

**CHALLENGES FACING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
DISCOVERY CHANNEL GLOBAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP  
(DCGEP) INITIATIVE IN KENYA**

**BY  
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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for examination to any other University or College for the award of degree, diploma or certificate.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



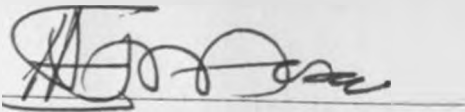
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And Almighty God through whom all things are possible.

## DEDICATION

... for all the people the Lord has placed in my life to bless  
me, love me, inspire me, encourage me, and support me ...

## ABSTRACT

It is always more difficult to do something (implement it) than to say you are going to do it (formulate it)! It therefore stands to reason that excellently formulated strategies will fail if they are not properly implemented (Merchant, 2011). The challenge therefore is to create a series of tight “fits” between strategy and the organisations competencies, capabilities and structure; between strategy and resource allocation; between strategy and policy; between strategy and internal support systems; between strategy and reward structures; between strategy and corporate culture, etcetera (Thompson and Strickland, 1998).

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategy implementation processes at Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership (DCGEP). The study further examined the challenges the organization faced and how they responded to the challenges during the implementation stage. At Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership (DCGEP) the organizational strategies are formulated at the head office in Washington, D.C. and the locally constituted country office is then tasked with the responsibility of implementing the strategy. The “disconnect” between the strategy formulation process and strategy implementation process has the potential to lead to numerous implementation challenges for the organization. The research study objectives were to determine how strategy implementation is handled at DCGEP, the challenges faced and the how these challenges were addressed.

The research design used was the case study method. Case studies involve collecting empirical data, generally from one or a small number of cases. Using the interview

method, the researcher deeply explored the interviewees' points of view, feelings and perspectives. The qualitative data collected was analyzed objectively, systematically in order to break down, identify, and analyze the presence or relations of words, word sense, characters, sentences, concepts or common themes.

The research results established that though DCGEP has a well formulated strategic plan, the organization experienced a few challenges in the implementation process. The researcher established the challenges as predominantly; resistance/inertia at the implementation brought about by the misalignment of the culture and the systems in place to the strategy implementation process; the lack of ownership of the strategy by some employees and finally the morale and motivation of some employees as pertains to their reward and incentive structures as well as their job security.

The research results show that the main mitigation strategies are inclusive participatory management practices, the facilitation and support approach and the education and communication approach as well as control measures were instigated to check the challenges wherever possible.

For completeness and better understanding of the implications of the research findings, it is imperative that the limitations be highlighted. The study was confined to challenges facing strategy implementation at DCGEP, other aspects of the strategic management process such as strategy formulation, monitoring and evaluation were completely ignored. Due to limited resources such as time, the researcher collected data only from the Kenyan implementation team as opposed to all members of DCGEP or its partners.

The research recommendations for further study are research can be undertaken to encompass all aspects of strategic management, from strategy formulation, to strategy implementation and control, based on the findings of the research. This line of study will provide a more holistic picture of strategic management for strategic managers. However, more specific to the NGO sector, the researcher recommends similar research is undertaken to establish whether or not the challenges identified are common to the sector to enable future implementers minimize and eradicate their negative impact on future projects.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACWICT	African Centre for Women in Information and Communication Technology
DCGEP	Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership
DVD	Digital Video Disc
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KSI	Key Success Indicators
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TCCAF	The Coca Cola Africa Foundation
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of study

The ability to implement strategy successfully is important to any organization. In spite of the importance of the implementation process within strategic management, this area of study is regularly overshadowed by a focus on the strategy formulation process. Strategy formulation guides executives in defining the business their organization is in and the means it will use to accomplish those ends (Pearce and Robinson, 1997). Strategy implementation on the other hand is an internal operations-driven activity involving organizing, budgeting, motivating, culture building, supervising, and leading to make strategy work as intended (Mintzberg, 1987).

Without implementation, a strategy that has been formulated will just be another document in the organization's files. Hence, it is imperative that organizations analyse their strategic plans and devise critical activities that transform the plan into actions that address the organizations objectives and accomplish their goals. Strategies are a critical element in organizational functioning but whereas most organizations have good strategies, successful implementation remains a major challenge. The notion that strategy implementation is quite straightforward, in that a strategy that is formulated is automatically implemented, in reality is quite contrary. Transforming strategies into action is a far more complex, difficult and a challenging undertaking and therefore not as straightforward as one would assume (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2001).

At Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership (DCGEP) the strategic plans' objectives are to improve and enhance the quality of basic education delivered in formal settings as well as provide training for teachers working at these levels on the effective integration of "video in the classroom" concept globally (DCGEP, 2009). The DCGEP strategies are formulated at the head office in Washington, D.C. and the locally constituted country office is then tasked with the responsibility of implementing the strategy. The "disconnect" between the formulation and implementation has the potential to lead to numerous implementation challenges for the organization.

### 1.1.1 Strategy implementation

Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long run that achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a changing environment to meet the needs of the market and to fulfil stakeholders' expectations (Johnson and Scholes, 2002). Aosa (1992) points out that once strategies have been formulated they need to be implemented; they are of no value unless they are translated into action. The job of strategy implementation therefore converts plans into actions aimed at achieving intended/desired results. The test of a successful strategy is the results evidenced from its implementation. If the performance results match or surpass the organizations targets or goals as outlined in the strategic plan then the implementation of the strategy can be deemed as successful.

Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008, p.6), define strategy implementation as "a dynamic, iterative and complex process, which is comprised of a series of decisions and activities by managers and employees – affected by a number of interrelated internal and external factors – to turn strategic plans into reality in order to achieve strategic

objectives". According to David (2009), strategy implementation definitions may sound easy enough although in reality successful strategy formulation does not guarantee successful strategy implementation. It is always more difficult to do something (implement it) than to say you are going to do it (formulate it)! It therefore stands to reason that excellently formulated strategies will fail if they are not properly implemented (Merchant, 2011).

There are many organizational characteristics (context) that act to constrain strategy implementation, of note are structure, culture, politics and managerial styles (Burns, 1996). Strategy implementation boils down to managing the action aspect of the strategic management process through which strategy is translated into actions aimed at achieving the strategic goals. Unlike strategy formulation that is more entrepreneurial and involves visionary and theoretical perspective, implementation is basically administrative and involves achieving strategic objectives by working through people, organizing, motivating, culture change building, and finding the optimal fit between strategy and the organization structure (Management Study Guide, 1998b).

### **1.1.2 The non-governmental organization (NGO) sector in Kenya**

In 1945, the United Nations (UN) coined the term "Non-Governmental Organization" (NGO) and since then, there has been a continuous proliferation of NGOs particularly due to government and market failure in developed countries and developing countries (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Hossain and Mälkiä, 1996; Markowitz, 2001; Martens, 2002, p.271).

NGOs emerged to undertake projects that were formerly undertaken by government agencies in both developed and developing countries. Thus, through NGOs,

governments in developed countries have been able to channel huge sums of money with the aim of funding projects in and out of the country. Similarly, through NGOs, governments in developed countries have been deeply involved with developmental projects in developing countries, which were initially undertaken by the government in those countries through their own governmental or international intergovernmental organizations such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank (Hossain and Myllylä, 1998).

