



# The Role of Improved Opportunities and Obstacles to Development Actors in Sustainability of Community-Based Development Initiatives: A Case of Morogoro District Council, Tanzania

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**Abstract:** *The study was conducted to assess the role of improved opportunities and obstacles to development actors in sustainability of community-based development initiatives. The study was conducted in Morogoro District Council because it was among the five (5) districts piloted for the implementation of project known as "Strengthening Participatory Planning and Community Development Cycle for Good Governance" popularly known as O and OD (PMO-RALG, 2008). Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the sample size of 70 respondents representing actors at district, ward and village levels including; one (1) DED, seven (7) CTF, six (6) WFs, two (2) WEOs, two (2) VEOs, two (2) group leaders from twelve (12) community development groups (2\*12) and twenty eight (28) community members. The study findings revealed that fifty seven (57) of respondents' equivalent to 81% of the total respondents supported that social preparation as one of the major factors for sustainability was done by Council Task Force. Whereas sixty four (64) respondents equivalent to 91% of the respondents supported that social preparation was done by Ward Facilitators, sixty (60) respondents equivalent to 86% of the respondents supported that awareness creation was done by Ward Facilitators, and fifty (50) respondents equivalent to 71% of the respondents supported that organization formation was facilitated by Ward Facilitators. This implies that Ward Facilitators are the principal organ in operationalization of improved Opportunity & Obstacles to Development and hence realization of Decentralization by Devolution (D by D).*

**Keywords:** *Role, Actors, Opportunities, Obstacles, and Development*

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## 1. Introduction

In relation to sustainability of community-based development projects, local actors play large part in influencing success of locally designed development projects. Roles played by local actors are manifestation of the transfer of power and responsibilities from central to local government. In describing the magnitude of the decentralization reforms, the World Bank (2011) observed that by 2000, at least 95% of the democratic states in the world had elected local authorities and subsequently

administrative, fiscal and political powers have been given to sub-national government at grassroots (Karlstrom, 2015; Makara, 2018).

Decentralization, in its many forms has been a global public service reform. From developed world to the global south, many countries have implemented decentralization reforms. It is argued that decentralization allow local people to participate in decision-making process for issues that affects their livelihood. According to Egbenya (2010) there is a close correlation between decentralization and poverty reduction as the local people are empowered and

given the resources and capacity to perform the function of developing their localities.

Countries that have gone further in implementing decentralization reform have increased decision making autonomy to local government and grassroots institutions and this has improved public quality service delivery to the local populace (Mbate, 2017). We further agree with Fatile and Ejalonibu (2015) who opined that, the effectiveness of decentralization is accomplished through increasing fiscal, administrative and political autonomy to LGAs and providing people with quality and affordable public services provided by competent and nonpartisan public bureaucrats. Banerjee *et al.* (2009) argue that decentralization of authority over the provision, allocation and delivery of public goods to local governments has been a wide spread practice in many developing countries.

As a developmental role, Local Government Authorities (LGAs) increasingly deliver fundamental public services (Njunwa, 2006; Warioba, 2008; Mafuru and Hulst, 2015). Public service delivery includes infrastructures development, health and education provision, access to water and sanitation as well as creating enabling environment for agricultural development. In this respect, the views of Natalini (2010) and Kesale (2017) are pertinent that local governments have been given a “developmental role” as institutions that are close to the communities and are likely to respond to the local needs and priorities

African countries were also not left behind in this reform trend. Since the 1990s, many African countries have tried to transfer resources and public service management to local government authorities (LGAs) such as counties, municipalities and cities (Dickovick & Wunsch, 2014). Awortwi (2011) observed that by 2010 almost two-thirds (2/3) of countries in sub-Saharan Africa have executed some forms of decentralization reforms, purposely to bring the government closer to the people it seeks to serve. Likewise, World Bank (2011) as cited in Mbate (2017) suggests that, more than 50% of African countries have devolved power, resources and functions from the centre to the grassroots

