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The Influence of Stakeholder Involvement on the Implementation of Urban Strategic Development Plan in Kapsabet Town, Nandi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Development planning in the urban areas in Kenya has taken a paradigm shift over the past decade and more so after the enactment of the new constitution in 2010. This study sought to investigate the influence of stakeholder involvement on the implementation of urban strategic development plans (USDP) in Kenya. The study was carried out in Kapsabet town, Nandi County. A sample size of 118 respondents was obtained from a population of 170 using Krejcie and Morgan method. They mainly came from the county Departments of Planning Infrastructure Development, Devolved Units & Special Programmes. Others were professionals and stakeholders in the town. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect data and the return rate was 95.8%. This study used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis. The study also adopted a descriptive analysis where descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to describe the basic features of the data and to provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. The study found out that majority (58.4%) of respondents believed that stakeholder communication has got a positive influence on the implementation of USDP. In addition, majority (55.8%) of the respondents support stakeholder training as a way of achieving success in the implementation of USDP. Similarly, it is important to be accountable to the stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic development plan as 61% of the respondents attested to its importance. The research findings and recommendations are useful in assisting the town managers, the Nandi County Government and all the stakeholders to take measures geared towards enhancing the implementation of urban strategic development plan and the realization of the vision and mission statements of the town.

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1.0 Introduction

The planning process is an integral part of the development process. Urban centres in Kenya and throughout sub-Saharan Africa are becoming increasingly crowded. According to the 2009 census, the country has an urban population of about 12.5 million people. It continues to urbanize rapidly. The growth of towns and cities, and particularly the unplanned nature of some of these urban areas, is the biggest planning challenge in Kenya. Although the proportion of the population that lives in urban areas is still quite low about one-third, the rate at which people are moving to urban areas is staggering.

Urban development plans in Kenya has followed the same trend since the inception of the Physical Planning Act Cap 286 in 1996. The main aims of these plans were to bring about harmony in developments across the country. The act was also to harmonize planning procedures and requirements provided for in other pieces of legislation; provide an effective institutional frame work to regulate planning practice; provide a framework for public participation in planning and plan implementation and provide a legal framework to protect public land intended for public amenities and utilities from misappropriation.

The preparations of the plans are under the mandate of Director of Physical Planning. Since 1996, urbanisation has been rapid; however a few plans have since been prepared. This has led to many problems in Kenya, one of them being issues of land tenure system, poor sewer system, poor transportation, land use conflicts and subsequently deaths.

Citizen participation in Kenya finds its early roots in development projects that benefited local communities. The Constitution provides a strong legal framework for citizen participation. The challenge will be to educate as many citizens as possible on these new rights and responsibilities and to provide them with tools to make valuable contributions to the governance process. This is why constitutional reforms, the establishment of county governments, and support for the full implementation of the Constitution are so important to the future of the nation. Citizen participation is a core part of the Constitution. It starts with Article 1, which states that all sovereign power is vested to the people of Kenya. The exercise of this power occurs at the national and county levels either directly through citizen participation or indirectly through democratically elected representatives. In terms of direct constitutional references to citizen participation in devolved government, Article 174(c) says that an object of

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devolution is to "enhance the participation of people in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them." Article 184(1)(c) further requires that mechanisms "for participation by residents" be included in national legislation to urban areas and cities governance and management.

Sessional Paper No. 3 of 2009 on national land policy in Kenya states that development in urban and peri-urban areas has been inhibited by poor planning, rapid growth of human settlements and activities, unmitigated urban sprawl and inadequate provision of infrastructure. Proper planning will facilitate coordinated development of urban and peri-urban areas in terms of housing, commercial, industrial and infrastructure development to accommodate changes in lifestyle and economic activities. In promoting stakeholder involvement, the paper states that the government shall facilitate the preparation and implementation of local area development plans for all urban and peri-urban areas in the country in a participatory manner. The government shall also establish an effective coordinating mechanism for the preparation, implementation of plans and development control.