NGOs operating in Kenya can be categorized as Local NGOs and International NGOs. Local NGOs have their operations based only in Kenya while International NGOs have their operations base in more than one country, like is typical of international organizations (Owino, 2006). Examples of International NGOs in Kenya are, CARE International, World Vision, Action Aid, Plan International, World Bank, United Nations and Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership (DCGEP).

International NGOs like international/multinational corporations have global strategies that usually involve a level of standardization of the product or service offered. Amulyoto in his 2004 study observed that for international NGOs there tends to be clear regulations (standards) that are in line with those of their parent offices, with laid down internal controls. Similarly, the strategy formulation of most international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is carried out at the corporate level and the implication of this is that the local management and staff at the country office level lack complete ownership of the strategy as they have limited participation in the formulation process, yet are tasked to implement it (Mobisa, 2007).

Over the last decade or two there has been a significant growth of the number of non-governmental organizations in Kenya. These NGOs control a large portion of the developmental resources in the country; this is mainly due to the ability of most NGOs to reach people and groups that the government and other governmental agencies are not able to reach. NGOs also play a focal role in the design, preparation and implementation of various developmental initiatives that supplement and augment the efforts made by the government (Kihara, 2007).

In this regard, NGOs serve in different ways to fulfill numerous functions and sometimes they are used as intermediaries to channel funds and in the execution of projects to local individuals or target groups of people (Carroll, 1992; Korten, 1990; Masoni, 1985; Rice, 1983). Thus, owing to this increasing role of NGOs, many governments in developing countries, like Kenya, have come to recognize them as partners in development and to rely on them for the execution of some projects, instead of relying only on governmental agencies on the one hand, and private profit seeking entities on the other (Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2006).

### **1.1.3 Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership (DCGEP)**

The Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership (DCGEP) began in 1997 as a corporate initiative of Discovery Communications, in line with its mission to help people explore their world and satisfy their curiosity. The Partnership extends these opportunities to people living in underserved areas who would otherwise have little access to educational resources (DCGEP, 2011).

The initiative in Kenya is funded by The Coca Cola Africa Foundation (TCCAF) and locally-managed by DCGEP's local country staff in concert with their institutional partner, African Centre for Women in Information and Communication Technology



(ACWICT). The initiative involves a collaborative process of educational video program development that combines contributions of expertise and high quality nonfiction footage from Discovery with the needs of educators in countries where DCGEP is active. In addition, DCGEP provides three years of teacher training and capacity building to ensure their ability to maximize the value of educational television as a tool for teaching and learning (DCGEP, 2009).

In 2009 DCGEP signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to pilot their “Video in the Classroom” Learning Center Initiative in schools in or around Nairobi and Machakos. Each learning center in the project receives a television (TV) set, a digital video disc (DVD) player, a library of high quality educational DVDs and teacher training and monitoring support for a period of three years in support of the MOE’s commitment to integrate information and communication technology (ICT) in education by developing ICT curricula and ensuring that teachers/trainers possess the requisite skills (DCGEP, 2009).

The DCGEP strategic plans’ objectives are to improve and enhance the quality of basic education delivered in formal settings as well as provide training for teachers working at these levels on the effective integration of “video in the classroom” concept globally. DCGEP has developed a series of specific steps for establishing successful, sustainable Learning Centers. Through this process, and in collaboration with their partners, DCGEP works with each community to improve access to critical information and educational tools. The DCGEP model’s key success indicators (KSIs) are the effective deployment of the “video in the classroom” initiative with the ultimate goal being improvements in academic grades, positive teacher/student attitudes as well as greater community involvement in schools (DCGEP, 2009).

## 1.2 Research problem

According to Mintzberg (1994), strategy implementation involves several processes. First, it involves doing a situation analysis for both internal and external environments. Secondly, it involves creating a vision statement with long term views of a possible future and creating mission statements that spell out the role that the organisation gives itself in the society. Thirdly, it involves creating overall corporate strategic business units and tactical objectives. Finally, it involves devising a plan with details on how to achieve the objectives as developed.

Strategy implementation is the translation of the chosen strategy into organizational action aimed at achieving organizational objectives. At DCGEP the strategies are formulated at the head office and are implemented in several countries globally using a globalised strategy. The local country office is then constituted with the help of an institutionalized partner who handles the local resource allocation. The local country office staff is then tasked with the responsibility of implementing the strategy using the pre-set parameters and guidelines from the head office. This replication of strategy implementation activities may not always match the country office reality given the uniqueness of each country. As a result, there is the potential of numerous implementation challenges given that each respective country office has its own set of unique dynamics that create challenges in implementing a generic “global” strategy.

The strategy implementation process has been researched by various scholars with specific emphasis on commercial and local for profit companies (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2001; Dwallow, 2007, Karuri, 2006; Koske, 2003; Machuki, 2005; Ochanda, 2005; Ronga, 2008; Waruhiu, 2004). While only a few studies (Amulyoto, 2004; Adongo, 2008; Mobisa, 2007; Ndonga 2010) touch on international non-

governmental organizations, and the challenge of implementing global strategies in a specific country with unique dynamics. However, from the above studies one thing is clear; different organizations handle strategy implementation differently based on their unique circumstances.

This study attempts to bridge the knowledge gap and respond to the following research questions. How is strategy implementation handled at DCGEP, the challenges faced during implementation and the how these challenges were addressed.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

The study will be guided by the following research objectives:-

- i.* To establish the challenges facing implementation of the Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership initiative in Kenya.
- ii.* To determine how Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership addressed these challenges.

### **1.4 Value of the study**

It is anticipated that the study will be of benefit to the various stakeholders. Management teams from similar international non-governmental organizations will draw lessons on the challenges of strategy implementation using a globalised strategy and what can be done to address these challenges to achieve success. Specifically, the DCGEP Board will get a better understanding of challenges facing implementation at country level and the recommendations for future implementation strategies.

Similarly, on the basis of the findings, the study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the area of strategy implementation in an international non-

governmental organization and may lead to improved implementation policies and procedures for future projects within Kenya. It may also inspire future researchers to carry out further research in the same or related field.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the purpose of the study. The chapter is organized according to the specific objectives in order to ensure relevance to the research problem.

The review explores the concept of strategy, the strategy implementation process, and the challenges of strategy implementation. The review was undertaken in order to eliminate duplication of what has been done and provide a clear understanding of existing knowledge base in the problem area. The literature review is based on authoritative, recent, and original sources such as research articles, journals, books, thesis, and dissertations.

### 2.2 The concept of strategy

Hannibal, commonly referred to as the father of strategy (Dodge, 1896), clearly illustrated the difference between strategy and tactics. In military terms, strategy is about making the decision on where, when and with what, while tactics are all about grouping and movements of the forces i.e. the how. In other words, strategy is decided prior to the battle while tactics are used during the battle (Joyce & Woods, 2001)

According to Hitt et al (2009), "strategy is an integrated and coordinated set of commitments and actions designed to exploit core competences and gain a competitive advantage." Therefore, strategy is about winning. It is the unifying theme that gives coherence and direction to the actions and decisions of an individual or organization.

The top management of an organization is concerned with the selection of a course of action from among different alternatives to meet the organizational objectives. The process by which objectives are formulated and achieved is known as strategic management and strategy acts as the means to achieve the objectives. Strategy is the grand design or an overall 'plan' which an organization chooses in order to move or react towards the set of objectives by using its resources. Strategies most often devote a general programme of action and an implied deployment emphasis and resources to attain comprehensive objectives (Joshi, Sharma and Singh, 2010)

An organization is considered efficient and operationally effective if it is characterized by coordination between objectives and strategies. There has to be integration of the parts into a complete structure. Strategy helps the organization to meet its uncertain situations with due diligence. Without a strategy, the organization is like a ship without a rudder. Without an appropriate strategy effectively implemented, the future is always dark and hence, more are the chances of business failure (MBA Knowledge Base, 2011).

