social capital theory, which posits that social networks, norms, and trust facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Ibrahim & Wan-Puteh, 2018). In educational settings, higher levels of community awareness can lead to increased participation in school projects, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members. This is essential for the sustainability of a school projects, as engaged communities are more likely to support and maintain initiatives over time (Njue, 2021). Furthermore, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) provides insights into how attitudes influence behaviors related to community engagement. TPB suggests that an individual's intention to engage in a behavior is influenced by their attitudes towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Dongen et al., 2022). In the context of school projects, positive community attitudes towards education and project sustainability can enhance participation and support, while negative attitudes may hinder these efforts (Mutale et al., 2015).

Therefore, community awareness and attitudes play a critical role in sustaining government-funded school projects in Morogoro Region. also provides valuable insights into the dynamics of community engagement and underscores the importance of effective communication, capacity building, and stakeholder involvement in fostering positive community attitudes and building awareness in funded school projects.

C. Enhancing Community Resource Mobilization for Sustaining Government-Funded School Projects

The potential for resource mobilization within communities is a critical factor in sustaining government-funded school projects. This literature review synthesizes theoretical frameworks and empirical studies that explore the dynamics of resource mobilization, highlighting the importance of community engagement and collaboration in ensuring the sustainability of educational initiatives. The study indicates that schools can create environments that foster relationships among parents and community members, which can be leveraged to mobilize resources for educational projects (Quinn et al., 2020). This highlights the potential for schools to act as hubs for community engagement, thereby enhancing resource mobilization efforts. Nguyen and Nguyen discuss the mobilization of social resources in Vietnam, emphasizing the importance of engaging parents and community members to alleviate financial pressures on schools (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021). This approach illustrates how communities can leverage existing social networks to gather resources, which can be adapted to the context of government-funded school projects.

Therefore, the literature indicates that resource mobilization potential within communities is vital for sustaining government-funded school projects. Theoretical frameworks such as resource mobilization theory and social capital provide valuable insights into the dynamics of community engagement and resource access. Empirical evidence underscores the importance of active participation, capacity building, and innovative strategies in enhancing resource mobilization efforts. Future initiatives should focus on addressing barriers to resource mobilization and fostering collaborative relationships among stakeholders to ensure the long-term sustainability of educational projects.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The study was conducted using case study research design which looks into cases in order to develop an in-depth understanding of the context of specific cases. A case study research design also examines the particularity and complexity of a case, coming to understand its activities and particular circumstances (Stake, 1995). Yin (2017) outlines case studies' critical features.

B. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A total of 23 sample size of participants was used comprises of 10 headmasters, 1 ward councillor, 2 Ward educational officers and 10 school board chairmen, The number of participants was determined due to the nature of the study that required qualitative information, and saturation of the data needed (Silverman, 2013; Creswell, 2012).

In this study, interviews (Semi-structured Interview) and documentary review were employed as a qualitative data collection method, involving the interaction between the researcher (interviewer) and the informants. The utilization of semi-structured interviews provides researchers with increased flexibility and adaptability when addressing various topics that may arise during the interview process (Biklen & Casella, 2007).

C. Data Collection Instruments and Analysis

Data analysis involved identifying and generating initial themes based on the codes developed in the previous phase. The researcher looked for shared patterns and meanings across the dataset, compiling clusters of codes that represented core ideas or concepts relevant to the research questions. Themes, which were broader than codes, served as the unit of analysis and helped interpret the data and develop arguments. The themes were derived from the data, the research questions, and the researcher's knowledge. Both inductive and deductive approaches were used, and tables and matrices were employed to aid in organizing the emergent themes for coding. This phase enabled the selection of appropriate themes to draw meaningful conclusions in line with the study's objective.

V. FINDINGS

A. Key Community Stakeholders in Sustaining Government-Funded School Projects

The first specific objective of this study was to identify key community stakeholders in sustaining government-funded school projects. Findings from interviews with Head Master indicate that the following 4 categories of key stakeholders participate in government funded projects in schools   parents, donors, ward councilors, NGOs and religious leaders as indicated in the following quotation from interviews**.** *"The members of the community were engaged in the project committee such as the purchase committee, storage committee and construction committees. In these parents, NGOs, religious leaders, local community formed the committees to represent the whole community in the project."* (HM4, Personal Communication, 3 October 2023).

The findings are supported by a study reported by Stocker et al. (2020) who indicated that when a schools engage different key stakeholders, they are likely to implement government funded projects and complete successfully. or ever according to Chapman (2011), engaging different stakeholders enables schools to harness or benefit from the unique capabilities of stakeholders, foster a shared sense of ownership, and ultimately enhance the success and longevity of the projects.

Similar findings were also reported by School Board Chairperson during interviews who identified the following parents, donors, religious leader's villagers, neighbors as key stakeholders who participate in government funded projects as evidenced in the following quotation *"The community is engaged in the project to carry out supervision roles, security services and site clearance."* (SBC1, Personal Communication, 2 August 2023).