According to Craythorne (2006), every municipality in South Africa must have a comprehensive strategic development plan, which must reflect various interrelated aspects. It is when contemplating these aspects that the integrated nature of strategic thought at the local sphere of government can be better understood. Myeza (2009) holds that the Urban Strategic Development Plan (USDP) serves as the principal plan of a municipality, and that it supersedes all other development initiatives at the local sphere of government. An interesting observation at this point is that USDPs are nationally prescribed strategic plans for municipal organisations, with a local/community focus.

Patel (2004), states that the urban development planning process should be used as an opportunity for the municipality to debate and agree on a long-term vision and strategy (20-25 years) that provides the basis for the shorter 5 year objectives and strategies. Patel (2004) continues to argue that the municipality should develop this long-term vision through consultative processes with local residents and all other relevant stakeholders in the municipal processes.

It is evident that firms which implement strategic planning achieve better performances than those without such planning, but these strategies often fail due to problems encountered at the implementation stage (O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2002). Strategic decisions should, however, be implemented with an awareness that their success is vital for the organization in question. By identifying the factors that influence the process and outcomes of the strategy implementation stage, an organization will be better prepared for its future performance, which will ultimately contribute to its bottom line.

In the Kenyan context, each county government has a major role in urban planning as outlined in Urban Areas and Cities Act (UACA, 2011). The promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya (CoK, 2010) placed the role of planning and management of urban areas on county governments. The enactment of the County Government Act (CGA, 2012) one year later provided an avenue for planning in the urban areas. The counties are mandated by law to develop a comprehensive plan dubbed the county integrated development plan (CIDP). It is from this comprehensive plan that urban areas and cities are required to develop their

strategic development plans. This paper aimed at investigating the influence of stakeholder involvement on the implementation of urban strategic development plan in Kapsabet town, Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

McNamara (2008) observes that a frequent complaint about the strategic planning process is that it produces a document that ends up collecting dust on a shelf – the organization ignores or fails to make good use of the precious information depicted in the strategic planning document. African context studies (Aosa, 1992; Fubara, 1986) noted that many firms created strategic plans which are rarely implemented according to the planned schedules. Even though Aosa (1992) looked into the implementation issue, he mainly took focus of large manufacturing private firms whose set up is very different from that of county governments which are specifically non-profit making organizations. There is evidence of gaps in the implementation of strategic urban development plans in towns across the country. This is from reports showing the glaring disparities between the plans and the final output at the end of the implementation period of the urban strategic development plans by the urban authorities.

Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2007) and Evans (2007) proposed further studies on management in instilling high levels of commitment to strategic success, lack of detailed planning to support goal achievement, poor communication and coordination, as well as strategy and culture misalignment as reasons for failure at strategic implementation. This study investigated the Influence of stakeholder Involvement on the Implementation of Urban Strategic Development Plan in Kapsabet town, Nandi County, Kenya.

2.0 Literature Review

According to Thompson and Strickland (2003) strategy implementation is viewed as the process that turns formulated strategy into a series of actions and then results to ensure that the vision, mission, strategy and strategic objectives of the organization are successfully achieved as planned. According to Wheelen (2009) strategy implementation is the process by which strategies and policies are put into action. Strategic formulation includes planning and decision making involved in developing organizations strategic goals and plans. Organisations that develop the strategic plan must expect to include a process for applying the plan. Strategic implementation is a fundamental step in turning an organizations vision to reality.

According to Dransfield (2001), strategy implementation involves the development of the strategies, policies and operational planning procedures to translate strategy into action steps and then carrying out the required actions. Strategies then need to be monitored and evaluated to ensure ongoing improvement. Effective leadership is important for implementing strategy in terms of the creation of strategies. Stakeholders of organizations seek some sort of directive leadership from senior managers. The responsibility of the senior management team within an organization is to create strategy - after a wide process of consultation - and then to set out the structures for implementing the strategy.

For the past two decades strategy formulation has been widely regarded as the most important component of the strategic management process more important than strategy implementation or strategic control. However recent research indicates that strategy implementation rather than strategy formulation alone is a key requirement for superior business

performance (Kapln & Norton, 2000). In addition there is growing recognition that most important problems in the field of strategic management are not related to strategy formulation but rather to strategy implementation (Speculand, 2009) and that high failure rate of organisational initiatives in a dynamic business environment is primarily due to poor implementation of new strategies. In order to create a strategic plan organizations spend a lot of money, time, personnel and other resources. According to Speculand (2009), United States managers spend more than US dollars 10 billion annually on strategy analysis and strategy formulation. Besides money, for many organizations, the process has indeed become lengthy and time consuming and measures to develop and support the strategic planning effort is often in short supply, unfortunately in spite of this lengthy and costly exercise, strategic planning has often failed to produce the desired results in organizations.