### **2.3 Strategy implementation process**

Once an organization has selected a particular strategy to achieve its goals, the strategy then has to be put into action by selecting appropriate organizational structure and managing its execution through tailoring the management systems of the organizations to the requirements of the strategy (Hill and Jones, 2001), Strategy implementation is then the sum total of the activities and choices required for the execution of a strategic plan, the process by which strategies and policies are put into action (Wheelen & Hunger, 1992).

Strategy implementation includes considerations of who will be responsible for execution of the strategy; the most suitable organization structure that can support the implementation strategy (Pettigrew, 1988; Lynch, 2000); the need to adapt the systems used to manage the organization (Johnson and Scholes, 2002); the key tasks to be carried out and desirable changes in the resource mix of the organization as well as the mandate of each department in the organization and the information systems to be put in place to monitor progress and resource planning (Pearce and Robinson, 1997).

#### **2.4 Challenges of strategy implementation**

According to Mintzberg and Waters (1985), intended strategies refer to strategy formulation processes, while realized strategy represents the strategy implementation processes. Managers may find that although their original strategy intentions were realized, additional strategies or modifications to the original strategy may have emerged during the strategic process (Harrinton et al, 2004).

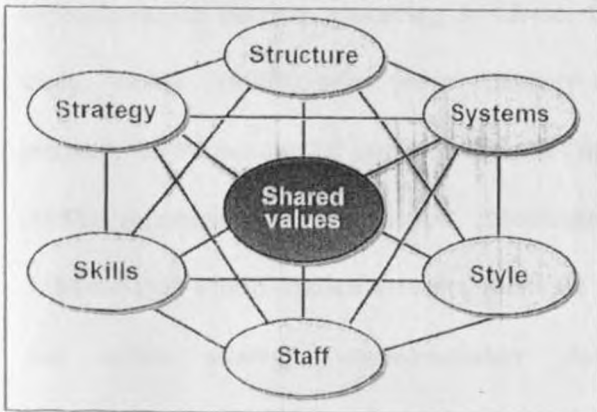
A multitude of factors can potentially affect the process by which strategic plans are turned into organizational action. Unlike strategy formulation, strategy implementation is often seen as something of a craft, rather than a science, and its research history has previously been described as fragmented and eclectic (Noble, 1999a). It is thus not surprising that, after a comprehensive strategy has been formulated, significant difficulties usually arise during the subsequent implementation process. The best-formulated strategies may fail to produce superior performance for the firm if they are not successfully implemented, as Noble (1999a) notes.

Consultants at McKinsey & Company developed the 7S model in the late 1970s to help managers address the difficulties of organizational change. The Seven-Ss is a

framework for analyzing organizations and their effectiveness. It looks at the seven key elements that make the organizations successful, or not: strategy; structure; systems; style; skills; staff; and shared values (Fleisher and Bensoussan, 2007, Waterman, Peters and Phillips 1980).

The 7-S model is a tool for managerial analysis and action that provides a structure with which to consider a company as a whole, so that the organization's problems may be diagnosed and a strategy may be developed and implemented. The 7-S diagram illustrates the multiplicity interconnectedness of elements that define an organization's ability to change. The theory helped to change manager's thinking about how companies could be improved. The way the model is presented in Figure 1 below depicts the interdependency of the elements and indicates how a change in one affects all the others. It says that it is not just a matter of devising a new strategy and following it through. Nor is it a matter of setting up new systems and letting them generate improvements. There is no starting point or implied hierarchy – different factors may drive the business in any one organization (Fleisher and Bensoussan, 2007, Waterman, Peters and Phillips 1980).

**Figure 1:** The Mckinsey 7 S model.



Source: Fleisher and Bensoussan (2007). Business and competitive analysis: effective application of new and classic methods.



The challenge therefore is to create a series of tight “fits” between strategy and the organizations competencies, capabilities and structure; between strategy and resource allocation; between strategy and policy; between strategy and internal support systems; between strategy and reward structures; between strategy and corporate culture, etcetera (Thompson and Strickland, 1998).

#### **2.4.1 Organizational structure and strategy**

Every organization has a unique structure. An organizational structure is the reflection of the company’s past history, reporting relationships and internal politics. It is the division of tasks for efficiency and clarity of purpose and coordination between interdependent parts of an organization to ensure organizational effectiveness. If activities, responsibilities and interrelationships are not organized in a manner that is consistent with the strategy chosen, the structure is left to evolve on its own. Structure should balance the need for specialization with the need for integration; it should provide formal means of decentralizing and centralizing consistent with organizational control needs of the strategy (Pearce and Robinson, 1997).

Factors relating to the organizational structure are ranked among the top most implementation barriers according to Heide, Grønhaug and Johannessen’s (2002) study. Noble (1999b) sees proper strategy-structure alignment as a necessary precursor to the successful implementation of new business strategies. Govindarajan (1988) proposes that though few researchers have focused on the design of differentiated administrative systems, there are three key administrative mechanisms that affect strategy implementation: design of organizational structure (decentralization), design of control systems (budget evaluative style) and selection of managers (locus of control).

The fundamental challenge for managers is the selection of the organization structure and controls that will implement the chosen strategy effectively. When organizations change their strategies, the existing structure may become obsolete (Wendy, 1997). If there is no “fit” between structure and strategy then it is likely that the structure will not be able to support the strategy being implemented. It is therefore important to identify primary and secondary/support activities in order to develop the most appropriate structure needed for the particular strategy implementation (Atreya, 2007).

#### **2.4.2 Organizational leadership and strategy**

The leadership role in the organizations is the forefront in providing vision, initiative, motivation and inspiration. The vision or strategic direction is a course of action that leads to the achievement of the goals of an organizations strategy. Management should cultivate team spirit and act as a catalyst in the whole strategy implementation process (Strategic direction, n.d.).

Organizational leadership or style refers to management’s potential to express and communicate a strategic vision to the organization, or a part of the organization, and to motivate and persuade others to acquire that vision – ownership. Organizational leadership can also be defined as utilizing strategy in the management of employees. It is the potential to influence organizational members and to execute organizational change (Management Study Guide, 1998a).

The most common reason a strategy fails is lack of ownership. If people don’t have a stake and responsibility in the plan, it’ll be business as usual for all but a frustrated few. Lack of understanding of a strategy is one of the obstacles of strategy implementation (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2001). They point out in their study that

many organizational members typically recognize strategic issues as important and understand their context in generic terms but the problem arises when trying to apply strategic issues to day-to-day decision making processes.

When management concentrates on only the day-to-day activities i.e. are consumed by daily operating problems, without any bearing to the strategic purpose, this can lead to losing sight of the organizations long-term goals. The strategy may be treated as something separate and removed from the management process causing a “disconnect” between the strategy and its implementation (Mintzberg and Quinn, 1996; Thompson and Strickland, 1998).

