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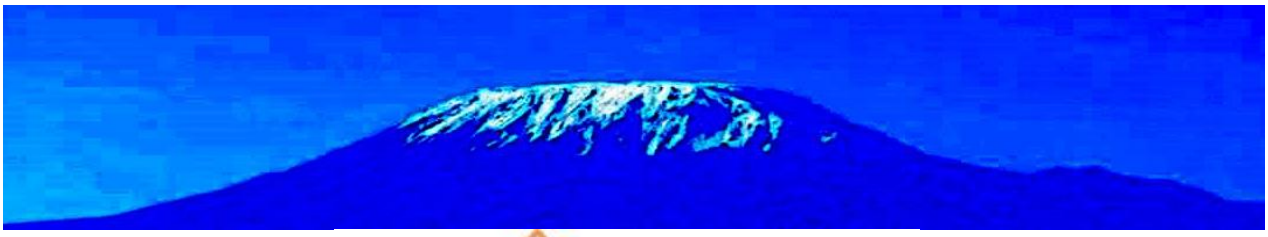

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# Communication Management and Stakeholder Satisfaction in Project-Based Organisations: the Case of Research, Community and Organizational Development Associates (RECODA)

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**Abstract**

Communication is an important aspect in projects' operations. There is still a need for further studies on communications especially in developing countries to reduce number of project failure triggered by poor communication. Using RECODA's project as a case study the study aimed at assessing communication management in achieving stakeholder satisfaction in project-based organizations. Randomly selected 120 project stakeholders participated in the study. There was an addition of a5 Key-Informants who participated in the study. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings envisage that traditional channels are still highly used in rural-oriented projects. Of the four communication channels used, face-to-face and meetings were rated the most effective modes of communication channels. Physical factors and poor accessibility to mobile gadgets were some of the highly rated barriers to effective communication. Conclusively, the adoption of modern communication channels remains poor in rural-based projects. Ultimately it is recommended that project planners should invest in the communication process for better performance of the project.

## Introduction

The Phoenicians developed the alphabet "communication" in 3500 BC. The term communication originates from the Latin word *communicare,* which means 'to make common', because when communicating, a common understanding is created (Zulch, 2014). Communication requires a clear understanding of the communication objectives and the skills to create messages to the right people, at the right time and with the right information in the right format (Bloechl & Schemuth, 2003). Project management is a rapidly growing discipline within many organizations and business ventures. However, optimal way of operating and continuous management of projects are one of the big challenges (Weldearegay & Biedenbach, 2014). According to Zulch (2014), one of most significant factors affecting the success of a project is the communication ability of the project managers. About 75-90 percent of a project manager's time is spent formally or informally communicating (Project Management.com, 2016). But surprisingly today, even with globalization, communication between diverse groups remains a major challenge. Most projects experience a breakdown in communications (Pietruszka-ortyl, 2017). Muszyńska (2015) asserts that if communication is not managed effectively and fully understood by Project Managers, project outcomes may be at risk.

Hoffmann, (2009) argues that 70 percent of the delays in project completion occur due to the absence of timely and sufficient communication. Furthermore, on average, two in five projects

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do not meet their original goals and business intent, and one-half of those unsuccessful projects are related to ineffective communications (Project Management Institute, 2013). The views suggest that the level of failure in the projects resulting from poor adherence to communication is high. It further shows that there is little attention allocated in its improvement and management. For instance, the Iranian industries attempted to incorporate Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) into their operations but witnessed some degree of failure due to miscommunication (Damoah, 2015). Furthermore, one of the six major factors that lead ICT projects to failure is poor communication (Ahmadzai & Paracha, 2016). Similarly, Community Development Corporations (CDC) in Milwaukee, Dallas, and Philadelphia failed due to poor communication. The Oak Cliff Development Corporation (OCDC) in Dallas failed due to the fact that the executive director did not communicate well with political leaders, particularly local city council representatives. Even in Portland CDC's communication between funders and CDC's hindered the success of projects (Norman, 2012). Further research on the importance of effective communications uncovers that a startling 56 percent (US$75 million of that US$135 million) is at risk due to ineffective communications (Project Management Institute, 2013).

