

# CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING HIV/AIDS RELATED PROJECTS IN LOCAL NGOS IN ADDIS ABABA: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

ZELLALEM TADESSE BEYENE

Lecturer, Department of Management, St. Mary's University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

\*\*\*

**Abstract** - The purpose of the study was to assess the project management practices and challenges of local NGOs implementing HIV/AIDS prevention projects. To accomplish the objectives of the study, a descriptive research method was employed. Data were gathered through questionnaires from 25 NGOs. Moreover, interview was conducted with Addis Ababa HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office (AAHAPCO) project monitoring and evaluation experts. The collected data were analyzed using percentage and weighted mean. Furthermore, inferential statistical tools one sample t-test was used. The findings of the study revealed that lack of participation of stakeholders during project designing, monitoring and evaluation, lack of fund, delayed release of funds, duplication effort, unable to have separate unit for monitoring and evaluation, unable to conduct mid-term evaluation, unable to have base line data were the serious problems encountered while managing HIV/AIDS related projects. Therefore, the study found out that, the projects implemented by the local NGOs were not effectively designed, monitored and evaluated. Thus, this has its own indication in accomplishing the objectives of the projects. To alleviate the prevailing problems implementing NGOs and AAHAPCO make an effort to encourage one another and create an enabling environment to develop a net-work by which they coordinate exchange of experience and can avoid duplication of effort. Furthermore, NGOs should involve concerned community and beneficiaries during project designing, monitoring and evaluation. And NGOs should establish separate unit to handle monitoring and evaluation activities effectively and efficiently.

**Key Words:** Project Management, Project Designing, Project implementation, Project Monitoring and Evaluation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Projects are identified in order to overcome development constraints, meet unsatisfied needs or demands and fulfill demands for goods and services. Besides, projects could contribute towards achieving specified development objectives. So, it demands a specialized branch of management known as project management. Project management has its own range of methods, systems, techniques etc. In project planning and control, to differentiate it from other forms of management, project management has its own uniqueness (Thirumalai, 2002:34). In favor of the above idea, Shihata (2000:9) suggested that

no matter how a project has significant ideas, its development benefits cannot be fully realized, if it is not properly managed and implemented. The observation made by the researcher showed that considerable numbers of HIV/AIDS related projects are facing difficulties in achieving their objectives and goals due to managerial and related reasons like ambitious expectation, vague objectives, absence of baseline information, inadequate monitoring systems, lack of experience in project and program management and lack of sufficient fund.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Project management includes planning, organizing, directing and controlling activities in addition to motivating what is usually the most expensive resource on the project-the people. Planning involves deciding what has to be done, when and by whom. The resources they need to be organized through activities such as procurement and recruitment. Directing their activities towards a coherent objective is a major management role. The activities also need controlling to ensure that they fit within the limits set for them (Maylor, 1996:3). Moreover, Anderson, *et al* (1995:29) described project management as a means of organizing, planning and controlling the project. A recipe for good project management can, of course, draw on our general knowledge of management, but the special conditions associated with project work also mean that project management requires special knowledge and methods.

Thirumalai (2002:12) defined project as "a sequence of unique, complex and connected activities having one goal or purpose and that be completed by a specific time, within budget, and according to specification.". In relation to this, Singh (2003:5) also explained project as a 'plan' for arranging, coordinating, supervising, monitoring and completion of various activities related to the final objective, i.e. HIV/AIDS prevention /mitigation related. In other words, all activities prior to completion of construction of work of the building shall be taken together as one time job and termed as 'project' and the building as an outcome from the projects.

Over the years, it has been widely assumed that Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been implementing different projects. A number of recent empirical studies have questioned the claims about effectiveness of NGO intervention in local communities

pertinent to project designing, monitoring and evaluation practices. Mark (2007:146) assessed the monitoring and evaluation practices and challenges of local NGOs implementing HIV/AIDS prevention projects in Botswana. The investigator in his findings shows that the projects implemented by NGOs were not effectively monitored and evaluated. The study determined that the monitoring and evaluation practices of the local NGOs fell short of the best practices. Most of the best practices were inconsistently done and others were not done at all. The study also unearthed the lack of funding faced by the NGOs. This was mainly as a result of lack of expertise in the area of project monitoring and evaluation. The study also identified quite a number of challenges the NGOs faced in carrying out monitoring and evaluation of the projects they faced. These challenges made it hard for the NGOs to effectively monitor and evaluate the projects implemented. The most significant ones included; inadequate finances, lack of expertise, stringent and multi-donor reporting requirements, and lack of baseline data. The study found out that, all in all the projects implemented by the local NGOs were not effectively monitored and evaluated.

