

The Influence of Partner Engagement on the Use of Monitoring and Evaluation Findings: The case of Non-Governmental Organizations in Nairobi, Kenya.

Ombisa Robert¹,  Omondi Bowa², 
Anne Aseey³, 

Received: 14 January, 2025

Final Revision: 20 June, 2025

Accepted: 22 June, 2025

Published: 2 August, 2025

 [10.52283/NSWRCA.AJBMR.20251001A01](https://doi.org/10.52283/NSWRCA.AJBMR.20251001A01)

Abstract

Development programs have undergone a paradigm shift, transitioning from a focus on processes to an emphasis on results. The heightened demand for accountability regarding resource utilization and demonstrable success within the development sector, particularly among NGOs, has markedly intensified the necessity for Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Many studies have indicated that the utilization of M&E findings is lacking in the context of enhancing NGO performance. A theoretical perspective highlights that utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) is predicated on the notion that evaluations should be assessed based on their application and practical use. Furthermore, utilization is the primary criterion for expert evaluation requirements agreed upon globally. The dependent variable is the utilization of monitoring and evaluation findings, while partner engagement serves as the independent variable. The study aimed to evaluate the impact of partner engagement on the utilization of M&E findings. The research employed mixed-methods design. Multi-stage sampling was utilized, employing stratified random sampling to acquire a sample of 283 NGOs from a target population of 979. Structured questionnaires were employed to gather data, while interview guides were utilized to obtain Key Informant information for the purpose of result triangulation. Quantitative data were analyzed using bivariate regression, and qualitative data were examined through content analysis. The research indicated that partner engagement ($r = 0.38$; $R^2 = 0.14$; $F = p < 0.05$) significantly affected the utilization of M&E findings. The research limitations included the NGOs' constrained timetables and their extensive distribution around Nairobi City. Moreover, respondents exhibited varying interpretations of the application of M&E results. The study advocates for sensitization workshops to empower partners with pertinent knowledge and skills, enabling them to be effective participants in processes. Boards of NGO management should mandate partner participation and urge leaders to promote such involvement to improve the utilization of monitoring and evaluation outcomes. The findings will be beneficial to funders, NGOs, M&E personnel, implementers, and researchers for policy development, citation, and financial guidance.

Keywords: Partner Engagement; M&E Findings; Use of M&E Findings; NGOs, Nairobi City County.

¹ Independent Researcher

 rombisa@strathmore.edu (Corresponding Author)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8838-619X>

² Lecturer: Department of Education & Distance Studies, University of Nairobi

 bowa@uonbi.ac.ke

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-0769-548X>

³ Lecturer: Department of Education & Distance Studies, University of Nairobi

 aaseey@uonbi.ac.ke

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2575-7192>

I. Introduction

For a long time, development initiatives have prioritized outcomes over procedural compliance. The development sector is expected to demonstrate that its policies and actions enhance the lives of beneficiaries while also ensuring accountability for the resources utilized. In Kenya, development efforts are increasingly driven by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), underscoring the need for efficient project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Over the past two decades, NGOs have played a vital role in addressing urgent needs such as education, health, and poverty alleviation. Assessing whether these initiatives achieve their objectives and ensuring effective resource utilization have become central components of M&E (World Bank, [2020](#)). In alignment with global best practices concerning accountability, transparency, and impact evaluation, M&E competence within NGOs has become a critical determinant of project success (UNDP, [2021](#)). The effectiveness of M&E systems largely depends on the capacity of project teams to implement these processes with precision and adaptability. Optimizing performance is fundamentally rooted in M&E capacity, which comprises human competencies, resource availability, and organizational commitment to data-driven procedures (Kusek & Rist, [2018](#)). However, many NGOs face challenges such as limited funding, high staff turnover, and insufficient technical expertise, which may hinder the successful implementation of M&E strategies (Kamau & Mirugi-Mukundi, [2019](#)).

Increasingly, donors demand information on the long-term impacts of interventions, prompting NGOs to adopt comprehensive M&E policies that transcend short-term performance indicators (Patton, [2017](#)). Research shows that NGOs with strong M&E capacities are better equipped to respond to challenges, learn from project implementation, and enhance sustainability (Chen et al., [2021](#)). M&E outcomes are, therefore, essential; without the practical application of these results, efforts to improve M&E systems would be ineffective. According to Kihuha ([2018](#)), monitoring serves as an intervention to improve project output success. Arce et al. ([2020](#)) demonstrated that such interventions are highly context-dependent. Thus, the effectiveness of any action significantly relies on specific contextual factors that may either support or hinder its success. Kabonga ([2019](#)) further asserts that evaluation helps uncover the reasons behind unmet objectives.

In the NGO sector, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is used to guide the implementation of activities. Scholars argue that development should be assessed across four critical dimensions: effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability (Kabonga, [2016](#); Kessler & Tanburn, [2014](#); Metzger & Guenther, [2015](#); World Bank, [2010](#)). Development interventions informed by M&E must meet these evaluative criteria. Investing in M&E is, therefore, essential to achieve these development metrics. To date, a greater number of NGOs than governmental entities in Africa appear to have embraced the practice of M&E.

Ogolla and Moronge ([2016](#)) note that project performance has been suboptimal, leading to donor withdrawal and disappointment among both implementers and intended beneficiaries. Projects often fail to meet objectives due to unforeseen events, evolving priorities, escalating demands, and dwindling resources. This is partly attributable to the underutilization of M&E findings, even though such insights could offer vital information to safeguard projects against common setbacks. Unfortunately, despite the substantial investments in M&E, studies show that partners frequently fail to use the results effectively (Bhikoo et al., [2018](#)). Factors such as inadequate management, corruption, poor information sharing and feedback mechanisms, limited stakeholder engagement, weak decision-making, and flawed planning and implementation processes impact project success. Simister ([2018](#)), in his analysis of M&E strategies, emphasized that ineffective methodologies must be adjusted or adapted to project changes. This can only be achieved through the application of insights and knowledge gained from M&E activities. Moreover, despite the extensive implementation of monitoring procedures in high-income countries, performance challenges persist, as highlighted by major donors such as the World Bank and bilateral aid agencies (Khan, [2017](#)). Ntiniya ([2016](#)) states that M&E outcomes serve as a critical link between implementers and decision-makers, enabling the identification of gaps and informing recommendations for improving NGO programs.