If one has to understand relevant communication strategy, it is essential to determine and be familiar with the targets addressed. Ultimately, this enables offering of content consisting of relevant interest, needs or problems (TechNews, 2017). An effective communication strategy in project management requires careful planning and setting of the right expectations with all the stakeholders of the project to ensure proper results (Rodriguez, 2017). Buddenhagen & Baldwin (2012) explained that open communication focuses on unrestricted information flow between community members and project personnel throughout the project. Personnel should make all details available, such as expenditure reports detailing contributions from all stakeholder groups. This open dialogue encouraged mutual understanding. Nonetheless, there is lack of stakeholder cooperation due to poor representation during the discussions, which also reflects the inadequacy of mutual respect, confidence and trust among stakeholders which ultimately leads to mixed-use project failures in Malaysia and elsewhere (Subramaniam *et al.,* 2019).

Overall, there are four performance indicators of communication: quality, time, cost and stakeholder satisfaction performance. This study focused on stakeholder's satisfaction performance (information stakeholder satisfaction and result stakeholder satisfaction). The focus was on satisfaction because time and cost performance, shared by Ho (2008), can be compromised. However, stakeholders' satisfaction is mandatory and has no compromise. Stakeholder satisfaction is an utmost important factor in projects especially local governance improvement projects (Jalaluddin & Dhilsharth, 2013). Empirical research on how communication impacts the performance of organization is still lacking, including the best set of tools and techniques to be used for successful management of communication. It appears that there is a need to establish contextual and empirical evidence on how communication impacts project performance (Nyandongo & Davids, 2020). According to PMI (2015), poor communication is the number one reason for projects failure at a rate of 67% or more for larger projects. Henceforth, effective communication must be sought and attained due to its vital role which affects the project's outcome directly (Othman et al., 2018). Ultimately, as shared by PMI (2015), neglecting communication leads to poor coordination of project activities, un-sustainability of the projects, de-motivated project teams and stakeholders, design errors, resistance from the stakeholders, slowdown in the entire project thus, failure generating results that are in line with the stakeholders' expectations.

This study used RECODA (Research, Community and Organizational Development Associates) as a case study. RECODA aims at bridging the technology gap in development through research, consultancy, capacity-building, and facilitation of community-based projects. The

organization initiated the Project titled Empowerment and Livelihood to People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLHAS). The project aimed at community mobilization into groups while building their capacity to utilize locally available resources and opportunities for improvement of their livelihoods with a special attention to PLHAs (RECODA, 2017). The key objective of the project included capacity building of the community to understand their land rights and to be able to integrate PLHAs. The second objective was to improve livelihood of the community, while the third was to build the capacity of KIWAKKUKI *"Kikundi cha Wanawake Kilimanjaro Kupambanana Ukimwi"* to apply RIPAT approach in community livelihood improvement projects as part of their work with HIV/AIDS prevention. The RIPAT approach was also meant to give care and support for People Living with HIV/AIDs (PLHAs) and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) (RECODA, 2017). In line with the study objective, the study explored communication channels used during the project. The focus was on the communication channels the stakeholders perceived effective and the communication barriers stakeholders faced during the project implementation using the case of RECODA as a project-based organization.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Effective Communication

The impact of effective communication by managers has become a topic of interest in the literature because of the way it impacts both the employee experience and organizations (Pujiwidodo, 2016). Initially, communication was an activity conducted by small number of people using face-to-face modalities. Several communication models have been developed over the years to better understand the communication process. According to Ted (1986), advances in the understanding of how communication works are reflected by the development of communication models. Such models include Lasswell model developed in 1927, Shannon/Weaver model in 1949, Schramm in 1954, Westley Maclean in 1957, Jakobsen model in 1958, Riley & Riley in 1959, SCMR (Berlo) in 1960, Symbolic Interactionism in 1969, Barnlund in 1970 and Framing model in 1974 (Kersner, 2018).

Today, new technologies have emerged due to Globalization which has made it possible for information to be produced, distributed and shared (Fassl, 2018). A good communication process keeps stakeholders engaged and project teams motivated (Project Management Institute, 2013). That is to say, communication has to be stable for proper coordination within the project. If the management struggles with communication, they will probably struggle with the project as well (Koivula, 2009). This will also lead into cost overrun (Wahdan et al., n.d.).

