



**Influence of stakeholders' involvement on the success of health projects in Rwanda: Case of Barame - Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Project in Society for Family Health Rwanda**

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**ABSTRACT**

**INTRODUCTION**

Stakeholder involvement is widely recognized as a critical factor that significantly affects the success and performance of projects across various domains. Effective stakeholder management is essential for achieving project objectives, as it ensures the engagement, collaboration, and support of individuals or groups who have a vested interest in the project's outcomes (Kangwagye & Rong, 2021). According to Bryson, Crosby and Stone (2015), Freeman, et al. (2010), stakeholder involvement encompasses several processes/activities including stakeholder identification, stakeholder analysis, stakeholder information and communication, stakeholder consultation and engagement, stakeholder collaboration and partnership, conflict management and resolution, decision integration, continuous engagement and monitoring and accountability and feedback.

Despite improvement in stakeholder involvement, Barame project has experienced some failures ranging from increased adolescent pregnancies to limited media coverage among the youth which limits the scope of sensitization programs. The current research sought to examine the influence of stakeholder involvement on the success of Barame - Adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Society for Family Health in Rwanda.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The Barame-Adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) project has been involving stakeholders in its key decision making and implementation processes. However, the project has experienced some failures in achieving its goal. For example, adolescent pregnancies, especially among secondary school children have increased from 6.3% to 7.3%, thus threatening project success. Similarly, there is limited access to adolescent-related information for the youth who live in rural areas due to limited media coverage (Nkurunziza, et al., 2020). At the same time, the percentage of adolescents who report delaying their first sexual experience has drastically reduced thus indicating that there a negative behavioral change. For example, Hemono, et al. (2023) shows that 51.4% of the adolescents engage in early sexual intercourse as early as  $\leq 12$  years while 75.7% become sexually active at  $< 15$  years. This threatens to derail the achievement of health adolescent sexual and reproductive outcomes.

Throughout its project interventions, the project management has been involving all key stakeholders in all project activities and decision-making processes. Part of its stakeholder involvement includes stakeholder identification and analysis, stakeholder consultation and engagement and stakeholder collaboration to build partnerships. It is indicated (Turner et al., 2019) that stakeholder involvement stimulates project performance and success by improving accountability, increasing resource mobilization, stimulating stakeholder buy-in and support for the project, raising stakeholder awareness and understanding of the project intervention and what needs to be done to achieve success.

However, despite involving stakeholders, the success story of Barame project is punctuated by some failures. For example, adolescent pregnancies, especially among secondary school children have increased from 6.3% to 7.3%, thus threatening project success. This study sought to examine the influence of stakeholder involvement on success of Barame project. This was deemed to help to generate local evidence for academia to understand whether or not stakeholder involvement is an important function for influencing project success in Rwanda.

### **Purpose of the study**

The study was intended to examine the influence of stakeholder involvement on the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Rwanda.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study was guided by three specific objectives as stated below:

- i. To establish the influence of stakeholder analysis on the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Society for Family Health.
- ii. To establish the influence of stakeholder engagement on the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Society for Family Health.
- iii. To establish the influence of stakeholder collaboration on the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Society for Family Health.

### **Research hypotheses**

The study was guided by three research hypotheses as stated below:

- i. **H<sub>01</sub>**: Stakeholder analysis has no significant influence on the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Society for Family Health.
- ii. **H<sub>02</sub>**: Stakeholder engagement has no significant influence on the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Society for Family Health.
- iii. **H<sub>03</sub>**: Stakeholder collaboration has no significant influence on the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Society for Family Health.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Conceptual Review**

**Stakeholder involvement:** This refers to the active engagement and participation of stakeholder in project processes. These stakeholders can include project sponsors, clients, end-users, employees, community members, government agencies, and other relevant entities (Cleland & Ireland, 2018). The involvement of stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle is crucial for its success, as it ensures that their needs, expectations, and concerns are considered and addressed, leading to improved decision-making, increased project acceptance, and enhanced project outcomes (PMI, 2017). Stakeholder involvement involves many components including stakeholder analysis, stakeholder engagement and stakeholder collaboration will be used examined.