Once there is no organization leadership and direction, then strategy will not get communicated to employees, and they won't understand how they contribute to the organizations goals and objectives. The result is that the vision, mission, and value statements are viewed as fluff and not supported by actions or don't have the employees buy-in or ownership (Gupta and Govindarajan, 1984; Govindarajan, 1989; Heracleous, 2000; MacMillan and Guth, 1986; Wooldridge and Floyd, 1990)

### **2.4.3 Organizational capabilities and strategy**

Management should also be able to rally the employees who are the executors of the strategy towards attaining organizational objectives. Executors (the people component of an organization) are responsible for transforming strategic intent and objectives into actions and managing the implementation processes (Govindarajan, 1989; Gupta and Govindarajan, 1984; Heracleous, 2000; MacMillan and Guth, 1986; Wooldridge and Floyd, 1990). Effectiveness of strategy implementation is, at least in part, affected by the “quality of people” involved in the process (Govindarajan, 1989). Here, quality refers to the skills, attitudes, capabilities, experiences and other

characteristics of people (staff and skills) required by a specific task or position (Peng and Litteljohn, 2001).

The importance of people in the study of strategic management is evident in the different implementation frameworks, for example, Candido & Morris (2001) and Peters & Waterman (1984) which include people as a factor that is crucial to ensure successful strategy implementation. It is therefore safe to conclude that if the “people factor” is ignored or not managed effectively, they could potentially disrupt the implementation process.

#### **2.4.4 Organizational culture and strategy**

Culture is a set of important assumptions that members of an organization share in common, the organizations shared values. Every organization has its own unique culture. Culture can be positive and negative; positive in that it eases and economizes communication, facilitates organizational decision making and control and may generate higher levels of cooperation and commitment within the organization; negative in that when shared beliefs and values interfere with the business strategy and the people working on the organizations behalf (Pearce and Robinson, 1997).

For most organizations, the fundamental strategic objective is to achieve the best performance possible. Success or failure depends on many factors. Central among them always is the appropriate beliefs, values and assumptions that feed the organization’s behaviours and decisions – in a word, ‘culture’. Organizational culture cannot be described as good or bad, right or wrong. Rather, it should be judged on whether it is suited or not to the organization’s strategic intentions. This makes culture and strategy two sides of the same coin: a problem with one will affect the

other. Conversely, the success of one presupposes the success of the other (Local Government Improvement and Development, 2009).

Leadership and organizational culture are purported to be tightly intertwined. Leaders must have a deep understanding of the identity and impact of the organizational culture in order to communicate and implement new visions and inspire follower commitment to the vision (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The organization's achievement of its strategic intentions depends on the development or shaping of culture to service these intentions. When due consideration is not paid to culture, a disparity between strategy and culture can compromise the organization's strategic outcomes. Crucially, a shift in strategic direction necessitates a corresponding reshaping of culture. Because culture is vital both to the formulation and implementation of a new strategy, cultural change is the key to successful strategic change (Local Government Improvement and Development, 2009).

#### **2.4.5 Organizational resources and strategy**

According to Johnson and Scholes (2002) analysing the strategic capability of an organization is clearly important in terms of understanding whether the resources and competencies fit the environment, in which the organization is operating, and the opportunities and threats that exist. Resource configuration is concerned with both the identification of resource requirements and how those resources are deployed to create competencies needed to underpin particular strategies. It is therefore necessary to undertake a resource audit in order to establish whether the available resources will be adequate for strategy implementation.

Availability of resources, be they staff, knowledge, skills, finances, time, information, competencies etc, are a crucial part of strategy implementation (Alexander, 1985;

Miller, 1998). Resources represent the strengths that organizations use to assist with the conception and implementation of strategies (Barney, 1991). Hence appropriate allocation of resources in the form of budgets, training and development of staff, and the availability of physical resources for use in the organization is important to the survival and success of any implementation plan.

There are four types of organizational resources, namely financial, physical, human and technological, used to achieve strategic objectives. These are the most valuable assets of the organization. Once the strategic decision has been made, management then turns to evaluating resource implications for the strategy (Harvey, 1998). However, David (1997) cautions that allocation of resources to a particular department or division does not ensure strategies will be successfully implemented. There are numerous factors at play that can prohibit effective resource allocation such as overprotection of resources, too great an emphasis on short-run financial criteria, organizational policies, vague strategy targets (reluctance to take risks) and lack of sufficient knowledge. The way an organization handles its resource allocation (irrespective of whether they are staff, knowledge, skills, finances, time, etc), is a crucial part of strategy implementation (Alexander, 1985; Miller, 1998).

#### **2.4.6 Organizational systems and strategy**

All procedures, formal or informal, that make the organization run its day to day activities such as budgeting, training and development, cost systems, are key to achieving strategic purpose (Mintzberg and Quinn, 1996). Noble, (1999b) discusses the role of formal control systems in the process of strategy implementation and suggests that the fluidity of control system contributes to (successful) strategy implementation.

Nilsson and Rapp (1999) study a related question; how are control systems designed and used at the management and operational levels with respect to implementing a given business strategy? They have found that control systems at management and operational levels are based on different logics and should have a different design. In addition, it is important to create a meaningful dialogue between the various organizational levels to facilitate the choice for a strategic orientation and its implementation.

However, if there is no monitoring and evaluation system in place then there is no method to track progress, and the strategy only measures what's easy, not what's important. No one feels any forward momentum. When this happens there is no accountability. Accountability and high visibility help drive change. This means that each measure, objective, data source, and initiative must have an owner (Ellis and Thompson, 1997). Therefore though accountability may provide strong motivation for improving performance, employees must also have the authority, responsibility, and tools necessary to impact relevant measures. Otherwise, they may resist involvement and ownership.

#### **2.4.7 Organizational rewards and incentives to strategy**

According to Kaplan and Norton (1996), only 25% of management have incentives linked to strategy and thus they are the only ones who actively build their capabilities and systems to support their particular functions. However, there is need to build capabilities (competitive capabilities) in the people and systems throughout the organization to "support" strategy and each one of the key success indicators (KSIs)

Thompson and Strickland (1998) argue that if strategy accomplishment is really a top priority the reward structure must be linked explicitly and tightly to actual strategic

purpose. Incentives such as salary raises, fringe benefits, promotion, recognition, and increased job autonomy and awards can encourage employees to push hard for the successful strategy implementation.

A properly designed reward structure is management's most powerful tool for mobilizing organizational commitment to successful strategy execution. A manager has to do more than just talk to everyone about how important new strategic practices and performance targets are to the organization's well-being. No matter how inspiring, talk seldom commands people's best efforts for long. To get employees' sustained, energetic commitment, management has to be resourceful in designing and using motivational incentives—both monetary and non-monetary (Thompson, Strickland and Gamble, 2009).

The most dependable way to keep people focused on strategy execution and the achievement of performance targets is to generously reward and recognize individuals and groups who meet or beat performance targets and deny rewards and recognition to those who don't. The use of incentives and rewards is the single most powerful tool management has to win strong employee commitment to diligent, competent strategy execution and operating excellence (Thompson, Strickland and Gamble, 2009).

#### **2.4.8 Organizational resistance and inertia in the implementation stage**

Ansoff and McDonnell (1990) noted that resistance to change occurs when there is a departure from the historic behaviour, culture and power structure. Resistance will manifest as behavioural resistance and systemic resistance. Behavioural resistance occurs as active opposition to change, while systemic resistance arises out of passive incompetence to change.