Chepchieng (2018) highlights the pivotal role that community participation can play in enhancing the success and sustainability of government-funded development initiatives, such as rural water infrastructure projects, school buildings including classrooms and supervision services. By empowering local stakeholders to actively contribute to the budgeting, procurement, and monitoring processes, project implementation can be better aligned with community needs and priorities, while also fostering a greater sense of ownership and commitment from the beneficiaries. These findings underscore the necessity of adopting a truly collaborative approach to community development, where the voice and involvement of local communities are central to the design, execution, and evaluation of public projects.

B. Fostering Community Engagement for Sustainable Government-Funded School Projects

The second specific objective of this study was to determine the development of community engagement for sustainable government-funded school projects. Findings from interviews with ward councilor indicate that different members of the community are aware and have positive attitude about government funded school projects as indicated in the following quotation. *"In a school meeting parents, and local community were told the benefit of education initiatives and they were well understood and contribute their power in supporting Construction of classroom."* (WC1, Personal Communication, 21 August 2024).

The findings are supported by a study reported by (Van Dongen et al., 2022). Who emphasized the importance of building community capacity to enhance awareness and promote implementation of educational projects. Their findings suggest that when local community are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge, they are better positioned to support school projects, leading to improved sustainability outcomes. This aligns with the notion that awareness is not merely about information but also about empowering communities to take action.

C. Enhancing Community Resource Mobilization for Sustaining Government-Funded School Projects

The third specific objective of this study was to highlight community resource mobilization for sustaining government-funded school projects. Findings from interviews with Ward Education Officer indicate that, *"There is strong potential for resource mobilization in Morogoro communities particularly through financial contribution, labor, materials donation, and partnership with local business or NGOs."* (WEO2, Personal Communication, 23 August 2024). These findings are supported by a study reported by (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021) who explained the importance of engaging parents and community members to alleviate financial pressures on schools' projects. This approach illustrates how communities can leverage existing social networks to gather resources, which can be adapted to the context of government-funded school projects.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The study reported in this study aimed to determine strategies for community involvement in sustaining government funded school projects. Findings have revealed three major strategies that can be used to sustain government funded school projects First, involvement of different key community stakeholders by engaging different stakeholders like parents, local community members, local leaders enable schools to oversight and ensure that funds are used effectively and transparency and this accountability help to build trust within the community and meets its project goals for sustainability. The findings are supported by a study of (Caton et al., 2020). Who reported that Engaging community members in school activities fosters a sense of belonging and collective responsibility, which are essential for the long-term success of educational projects. hence Community members can contribute resources, volunteer time, and provide support for various initiatives.

Second, fostering community engagement help the community to feel a sense of ownership and commitment of the projects since when the community is well-informed and a were of the project's goals, benefit and progress they are

more likely to take responsibility for its success and lead to active participation and volunteerism enhancing the projects sustainability. The findings are aligned with a study by Mutale (2019) who highlighted that communities with a strong belief in the value of education are more likely to support and sustain educational initiatives. Therefore, positive community attitudes towards education can significantly impact project outcomes.

Third strategy is to develop resource mobilization it is crucial for sustainability of government funded school projects that it reduces reliance on government funding by encouraging community involvement. According to Henry et al. (2023) who revealed that schools can create environments that foster relationships among parents and community members, that can be leveraged to mobilize resources for school projects. This highlights the potential for schools to act as hubs for community engagement, thereby enhancing resource mobilization efforts and leads to sustainability of the funded school projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Strengthening sustainability, it is essential to form inclusive project committees that reflect community diversity, provide training for effective participation, and enhance resource mobilization through local fundraising and partnerships. This collaborative approach will solidify community commitment and improve educational outcomes.

Community involvement is vital for the sustainability of government-funded school projects in the Morogoro region. Engaging key stakeholders such as parents, donors, local leaders, and NGOs enhances ownership and accountability, ensuring that educational initiatives meet local needs and improve educational quality.

REFERENCES

[1]. Biklen, S. K., & Casella, R. (2007). A practical guide to the qualitative dissertation: For students and their advisors in education, human services and social science. Teachers College Press.

[2]. Chapman, D. W. (2011). Sustaining community participation: What remains after the money ends? International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft, 52(6), 509–532. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25698801

[3]. Chepchieng, J. K. (2018). Institutional factors, political environment and public participation in monitoring and evaluation: A case of pre-primary school projects in Migori county, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

[4]. Cottafava, D., Cavaglià, G., & Corazza, L. (2019). Education of sustainable development goals through students' active engagement: A transformative learning experience. Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal, 10(3), 521-544.

[5]. Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research (4th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.

[6]. Eden, C. (2024). Parent and community involvement in education: Strengthening partnerships for social improvement. International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences, 6(3), 372-382. https://doi.org/10.51594/ijarss.v6i3.894

[7]. Godfrey, S. (2016). Challenges impacting community participation and their effect on teaching and learning: A case study of rural areas. European Scientific Journal ESJ, 12(25), 345. https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n25p345

[8]. Henry, A., Vincent, O., Gladies, A., & Vincent, B. (2023). Resource mobilization strategies, resource utilization and sustainability of community based organizations in developing countries: Emerging studies of CBOs in Arua District, Uganda. ORSEA Journal, 13(1).