Local governments in Tanzania are based on political devolution and decentralization of functional responsibilities, power and resources from central government to local governments and empower communities to control their development process. Through Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP-I) in 1998, the Central Government devolved authorities and responsibilities of social service delivery to the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) with a view of improving social services delivery to the public (LGRP-II, 2011). Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP), apart

from other things, aimed at improving quality, access and equitable delivery of health and education services (Ngware, 2005; Sarwatt *et al.*, 2014). Local governments, through their elected officials, have the responsibility of providing social services in their areas of jurisdiction (Goel, 2008; Muro and Namusonge, 2015).

## 1.1 Research question of the study

What is the role of improved opportunities and obstacles to development actors in sustainability of community-based development initiatives?

## 1.2 Problem statement

Through decentralization policy, particularly decentralization by devolution (D by D), most of development projects which were formerly implemented by the central government were transferred to the local governments (Kipiriri *et al.*, 2003; Frumence *et al.*, 2014; Sigalla, 2015). However it is not clear what roles do various actors play in sustainability of community based development initiatives. Therefore, the study intends to assess the different roles played by various actors in the study area, in relation to improved Opportunity and Obstacle to Development (O & OD).

## 1.3 Significance of the study

The study is significant to local community members as the main actors of their community based development initiatives. The local community members as main actors of the projects can increase sense of ownership of the community-based development initiatives. The community based development initiatives can help the local community members to realize their opportunities and obstacles, hence community empowerment. The study is also significant to policy makers because they are the overseers of the local community development initiatives. Therefore, policy makers can provide moral support, technical support as well as financial support to the local community based development initiatives realized by the community members for sustainability of projects.

## 2. Literature Review

### Facilitation on sustainability of community-based development initiatives

Several studies have been conducted in the globe including Tanzania to assess the sustainability of community-based development interventions. The studies include; Mihanjo (2005) who examined the sustainability and effectiveness of community based development initiatives in supporting rural development in Morogoro, Tanzania by using qualitative and quantitative methods. The author found that the new established community based groups need facilitation on the professional skills

which would promote in enhancing sustainability and effectiveness of the community based development activities. Hence, based on findings the author recommended the development of training manual for facilitation on professional skills.

Technical support from local government and NGOs, including capacity building and delegation of tasks to community members, enhances the confidence of local members and thus leads to a high level of participation. Aref et. al., (2010) emphasizes the need for development agencies and governments to strengthen community capacity that would enable local residents to take full ownership of projects in terms of resource management, planning, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of projects.

Moreover, Aref et. al., (2010) revealed that ownership makes it easier in determining how the interests and actions of individuals or organizations contribute to community development work. The level of dedication to the process and outcome is enhanced; that is, if individuals are engaged authentically and intimately, engaging individual lead to greater chances of support in implementation and realization of community development goals.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research design**

The study employed case study research design because it is the most flexible to all research design, allowing the researcher to retain holistic characteristics of real-life events while investigating empirical events (Schell, 1992). The merits of case studies, indeed any type quantitative research is subject to interpretation which explored through science of meaning and subjective process.

### **3.2 Area of the study**

The study was conducted in Morogoro District Council because it was among the five (5) districts piloted for the implementation of project known as "Strengthening Participatory Planning and Community Development Cycle for Good Governance" popularly known as O and OD (PMO-RALG, 2008). The study took place in two piloted Wards which are Gwata and Mvula. In Gwata Ward study was conducted in Maseyu Village and in Mvula Ward study was conducted in Tulo Village.

### **3.3 Sample size**

The undertaken study comprised of 70 respondents selected through purposive sampling technique which includes; 1 DED, 7 CTF, 6 WFs, 2 WEOs, 2 VEOs, 2 group leaders from twelve (12) community development groups and 28 community members.

