

**FACTORS INFLUENCING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND
PERFORMANCE OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AND
DEVELOPMENT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN
KENYA: A CASE STUDY MERCY CORPS**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and that it has not been presented in any other University/Institution for consideration. This research project has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged.

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The research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my husband Eric Wakaria and mother Bertha Omany.

It is through your support, prayers and encouragement that made my studies possible. I will forever remain indebted to you.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

INGOs International Non-Governmental Organizations

KES Kenya Shillings

NGO Non- Governmental Organization

SMT Senior Management Team

ABSTRACT

Over the years Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have implemented programs to offer services to vulnerable individuals, communities and societies in developing countries around the world and they depend on funding from donors, governments among other sources. Given the dynamic environment within which NGOs operate that is characterized by unpredictability, strategy implementation is of great necessity in support of performance of these NGOs to meet the changes in their operating environment. International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) have gained prominence as critical actors at the all levels in Kenya. This increased prominence exposes the INGOs to targeted scrutiny in relation to increased demands for accountability thus arousing the curiosity of the researcher on factors influencing the implementation and performance of strategies in the environment they operate in. This study aimed at contributing to the field of strategy development and implementation by assessing the factors influencing strategy implementation within the International Humanitarian and Development NGOs sector with the focus being on Mercy Corps. Theories which formed the basis of this study included the resource dependence theory, strategic fit theory and open systems theory. This study was conducted through a case study design. Qualitative data was collected by way of face-to-face interviews guided by an interview guide. The data obtained was analyzed by way of content analysis which involved thematic comparisons of data obtained from the various program officers. The findings revealed that major factors affecting strategy implementation were staff engagement/involvement, technological factors, external environment, appropriate strategic decisions, availability of resources, organizational structure as well as inclusivity. The study further found out that Mercy Corps Kenya had strategic plans in place and that there existed some viable strategies at the organization which was found to be a point of reference in their daily routines. The strategies at Mercy Corps Kenya were formulated mostly by senior management team with minimum inclusion of support staff. It was therefore recommended that in order for international humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations to perform better, there is need to cultivate the elements related to proper strategy implementation in order to realize success in their undertakings. In addition, there is need for inclusivity of employees from the onset of strategy planning to the implementation stage. There is need for further research whose scope should be larger than just on firm and should have more a larger sample size which can be used to further generalize and justification of the results.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails a brief background of the study, concept of strategy implementation, and a precise background on organization performance. International Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya have been discussed, an overview of Mercy Corps provided as well as statement of the problem and research objectives. The chapter was concluded with the research objectives and the value of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Ideology of strategy has continued to gain popularity and interest in the management of organizations and this is because there is no single organization private or public, profit or non-profit that can ignore or do without strategic management (Waweru, 2014). According to Gichema (2012) strategy implementation is putting strategy into action and the manner in which the strategy is implemented can have a significant impact on whether it will be successful or not. Strategy implementation remains a central challenge for many institutions more so in contemporary management and in situations where the organization's environment is changing (Hrebiniak, 2006).

Strategy implementation theories can aid organizations to understand factors which may influence them as well as guide proper strategic management for organizational functioning and survival. Three theories were relevant to this study. They include the Resource Dependence Theory, Strategic Fit Theory and Open Systems Theory. This is because the Resource Dependence Theory recognizes that organizations operate in the context of being dependent on the external environment.

The Strategic Fit Theory involves aligning organizational strategy to the environment while the Open Systems Theory which views organizations being heavily affected by their environment they operate in. Over the years Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have implemented programs to offer services to vulnerable individuals, communities and societies in developing countries around the world and they depend on funding from donors, governments among other sources. There has been great interest in the NGO sector given the economic value add to communities and their tremendous increase and manifestation in execution of programs and projects. Given the dynamic environment within which NGOs operate that is characterized by unpredictability, strategy implementation is of great necessity in support of performance of these NGOs to meet the changes in their operating environment.

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) have gained prominence as critical actors at the all levels in Kenya. They have taken on substantial responsibilities in promoting many spheres including economic, social, and political development sectors. This can be attributed to their marked efforts in implementing social programs, self-governance, self-empowerment and policy advocacy particularly for the less fortunate and marginalized society. This increased prominence exposes the INGOs to targeted scrutiny in relation to increased demands for accountability thus arousing the curiosity of the researcher on factors influencing the implementation and performance of strategies in the environment they operate in.

1.1.1 The Concept of Strategy Implementation

Organizations change continually because they are open systems in constant interaction with the environment and they use strategy to determine goals and objectives; identify necessary interventions and allocation of resources required to achieve the set goals and targets. Pearce and Robinson (2003) concluded that for organizations to achieve their set goals and objectives it would be necessary for organizations to change their working environment through strategy. Implementation of an organization's strategy involves putting in place processes and procedures that are led by competent and devoted personnel for the organization to obtain the desired results.

Strategy implementation is the process of translating strategic intentions into actions. As part of decision making process in an organization, implementation of the chosen strategy is one of the central phase. Strategy implementation encompasses all those actions that are necessary to translate strategy into practical ideas. This is through the management coming up with procedures and correspondent budgets guided by the strategy and aiming at achieving the goals of the organization (Kiruthi, 2001). As part of the strategy implementation process, managers must direct and control actions, outcomes and adjust to change (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000). This involves the organization's strategic management process therefore moving into a phase of translating strategic thought into organizational actions: shifting from planning the work into working the plan (Mutuvi, 2013). Pearce & Robinson (1997) pointed out that this shift gives rise to four concerns: identifying action plans and short-term objectives, commencing specific functional tactics, disseminating policies that build the capacity of people in the organization, and committing to continuous improvement.

1.1.2 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is defined differently by different authors. Daft (2000) defined organizational performance as the ability of an institution to continuously meet the goals and objectives it has set with minimal resources. Griffin (2006) defined organizational performance as an organization's ability to mobilize and optimally use the scarce resource in the pursuit of its operational goals.

Performance also relates to addressing a specific requestor conducting an activity effectively also as utilizing knowledge as opposed to only having it (Muchira, 2013). Aaltonen and Ikåvalko (2002) described performance as the outcome of the entire organization's operations and strategies to the extent to which an individual meets the expectations regarding how he should function or conduct himself in a particular context, situation, job or circumstance. The heightened need to measure performance in non-profits is correlated to the upcoming drive on showing effectiveness of the organization from the stakeholders and clients (Cairns, *et. al.* 2005). An NGO's performance can be measured by how well it continuously achieves its set goals.

According to Ozgur (2004) it is widely believed that strategic management has a positive correlation on the organizational performance through optimal use of available resources, diminishing ambiguity, motivating and inspiring the staff. Powell (1992) indicated that institutions that adopt strategic management generally improve their performance. David (2005) noted that the practice of strategy implementation in firms indicated that organizational factors such as formalization, centralization and differentiation of organization structure, play a vital role in enhancing organizational performance.

1.1.3 International Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya

The amended Non-Governmental Organizations Co-ordination Act, 1990 describes a Non-Governmental Organization as “a private voluntary grouping of individuals or associations, not operated for profit or for other commercial purposes but which have organized themselves nationally or internationally for the benefit of the public at large and for the promotion of social welfare, development, charity or research in the areas inclusive of, but not restricted to, health, relief, agriculture, education, industry, and the supply of amenities and services”.

A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is any organization that receives funds from development partners to implement interventions such as health, education, micro financing, appropriate technology, and other social activities (Dees, 1998). The definition excludes nonprofit organizations like universities, churches, hospitals and local authorities not registered by the NGO council or NGO coordinating board. The contribution of the NGOs to the country’s economy has recently increased and it is currently estimated at KES 80 billion per year (NGO Coordination Board strategic plan 2009 – 2013).

NGOs operating in Kenya can be categorized into local and International NGOs. Local NGOs have their operations based only in Kenya and some of them operate in only one county while others are spread out in the country operating various counties. These local NGOs mostly draw their workforce from within the country as opposed to going beyond the national boundaries. International NGOs on the other hand have their operations in more than one country, like is typical of other international organizations and corporations.

A large number of them have projects in different sectors of the economy such as environment, health, relief, among other sectors (NGO Coordinating Bureau, 2004). Most of them are very well established with adequate provision of the required resources to carry out their operations compared to the local NGOs. The workforce in international NGOs is drawn from within the host country as well as from other nationalities in line with the regulations and in fulfillment of the requirements of the NGO Board.

1.1.4 Overview of Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps is a global relief and development agency saving and improving lives in the world's toughest places and works. Mercy Corps has had its foot print in many countries currently it is implementing programs in 40 countries. It partners with local personnel to implement customer oriented interventions therefore strengthening communities and helping the population overcome calamities/disasters. Mercy Corps has been in existence since 1979 turning crises into opportunities for sustainable, positive change for millions of individuals, families, and communities. When working with communities, the agency leverages on indigenous capacity to empower people continuously change their lives, ensure food security, increase their source of revenue and ultimately creating self-dependence. Mercy Corps views challenges as an opportunity to design innovative and sustainable solutions responsive to identified challenges.

Mercy Corps started its operations in Kenya in 2008. The agency is currently undertaking development programs in various counties which were the previous provinces as per the old constitution. As part of the agency's strategic framework, Mercy Corps uses strategy as a tool to ensure that individual country goals, priorities, programs, and activities align with its mission.