Resistance is the action taken by individuals and groups when they perceive that a change that is occurring as a threat to them. The implementation stage of any project is the critical step between the decision to change and the regular use of it at the organization (Klein and Sorra, 1996). In this stage, two more resistance groups can be found. The first of them deals with political and cultural deadlocks to change. It consists of the implementation climate and relation between change values and organizational values, considering that a strong implementation climate when the values' relation is negative will result in resistance and opposition to change. The second deals with the departmental politics or resistance from those departments that will suffer with the change implementation. If there are incommensurable beliefs, or strong and definitive disagreements among groups about the nature of the problem and its consequent alternative solutions then you will encounter resistance (Pardo del Val and Fuentes, 1979).

However, one of the major problems is that most organizations do not anticipate or provide for the resistance which may arise towards the introduction of new strategies. Rather, they deal with it reactively when it does arise. This attitude of management may lead firms to experience additional costs and delays in the implementation of strategy, due to resistance (Ansoff and McDonnell, 1990). Aosa (1992) concurs by observing that lack of compatibility between strategy and culture can lead to high organizational resistance to change and de-motivation, which in turn frustrates strategy implementation.

There are various avenues that can be explored to overcome resistance. They are the participatory approach where the employees are involved in the change effort. The facilitation and support approach where management helps with adjustment problems

by being supportive and the education and communication approach which is used to reduce the uncertainty and assist in the employee buy-in (Kotter and Schlesinger, 1979). Therefore the challenge leaders' face in implementation strategy is the internal power play and politics within an organization. It is important to overcome resistance within the organization through leadership efforts (Kithinji, 2005).

#### **2.4.9 Organizational continuity and consistency to strategy**

Ellis and Thompson (1997) state that organizations exist in the context of a complex commercial, political, economic, social, technological and legal world. These environmental changes are more complex for some organization than for others. As such, competitiveness for skilled workers within the environment can lead to senior managers leaving soon after the implementation process is started. Subsequently frequent changes in strategy direction in an effort to align strategy to the environment tends to undermine staff commitment and enthusiasm and can lead to low morale and lack of focus in staff.

For successful implementation an organization should understand the impact on strategy of their internal and external forces as well as the expectations and influence on their stakeholders. Efforts should be made to ensure all stakeholders are content and secure in their role within the organization (Ellis and Thompson, 1997).

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims at defining the research design and methodology used in the study. It contains a description of the research design, data collection instrument and procedure as well as the data analysis method.

### **3.2 Research design**

A research design is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of the study (Yin, 1989). The researcher used the case study design to undertake the research. Case studies involve collecting empirical data, generally from one or a small number of cases. It usually provides rich detail about those cases, of a predominantly qualitative nature (Yin, 2004).

Yin (1994) defines a case study as an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. A case study generally aims to provide insight into a particular situation and often stresses the experiences and interpretations of those involved. It may generate new understandings, explanations or hypotheses. According to Eisenhardt (2003), case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.

### **3.3 Data collection**

The data was collected using the interview method. In –depth interviews were conducted using guided open-ended questions to collect the data. The interview is an open-ended, discovery-oriented method that is well suited for describing both program processes and outcomes from the perspective of the key stakeholder (Guion, 2001). The goal of the interview was to deeply explore the interviewee’s point of view, feelings and perspectives.

All questions on the instrument were developed in line with the research objectives. The interviewees were interviewed at their convenience. The researcher called to set up teleconferences (for interviewees not residing in Kenya) to administer the interviews. For the interviewees that reside in the country, face to face interviews were set up and conducted.

The interviewees of the study were drawn from DCGEP Kenya implementation team. They included the Program Director, Program Officer, Regional Trainer, Teacher Trainer and Institutional Partner. The five officers were selected on a judgemental basis; based on their job descriptions and the role they each played in the implementation of the DCGEP initiative in Kenya. The interviewees are considered experts in their respective functional fields.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

The data collected was predominantly qualitative in nature. As such qualitative data analysis in the form of content analysis was used. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996) content analysis is a technique of making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages and

using the same to relate trends. This type of analysis does not restrict interviewees on answers and has the potential of generating more information with much more detail. Content analysis also ensures objectivity, systematic examination of communication in order to break down, identify, and analyze the presence or relations of words, word sense, characters, sentences, concepts or common themes (Mito, 2008).

The focus of the analysis included examination of the data collected including both verbal and non-verbal communication to determine adequacy of information, precision, credibility, usefulness, consistency and validation of information. This helped the researcher gain insights into the research topic and the methodology used ensured the researcher would identify patterns that might have otherwise not been identified had another research method been used.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The study proposed to establish the two research objectives of determining the challenges of strategy implementation at Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership (DCGEP) and establishing the measures taken by DCGEP to address or mitigate the impact of these challenges to their strategy implementation processes. An interview guide was designed to solicit data from the DCGEP Kenya implementation team relating to the challenges of strategy implementation and measures taken thereof. The qualitative data collected was systematically examined to provide the in depth findings of the study.

The interviewees were selected on a judgemental basis; based on the role each played in the implementation of the DCGEP initiative in Kenya. The study viewed these individuals as pivotal to the implementation process. Though these individuals have outstanding experience, impeccable and unquestionable professional skills in their respective areas coupled with a high level of commitment towards the successful implementation of the initiative, the study was able to establish challenges they faced in the implementation process. This chapter discusses strategy implementation at DCGEP, the challenges faced and how they were addressed.

### **4.2 Strategy implementation at DCGEP**

DCGEP is a registered non-profit charitable organization that for the past 13 years has been working in under-resourced schools in over 16 country locations around the world, using the power of television to increase student learning, increase teacher effectiveness, and increase the community's access to information and involvement in

their children's schools. The initiative in Kenya is funded by The Coca Cola Africa Foundation (TCCAF) and locally-managed in concert with their institutional partner, African Centre for Women in Information and Communication Technology (ACWICT). In addition, DCGEP provides three years of teacher training and capacity building to ensure their ability to maximize the value of educational television as a tool for teaching and learning (DCGEP, 2009).

At DCGEP the strategic plan aims at improving primary/basic education delivered in formal settings and provide training for teachers working at these levels on the effective integration of video in the classroom concept globally (DCGEP, 2009). The locally constituted country office(s) working closely with the institutional partner are tasked with the responsibility of implementing the strategy. Guidelines of the activities needed are provided by the head office and tailored to the local country context.

#### **4.3 Challenges to strategy implementation at DCGEP**

Implementation challenges arise from factors that are both internal and external to an organization. The particular challenges the organization faces will depend on the type of strategy, type of organization and prevailing circumstances. The study explored the strategy implementation challenges outlined in the literature review. The findings below address each of the challenges stated and the interviewees' perceptions of whether or not they truly posed as challenges during the implementation stage at DCGEP. The researcher established that though DCGEP has a well formulated strategic plan, and that all the challenges listed were not viewed as challenges at DCGEP, the organization experienced a few challenges during their implementation stage.

Factors relating to the organizational structure are ranked among the top implementation barriers. However, the researcher found that the interviewees were content with the organizational structures currently in place and did not think of them as a challenge to strategy implementation.

The researcher established that the interviewees had a good understanding of the organizations strategies but were non-committal as to how they (as individuals) fit into the “big picture”. However, the employees actively involved in the organizations strategy formulation exhibited a higher level of understanding of the strategies and their role within the strategy.

The researcher deduced that the interviewees agreed that the “quality of people” was of great importance. There was agreement that the people factor was crucial to ensuring successful strategy implementation. From the data collected the researcher was able to deduce that none of the interviewees felt that this was an area of concern as adequate measures had been taken to ensure a “fit” between the people and the strategy.

