# STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AT UNITED NATIONS CHILDRENS FUND (UNICEF) KENYA

JESSIE CHIHENYO BUGO

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# DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of degree in any other university or institution for any other purpose.

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**Jessie Chihenyo Bugo**

**D61/70079/2007**

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

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**Dr. Jackson Maalu**

Department of Business Administration

School of Business

University of Nairobi

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

# DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my family for unfailing encouragement and love. To my parents, the strong man in my life and siblings who surround me as a family and friends, for walking this long journey with me, for their continuous guidance and prayers.

To my siblings, May this accomplishment be an inspiration to you in your pursuit of knowledge and excellence. With God anything is possible and you can do it.

# ABSTRACT

Strategy implementation is the process that turns implementation strategies and plans into actions to accomplish objectives. It is always more difficult to do something (strategy implementation) than to say you are going to do it (strategy formulation). For successful strategy implementation, an organization should understand the impact of strategy on external environment, internal resources and competences, and the expectations and influence of stakeholders.

The objective of the study was to determine the strategy implementation and establish the challenges encountered in implementation of strategy in UNICEF Kenya. The research design was a case study of the UNICEF Kenya. The data collection tool was an interview guide where content analysis was used to analyze the qualitative primary data which had been collected by conducting interviews from the respondents.

The study found out that the strategies which are being implemented by UNICEF (K) were formulated in their headquarters and the local office has to localize the strategies to the local set ups, top-down approach was being used to formulate the strategies, upper level management are normally the ones implementing the strategies in the organization although in some cases random sampling is employed on employees to spearhead the implementation of strategies.

The challenges which the organization faced were bureaucracy in the organization, leadership, rewards and resources and organizational structure. The challenges were brought by lack of adequate leadership, transfers of staff mid-implementation of the project and also the management constantly hiring consultants, lack of ownership of projects by staff

members and slowness which in some cases leads to the loss of opportunities to achieve target results.

From this, the organization should be able to come up with appropriate measures to overcome the challenges early enough before they affect much, the realization of its objectives.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1     Background of the Study

A strategy is a long term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal, as differentiated from tactics or immediate actions with resources at hand. The reason for strategic or long-range planning is to assist organizations in establishing priorities and to better serve the needs of the stakeholders (Olsen, 2005). Many organizations know their business needs and the struggles required for success. However, many organizations struggle to translate theory into action. Implementing strategies successfully is vital for any organization, either public or private. Without implementation, even the most superior strategy is useless (Alexander, 1991). The notion of strategy implementation might at first seem quite straightforward: the strategy is formulated and then it is implemented. Implementing would thus be perceived as being about allocating resources and changing organizational structure. However, transforming strategies into action is a far more complex and difficult task (Olsen, 2005).

The fatal problem with strategy implementation is the de facto success rate of intended strategies. According to Judson, (Judson, 1991) it is as low as 10 percent. Despite this abysmal record, strategy implementation does not seem to be a popular topic at all. In fact, some managers mistake implementation as a strategic afterthought and a pure top-down-approach. Instead, management spends most of its attention on strategy formulation. To resolve this, strategic management is gradually shifting from paying 90 per cent attention to strategy formulation and 10 per cent to strategy implementation, to paying equal attention to both (Grundy, 1998). Traditionally, it is believed that strategy

implementation and execution is less glamorous than strategy formulation, and that anyone can implement and execute a well-formulated strategy. Therefore, implementation and execution has attracted much less attention than strategy formulation or strategic planning (Bigler, 2001). While strategy formulation and implementation are tightly integrated functions, strategy implementation is the most complicated and time-consuming part of strategic management. It cuts across virtually all facets of managing and needs to be initiated from many points inside the organization. The implementation task involves coordination of a broad range of efforts aimed at transforming strategic intentions into actions.