The imperative of success has necessitated continuous project monitoring to ensure alignment with performance goals. Amina et al. ([2022](#)) sought to assess the impact of utilizing M&E findings on the effectiveness of drought resilience projects undertaken by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) in Mandera County. Their findings revealed a significant influence of M&E utilization on project outcomes.

A study examining the factors influencing the use of M&E data in decision-making and accountability, as perceived by M&E professionals in Tanzania, identified key determinants such as skills and knowledge, organizational culture and support, data quality and accessibility, and institutional and policy frameworks. It recommended that projects and organizations adopt appropriate strategies to foster an environment conducive to effective M&E data usage (Nguliki, [2024](#)). Similarly, a study by Nyabuto and Musembi ([2024](#)) evaluating the impact of M&E practices on the performance of Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) construction projects in Nairobi City County found that M&E planning and stakeholder participation significantly influenced project performance. Based on these findings, it is advisable to design comprehensive M&E strategies through participatory processes and enhance stakeholder involvement throughout all project phases. Such approaches are expected to improve project outcomes by promoting effective monitoring, evaluation, and engagement.

The theoretical framework of Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UFE) posits that evaluations should be judged primarily by their intended use and users. This approach underscores the importance of ensuring that evaluations are designed with specific end-users in mind and that the findings are actionable. Interest in UFE began in the early 1970s and it has since become one of the most widely recognized evaluation criteria globally. Patton (2008) emphasized that focusing on the purpose of an evaluation and the needs of its intended users is essential for successful assessments. This emphasis shapes the evaluation's design, the involvement of users, the selection of methodologies, and the communication of outcomes. UFE insists on the practical application of evaluation results from the outset, beginning with the identification of target users and the kinds of data they find useful.

Statement Of the Problem

The primary impetus for establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is to utilize results for performance improvement. Consequently, in the absence of effective utilization of findings, the fundamental concept of M&E frameworks as a "revolutionary set of tools" designed to improve implementation is undermined. Partner engagement is therefore essential in the application of M&E findings. Engagement may foster a sense of ownership among recipients of NGO programs, thereby enhancing their commitment to utilize M&E findings. A deficiency in partner engagement may pose a challenge that negatively affects the utilization of M&E findings and, consequently, the overall performance of NGOs (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2002). This growing consensus on the utilization of findings emerges amid widespread dissatisfaction with the efficacy of NGO development projects in various countries today. Despite increased efforts by NGOs, living standards and poverty levels remain unchanged in many affected populations. Cases of malnutrition and poor health continue to rise, among other pressing issues. This suggests that the expected outcomes of numerous development programs have not materialized (Chesos, 2010). The inadequate implementation of optimal M&E systems by NGOs is often attributed to an excessive focus on physical infrastructure rather than on methodological and conceptual training. This implies that existing M&E structures are underperforming, encountering unfavorable conditions that may render them ineffective and necessitate urgent support. The primary objective of an evaluation is to generate actionable information. Unfortunately, this is often not the case. There is a recognized tendency for organizations to create a so-called "elephants' graveyard" of evaluation reports that remain unexamined and unutilized beyond their initial release. Therefore, the concluding phase of an evaluation should include efforts to increase the likelihood that evaluation results will be effectively used (World Vision, 2007).

A study by Olwenyi et al. (2025) aimed to determine how organizational culture affects the performance of Global Partnership for Education (GPE) projects in Uganda by moderating the link between M&E practices and performance. It was found that organizational culture significantly influenced the relationship between M&E techniques and the performance of GPE projects. The findings indicated that a supportive organizational culture enhances the impact of M&E activities on project outcomes. Hence, promoting a positive corporate culture aligned with M&E is essential for improving the performance of GPE projects. In this context, a culture that fosters partner engagement would help ensure the utilization of M&E results and consequently enhance organizational performance based on the recommendations provided.

Wepukhulu (2017) examined the influence of M&E outcomes on county administrations, specifically in Busia County, Kenya. The results revealed that a lack of M&E knowledge negatively impacted the use of monitoring outcomes and demonstrated that separating M&E knowledge from the application of results is not straightforward. M&E proficiency entails understanding the importance of partner engagement in the utilization of M&E findings. The limited capacity of local partners to carry out M&E activities has also been identified as a major obstacle to the success of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) initiatives (Gichaba et al., 2019). Many smallholder farmers, particularly in rural areas, lack the technical knowledge required for M&E processes, and the absence of training and capacity-building programs has hindered their ability to actively participate in the assessment of project outcomes.

A growing body of research suggests that the design, implementation, and utilization of M&E systems in Kenya still face considerable challenges (Sikuku, 2019). Stakeholder engagement, which is typically high during the initiation phase, tends to diminish during the M&E phase (Manumbu, 2020). Although donors and development organizations emphasize M&E, its practical application varies significantly; many initiatives fail to implement continuous and comprehensive evaluations throughout the project lifecycle (Kusek & Rist, 2018).

Gaps in Literature

The deficiencies identified in previous studies primarily relate to methodological issues, where desktop research has been favored over genuine empirical investigations. Without comprehensive fieldwork, critical aspects of the subject may be overlooked; thus, conducting empirical research is essential to validate findings derived from desk-based studies. Moreover, a significant number of existing studies have concentrated more on the implementation

of M&E systems rather than on the actual utilization of the results generated by these systems. In the absence of result application, there is a risk that well-functioning systems may produce valuable information that ultimately fails to benefit the NGO.

