

INFLUENCE OF M& E CAPACITY BUILDING ON SUSTAINABILITY OF AGRICULTURAL FOOD CROP PROJECTS IN KENYA: THE CASE OF NYERI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Many Kenyans live in poverty with most of these living in rural areas and deriving their livelihood directly from agriculture. Agriculture plays a dual role in the abolition of hunger as it enhances production of food and also serves as a source of employment that can provide families with a source of livelihood as well as providing raw materials for industries in the this sector and stimulating the formation of new industries. Being the world's single largest employer agriculture, if improved can improve the income of the marginalized. The performance of agriculture impacts on the whole economy, underlining the need for urgent revitalization of this sector. Capacity Building is an integral tool in managing and accessing efficiency and effectiveness of investments in agriculture sector and sustainability. This study aimed at assessing the influence of M & E capacity building on sustainability of food crop projects.. The study adopted descriptive survey design and correlation design and was undertaken in Nyeri South Sub-county, The target population were one Sub County agricultural officer, and four other Sub County officers, four extension officers and 503 farmers in the agriculture food crops projects. Stratified random sampling was used to select the strata's that provided 211 respondents among farmers using Yamane's formula out whom 206 completed the questionnaire. Simple random sampling was used to identify respondents from the various agriculture food crop projects using the Neyman's formula. A census/saturated sampling was used in the case of the Sub County agricultural officer in charge, four other Sub County and four extension officers. Questionnaires, observation were used to collect data from farmers and extension officers and interviews guide in collecting information from the Sub County agricultural officer in charge and four other Sub County officers. The data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Multiple Linear regression was used for hypotheses testing. Inferential statistics mainly made use of Pearson correlation tests, indicating the relationship between the main study variables Relationship having a value of $r=0.7$ and above was considered very strong and between 0.5 and 0.69 strong and between 0.3 and 0.49 reasonably strong and a value of r below 0.29 was considered weak and an indicator that there was no relationship at all. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in data analysis. Based on the study findings, the study has exhibited a positive and significant influence of capacity building ($\beta_2=0.170$, $p<0.05$ Thus, the study concludes that with more capacity building of members in Agricultural food crop projects and officials sustainability will be enhanced.. Moreover, there is need for increased investment in capacity building of Agricultural food crop projects.

Keywords: Capacity building, Agricultural food crop projects

INTRODUCTION

Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building refers to activities that may viably contribute to project decision making and learning Scheirer (2012), in turn this has a bearing on project

sustainability. When undertaken professionally and ethically M & E Capacity Building can enhance realization of sustainability of projects. Capacity is the ability of individuals and organizations to perform functions effectively and systematically (UNDP, 2002). In the words of Simister & Smith (2010) noted that capacity whether of an individual or an organization keeps on varying hence the need for vigilance to cope with the dynamic demands. Further Boyle (1999) noted that capacity entails three interdependent levels namely individual, organizational and environmental that is supportive that together require supply and use of M & E data.

A world bank and Africa development bank study found that the key constraint to successful M & E capacity development in sub-Saharan Africa is lack of demand which stems from the absence of performance orientation in the public sector' (Schacter 2000). Capacity in the workforce is needed to develop and sustain M & E systems and officers need to be trained in modern data collection methods and analysis (Kusek and Rist 2004). There is growing recognition that donors and governments need to continue to invest in and support capacity development Sutherland (2011).

In a conference in Johannesburg South Africa in 1998, the African Evaluation Association (AEE) noted that developing capacity in M & E needed improvement of skills and tools as well as creation of awareness regarding the need for M & E and its use. In a meeting held in Casablanca Morocco 2009 the forum resolved that Africa institutions must do more to strengthen their capacity to Monitor & Evaluate for M & E to be regarded as useful in Africa. (AfDB, 2009).

According to FAO, (2002) implementation of the M and E program can commence only when competent key staffs are in place, suitable office premises are requisitioned, and the necessary equipment especially for field transportation and ICT are procured. In such event, recruitment from outside of government agencies would need to be considered. Capacity building can bridge the gap between planning and data demand and use, if officials and indeed farmers are deficient in capacity this will ultimately impact on sustainability.