Dynamic strategy formulation and implementation are realized when they are no longer regarded as centrally performed processes but as part of a continuous learning processes such that the overall operations and supporting strategies are constantly aligned (Feurer and Chaharbaghi, 2005). The fact that organizations worldwide are abandoning their central planning departments and dispersing the ownership of strategy formulation throughout their organizations is a clear indication of the significance of the dynamic approach however these does not apply to UN1CEF as they are still formulating the strategies centrally in their headquarters and disseminates the same to their offices in countries on what they are expected to implement in order to achieve its objectives.

## 1.1.1 Strategy Implementation

Strategy implementation is an important component of the strategic planning process. It has been defined as 'the process that turns implementation strategies and plans into actions to accomplish objectives" (Pride and Ferrell, 2003, pg. 574). It addresses then

who, where, when, and how to carry out strategic implementation process successfully (Kotler *et al.* 2001). Pride and Ferrell, 2003, p. 574 define strategy implementation as 'the process of putting strategies into action'. According to David (2003), both managers and employees should be involved in the implementation decision and adequate communication between all parties is important for successful implementation. Elements that require consideration during the implementation process include annual objectives, policies, resource allocation, management of conflict, organization structure, managing resistance to change, and organizational culture. In developing policies during the implementation process, methods, procedures, rules, forms, and administrative practices are established.

Strategy implementation is defined as 'the process used to implement specific firm policies, programs, and action plans across the organization' (Harrington, 2004, pg. 321). A prudent organization needs to formulate a strategy that is "appropriate for the organization, appropriate for the industry, and appropriate for the situation" (Alexander, 1991). Effective strategy implementation and execution relies on maintaining a balance between preventing failures and promoting success simultaneously. When there is a proper alignment between strategy, administrative mechanisms and organizational capabilities, it will be easier to implement and execute the strategy and to achieve the desired objectives (Okumu, 2003).

According to David (2003), strategies which are implemented within an organization should support the culture associated with the firm. The proposed strategy should

preserve, emphasize, and enhance the culture, in accordance with the culture supporting the proposed strategy. Conflict management also plays an integral role within the implementation process. According to David (2003) the human element of strategic implementation plays a key role in successful implementation and involves both managers and employees of the organization. Both parties should directly participate in implementation of decisions and communication that plays a key role in ensuring that this occurs (David, 2003). Business performance is influenced by this human element of strategic implementation. Through providing performance incentives to employees during the implementation phase, it is suggested by David (2003) that business performance will be positively influenced.

Strategy formulation is concerned with determining where the organization is, where it wants to go and how to get there. It involves carrying out situation analysis that leads to setting of objectives. Vision and mission statements are crafted and overall corporate objectives, strategic business unit objectives and tactical objectives are also developed. Strategy implementation is the process of allocating resources to support an organization's chosen strategies. This process includes the various includes various management activities that are necessary to put strategy in motion and institute strategic controls that monitor progress and ultimately achieve organizational goals. Strategy evaluation includes review of external and internal factors that are bases for strategies formulated, measuring performance and taking corrective action, if necessary. This is important as all strategies are subject to future modification depending on environmental turbulence (Robbins and Coulter, 1996).

Strategy implementation is a tough management job as it involves a variety of managerial activities. There is also a lot of different ways to approach each and every activity involved in implementing strategy, and the whole process also requires distinct and diverse people management skills. Those involved in strategy implementation must, for example, be able to overcome their resistance to change for the whole process to be successful. According to Patterson (2003) strategic management involves formulation, implementation and review. Strategy implementation can be said to be the most challenging of them all. Strategy is most effectively implemented when the people involved in the operations of the business are action-oriented and pragmatic. Effective strategy implementation is also a systems management activity that involves leading, motivating, organizing change, engineering business processes, and creating strong fits between strategy and how the business does things. Someone who intends to implement strategy must be able to put the strategic plan into action. He must be able to identify what needs to be done and start working on it in order for the targeted strategic and financial goals to be achieved. With all these factors involved, one can say that strategy implementation is more challenging and time consuming than strategy formulation.