Other notable shortcomings pertain to the scope of coverage. Some studies are overly narrow, focusing solely on small-scale enterprises or specific counties, while others are excessively broad, attempting to generalize across Kenya or the wider region. Additionally, public sector projects have often received disproportionate attention, with NGO-based projects receiving comparatively less focus. The emphasis placed on the use of monitoring data, while neglecting the application of evaluation data and findings, further points to a lack of comprehensive consideration by researchers.

Furthermore, many studies have primarily identified external donors as the main sources of pressure for the application of M&E findings. However, other actors—such as internal stakeholders can also exert influence by urging NGOs to implement specific recommendations emerging from M&E outcomes.

Aim And Originality of Study

Various factors hinder the effective application of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) results by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), particularly in developing countries. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by empirically demonstrating that partner engagement significantly influences the utilization of M&E findings. Moreover, the findings support the theoretical framework underpinning the research.

Makokha and Kamwele (2023) examined the effectiveness of M&E systems in poultry farming initiatives in Samia Sub-County, Busia County, Kenya, and identified that partner engagement, technical capacity, and budgetary allocation had a significant impact on the performance of M&E in these projects. Similarly, Ng'etich (2020), in a study on the influence of M&E on Kenya Ports Authority projects, found a positive and significant relationship between partner engagement and project performance. The study revealed that regular meetings enhanced partner involvement, which in turn led to improved project outcomes. Engagement effectively transformed partners into project owners.

II. Literature Review and Development of Hypothesis

The effectiveness of development programs relies heavily on the proper utilization of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) findings, which is contingent upon active partner engagement. However, many NGOs operating in Nairobi rarely prioritize partner involvement, particularly within the M&E process and, more specifically, in the application of its findings. The absence of such engagement often results in a lack of ownership over the findings, ultimately reducing the willingness of stakeholders to apply the results.

Recognizing the importance of effective M&E practices, Shuna and Katua (2024) conducted a study to evaluate their influence on the success of health development initiatives at Marsabit County Referral Hospital in Kenya. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between various M&E approaches and project success indicators. Partner engagement emerged as a critical component of M&E practices, without which effective project implementation would be difficult.

Similarly, Mohamed and Mose (2024) investigated the impact of M&E planning and stakeholder participation on the success of affordable housing projects in Kenya's urban counties. Their results indicated that both robust M&E planning and active stakeholder involvement positively and significantly contributed to project performance.

In another study conducted in the Dodoma and Dar es Salaam regions of Tanzania, Kwareh et al. (2024) assessed the influence of M&E procedures on the performance of the SIKIKA Health Project. They concluded that M&E practices had a significant impact on project outcomes and recommended adopting a participatory M&E approach to facilitate collaborative implementation.

Thus, partner engagement remains a vital factor in ensuring the utilization of M&E findings, which, in turn, enhances the overall effectiveness and success of development projects.

Matoka and Mutasa (2024) evaluated the impact of stakeholder engagement on the efficacy of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system within the Zanzibar public sector. Their findings indicated that stakeholder engagement had a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of the M&E system. The study emphasized the necessity of involving stakeholders throughout all phases of M&E, including design, implementation, and reporting.

Similarly, Chepkwony and Nyang'au (2019) investigated the impact of stakeholder participation on the performance of road projects in Nakuru, revealing that stakeholder relationships were vital at every stage of project execution. Their results indicated that such engagement significantly affected the adequacy, timeliness, and quality of investment initiatives.

Furthermore, Githinji et al. (2020) demonstrated that stakeholder involvement in project identification, planning, monitoring, and funding had a significant and positive influence on project performance. Engaging partners in M&E processes fosters their commitment to ensuring that findings are effectively utilized by project leadership. Onyango (2017) examined the efficacy of M&E mechanisms in projects implemented by Kenyan county governments. The study acknowledged that the use of evaluation results significantly influenced project performance. According to the findings, the primary purpose of the M&E system is to support decision-making and enhance organizational efficiency. Programme and project managers were advised to implement corrective actions based on evaluation outcomes. The application of lessons learned was found to address immediate programmatic needs while also providing valuable insights for future policy formulation.

Mutesi and Odhuno (2021) asserted that, in comparison to other performance determinants, M&E plays a crucial role in enhancing project outcomes. It ensures goal alignment through the verification of efficient and effective use of resources. The use of M&E findings enables the implementation of necessary changes based on empirical evidence.

Similarly, Skedsmo and Huber (2019) stated that M&E facilitates the identification of successful and underperforming areas and reveals opportunities for improvement by providing critical insights into project performance. Through this process, NGOs are better equipped to assess implementation effectiveness and resource utilization. Additionally, M&E supports evaluations of how well project objectives are being achieved, enabling NGOs to apply appropriate modifications and realign projects to better meet their intended outcomes.

Contextual Dimension

Focusing on the welfare of individuals, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been active in Kenya since the colonial period and are often regarded as agents of developmental transformation. Over time, the number of registered NGOs has significantly increased, growing from fewer than 3,500 in 2002 to approximately 9,000 by 2018 (Bougheas et al., 2018).

Muthee and Nyamongo (2020) examined the utilization of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) techniques within a Kenyan government agency. Their study aimed to assess the functionality of M&E systems and their impact on program performance. The findings underscored the need to enhance M&E capacity, improve data quality, and ensure better application of M&E results in the national decision-making process.

In related studies, Wamugu and Ogollah (2017) as well as Mburu (2018) identified that stakeholder involvement in M&E activities across Kenya remained at a moderate level. These studies collectively recommended several initiatives to enhance stakeholder engagement in M&E processes, which is critical to achieving sustainable project outcomes.