Satisfactory and effective communication contributes to an organization's success, employee attitude and morale, and customer satisfaction (Shore et al., 2014). Effective communication is about more than just exchanging information. It is about understanding the emotion and intentions behind the information. Being able to clearly convey a message, one needs also to listen in a way that gains the full meaning of what's being said and make the other person feel heard and understood (Wood, 1983). Effective communication requires a clear understanding of the objectives of the communication and the skills to create messages that are focused: on the right people, at the right time and with the right information in the right format (Bloechl & Schemuth, 2003). The message has to be decoded by the receiver as intended by the sender in order for communication to be effective. Furthermore, effectiveness of a communication channel is defined by the fact that each channel has a maximum amount of information that can be transmitted within a certain amount of time. Effectiveness is also connected with the cost of communication (Sanina et al., 2017). Generally, sincere and effective communication styles among project member enables members to integrate the project through internalization of the project's objectives and rules (Husain, 2013). Communication has been perceived to be a cyclic

system and each of the elements in the cycle has to be effective and proper for communication to be precise and effective. Figure 1 reflects the elements of the communication process.

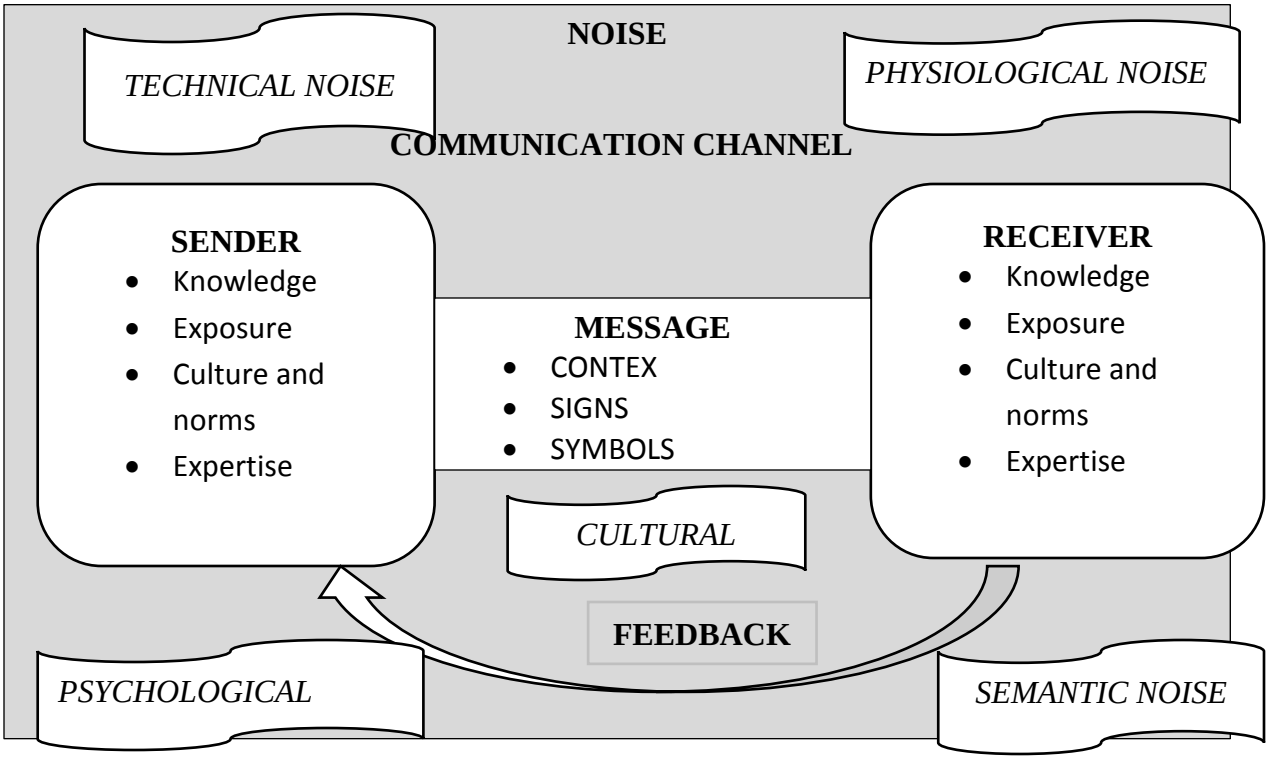


**Figure 1: Communication Process**

**Communication channel**

A communication channel is a means by which messages are carried from one person to another and may take the form of mediated systems such as; telephone conversations, internal letters or memos, face to face meetings, electronic mail, internal newsletter, internet (Kamanda, 2014). People choose between communication channels for numerous reasons. The reasons can be heuristics, ease of use, experience, or simple preference. The communication channel may contribute to the success of the overall message (Zizka, 2017). Each communication channel has its advantages and disadvantages in terms of speed, clarity, maximum size of the message transferred, and cost. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that each channel is suitable for a different set of circumstances (Nagy, 2012). Furthermore, according to (Scholes, 1999), selection of the right communication channel depends on an understanding of the communication objectives and audiences, and the strengths and weaknesses of the different channels that are available. According to Mony (2007) a number of considerations will have to be made in selecting the channel which are; a) what is available, b) how much money can be spent, c) what channel is preferred by the source as well as receiver, d) which channels are received by the most people, e) which channels have the most impact, f) which channels are most adaptable to the kind of purpose which the source has, and g) which channels are most adaptable to the content of the message.

**Stakeholder Satisfaction Performance**

Satisfaction is derived from the Latin *satis* (enough) and *facere* (to do or make). Thus, satisfying products and services have the capacity to provide what is sought to the point of being "enough." Two related words are satiation, which loosely means enough up to the point of

