



Full length article

# Stakeholder Participation and Performance of Funding Educational Materials for Disadvantaged Children in Rwanda

Umutoniwase Esther<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Eugenia Nkechi Irechukwu<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Business and Economics, Mount Kenya University, Rwanda

<sup>2</sup> Mount Kigali University, Rwanda

\*Corresponding author: [tuvier90@gmail.com](mailto:tuvier90@gmail.com)

## Article Info

Received: 18.06.2025

Accepted: 01.07.2025

Available online: 30.07.2025

## Keywords:

Stakeholder Participation, Project Performance, Educational Materials, Disadvantaged Children, Rwanda

## DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.59857/nqmo8988>

## ABSTRACT

This study assessed the impact of stakeholder participation on the performance of educational material funding projects for disadvantaged children in Rwanda, focusing on International Teams Rwanda. A descriptive research design was used, with a sample of 92 respondents including project staff, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. Analysis was conducted using SPSS v23, employing descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. Findings revealed that stakeholder participation in project planning enhanced performance by increasing community acceptance and fostering a sense of ownership. During implementation, stakeholder contributions in cash, labor, and materials significantly improved project outcomes. Participation in monitoring and evaluation positively influenced performance through feedback provision; however, reporting clarity remained a challenge, with mixed responses from participants. Effective stakeholder engagement in planning, implementation, and evaluation significantly improves project performance in terms of timeliness, scope, budget adherence, and quality delivery. The study recommends strengthening stakeholder involvement to enhance transparency, accountability, and community empowerment in non-governmental projects in Rwanda.

## 1. Introduction

Globally, the performance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is significantly influenced by sponsor participation. NGOs are independent, non-profit entities that address pressing social, environmental, and humanitarian challenges. Their success depends heavily on the involvement of sponsors, which may include individuals, communities, businesses, governments, donors, and other organizations. These stakeholders contribute diverse perspectives, resources, skills, and networks that enhance project effectiveness. When included in decision-making, sponsors help align projects with the actual needs of the communities they aim to serve, thus improving transparency, ownership, and long-term impact (Shahzad, 2018; Bryde, Bal, & Fearon, 2018). This collaborative approach enhances organizational credibility and fosters sustainable development outcomes.

In Asia and Africa, sponsor engagement has proven essential to improving project design, implementation, and sustainability. In Asia, involving sponsors in planning and execution allows NGOs to tap into local knowledge and resources, resulting in more innovative and context-sensitive solutions (Scoones, 2017). In Africa, including stakeholders in decision-making enables NGOs to design interventions that are more culturally and economically appropriate (Mulwa, 2018). Sponsor participation not only builds strong relationships between communities and NGOs but also contributes to a sense of shared responsibility and trust. Participatory approaches, such as focus group discussions and community consultations enable sponsors to actively influence project direction, leading to greater accountability and enhanced performance (Belassi, 2016).

In Rwanda, sponsor participation is a key determinant of NGO success, especially for organizations like International Teams Rwanda, which focuses on supporting disadvantaged children through educational materials. Sponsors provide not just funding but also critical input that shapes implementation and outcomes. Their involvement enhances project reach, effectiveness, and sustainability (Sonya, 2019). Active engagement builds community ownership, fosters transparency, and strengthens the organization's ability to deliver long-term impact. By prioritizing inclusive stakeholder participation, NGOs in Rwanda can develop more resilient and responsive interventions that address complex social challenges effectively.

## **2. Research Objectives**

This study was guided by the following specific objectives;

- i) To examine the influence of project planning on project performance of funding educational materials to disadvantaged children.
- ii) To determine the influence of project implementation on project performance of funding educational materials to disadvantaged children.
- iii) To determine the influence of project monitoring and evaluation on project performance funding educational materials to disadvantaged children.

## **3. Methods**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both descriptive and analytical research designs. The descriptive design was employed to explain the nature and extent of sponsor participation in educational projects, particularly in project planning, implementation, and monitoring. The analytical design facilitated examination of the relationship between sponsor engagement and project performance outcomes, such as increased school enrollment, reduced dropout rates, and improved access to educational materials among disadvantaged children supported by International Teams Rwanda.