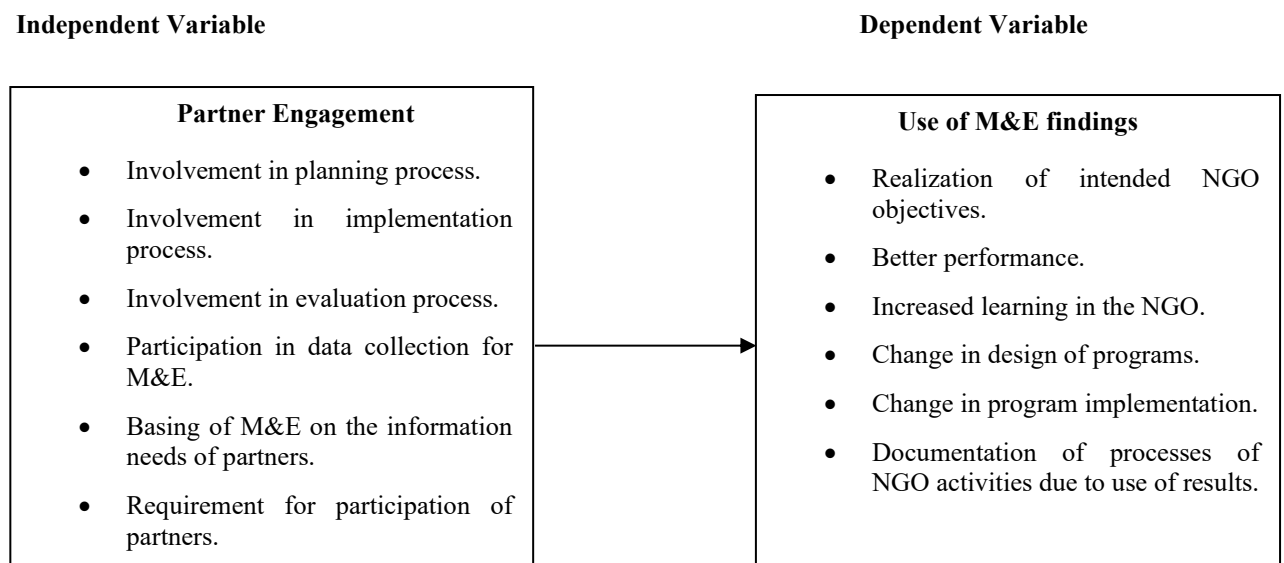
The persistent underutilization of M&E findings may be attributed to the inability of NGOs to resolve systemic discrepancies and ensure the continuity of operations.

Theory of Change

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2017) defines a theory of change as a method that elucidates how a particular intervention, or collection of interventions, is anticipated to result in a specific development change, utilizing a causal analysis grounded in available evidence. This theory substantiates the study's dependent variable, which is the use of M&E findings. Thus, by engaging partners, NGOs in Nairobi City County would enhance the likelihood of the use of M&E findings following evaluation exercises. Involving partners in the monitoring and evaluation process fosters a sense of ownership, positioning them to effectively implement findings and recommendations thereafter. This would enable the NGO to address any identified anomalies within the designated timeframe, ultimately leading to enhanced performance aligned with its specific objectives.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework showing the relationship between the research variables



Note: Author's own work

III. Methodology

This study adopted a pragmatism paradigm, representing a synthesis of positivist and constructivist paradigms. It dismisses the dichotomy associated with paradigm conflicts. Pragmatists acknowledge the existence of truth; however, they view it as dynamic and largely contingent upon human actions (Kithinji, Gakuu, & Kidombo, 2017).

The research utilized a cross-sectional survey design on a stratified random sample, subsequently incorporating a purposive sample of 284 NGOs. The unit of analysis for this study was the NGOs located in Nairobi City County. These NGOs operate in the sectors of education, health, environment, women's issues, relief, and economic empowerment.

The selection of M&E Leads as respondents in NGOs was based on their oversight of the M&E function within their organizations. Consequently, they were deemed to possess the necessary information regarding the utilization of M&E findings. Program Directors, Program Managers, and Project Coordinators serve as essential informants in the management of NGOs and their associated M&E activities and are anticipated to possess relevant information regarding the utilization of M&E findings.

The target population for a survey comprises the complete set of units from which data will be utilized for inferential purposes. This study's target population comprised 979 NGOs functioning within Nairobi City County. The sample size for this study was calculated based on the target population using the formula proposed by Cooper and Schindler (2003).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = sample size, N = population size, e = level of precision at a 95 percent level of confidence, and $P = 0.05$.

Thus,

$$n = \frac{979}{1 + 979(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 284$$

The sampling technique refers to the framework guiding the selection of study participants. Beginning with stratified random sampling, a multi-stage sampling technique was applied; thereafter, purposive sampling followed. NGOs from different sectors were categorized using stratified random sampling. This approach was intended to ensure appropriate representation across various sectors and to enhance the effectiveness of the research (Kithinji, Gakuu, & Kidombo, [2017](#)). Random sampling was conducted within each category to ensure that M&E Leads had an equal opportunity of being selected, thereby guiding respondent selection in each stratum. Program Directors, Program Managers, and Project Coordinators were then purposely selected for Key Informant Interviews.

Two tools were employed: questionnaires and interview guides, the latter of which provided comprehensive data triangulation and insights. Each NGO had one M&E employee who completed a questionnaire. The Key Informants included two Program Managers, two Program Directors, and two Project Coordinators. Using self-administered surveys and Key Informant Interview guides, the study collected primary data from participants. Primarily, the questionnaire served as the main tool for gathering primary data. A questionnaire is a data collection instrument composed of several questions and various prompts designed to elicit responses from participants (Gillham, [2008](#)).

The questionnaire consisted of a series of items aimed at collecting data on the respondents' opinions related to the various issues outlined in the study's objectives, hypotheses, and ultimately summarized in the conceptual framework. The questions in the tool were structured using a five-point Likert scale and were closed-ended.