## **3.4 Data collection methods**

### **3.4.1 Questionnaires**

The questionnaires comprised of both closed and open ended questions were used as data collection instruments. The questionnaires collected informative primary data on community-based development initiatives from the local community members in the study area.

### **3.4.2 In-depth interview**

It was used to collect in-depth primary information from the respondents sampled in Maseyu and Tulo villages located in Gwata and Mvula wards, Morogoro district council. Key informants were District Executive Director (DED), Council Task Force (CTF), Ward Facilitators (WFs), Ward Executive Officers (WEOs), Village Executive Officers (VEOs), group leaders and local community members.

### **3.4.3 Documentary review**

The documentary review technique was used to collect existing secondary data of improved O&OD community initiatives from various actors including; DED, CTF, WFs, WEOs, VEOs, groups' leaders and local community members sampled in the study area.

## **3.5 Data analysis and presentation**

The collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and summarized in terms of bar charts as shown in Figures 1-5.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Research question analysis**

#### **4.1.1 Role of Council Task Force in sustainability of community based development initiatives**

Results in Figure 1 revealed that 57 respondents equivalent to 81% of the total respondents supported that monitoring and evaluation as one of the major factors for sustainability was done by Council Task Force. Conversely, Council Task Force (CTF) did not play much more roles in the other factors for sustainability namely: training, organization formation, networking and social preparation because they concentrated much more on the provision of moral, technical, and financial supports to the ward facilitators as pointed out by respondents of the study.

Similar findings were reported by Venugopal and Yilmaz, (2010), it was revealed that technical staff often have

mandate in planning, budgeting and personnel management. CTF represents members of technocracy in LGAs constituting seven Heads of Department in respective LGA. However, in the study conducted by World Bank, (2001) and Azfar et al., (2004), it was reported that LGAs use financial and other resources in an

efficient, effective and transparent way sanctioned by government budget ceiling compromising mandate of LGAs to allocate funds according to their needs. This suggests that CTF technical and financial support to the ward facilitators may get compromised.

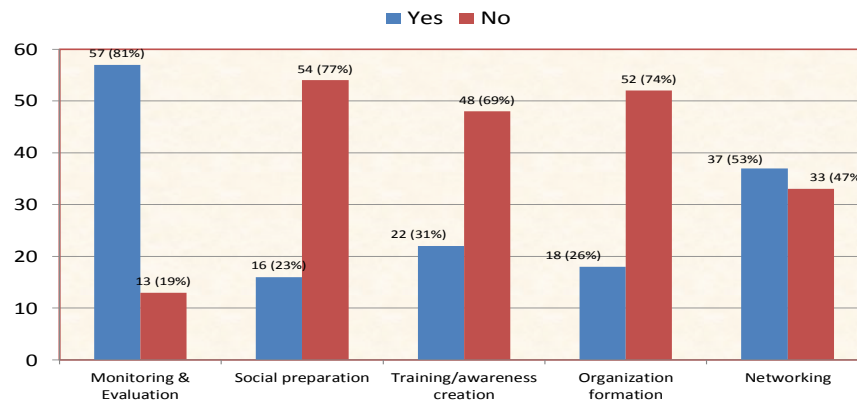
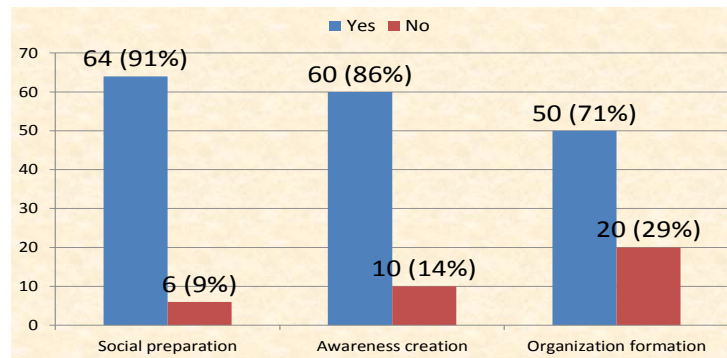