excess, and satiety, which can mean a surfeit or too much of enough, as if to say that too much is necessarily undesirable (Dhman, 2014). Generally, it has been widely accepted that quality, time, cost, and stakeholder satisfaction are major concern factors in the performance measurements of a project. However, time and cost attributes in a project can be compromised on (Ho, 2008).

According to Spacey (2018), stakeholder satisfaction is a measurement of stakeholder perceptions of a program, project or initiative. It is measured by asking stakeholders to rate their satisfaction on a numerical scale or index. Stakeholder satisfaction is one among the project performance indicators that is determined by the extent to which the project objectives and a project operation/project implementation (service) meet and/or exceed stakeholder's expectations(Kärnä et al., 2013). In this study, the stakeholders' satisfaction on the communication system was assessed. The key point is that the project success components must meet stakeholders' satisfaction where there is a link between their interest and the components (Heravi et al., 2015).

**Theoretical framework**

The diffusion theory of communication explains how new viewpoints and ideas spread through cultures. Information and ideas pass through a path of communication in order to reach the target group and the entire population. Generally, spread of an idea is influenced by the nature of the idea to be spread, the available communication channels, the social system and time of communication (Westland, 2006). In DT, the aspect of communication channel is of a vital importance in determining performance of a project. Generally, for a project's success the project manager should consider vital aspects of the diffusion theory in mind during planning and execution of ideas in the group (Campbell, 2010).

The project members should determine the best way that a certain decision or communication channel will accelerate project performance. Some decisions and ideas may be shared online via e-mail and social media while others may be shared via the telephone (Harrison & Lock, 2017). However, for decisions that need face-to-face interaction, the project manager should organize for a meeting to ensure the ideas are shared and decisions and conclusions are drawn from a common sense of agreement. The DT shows a link between the project channels and the performance of the project. Some ideas that need to be taken seriously may appear less serious based on the channel of communication adopted. Using social media to pass information pertaining to change of project management may appear informal and less serious. However, when ideas are sought on merit of their importance and communicated using the right channel, project performance becomes certain (Rodriguez, 2017). The DT theory explains more on the link between the project channels and the success of the project.

**Empirical review**

Bubshait *et al.* (2015), conducted a case study to analyse the role of communication and coordination in project success. Ultimately, the study demonstrated the importance of communication and coordination in successful project management for complex projects.

Furthermore, Liu *et al.* (2016), conducted research on identification of key contractor characteristic factors that affect project success under different project delivery systems. The data was collected through Empirical Analysis Based on a Group of Data from China. A total of 12 contractor characteristic factors that affect project success under different PDSs were obtained via a literature review as well as 73 research samples from successful projects in China that adopted different PDSs. The findings mentioned that regardless of the project delivery system, communication is among the most critical factors that would affect project success.