### **Study Area and Context**

The study was conducted in Rwanda, focusing on educational projects implemented by International Teams Rwanda. The organization is involved in supporting disadvantaged children through the provision of school materials, teacher training, literacy programs, and inclusive education for children with disabilities. Given Rwanda's policy emphasis on universal education and the critical role of NGO sponsors, this context provided a relevant case for analyzing the impact of sponsor engagement on project outcomes.

### Population and Sample

The target population comprised 2,356 individuals, including 12 staff members from International Teams Rwanda, 20 partner organization representatives, and 2,326 project beneficiaries. A sample of 92 respondents was selected using stratified and purposive sampling techniques to ensure representation of sponsors, staff, and beneficiaries. The sample size was determined using Dr. Alain Bouchard’s formula for finite populations, ensuring statistical reliability within acceptable error margins.

### Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using three primary tools: semi-structured questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. Questionnaires were administered to staff and beneficiaries to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including program leaders and sponsors, to gain deeper insight into sponsor engagement. Document analysis of reports, budgets, and project evaluations supplemented the primary data, enabling triangulation and validation of findings.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were coded and analyzed using SPSS version 22.0, employing descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) and regression analysis to assess the relationship between variables. The regression model used the equation:  $Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + e$ , where Y represents project performance, and X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub>, and X<sub>3</sub> represent planning, implementation, and monitoring, respectively. Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended responses were analyzed thematically and narratively to extract insights and support quantitative findings.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the researcher’s academic institution, with formal consent sought from participants and partner organizations. Participants were informed of the study’s purpose, assured of confidentiality, and given the right to withdraw at any stage. Anonymity was ensured by coding responses instead of using real names. Permissions were secured from project authorities, and ethical standards were strictly followed in handling data and interacting with human subjects.

## 4. Results

### Descriptive Statistical Results

According to Marsden (2017), sponsors are those who have an interest in the outcome of a project. They are frequently managers, mission managers, and venture crew members. Therefore, this phase provides respondents' perceptions of how sponsor participation and the performance of academic materials invested in underprivileged children in Rwanda, along with planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the project.

Table 1: Findings on the influence of project planning on performance of funding educational materials to disadvantaged children project.

Project Planning on Performance	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	Std Dev.
	fi	%	fi	%	f	%	f	%	fi	%		
					i		i					

Setting objectives by sponsors during project planning enhances project acceptability by the community, which in turn affects project performance.											1.867 6	1.04958
	2	<b>42.</b>	2	<b>42.</b>	3	<b>4.</b>	4	<b>5.</b>	3	<b>4.4</b>		
	7	<b>6</b>	7	<b>6</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>9</b>				
Budgeting project influenced by sponsors in project planning affects community ownership of the project.											1.735 3	1.04550
	3	<b>55.</b>	1	<b>26.</b>	6	<b>8.</b>	4	<b>5.</b>	2	<b>2.9</b>		
	5	<b>9</b>	6	<b>5</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>9</b>				
Resource allocation by sponsors engagement allows organizations to make decisions that are more sustainable in line with larger societal objectives and interests											1.794 1	1.04466
	3	<b>50.</b>	2	<b>33.</b>	4	<b>5.</b>	5	<b>7.</b>	2	<b>2.9</b>		
	2	<b>0</b>	1	<b>8</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>4</b>				
Project leadership accountable for resource allocation and budgeting by sponsors has lead project's success and accountable											1.617 6	.91471
	2	<b>2.9</b>	2	<b>35.</b>	2	<b>2.</b>	2	<b>2.</b>	3	<b>55.</b>		
			2	<b>3</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>9</b>	5	<b>9</b>		
<b>Overall Average</b>											<b>1.753</b> <b>6</b>	<b>1.0136</b>

Source: Primary Data, Field results (March, 2024)

Sponsor involvement in project planning significantly enhances community acceptance and overall project performance. This is supported by 85.3% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that sponsor participation positively impacts outcomes. Similarly, 82.4% indicated that budgeting guided by sponsors not only improves performance but also fosters a sense of community ownership. Moreover, 83.8% believed that sponsor-supported resource allocation enables more sustainable and socially aligned decisions. With 91.2% affirming that sponsor involvement strengthens accountability and commitment to project completion, the findings highlight a strong consensus on the value of sponsor engagement. Although minor variations in responses suggest some heterogeneity, the overall trend underscores the critical role sponsors play in ensuring project success.

