

Effects of the Public Participation on the Sustainability of Development Projects

Munyua A.M.

Abstract

Governments and development agencies as well as private entities spend huge sums of financial and other resources in the implementation of public development projects. Some of these projects do not give the intended results, some fail even before they are completed while for others a few years after their completion, face numerous challenges, they have sustainability issues. From the literature review researchers have pointed out lack of public participation as one of the major contributor to this situation; in projects where the public is not involved in the identification and development of the projects, sustainability issues normally crop at different point of the project cycle. This conceptual study is mainly a literature review of public participation in development project and how it influences project sustainability. The study found that involvement of public or community in decisions that directly affect them produces positive results. In development projects, there are higher chances of contributing to the project reducing cost, the public gets to accept and own the project, and conflict is reduced; factors that contribute to the larger project sustainability. The study identified the need for empirical research in establishing whether the level at which public participation is conducted influences project sustainability. It also recommends that an empirical study be carried out comparing the projects where public participation was carried out at lower levels with those that engaged at the higher level.

Keywords: *Public participation, project sustainability, development projects*