Henry (2008) stated that even the best formulated strategy in the world can fail if it is poorly implemented, hence the need for strategies to be effectively communicated and properly resourced. The need for change needs to be understood and properly coordinated with stakeholders inside and outside the organization. Successful strategy implementation depends to a large extent on the implementation process. It is observed that implementation under the best situation is exceedingly difficult and while in recent years it has been much discussed, it has been rarely studied (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1979). Strategy implementation consists a disciplined process or a logical set of connected activities that enable an organization successfully action a strategy and without which strategic goals cannot be achieved. Development of this logical approach can however be impeached by a host of factors including politics, inertia, resistance to change among others that characterize every organization and routinely get in the way of strategy implementation. It is apparent that making a strategy work is a much uphill task than formulation (Hrebiniak, 2005).

The CoK (2010) provides that citizen participation is mandatory in the development process. CGA, 106(4) states “*county planning shall provide for citizen participation*” and shall be done in a process that “*involves meaningful engagement of citizens*” (CGA, 105(1-d)). Public participation shall be facilitated through various ways. One of them is through The County Budget and Economic Forum (CB&EF). The Public Finance Management Act (137) provides that a county government shall establish the CB&EF. It shall comprise the Governor and members of the county executive committee, an equal number of nominees of Non State Actors (NSA) (professionals, business, labour, women, persons with disabilities, elderly and faith based groups at county level). The forum shall provide a means of consultation on the planning budgeting, economic and financial management processes in the county.

The second way of facilitating public participation is through the County Citizen Engagement Framework: CGA Part VIII obligates the county government to establish structures for citizen participation. These are guided by principles set out in CGA 87. Thirdly, County Communication Platform and Strategy provides for engagement in implementation of strategy. The CGA Part IX obligates the county government to integrate communication in all its development activities, observe Article 35 of the CoK (2010) through access to information.

The county government is required to establish an effective communication and sensitization framework using various media forms, targeted at widest selection of stakeholders in the county.

The County Civic Education Strategy provides yet another platform for citizen participation in development. CGA Part X requires the county government to develop an effective civic education framework through which it shall empower and enlighten citizens and promote the principles of devolution in the constitution on a continual basis.

Kuen, Zailani and Fernando (2009) in their study, found that stakeholder involvement is not relevant to project success in manufacturing. This could be true but to service product like development plans, constant stakeholder engagement is vital. The views and the comments from the Government, local planning authorities, Non-state Actors (NSA), Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and local communities are an important part of the planning process. The Master Plan and the Action Plans have been subject to extensive informal and formal consultation. Reeves (2012) emphasises that consultation is central to better policy-making and implementation. The most successful consultations for both officials and user or representative groups are those carried out through on-going consultative forums that provide a means for organisations to look ahead at emerging issues as well as receive feedback on existing policies and practice.

Community participation is a key tenet approach in today’s urban planning. This is also enshrined in the CoK (2010) and the County Government Act (2012). Without community participation, development plans might risk a situation of the plan not being approved, loss of ownership of the plan by the community and sustainability of the same. Therefore communities need to be involved in preparing development plans. This is supported by Ramlall (2010), that the issue of public trust follows on to another critical success factor for the development planning instruments, that is, increased stakeholder engagement. Given the myriad of stakeholders relevant to the planning process, through the participation of these groups more comprehensive plans can be devised to meet the needs of maximum stakeholders and thereby attain urban sustainability. As per the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT, 2010) participatory processes are becoming more and more embedded into planning processes in order to provide for meaningful engagement and involvement of the public in all phases of decision making, implementation and monitoring. Participatory planning empowers communities and results in better design outcomes that are more responsive to the diverse needs of the different urban groups. Participation also ensures the relevance of plans when faced with limited resources and can also increase effectiveness.