Furthermore, the interview guide was employed to gather triangulation data to close gaps or provide technical knowledge that the questionnaire might have omitted. The face-to-face nature of the interviews enabled the interviewer to observe non-verbal cues, thereby adding depth and meaning to the process. Pilot testing of the instruments included evaluating the appropriateness of the structured questionnaire. One week prior to the main study, a pilot sample was used to test the research instrument. This approach allowed the researcher to verify whether respondents interpreted the questions and instructions accurately and consistently.

The questionnaire was completed by 10 percent ($n = 28$) of respondents who exhibited characteristics similar to those of the target group; a 10 percent pilot sample is considered acceptable for such testing (De Vaus, [1993](#); Baker, [1994](#)). Questions deemed unclear were revised accordingly. The researcher carefully recorded how participants responded to the format of the instruments and the amount of time they took to answer the questions. All responses were reviewed to assess whether they reflected the intended data. The instruments were then adjusted based on the pilot test findings. In addition, consultations with supervisors and instrument retesting contributed to further refinement.

Two types of validity were assessed: content and face validity. While face validity refers to the extent to which a method, such as a psychological test or assessment, appears effective in relation to its stated goals, content validity refers to the extent to which the instrument thoroughly assesses or measures the construct of interest. A review of the literature to identify content validation studies and reported reliability statistics from published works that had employed similar instruments served to support content validity.

The application of pragmatism significantly enhanced the validity and practical relevance of the component designs. The primary aim of employing pragmatism was to triangulate data sources to verify the validity of one instrument against another (Bamberger et al., [2010](#)). Simultaneously collecting both quantitative and qualitative data improved the validity of the tools and the overall study.

Subsequently, face validity was evaluated using expert judgment from supervisors, who assessed the relevance of the indicators for each variable and confirmed the consistency of the questionnaire with the subject matter. Interpretation of the test results and the determination of whether the measurements accurately captured the intended variables were central concerns. The questionnaire achieved a response rate of 72.89%. The responses reflected the informants' views on the extent of agreement with statements related to the study's variable indicators, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

Data Analysis

The participants were requested to respond to items in the questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, where 5 indicated strong agreement, 4 indicated agreement, 3 indicated neutrality, 2 indicated disagreement, and 1 indicated strong disagreement. The mean score of each item was calculated to evaluate the degree of respondents' agreement with the statements presented. Subsequently, the composite mean and standard deviation were computed to measure the overall level of agreement regarding partner engagement. Table 1 below presents these results.

Table 1. Partner Engagement and Use of M&E Finding

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	MN	STDV
Partners are involved in the planning process in this organization.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (5.8%)	125 (60.4%)	70 (33.8%)	4.28	0.56495
Partners are involved in the implementation process of programs in this organization.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	23 (11.1%)	137 (66.2%)	47 (22.7%)	4.12	0.57123
Partners are involved in evaluation process of programs in this organization.	0 (0%)	3 (1.4%)	34 (16.4%)	121 (58.5%)	49 (23.7%)	4.04	0.67769
Partners are consistently involved in data collection for Monitoring and Evaluation.	0 (0%)	4 (1.9%)	55 (26.6%)	113 (54.6%)	35 (16.9%)	3.86	0.70440
M&E exercises are based on the information needs of relevant partners.	1 (0.5%)	10 (4.8%)	47 (22.7%)	110 (53.1%)	39 (18.8%)	3.85	0.79549
This organization requires that partners participate in M&E processes.	0 (0%)	2 (0.9%)	48 (23.2%)	116 (56.0%)	41 (19.8%)	3.95	0.68413
Composite mean and Standard Deviation						4.02	0.6663

Note: Author's own work

The data in Table 1 demonstrate that partners agreed regarding their involvement in the program planning process within their organizations ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.57$). Respondents also agreed on the involvement of partners in the implementation of initiatives within their organizations ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.57$). Furthermore, respondents agreed that partners participated in the review processes within their organizations ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.68$).

The study examined whether partners were consistently engaged in data collection for Monitoring and Evaluation. The findings indicated that participants agreed that partners were regularly involved in data collection activities ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.70$). Respondents also agreed on the alignment of M&E exercises with the information needs of relevant partners ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.80$). Additionally, the majority of respondents agreed that their organizations mandate partner participation in M&E processes ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.68$).

Overall, the survey findings indicated that respondents agreed with the majority of the items on the scale ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.67$). The study further corroborated the quantitative data by collecting qualitative data through Key Informant Interviews. Participants confirmed that partners within their NGOs were engaged in monitoring and evaluation activities and advocated for the utilization of M&E findings. This perspective was supported by a participant's response.

".....partners such as funders participate in use of M&E findings as they ensure the areas they will fund in future are genuine and are backed by evidence from M&E findings." (Respondent, Program Director)

As noted by Tana, P. O., Onyango, W. O., Ochola, C., and Omolo (2012), it is essential to engage all partners in the continuous monitoring and evaluation of project performance throughout the entire process. One respondent interviewed expressed this perspective as follows:

".....partners who participated were clients/beneficiaries and partners for particular projects through engagement in evaluation by independent evaluators." (Respondent, Program Manager)

Hinchcliff (2005) posits that the foremost objective of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) ought to be the effective use of M&E information gathered by partners, not merely to assess the achievement of project objectives but also to determine the degree to which the findings inform critical decision-making processes. When inquired about the

involvement of partners in the utilization of M&E findings, one respondent provided the following response: “Partners are involved in use of M&E findings. For a project that shows that adoption of a particular intervention brings reliable results, partners involved and beneficiaries are appraised on the findings, and they use them to scale up the program.” (Respondent, Program Manager)

IV. Correlation Analysis of Partner Engagement and Use of M&E Findings

The analysis of correlation was employed to measure both the direction and strength of the linear relationship between partner engagement and the utilization of Monitoring and Evaluation findings. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients for Partner Engagement and Use of Findings

Variable	Use of M&E Findings	Partner Engagement
Use of M&E Findings	Pearson Correlation	.38
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	<i>n</i>	207
Partner Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.38
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	<i>n</i>	207

Note: Author's own work

As illustrated in Table 2, partner engagement had a weak positive correlation with the use of M&E findings in Nairobi City ($r = .38, p < .05$).