Figure 1: Role of Council Task Force in sustainability of community based development initiatives

#### 4.1.2 Role of Ward facilitators in sustainability of community based development initiatives

The results showed that, (64) respondents equivalent to 91% of the respondents supported that social preparation was done by Ward Facilitators, (60) equivalent to 86% of the respondents supported that awareness creation was done by Ward Facilitators, and (50) respondents equivalent to 71% of the respondents supported that organization formation was facilitated by Ward Facilitators. Hence, sustainability of the community based development projects (Figure 2).

The similar findings were reported by Amjad et al., (2015) and Ademiluyi & Odugbesan, (2008). They spotted out on the aspect of enabling environment to pave the way to sustainability of community based environment. The enabling environment, in terms of effective institutions, can be measured through the presence and implementation of policies and laws that clearly define the roles and responsibilities, capacity and capability, of these institutions. Therefore, as acknowledged by scholars, one of the key drivers of the sustainability of water sustainability projects is the availability of well-established institutions as enabling environment. Hence, adequate institutional support and policy arrangements are indispensable in enhancing sustainability of community based development projects.



**Figure 2: Role of Ward Facilitators in sustainability of community based development initiatives**

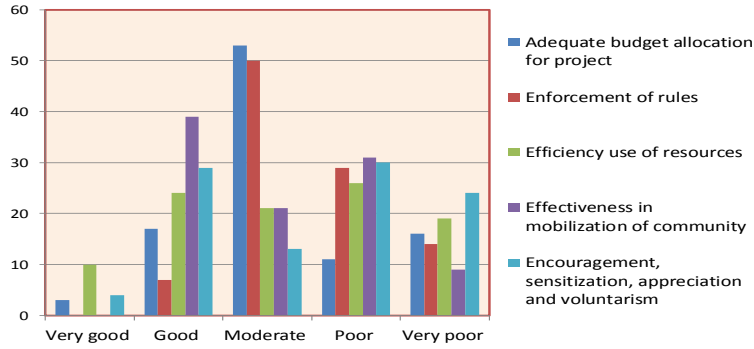
#### 4.1.3 Role of village government council in sustainability of community-based development initiatives

The results revealed that 18% of the total respondents said that adequate budget allocation for project was good whereas 53% of the total respondents said that budget allocation for project was moderate. On the other hand 11% of the total respondents said that adequate budget allocation for project was poor. The results supported with the study conducted by (Montgomery et al., 2009) who found that budget allocation for community initiatives is supervised by the village government council. Moreover, 7% of the respondents said that enforcement of rules was good whereas 50% of the respondents said that enforcement of rules was moderate while 29% said that enforcement of rules was poor. Although government at village level uses to formulate policies and make and approve by-laws as it was reported by Njunwa (2005), the subsequent enforcement is poor. The 24% of the respondents said that efficiency use of resources was good; while 21% reported that efficiency use of resources was moderate whereas 26% said that efficiency use of resources was poor (Figure 3). Similar findings were reported in the study conducted by Smoke (2010:197-198) in relation to financial control and efficiency use of resources; he reported that local authorities do not have sufficient staff to carry out new tasks, and they lack the

technical expertise to provide services and to manage local finances.

Furthermore, the 39% of the respondents said that effectiveness in mobilization of community was good whereas 21% of respondents reported that effectiveness in mobilization of community was moderate while 31% said that effectiveness in mobilization of community was poor. The results revealed that 29% of the respondents said that encouragement; sensitization, appreciation and voluntarism were good whereas 13% said that encouragement, sensitization, appreciation and voluntarism were moderate; and 30% said that encouragement, sensitization, appreciation and voluntarism were poor (Figure 3).