## 1.1.2  UNICEF (United Nations Children Fund)

UNICEF is a Non-Profit Organization created by the General Assembly in 1946 to meet the emergency needs of children in post-war Europe; UNICEF's mission is dedicated exclusively to children. The agency works for child protection, survival and development within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations to advocate for the protection of children's rights, especially in

situations of war, disasters, extreme poverty and all forms of violence. UNICEF mobilizes resources to help countries, particularly developing countries, deliver services for children. UNICEF aims to promote equal rights of women and girls, including their full participation in the political, social and economic development of their communities. UNICEF was formed at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly and now works for children in 191 countries and territories around the world. It is the only United Nations agency devoted exclusively to the needs of the world's children working to help children survive and thrive, from early childhood through adolescence (United Nations Information Centre Nairobi, 2000).

Within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF Kenya Country Office, jointly with the Government of Kenya, advances the cause of children in health and nutrition, basic education, provision of clean water and sanitation. UNICEF is also actively involved in the HIV/AIDS awareness campaign.

The UN body is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. UNICEF insists that the survival, protection and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress. UNICEF mobilizes political will and material resources to help countries, particularly developing countries, ensure a "first call for children" and to build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families. UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged

children - victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence, exploitation and those with disabilities.

Through its country programs, UNICEF aims to promote the equal rights of women and girls and to support their full participation in the political, social, and economic development of their communities. It works with all its partners towards the attainment of the sustainable human development goals adopted by the world community and the realization of the vision of peace and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. UNICEF continually strengthens its capacity to leverage a greater national response for children affected by poverty, HIV and AIDS and poor service delivery, focusing on scaling up and piloting innovative approaches and increasing access to basic social services for orphaned and vulnerable children.

However, in its effort to achieve what is considered a noble cause, UNICEF faces some challenges in its operations. Cooperation with governments and other organizations to better ensure the availability and accessibility of essential commodities for children needs to be intensified, within a dynamic new aid environment. This includes the recognition of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Millennium Declaration as the major development agenda for industrialized and developing countries alike. It reflects consensus on the need for improved governance and national capacities; and renews the commitment to using common instruments, such as Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs), as the framework for cooperation. Accompanying this change in the aid environment has been the emergence of new cooperation modalities such as direct budget support and

sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) as well as other supporting modalities such as the global funds. These changes present new challenges. As a member of the UN Country Teams, UNICEF supports greater national ownership of the development process, including the availability of commodities which are essential for fulfilling children's rights. This requires 1 'NICEF to increase its support to national capacity building so that good practices in the provision of essential commodities for children can take root firmly within national policy making.

## 1.2 Research Problem

Strategy formulation and implementation is the most substantive decision making process, covering four principal stages: formulating priority strategies; negotiating and agreeing action plans; designing and implementing demonstration projects; and Integrating projects and plans into strategic approaches (UN-Habitat, 2001). The effort that country offices put into the country programs depends on the size and complexity of the office and the programme, these take priority, and hence siow down the implementation of the strategies to be put in place.

Many organizations have formulated excellent strategies but have not achieved excellent results due to poor strategy implementation and UNICEF is not an exception as the strategies which are supposed to be implemented have been designed without the local offices been involved and also the environment in which the offices operate. This therefore leads to poor implementation of the strategies in the country offices as they seek ways of ensuring that the designed strategies are implemented. As a humanitarian

organization UNICEF has a challenge to respond to emerging situations in country offices besides following globally formulated strategies that all UNICEF Offices must ensure implementation. Disaster response and management are key concerns and priority to UNICEF which have to be dealt with as and when emergencies come up, and thus destabilize formulated strategies and their implementation.

The research will be guided by Burkardt's theory of strategy implementation which points out that strategy implementation determines the organizations current position, where they want to go, how to get there and how they will know if they got there or not. Current position of the organization can be assessed with the help of SWOT analysis. Strategy implementation should respond to changing circumstances of the environment in the best possible way. Each organization has to develop its own model of strategic planning often by selecting a model and modify it (Burkardt, 2005).