A study conducted in South Africa by Swartz and Roux (2002:1) also indicates that most projects implemented focused on prevention and awareness. Major constraints were a lack of fund and trained personnel. Furthermore, the investigators argued that to achieve the objective of the project further emphasis must be put on the constraints identified. Similarly, AusAID (2000:5) highlights that the NGO sector plays a critical role in attempts to control HIV/AIDS in Tanzania and Zimbabwe. By this assumption the study conducted in these countries shows that the overall quality of the NGOs program could be lifted considerably, by if the standard of the project designs could be improved and if design frameworks could be utilized more effectively as management tools.

The standard of design of NGOs was generally weak and requires early attention. Activities are often presented as outputs and objectives, not as activities and risk and sustainability are inadequately addressed. Poor design inhabits appraises, which was found to superficial and also undermines monitoring, implementation and reporting by NGOs. At the same time, it was apparent to the evaluation team that many NGOs and their implementing partners are not yet fully conversant with, or convinced of the benefits, of utilizing designing as a management tool. Furthermore, PACT (2000:41) stated that several of the NGOs are involved in different components of the epidemic control, which ranges from prevention activities, care and support to alleviating the impacts of the epidemic. It is fact that such attempts especially by smaller NGOs would be difficult due to several reasons: limited limitation capacity, lack of experience, resource limitations (financial as well as human).

## 2.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges faced by the NGOs while managing HIV/AIDS prevention projects?
2. How effectively are the monitoring and evaluation phases done on HIV/AIDS projects implemented by NGOs?

## 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The nature of the research triggered the investigator to use mixed approach. This approach was used in response to a need to clarify the intent of mixing quantitative and qualitative data in this study. In this study descriptive research method was used. This method was used to describe the project management practices and challenges of the HIV/AIDS related projects that are handled by NGOs. Once the data have been collected through the designed questionnaires, they were edited, presented in tabular form. Accordingly, weighted mean, standard deviation, and one sample t-test tools were used to test respondents' response.

Project personnel were considered as an informant of the study. Out of 90 NGOs that have been implementing HIV/AIDS prevention as part of their activities 30 percent (27) NGOs were contacted. The NGOs were selected on the basis of random sampling technique on the ground that this technique allows the researcher to gain unbiased estimates of the population's characteristics. Out of 27 NGOs, 25 of them were filled and returned the questionnaires. Project personnel constitute the most important group of respondents that can smoke out the project management practices and challenges faced during managing projects. Therefore, project personnel/managers from sampled NGOs were approached through questionnaire.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section deals with the extraction of the principal factors or pattern of reasons from the item-responses collected through questionnaire. The factors that emerged from this part were identified and subsequently labeled and described. Responses were gathered to assess the project designing practices of local NGOs from project personnel. Then, they were asked to rate using the five point likert scale of poor (1), weak/less than satisfactory (2), average/satisfactory (3), good/more than satisfactory (4), excellent (5) to rate the variables under project designing. Their responses are recorded in Table below.

Respondents Response on Project Designing Practice			
No	Item	Mean	ST
1	The project addresses a genuine development problem	3.64	1.04
2	The project form is coherent with national HIV/AIDS prevention program	4.36	0.57
3	Clarity of immediate objectives, including specifications of targets	3.80	0.71
4	Specification of beneficiaries	4.00	0.96
5	Validity of means, ends relationship between inputs, outputs and objectives	3.60	1.04
6	Work plan including timing or inputs, activities and outputs	3.08	1.29
7	Adequacy of partnerships with other related institutions and organizations	2.96	1.17
8	Implementation arrangement and managerial structure	3.24	1.13
9	Overall assessment of project design	3.24	0.88

The genuineness of the project in addressing development problems were more than satisfactory of weighted mean score of (3.64) and a standard deviation of (1.04). Furthermore, the respondents rated the coherence of the project with HIV/AIDS prevention program of the country as weighted mean score of (4.36) and a standard deviation of (0.57). As attested in item 3 of Table above, concerning the clarity and vivaciousness of the projects' objectives the respondents reported the clarity of the objectives of the projects as weighted mean of (3.8) and a standard deviation of (0.71).

According to the data in item 4 respondents rated the specification of beneficiaries as weighted mean of (4.00) and a standard deviation of (0.96). Furthermore respondents were asked to rate the validity of means, ends relationship between inputs, outputs and objectives as weighted mean of (3.60) and a standard deviation of (1.04).