Mercy Corps Kenya is presently implementing its Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018. The overarching goal of the strategic plan is to create just and durable peace by building sustainable livelihoods and greater political and economic participation for the poor and marginalized. The strategic objectives of the strategic plan in summary include Governance, peace, market systems and youth.

1.2 Research Problem

Kiruthi (2001) recognized that all organizations face the challenges of the changing environment in which they operate. Thus, the implementation of strategy requires converting strategies into action, and for organizations to thrive in the unpredictable organizational environment good strategy formulation is imperative to enhance organizational performance. However, the implementation of strategies does not happen without obstructions and it is impossible to foresee all the problems that will arise during this process since there is no universal model of strategy implementation and most strategies fail at this stage. Johnson and Scholes (2005) pointed out that managers need to develop appropriate strategies specific to circumstances of an organization and design appropriate plans on how to implement the strategies.

Different scholars and researchers in varied contexts have inquired through studies on the various factors and relationships between strategy implementation and organizational performance. Chaimankong and Prasertsakul (2012) carried out a study aimed at establishing the association between strategic management and organizational performance in Somalia. Ramadan (2015) on the other hand examined the impact of strategy implementation drivers on programs effectiveness in NGOs in Poland and recommended future studies in the same direction using a different sample type and size.

Various scholars in Kenya (Michael, 2004; Nour, 2013; Gichema, 2012; Okoth, 2013; Muthiya, 2004; Mutuvi, 2013; Abok, 2013 among others) have researched on issues revolving around strategy implementation in non- profit organizations, NGOs and developmental NGOs in Kenya. More specifically, Michael (2004) and Kibathi (2009) focused on factors influencing strategy implementation and challenges of strategy implementation in INGOs in Kenya. They recommended suggestions for further study regards to various aspects.

This included in relation to donor involvement and government regulations on the management of INGOs in strategy implementation as well as strategy implementation in International Humanitarian and Development NGOs in Kenya. In addition, they suggested that a replication study to be carried after sometime to establish if there are any changes that have emerged in the INGOs environment operating in Kenya for comparison and to offer more definite and valid recommendations.

This study aimed at contributing to the field of strategy development and implementation by assessing the factors influencing strategy implementation within the International Humanitarian and Development NGOs sector with the focus being on Mercy Corps. The study therefore sought to answer the research question: What were the factors influencing strategy implementation and performance of international humanitarian and development NGOs in Kenya?

1.3 Research Objective

The study objective was to establish the factors influencing strategy implementation and performance of international humanitarian and development NGOs in Kenya.

1.4 Value of the study

The study findings added value to policy, theory and practice by forming a platform upon which further research on issues of implementation of strategies by organizations shall be undertaken by academicians and managers. It offered a model applicable theoretically to all organizations, to be aware of and deal with factors influencing implementation of strategies. Recommendations were drawn to give a platform to practicing successful implementation.

This study helped practitioners and managers in existing INGOs to be proactive in identifying and addressing the factors that influence the implementation and performance of their strategies. It provided mechanisms that aided better management of these agencies in support of strategy implementation and subsequent performance. Similarly, it informed their management on how to successfully implement strategies as well as how to mitigate the challenges they may face.

The study also aimed to provide information to future scholars, academicians and researchers to bridge the knowledge gap on strategy implementation and performance in INGOs in Kenya. It contributed to the pool of knowledge on strategy implementation and performance in INGOs. Where applicable it made recommendations for further research based on the finding of the research project.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Available literature from secondary data sources in the areas of specific interest to this study were reviewed in this chapter. Information and views of other scholars across the globe who have performed research in a similar field of study have been summarized. The chapter sought to look at various definitions, theories and arguments that have been advanced on strategy as well as other concepts advanced in this subject of study.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations

Strategy implementation should be linked to the original theories and frameworks that are supporting their existence. Theories formed the basis on which the study was undertaken. Three main theories namely the resource dependence theory, strategic fit theory and open systems theory formed the basis of this study. An understanding of the theories was of major contribution to the study.

2.2.1 Resource Dependence Theory

Pfeffer and Salancik (2003) intimated that when an organization depends on its external environment for a huge proportion of central resources, such as finances therefore being subject to external control, it falls under resource dependence theory. Hafsi and Thomas (2005) ascertained that although resource dependence is a beneficial response there is a trade off between the autonomy for organizational growth and survival. Adopting a resource dependence theory requires close collaboration and mutual agreements between various players including donors, governments and NGOs.

This involves disproportional distribution of resources therefore leading to external control (Cooley & Ron, 2002). Donor and government agreements may provide NGOs with desirable financial stability. On the flip side of this arrangement there is a possibility of reducing the NGO independence in implementing its programs (Feiock & Jang, 2009). In addition, organizations that rely heavily on external funding exposes them to great risks in instances of reduced funding source as opposed to privately funded organizations (Hodge & Piccolo 2005).

Various studies have identified that resource dependence can strain the relationship between the NGO and its external funding source as in some instances the NGOs may be viewed as of lower status in comparison with the funding source while as the two should be viewed as partners to ensure efficiency (Ahmad, 2006; Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, 2004; Fowler, 1997; Lister, 2000). This phenomenon is more profound when looked from a global perspective. For an NGO to receive funding it may be required to provide something in return mostly indigenous knowledge therefore making the NGO be viewed as a passive recipient or a conduit or even a subcontractor (Hudock, 1995).

Resource dependence theory puts more emphasis on the role of factors external to the organization and less appreciates the level of NGO autonomy (Gerstbauer, 2010). It oversimplifies the relationship between the donor and NGO more so painting the NGO as to having subordinate roles (Najam, 2000). However, this assumption has not been extensively researched (McCloughlin, 2011).

Resource dependence approaches does not look at all the conditions set for funding the NGO but in most cases, it looks at the amount of funding provided to the NGO. The conditions set for the funding are important since they affect the NGO performance. For example, multiple year grants or contracts may lower the likelihood of cooptation, increase transparency, and improve coordination (Cooley & Ron 2002, Deflin Jr. & Tang, 2008).

2.2.2 Strategic Fit Theory

The theory of strategic choice perspective proposes that not only do organizations adapt to a dynamic environment but they also have the capacity to influence and shape their environment (Wheelen & Hunger, 2008). In that regard, management decisions have impact in not only the performance of the firm but also the industry overall factors. Consequently, the theory of strategic fit involves aligning organizational strategy to the environment.

Grant (2010) argued that for a strategy to be successful, it has to be in line with; the goals and core values of the institution. This also include being aligned with its external environment, with its resources and capabilities, and with its organization systems. Therefore, this study anchors to the theory of strategic fit between external and internal organizational environment.

2.2.3 Open System Theory

Strategy implementation can also be diagnosed from system perspective whereby system theory examines organization as open system in active exchange with environment. It acknowledges mutual inter relationship among elements in a set that constitutes an identifiable whole or gestalt (Wendell & Cecil, 1999). Cole, (2004) defined a system as collection of parts which form some whole.

Wendell and Cecil (1999) further illustrates that all open systems have processes that convert inputs into outputs. Some of the inputs include data, funds, human resource and raw materials. These are converted through internal processes to final output that are exported to environment. Implementation of strategies within the organization must therefore take note of what organization can do and what it cannot do (Okoth, 2013). Thus, this implies that resource availability, capital, people, technology and history of past performances shape strategy implementation and performance within the organization.

2.3 Concept of Strategy Development and Implementation

The development of strategy in most cases involves in-depth research and decision making to make a determination of the goals and objectives of the organization. It is a process aimed to answer the question: “How will we achieve our goals and get to where we want to be?” The development of strategy can be understood as an ongoing effort to develop a road map for the organization (Alkhafaji, 2003). Kaplan *et al.* (2008) proposed that developing a strategy can be seen as an art and thus it necessitates a systematic process that considers developing or reaffirming the mission, values and vision, as the concrete goals and outcomes that would represent the attainment of the vision to be determined. The process also includes the identification and analysis of key issues, encompassing internal and external forces that might affect the strategy and formulation of the strategy as a last step of the process which will lead to a creation of change (Kaplan, et. al. 2008).

Hrebiniak (2006) acknowledged that although formulating strategy is a tough assignment for various level of management within an organization, system wide actualization of the strategies is even harder. Noble (1999b) recognized that as opposed to strategy development and formulation, strategy implementation has often been perceived and described through research as a disjointed and extensive process, consequently even the well thought out strategies do not lead to improved performance for organizations if they are not implemented in a structured way. Yang *et. al* (2008) noted that strategy implementation is a major challenge for many institutions because there are numerous factors that influence the success of strategy implementation, including the people who disseminate or implement the strategy, the systems in place for harmonization and control.

2.4 Communication

Effective communication across all levels of an organization on all aspects of the strategy including formulation, development and implementation motivates personnel in owning the strategy process and may therefore have a positive outcome on the strategy implementation (Aosa, 1992). Effective communication to the employees builds trust and confidence therefore helping the employees to relate to how their contribution be it at departmental level relate and influence the organizations performance in the overall strategy (Lamb & McKee, 2004).

Various studies have narrowed down their research on internal factors and how they affect strategy implementation in an organization. Yang (2008) described top management team in an organization as employees who have high level of authority and critical responsibilities in decision making. Members of the top management may include organization president, executive directors, top tier managers and stakeholders. The board plays a major role in strategy implementation (Schmidt & Braurer, 2006). If communication is generated from the board and trickles down to the organization, the level of success of strategy implementation may be increased.