[9]. Ibrahim, U., & Wan-Puteh, S. E. (2018). An overview of civil society organizations' roles in health project sustainability in Bauchi State, Nigeria. Pan African Medical Journal, 30(1).

[10]. Kamau, S., Rambo, C., & Mbugua, J. (2021). Influences of community participation on school infrastructure policy implementation and performance of construction projects. Open Journal of Social Sciences, 9(03), 173-187. https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2021.93012

[11]. Kamkwis, M., & Zumo, M. (2019). Community involvement and impact on public secondary schools curriculum implementation in Nigeria. International Journal of Current Aspects, 3(V), 91-102. https://doi.org/10.35942/ijcab.v3iv.63

[12]. Kurniawan, D. (2024). Technology integration in educational management: Its impact on community participation. J.Tirakat, 1(1), 10-20. https://doi.org/10.61100/j.tirakat.v1i1.101

[13]. Machange, M., & Munyogwa, M. (2022). To assess the determinants of family planning uptake among women of reproductive age in rural settings, Morogoro region, Tanzania: Protocol for a cross-sectional study. PLOS One, 17(4), e0267020. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0267020

[14]. Musyarapah, M., & Helmiannoor, H. (2019). Community participation model in development of education facilities and infrastructure. https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.8-12-2018.2283979

[15]. Mutale, E. (2019). Local stakeholders' participation in the expansion of secondary school education in selected schools of Isoka District In Muchinga Province, Zambia (Doctoral dissertation, University of Zambia).

[16]. Mutale, W., Masoso, C., Mwanza, B., Chirwa, C., Mwaba, L., Siwale, Z., ... & Chilengi, R. (2017). Exploring community participation in project design: Application of the community conversation approach to improve maternal and newborn health in Zambia. BMC Public Health, 17(1), 1-14.

[17]. Nguyen, N. T. T., & Nguyen, N. P. (2021). Ethical leadership, corporate social responsibility, firm reputation, and firm performance: A serial mediation model. Heliyon, 7(4).

[18]. Njue, D. (2021). Assessment of strategies used in enhancing sustainability of projects: A case of Kenya National Highway Authority (Doctoral dissertation, Daystar University, School of Business and Economics).

[19]. Puri, P. (2024). A systematic review of the role of school management committee for the school performance in Nepal. Education Journal, 13(3), 97-107. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.edu.20241303.12

[20]. Quinn, R., Cox, A. B., & Steinbugler, A. (2020). Social position or school participation? Access and mobilization of social capital in a school-based network. Educational Researcher, 49(1), 44-55.

[21]. Rahman, A., Suharyat, Y., Ilwandri, I., Santosa, T. A., Sofianora, A., Gunawan, R. G., & Putra, R. (2023). Meta-analisis: Pengaruh pendekatan STEM berbasis etnosains terhadap kemampuan pemecahan masalah dan berpikir kreatif siswa. INNOVATIVE: Journal of Social Science Research, 3(2), 2111-2125.

[22]. Ross, S. (2018). Strategies for more inclusive municipal participatory governance and implementing UN-Habitat's New Urban Agenda: Improving consultation and participation in urban planning decision-making processes through rapid ethnographic assessment procedures. Canadian Bar Review, 96, 294.

[23]. Sakibu, A., & Kamugisha, N. (2022). Shortage of school physical facilities as a threat to provision of quality education in Tanzania: A case Morogoro municipal community secondary schools. East African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 5(1), 231-141. https://doi.org/10.37284/eajis.5.1.918

[24]. Silverman, D. (2013). Doing qualitative research (4th ed.). Sage Publications Ltd.

[25]. Stake, R. E. (2010). Qualitative research: Studying how things work. Guilford Press.

[26]. Stewart, J. (2023). Challenges facing community participation in construction projects of ward secondary schools in Kibaha Town Council, Tanzania. Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences, 21(4), 22-31. https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2023/v21i4489

[27]. Stocker, F., de Arruda, M. P., de Mascena, K. M., & Boaventura, J. M. (2020). Stakeholder engagement in sustainability reporting: A classification model. Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, 27(5), 2071-2080.

[28]. Tibbitts, B., Willis, K., Reid, T., Sebire, S. J., Campbell, R., Kipping, R. R., ... & Jago, R. (2021). Considerations for individual-level versus whole-school physical activity interventions: Stakeholder perspectives. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18(14), 7628.

[29]. Van Dongen, B. M., Ridder, M. A. M., Wolters, L., Steenhuis, I. H. M., & Renders, C. M. (2023). Increasing community capacity to improve the implementation of Health Promoting Schools: Barriers and facilitators from the FLASH intervention. Health Promotion International, 38(5), daad115.

[30]. Yin, R. K. (2016). Qualitative research from start to finish (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.