V. Regression Analysis of Partner Engagement and Use of M&E Findings

Regression analysis was applied to the quantitative data to further examine the hypothesis concerning the relationship between partner engagement and the utilization of M&E findings. The analysis aimed to assess how partner involvement influenced the use of M&E results in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating in Nairobi City County.

The hypothesis was stated as follows:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Partner involvement has no significant impact on the utilization of M&E results in NGOs in Nairobi City County.

The hypothesis was tested using the following regression model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- YYY = Composite score for use of findings
- β_0 = Constant (intercept)
- β_1 = Beta coefficient for partner engagement
- X_1 = Composite score for partner engagement
- ε = Error term

The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Summary for the Effect of Partner Engagement on Use of M&E Findings

Model Summary	
R	0.38
R Square	0.14
Adjusted R Square	0.14
Standard Error of the Estimate	0.377
ANOVA and Change Statistics	Value
R Square Change	0.14
F Change	34.47
df1	1
df2	205
Sig. F Change	0.000

Note. Predictor: Partner Engagement. Dependent Variable: Use of M&E Findings.

Note: Author's own work

Interpretation: The model indicates that partner engagement explains approximately 14% of the variance in the use of M&E findings, and this effect is statistically significant ($p < .001$).

As shown in Table 3 above, the coefficient of determination was $R^2 = 0.14$. This indicates that 14.0% of the variation in the utilization of M&E results can be explained by partner involvement. Table 4 below presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the relationship between partner involvement and the use of M&E findings.

Table 4. ANOVA for Partner Engagement and Use of M&E Findings

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4.90	1	4.90	34.47	.000
Residual	29.15	205	0.14		
Total	34.05	206			

Note. Dependent Variable: Use of M&E Findings. Predictor: Partner Engagement.

Note: Author's own work

As shown in Table 4, the calculated F-value of 34.47 exceeded the critical F-value of 3.92, and the p-value ($p < .001$) was below the significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the model was a good fit for the analyzed data. The results suggest that the model can effectively predict the impact of partner involvement on the utilization of M&E findings in NGOs operating within Nairobi City County, Kenya. The regression coefficients for partner involvement and the utilization of M&E findings are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Coefficients of Partner Engagement on Use of M&E Findings

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B		Beta		
(Constant)	2.94	0.20	—	14.48	.000
Partner Engagement	0.29	0.05	0.38	5.87	.000

Note. Dependent Variable: Use of M&E Findings.

Note: Author's own work

The hypothesis regression model was as follows:

$$Y = 2.94 + 0.29X + 0.20$$

Where:

YYY=Use of M&E Findings

XXX = Partner Engagement

The findings indicated that partner engagement had a statistically significant and positive effect on the utilization of M&E findings, as demonstrated by a regression coefficient of $\beta=0.29$ (beta = 0.29, $t=5.87$, $p=.000$, $p<.05$) (see Table 5). The p-value of .000 was below the established significance threshold of .05. As a result, the null hypothesis which stated that partner engagement does not significantly influence the utilization of M&E findings was rejected.

These findings are consistent with those of Wanda (2013), who examined the participation of fishpond farmers in Kiambu County, Kenya, in the utilization of monitoring and evaluation findings and their impact on economic performance. The study showed that farmer engagement in M&E activities, supported by accessible record-keeping, significantly improved the economic viability of development initiatives.

Similarly, the findings align with the study by Kiumbe, Wambugu, and Luketero (2018), which aimed to determine the influence of stakeholder engagement on the utilization of M&E findings in relation to the performance of fish farming projects in Nyeri County, Kenya. Their results indicated a significant impact of partner engagement on the application of M&E findings ($t=14.20$, $p<.05$), and the authors recommended enhancing the use of M&E outputs to improve project performance. The study also introduced a stakeholder engagement framework to improve the effectiveness of aquaculture projects.

Furthermore, the present results correspond with the findings of Okul and Nyonje (2020), who investigated the extent to which partner participation in evaluations affects the use of evaluation results for program improvement. Their research identified a significant correlation between stakeholder involvement and the utilization of evaluation findings. This study supports existing literature and offers additional insights into how partner engagement in evaluations influences the application of assessment results. It contributes to the field of evaluation by addressing existing gaps and advancing understanding of factors that predict and enhance the use of evaluation findings.

VI. Discussion of Findings

Partner participation significantly influenced the utilization of M&E findings at a 95% confidence level ($p < .05$). Participation in the planning, execution, and data collection phases of Monitoring and Evaluation contributed to the effective utilization of M&E results. The M&E exercises were grounded in the information needs of relevant partners, which necessitated their involvement in M&E processes and subsequently enhanced the use of M&E findings. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between partner engagement and the utilization of M&E findings ($r = .38$, $p < .00005$).

The model summary indicated that 14.0% of the variance in the utilization of M&E findings could be attributed to partner participation within NGOs ($R^2 = .14$).

Likert scale analysis further showed that partner engagement significantly accounted for variability in the utilization of M&E findings ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.67$). The regression analysis demonstrated that partner engagement had a statistically significant positive effect on the utilization of M&E findings, with a regression coefficient of $\beta=0.294$ (beta = 0.294, $t=5.87$, $p=.000$, $p<.05$). Given that the p-value

was below the threshold of .05, the null hypothesis stating that partner engagement does not significantly affect the utilization of M&E findings was rejected.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendation

Partners should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills through forums and sensitization workshops to comprehend key components such as planning, implementation, evaluation processes, and data collection. This will enable them to become valuable contributors to these processes. As their knowledge improves, their propensity to demand quality and relevance from NGO personnel and leadership is expected to increase. Partner engagement will foster shared ownership of processes, including the utilization of M&E findings, jointly overseen by both partners and implementers. This shared accountability is anticipated to enhance the overall utilization of M&E findings. Consequently, NGOs should institutionalize partner involvement in all phases of project implementation.