In the case of International Teams in Rwanda, sponsor participation during goal setting and planning greatly improved project acceptance and execution. By engaging in discussions about objectives, budgeting, and resource distribution, sponsors became invested in project outcomes and helped enforce accountability within the implementing organization. This collaborative approach not only aligned projects with broader societal goals but also increased transparency and stakeholder trust. As Del-Ninno (2012) notes, effective planning depends on various factors such as budgeting, legal frameworks, team responsibilities, and cost schedules.

While planning alone is not always the decisive factor, when combined with meaningful sponsor involvement, it becomes a powerful driver of sustainable and impactful development.

Findings on perceptions of respondents on influence of project implementation on performance of performance of funding educational materials to disadvantaged children project

The results demonstrated how project execution affected the initiative's ability to finance educational materials for underprivileged kids. The clear final result of project execution is the realization of goals and plans through the processes of evaluating, selecting.

Table 2: Results of respondents' perceptions of how project implementation affects the success of the initiative to support educational resources for underprivileged children

Project Implementation and Performance	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	Std Dev.
	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%		
Contribution of labor and materials in project implementation at early involvement planning stage aids early identification of potential risks, opportunities, and constraints.	46	73.5	10	16.2	4	5.9	2	2.9	1	1.5	1.4265	.85197
Contribution of project expertise has influenced sponsors in participating of management of labor and materials during project execution by ensuring continuous feedback	35	54.4	24	38.2	1	1.5	2	2.9	2	2.9	1.6176	.89825
Managerial skills within the project have customized to match real community needs and preferences	25	39.7	34	51.5	2	2.9	3	4.4	1	1.5	1.7647	.83071
Staying within budget influenced by sponsors within project gives the community a sense of ownership over the	01	1.5	2	2.9	2	2.9	26	41.2	33	51.5	1.6176	.81092

project sustainability beyond its project lifecycle.

**1.6066 0.8479**

**Overall Average**

Source: *Primary Data, Field results (March, 2024)*

The results in Table 2 highlight the importance of early sponsor involvement in project implementation, particularly through material and financial contributions. A strong majority (89.7%) of respondents agreed that such early engagement helps identify capability risks, ultimately enhancing overall project performance. Furthermore, 92.6% agreed that the sharing of project information encouraged sponsors to collaborate actively in managing materials and efforts during execution, ensuring consistent progress monitoring and feedback loops. Similarly, 91.2% indicated that management strategies tailored to community needs increased the relevance and sustainability of the project. Additionally, 92.6% of respondents disagreed with the notion that sponsor involvement diminishes community ownership; instead, they emphasized that involving sponsors in budgeting and implementation fosters a strong sense of responsibility and engagement among community members.

In the “Investment in Academic Materials for Deprived Children” project by International Teams Rwanda, the findings showed a mean influence score of  $x = 1.6066$  ( $SD = 0.8479$ ), suggesting relatively consistent responses and a moderate overall impact on project performance. The data supports the conclusion that sponsor contributions both in materials and labor enhance initiative outcomes by fostering accountability, building a sense of ownership, and aligning efforts with community needs. According to Mario (2018), the execution phase is where ideas become reality, encompassing everything from technical implementation to adaptive management strategies. This stage brings together planning, financing, and stakeholder coordination to ensure that projects not only meet their objectives but also remain flexible for adjustments. Such a collaborative and well-managed approach to implementation proves essential in translating project plans into tangible, lasting impact.

Results on respondents' assessments of the impact of monitoring and evaluation on the effectiveness of the initiative to support educational materials for underprivileged kids.