Nutt (1986) suggested that having top management comprehend the strategies and take responsibilities in being champions of communication of the strategies to the lower level may help in overcoming resistance to strategy implementation from lower level personnel. He further noted that a participatory approach involving top-down and down - up consultation other than top-down imposing may yield better results. Strategy implementation therefore, may not be successful if issues concerning the implementation of strategies are not disseminated to the lower level managers and the other employees. This may be compounded further if several layers of management are involved as there could be lack of consensus of the various level hence creating barriers that slow the implementing a strategy (Noble, 1999).

According to Alexander (1985) identified effective communication as a critical factor that leads to successful implementation of a strategy. Once strategy is formulated and an implementation plan drawn the new responsibilities and roles therefore needs to be communicated to the employees to ensure they understand them and access if they are ready for the change. Although communication has been demonstrated to be important, challenges do exist (Heide, Gronhaug & Johannessen, 2002).

The communication challenges could be due to the organization layer of the institution which may lead to the creation of a barrier to the implementation of the strategic activities which had been planned. Abok (2013) part of the findings on factors affecting implementation of strategic plans in NGOs in Kenya established that although many NGOs have put a lot of resources in communications systems in implementation of strategic plans implying that communication could therefore be said to be an integral ingredient in the effective implementation of strategic plans there was need for organizations to embrace frequent structured meetings, performance monitoring activities and regular feedback meeting on strategy implementation.

2.5 Organizational Internal Capacities

Organizations with adequate and reliable resources more so internally including human capital have a competitive edge as opposed to organizations relying on external funding. Franklin (2011) indicated that although an organization can adopt a management practices similar to another organization it may not be able to replicate all the factors from the source organization more so on employee skills and competence, values, time

management culture and optimal utilization of resources. Organizations therefore need to cultivate these elements internally so that they are set for success in strategy implementation – the lack of these will lead to huge discrepancies. Abok (2013) observed that increasing the capacity of internal employees in resource mobilization and management is critical to successful implementation of strategy. The effective coordination of activities need to be aligned to organizations goals. Most organizations have invested in hiring resource managers depicting the importance of resource management in meeting clients and stakeholder's expectations (Osano, 2013).

Wastage of organization resources due lack of capacity to manage the resources effectively hinders effective strategy implementation. Therefore, there is need to engage employees with suitable capacity. Ogonge, (2013) noted that failure to implement well designed and documented strategic plans across Africa could be as a result of the lack of proper management of resources.

An implementation plan is not only dependent on having adequate employees alone for proper implementation but also on good leadership and well-trained managers that will coordinate the usage of organization resources which are normally scarce and very costly (Ogonge, 2013). Most organizations and stakeholders have now started prioritizing accountability, integrity and transparency and not just on financial resources, but also on the way human resources are motivated to avoid large turnovers that are a detriment to strategy implementation.

Involvement of employees from the onset of strategy planning to the implementation stage is a key success factor in effective implementation and hence it is necessary to coordinate through effective communication of all the resources that help retain employees in an organization over the strategic period (Letting, 2010). During strategy implementation a supportive culture, synergistic organogram and motivation of staff are some of the internal capacities required. Managers need to know when particular strategies initiated are not effective and thus managers at all levels use the clear, prompt, unbiased information for the people they manage to take remedial action and resolve problems that may exist.

2.6 Empirical Studies and Knowledge Gaps

According to empirical studies, despite enormous investment in strategy development, many organizations have not realized any tangible results strategy implementation. Most organizations on average only attain approximately 63 percent of the financial performance promised by their strategies (Mankins & Steele 2005). Various factors contribute to this performance. Not having the required resources in a timely manner leads to 7.5 percent of the value being eroded while poor communication contributes to loss of 5.2 percent. Poor planning and lack of accountability leads to 4.5 percent and 4.1 percent loss respectively. Proper plan and implementation of strategy can however increase performance above 60%. To achieve close to 100% closer link strategies, plans, and performance is required.

Njagi and Kombo (2014) study on the effect of strategy implementation on performance of commercial banks found that there is a moderately strong association between strategy implementation and organizational performance and that institutions that want to thrive and compete effectively must implement strategy effectively. They however noted that, only 44.8% difference in performance is explained by strategy implementation.

From that study, it therefore implies that other factors affect performance. Organizations need to systematically evaluate their strategic management styles to determine strengths and weakness in strategy implementation. According to Mwawasi, *et. al* (2013) despite the central role of implementation of operational strategy issues, there has been relatively little scholarly study of the factors that affect their implementation in the NGO field.

Although empirical studies by Slack, (2006c), Roger (1995), Prahalad and Hamel, (1990) with a later review of the same in September 2008, have investigated factors affecting the implementation of strategies in non-governmental organizations these studies did not examine the pattern in NGOs strategies implementation, more so bearing in mind that the external environment is keeps on changing, with the need for managers to develop and implement specific operational strategies so as to achieve better business performance (Mwawasi, *et.al*, 2013).

2.7 Conceptual Framework

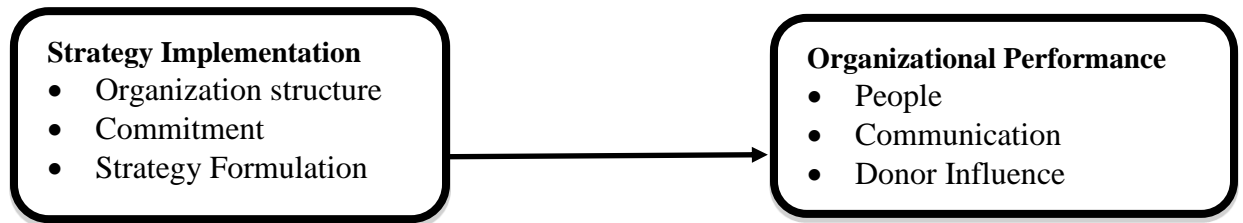


Figure 2.1: Strategy Implementation and Performance Model

Source: Researcher

Noble (1999b) pointed out that an accurate strategy-structure alignment is a necessary precursor to the successful implementation of strategies in an organization and reorganization of external environment require adjustments to the organizational structure. Schaap (2006) proposed that adjusting organizational structure according to a formulated strategy can ensure successful strategy implementation. Alexander (1985) noted that obtaining employee commitment and participation from the onset can promote successful strategy implementation and a shared understanding of an organization's strategic goals is critical importance to effective implementation of strategy.

Efforts may fail if the strategy being implemented is not supported by of majority of the personnel in the organization (Rapert, Velliquette & Garretson, 2002). In regards to strategy formulation, Hrebiniak (2006) mentioned that a poorly formulated strategy can adversely limit strategy implementation efforts. The kind of strategy that is formulated and the process of strategy formulation influence the effect of implementation and there is need to begin implementation with a proper formulated strategy that involves a good concept that is intended to promote successful implementation (Alexander, 1985; Allio, 2005; Kim & Mauborgne, 1991; Singh, 1998).

Organizational performance is on the performance of managers and the personnel they manage at the various tiers of the organization. Organizational performance as part of strategy implementation's success depends crucially on the human or people side. This implies that there is less of the processes in place since human resources are the process owners (Viseras, Baines & Sweeney 2005).

Communication is treated as a foundation to realizing commitment and consensus in strategy implementation. Rapert, Velliquette and Garretson (2002) found that the viability of frequent communication is a means by which strategic consensus may be enhanced. Frequent effective communication ensures harmony is enhanced and organizational performance improves. Most NGOs depend largely on funding through donors for their activities and to be able to implement a chosen strategy (Tieleman, 1996).

Mbom (2012) in his investigation of partnerships between donors and NGOs in Africa found that there is a multifaceted responsibility on INGOs to provide accountability to their stakeholders and in most cases, the NGOs tend to be more accountable to donors than to beneficiaries because they want to ensure they can secure the already scarce resources provided by these donors. This leads to a situation where the INGOs may end up neglecting their overarching goal of the implementation of their programs based on the strategies they have formulated thus comprising organizational performance.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research methodology chapter describes how the study was approached. The data collection procedure, analysis of the data and presentation are highlighted in this section. The section presented the research plan, that is, the research design, how data was collected and from whom, and the data analysis techniques that were used to analyze the data in order to generate the findings of the study.

3.2 Research Design

Kothari (2003) defines a research design as the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. Sekaran (2003) describes a research design as the set up to decide on how data will be collected, analyzed and interpreted to answer the research questions among other issues. Therefore, research design sticks together the major parts of the research project and enables to address the intended research question.

The study was conducted through a case study design. According to Kothari (2004) a case study is the appropriate form of study as it is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question. The advantage of using a case study is that it enables in-depth understanding of the behavior pattern of the concerned unit, facilitating intensive study of the concerned organization, which is not possible with other methods (Sekaran, 2003).

It therefore involved an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon of strategy implementation in the context of an International Humanitarian and Development NGO - Mercy Corps, Kenya. This research design was successfully used by similar studies (Koske, 2003; Muthuiya, 2004; Machuki, 2005; Wambugu, 2006; Waweru, 2014). The case study enriched generalized knowledge and made it possible for the researcher to use one or more methods depending on the prevalent circumstances.

3.3 Data Collection

The study used primary data which was collected by way of face-to-face interviews guided by an interview guide developed to solicit information in line with the objectives of the study. An interview guide enables the interviewer to probe further in case there is need for more information (Waweru, 2014). Open-ended interviews and semi-structured interviews were applied to afford the interviewees the opportunity to fully express their experiences with strategy implementation and performance at the organization.