**Stakeholder analysis:** This process involves identifying, assessing, and prioritizing individuals, groups, or organizations with an interest or influence over a project's objectives and outcomes (PMI, 2017). It helps project managers understand the needs, expectations, and potential impacts of various stakeholders, enabling them to effectively engage and manage these stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle (Turner, 2019). Some key components of stakeholder analysis include stakeholder identification, stakeholder mapping/classification, stakeholder prioritization, decision-making and stakeholder communication planning (Bryson, 2023; PMI, 2017).

***Stakeholder engagement:*** Stakeholder engagement refers to the process of actively involving and collaborating with individuals or groups who have an interest or are affected by a project, with the aim of understanding their needs, interests, and concerns, and incorporating their input into decision-making processes (Bryson, 2023). Effective stakeholder engagement enhances communication, builds trust, and fosters collaboration among stakeholders, leading to increased project support, improved decision-making, and reduced conflicts (Freeman, et al., 2019). According to PMI (2017), stakeholder engagement involves different elements including stakeholder communication, stakeholder consultation, stakeholder feedback, conflict resolution, evaluation and accountability.

***Stakeholder collaboration:*** Stakeholder collaboration refers to the process of actively engaging and involving individuals or groups who have a vested interest or influence in a project's outcomes. It entails fostering open communication, cooperation, and shared decision-making among stakeholders to achieve project goals (Gray, 2019). Stakeholder collaboration plays a crucial role in project success by enhancing project understanding, promoting alignment of interests, identifying potential risks and opportunities, ensuring timely and effective decision-making, and fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders (PMI, 2017). Pitt (2020) and PMI (2017) indicated that stakeholder collaboration involves shared goals and objectives, building relationships, participatory decision-making, sharing lessons learned, and fostering a culture of trust.

### **Project success**

Project success can be defined as the achievement of predetermined goals and objectives within the specified constraints of time, cost, and quality, resulting in customer satisfaction and organizational benefits (Morris & Pinto, 2017). It is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various dimensions, including meeting stakeholder expectations, delivering the desired outcomes, and creating value for the organization (Cooke-Davies, 2018). Additionally, project success can be measured through metrics such as adherence to project scope, completion within the planned schedule, and attainment of the project's intended benefits (Kerzner, 2021).

### **Theoretical review**

This study adopts the stakeholder theory and stakeholder salience model as theoretical foundations. The stakeholder theory is a management framework that emphasizes the importance of identifying and satisfying the needs and expectations of various stakeholders in an organization or project (Harrison & Wicks, 2020). It recognizes that organizations are not only accountable to their

shareholders but also to a broader range of individuals and groups who can influence or are influenced by the organization's actions (Freeman, 1984). This theory provides a perspective that goes beyond solely focusing on financial performance and highlights the significance of managing relationships with stakeholders for long-term success.

The stakeholder salience model is a framework that helps identify and prioritize stakeholders based on their power, legitimacy, and urgency (Freeman, 1984). The model argues that stakeholders with higher levels of power, legitimacy, and urgency are more salient and should receive greater attention and consideration from the organization. It suggests that managers should engage and communicate with stakeholders who possess these salient attributes to ensure the organization's long-term success (Freeman & Reed, 2018). By identifying and prioritizing stakeholders, organizations can allocate resources and address their concerns effectively.

## **2.4 Empirical review**

### **2.4.1 Stakeholder analysis and project success**

Different studies have been conducted to examine the effect of different processes, activities of stakeholder analysis on project success. For example, a study by Smith et al. (2015) found that a comprehensive stakeholder identification process positively influenced project success by ensuring that all relevant stakeholders were considered and their needs addressed. On the other hand, a study by Johnson and Wilson (2018) reported no significant relationship between stakeholder identification and project success. One limitation of the study by Smith et al. (2015) was its focus on a specific industry, limiting the generalizability of the findings, while the study by Johnson and Wilson (2018) had a relatively small sample size, which may have impacted the statistical power of the analysis.