Culture is a set of important assumptions that members of an organization share in common, the organizations shared values. The researcher established that there was a consensus from all interviewees that departmental politics and cultural deadlocks were indeed a major challenge to the implementation processes. The interviewees all felt that the departmental and cultural challenges were primarily due to the normal “teething” processes (better known as the storming stage in group dynamics) when a new idea is introduced before the various players become conversant and comfortable with it.



Organizational culture is a company's way of doing things, its norms, values and beliefs held over time in the course of its daily operations. At DCGEP the organizational culture is a blend of various norms, values and beliefs. This blend is a result of the two institutions (DCGEP and ACWICT) partnering together in the initiative. There has been a lot of give and take from all sides resulting in this "new" hybrid culture emerging amongst the implementation team. Culture was therefore considered one of the main challenges by the interviewees that faced the implementation process at DCGEP.

Analysing the strategic capabilities of an organization is clearly important in terms of understanding whether the resources and competencies fit the environment in which the organization is operating. Resource configuration is concerned with both the identification of resource requirements and how those resources are deployed to create competencies needed to underpin particular strategies. The study revealed that the interviewees felt that the "fit" between the organizational resources and strategy was adequate at DCGEP, and as such this was not considered a challenge to the implementation processes.

The role of formal control systems in the process of strategy implementation and the fluidity of control system contributes to (successful) strategy implementation. The researcher established that majority of the interviewees, to some extent, felt that there was a misfit between the organizational systems and the strategy. They attributed this "misfit" to the fact that both organizations, DCGEP and the institutional partner, had established systems and when the implementation activities were carried out, sometimes the two systems overlapped or clashed resulting in challenges. However, some of the interviewees were non-committal regarding whether or not they saw the

“systems misfit” as a challenge.

No matter how inspiring, talk seldom commands people’s best efforts for long. To get employees’ sustained, energetic commitment, management has to be resourceful in designing and using motivational incentives—both monetary and non-monetary. The researcher found that a few of the interviewees felt that the reward and incentives package was inadequate while majority of the interviewees thought the rewards and incentives package was adequate.

Continuity and consistency during the implementation process is important. A lack of continuity or consistency tends to undermine staff commitment and enthusiasm and can lead to low morale and lack of focus in staff. The researcher established that some of the interviewees were concerned about this aspect mainly because they sometimes had concerns about their own continuity within the organization (lack of job security). However, majority of the interviewees felt that the DCGEP continuity and consistency was above reproach and were secure with it.

#### **4.4 How the challenges were addressed at DCGEP**

The second objective of the study was to establish how the above challenges were addressed at DCGEP. The measures/mitigation strategies DCGEP took to cope, mitigate and address the identified challenges are listed below. The research results show that the main mitigation strategies are inclusive participatory management practices, the facilitation and support approach and the education and communication approach as well as control measures were instigated to check the challenges wherever possible.

The researcher established the challenges as predominantly; resistance/inertia at the implementation brought about by the misalignment of the culture and the systems in place to the strategy implementation process; the lack of ownership of the strategy by some employees and finally the morale and motivation of some employees as pertains to their reward and incentive structures as well as their job security.

The researcher ascertained that the main challenge was resistance/ inertia at the implementation stage. From the data collected and subsequent probing of the interviewees, the researcher further established that this resistance/inertia was intricately tied to the existing organizational culture and organizational systems in place. The researcher found that there was a consensus from all interviewees that departmental politics and cultural deadlocks indeed posed a major challenge to the implementation processes.

The resistance/ inertia at the implementation stage can be further broken down into two main challenge areas, the culture and the system “misfit(s)” with the strategy. In an effort to address these challenges, DCGEP opted to use inclusive and participatory management practices, facilitation and support approach where management helps with adjustment problems by being supportive and the education and communication approach which is used to reduce the uncertainty and assist in the employee buy-in. Constant reviews and evaluation of the policies and procedures in an effort to streamline the procurement and accounting systems respectively were also undertaken.

The measures taken to address the culture “misfit” included regular weekly management and team meetings where issues are tabled, discussed and a consensus reached on way forward. Further to this management paid special attention to the

interpersonal dynamics of the employees to monitor any significant changes and or problems that arose. The preparation of an annual and monthly work plans for each country level employee that is jointly reviewed, discussed and a general consensus reached before actual implementation was also instituted. Other inclusive practices included engaging and encouraging of staff and acknowledgement of staff effort for tasks completed during annual reviews.

The measures taken to address the systems "misfit" included regular reporting, monitoring and evaluation of existing systems. Constant realignment of the systems in place to strategy has been executed and enforced. Where necessary total reworking of the system to "fit" the strategy implementation processes has been undertaken.

Another challenge identified was that certain aspects of the organizational strategy were not fully understood by all implementers. This particular issue was partially addressed at the annual staff workshop where employees were given an opportunity to participate in the strategy formulation discussions. Though the final strategic plans have not been shared with all employees, country specific strategy documents have been derived for each country with a bottom up approach being used to create country specific strategies for more local ownership. This is an ongoing process and the interviewees are confident that if DCGEP continues down this path, this particular challenge will be addressed and completely eradicated.

Though not viewed as challenges by all the interviewees, the following challenges were uncovered and as such warranted further probing. The challenges revolved around issues pertaining to the organization's rewards and incentives package especially in regards to motivation of staff, and the organization's continuity and consistency was a constant threat for some employees.

The measures taken have been from a more individualistic approach. The researcher found that where the challenges had been raised and identified, management at DCGEP tended to address the concerns of the individual employee(s) as opposed to setting up a more structured rewards and incentive program to address the needs of all employees.

#### **4.5 Discussion of results**

In this section the researcher discusses the findings of the study in detail. The researcher will explore the theoretical basis of the study vis-à-vis the research findings as well as explore the findings in light of the other empirical studies undertaken in similar areas.

##### **4.5.1 Theoretical discussion**

According to Klein and Sorra (1996), resistance is the action taken by individuals and groups when they perceive that a change that is occurring as a threat to them. The researcher found that there was a consensus that departmental politics and cultural deadlocks were a main challenge to the implementation processes. These two types of resistance/ inertia to change can be further broken down into two main challenges, the culture and the system "misfit" with the strategy.

Kotter and Schlesinger (1979) state that there are various avenues that can be explored to overcome resistance. They recommend the participatory approach where the employees are involved in the change effort. The facilitation and support approach where management helps with adjustment problems by being supportive and the education and communication approach which is used to reduce the uncertainty and assist in the employee buy-in. The measures taken at DCGEP to address the culture

“misfit” and the systems “misfit” are in line with the findings of the theoretical discussion of the study.

However, the researcher also deduced that the departmental and cultural challenges were primarily due to what the interviewees called the normal “teething” process or the “storming” stage of group dynamics. According to the group dynamics second stage, the “storming” stage is often characterized by conflict among members of the team. This is the stage when it may not be clear exactly what the goal is, how the team is going to proceed, or what members’ roles are in reaching the goal. The goal may be more complex and/or time-consuming than originally expected. Members may have different views about the goals. There may not be adequate communication or trust among the members (Tuckman, 1965).

Therefore the challenge leaders’ face in implementation strategy is the internal power play and politics within an organization. It is important to overcome resistance within the organization through leadership efforts (Kithinji, 2005). The researcher found that to some extent the management at DCGEP acknowledged this “teething” challenge and instituted measures such as engaging and encouraging of staff as well as acknowledgement of staff efforts for tasks completed during annual reviews.