The use of this interview approach allowed the researcher to balance between the quality and quantity of data collected and to provide more information which was useful for a detailed explanation of the factors influencing strategy implementation and the measures being taken in relation to the factors. The study targeted thirty (30) interviewees who were drawn from the Country Office, field offices and at the program level. They included interviewees from the leadership at the Country Office, middle level staff drawn from support departments (Logistics and Finance) and programs. Program heads and program support team members drawn from the field offices were also interviewed. The data was recorded for transcription and where possible by writing the responses as provided by the interviewees.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained was analyzed by way of content analysis. This is because the study sought to solicit data that is qualitative in nature and given that interviewees was drawn from a single organization but from different levels of management and programs, each group of interviewees responded to different sets of questions. A comparison of the data and the theoretical approaches discussed in the literature review was performed to foster informed data interpretation and correct conclusions.

Analysis also involved thematic comparisons of data obtained from the various program officers to enable a more detailed investigation. This aided in determination of whether the strategy implementation practices were similar or otherwise across programs. This type of analysis was found not to restrict interviewees on answers and had potential of generating more information with much detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This research looked into factors influencing strategy implementation and performance of international humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations in Kenya with focus on Mercy Corps. This chapter therefore presents the research findings based on the proposed methodology and procedures. The chapter is comprised of the following sub-sections: findings of the study, discussion of the study findings as well as chapter summary.

4.2. Findings of the Study

Recorded data was transcribed and described in a pragmatic process of thematic content analysis as a method of analyzing qualitative data. This was generated from interviews based on an interview guide with interviews conducted from selected interviewees. Data was analyzed through categorization of feedback into similar themes and thereafter, report writing as well as discussions of the findings.

4.2.1 Factors Influencing Strategy Implementation

The interviewees were asked to state factors that affect implementation. The interview findings revealed that there are various factors that affect strategy implementation. Most importantly, the research identified the following: staff engagement/involvement, technological factors, external environment, appropriate strategic decisions, availability of resources, organizational structure as well as inclusivity. According to one of the program support:

“A motivated team that understands the strategy and are ready to provide different levels of skill, budget, technology to help capture and track plan, and consideration of external environment factors influence the implementation and organizational performance.” On the issue of involvement/inclusivity, one of the senior managers explained that *“there are two major factors which can be summarized as: inclusivity – ensuring that all members of staff are adequately involved in the strategy development and implementation processes. Another factor can be in category of communication – having deliberate efforts and channels for regular communication and review of the strategy implementation process enhances the chances of success.”*

Some interviewees categorized these factors as internal and external.

“There are several factors both internal and external that can largely influence strategy implementation and organizational performance. These include but not limited to: resources - availability of resources (can be monetary and time allocation); organizational culture – looking into organization beliefs, norms and values; organizational structure and its leadership – this reflects heavily on how activities are being coordinated within an organization; political, Economic, Social environment and Technology- The Socio-economic and political environment can influence implementation. Particularly, because they are very unpredictable” (middle management staff, Mercy Corps).

The external environment included that of donor interests and government interventions.

“I think some of these factors include: the strategy of donor community and what their interests are (donor dependence for funding to implement strategies); the Kenya government priorities – Vision 2013, our current strategic plan was aligned to it when the strategy was being prepared because the role of an iNGO is to fill gaps e.g. limited resources by working closely with government to realize their objectives; internal resources – what does the organization have – i.e. resources, the people, technological knowhow i.e. internally and in head quarter, look all round to achieve objectives for support; and technical knowhow – what is our niche/strengths as the organization and country program as whole and weigh this against the external environment’s strengths and limitations. This means looking at the enabling environment to support frameworks to achieve objective and decide route to take” (senior management staff, Mercy Corps).

4.2.2 Participation in Formulation of Strategy

The interviewees were asked to indicate the ways in which they participated in strategy implementation. Their responses included the following: contribution to management practices, attendance of senior management team meetings, presenting new ideas, creating work plans, problems and opportunities identification as well as design of new programs.

“I contribute through identification of problems and opportunities, coming up with broad thematic areas and participate in writing context analysis and indicators for measurement. This is during the Senior Management Meetings and revision of draft strategy documents” (Senior manager, Mercy Corps).

In addition, a middle level manager stated that:

“I lead the efforts in ensuring that there are systems and metrics in place for ensuring that the organization is adequately tracking the strategy implementation. I also advise on the strategy review process by reporting on successes and gaps from the implementation process.”

Most of the participation in strategy formulation was from top management.

“I played a key role as the lead writer and main facilitator in development of strategy, formulated questions, convened workshops and handled the communication component to keep the team abreast with what was happening and driving the initiative of strategy formulation” (Top manager, Mercy Corps).

On other hand, some interviewees felt that they were not being involved in formulation of strategies at Mercy Corps.

“No I do not but I think that if one is to participate/ be involved I think that the following criteria should be used: by position/title one owns, by invitation, and by mere fact that one is an employee of the said organization” (Program support staff, Mercy Corps).

Another middle level manager reiterated that:

“My participation is limited because of the structure of the organization. Strategy formulation is performed at a higher level by the top management given that they are the ones who determine the strategy.

The strategies are rolled down to program staff who implement them alongside the strategic objectives. I would desire be actively involved and contribute towards strategy formulation by being part of discussions and brainstorming so that it is a more inclusive process across all levels in country.”

4.2.3 Strategic Plan and Implementation Timeframe

On whether Mercy Corps had a strategic plan, majority of the interviewees acknowledged that there was existence of strategic plan at this organization, although some of them were not aware of such kind of strategic plan being in place. However, the interviewees had different opinion on the duration taken to implement the strategic plan of this organization. Some interviewees claimed that they implement annually, some said after three years, while others felt that implementation of strategic plan based on a five-year interval.

“Yes. Mercy Corps has an up-to-date strategic plan that runs and is reviewed annually. What I cannot point out clearly is Mercy Corps short term and long-term goals and it timeframe. This is because of the changes that occur frequently. However, the current key strategic objectives and thematic areas that guides implementation work for the year 2017-2018 specifically for the Kenya program.

They are: peace building and conflict management; resilience; empowerment of youth and adolescents; as well as gender and governance. All the above key objectives are anchored on the ultimate goal of ensuring just, secure and productive communities” (Middle manager, Mercy Corps).

“Yes - Time frame: April 2013 – March 2018. Some of the strategic objectives are: peace building and conflict transformation; resilience and livelihoods; youth and governance (devolution); and cross cutting (women and gender). Adjustments were later made to the objectives during the annual reviews of the strategic plan & development of annual plans” (Senior manager, Mercy Corps). To add on that, another top manager had the following views “The Mercy Corps Kenya strategic plan is a 5-year plan, guided by the prevailing in-country socio-economic and environmental circumstances e.g. drought prevalence in the ASAL influence the strategic objectives and programming areas of focus in our strategic plan.”

On contrary, there were a few of the interviewees who were not sure of timeframe of strategic plan implementation.

“Yes – I am not sure of the time frame of implementation of the strategic plan but I am aware of the four strategic objectives which include: governance, peace and conflict, youth, and economic empowerment” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps). “Yes, not sure of timeframe - I am aware of youth, governance as the some of the strategic objectives” added another middle level manager.

Furthermore, these opinions were supported by a program support staff who ascertained that *“Yes, although I am not aware of the timeline for implementation and the objectives. I think it is an annual strategic plan.*

4.2.4 Presence of Strategies at Mercy Corps

The interviewees were required to clarify whether there existed some strategies in the organization. The findings indicated that overwhelming majority of those who were interviewed agreed that Mercy Corps Kenya had some strategies in place.

“Yes. Mercy Corps has strategies that aid the organization in execution of its activities, I am aware of there being a gender strategy” (Middle manager, Mercy Corps). *“Yes. I am aware of the draft livestock strategy, youth strategy, resilience strategy, ASALs strategy (draft) and gender strategy. The ASALs strategy is Kenya specific while the rest are regional East and Southern Africa Strategies adopted to handle and support the region”* (Senior Manager, Mercy Corps).

Moreover, another senior manager had this contribution,

“Yes, in addition to the 5 year strategic plan, there are strategies for thematic areas e.g. arid and semi strategies, resilience building strategy, governance strategy, Countering Violent Extremism strategy.”

However, some of the program support and middle level staffs seemed not to be aware of presence of any strategy at Mercy Corps Kenya.

“I am not sure but I believe that there are strategies; I have not had access or information to them” (Program support staff, Mercy Corps). *“I am not aware but I believe it does like most organizations do”* (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

4.2.5 Reference to Strategies/Strategic Plan

The interviewees were asked to state whether they were referring to strategies/strategic plans in the process of activity execution. Majority of them agreed to this.

“Yes. The above-mentioned strategy often supports successful implementation of our day to day activities and realization of the objectives. In most cases the kind of programming we do have some relationship with these strategies and I would say the organization does this deliberately. For instance, incorporation of gender strategies into our program work. We must report on how many male or female were engaged/benefited” (Middle level Manager, Mercy Corps).

The other interviewee who held the position of senior manager at Mercy Corps stated that:

“Depends on the program lead to inculcate downwards for the bigger vision. However, at SMT level it is clear and for proposals being developed, they are guide by strategies and are also aligned to the strategic objectives of the strategic plan.”