Studies done in the area of strategy implementation include; Waiyego (2009) studied strategy implementation at Kenya electricity generating company ltd and observed that for dominant players in the market, the strategy implementation process has changed recently due to more scrutiny from the government and stakeholders in general. She therefore observed that such firms should be adaptable to the changing environment. Koskei (2003) studied strategy implementation and its challenges in public corporations with emphasis on Telkom Kenya limited found out that the corporations sets some targets which becomes hard to be accomplished and also lack of dedication by the staff to ensure successful accomplishment of the strategies. Njuguna (2009) studied strategy

implementation at St. Johns Community Centre and found out that the organization does not have a strategy for local resource mobilization and therefore depends on international donors whom they have to report to on their implementation. Muthuiya (2004) did strategy implementation and its challenges in non-profit organizations in Kenya, a case of AMREF and he found out that AMREF encountered challenges on inadequate resources, advocates and supporters of strategic decisions abandoning the process with resultant effect on staff commitment and enthusiasm, unsupportive organization structure, environmental factors and implementation period taking longer than anticipated. As can be evidenced in the above studies, they fail to capture strategy implementation by united nation agencies like UNICEF Kenya. This study seeks to answer the questions; "How strategy implementation in UNICEF Kenya is and what challenges are encountered in the process of implementing the strategies".

## 1.3  Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

i.   Establish strategy implementation practice at UNICEF Kenya.

ii.  Establish the challenges encountered in implementation of strategy by UNICEF Kenya.

## 1.4  Value of the study

The study will aid various stakeholders: the United Nation agencies in general will obtain information on the implementation of the strategies designed at the headquarters and are supposed to be implemented by country offices thus are in a position to ensure that they

can ensure successful implementation of the strategies. It will also give an insight to the agencies on the challenges encountered in the implementation of the strategies which does not involve the country offices.

A great strategic plan can be destroyed by poor implementation. Successful implementation requires an understanding of the 'big picture.' A thorough understanding of the implementation challenges in a given context is therefore imperative to enable one make more informed strategy implementation decisions. It will assist management of UNICEF to address key factors that leads to low strategy implementation and thus have an insight on how to tackle the challenges for future successful implementation of strategy. For academicians, this study will form the foundation upon which other related and replicated studies can be based on.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 The Concept of Strategy

A strategy is about "winning" game plan by an organization. Strategy is not a detailed plan or program of instructions; it is a unifying theme that gives coherence and direction to actions and decisions of an organization. It is the ability to recognize opportunities when they appeared and have the clarity of direction and flexibility necessary to exploit these opportunities (Grant, 1998). Chandler (1962) defined strategy as the determination of the basic long term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals. This means that strategy is about managing new opportunities. The strategy that is chosen should be one that optimizes the resources available in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives. According to Mintzberg (1987), strategy is a plan, ploy, a pattern of behaviour, a position in respect to others and a perspective. Strategy therefore specifies the intended course of action of an organization, develops ways to outwit a competitor, is emergent in a process of actions and it is a position in the market. The characteristic of strategy is that it is deliberate as well as emergent. Quinn (2003) defined strategy as the pattern or plan that integrates an organizations major goal, policies and action sequences into a cohesive whole.

Strategy is the direction of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage in the changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations (Johnson and Scholes, 2003). This means that organizations should provide value to their customers better than their competitors.

McDonalds (1996) is of the view that strategy provides the long-term direction of an organization. In spite of the importance of strategy implementation, the area has not been given much attention by both the practitioners and scholars. Beer et al, (1990) argues that effective implementation is vital to the success of any strategy. Hence, strategies developed by organizations need effective implementation to guarantee results. Noble (1999), makes distinctions between structural and interpersonal process views on strategic implementations. The structural perspectives focus on formal organizational structures and control mechanisms, while the interpersonal process is about understanding issues like strategic consensus, autonomous strategic behavior, diffusion perspectives, leadership and implementation style, communication and other interaction processes.