Table 3: Respondents' opinions on how monitoring and assessment affect the effectiveness of projects that provide educational resources to underprivileged kids

Monitoring and Evaluation and Performance	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	Std Dev.
	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%		
Early problem identification of the sponsors by following up project analysis reports and the feedback affects project performance.	35	55.9	24	38.2	0	0.0	2	2.9	2	2.9	1.5882	.8849

Reporting and evaluation reports by sponsors by providing a clear reporting that catch problems early and giving quick interventions to keep the project on track.	1	1.5	1	1.5	2	2.9	22	35.3	37	58.8	1.5147	.7628
Optimizing resource allocation by boosting community acceptance of the project to ensure that resources are used effectively by identifying gaps or issues needed attention	32	50.0	23	36.8	5	7.4	2	2.9	2	2.9	1.7206	.9438
By facilitating successful project completion by sponsors, accountability and review of project performance allow the project to grow from its mistakes.	35	55.9	13	22.1	2	4.4	6	10.3	5	7.4	1.9118	1.301
<b>Overall Average</b>											<b>1.6838</b>	<b>0.97312</b>

Source: Primary Data, Field results (March, 2024)

The results in Table 3, Show that 94.1% of respondents strongly agreed that early sponsor identification through follow-up evaluations and feedback significantly improves overall project performance. However, the same percentage (94.1%) disagreed with the effectiveness of sponsors’ involvement in reporting and assessment when it came to providing clear, early issue identification and quick corrective actions to keep the project on track. Additionally, 86.8% agreed that optimizing aid allocation by increasing community acceptance helps ensure resources are used efficiently by identifying gaps and eliminating waste. About 77.9% of respondents also agreed that accountability and performance assessment allow sponsors to complete projects accurately, helping organizations learn from failures and improve future efforts.

Monitoring and evaluation findings from International Teams Rwanda indicate that providing educational materials to underprivileged children has had a moderate impact on overall mission success. Sponsor participation in monitoring and assessment enhances project performance by increasing community acceptance and enabling timely adjustments based on feedback. Kirianki (2023) explains that governments and organizations use monitoring and evaluation to measure project effectiveness, improve productivity, and ensure future sustainability. Monitoring is a continuous process that begins at project inception and involves tracking

progress against plans. The data collected through monitoring forms the basis for evaluation, guiding decision-making and learning throughout the project lifecycle.

Respondents' opinions about the effectiveness of the effort to provide educational materials to underprivileged kids.

*The results of the study demonstrate the effectiveness of International Teams Rwanda's effort to provide educational materials to underprivileged children.*

Table 4: Perceptions of respondents on the performance of Project

Performance of Project	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean	Std Dev.
	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%	fi	%		
Community participation influenced timely completion and minimise cost implications	3	55.	1	26.	6	8.	3	4.4	3	4.	1.750	1.084
	5	9	7	5	6	8	3	4.4	3	4	0	
Project sustainability and project quality is due to community participation influence	2	44.	2	41.	4	7.	3	4.4	2	2.	1.808	.9659
	8	1	5	2	4	4	3	4.4	2	9	8	
<b>Overall Average</b>											<b>1.779</b>	<b>1.02495</b>
											<b>4</b>	

**Source:** Primary Data, Field results (March, 2024)

According to the results in Table 4, 82.4% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that financial factors and timely project completion significantly influence network engagement. Additionally, 85.3% confirmed that increased network engagement enhances project sustainability and overall mission success. Findings from International Teams Rwanda, which funds educational materials for disadvantaged children, provide some evidence of consistent responses and highlight the varied realities affecting project outcomes.

Lawson (2022) defines mission overall performance management as the process of designing, implementing, and overseeing programs to improve an organization’s broader performance and strategic goals. Unlike focusing solely on project execution, overall performance management takes a holistic view. Traditionally, project success has been measured by meeting goals within budget and on schedule criteria that remain standard in many industries. However, for development projects, success goes beyond financial and timing targets to include delivering intended benefits and meeting the expectations of stakeholders, funders, and beneficiaries. These broader outcomes are often difficult to measure immediately and may only become clear years after project completion. Many organizations struggle with such evaluations due to resource constraints and investment losses.