The other challenge identified was that certain aspects of the organizational strategy were not fully understood by all implementers. According to Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2001), many organizational members typically recognize strategic issues as important and understand their context in generic terms but the problem arises when trying to apply strategic issues to day-to-day decision making processes. The leadership role in the organizations is therefore the forefront in providing vision, initiative, motivation and inspiration. The vision or strategic direction is a course of

action that leads to the achievement of the goals of an organizations strategy. Management should cultivate team spirit and act as a catalyst in the whole strategy implementation process (Strategic direction, n.d.).

This particular issue was partially addressed at the annual staff workshop, in line with the theoretical discussion, by involving the employees in the strategy formulation process. Employees were given an opportunity to participate fully in the strategy formulation discussion. Though the final strategic plans have not yet been shared with all employees, country specific strategy documents have been derived for each country with a bottom up approach being used to create country specific strategies for more ownership. This is an ongoing process and the respondents are confident that if DCGEP continues down this path, this particular challenge will be addressed and completely eradicated.

Though not viewed as challenges by all the interviewees, the following challenges were uncovered, the challenges revolved around issues pertaining to the organization's rewards and incentives package especially in regards to motivation of staff, and the organization's continuity and consistency was a constant threat for some employees.

According to Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2009), the most dependable way to keep people focused on strategy execution and the achievement of performance targets is to generously reward and recognize individuals and groups who meet or beat performance targets and deny rewards and recognition to those who don't. The use of incentives and rewards is the single most powerful tool management has to win strong employee commitment to diligent, competent strategy execution and operating excellence. At DCGEP the measures taken have been "ad hoc" in nature with

management addressing individual concerns rather than instituting policies to address the challenges. This attitude of management may lead firms to experience additional costs and delays in the implementation of strategy, due to resistance (Ansoff and McDonnell, 1990). The theoretical discussion points towards a more main stream approach of setting up a structured rewards and incentive program to address the needs of all employees within the organization.

#### **4.5.2 Empirical discussion**

In light of the findings, the researcher was able to concur with other empirical studies done in the area of strategy implementation. Mobisa (2007) mentions in his research findings that organizational culture, especially in international NGOs, poses a significant threat to the success of the strategy. He states the reason is most INGOs replicate their global strategies and this replication is done in each country with only slight contextual adjustments. Though some emphasis is made on the context of each country, there are still some areas that pose serious challenges to the strategy implementation as each country's dynamics are unique.

The researcher established that culture was considered one of the main challenges by the interviewees that faced the implementation process at DCGEP. The organizational culture for the Kenya country office is predominantly a blend of various norms, values and beliefs. This blend is a result of the two institutions (DCGEP and ACWICT) partnering together in the implementation of the program. There has been a lot of give and take from all sides and sometimes resulting in conflict but ultimately a "new" hybrid culture is emerging amongst the implementation team.

The research results also concur with the challenge put forth by Adongo (2008) where he states that one of the main challenges that NGOs face during the strategy



implementation process if the lack of ownership by local staff. Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2001), go a step further to state that the most common reason a strategy fails is lack of ownership. At DCGEP, the researcher was able to ascertain that there was some level of “lack of ownership” among the implementer as evidenced by the non-committal nature of their responses.

Though not viewed as challenges by all the interviewees, the challenges revolving around the organization’s rewards and incentives package especially in regards to motivation of staff, and the organization’s continuity and consistency was a constant threat for some employees. Ndonga in his 2010 study also mentions that employee morale was closely tied to the reward and incentive package. He further stated that the organization’s continuity was linked to the motivation, incentives and job security of the employees.

Therefore we can deduce from the research findings that there is no single solution and “one size does not fit all” when dealing with challenges facing strategy implementation. Though some of the challenges are common to some NGOs, each organization will face different challenges based on their unique dynamics. However, some of the challenges identified by the research as outlined above were consistent with other findings by Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2001), Adongo (2008), Mobisa (2007), and Ndonga (2010).

## **CHAPTER FIVE; SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The findings of the research study are summarized and discussed in this chapter and focus given to the two main research objectives. These included establishing challenges encountered during strategy implementation process and steps taken to mitigate, cope or address them at Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership (DCGEP).

This chapter also highlights the recommendations for future implementation activities, the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

### **5.2 Summary**

The first objective was to establish the challenges facing strategy implementation by the organization. In order to achieve this objective the interviewer used an interview guide based on a list of challenges identified during the literature review as common challenges to successful strategy implementation. The intention was to establish whether or not these challenges applied to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), specifically DCGEP or not. Using the guide, the interviewer managed to probe and get additional information and insights both verbal and non-verbal that was not available in the literature reviewed or which existed but in a parallel perspective.

The researcher established that the main challenge at DCGEP was resistance/ inertia at the implementation stage. From the data collected and subsequent probing of the

interviewees, the researcher further established that this resistance/inertia was intricately tied to the existing organizational culture and organizational systems in place. However, the researcher also deduced that the departmental and cultural challenges were primarily due to what the interviewees called the normal “teething” process or the “storming” stage of group dynamics.

The research attributed the systems “misfit” to the fact that both organizations, DCGEP and ACWICT, had established systems and when the implementation activities were carried out, the two systems sometimes overlapped or clashed resulting in challenges. In an effort to address these challenges, DCGEP opted to use inclusive and participatory management practices as well as constant reviews and evaluation of the policies and procedures in an effort to streamline the procurement and accounting systems respectively.

Another challenge identified by the study was that certain aspects of the organizational strategy were not fully understood by all implementers. This particular issue was partially addressed at the annual staff workshop where employees were given an opportunity to participate fully in the strategy formulation discussion.

Though the final strategic plans have not been shared with all employees, country specific strategy documents are then derived for each country with a bottom up approach being used to create country specific strategies for more ownership. This is an ongoing process and the respondents are confident that if we continue down this path, this particular challenge will be addressed and completely eradicated.

Finally, though not viewed as challenges by all the interviewees, the following challenges were uncovered and as such warranted further probing. The challenges revolved around issues pertaining to the organization’s rewards and incentives

package especially in regards to motivation of staff, and the organization's continuity and consistency was a constant threat for some employees. The measures taken have been from a more individualistic approach. The researcher found that where the challenges had been raised and identified, management at DCGEP tended to address the concerns of the individual employee(s) as opposed to setting up a more structured rewards and incentive program to address the needs of all employees.

### 5.3 Conclusion

The research findings suggest that DCGEP has a well formulated globalized strategic plan. Even though they predominantly employ a globalized strategy and implementation plan, for the most part it works well and is successful. The research findings established that the challenges listed were not all viewed as challenges at DCGEP, however they still experienced a few challenges during their implementation stage.

The researcher established the challenges as predominantly; resistance/inertia at the implementation brought about by the misalignment of the culture and the systems in place to the strategy implementation process; the lack of ownership of the strategy by some employees and finally the morale and motivation of some employees as pertains to their reward and incentive structures as well as their job security.

The researcher explored the measures taken at DCGEP to address these challenges vis-à-vis the theoretical and empirical discussions of the study. The research results showed that the main mitigation strategies used were inclusive participatory management practices, the facilitation and support approach and the education and communication approach as well as control measures were instigated which were in line, for the most part, with the theoretical and empirical discussions of the study.

