

Factors influencing sustainability of environmental projects: case of municipal council of Kisii, Kenya

Abstract:

Wastes continue to contaminate and degrade the environment with resultant problems of global warming, pollution, depleting natural resources, poverty, disease and conflicts increasing. These problems will continue to persist unless measures are taken to properly manage and sustain environmental conservation programs. Although research findings show that this can be done and achieved through environmental projects undertaken at local authorities level, there is a problem of unsustainability of the projects. Based on this, a need arises to ensure sustainability of such projects to address environmental degradation and resultant negative effects on climate and public health. Unsustainability of environmental projects causes increased environmental degradation that in turn aggravates environmental problems such as global warming, climate change, diseases, disasters, poverty and conflict. It also leads to waste of resources used to undertake such projects which yield minimum benefits. The study was conducted to address the problem of unsustainability of projects to make them sustainable, minimize problems arising from environmental degradation and contribute to sustainable use and conservation of our environment. The objectives of the study were to establish whether funding and budgeting, management, stakeholder participation, partnerships between local councils and NGOs and public awareness are factors influencing sustainability of projects. Research questions were drawn from objectives and they sought to determine the extent funding and budgeting, management, stakeholders' participation, partnerships between councils and NGOs and public awareness contributed to project sustainability. The study used descriptive research design supported by quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population was permanent employees of the Municipal Council of Kisii (M.C.K) who were sampled, stratified and randomly drawn on the basis of departments of the council. Out of 530 permanent employees of the council, a representative sample of 30% was selected. Questionnaires and observations were used to collect data and information. These were most appropriate because questionnaires enabled respondents answer and fill information required confidentially and easily at their own time whereas observations gave the researcher opportunity to physically check on the existing status of projects and variables and record findings. The study found that sustainability of environmental projects depended on quality management of projects, adequate funding and prioritizing environmental projects when allocating funds in the council's budget, participation of stakeholders in projects, partnerships with NGOs in undertaking projects and public awareness and community participation. These are important factors that contribute to and ensure sustainability of environmental projects in local councils. The study's contribution to the body of knowledge is in terms of empowering local councils to freely generate revenue to fund environmental projects to reduce over reliance on central government, formulation of policies to employ qualified manpower to manage environmental projects in local councils, removal of

monopoly of local councils in undertaking environmental projects in their jurisdictions and embracing stakeholder, public and community participation in environmental conservation efforts within local authorities in Kenya. The study recommends adequate funding, stakeholder participation, partnering with NGOs and public awareness to address the problem of unsustainability of projects.