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Factors Influencing Project Sustainability: A Case Study of Rural Livelihood Programme by VEDCO in Butansi Sub-County, Kamuli District.

Sustaining project outcomes is one key strategy that stewards of development projects and livelihood programmes set in their operations agenda. Sustaining project outcomes is becoming increasingly important because most donor funded projects are timed past which it is anticipated that the beneficiaries would break-even with the support given and live fuller lives. This study was flagged to examine the factors influencing project sustainability, the case of the Rural Livelihood programme by VEDCO in Butansi sub-county. Specifically the study assessed the influence of community participation and involvement on project sustainability; established the influence of project management factors on project sustainability; and the influence of characteristics of beneficiary group members on project sustainability.

A cross sectional correlational case study design was used to achieve the objectives of the study. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used for data collection and analysis. The case study looked at the Rural Livelihood Program implemented by VEDCO in Butansi sub-county in Kamuli district. Case study design was used so as to obtain an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing project sustainability. The beneficiary respondents were selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques while the key informants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions guides and were analysed using descriptive means. The influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable was tested using Pearson correlation coefficient and simple regression analysis. Data were presented using tables and narrative text.

The study found out a low positive non-significant effect of community participation on project sustainability ($r=0.138$, $p=.0.181>0.05$) with predicted variation of 43.8% in sustaining project outcomes. Project management factors such as failure to adopt inter-organisational working relationships had a negative non-significant effect on project sustainability ($r= -.085$, $p=.0.413>0.05$) with a predicted variation of -8.5% while characteristics of the beneficiary groups too, had a negative non-significant effect on project sustainability ($r= -0.160$, $p=.0.121>0.05$) with a prediction of -2.3 % variation in sustaining project. The worst challenges xvi of the three investigated factors were characteristics of the beneficiary groups, project management factors and community participation/investment in that pecking order. It was concluded that majority of the community members had failed to sustain the project outcomes and were succumbing to food insecurity; they failed to make any savings among others. The study recommended need for training beneficiaries and inter-organisational collaborations.

Key Words: Project Sustainability, Rural Livelihood Programme, Kamuli District