The research findings implied that the management at DCGEP was indeed using the principles of strategic management at all stages of the implementation process. Though some of the challenges were anticipated and measures put in place to address them, the challenges faced were due to uncontrollable eventualities resultant from the unique country office dynamic. These challenges could have been managed more effectively and efficiently if all members in the implementation team had basic knowledge of the strategic management process. These basics provide a framework within which all staff can make day-to-day operational decisions and understand that those decisions are moving the organization towards a common direction/goal.

The researcher concludes that strategy implementation is an organization wide activity and failure in one area can lead to serious consequences in other areas within the organization. It is therefore imperative that management at DCGEP pay keen attention to the implementation processes in order to identify and highlight any difficulties and determine ways to address them early enough to ensure that the emergent and realised strategies achieve the organizational strategic objectives.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

There might not be any universal advice on how to avoid resistance or inertia at the implementation stage. However, according to these results, the researcher recommends that management should pay special attention to certain topics. First, to reduce resistance caused by deep-rooted values, managers should consider how to merge the conflicting organizational cultures and what could be done to improve the “fit”. This could be achieved by having joint seminars and events where the values, norms and other ideologies can be discussed openly. This cultural consideration

would also help to bring employees and management interests closer and to avoid organizational silence.

Effective leadership is crucial at the “storming” stage. It is imperative that the leadership understands this difficult stage and assists the team by fostering close communication, clarifying the goal/task and procedures, supporting team members, clarifying their roles, encouraging participation, and dealing with conflict early on, before it escalates. The more complex the goal/task and the higher the stakes, the more likely the team will struggle through this stage. The researchers’ recommendation points towards internal and cross organizational training to help address this challenge.

Training would be a good tool to surpass communication difficulties and thus avoid resistance caused by communication barriers, as well as to help reduce the gap between the present situation and the capabilities required for the implementation process. Nevertheless there was a general consensus that more communication at the country office level was needed to ensure complete “buy in” and “ownership” of the strategy

Management should also consider setting up a human resource (HR) department so that the HR issues can be handled professionally. From issues pertaining to compensation, benefits and rewards, training and development, labour relations, and finally to health and safety issues. This would reinforce the organizations view that all employees are valued and that the organization is concerned with their well-being and contentment.

### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

The study encountered some limitations and for completeness and better understanding of the implications of the research findings, it is imperative that they be highlighted. The study is confined to challenges facing strategy implementation at DCGEP (an individual organization). Other aspects of the strategic management process such as formulation, monitoring and evaluation were completely ignored by this study. Due to limited resources such as time, the study collected data only from the Kenya implementation team as opposed to all members of the organization or its partners.

### **5.6 Suggestions for further study**

This research study investigated the challenges facing strategy implementation at DCGEP, an international NGO operating in Kenya in conjunction with their institutional partner ACWICT, and how they mitigated against them. Similar research could be undertaken in other international NGOs to establish if these or similar challenges face the entire NGO sector so that implementers can minimize and eradicate the negative impacts in the future.

Further research can also be undertaken to encompass all aspects of strategic management, from strategy formulation, to strategy implementation and control. This line of study will provide a more holistic picture of strategic management for strategic managers.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

Telephone: 4184160-5 Ext 215  
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P.O. Box 30197  
Nairobi, KENYA

1<sup>st</sup> August, 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

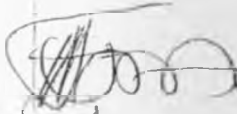
**INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH**  
**WILHELMINA HAGOI SENG – REGISTRATION NO. D61/P/8415/2005**

The above named is a bona fide Master of Business Administration (MBA) student in the School of Business, University of Nairobi. In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the MBA Degree she is conducting research on *"Challenges Facing Strategic Implementation at Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership Initiative (DCGEP) in Kenya"*

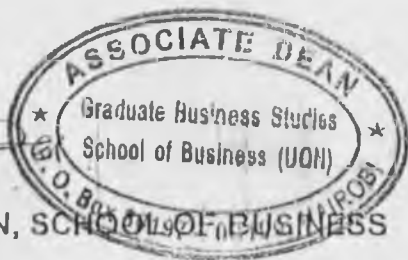
We request your organisation to assist the student with necessary data, which forms an integral part of the research project. The information and data required is needed for academic purposes only and will be treated in **Strict-Confidence**. A copy of the research project will be made available to your organization/firm upon request.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

  
**PROF. E. AOSA**

**ASSOCIATE DEAN, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**



EA/m

## Appendix 2

### Interview Guide

The main objective of this interview is to establish the challenges facing implementation of the Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership (DCGEP) initiative in Kenya and to identify DCGEP's responses to said challenges.

### Respondent Profile

1. Respondent Name:
2. Position held:
3. What is your role in the organizations implementation team?

### Interview Questions

4. Do you actively participate in the strategy formulation process at DCGEP?
5. Do you think the leadership, vision, initiative, motivation and inspiration at country level allows for local staff ownership of the implementation process?
6. Do you agree that the organization communicates its strategic intent and objectives (goals) to all employees?
7. Do the country offices refer to the organizations pre-set annual work plans when planning to execute any of its activities?
8. Do you think the current policies and procedures adequately support the organizations strategic plans?
9. Do you think the organizational policies and procedures change in line with changes in the environmental context of the implementing country?
10. Do you think organizational management and staff are fully committed to the strategy and implementation process?
11. Do you think the organizational structure is hierarchical (cannot easily be changed), problematic or inhibitive to strategy implementation processes?
12. Do you think the organization has established strategic objectives, desired policies, adequate and available allocation of resources in readiness for the implementation initiatives in Kenya?
13. Do you think the organization has developed strategy supportive budgets and programs to create a conducive working environment for implementation staff in Kenya?
14. Do you think the culture of the organization, institutional partner and implementing country office staff are in alignment to the organizations' strategic objectives for Kenya?
15. Do you think the leadership and direction at organizational level adequate and



able to galvanize organization wide commitment?

16. Do you think strategic direction should be communicated organization wide especially the country office level for ownership of the strategy?
17. How effective are the organizational communication systems in enhancing access to information by country level employees?
18. Do you agree that strategic plans and subsequent implementation activities should involve all levels especially the country office level for consensus and commitment?
19. Do you agree that there is a fit between country office staff capabilities and abilities in line with strategy implementation requirements
20. Do you agree that there is adequate administration, coordination and support from the organization to country office staff on all implementation activities?
21. Do you think the organization actively makes efforts to align their organizational structures to match implementation plans at country level?
22. Do you think the organization provides the leadership, vision, initiative, motivation and inspiration at country level to allow for local staff ownership of the implementation process?
23. Do you think the organization recognizes the executors (implementers) of the strategy and reward their efforts effectively?
24. Do you think that a shift in the organization's strategic direction results in a corresponding reshaping of the organizations culture through organization wide correspondence, trainings, etc?
25. Do you think the organization ensures that the administrative and control systems at country level are in line with country environments and are deemed appropriate for the implementation process?
26. Do you agree that the organizations monitoring and evaluation systems in place adequately reflect the implementation activities at country level?
27. What are some of the implementation challenges you have encountered in the implementation of this initiative in Kenya?
28. What has the organization done to address the challenges you have identified?
29. Any other comments, suggestions and insights you wish to make pertaining to implementation of the organizations initiative in Kenya?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your time and participation in assisting complete this academic research project in partial fulfilment of my Masters of Business Administration degree requirement.