On the contrary some interviewees had different views, for instance, a program support staff stated that

“I do not do so directly but I believe that as part of a program team member the execution of our activities is in reference to the existing strategies.” The middle level manager at Mercy Corps argued that *“I offer a supportive role to programs in my role and I do not directly refer to the organization strategies but I believe by extension and support the program staff do refer to the strategies while implementing activities which I indirectly support.”*

4.2.6 Process of Formulating Programmatic/Departmental Plans

On another interview question whose aim was to understand the process undertaken in formulation of programmatic/departmental plans, it was discovered that most of the departments employ use of consultations, define specific objectives, generation of work plans through a collaborative process, and organization road map together with the vision.

“In my specific department which is programs, we normally generate annual work plans from the approved proposal. Thereafter we break down into monthly plans and if possible weekly plans. Generally, the program and support teams meet to come up with a draft plan which is then shared with the donor for approval. Depending on the program timeframe, we evaluate previous work plan vs achieved targets and thus guiding the team on the plans for the coming year. In most cases, we do quarterly reviews of our programming to factor in any changes that might have occurred during implementation” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps). *“As part of department, my role includes budgeting for activities, budget monitoring and reporting. I use a collaborative process, where program team mates prepare their budgets and I coordinate the budgeting process. Also, program team mates provide me with variance explanations for reporting purpose,* (Support staff, Mercy Corps).

Some were found to formulate their departmental plans based on organization’s vision and strategic plan.

“We look at the Mercy Corps road map/ vision for change, its guiding principles in relation to the stipulated goals then identify our area of interest. It is through this that we design concept notes and proposal for funding.

Once funded, the team develops operation plan which could be annually then further broken down to quarterly, monthly and weekly for ease of activity implementation” (Program support, Mercy Corps).

Another middle level manager who was interviewed added that:

“I try to ensure that everything done in the department is guided by the overall blue print of the organization which is in support of programs so as to be successful in supporting. I ensure that I read and understand program proposals and then formulate plans for the department around that in support of programs.”

4.2.7 Relationship of Programmatic /Departmental Plans to Strategic Plan

In relating the programmatic/departmental plans with the organization’s strategic plan, the findings show that majority were relying on organization strategic plan guidelines and program contribution to objectives of organization.

“Proposals developed are in line with the strategic objectives, meaning programs deliverables address strategic objectives. The plans are aligned annually at senior management meetings and during the review of strategic annual plans whereby we look at how each of the program deliverables fit to the strategic objectives. Look at the measurable indicators within the strategic objectives to see which ones are being addressed. Even annual country specific report addresses

how we are achieving strategic objectives across all programs” (Senior Manager, Mercy Corps). In support to this, a middle manager highlighted that “As mentioned earlier, there is a big co-relation of our programming with Mercy Corps strategic plan. Ideally, the organization strategic plan guides the organization on what programs to position herself for- during bidding for proposals. Mercy Corps is best known for humanitarian work and more so peace building and conflict management.”

Some of the interviewees indicated that they related programmatic plans with that of organization through regular checks, monitoring and evaluation, through implementation partners as well as during program design.

“Our Monitoring and Evaluation team helps programs articulate our impact, utilizing substantive and data-driven evidence to report on progress against program objectives. Through our governance and gender work, policy documents have been developed and we trust that if these policies are implemented will strengthened good governance practices at the county level. Through our implementing partners we have successfully implemented activities in the ASAL areas” (Support staff, Mercy Corps).

4.2.8 Rating Strategic Plan of the Organization

The interviewees who participated in the interview were required to rate their understanding of Mercy Corps strategic plan. The findings revealed that about 41.7% of the interviewees rated their understanding as good.

“Good. I am aware of the strategic objectives but not the strategic plan in full” (Middle level support staff, Mercy Corps).

Those who rated it as poor and very good had balanced opinion with each scoring 25% respectively.

“Very Good - Being in the senior management team, it has really helped me to understand what Mercy Corps aims at and more so its strategic road map” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps). *“Very Good - because it is a leaving document, flexible to align to changing contexts – it was able to take in new and emerging programs and is – broad enough to take in more and multiple ideas and yet remain focused enough to allow its implementation”* (Senior manager, Mercy Corps).

On contrary, a support manager rated the strategic plan as poor

“Poor – I have not had an opportunity to see the document.”

While those who rated their level of understanding as excellent, had a representation of 8.3 percent.

“Excellent - have read all annual plans and reports and these are linked to the strategic plan” (Top manager, Mercy Corps).

4.2.9 Important of Strategies to organization

Furthermore, the interviewees who participated in the interview of this research were required to give their views on whether they think strategies were important to organization. The findings show that all of them acknowledged that these strategies are essential to organization.

“Yes. And I want to believe that when an organization is formulating a strategy, then it’s because it is geared towards meeting certain objectives. Mercy Corps strategies, I believe are the best and that is why during every annual review of these strategies, staff would always recommend to retain most if not all them because it basically narrates who we are and what we stand for in relation to resolving issues at the community level” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

“Yes, because they give strategic direction and helps MC focus on felt needs and measure achievement of what had been planned to be achieved across all programs especially in the annual report tied to the strategic plan objectives.”

Nevertheless, another interviewee in middle level management stated that *“Yes. But I don’t feel that there is effort to push the strategy and if there are any efforts then they have not been significant.”* (Senior manager, Mercy Corps)

4.2.10 Frequency Review of Organization Strategies

On whether the employees of Mercy Corps were reviewing their departmental strategies, an estimate of 83.3 percent of the interviewees stated that their respective departments were reviewing their strategies while 16.7 percent felt otherwise. However, the interviewees were found to have different opinions on the frequency at which these strategies are reviewed as some said quarterly, others said annually, after five years and weekly.

“Yes, we do review our strategies, I think it is on a quarterly basis” (Program support staff, Mercy Corps). *“Yes. Within my department, we do it annually, and in some instances when there are perceived changes within the program that might affect our strategies”* (Middle manager, Mercy Corps).

A middle manager made it clear that they were doing it on weekly basis.

“Yes. At the programmatic level there is bi-weekly review of action plans and the strategy check on a quarterly basis.” On the opposite, some were found not to know whether the strategies are reviewed or not. *“No, but it is done by the senior management team, I am not sure how often”* (Program support, Mercy Corps).

4.2.11 Formulators of Strategies in Organization

The study further sought to establish the strategy formulators at Mercy Corps Kenya. The findings revealed that strategies at this organization were found to be formulated majorly by directors, heads of departments and senior management team.

“This basically depends with the kind of strategies being formulated. If its departmental /programmatic related then the heads of those departments would ideally spearhead. But if its country specific strategies, then the Senior Management Team (SMT) takes the lead with the input from field staff” (Middle level Manager, Mercy Corps).

“I think it is the Country Director, Program Directors and the Senior Management team as well as departmental heads with support from HQ and Technical Support Unit.” One of the senior managers added that *“Senior management team formulates strategies sometimes with support from the HQ Technical Support Unit or an external consultant”* (Middle level Manager, Mercy Corps).

4.2.12 Senior Management Team Leading in Strategy Implementation

On the question of whether senior management team of Mercy Corps Kenya provide leadership that enable effective strategy implementation, majority of the interviewees agreed to it.

“Yes. The SMT is normally in the forefront because it is constituted by the departmental/program leads. Furthermore, if they are part and parcel of the process, then none would want such a thing to flop. For successful implementation of these, the team must ensure that the strategy is effectively implemented” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

“Yes, to monitor progress and achievement of stated goals and strategic objectives, review indicators if they are relevant, they call and plan for annual review of the strategic plan and ensure all programs developed are aligned to the country’s strategic plan” (Senior manager, Mercy Corps).

On other hand, some interviewees were found not to be sure.

“I am not sure because I have not seen them actively communicate matters strategy or cascading information down or having it expressly communicated. I would expect the SMT to come out strongly in communicating strategy matters and the objectives so as to enable all staff have knowledge thus be motivated to support in strategy implementation. The senior management needs to be in the forefront providing leadership to enable effective strategy implementation.”
(Middle level support staff, Mercy Corps).

In addition, another interviewee a top manager at Mercy Corps had this to say
“Probably not, sometimes but not always because focus at the Senior Management meetings is sometimes on emerging issues, problems that need to be fixed and upcoming matters.”

4.2.13 Departmental Functional Strategies

On whether each department at Mercy Corps Kenya had functional strategies, more than a half of the interviewees acknowledged that they were functional while about a quarter of them tend to disagree.

“I believe they all have considering existing integration of departmental roles and collaboration” (Program support, Mercy Corps).

In support to this a senior manager at Mercy Corps Kenya restated that:

“Yes, these are all housed in the country annual plan which is derived from the strategic plan. On reverse, those who did not agreed to this question had the following to say, “I don’t think so. However, we have annual work plans as part of the overall MC strategy and all departmental work plans are incorporated in the country annual work plans aligned to the Mercy Corps 5-year strategic plan. The strategies are more programmatic and other departmental and they offer supportive functions to support program” (Senior Manager, Mercy Corps). *“No, I would refer to them as annual work plans are drawn from the annual work plan linked to the overall strategic plan”* (Top manager, Mercy Corps).

4.2.14 Practices Employed in Implementing Action Plans

The interview guide had a question to establish the practices being employed by organization to implement actions plans in the department. It was observed that Mercy Corps Kenya employ the following practices in implementing action plans: quarterly senior management team review meetings, time management, effective communication and sharing of information, proper utilisation of resources, frequent check ins/monitoring, development of guidelines, teams brainstorming on action plans, use of uniform strategies, departmental/ program action plans as well as through projects.