Similarly, Lindebaum and Jordan (2012) did a research on the effects of emotional intelligence on project manager performance in construction. However, in their findings the authors confirmed that improvement in communication would help avoid project failure by increasing the chances of project success. Hyvari (2006), conducted research on success of projects in different organizational conditions and arrived at a conclusion that communication is important in attaining success of a project.

A study done by Weldearegay and Biedenbach (2014), in Sweden on the role of communication in managing Projects concluded that adaptive communication system comes from the vision of the organization which is linked to the mission of the organization, due to that it views communication as high priority. It incorporates long term communication objectives, philosophy statements, mission statements and communication policies. Furthermore, research on the role of communication in sustaining development projects, the Case of Ejura Sekyedumase Municipality in Ghana was conducted by Owusu (2014). The study revealed that though development partners communicated to communities on some of the projects, the components of development communication was not wholly employed. The projects that employed communication among other things have been sustained whilst the ones with little or no communication are in deplorable state. The study also revealed that interpersonal communication was the most common means of communication used by development partners to contact communities and this helped in bringing social change to the lives of the people in the Ejura/Sekyedumase Municipality.

**Research Gap**

Communication is a broadly discussed topic as clearly evidenced. However, communication style varies from one community to another. Henceforth, findings on the compatible types of communication and communication channels in a certain area or case may prove incompatible in another due to factors such as cultural and technological advancements. Subsequently, the effectiveness of these communication styles, communication channels and processes also vary in different environment. Tanzanian research has not fully specifically focused in identifying the types of communication channels used during the project process in rural area as well as the assessment of the stakeholders' perception on how effective these communication channels in relation to stakeholder satisfaction. Furthermore, challenges of communication facing rural stakeholders especially the marginalized groups during the project especially in Tanzania rural settings have not been well established.

**Materials and Methods**

Research design adopted in this study is a case study. The case study approach allows in-depth, multi-faceted explorations of complex issues in their real-life settings (Crowe et al., 2011). Through case study methods, a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand the behavioural conditions through the actor's perspective. By including both quantitative and qualitative data, case study helps explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation (Symonds & Symonds, 2016). Henceforth through the design, the study aims to attain an in-depth understanding on effective communication role in stakeholder satisfaction performance in project. The targeted population included stakeholders of the *Empowerment and Livelihood Improvement to PLHAs and their Communities Project* implemented by RECODA. The organization was facilitated by several local institutions such as KIWAKKUKI during the project operation.

According to Bailey (1998) and Delİce (2001), sample size between 30 at 5% confidence level is generally sufficient for many researchers. Subsequently, Israel (2012), says that 30 to 200 elements are sufficient when the attribute is present 20 to 80 percent of the time (i.e., the distribution approaches normality). Furthermore, Kenny & Madgin (2016) as long as the sample is based on 30 or more observations, the sampling distribution of the mean can be safely assumed to be normal. Therefore, 30 project stakeholders of the Empowerment and Livelihood Improvement to PLHAs and their Communities Project were surveyed using questionnaires randomly from each village hence, making a total of 120 respondents. Furthermore, purposive sampling was used to attain 5 Key Informants who would provide in-depth explanation on the prior data collected from survey whereby, the information was collected through a structured interview using a checklist as a tool. The KI were one village extension worker (1), one project manager (1), a representative of the KIWAKKUKI organisation (1) and two project team members (2).

The analysis of the findings was done using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) whereby Descriptive statistics were determined in order to explore the underlying features in the data. For each of the indicators for each variable, the mean score and standard deviation of the responses was calculated in the 5-point Likert scales. The mean scores were aggregated so as to illustrate the general score of the specified variables. Responses with mean score below the aggregate mean will be determined as having low impact while responses with mean score above the aggregate mean will be determined as having high impact. The scale analysis assisted to identify the ranking as well.