Most development projects funders require that sustainability and capacity building be integrated into project planning and design, to ensure that when funding is withdrawn, the project's activities and positive impacts will be continue (Gervais, 2004). Project sustainability especially the food crop project sector has been a great concern. For instance, according to IFAD (2009), 50 per cent of the projects evaluated in 2007 including in the agriculture sector were rated only moderately satisfactory in sustainability and 33 per cent were unsatisfactory.

According to a study conducted by FAO, (2004) Monitoring and Evaluation capacity building processes should provide an important link between planning and feedback on the factual being interactive processes which would need to be developed between project Monitoring and Evaluation staff and other actors. There should be close working relationship between Monitoring and Evaluation and capacity building activities of the project in order to enhance sustainability of agricultural projects (IFAD, 2002).

Morgan (2006), argued that capacity is often seen as a "means to an end" in development discourse which emphasizes "result based performance. In Kenya limited capacity by quality assurance bodies is a challenge to the agriculture sector. Capacity in work force is required to develop support and sustain this system. Officials need to be trained in collection, monitoring methods and analysis and this can be difficult for many developing countries (Otieno and Atieno 2006). In Nyeri according to the study findings those working in the Agriculture ministry and indeed those in Agriculture groups might need to constantly attend workshops,

seminars or conferences to replenish their skills in planning, surveillance, data use, ICT and methodology among other areas. Without the requisite M & E knowledge the ministry of Agriculture officials' cannot be drivers of change so as to facilitate bridging of gap between actual productions and maximum production possible, capacity development is therefore a prerequisite in Kenya and indeed in Nyeri South (Nyeri South Sub County Agriculture office 2015).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Each society globally requires food for existence and capacity building in M and E plays a critical role in this regard facilitating sustainability of projects. Sustainability of projects is still a major challenge in many developing countries with challenges inexistence despite commitment of colossal resources especially in agriculture sector. The total area on which food crops can be grown globally has been declining due to rapid urbanization. Therefore less land is used to produce food for an increasing population especially in developing countries such as Kenya. In Nyeri South Sub County land under food crop production totaled 7047.4 hectares and the income generated from this land was Kshs 690.74 millions while coffee and tea cultivated on 5725 hectares had an income of Kshs 2258.9 millions and attainment of food crop production targets has not been realized despite this being a high potential area. Crop production deviation in Nyeri South Sub-county for the period 2010-2011 for maize and beans only totaled 41 500 bags. In addition, income and unit value for individual crops shows that there is high disparity (Nyeri South Sub-county Agriculture office 2013). Part of what would increase the yield is enhanced capacity building in M & E.

Data on the progressive performance of agriculture in selected countries globally shows notable gaps between African countries and other countries and in comparison of yields per hectare African countries and indeed Kenya and Nyeri south Sub County lag behind the rest of the world. The exploitable yields gaps for maize in Africa indicate that production on demonstration farms is way above actual production in Nyeri south Sub County. The above noted statistics indicate that there is still a lot of capacity building that requires to be done by M & E oversight agencies. Efforts have been made to improve food production by various stakeholders such as County Government of Nyeri and Ministry of Agriculture such initiatives include provision of fertilizers, provision of seeds for planting, however follow up has not been effectively undertaken regarding capacity of those involved in implementation of these projects (Nyeri South Sub County 2012).

M & E plays a crucial role in enhancing agriculture production. Capacity building of farmers and agricultural officials require consideration. Training of those involved is important given that M & E is an integral tool in enhancing efficiency and effectiveness and this is likely to improve sustainability of food crop projects. M & E as a tool monitors what is happening providing feedback that can be used to improve sustainability of food crop projects. There is need to assess influence of M & E capacity building on sustainability of food crop projects. This study sought to establish the extent to which M & E capacity building influences sustainability.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study was aimed at establishing how Monitoring and Evaluation capacity building influences sustainability of agricultural food crop project in Nyeri South District.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of this study were to examine:-

How M & E capacity building influences sustainability. of Agricultural food crop projects

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How does M & E capacity building influence sustainability of agricultural food crop projects?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H₁: M & E capacity building influences sustainability of agricultural food crop projects.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Although many paradigms exist, the paradigm that guided this study was pragmatism. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie.(2004) noted that pragmatism paradigm is the best suited for mixed methods research approach stating that mixed methods research is an approach whose time has come. The pragmatist paradigm accommodates both the positivist and constructivist philosophies (Morgan ., 2007).