“There are several practices that different departments would refer to when executing laid up plans: time management- ensuring that departments have executed the action plans within a given time frame, effective communication and sharing of information, availing of resources to support the plans, and frequent check ins/monitoring of the proposed action plans” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

“They develop hand book to guide and act as reference point to the team within a given department, holding workshops/meeting/training with a particular department so as to help the team understand the task the overall goal of the project and how each team member contributes to its success, and designing job descriptions for each individual in relation to the objectives the program is envisaged to achieve within a given timeframe” (Program support staff, Mercy Corps).

Nevertheless, some employees at Mercy Corps Kenya were not aware of the practices employed in implementation of action plan.

“I am not sure but I suppose that after finalization action plans development, a meeting is convened at field office level to brief team members of contents of the plan and objectives.

Prioritizing changes is administered depending on how easy it is to adopt them. Templates are edited where necessary and re-shared with team members allowing room to progressively adjust to new activities in support of the action plans” (Program Support staff, Mercy Corps). Likewise, a middle level manager asserted that *“I am not aware but I believe that once action plans have been established at the SMT level it is the responsibility of head of programs and departments to communicate them to the larger team members and this should be linked to their performance so as to measure if the action plan objectives have been achieved. Action plans should be communicated to everyone so that it is free open information to everyone since it is one organisation.”*

4.2.15 Planning for Implementation of Strategy

Another interview question presented in the guide required the interviewees to respond to aspect of whether their respective organization had plans for strategy implementation. From the findings provided, overwhelming majority of the interviewees acknowledged that there exist some plans in their respective departments that help in strategy implementation.

“Definitely yes, during annual work planning sessions. Otherwise it beats logic to formulate a strategy that you know you wouldn’t implement. To the best of my knowledge, Mercy Corps has always implemented strategies it has generated unless if and when faced with unforeseen challenges” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

In addition to this statement, a senior manager supported it by saying that

“Yes, for example during the start-up of a new program after being awarded funding and during program monitoring and review sessions of programs.” “Yes, through annual review and planning meetings. Strategy implementation is also done through development of new programs” (Top Manager, Mercy Corps).

4.2.16 Rating the Organization’s Current Strategic Plan

The interviewees were asked to rate the employees understanding of their organization’s strategic plan. From the observation of the findings given, an estimate of 33.3 percent of the employees interviewed rate the current strategic plan as poor, a similar percentage of the interviewees rated it as good, 8.3 percent said that the current strategic plan was on average rating, while approximately 25 percent were had not decided. Some of those who rated it as poor had this to say:

“Poor because SMT do everything. The lower staff at the field level should also be involved. Middle and lower level not involved. The SMT is assumed to be representative of the larger team. Not best practice. It should be bottom up – begin at the office level and have it cascaded to the top through SMT.

Sometimes consultants involve the team members at the field as they gather information e.g. For ASALs strategy development was an inclusive process” (Senior manager, Mercy Corps). Another middle manager’s view was as follows: “Poor because there is no deliberate effort in driving its understanding for the leadership to all staff because it is not communicated. Its communication needs to be driven by the top management or they should offer guidance on where the information can be obtained.”

“I rate it as average. In most cases, the senior management team is involved in the formulation and review of the strategic plan and so I believe at their level they are well conversant with the strategic plan. However, the junior staff may not comprehend the plan and this could be attributed to their level of involvement when generating this plan. My recommendation would be senior management team generates a draft that is shared with all the staff for input. There is the notion that program departments within the organization are better placed when it comes the strategic plan compared to the support departments and hence less interest by the latter” (Middle manager, Mercy Corps).

However, some rated the current strategy as good, where a program support staff quoted that

“I rate it 6/10 considering that senior management have knowledge of it but awareness of it diminishes as you go down management levels.” “I think the understanding of current strategic plan by employee can be rated as good particularly for some program staff and the senior management team.”

4.2.17 Achievements Resulted from Strategic Planning

Furthermore, the research inquired to know if there were achievements realized as a result of strategic planning. The findings indicated that Mercy Corps Kenya had made some achievement resulting from strategic planning. These comprised of the following: effective utilization of resources, achievement of goals, effective planning, new programs, increased funding, identification of strategic areas, strategic planning, and buy-in from team members.

“From a programmatic perspective – we have hit targets we set out because of thinking of strategic planning as a continuous dynamic process, open revision has been happened as well as being thoughtful of strategy and being open to learning and adaptive management have been achievements. And hopefully in the future it will contribute to how MC operates as a whole” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

“New programs have benefited from existing strategies during their development. Strategic objectives guide whether or not to respond to call/requests for proposals because they are the drivers of strategy and give information to proposal development” (Senior manager, Mercy Corps).

“Effective planning, Successful implementation of activities hence achievements of the set goals. Better understanding of the organization in terms of what it does, how and who is responsible. Effective mobilization, allocation and utilization of available resources, and Prioritization of plans” (Middle managers, Mercy Corps).

“Buy-in from team members for what the organization is trying to achieve so as to ensure that we are driving at the same objective. Another achievement is that there is freedom/an avenue for matters to be debated on giving people a voice thus fosters team building” (Top manager, Mercy Corps).

4.2.18 Targets put in Place to Measure the Level of Strategy Achievement

On the aspect of the targets put in place to measure level of strategy achievement, Mercy Corps Kenya was found to have put in place some targets to enable them measure the level of strategic achievement and some these were found to base on the following: program scale and impact, systems and structures to measure and support success, leadership and culture, resources and business model, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

“Each strategy has its targets. For example, for the gender strategy, each program must strive to ensure that the Sex Age Disaggregated Data (SADD) is collected and documented. We have an annual audit for this and therefore, there are targets that eventually showcase how many people were reached in terms of their ages and gender” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

“We have set out some strategic priorities to be realized within the five year strategic period. We also develop timelines and benchmarks to measure the success and impact of our fundraising in line with our projected income levels and annual cash-flows, talent acquisition, retention and staff performance” (Top level manager, Mercy Corps).

“Targets are set for monitoring given that we have indicators that are being tracked and this is done more at the programmatic level than at the country level and then there is aggregation of all the data based on targets. It would be good if the tracking can be done more systematically” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

On contrary, a few interviewees were found not to be aware of any targets put in place to measure level of strategy achievement. For instance, an middle level respondent said that

“Not aware but at the program level, we have customized strategy to interventions with specific targets to the strategies and articulating the level of effort and resourcing required as well as flexibility to revisit strategies.”

4.2.19 Adequate Information on the Role of Strategy Implementation

The interview guide had a question inquiring on whether the staff had adequate information on their roles towards strategy implementation. The qualitative findings disclosed that majority of the interviewees were not aware.

“I would say not all the staff have adequate information. While everyone in the organization has been provided with an equal opportunity, this still is highly depended on the level in which one is serving at” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps). *“No – may be some have information at the senior management team level but beyond that level there is inadequate information”* (Middle level support).

On other hand, less than a half of the interviewees admitted that the employees of Mercy Corps Kenya had adequate on their role towards strategy implementation. Some of the viewpoints were given by a senior manager who asserted that:

“At the senior management team level Yes. Middle level work towards achieving program objectives automatically and they are conversant with the program objectives but may not be aware of the link to the strategic objectives because they are already aligned. Lower level may only know program objectives. It is the work of the senior management team to ensure all programs are aware their role in strategy implementation thus making work easier because all the organizational levels will help achieve the strategic through the program objectives.” In support to this, a program support staff had the following views: *“Yes at the senior management level and cascaded by program heads to their teams in support of program activities.”*

4.2.20 Employees Getting Technical Skills for Implementation of New Strategies

On whether the employees at Mercy Corps Kenya were given technical skills needed for the implementation of new strategies, interviewees had equally divided opinion on this question where a half agreed to it and the other half were not sure. The trainings were found to be done through staff being enlightened on new practices, guidelines and templates of organization, various workshops/training programs, staff(s) appraisal as well as through site visits.

“Yes. Employees are given technical knowledge and skills whenever there are new strategies for implementation. However, priority is given to the lead persons of programs. Normally, imparting new skills would be done through resource sharing, mentorship as well as coaching internally” (Middle level, Mercy Corps).

“Yes I believe that staff are enlightened on new practices, guidelines and templates that support strategy and this information is provided to ensure consistency within all departments and program levels” (Program support, Mercy Corps).

Those who thought otherwise on the training skills of employees had this to say:

“There is no training in strategic implementation but rather guided hands on practical experience implementing strategy” (Senior manager, Mercy Corps).

“NO never taken steps through capacity building other than circulating on the strategic plan in the past.” Similarly, a middle manager disagreed by saying *“Not aware and at program level it is not intentional”* (Senior manager, Mercy Corps).

4.2.21 Challenges Encountered During Strategy Implementation

The research sought to determine if there were challenges encountered in process of strategy implementation. From the responses given, various challenges were highlighted as follows: unpredictable external environment, lack of follow-ups, poor communication, lack of adequate funding, inadequate resources, lack of ownership of the strategy, and eventually non-involvement in strategy implementation.

“Unpredictable external environment, unavailability of skills required, donor procedures and regulations, wear and tear of assets and government regulations are part of the many challenges that have been faced during implementation”
(Program support staff, Mercy Corps).