Research Implications

This study addresses both theoretical and practical implications, offering insights into how its findings may be applied or influence practices in the field of Monitoring and Evaluation. In terms of policy development, funding strategies, and scholarly discourse, the study's findings may serve as a useful reference for NGOs, donor agencies, M&E personnel, implementers, academics, and researchers. Changes to practice include the creation of forums and sensitization workshops, where partners can acquire the relevant knowledge and skills to better understand planning, implementation, evaluation, and data collection. The study contributes to academic literature and supports theory development in the field. Documented evidence on the role of partner involvement in the application of M&E findings can serve as a decision-making guide for M&E practitioners and NGOs in determining which variables to prioritize or reinforce.

Study Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

A key limitation of the study was the constrained schedules and wide geographical distribution of NGOs across Nairobi City County. Data collection was anticipated to require substantial manpower. To address this challenge, the researchers engaged research assistants, which facilitated improved access to respondents and adherence to the study's timeline.

Additionally, differences in the interpretation of M&E findings were observed among M&E Leads, Program Directors, Program Managers, and Project Coordinators. To mitigate this issue, M&E findings were simplified into understandable concepts and questions, in alignment with established M&E frameworks.

It is recommended that future research focus on identifying specific types of partners who effectively facilitate the use of M&E findings within NGOs. Moreover, additional studies should be conducted on NGOs located in different regions to provide further empirical support and contribute to the theoretical development surrounding the utilization of M&E results.

Acknowledgements.

No acknowledgements

Competing Interest Statement

No funding was received by the researcher while preparing this manuscript. There are no conflicts of interest for the writers in relation to the article content.

Author (s) Contribution Statement

The authors revised the manuscript, read and approved the final document for submission. The correspondent author, Robert Ombisa developed and edited the manuscript according to the recommended guidelines. Doctor Omondi Bowa reviewed and approved the manuscript for submission. Doctor Anne Aseey participated in reviewing and approving the manuscript for submission.

References

- Amina, M., & Ngugi, [İsim soyisim eksik – kesin yazım gerekli]. (2022). Effects of utilization of monitoring and evaluation results on project performance. *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 7(5), Article 1294. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejss.v7i5.1294>
- Arce, Ó., Nuño, G., Thaler, D., & Thomas, C. (2020). A large central bank balance sheet? Floor vs corridor systems in a New Keynesian environment. *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 114, 350–367. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmoneco.2019.05.001>
- Baker, T. L. (1994). *Doing social research* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Bamberger, M., Rao, V., & Woolcock, M. (2010). *Using mixed method in monitoring and evaluation: Experiences from international development*. World Bank Publications.
- Bhikoo, C., Xu, J., & Sun, H. (2018). Factors affecting treatment duration of labial inversely impacted maxillary central incisors. *American Journal of Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics*, 153(5), 708–717.
- Bougheas, S., Lim, H., Mateut, S., Mizen, P., & Yalcin, C. (2018). Foreign currency borrowing, exports, and firm performance: Evidence from a currency crisis. *European Journal of Finance*, 24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1351847X.2017.1421246>
- Chen, Z., Li, X., & Xia, X. (2021). Measurement and spatial convergence analysis of China's agricultural green development index. *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, 28(16), 19694–19709. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-020-11953-z>
- Chepkwony, K. P., & Nyang'au, S. P. (2019). Influence of stakeholders participation on performance of road projects in Kenya (A case study of road projects in Nakuru County). *International Journal of Recent Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRRSSH)*, 6(2), 132–139. Retrieved from www.paperpublications.org
- Chesos, R. (2010). Automated M&E systems for NGOs. *The Coordinator*, Issue 5.
- Cooper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2003). *Business research methods* (8th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- De Vaus, D. (1993). *Surveys in social research* (3rd ed.). UCL Press.
- Hinchcliffe, T. (2005). Review essay: Elusive suburbs, endless variation. *Journal of Urban History*, 31(6), 899–906.
- Gillham, B. (2008). *Developing a questionnaire* (2nd ed.). Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Gichaba, M. M., Kariuki, S. M., & Mugwe, J. N. (2019). Adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices among smallholder farmers in Eastern Kenya. *African Journal of Agricultural Research*, 14(36), 2261–2270. <https://doi.org/10.5897/AJAR2019.14197>
- Githinji, N. (2020). Influence of stakeholder involvement on project performance: A case study of Kenya Ferry Services. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 7(3), 738–756.
- Kabonga, I. (2016). Development in quandary: Shortcomings and inadequacies of non-governmental organizations—a perspective from the field. *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 7(2), 89–94. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2321-5828.2016.00015.2>
- Kabonga, I. (2019). Principles and practice of monitoring and evaluation: A paraphernalia for effective development. *Africanus: Journal of Development Studies*, 48(1), 21. <https://doi.org/10.25159/0304-615X/3086>
- Kamau, R., & Mirugi-Mukundi, G. (2019). Building M&E capacity: Insights from rural Kenyan projects. *East African Journal of Policy Research*, 9(2), 75–92.
- Kessler, A., & Tanburn, J. (2014). *Why evaluations fail: The importance of good monitoring*. Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED).
- Khan, M. S., Iqbal, M. S., & Ahmed, S. (2017). Community participation in monitoring and evaluation of development projects: A literature review. *Development in Practice*, 27(1), 48–62.
- Kihuha, P. (2018). *Monitoring and evaluation practices and performance of Global Environment Facility projects in Kenya: A case of United Nations Environment Programme* (Unpublished master's thesis). Kenyatta University.
- Kithinji, C., Gakuu, C., & Kidombo, H. (2017). Professional development in monitoring and evaluation and result utilization in Meru region in Kenya. (*Unpublished manuscript*).
- Kiumbe, P., Wambugu, L., & Luketero, S. (2018). Influence of stakeholder participation on utilization of monitoring and evaluation results on the performance of fish farming projects in Kenya. Karatina University.
- Kwareh, K. R., Mgale, Y. J., & Rwela, T. G. (2024). Influence of monitoring and evaluation practices on performance of health projects: Evidence from SIKIKA project in Dodoma and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *Open Access Library Journal*, 11, Article e11470. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1111470>
- Kusek, J. Z., & Rist, R. C. (2018). *Ten steps to a results-based monitoring and evaluation system*. World Bank Publications.