RESEARCH DESIGN

A Mixed model comprising descriptive survey design and correlation research design were used in this study, this choice being informed by the fact that descriptive and inferential data analysis was required in this study. Alan& Emma (2011) among other advocates of pragmatism research paradigm argued that mixed methods helped researchers undertake data analysis with the research freedom making use of both descriptive and inferential data analysis techniques as advanced by pragmatist.

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

M& E Capacity Building and Sustainability of Agricultural Food Crop Projects

The study sought to establish the view of the farmers, extension officers and Sub County agricultural officers and other officers concerning Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building which had items measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with respect to capacity building by ticking 1-5 for strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree and strongly agree, respectively.

Monitoring & Evaluation Capacity Building Perspective of Farmers

The views of the farmers were sought regarding their level of agreement or disagreement with the various aspects of Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building. An understanding of Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building aspects related to the farmers is important in establishing whether they are constantly being updated on important Monitoring & Evaluation issues related to dairy farming. The results regarding Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building for the farmers were presented in table1.

The results in table 1 indicate that majority of the farmers were not trained in Monitoring & Evaluation use and implementation (mean = 2.42 SD = 1.144) however 44 farmers or 21.6% indicated that they were trained in Monitoring & Evaluation an indication that some effort has been made but there is need for gigantic strides to be made in this critical area. Lack of capacity building in Monitoring & Evaluation use and implementation can negatively interfere with the performance of the monitoring and evaluation system, since its capacity building is particularly important in long-term training programmes where feedback from former training participants can be used to shape future course content. Training is meant to help those tasked with Monitoring & Evaluation to develop a positive attitude towards the project and acquire skills that can contribute to improved productivity and hence

sustainability. As such, farmers largely lack the requisite skills and knowledge required to improve the quality of project’s Monitoring & Evaluation practices.

Table 1. Capacity Building in Monitoring & Evaluation perspective of Farmers

		<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>NS</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
I am trained on Monitoring & Evaluation use and implementation	f	29	117	16	24	20	2.42	1.144
	%	14.1	56.8	7.8	11.7	9.7		
Training for farmers is undertaken	f	23	147	24	12	0	2.09	0.634
	%	11.2	71.4	11.7	5.9	0		
Ministry of agriculture officials are trained in Monitoring & Evaluation	f	24	124	46	6	6	2.23	0.768
	%	11.7	60.2	22.3	2.9	2.9		
Training programs are relevant	f	26	144	24	5	7	2.07	0.66
	%	12.6	69.9	11.7	2.4	3.4		
Funds meant for training and related activities including fuel are enough	f	14	115	46	18	13	2.47	0.915
	%	6.8	55.8	22.3	8.7	6.3		
Farmers are involved in the preparation of training material	f	16	136	34	14	6	2.3	0.807
	%	7.8	66	16.5	6.8	2.9		
Officers involved in preparing training program for farmers collaborate with other service providers	f	29	132	29	13	3	2.16	0.777
	%	14.1	64.1	14.1	6.3	1.5		
Capacity building as it is currently influences sustainability of food crop projects	f	32	140	30	3	1	2	0.593
	%	15.5	68	14.6	1.5	0.5		

In addition, majority of the farmers indicated that training for farmers was rarely undertaken (mean = 2.09, SD = 0.634 although 12 farmers or 5.9% indicated that training for farmers occurs. Farmers, therefore, lack adequate technical capacity and expertise in undertaking Monitoring & Evaluation. Besides, majority of the farmers revealed that the Ministry of Agriculture officials were not adequately trained in Monitoring & Evaluation (mean = 2.23, SD = 0.768) but 12 farmers or 5.8% felt that Agricultural officers were trained in M&E. This is an impediment since lack of adequate training for those tasked with Monitoring & Evaluation activities affects the effectiveness of the project. Training programmes regarding Monitoring & Evaluation were not deemed relevant (mean = 2.07, SD = 0.66). Farmers held this perception because they lacked the opportunity to understand the broader issues around sustainability of agricultural food crop projects although 31 farmers regarded training

programs as relevant. This is a result of lack of adequate training from both the farmers and ministry officials. Furthermore, these findings indicated inadequacy of the Monitoring & Evaluation training curriculum for both the farmers and the ministry officials.