## 2.2 Strategy Implementation

Although formulating a consistent strategy is a difficult task for any management team, making that strategy work - implementing it throughout the organization - is even more difficult (Hrebiniak, 2006). A myriad 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, 1999b). It is thus not surprising that, after a comprehensive strategy or single strategic decision 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 (Noble, 1999b).

Strategy implementation is one of the components of strategic management and refers to a set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of long term; plans designed to achieve organizational objectives (Pearce and Robinson, 2003). Its purpose is to complete the transition from strategic planning to strategic management by incorporating adopted strategies throughout the relevant system (Bryson, 1995). Strategic management by itself is a process. Robins and Coulter (2002) defines it as the process that encompasses strategic planning, implementation and evaluation. In their view, strategic management process is a way of considering, deciding, and realizing already formulated strategies. Strategy implementation, on the other hand, is concerned with both planning on how the choice of strategy can be put into effect, and managing the changes required (Wang, 2000).

Management issues to strategy implementation include establishing annual objectives, devising policies, allocating resources, altering an existing organization structure, restructuring and re-engineering, revising reward and incentives plans, minimizing resistance to change, matching managers with strategy, developing a strategy supportive culture, developing an effective human resource function, and if necessary, downsizing (David, 2003). An excellent implementation plan will not only cause the success of an appropriate strategy, but can also rescue an inappropriate strategy (Hunger and Wheelen, 2004). Strategy implementation is therefore crucial to effective management.

The implementation process of a strategy typically impacts every part of the organization structure, from the biggest organizational unit to the smallest frontline work group

(Thomson and Strickland, 1998). They point that every manager has to think through the question "what has to be done in my area to implement our part of strategic plan and what should I do to get these things accomplished?" All managers therefore become strategic implementers in their areas of authority arid responsibility and all employees should be involved. Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2001) argue that transforming strategies into action is a far more complex and difficult task. Similarly, David (2003) points out that it is always more difficult to do something (strategy implementation) than to say you are going to do it (strategy formulation). Implementation of strategy does not therefore automatically follow strategy formulation; it exhibits its own resistance, which can invalidate the planning efforts (Ansoff and McDonnell, 1990).

Clearly, the implementation of a strategy is not a straightforward process, as one would assume. Bryson (1995) asserts that the earlier steps in the strategic management process are designed to ensure as much as possible that adopted strategies and plans do riot contain any major flaws, but it is almost inconceivable that some important difficulties will not arise as strategies are put into practice. Thomson and Strickland (1998) states that strategy implementation challenge is to create a series of tight fits between strategy and the organization's competences, capabilities and structure; between strategy and budgetary allocation; between strategy and policy; between strategy and internal support system; between strategy and the reward structure and; between strategy and the corporate culture. However, the problems of strategy implementation relate to situations or processes that are unique to a particular organization even though some problems are common to all Organizations. The key decision makers should therefore pay regular

attention to the implementation process in order to focus attention on any difficulties and on how to address them.

## 2.3 Models of Strategy Implementation

Higgins (2007) describes strategic implementation as the process of allocating resources to support chosen strategies. This process includes the various management activities that are necessary to put strategy in motion and institute strategic controls that monitor progress and ultimately achieve organizational goals. Porters (2007), five forces theory of strategy implementation provides a framework that models an industry as being influenced by five forces. The theory assumes that organizations when implementing strategies, must do so within the framework of five forces; the force of suppliers, the force of buyers the force of substitute products, the force of new entrants and the force of competitive rivalry. The five-force model looks at the strength of the five distinct competitive forces, which, when taken together, determine long-term profitability and competition. The strategic business manager seeking to develop an edge over rival firms use this model to understand the industry context in which the firm operates (Porter, 2007). Porter (2007) states that, in order to position the organization best, or to cope with the environment best, the strategist needs to understand the competitive structure of the marketplace in which his/her organization operates. The "five forces" model can be used to help strategists better understand the competitive dynamics of their marketplaces and align their organization successfully against each of the forces. The model can also be used to assess the general attractiveness of a market place and to help strategists decide whether, where and how to compete in a market place.