### Correlation Matrix and Regression Analysis test

Table 5: Correlation Matrix Results

		Project Planning	Project Implementation	Project Monitoring and Evaluation	Sponsors participation	Performance
Project Planning	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	63				
Project Implementation	Pearson Correlation	.899**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	63	63			
Project Monitoring and Evaluation	Pearson Correlation	.730**	.604**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	63	63	63		
Sponsors participation	Pearson Correlation	.965**	.901**	.720**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	63	63	63	63	
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.663**	.565**	.927**	.668**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	63	63	63	63	63

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

Source: *Primary Data, Field results (March, 2024)*

The correlation matrix shows a strong and statistically significant relationship between project planning and overall assignment performance, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.663\*\* and a p-value of 0.000, well below the 0.05 significance threshold. This leads to rejecting the null hypothesis (H0) and accepting the alternative (H1), indicating that effective sponsor engagement during planning significantly enhances the total

performance of international teams. Specifically, in Rwanda's context of funding educational materials for disadvantaged children, project planning emerges as a key driver of success.

Similarly, project performance and mission implementation show a strong positive correlation (Pearson correlation of 0.565\*\*, p-value = 0.000), reinforcing that mission execution is crucial for achieving successful outcomes. Sponsor participation in monitoring and evaluation exhibits the strongest correlation with assignment performance (Pearson correlation of 0.927\*\*, p-value = 0.000), underscoring its critical role in project success. Overall, the analysis confirms that sponsor involvement significantly influences project performance, particularly in initiatives like International Teams Rwanda's effort to supply educational materials to underprivileged children, with a combined correlation coefficient of 0.668\*\* and a highly significant p-value.

## 5. Conclusion

The study examined how sponsor behaviors influenced the effectiveness of the International Teams Rwanda project, which aimed to provide educational materials to underprivileged children. Findings showed that appropriate sponsor practices in project planning, implementation, and monitoring significantly improved project performance in terms of quality, timely delivery, and adherence to scope and budget. While a few respondents felt sponsor engagement did not sufficiently empower communities to hold project leaders accountable, this had minimal impact on overall outcomes. Ultimately, the study concluded that strategic sponsor involvement enhances the performance of non-governmental initiatives in Rwanda.

### 5.1 Recommendations

The researcher made several key recommendations to improve project success: Project management should strategically organize sponsor involvement to empower the community and ensure accountability. Effective budgeting and resource allocation should be prioritized, with efforts to foster a sense of ownership within the community to encourage budget adherence. Additionally, enhancing project planning and placing greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation were recommended to boost performance, particularly in delivering sponsored educational materials to underprivileged children.

## REFERENCES

- Ahmed, A, U, and C. del-Ninno (2019). The food for Education Program in Bangladesh, Evaluation of its Impact on Educational Attainment and Food security, Washington D.C, International Food Policy Research Institute.
- Jyoti, D., Edward, F, and Sonya, J. (2019). Food Insecurity Affects School Children Academic performance, Weight gain, and Social Skills, *Journal of Project* 135: 2831-2839.
- Kirianki J.P, George & Mallery, (2023). An Assessment of Community Participation in the sustainability of School Feeding Program in Primary Schools: A Case of Embakasi, Kenya, *International journal of Academic Research in Business and social Sciences*, 3(9), 584-594
- Lawson, M. (2022). Impact of School Feeding Programs on Educational, Projects and Agricultural Developments Goals, U published thesis, Michigan State University
- Mario M. (2018). The Impact of Project Management Implementation on the Successful Completion of Projects, New York.
- Mulwa, F. (2019). Managing Community-Based Development: Unmasking the Mastery of Participatory Development, PREMESE Olivex Publishers, Nairobi.

- Mulwa, F. (2018). Participatory monitoring and evaluation of Community projects, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, Kenya p. 13.
- Oakley, P. & Marsden, D. (2017). Approaches to participation in rural development.
- Scoones. H. (2017). Sustainability in project management. Burlington, VT: Gower Pub.
- Scoones. T. (2017). Is increasing Community Participation Always a Good Thing? Journal of the European Economic Association, 2(2-3), 427-436. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1162/154247604323068113>
- Shahzad Naeem, M. (2018). Examine the impact of project planning on project success, Pakistan, Age International (P) Ltd.