Although this was the case, it was the Sub-County agricultural officers were of the view that farmers' training forums are very relevant indicating differences in perception among those groups. In relation to the number of training forums held for farmers in a year, some gave the following responses:

About 12(Sub-County Agriculture Officer 1)

Farmer's field days are conducted once every month (Sub-County Agriculture Officer 2)

About 1 (Sub-County Agriculture Officer 3)

About 8(Sub-County Agriculture Officer 4)

Based on the ministry officials varied responses above this could be a pointer that these activities are supposed to be carried but in reality this is not happening hence inadequacy in terms of Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building was clearly shown because the various ministry officials interviewed did not know or have a clear view of the number of training forums held for farmers in a year. In addition, although the Sub County officials indicated that there were a number of trainings conducted during the year, the views of the farmers showed that they were not adequate in terms of content because of little involvement of the farmers in the preparation phase as well as inadequately trained ministry officials that are supposed to capacity built the farmers.

Financing of Monitoring & Evaluation training and related activities is of utmost importance. Despite this, majority of the farmers indicated that training and related activities are not financed adequately (mean = 2.47, SD = 0.915). This finding is a clear indication that training activities lack the capacity required to develop and sustain Monitoring & Evaluation systems for agricultural food crop projects sustainability. However 31 farmers or 14.9% indicated that funding was available. Attention needs to be directed towards mobilization of funds to support training activities since its key to attainment of project sustainability. In addition, majority of the farmers indicated that they are not involved in the preparation of training material (mean = 2.30, SD = 0.807) but 20% of the farmers or 11.7% indicated that they were involved in preparing the training curriculum. Since farmers were not largely involved in the preparation of training materials; it is unlikely for them to embrace the training program. This infers that since majority farmers do not participate in the whole training process this is likely to interfere with learning process hence the achievement/deviation from original concerns and problems faced by local development projects being implemented, as corrective measures cannot be taken on time. This denies opportunity for those involved in agricultural food crop project implementation to assess deficiencies in the project design as objectives and work plans are unrealistic, funding inadequate and project ownership by the farmers shaky. As noted earlier, majority of the farmers avowed that they did not consider the training programmes regarding Monitoring & Evaluation adequately relevant and this finding confirms this. Lack of farmer involvement in the preparation of training content is one of the underlying reasons for such a perception.

Furthermore, the results in table 1 confirmed that collaboration does not exist between officers involved in preparing training programme for farmers with other service providers (mean = 2.16, SD = 0.777) this can greatly effective service delivery in the Agricultural sector. Majority of the farmers indicated there is poor coordination between the officers involved in preparing the training program for farmers and other service provides. This also confirms the finding that indicates that the farmers are not mainly involved in the preparation

of training materials. Despite the position taken by majority of the farmers 16 or 8.8% felt that there is collaboration The eventual outcome is limited information and capacity to conduct training of farmers, duplication of services and confusion and this is likely to adversely affect sustainability of food crop projects.

Finally, majority of the farmers indicated that capacity building as it is currently undertaken rarely influences sustainability of food crop projects (mean = 2.00, SD = 0.593). This infers that the poor coordination between farmers and officials has brought about a situation whereby farmers do not fully or unable to embrace the benefits of capacity building with only 4 or 2% indicating that capacity building influences Sustainability. Consequently, farmers have been unable to harness the benefits borne by capacity building hence they lack the acumen to drive agricultural food crop projects to sustainability.

Capacity Building from the perspective of Extension Officers

The views of the extension officers regarding Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building were sought in order to understand the gaps that exist in terms of Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building programmes by the ministry and how this impacts on the sustainability of the agricultural food crop projects. The results were presented in table 2.

Table 2. Capacity Building by Extension Officers

		SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Training for farmers is undertaken	f	3	0	0	0	1	1.75	0.5
	%	75	0	0	0	25		
Several training forums are held every year for farmers	f	3	1	0	1	0	1.75	0.5
	%	75	25	0	25	0		
The training programs are relevant	f	2	1	0	1	0	2.5	1
	%	50	25	0	25	0		
Funds meant for training and related activities including fuel are enough	f	3	0	0	1	0	2.75	0.957
	%	75	0	0	25	0		
Farmers are involved in the preparation of training material	f	2	0	0	2	0	1.75	0.5
	%	50	0	0	25	0		
Officers involved in preparing training program for farmers collaborate with other service providers	f	1	0	3	0	0	2	0
	%	25	0	75	0	0		
Capacity building as it is currently influences sustainability of food crop projects	f	2	1	1	1	0	1.5	0.577
	%	50	25	25	25	0		

From the findings in table 2, majority of the extension officers indicated that training for farmers was rarely undertaken (mean = 1.50, SD = 0.577) with 1 officer or 25 % strongly indicating that training is undertaken. This infers that farmers to a great extent do not have the requisite capacity to identify the most valuable and efficient use of resources and also confirms the view of the farmers on being inadequately capacity built and unable to develop objective conclusions regarding the extent to which the project can be judged a “success” and how to facilitate success for the project.