Item 7 shows that realism of identified prerequisites and risks for project success as weighted mean of (3.24) and a standard deviation of (1.30). Furthermore, respondents rated adequacy of partnerships with other related institutions and organizations as weighted mean of (2.96) and a standard deviation of (1.17).

Means and standard deviations calculated, to describe the responses of the study on project designing practice with the variable implementation arrangement and managerial structure final results obtained from above Table illustrates that figures of the variable (implementation arrangement

and managerial structure) is (3.24) for the mean score and standard deviation is (1.13). Final results in Table shows that the variable (overall assessment of project design) has mean score of (3.24), and standard deviation of (0.88).

Describes Absence of Project Monitoring Related Constructs			
No.	Items	SD	T-Value
1	Fear of finding mistakes	1.04	11.39
2	Fear of failure	1.02	10
3	Lack of transparency and accountability	1.42	8.61
4	Lack of skill	1.13	9.95
5	Cost of the redesigning the overall project	1.25	11.38
6	Resistance to change by entire project staff	1.08	11.43
7	People are overwhelmed by more work	1.16	10.7
8	Lack of time	1.19	10.92
9	Lack of fund	1.29	9.3
10	Poor project design	1.23	9.07
11	Lack of awareness on the contribution of project monitoring	1.24	12.63

The lists of assumed potential constraint in the project monitoring presented in Table above were considered as the major factors that affect the effectiveness of project management. The responses were analyzed using t-value and standard deviation.

Evidence from item 1 of the Table shows that the t-value score for the variable (fear of finding mistakes) is (11.39) and its standard deviation is (1.04). Moreover, as attested in item 2 of the Table concerning the variable (fear of failure) respondents reported as t-value of (10.00) and a standard deviation of (1.02). T-value and standard deviations calculated to describe the responses on factors that affect monitoring practices with the variable (lack of transparency and accountability) and it is confirmed that its t-value and standard deviation was (8.61) and (1.42) respectively.

Similarly, the responses of the remaining constructs of t-value and standard deviation were 9.95 and 1.13 (lack of skills), 11.38 and 1.25 (cost of re-designing the overall project), 11.43 and 1.08 (resistance to change by entire project staff), 10.70 and 1.16 (people are overwhelmed by more work), 10.92 and 1.19 (lack of time), 9.30 and 1.29 (lack of fund), 9.07 and 1.23 (poor project design), and 12.63 and 1.24 (lack of awareness on the contribution of project monitoring) respectively.

Describes Absence of Project Evaluation Related Constructs			
No.	Items	T-value	SD
1	Fear of finding mistakes	11.39	1
2	Fear of failure	12.00	1
3	Lack of transparency and accountability	9.05	1
4	Lack of skills	10.43	1
5	Cost of re-designing the overall Project	11.59	1
6	Resistance to change by entire project staff	14.18	1
7	People are overwhelmed by more work	10.01	1
8	Lack of time	10.55	1
9	Lack of fund	10.11	1
10	Poor project design	9.51	1

The lists of assumed potential constraint in the project evaluation presented in Table above were considered as the major factors that affect consequently the implementation of HIV/AIDS related projects. Similarly, the response on potential seriousness of the constraints discussed as follows using t-value and standard deviation; 11.39 and 1.04 (fear of finding mistakes), 12.00 and 1.00 (fear of failure), 9.05 and 1.28 (lack of transparency and accountability), 10.43 and 1.23 (lack of skills), 11.59 and 1.17 (cost of re-designing the overall project), 14.18 and 0.94 (resistance to change by entire project staff), 10.01 and 1.32 (people are overwhelmed by more work), 10.55 and 1.19 (lack of time), 10.11 and 1.40 (lack of fund) and 9.51 and 1.47 (poor project design)

### 5. Conclusions

Based on the major findings, the following conclusions were drawn in line with the research questions and objectives of the study. The issue of implementing HIV/AIDS related projects has become a difficult and critical for the NGOs. Duplication of efforts and inadequate coordination and lack of integration efforts among different stakeholders is considered as a problem by respondents. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that some of the HIV/AIDS intervention areas might be unnoticed by NGOs.

The findings showed that majority of the NGOs did not involve beneficiaries during project designing, monitoring and evaluation. Moreover, NGOs failed to have an advantage of collecting information during project designing, monitoring and information. Thus, it is possible to deduce that such type of practice might make beneficiaries not to develop sense of belongingness, demonstrating accountability and also ensuring sustainability of the project.

Therefore, all these will have their own insinuation on the accomplishment of the objective of the projects.