As Wong and Tein (2003) suggests, public participation is of considerable importance. It would make policies more acceptable to the general public as it would ensure that the development policies are responsive to community views and values. According to Vaidya, Sajeev and Callender (2006), the importance of stakeholder involvement cannot be underestimated. This conclusion is drawn from the findings of their study on e-procurement projects that the user uptake and training turned out to be the most important factor followed by supplier adoption. Agevi (2012) suggests that public participation in planning and development has been unstructured and ineffective. Furthermore, it has been characterised by apathy and political interference.

There are several reasons for this: lack of clear guidelines on stakeholder participation; limited information sharing; poor appreciation of urban planning; and vested interests. In addition, planning outcomes and decisions have not always reflected the public interest. Poor public participation at the local levels has seriously constrained the work of county planning departments or units.

According to Joseph (2002), a customer orientated approach to service delivery in local government has to do with more than merely making customers feel good through pleasant interaction. Effective customer care could have a direct impact on investment and economic growth, for example the ability/inability to approve the rezoning of land for business purposes, which could see potential investors refraining from conducting business in the municipal area. According to Houston, Humphries and Liebenberg (2001), involving the stakeholders in service delivery decisions ensures that service to the local community is prioritised, enhances the potential for local governments to meet the expectations of the community as end-users of municipal services and enhances an understanding of the impact that policies and programmes have, and promotes the development of priorities that are relevant. In addition, it enhances long-term democratic stability.

Craythorne (2006) on financial plan and the key performance indicators, states that in order for the strategic plan to become operational, it must inform the municipality's annual budget as well as the performance targets set by the municipality, and must also be used to prepare action plans for the implementation of strategies identified by the municipality. This paper investigated the influence of stakeholder involvement on the implementation of urban strategic development plan in Kapsabet town, Kenya.

3.0 Methodology

The study utilized the descriptive survey design and adopted mixed research approach. This is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho, 2003). This was appropriate in enabling data to be presented data in a meaningful form, thereby helping to offer ideas for further probe and research and help make certain simple decisions.

The study targeted 170 respondents which comprised of a section of county government employees and stakeholders who are directly involved in the implementation of the USDP in Kapsabet town. In order to realize the objectives of this study, these employees were selected from the county's offices while the stakeholders were selected among religious leaders, professionals, businessmen, civil society organizations (CSOs) and residents of the town. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) explains that the target population should have some observable characteristics to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the study. The population was divided into different cadres. When the population is heterogeneous, Kothari (2008) recommends stratified random sampling since the method increases sample statistical efficiencies, provides adequate data for analyzing the various sub populations and enables different methods to be used depending on the characteristic of the stratum. The sample was developed using proportionate sampling strategy where the size of each stratum was proportionate to the population size of the stratum for better precision.

The researcher adopted the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling formula. The sample size was calculated based on the total target population of 170 respondents.

Data was collected using questionnaires. Warwick and Lingher (1975) state that researchers should settle on instruments which provide high accuracy, generalizability and explanatory power with low cost, rapid speed and a minimum of management demands with high administrative convenience. Questionnaire is a research tool that gathers data over a large sample (Kombo 2006). The questionnaire and interview schedule is the most appropriate research tools as it allows the researcher to collect information from large samples with diverse background. The variables in the questionnaires were developed based on the themes in the literature review section and objectives.

To determine the validity of the questionnaire, the researcher sought expert opinion on content and construct validity. Comments solicited from them were used to improve the research instrument before commencing data collection. Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials (Neuman, 2000). To determine the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was used. The questionnaire was administered twice within an interval of two weeks. This entailed administering the same questionnaire to the same group after a certain interval had elapsed since the previous test (Coopers and Schindler, 2003). The test retest criterion was applied since the respondents in this study were county government staff, stakeholders and professionals who had a detailed grasp on research and therefore would understand the need for filling the questionnaire for the second time.

Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistical methods. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and measures of central tendency was used to describe the basic features of the data and to provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Quantitative data analysis was aided by SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to generate these measures. Pearson Correlation analysis was further used to show the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables (Hair et al, 2005). The data was presented using tables, graphs and charts to give a clear picture of the research findings at a glance.

