

Chapter 12

An Assessment of the Effectiveness of Participatory Communication Strategies Used in Implementation of Public Water Projects in Rural Areas: Muranga County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Community involvement is a very important aspect in the implementation of any project. Without community buy-in, a project may never get off the ground or will not be accepted once it is completed. This study investigated participatory communication strategies used in implementation of public water projects in Murang'a County (Kenya). The study aimed to assess participatory communication strategies used in the implementation of public water projects in Muranga County. The results of the study indicated that community grouping (27.2%) was the most preferred method of involving the public in the implementation of the Northern Collector Project. The results further indicated that use of community groups was the most effective participatory communication strategy in implementation of Northern Collector Tunnel project. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

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INTRODUCTION

Participatory communication takes many different forms. It can be designed to suit different contexts. Thailand employed participatory communication to be a framework of study and divided into two: study of the investigation of the role of media as community media, and study of the design of participatory communication as tools for solving problems or community development. Both of these contexts focused on three topics: communication strategies, types and degrees of participation, and factors affecting the people participation (Musakophas, Polnigongit & Kasetsart, 2017).

Development communication plays a major role in information distribution in developing countries and other parts of the world. Communication does not only inform but also influences the behaviour of the receiver of information. Effective development communication should motivate people to participate in planned activities. Participatory development communication means moving from a focus of informing and persuading people to changing their behaviour or attitudes and focus on facilitating exchanges between different stakeholders to address a common problem (Kheerajit & Alexander, 2013). Participatory development communication has been used in several development projects such as land and water conservation or natural resources management and poverty alleviation. Natural resources management is one of the major problems in Kenya. Participatory development communication in natural resources management is an essential component of the participatory research and development process and suggests shifting away from informing stakeholders in order to improve their knowledge, attitudes, and practice. It integrates communication, research, and action in an integrated framework, and involves researchers, extension workers, community members, and other stakeholders in the different phases of the development process (Kheerajit & Alexander, 2013). Due to effectiveness of participatory communication in aiding success of different community projects, the study, therefore, aimed to access different participatory communication strategies that have been used in the implementation of public water projects in Murang'a County, Kenya.

STUDY BACKGROUND

Murang'a County is one of the counties created under the Kenya Constitution 2010. It is one of the five counties in Central region of the Republic of Kenya and occupies a total area of 2,558.8Km². It is bordered to the north by Nyeri, to the south by Kiambu, to the west by Nyandarua and to the east by Kirinyaga, Embu and Machakos counties. It lies between latitudes 0° 34' South and 1° 7' South and longitudes 36 ° East and 37° 27' East. The county lies between 914 m above sea

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