## Results and Discussions

### Communication Channels Project stakeholders perceived effective

The respondents were required to rate the communication channel exposed during the project effectiveness in the deliverance of the project. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the level of effectiveness of the communication channel to the performance of donor-funded projects whereas (1) = Not effective (2)= Slightly effective (3)= Moderate effective, (4)= Very effective (5)= Exceedingly effective. The scoring was done using mean values ranging from 1-5; therefore, the closer a score is to 5, the more effective the communication channel is to the performance of the projects.

| Communication Channel | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Face to face | 2 | 5 | 4.05 | 0.868 | 1 |
| Mobile phones | 2 | 5 | 3.66 | 0.849 | 3 |
| Meetings | 2 | 5 | 4.03 | 1.004 | 2 |
| Letter | 2 | 5 | 3.64 | 1.036 | 4 |
| **Grand Mean** | | | | **3.845** | |

**Table I: Effectiveness of the communication channel used during the project (n=120)**

The most frequently used communication channels were public meetings and face to face communication. Traditional means of communication channel were the only communication channels used in the project. Some of the channels such as mobile phone and letters were not used by every stakeholder. In rural based projects, the study has shown that even with the perceived globalization around the world, still means of communication used in the rural communities remain traditional. Few respondents had any internet-based and wireless communication channels whereas only 18% had smartphones while none had personal computers. A study conducted in Zambia revealed that communication channels used in similar settings included demonstration blocks, village meetings and radio. Subsequently, print

communication channels were also used such as posters (leaflets) (Ndilowe, 2013). The communication channels used in the later project show the use of a more modern form of communication channels contrary to the former project which communication channels were mainly traditional. A study by Forcada et al. (2017) revealed that a preferred verbal communication channel is face-to-face, followed by mobile phone, and finally video call and teleconference.

From a grand mean of 3.845, face to face and meetings were rated to be the most effective communication channel used during the project when fostering the performance of the project leading by 4.05 and 4.03 mean (see Table I). The stakeholders favoured face-to-face communication channel despite the development of much less expensive and more flexible electronic ways of communicating, because firstly, being physically close influences better use and understanding of all senses such as sight, sound, smell and touch. Secondly, using face to face allows better chance for probing questions and better clarification during the process of communication (training and practical). Furthermore, face to face method facilitate connection and bonding between the local communities with external agencies. Lastly, the medium has an advantage of speed because the message is instantaneously received by the receiver.

Face to face communication is the most traditional, but still very effective, way to communicate and spread information, as it allows targeting the message and obtaining a direct feedback (Blenke, 2013). Both Public and small group meeting were used during the project. Public meeting was initially conducted by the project representatives, the local government representatives and the public residing in the stated villages. The initial aim was to introduce the organizations (RECODA and KIWAKUKI) and their intentions, goals and objectives. Small group meetings were then conducted by the stakeholders who were interested and registered to be part of the project. Some of the meeting conducted during the meeting were Kick-of meeting, Project Team internal meetings, Project stakeholders with project team meeting, Project Progress Meetings and Project stakeholders' meetings. Due to the effectiveness of the meetings, there was gradual increase in the attendance level of the stakeholders in all four villages thus Kidia, Mdawi, Tsuduni and Kikarara.

However, the grand mean suggests that the communication channels were generally rated moderately effective. This shows that in communicating with a project stakeholder the medium used to communicate the project message is just as important as the message itself. The effectiveness of some of the communication channels was hindered by some communication barriers.

The study findings contradict some studies conducted elsewhere. For instance, Zulch's (2014) conducted a study in South Africa and concluded that, electronic communication ranked the highest in relation to effective communication. The communication method ranked second was written, communication with oral communication ranking third. Visual communication was ranked fourth and nonverbal communication fifth. However, written media were better than oral media (i.e face to face), a finding that is in contrast with this particular study (Forcada et al., 2017). Communication channels used in the project varies depending on the setting, which depends on the environmental contexts of interpersonal communication. This could substantiate the variation of communication channels used in the study areas (Ricker, 2019).

**Effective Communication Barriers**

A 5-point Likert scale was used to rate the importance of the possible barriers encountered by stakeholders during the project and denoted as (1) = Not Significant (2) = Slightly Significant (3) = Moderately Significant (4) = Very Significant and (5) = Exceedingly Significant. This was to

measure the importance of the communication barriers because in a community not all problems bare the same weight. The scoring was done using mean values ranging from 1-5; hence, the closer a score is to 5, the more significant the barrier is to communication.