“Communication break-down, external factors like the government regulations and donor requirements, lack of adequate resources, poor planning and focus, lack of commitment from team members, lack of commitment from key stakeholders, unclear roles and responsibilities, and lack of leadership from the senior management team” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

“Getting adequate resources to exhaustively implement strategies, priorities shifting in funding not long-term enough to support development to implement completely, the GOK sometimes extremely hostile to NGOs e.g. expats work permits processing that would be key personnel to help meet objectives and providing technical support donors thus the organization get denied funding”
(Senior managers, Mercy Corps).

Some employees were found not to be involved in the strategy implementation and here are some of their views:

“I have not been involved in direct strategy implementation but I believe the following could be challenges: lack of adequate funding, inadequate understanding of the strategic plan, and lack of widespread consultation from staff and support from staff” (Program support staff, Mercy Corps). *“I am not aware. There is need for more involvement and deliberate communication of strategy thus creating awareness”* (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

4.2.22 Countering Challenges

There was question on how the Mercy Corps had responded to above challenges, the study discovered that these challenges were found to be counter through the following ways as per the responses: debrief meetings with all parties, coming up with interventions to plan, striving to have a balance, involvement of the senior managers in all the processes, attempts to improve relationship with government and donors, annual country planning meetings and program review, as well as mitigating measures to manage risks.

“Involving the senior managers in all the processes i.e. from strategy design & formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Hiring qualified staff for appropriate positions. Passion for a given cause has also been a factor when selecting the right candidates for jobs. Proper measurement, follow up and accountability mechanism has been put in place. The strategy is reviewed continuously with specific dates set for meetings to undertake the process. This is done by the senior management but the resolution is communicated to the entire team by their supervisors. Supporting the staff in appropriate trainings for

effective implementation of the strategy. Ensuring that the strategy formulated is realistic and within the organization's ability to execute it. Holding respective managers accountable in ensuring that given roles and responsibilities are executed as expected within a given period of time. Participation approach is core to Mercy Corps execution of its strategy. All partners have been involved in the strategy formulation and implementation. Constructive feedback to all stakeholders has always been key in all Mercy Corps' programs” (Program support staff, Mercy Corps).

The above sentiments were echoed by another senior manager employee at Mercy Corps who asserted that:

“We have tried to improve relationship with government and donors, by informing them about what we are doing as an agency, diversify our portfolio, working with partnerships e.g. with foundations to augment efforts and build relationships with the NGO Board and Ministry of Interior.”

To add on that a middle level manager had the following responses

“Well, the organization has always strived to have a balance of ensuring that the ultimate goal is achieved without jeopardizing programming work. At SMT with representation of heads of departments and program leads was constituted and frequent SMT meetings are being held hence keeping the team on track. At the initial stages, a budget is usually set aside for any anticipated strategies that would require resources.”

4.2.23 Annual Work Plan for Reference

The other issue was to test whether Mercy Corps had annual work plan from which the employees referred to when planning to execute programme activities. The responses revealed that majority of the interviewees acknowledged that there existed an annual work plan at Mercy Corps while a few were not aware.

“Yes. Annual work plans MUST be generated by the program staff with an approval from the donor prior to implementation.

This normally guides the implementing team on what is expected of them, when, how and what resources might be required. It basically, supports the team to plan adequately. It is from the annual plans that the team derives the Quarterly/Monthly/weekly plans for effective and efficient implementation of activities” (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps). *“I am aware that there exists an annual work plan but I have` not interacted with it. It may have been shared/communicated passively in meetings but I have not seen it”* (Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

4.2.24 Support of Employee Skills on Programme Implementation

On different aspect of description of support given on employees’ skills towards successful strategy implementation as well as other stakeholders, some interviewees were satisfied with the skills available, some were very supportive, others said they were good, a number of them felt it was adequate, on other hand some said it was not very good and other were not sure. Some of the descriptions narrated by interviewees are as indicated below:

“It begins at the recruitment stage of any program team. If the right person with the relevant skills is brought on board, then definitely, the process of program implementations will be good. During program implementation, Mercy Corps usually takes the advantage to utilize the expertise in the midst hence saving on cost. In order to fully utilize their potential in certain fields, Mercy Corps has always provided an opportunity for staff and encourages them to build their capacity in those areas.

Additionally, stakeholders form a key component in any programming and hence they are always considered as a priority and no project usually kicks off without the stakeholder involvement. For many reasons including program/project sustainability and community acceptance of the project being implemented”
(Middle level manager, Mercy Corps).

“The skills are adequate because they enable program staff help the program meet their objectives through as part of program implementation. They (Stakeholders) recognize what we do as an organization and work towards providing an enabling environment to be able to address the issues and initiatives being driven by program which in turn successful program implementation”
(Program support staff, Mercy Corps). This was also in line with a Mercy Corps Kenya support staff who explained that *“The right people with the required knowledge and skills have been employed to implement respective programs. The teams are knowledgeable of their specific tasks which have contributed greatly to the successful implementation of the programs. Likewise, good will from external*

actors/ partners has been an asset to the organization owing to their active participation in all the stages during program implementation.” One of the top manager elaborated that “The program staff are an integral part of the successful strategy implementation since they are the main implementers of program activities. The stakeholders i.e. partners and the community are also instrumental since their buy in and support and engagement in process during program implementation is paramount.”

4.2.25 Opinion on Organization’s Structure on Strategy Implementation Process

Interviewees were further required to give their thoughts about the structure of Mercy Corps Kenya in support to strategy implementation process. Some of the responses given indicated that strategy should be all encompassing, can be improved to ensure inclusivity, it is good, structure is equal and also adequate.

“The Mercy Corps Kenya structure in my opinion still has room for improvement. If teams were organized into thematic areas (Finance, Admin, Programs, Operations etc.) with clear leadership and reporting structures...I think it would enhance strategic delivery. (For example, we do not have a Director of Programs to guide program development and delivery...which I think is a crucial component in Strategic implementation)” (Senior manager, Mercy Corps).

“I think the current MC Kenya structure is equal to the task of implementing the current strategy. Staffs with the required knowledge and skills have been hired to assume given roles and responsibilities. However, I would suggest that MC ought to strengthen its communication to handle communications internally and with

external partners perhaps by having a strong communication department who will be able to ensure that MC Kenya's impact is felt and well communicated. Impact stories can be well captured and can contribute to goal number 6 (resources and business models) where the stories can aid in fundraising” added a program support staff.

Similar to the responses give above another program support staff said that:

“Strategy should be all encompassing involving all in the sense that it contributes to bottom-up approach so that team implementing can have that sense of ownership. Proper technology should be put in place with specific team members tasked with managing these resources for tracking and progress and identifying and sharing learning throughout the course of implementation.”

4.3. Discussion of the Findings

The research findings showed that there were factors affecting strategy implementation which included: staff engagement/involvement, technological factors, external environment, appropriate strategic decisions, availability of resources, organizational structure as well as inclusivity. This revelation conforms to Mankins and Steele (2005) study which found out that there exist some strategic factors that contribute to performance of organization. They noted some as not having the required resources in a timely manner leading to 7.5 percent of the value being eroded while poor communication contributes to loss of 5.2 percent. Poor planning and lack of accountability leads to 4.5 percent and 4.1 percent loss respectively. Proper planning and implementation of strategy was found to increase performance by over 60%.

The findings indicated that overwhelming majority of those who were interviewed agreed that Mercy Corps Kenya had some strategies in place. In understanding the process undertaken in formulation of programmatic/departmental plans, it was discovered that most of the departments employ use of consultations, definition of specific objectives, generation of work plan, collaborative process, and organization road map. Noble (1999b) pointed out that an accurate strategy-structure alignment is a necessary precursor to the successful implementation of strategies in an organization and reorganization of external environment require adjustments to the organizational structure.

The strategies at Mercy Corps Kenya were found to be formulated majorly by directors, heads of departments and senior management team. Alexander (1985) noted that obtaining employee commitment and participation from the onset can promote successful strategy implementation and a shared understanding of an organization's strategic goals is critical importance to effective implementation of strategy. The findings indicated that overwhelming majority of those who were interviewed agreed that Mercy Corps Kenya had some strategies in place.

In understanding the process undertaken in formulation of programmatic/departmental plans, it was discovered that most of the departments employ use of consultations, definition of specific objectives, generation of work plan, collaborative process, and organization road map together with vision. Mbom (2012) found that that there is a multifaceted responsibility on INGOs to provide accountability to their partners, beneficiaries, donors and governments. In most cases, the NGOs tend to be more accountable to donors than to beneficiaries because they want to ensure they can secure the already scarce resources provided by these donors.

This leads to a situation where the INGOs may end up neglecting their overarching goal of the implementation of their programs based on the strategies they have formulated. This could thus comprise organizational performance. In regard to the theoretical foundations that anchored the study, based on the findings the researcher agreed to some degree with proposition of the theories.

In reference to the resource dependence theory, findings of the study confirmed that indeed organizations depend on the external environment for resources including finances through donors thus requiring close collaboration and mutual agreement for the agreements to be successful. In reference to the strategic fit theory, the findings confirmed that indeed organizations not only have to adapt to a dynamic external environment for strategy to be successful thus confirming the need for strategic fit between the external and internal organizational environment. Finally, in regard to open system theory, findings confirmed that the relationship between the organization is an active exchange with the environment thereby supporting the existence of mutual relationships existing with the external environment.