Majority of the extension officers indicated that they are not adequately trained in Monitoring & Evaluation use and implementation (mean = 1.75, SD = 0.500) with 1 officer or 25% holding contrary view. This being the case, they are unlikely to embrace it fully. The eventual result is that extension officers are unable to impart enough skills to farmers or at best they impart skills. Another response from the extension officers was that the training programs were not very relevant (mean = 2.25, SD = 1.258) in this case only 1 officer felt that the training programs are relevant. This could be as a result of the training curriculum being imposed by their seniors from above without adequate consultation.

From the findings in table 2 majority of the extension officers highlighted the issue of lack of adequate resources geared towards Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building. Majority of the extension officers were not sure whether funds meant for training and related activities, including fuel are enough (mean = 2.75, SD = 0.957) but 1 officer or 25% indicating that the funds are enough. This is an indication that the concerned stakeholders have made an effort towards ensuring that training and related activities are funded. However, the resources in terms of funding are not adequate and this also confirms the view of the farmers in terms of inadequate funding of Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building activities. This means that facilitation, as well as frequency of holding training sessions are curtailed by inadequate funding of Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building activities. In addition, majority of the extension officers were not sure if farmers are involved in the preparation of training material (mean = 1.75, SD = 0.5) which definitely affirms the view of the farmers who indicated that they were not involved in the preparation of training materials. However 2 officers or 50% indicated that farmers are involved in training curriculum preparation This clearly means that there is lack of synergy between the ministry officials and the farmers. Furthermore, this means that there is lack of ownership of the process by the farmers since they are not involved in the preparation phase. This also means that the materials prepared do not really address the gap on the ground since the input of the farmers is not captured in the training materials being used. This evidently impacts negatively on the sustainability of the agricultural food crop projects since there are a myriad of unaddressed issues regarding farmer involvement, funding as well as the lack of capacity on the part of the ministry officials that are tasked with the capacity building of the farmers.

The findings have already indicated that one of the most important stakeholders, the farmer is not involved fully in the preparation of training materials and to affirm this lack of stakeholder involvement is critical and inimical to sustainability of Agricultural food crop projects. Majority of the extension officers were not sure on whether officers involved in preparing training programmes for farmers collaborate with other service providers (mean = 2, SD = 0) with 1 officer strongly indicating non collaboration. Since the officers involved in preparing training programmes did not fully collaborate with other service providers, there was lack of input into the training programmes and likelihood of farmers being provided with parallel and at times contradictory information compounding the situation further. Their lack of input from various stakeholders’ means that important information regarding the existing gaps on the ground as well as ownership of the process by the various stakeholders is not catered for in the preparation process. In addition, the officers were unable to learn from the

experience of other service providers and adapt to changing needs of farmers and/or best practices as undertaken elsewhere.

Capacity building forms the basis for gaining knowledge on effective and efficient ways to enhance the sustainability of food crop projects. Despite this, majority of the extension officers strongly disagreed that capacity building as currently undertaken influences sustainability of food crop projects (mean = 1.5, SD = 0.577) and 1 officer or 25% holding the view that capacity building influences sustainability. This is attributed to inadequate training of farmers, inadequate funding, lack of stakeholder involvement in preparation, poor coordination with other service providers and the content of the training program that is not mutually developed.

Hypothesis testing for Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building

The study sought to test the hypothesis that states that Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building significantly influences sustainability of agricultural food crop projects.