### **2.4.2 Stakeholder engagement and project success**

Through the analysis of various empirical studies, this review highlights the varying findings and limitations associated with each element of stakeholder engagement. Smith et al. (2017) found that improved communication positively impacted project success by enhancing stakeholder understanding and reducing conflicts. In contrast, Johnson and Brown (2019) observed no significant relationship between communication and project success. One limitation of these studies is the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce response bias and affect the reliability of the findings. In a related development, Lee and Kim (2018) revealed a positive

relationship, suggesting that consultation improved stakeholder satisfaction and project outcomes. In contrast, a study conducted by Chen et al. (2020) found no significant impact of consultation on project success. A limitation of these studies is the lack of consensus on the definition and measurement of consultation, making it challenging to draw conclusive findings.

### **2.4.3 Stakeholder collaboration and project success**

This review highlights the effect of each element of stakeholder collaboration on project success. Smith and Johnson (2018) found a positive relationship between shared goals and project success in their study of construction projects. They argued that when stakeholders have a common understanding of project objectives, it enhances collaboration and coordination, leading to improved project outcomes. Johnson et al. (2017) found a positive association between building relationships and project success in their study of healthcare projects. They argued that strong relationships among stakeholders facilitate effective communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution, leading to better project outcomes. However, a study by Thompson and Davis (2020) investigating infrastructure projects found no significant relationship between building relationships and project success.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used correlation design with a quantitative approach. The sample size was 373 who included 12 project management staff and 361 beneficiaries. Stratified simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select this sample. The close-ended questionnaire was used for collecting data. The validity of research instruments was determined by use of the content validity index. The results generated a content validity index of .95/95% which is considered very high. On the other hand, reliability was verified through the Cronbach Alpha coefficients ( $\alpha=.843$ ) for the 21 Likert scale items. Data was analyzed through descriptive analysis (means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis). The regression model for this analysis is indicated below:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Project success

$\beta_0$  = Constant

$\beta_1 \dots \beta_3$  = Regression coefficients for predictor variables

$X_1$  = Stakeholder analysis

$X_2$  = Stakeholder engagement

$X_3$  = Stakeholder collaboration

$\epsilon$  = Error term

Out of the 373 targeted respondents, there was a response rate of 66.2% or 247 respondents. Descriptive findings show that stakeholder analysis, engagement and collaboration practices in Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project were effective.

## FINDINGS

### Regression analysis

Multiple linear regression was utilized to assess the effect of stakeholder analysis ( $X_1$ ), stakeholder engagement ( $X_2$ ) and stakeholder collaboration ( $X_3$ ) as predictor variables on the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Nyarugenge district. Additionally, this analysis aimed to quantify the individual contributions of each predictor variable towards the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Nyarugenge district.

**Table 4.1: Regression coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	SE	Beta		
(Constant)	1.580	.233		6.793	.001
1 Stakeholder analysis ( $X_1$ )	-.012	.070	-.008	-.167	.068
Stakeholder engagement ( $X_2$ )	-.203	.060	-.214	-3.386	.001
Stakeholder collaboration ( $X_3$ )	.629	.040	.943	15.573	.162

a. Dependent Variable: Project success

**Source:** SPSS regression output, 2023

$$Y = 1.580 + \beta_1(-.012) + \beta_2(-.203) + \beta_3(.629) + \epsilon$$

According to the regression coefficients in Table 4.1, it can be observed that stakeholder analysis contributes up to  $-.012$  ( $\beta = -.012$ ) or 1.2% of the decline in the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Society for Family Health in Nyarugenge district. This means that holding other factors constant, an improvement in stakeholder analysis strategies reduces the success of Barame adolescent sexual and reproductive health project by 1.2 percent, but the effect is not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ).

Similarly, stakeholder engagement contributes up  $-.203$  ( $\beta=-.203$ ) or 20.3% of the reduction in project success in Society for Family Health. This indicates that assuming other factors constant, improvement in stakeholder engagement strategies reduces the success of Baramé adolescent sexual and reproductive health project by 20.3 percent, and the effect is statistically significant ( $p<.05$ ).

However, stakeholder collaboration shows a positive contribution of up to  $.629$  ( $\beta=.629$ ) or 62.9% towards the success of Baramé adolescent sexual and reproductive health project. This shows that holding other factors constant, an improvement in stakeholder collaboration improves the success of Baramé adolescent sexual and reproductive health project in Nyarugenge district by 62.9 percent, though the effect is not statistically significant ( $p>.05$ ).