The findings supported with the study conducted by REPOA (2008) as it was reported that most lower level authorities in Tanzania still operated with limited skilled human resources. In spite of enhanced mechanisms like training workshops and Human capacity across major cadres (Councilors, Directors, Senior Management, Village, Ward Officials and Elected Representatives) provision of social service delivery still faces many challenges. Sustainability of community based development initiatives as an administrative function. Administrative function is a mandate of street/Village administration (Njunwa, 2005).



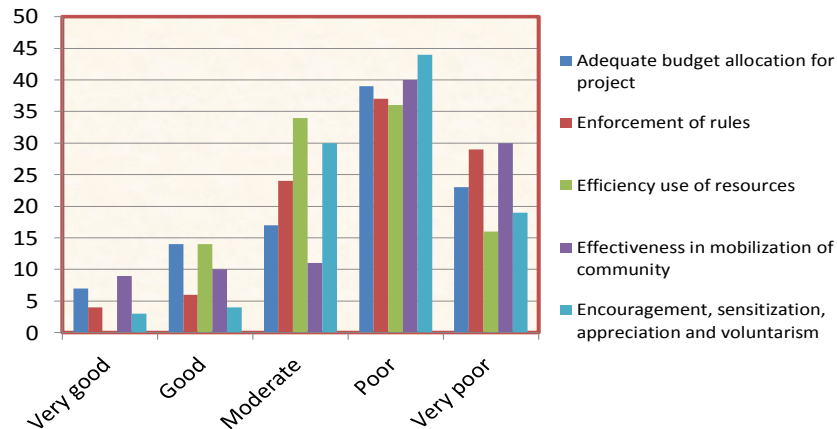
**Figure 3: Role of Village Government Council in sustainability of Community Based Development initiatives.**

#### **4.1.4 Role of project committee in sustainability of community-based development initiatives**

The findings showed that 14% of the respondents reported that adequate budget allocation for project was good whereas 17% of respondents said that budget allocation for project was moderate. The 6% of respondents said that enforcement of rules was good. Moreover, 24% of respondents said that enforcement of rules was moderate. The results revealed that 14% of respondents said that efficiency use of resources was good; whereas 34% of the respondents said that efficiency use of resources was moderate. On the other hand 36% of respondents said that efficiency use of resources was poor. Moreover, the 10% of the respondents reported that effectiveness in mobilization of community was good while 11% said that effectiveness in mobilization of community was moderate (Figure 4).

Furthermore, the results showed that 4% of the respondents said that encouragement; sensitization, appreciation and voluntarism were good whereas 30% said that encouragement, sensitization, appreciation and voluntarism were moderate. On the roles of project committee, in the study conducted by Mosha et al., (2016) it was reported that the general purpose of project committee is to organize the provision of water resources so as to respond to the collective needs of service users and at the same time to secure the sustainable use of the resources.

According to Conyers (2007), the effectiveness of management and user committees depends on their structure, composition, motivation and capacity of their members; and how they are linked to the local and national structures. Hence, project committee should be strengthened in terms of training for well execution of their roles for sustainability of community based development initiatives (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Role of project committee in sustainability of community-based development initiatives**

#### 4.1.5 Role of Group leaders' in sustainability of community-based development initiatives

The results showed that 33% of the total respondents said enforcement of rules was very good. The 21% of the total respondents said enforcement of rules was good, 24% of the total respondents said that efficiency use of resources was very good; 13% of the total respondents said that efficiency use of resources was good; 19% of the total respondents said that efficiency use of resources was moderate; 30% said that efficiency use of resources was poor, 23% said that effectiveness in mobilization of

community was good; 23% said that effectiveness in mobilization of community was moderate. Moreover, the respondents amounting 13% of the respondents said that encouragement, sensitization, appreciation and voluntarism was good whereas 24% of the respondents said that encouragement, sensitization, appreciation and voluntarism was moderate; (Figure 5).