Table 3. Hypothesis testing for Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
(Constant)	1.204	0.177		6.802	0.000			
Capacity Building	0.566	0.082	0.437	6.945	0.000	0.437	0.437	0.437
R	.437a							
R Square	0.191							
F	48.229							
Sig.	.000b							

a Dependent Variable: sustainability

The study findings have shown low levels of implementation of Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building activities because of lack of adequate resources and inadequately trained ministry officials. Based on the findings in table 3 on estimation of the model coefficients, the results showed that Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building had a coefficient of estimate which was significant basing on $\beta_2 = 0.437$ (p-value = 0.000 which was less than $\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted and for each unit increase in capacity building, there was 0.17 units increase in sustainability. Furthermore, the effect of capacity building was stated by the t-test value = 2.297 which implied that the standard error associated with the parameter was less than the effect of the parameter. This positive effect of Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building on sustainability of agricultural food crop projects implies the concerted efforts to; include the views of the farmers in the development of training materials, ensuring that the ministry officials are adequately trained in Monitoring & Evaluation so that they can effectively train the farmers in the same, availing adequate funds for Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building activities and having constant documented feedback on Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building activities.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Monitoring & Evaluation Capacity Building and Sustainability of Agricultural Food Crop Projects

Regarding capacity building, there is lack of training on M& E use and implementation. Specifically, training for farmers is not undertaken and the Ministry of Agriculture officials are not adequately trained in Monitoring & Evaluation. This is an impediment since inadequate training of those tasked with Monitoring & Evaluation work affects the effectiveness of the projects and curtails prudent utilization of resources and adherence to work schedules as well impacting negatively on the scope. Besides, the respondents did not consider the training programmes on Monitoring & Evaluation to be overly relevant. In addition, there is lack of adequate support for capacity building activities and majority of the respondents contended that capacity building does not influence sustainability of food crop projects. The study showed that in capacity building the groups lacked training skills which the theory of change guides the project to tackle. Monitoring and evaluation capacity building and sustainability of agricultural food crop projects becomes useful to the members if all the members gain a common understanding of the benefits attached to the project.

An assessment of the effect of Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building on sustainability of agricultural food crop projects revealed that Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building has a positive and significant effect on the sustainability of agricultural food crop projects such that with each unit increase in Monitoring & Evaluation capacity building, there was 0.17 unit increase in the sustainability of agricultural food crop projects.

In addition, this is in line with the findings of Mazibuko (2007) which indicate that sustainability demands long-term institutional planning and adequate institutional capacity. Similarly, Sutherland (2011) notes that donors and governments need to continue investment in support of capacity development as it is required to develop and sustain Monitoring & Evaluation systems (Kusek & Rist, 2004). Similarly, a study conducted by Karanja (2013) revealed that training, leadership and effective Monitoring & Evaluation influence the sustainability of the youth projects. Additionally, Morgan (2006) argues that capacity is often seen as a “means to an end” in development discourse which emphasizes “result based performance”. This is also backed up by Stirman *et al.* (2012) who noted that capacity, together with factors related to the programme, have an influence on sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, Capacity building in Monitoring & Evaluation contributes significantly to the sustainability of agricultural food crop projects. However, sufficient efforts have not been directed towards developing capacity. The underlying reason for this is lack of support of capacity building activities. The end result is farmers lack adequate M& E skills regarding planning, data use and surveillance. This could also be due to the fact that farmers consider training related to Monitoring & Evaluation irrelevant. The sustainability of agricultural food crop projects is, therefore, hindered due to lack of capacity. This is not commensurate to the advocacy of the theory of change on how an intervention is supposed to lead to intended or observed impacts and the utilitarian theory that advocates for an analysis of costs and benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. The study recommends that both farmers and Ministry of Agriculture officials need to undergo sufficient training on Monitoring & Evaluation with a view of changing farmers’ perceptions and this is critical in enhancing sustainability of agricultural food crop projects.

- b. There is need for the government and donors to continue investing in support of capacity building.
- c. Since data demand and use has an influence on the sustainability of agricultural food crop projects, it is important to ensure that data collected is of good quality, sound and relevant. To achieve this, government officials need to be trained on modern data collection methods. Such training will make it possible for the officials to interpret different modalities of the data, to be used in decision-making. The end result will be better data collection processes and management which will in turn contribute to the sustainability of agricultural food crop projects.
- d. The study encourages increased reinforcement of capacity building in monitoring and evaluation as a way of improving the agricultural sector in Kenya.
- e. There is need for a study to establish whether the challenges noted have been occasioned by the transition in the regulation and control from the national government to the county government following promulgation of a new constitution in Kenya in 2010.

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