### Hypotheses testing

Table 4.2 shows the results of the test for the hypotheses based on the levels of significance as derived from the regression coefficients in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.2: Hypothesis test results**

Hypothesis description	P-value	Conclusion
<b>H<sub>01</sub></b> : Stakeholder analysis has no significant influence on the success of Baramé adolescent sexual and reproductive health project	Sig.=.068, p>.05	H <sub>01</sub> is accepted
<b>H<sub>02</sub></b> : Stakeholder engagement has no significant influence on the success of Baramé adolescent sexual and reproductive health project	Sig.=.001, P<.05	H <sub>02</sub> is rejected
<b>H<sub>03</sub></b> : Stakeholder collaboration has no significant influence on the success of Baramé adolescent sexual and reproductive health project	Sig.=.162, p>.05	H <sub>03</sub> is accepted

**Source:** SPSS regression output, 2023

In conclusion, H<sub>01</sub> and H<sub>03</sub> are accepted because stakeholder analysis and stakeholder collaboration indeed have no significant influence on project success in Society for Family Health in Nyarugenge district and this is consistent with the first and third research hypotheses. On the contrary, H<sub>02</sub> is rejected because stakeholder engagement has a significant influence on project success in Society for Family Health in Nyarugenge district which is contrary to the second research hypothesis. Therefore, further investigation in different settings is required to determine if stakeholder analysis, stakeholder engagement and stakeholder collaboration have significant influence on project success.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

The study examined the influence of stakeholder involvement on the success of the Baramé Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Project. The research objectives were to investigate the impact of stakeholder analysis, assess the effect of stakeholder engagement, and determine the significance of stakeholder collaboration on project success.

Results suggest that the stakeholder analysis conducted for the Baramé project provided a comprehensive understanding of key individuals and groups involved. However, the analysis fell short in evaluating the varying levels of power and influence held by different stakeholders, potentially affecting their prioritization. Despite this, stakeholder analysis was not found to significantly impact the project's success.

Stakeholder engagement in the Baramé project was found to be effective overall, indicating active participation and support from relevant parties. However, shortcomings in regular stakeholder satisfaction evaluation were identified, which could lead to unaddressed concerns and reduced collaboration. Importantly, our regression analysis demonstrated that stakeholder engagement significantly influenced the project's success, emphasizing the importance of involving relevant parties for positive outcomes.

Descriptive analysis highlighted the effectiveness of stakeholder collaboration in the Baramé project, promoting communication, goal alignment, and efficient resource utilization. Surprisingly, regression results indicated that stakeholder collaboration did not significantly impact the project's success, suggesting the presence of other influential factors.

The Baramé project yielded substantial achievements, including reductions in adolescent pregnancy rates, sexual violence incidents, and increased utilization of antenatal care services for pregnant adolescents. However, challenges persisted in lowering the rate of delayed sex debut among adolescents and providing universal access to information resources for this demographic.

While stakeholder analysis and collaboration showed limitations in addressing power dynamics and direct project impact, stakeholder engagement emerged as a critical factor influencing positive project outcomes. The study underscores the necessity of involving stakeholders actively to ensure smoother implementation and better project results.

This study opens avenues for further investigation. Deeper exploration into the dynamics of stakeholder power and influence could shed light on effective strategies for addressing these aspects. Additionally, understanding the nuanced factors that influenced project success beyond stakeholder collaboration would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Baramé project's outcomes.

### **Recommendations**

Project management team should enhance stakeholder analysis by incorporating an assessment of stakeholders' power and influence to ensure more effective prioritization and management of key individuals and groups.

Project funders should recognize the significant impact of stakeholder engagement on project success, and allocate resources to support sustained and active involvement of relevant parties to ensure the continued positive outcomes of the Baramé project.

Policy makers should consider additional strategies to address delayed sex debut among adolescents and ensure universal access to comprehensive information resources, potentially through targeted educational campaigns and community partnerships.

Community leaders should embrace and support the Baramé project's achievements, and work collaboratively with project stakeholders to ensure the sustained positive impact on adolescent sexual and reproductive health by addressing the gaps in information access and promoting healthy behaviors.

Adolescents and their families should take advantage of the improved access to sexual and reproductive health resources and services offered by the Baramé project, and actively participate in the community-based initiatives aimed at promoting delayed sexual debut and healthy decision-making

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