The similar findings reported by URT,(2008), and Cleaver and Toner, (2006) suggests that social service user' groups and associations play various roles in terms of building sense ownership, management of resources, operation and maintenance of water supply infrastructures on behalf of the local communities.

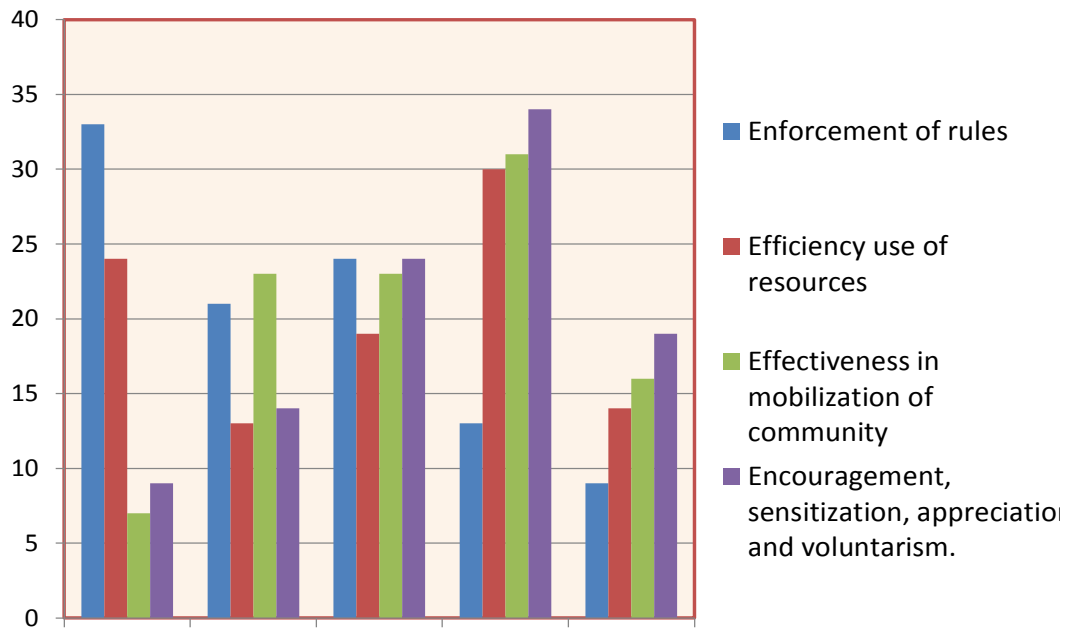


Figure 5: Role of group leaders in sustainability of community based development initiatives

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The focus of the study was to assess the role of improved opportunities and obstacles to development actors in the sustainability of community based development initiatives. The improved O&OD actors involved in the study were Council Task Force (CTF), Ward facilitators (WFs), Village government council (VGC), Project committee (PC), and Group leaders (GL). The study revealed that roles played by improved O&OD actors are very indispensable in the sustainability of Community Based Development Initiatives.

Hence, the study concluded that organization formation, networking, monitoring and evaluation, adequate budget allocation for project; 'effectiveness in mobilization of community'; efficiency use of resources and encouragement, sensitization, appreciation and voluntarism are the significant roles of improved O&OD actors in the sustainability of community based development initiatives which should be taken into

account as indispensable roles for sustainability of the community based-development initiatives in the country. However, strengthening of village government council, project committee members and group leaders in terms of training for well execution of their roles in the sustainability of community based development initiatives is very indispensable.

Moreover, the improved O&OD model can be replicated to all LGAs in the country with the aim of scaling-up the community based development initiatives as indispensable tool for realization of opportunities and obstacles to development of the local communities for the local community empowerment.

Therefore, the study informs the Tanzanian government that the roles played by the key actors of improved O&OD are the indispensable roles for sustainability of community based development initiatives. Hence, the indispensable roles of improved O&OD actors can be translated into local government policies and guidelines of the country for sustainability of community based development initiatives.

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