The study further indicated that the project(s) implemented by NGOs were not well/properly designed, monitored and evaluated. The study also revealed lack of awareness on the contribution of project, lack of fund, lack of knowledge and skills, lack of transparency and accountability and fear of failure as major challenges. Thus, it is safe and sound to conclude that all these factors lead to poor project management or challenge to implement projects. It was also found that majority of the NGOs did not have a separate unit for monitoring and evaluation. This has contributed to the conspicuous lack of a strong monitoring and evaluation system. Therefore, all these will have their own implications on the accomplishment of monitoring and evaluation in particular and overall project management in general.

### REFERENCES

1. AAHAPCO. 'HIV/AIDS Prevalence in Addis Ababa'. Available at <http://www.aahapco.org/orgnizational.html>. Accessed on 19 October, 2014
2. Abudulatif, Jelal. 2001. "Good Governance for Peace, Democracy and Development and the Role of NGOs". Proceedings of the Workshop on the Role of NGOs in the Democratization Process and Peace Building. Addis Ababa: CRDA
3. AIDSCAP. 1997. Final Report for the AIDCAP in Rwanda. Rwanda
4. Anderson, E.S, Grude, K.V, Hagos, T, Gibbons, T and Wiig, R. 1995. Goal Directed Project Management. London: Coopers and Lybrand.
5. AusAID. 2000. Evaluation of Australian Government Funded NGO Projects in Africa. Available at: [www.usaid.gov.au](http://www.usaid.gov.au). Accessed on 28 January 2009.
6. Brandon, H.D. and Gray, M. 1970. Project Control Standards 2nd edition. New York: Mason/Charter Publisher Inc.
7. Chandra, P. 2002. Projects: Planning, Analysis, Financing, Implementation and Review 5th ed. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.
8. CRDA. 2000. "Project Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation" Training Manual. Addis Ababa: CRDA.
9. \_\_\_\_\_. 2001. "Annual Report 2000". Addis Ababa: CRDA.
10. \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. "Participatory Project development". Training Manual. Addis Ababa.
11. Creswell, J.W. 2003. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches 2nd edition. California: Sage Publications, Inc.
12. Duncan, W.R. 1996. A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge. New York: NC Project Management Institute.

13. Gall, M.D., Borg, W.R. and Gall J.P. 1996. Educational Research: An Introduction. White Plains Ny: Longman Publishers.
14. Kliem, R.L. and I.S. Ludin. 1994. The People Side of Project Management. England: Gower Publishing.
15. Knutson, J. 2001. Project management; for Business Professional: A Comprehensive Guide. New York: Sons Wiley and Son Inc.
16. Lewis, D. 2001. The Management of Non-Governmental Development Organizations: An Introduction. New York: St. Edmundsbury Press.
17. Little, I.M. and Mirrless, J.A. 1982. Project Appraisal and Planning for Developing Countries. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
18. Malhotra, 2006. Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation. New Delhi: Prentice Hall.
19. Mark, M. 2007. Monitoring and Evaluation Practice and Challenges of Gaborone Based Local NGOs Implementing HIV/AIDS Projects in Botswana. Available at: <http://www.aau.org.aur-hiv-aids/docs/students/mmuzinda.pdf>. Accessed on 17 November 2008.
20. Maylor, H. 1996. Project Management. London: Pitman Publishing.
21. MoFED. 2004. "Project Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation" Training Manual. Addis Ababa: MoFED
22. MoH.1998. Policy on HIV/AIDS of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: MoH.
23. \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. AIDS in Ethiopia. 3rd ed. Addis Ababa: MoH.
24. \_\_\_\_\_. 2004. AIDS in Ethiopia 5th ed. Addis Ababa: MoH.
25. NAF. 1995. Evaluating HIV/AIDS Prevention Programs in Community –Based Organizations. Washington DC
26. PACT. 2000. Assessment Study of HIV/AIDS Implementing Organizations. Addis Ababa
27. Project Evaluation Questionnaire. 1994. Available at: <http://www.adpc.net/pdr-sea/eval/file14.pdf>. Accessed on 19 December 2008.
28. Shah, M.K., Mahlalela, X.M, Kambou, S.D. and Adams, M.K. 2006. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation of Community- and Faith-Based Programs. Core Initiative
29. Shihata, I.F. 2000. The World Bank Inspection Panel: In Practice. Washington DC: World Bank.
30. Singh, N. 2003. Project Management and Control. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.
31. Thirumalai, S. 2002. Project Management. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.
32. UNDP. 2002. Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results. New York: One United Nations Plaza
33. \_\_\_\_\_.2003. Prevention and Treatment of HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Belarus. Belarus.
34. Williams, D. and Parr, T. 2006. Enterprises Program Management. Norwich: Curran Publishing Service.