Burkardt's theory of strategy implementation points out that strategy implementation determines the organizations current position, where they want to go, how to get there and how they will know if they got there or not. Current position of the organization can be assessed with the help of SWOT analysis. Strategy implementation should respond to changing circumstances of the environment in the best possible way. It can be described as externally oriented planning i.e. their own products and competitor products will be viewed from an outsider's point of view. Therefore setting goals is necessary and an approach must be developed to achieve these goals. There is no one perfect strategic planning model. Each organization has to develop its own model of strategic planning often by selecting a model and modify it (Burkardt, 2005).

Zyen (2009) theory of strategy implementation defines strategy as a means by which organizations deal with risks and rewards in order to achieve their objectives. The values of strategy, planning and strategic planning are paramount to any organization. Organizational relationships with clients often begin with strategy implementation. Many successful organizations are those that plan. Therefore, organizations use strategy as a means of dealing with uncertainty. On the other hand, McNamara, (2009) indicates that strategy implementation determines where an organization is going over the next year or more and how it is going to get there. According to this theory, the process of strategy implementation is organization wide, or focused on a major function such as a division, department or other major function. Planning typically includes several major activities in the process.

In setting strategic direction, planners carefully come to conclusion about what the organization must do as a result of the major issues and opportunities facing the organization. These conclusions include strategic goals the organization should achieve and the strategies to achieve the accomplishment (McNamara, 2009). According to Hall (2004), strategy implementation is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy, including its capital and people. Various business analysis techniques can be used in strategy implementation, including SWOT analysis, PEST analysis, and PESTEL analysis. According to this theory, strategy implementation is the formal consideration of an organization's future course. All strategy implementation deals with question like "what do we do", "For whom do we do it?" and "How do we excel?"Imnlementing strategies successfully is vital for any organization, either public or private. Without implementation, even the most superior strategy is useless (Alexander, 1991). The notion of strategy implementation might at first seem quite straightforward: the strategy is formulated and then it is implemented. Implementing would thus be perceived as being about allocating resources and changing organizational structure. However, transforming strategies into action is a far more complex and difficult task.

According to Mintzberg (1994), organizations begin strategy formulation by carefully specifying their missions, goals and objectives, and then they engage in SWOT analysis to choose appropriate strategies. Further, he suggests that the traditional way of thinking about strategy implementation focus.es only on deliberate strategies. Some organizations begin implementing strategies before they clearly articulate mission, goals, or objectives.

In this case strategy implementation actually precedes strategy formulation. The strategies that unfold in this way are called emergent strategies. Implementation of emergent strategies involves the allocation of resources even though an organization has not explicitly chosen its strategies. Most organizations make use of both deliberate and emergent strategies. Where deliberate or emergent, however, a strategy has little effect on an organization's performance until it is implemented (Mintzberg, 1994).

According to Pearce and Robinson (2004), implementation stage is commonly referred to as action phase of the strategic management process. While other phases of formulation, analysis and choice of strategy are important, these phases cannot ensure success alone. A strategy must be translated into action, and that action must be carefully implemented. Implementation of strategy is initiated in three interrelated stages which include identification of measurable, mutually determined annual objectives, development of specific functional strategies and communication of policies to guide decisions. Implementing strategies successfully is about matching the planned and the realizing strategies, which together aim at reaching the organizational vision. The components of strategy implementation, interpretation, adoption and action are not necessarily i

successive and they cannot be detached from one another.