| Barriers of communication | Mean | Std. Deviation | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Poor infrastructure such as roads | 3.01 | 0.983 | 1 |
| Lack of gargets such as phones | 2.48 | 0.879 | 2 |
| Sickness | 2.33 | 0.758 | 3 |
| Illiteracy | 2.29 | 0.893 | 4 |
| Distance between the stakeholders' households | 2.28 | 0.777 | 5 |
| Sincerity barrier | 2.26 | 0.615 | 6 |
| Old age | 2.24 | 0.926 | 7 |
| Sender's barrier | 2.11 | 0.848 | 8 |
| Role perception barrier | 2.08 | 0.602 | 9 |
| **Grand Mean** | | **2.28** | |

**Table II: Barriers to communication (n=120)**

Study findings in table II shows that the Grand mean achieved is 2.28. The effective communication barriers mean score that will fall below the grand mean will be considered low rated communication barriers. Subsequently, the effective communication barriers mean score that will fall above or equal to the grand mean will be considered high rated barriers. Generally, the communication barriers were present however not highly rated. The highest-rated barriers were poor infrastructure, lack of gadgets such as phones, sickness, illiteracy and distance between the stakeholders' households with 3.01, 2.48, 2.33, 2.29 and 2.28 mean score respectively. The low-rated effective communication barriers were sincerity barrier, old age, sender's barrier and role perception barrier with 2.26, 2.24, 2.11 and 2.08 respectively. The findings contradict those of elsewhere. Age difference, ineffective reporting systems, unclear objectives, interpersonal conflicts, unclear communication channels, gender issues and lack of necessary skills are among the leading communication barriers that affect the effective communication in Singapore projects (Bandulahewa, 2013). The classification of some of effective communication barriers is explained below;

**High rated effective communication barriers**

***Physical barriers***

Physical barriers to communication in this study were poor infrastructure and geographic distance between project staff and stakeholders as well as from one stakeholder to another with mean score of 3.01 and 2.28 respectively. In case of emergency meetings stakeholders without mobile communication had to be followed to his/her house for delivery of the message which proved difficult. In the villages, the settlement is mostly dispersed especially in Mdawi and Kidia and the poor physical infrastructure such as the roads, especially during the rainy seasons flared the barrier. The findings are supported by Mutua (2014), who insisted that communication is generally easier over shorter distances as more communication channels are available and less technology is required.

***Accessibility of mobile gadgets***

Due to the poor living conditions of the stakeholders, some of the stakeholders could not afford communication gadgets such as hand phones especially smart phone. Nonetheless, telephones were among the main channels of communication used within the project as a way to inform each other of any project progress as well as emergency meetings. This caused a challenge because they missed some of the important and up-to-date project information especially in emergency situation. The barrier was rated by 54.2% of the respondents as a barrier that affected effective communication during the project.

### *Sickness*

Some of the stakeholders were old and about 10% of each group were people living with HIV/AIDS as a requirement. The situation sometimes posed as a challenge as the stakeholders' inability to make effective participation and involvement in meetings during the project operation. The finding is supported with Melisa (2000), explaining that even the most experienced program officers can find it challenging to communicate effectively with special/vulnerable people. It difficult to effectively communicate with a group with young children, adolescents, and older patients as they present unique communication concerns.

### Low rated effective communication barriers

### *Sender barrier*

The sender barrier was a barrier that was highlighted by under a third (30.8%). This normally occurred when some of the stakeholders with innovative ideas failed to speak up at a meeting, chaired by the superintendent, for fear of criticism. Even with the high level of participation between the project initiators, some stakeholders feared to express their views. However, a further discussion showed that the fear had nothing to do with the project but with the respondent's lack of self-confidence. Conjointly Lunenburg (2010) discussed that some stakeholders fail to speak up at a meeting to provide innovative ideas for fear of criticism.

### *Sincerity barrier*

Some of the project respondents claimed that some project beneficiaries were not completely sincere with their devotion to the project. As a consequence, the number of group members has slowly decreased after the project phased out. When the project phased out, RECODA handed the project to KIWAKUKKI to ensure sustainability of the project. Without sincerity, honesty, frankness, and validity in a project, all attempts of communication are destined to fail. Subsequently, FAO (2013), explained that lack of interest or wrong attitude can lead to improper communication.