4.4. Summary

The chapter has highlighted various notable findings. It revealed factors affecting strategy implementation. A strategic plan exists at Mercy Corps Kenya, however, some of the employees were not aware of such kind of a plan being in place. Strategy implementation was found to be done annually through the annual working planning process as part of the five-year implementation cycle. Mercy Corps Kenya has some strategies in place and they are formulated majorly by directors, heads of departments and senior management team.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the summary of the study findings, conclusions made with focus on the responses given in the preceding chapter of the study. Appropriate recommendations have been made to policy makers and stakeholders in line to international humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations. In addition, the chapter gives suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The summary of the research findings were deduced based on the objective of the study which determined the factors influencing strategy implementation and performance of international humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations in Kenya. Therefore, based on the responses given, the study summarized the findings as follows: the qualitative data obtained from the responses of the interviews conducted revealed major factors affecting strategy implementation as being staff engagement/involvement, technological factors, external environment, appropriate strategic decisions, availability of resources, organizational structure as well as inclusivity. It was revealed that team members participated in strategy implementation through contribution to management practices, attendance of senior management team meetings, presenting new ideas, creating work plans, problems and opportunities identification as well as design of new programs.

Majority of the interviewees acknowledged that strategic plan existed at Mercy Corps Kenya, though some of them were not aware of such kind of a plan being in place. It was observed that the interviewees had divergent opinion on the duration taken to implement the strategic plan of this organization. Some stated that the implementation is done annually, some said after three years, while others felt that implementation of strategic plan was based on a five-year phase.

The findings indicated that overwhelming majority of those who were interviewed agreed that Mercy Corps Kenya had some strategies in place. In understanding the process undertaken in formulation of programmatic/departmental plans, it was discovered that most of the departments employ use of consultations, definition of specific objectives, generation of work plan, collaborative process, and organization road map together with vision. The strategies at Mercy Corps Kenya were found to be formulated majorly by directors, heads of departments and senior management team.

On whether each department at Mercy Corps Kenya had functional strategies, more than a half of the interviewees acknowledged that they were functional while about a quarter of them tend to disagree. It was observed that Mercy Corps Kenya employ the following practices in implementing action plans: quarterly senior management team review meetings, time management, effective communication and sharing of information, proper utilisation of resources, frequent check ins/monitoring, development of guidelines, teams brainstorming on action plans, use of uniform strategies, departmental/ program action plans as well as through projects.

The findings provided that an overwhelming majority of the interviewees acknowledged that there exist some plans in their respective departments that help in strategy implementation. Various achievements were realized due to strategic planning at Mercy Corps Kenya and these included: effective utilization of resources, achievement of goals, effective planning, award of new programs by donors, increased funding, identification of strategic areas, strategic planning, and buy-in from team members. Mercy Corps Kenya was found to have put in place some targets to enable them measure the level of strategic achievement and some these were found to be program scale and impact, systems and structures to measure and support success, leadership and culture, resources and business model, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

On whether the employees at Mercy Corps Kenya were given technical skills needed for the implementation of new strategies, interviewees had equally divided opinion. On this question a half agreed to it and the other half were not sure. The trainings were found to be done through staff being enlightened on new practices, guidelines and templates of organization, various workshops/training programs, and staff appraisal as well as through site visits.

Various challenges were highlighted in the process of strategy implementation namely, unpredictable external environment, lack of follow-ups, poor communication, lack of adequate funding, inadequate resources, lack of ownership of the strategy, and eventually non-involvement in strategy implementation. There were propositions put out by the interviewees to counter these challenges.

For instance, debrief meetings with all parties, coming up with all-inclusive interventions to plan, striving to have a balance in the strategy implementation process, involvement of additional staff other than the senior managers in all the processes. It also entailed continuous efforts to improve relationship with government and donors, annual country planning meetings and program review, as well as mitigating measures to manage risks. In regards to the different aspects of the description of support given to employees' skills towards successful strategy implementation as well as other stakeholders were provided. Some interviewees were satisfied with the skills available, some were very supportive, others said they were good, a number of them felt it was adequate, on other hand some said it was not very good and other were not sure.

5.3 Conclusion

On the basis of the study findings, it can be concluded that the main factors found to affect implementation of strategy at Mercy Corps Kenya comprised of staff engagement/involvement, the external environment, appropriate strategic decisions, availability of resources, organizational structure as well as inclusivity. The study further revealed that Mercy Corps Kenya had strategic plans in place and that there existed some viable strategies at the organization which were found to be a point of reference in their daily routines. The strategies at Mercy Corps Kenya are formulated mostly by senior management team with minimum inclusion of support staff.

Strategy implementation is a common practice at Mercy Corps Kenya. This is normally done at programmatic/departmental level. Due to strategic planning, the organization had realized notable achievements. Mercy Corps Kenya had put in more efforts to ensure that a good number of employees are informed about their existing strategies.

This is done through various trainings and information sharing sessions of lessons learned conducted at the programmatic level of organization. The study further concludes that there are hindrances to strategy implementation process at the Mercy Corps Kenya. However, this organization has put in place various ways to mitigate these challenges. This is a good course of action since it enables them minimize the risks of not achieving the organizations objectives and goals. Where similar strategies are being implemented in an organization that has the elements of strategy implementation challenges will seemingly arise and therefore need to plan ahead on the appropriate ways to counter them.

5.4 Recommendations

The study came up with the following recommendations in order for international humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations to perform better. There is need to cultivate the elements related to proper strategy implementation in order to realize success in their undertakings. Inclusivity of employees from the onset of strategy planning to the implementation stage is very key and should be considered. This can ensure success in implementation effectiveness and hence enhance easy coordination through effective communication of all the resources that help retain employees in the organization within a strategic period of time.

In addition, the senior management need to be cognizant of when particular strategies initiated are not working well towards achieving the organization goals. This can be done by managers at all levels using unbiased, prompt, and clear information. This information can be obtained from the employees being managed – hence take remedial action and resolve problems that may exist.

In conclusion, to help the international humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations in Kenya to mitigate or minimise challenges of strategy implementation, these strategies need to be clear, simple, easy and with clear purpose; they need to be consistent and adaptive; the organization should allocate more resources towards implementation; employ qualified staff based on merit to drive and support strategy implementation. These organisations should also provide more accessible avenues of involvement employees at all levels of the organisation; clearly define organization goals and scope; ensure that strategic objectives should be precise and embrace inclusivity and flexibility during communication of the strategies to be implemented.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study examined the factors influencing strategy implementation and performance of international humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations in Kenya, a case in point being Mercy Corps. Therefore, the need arises for further research in which the scope should be larger than just on organization and should have more a larger sample size. This should be across organizations which can be used to further generalize and justification of the results.

There is need for another research to be conducted to determine the factors affecting the whole strategic process that include planning, implementation. It should also include monitoring and evaluation to aid in tracking progress. This will help in giving more insights to performance of related firms.

A final suggestion would be for a study to be conducted in a multinational corporation. This is for the purpose of comparison so as to establish the factors that influence strategy implementation and performance in that sector as opposed to agencies in the development sector that are not for profit. It will also provide insight on whether there is any correlation across these two diverse and multifaceted sectors.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter JEAN AWUOR OMANYA

Registration No. D.S.I/6,7708/2013

is a bona fide continuing student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate your assistance to enable him/her collect data in your organization.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you.

PATRICK NYABUTO
SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



Appendix II: Interview Guide

1. What factors do you think influence the implementation of strategy and organizational performance?
2. How do you participate in strategy formulation?
3. Does Mercy Corps Kenya have a strategic plan? (Yes or No) If yes, what is the timeframe of the strategic plan implementation and the overarching strategic objectives?
4. Does Mercy Corps have strategies?
5. Do you refer to the strategies/strategic plan when executing your activities?
6. What process do you undertake in formulating your programmatic/departmental plans?
7. How do your programmatic/departmental plans relate/tie in with the Mercy Corps strategic plan?
8. How would you rate your level of understanding of the Mercy Corps Strategic plan? (Poor, Good, Very Good, Excellent)
9. Do you think that these strategies are important to your organization?
10. Do you review your strategies? If yes, how often?
11. Who formulates strategies in your organization?
12. Is the senior management team of the organization in the forefront in providing leadership to enable effective strategy implementation?
13. Does each department in your organization have functional strategies?
14. What practices does the organization employ in implementing the action plans if the various departments within the organization?

15. After the formulation of strategies, does your organization plan for strategy implementation?
16. How would you rate the level of understanding of the organization's current strategic plan by the employees at various levels of the organization?
17. What are the achievements that have resulted from strategic planning?
18. What targets have been put in place to measure the level of achievement of strategies in your organization?
19. Does the staff have adequate information on their role towards strategy implementation?
20. Are Mercy Corps Kenya staff given technical skills needed for the implementation of new strategies? How is this done to ensure congruence?
21. What are the challenges faced during strategy implementation?
22. How has the organization responded to these challenges?
23. Do you have an annual work plan for your program that you always refer to when planning to execute programme activities?
24. How would you describe the support of the program staff in terms of their skills towards enabling successful programme implementation? What about other stakeholders? (communities, government, donors etc.)
25. What are your thoughts about the current Mercy Corps Kenya's structure in terms of its support of the strategy implementation process?
26. What suggestion(s) would you give that will help International Humanitarian and Development NGOs avoid or minimize strategy implementation challenges?