In addition to conceptualizing the writing process of the thesis, a researcher needs to anticipate the ethical issues that may arise during a study (Hesse-Bieber & Leavey, 2006). The data to be collected was used purely for academic purposes and therefore an introduction letter from the university was obtained and issued to the respondents to assure them of the same. Informed consent from each research participant was obtained and utmost privacy and confidentiality was maintained at all levels of the study. Anonymity was attached to the questionnaire and given to the respondents during their participation.

4.0 Results and Discussions

The aim of this study was to investigate the Influence of Stakeholder Involvement on the Implementation of Urban Strategic Development Plan in Kapsabet town, Nandi County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five point likert scale items. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that 11(9.7%) respondents strongly disagreed with statement that public participation has a positive influence on the implementation of USDP, 13(11.5%) respondents disagreed with the statement and 43(38.1%) respondents were in agreement with the statement

Table 1. Responses on Stakeholder Involvement on the Implementation of Urban Strategic Development Plan.

Statement	SD		D		UD		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Public participation has a positive impact on the implementation of urban strategic development plan	11	9.7	13	11.5	28	24.8	43	38.1	18	15.9
Accountability to stakeholders has no influence on the implementation of urban strategic development plans	32	28.3	37	32.7	21	18.6	14	12.4	9	8.0
Constant communication with stakeholders a enhances implementation of urban strategic development plans	13	11.5	16	14.2	18	15.9	39	34.5	27	23.9
Stakeholder training enhances the implementation of urban strategic development plan	12	10.6	18	15.9	20	17.7	22	19.5	41	36.3

while 28(24.8%) respondents were undecided on the statement. The other 18(15.9%) strongly agreed on the statement of public participation in the strategic plan implementation. The study findings showed that majority of the respondents (57%) believe that the public participation approach has got a positive influence on the implementation of USDP in Kapsabet town.

Further, 39(34.5%) respondents agreed with the statement that stakeholder communication enhances the implementation of USDP, 27(23.9%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 16(14.2%) respondents disagreed with the statement and 13(11.5%) respondents strongly disagreed with the statement while 18(15.9%) respondents were undecided on the statement. It emerged that majority (58.4%) of respondents believed that stakeholder communication has got an influence during the implementation of USDP in Nandi County. Many scholars including Aosa (1992), Burnes (2004), Korten (1990), Mulube (2008) and Letting (2009) have concluded that lack of clear flow of communication was a hindering factor in implementing strategic plans. The study findings imply that the government could be having problems with their implementation occasioned by lack of multidirectional communication flow.

Similarly, 14(12.4%) respondents agreed with the statement that transparency has no influence on the implementation of USDP in Kapsabet town, 9(8.0%) respondents strongly agreed with statement and 37(32.7%) respondents were in disagreement with the statement. Another 21(18.6%) respondents were undecided while 32(28.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. From the responses, it can be shown that majority (61.0%) of the respondents in Kapsabet town believe that accountability during strategic development plan implementation is crucial.

The table above shows that 22(19.5%) respondents agreed with the statement that stakeholder training enhances the implementation of USDP while 41(36.3) strongly agreed with the statement. Another 12(10.6) strongly disagreed as 20(17.7) remained undecided on the statement. From the study, it was found out that a majority (55.8%) of the respondents support stakeholder training as a way of achieving success in the implementation of USDP. Findings indicate that indeed stakeholders have several roles to play on aspects that affect implementation of strategies. Cummings and Doha (2000) noted that stakeholders can wield influence on the actions of organizations looking back in the past, present and the future. Arasa (2008) and Simpson and Lyndon (1995) had also concluded that stakeholders could negatively affect implementation if their interests were against those of the organization. Other scholars who identified stakeholder role include Johnson and Scholes (1999), Pearce and Robinson (2004), Kobia (1985) and

Mulube (2009). These field findings are therefore in support of the scholars' findings and hence it is right to use the findings for further inferences.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The study found out that it is important to involve all the stakeholders in the implementation of the strategic development plan. This gives the stakeholders a sense of ownership of the plan and by extension the projects therein hence avoid conflicts that may derail implementation. The study recommends that community/public participation during the implementation of projects contained in the strategic development plan should be given consideration. Most of the community members are the direct beneficiaries of the said projects and therefore it is their right to be involved in the planning and implementation process as enshrined in the constitution of Kenya.

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