### *Role perceptions*

A-45-year-old male respondent claimed that "*Other members would tell fellow group members, just go ahead I will learn from you later*", another 63-year-old female respondent claimed that "*some members tell lies that they are attending to family emergencies hence, they cannot attend the group meetings but you later find out he/she was farming instead*". Role perception is the person's or a group's viewpoints, attitudes, understandings, approaches, or expectations that are related to the status and the position responsibilities. Some of the beneficiaries did not respect their roles in the project. Some disregarded the project's attempt to improve their livelihood. Lunenburg, (2010) explicated that, when stakeholders do not know what their role is, the importance of their role, and what is expected of them, they will not know what to communicate, when to communicate or to whom to communicate.

## Conclusion

Overall, effective communication management in achieving stakeholder satisfaction in project-based organizations continues to rely on traditional communication channels in rural setting. The adoption of modern types of communication channels remains challenging proving that there could a long way before project officers use modern form of communication channels when handling rural community projects. Of the four communication channels used in the RECODA project, face to face and meetings have been rated by the stakeholders as being more satisfying due to being a more effective means of communication. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the effective communication barriers to projects established in the study include poor infrastructure such as roads, lack of communication gadgets i.e. phones, sickness, distance between the stakeholders households, lack of sincerity, old age, sender's barrier and beneficiaries perception of roles

barrier were rated. However, from the likert scale rating, they were not highly rated meaning that the barriers were not as threatening to the stakeholder satisfaction with the project.

**Recommendation**

The recommendations include first, information sharing by project officers and implementers to stakeholders should consider the socio-demographic characteristics such as education, age and occupation of respondents. This is because they can limit the persons' understanding towards what is communicated. Second, project managers, officers, designers and implementers should think of using a multitude of communication channels such as radios and print communication (posters). Doing so will increase the number of stakeholders interest towards the project and further deliver information to a larger number of stakeholders. Third, communication in project calls for recognition to its role in performance. Therefore, there is need for proper communication plans that are realistic and which call for commitment and a communication management department that is well resourced. Lastly, project planners have to critically do proper risk analysis of their communication strategy right from proposal development. Barriers should be predicted and proper contingency plans be put in place so as to reduce or avoid the negative effects of poor communication on the performance of the project.

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## POLICY BRIEF

**Effective Communication Management: A Key To Stakeholder Satisfaction In Project-Based Organisations: The Case Of Research, Community And Organizational Development Associates (RECODA)**

Achieving stakeholder satisfaction in project-based organizations continues to rely on traditional communication channels in rural setting. The adoption of modern types of communication channels remains challenging proving that there is a long way before project officers use modern form of communication channels when handling rural community projects. Furthermore, some community members living in rural areas have not adopted the modern means of communication such as mobile phones. The study established that there are communication challenges that are caused by poor communication infrastructures, poor access to broadband services, and enable to access advanced gadget for communication. Due to the low livelihood, advanced forms of communication is not the major priority of many of the community members.

### Policy Implication

In Tanzania the policy that directly addresses communication in Tanzania is the National ICT Policy formulated in 2003. The policy has enabled Tanzania to attain successes in the areas of telecommunications, infrastructure development, human capital development and use of ICT in service delivery to citizens. Information and communication technology has advanced over the years hence leading to convergence of content, telecommunications, broadcasting and computing. Ultimately, ICT policy has impacted the way business are conducted, facilitation in knowledge and learning sharing, and generated global and national information flows which ultimately empowered Tanzanian citizens.

**Policy Recommendation**

The researchers recommend the following;

- The policy should encourage the private sector to continue their role as an integral part of the development of ICT infrastructure. Furthermore, recognizing the multifaceted nature of communication issues and the factors that impacts on them, the policy should address the partnership with the private sector and civil society. Consequently, the participation and involvement of all key ICT stakeholders from Government, civil society and private sector is crucial.
- The policy should an emphasis on the effective utilisation of all installed communication infrastructure which should be harmonised to contribute to flexibility and redundancy on a national basis.
- The policy has to put an emphasis on the development of the necessary innovation capacity and instrument, such as ICT indicators, to monitor the impact of the policies on social and economic development.
- The policy should formulate direct initiatives such as “Mobile First” through government investment to enable a higher accessibility of the citizen through mobile phones. The internet access anywhere and at any time is important to the successful growth of a knowledge economy. Furthermore, this could be used as an advantage to local assembly and manufacturer of mobile devices.
- The policy should encourage awards of tenders to new and innovative organisational forms to permit greater participation by emerging enterprises, and adopt home grown solutions to communication and infrastructure.