- Makokha, S., & Kamwele, H. (2023). Assessment of the effectiveness of M&E system in chicken farming projects in Samia Sub County, Busia County, Kenya. *International Journal of Research and Scientific Innovation (IJRSI)*. <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2023.1012007>
- Manumbu, E. (2020). Community participation in monitoring and evaluation and its implication in village land use. (Unpublished manuscript).
- Matoka, C., & Mutasa, F. (2024). Enhancing the effectiveness of public sector monitoring and evaluation systems in Zanzibar through stakeholders' engagement. *Pan-African Journal of Business Management*, 8(1).
- Mburu, P. K. (2018). *Participatory monitoring and evaluation, capacity building of stakeholders, and performance of fish farming projects: A case of economic stimulus projects in Nyeri County, Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- Metzger, L., & Guenther, E. (2015). How to assess the effectiveness of development aid projects: Evaluation ratings versus project indicators. *Journal of International Development*, 27(10), 1496–1520. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3189>
- Mohamed, D., & Mose, T. (2024). Participatory monitoring and evaluation practices and performance of affordable housing projects in metropolitan counties in Kenya. *International Journal of Social Sciences Management and Entrepreneurship*, 8(1).
- Mutesi, J., & Odhuno, E. (2021). Impact of monitoring and evaluation practices on compliance at Rwanda's Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project. *Journal of Economics*, 5(1).
- Muthee, I., & Nyamongo, E. (2020). Effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation systems in a Kenyan government agency: A case study. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 8(2), 98–115.
- Ng'etich, K. (2020). Influence of monitoring & evaluation on the performance of projects in parastatals in Kenya: A case of Kenya Ports Authority (Unpublished manuscript).
- Nguliki, A. (2024). Exploring factors affecting the utilization of monitoring and evaluation data in decision-making and accountability: Perspectives from monitoring and evaluation professionals in Tanzania. *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research*, 9(9).
- Ntiniya, M. (2016). *Influence of monitoring and evaluation on the performance of constituency development funded projects in Kenya: A case of Kajiado East constituency* (Unpublished manuscript).
- Nyabuto, & Musembi. (2024). How monitoring and evaluation practices contribute to project performance: A study of KURA construction projects in Nairobi City County, Kenya. *Journal of Applied Social Sciences in Business and Management*, 3(2), 170–181.
- Ogolla, F., & Moronge, M. (2016). Determinants of effective monitoring and evaluation of government-funded water projects in Kenya. *A Strategic Business and Change Journal of Management*, 3(1).
- Okul, E. O., & Nyonje, R. O. (2020). Examining stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process for program improvement. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, 9(5), 179–191. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v9i5.835>
- Olwenyi, M., Ndunge, D., Kyalo, B., Nyonje, R., & Kikwatha, R. (2025). Monitoring and evaluation practices and performance of Global Partnership for Education projects in Uganda: The role of organizational culture. *International Journal of Professional Business Review*. ISSN: 2525-3654.
- Onyango, C. (2017). *Assessing the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation system in the implementation of county government projects: A case of Kirinyaga County, Kenya* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Nairobi. Retrieved from <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/101269/Masters%20final%20report%20submission>
- Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (2017). Pedagogical principles of evaluation: Interpreting Freire. *Wiley Online Library*, 2017(155).
- Sikuku, C. (2019). *An assessment of the monitoring and evaluation system for Kenyatta National Hospital* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Nairobi.
- Shuna, S., & Kithandi, C. (2024). Monitoring and evaluation practices and performance of health development projects in Kenya. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 14, 269–277.
- Simister, N. (2015). *M&E plans*. Intrac Publications.
- Skedsmo, G., & Huber, S. G. (2019). Forms and practices of accountability in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 31(3), 251–255.
- Tana, P. O., Onyango, W. O., Ochola, C., & Omolo, S. (2012). *Socio-cultural participatory monitoring and evaluation indicators used in adopting improved cassavas by Western Kenya communities*. Nairobi: Kenya Agricultural Research Institute.
- United Nations Development Assistance Framework. (2017). *Guidance and related documents on programming principles, UN Vision 2030, Common Country Analysis, communications and advocacy*.
- United Nations Development Programme. (2002). *Handbook on monitoring and evaluation for results*. New York: Author.

- United Nations Development Programme. (2021). Guidelines for effective monitoring and evaluation of development projects. UNDP Publications.
- Wamugu, J. W., & Ogollah, K. (2017). Role of stakeholders' participation on the performance of constituency development fund projects in Mathira East constituency, Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Information Sciences and Project Management*, 2(1), 106–117.
- Wanda, E. (2013). The role of participatory monitoring and evaluation for sustainable backyard aquaculture (Unpublished master's thesis). Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Wepukhulu, J. (2017). Factors influencing utilization of monitoring and evaluation results in county governments: A case of Busia County, Kenya (Unpublished manuscript).
- World Bank. (2010). Guide to road safety: Opportunities and challenges. <https://doi.org/10.1596/33363>
- World Bank. (2020). Guide to road safety: Opportunities and challenges. <https://doi.org/10.1596/33363>
- World Vision. (2007). Learning through evaluation with accountability and planning (LEAP) (2nd ed.). World Vision.