## 2.4 Challenges of Strategy Implementation

Formulating appropriate strategy is not enough. Just as the strategy of the organization must be matched to the external environment, it must also fit the multiple factors responsible for its implementation (Bateman and Zeithaml, 1993). As was further

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observed by David (1997), successful strategy implementation must consider issues central to its implementation which include, matching organizational structure to strategy, creating a supportive organizational culture among other issues. Downes (2001) states that the kinds of execution obstacles most companies run into fall into two categories: problems internal to the organizations and problems generated by outside forces in its industry. These internal and external issues are affected by the extent of flexibility organizations have to launch strategic initiatives successfully.

The most important problem experienced in strategy implementation in many cases is the lack of sufficient communication. Aaltonen and Ikavalko (2001) state that the amount of strategic communication in most of the organizations is large, both written and oral communication is used, mostly in form of top down communications. However, a great amount of information does not guarantee understanding and there is still much to be done on the field of communicating strategies. According to Wang (2000), communication should be a two way so that it can provide information to improve understanding and responsibility, and to motivate staff. Also, they argue that communication should not be seen as a once-off activity focusing on announcing the strategy. It should be an on-going activity throughout the implementation process. In many cases it is not so and therefore communication still remains a challenge to strategy implementation process.

According to Rapert *el al.,* (2002) organizations where employees have easy access to management through open and supportive communication climates tend to outperform

those with more restrictive communication environments. Peng and Litteljohn (2001) also note that effective communication is a key requirement for effective strategy implementation. Organizational communication plays an important role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation. In fact, communication is pervasive in every aspect of strategy implementation, as it relates in a complex way to organizing processes, organizational context and implementation objectives which, in turn, have an effect on the process of implementation.

Before any strategy can be implemented, it must be clearly understood. Clear understanding of a strategy gives purpose to the activities of each employee and allows them to link whatever task is at hand to the overall organizational direction (Byars et al, 1996). Lack of understanding of a strategy is one of the obstacles of strategy implementation (Aaltonen and Ikavalko, 2001). They point out that many organizational members typically recognize strategic issues as important and also understand their context in generic terms. However, problems in understanding arise when it comes to applying the strategic issues in the day-day decision-making.


Whilst the strategy should be chosen in a way that it fit the organization structure, the process of matching structure to strategy is complex (Byars et al, 1996). The structure that served the organization well at a certain size may no longer be appropriate for its new or planned size. The existing structures and processes in the organization support the current ways of doing things and if the strategy indicates that the organization need to behave in different ways, there is likely to be problems should the existing structures be used to implement the changes (Campbell et al, 2002). The current structures may as well

distort and dilute the intended strategy to the point where no discernible change takes place. According to McCarthy et al (1996), creating that structure and the attendance behaviour changes is a formidable challenge. The fundamental challenge for managers is the selection of the organization structure and controls that will implement the chosen strategies effectively.

Thompson and Strickland (1980) notes that strategy implementation involves working with and through other people and institutions of change. It is important therefore that in designing the structure and making it operational, key aspects such as empowerment, employee motivation and reward should be considered. Structure (Thompson 1997) is the means by which the organization seeks to achieve its strategic objectives and implement strategies and strategic changes. Strategies are formulated and implemented by managers operating within the current structure. The structure of an organization is designed to breakdown how work is to be carried out in business units and functional departments. People work within these divisions and units and their actions take place within a defined framework of objectives, plans, and policies.

Successful strategy implementation depends on a large part on how a firm is organized. Owen (1982) agrees that strategy and structure need to be matched and be supportive of each other in order to achieve objective set. The structure helps an organization identify its activities and the way in which it will coordinate them to achieve the firm's strategic objective. It also provides managers with a vehicle to exploit fully the skills and capabilities of the employees with minimal costs and at the same time enhance the firm's

capacity to achieve superior efficiency, quality, innovation and customer responsiveness (Pearce and Robinson, 2007). According to Wang (2000), senior managers might leave too soon after the process has been started. When senior managers step out of the picture, after implementation begins, this undermines staffs commitment and enthusiasm for strategy. According to him, staff often distrust new strategy and prefer old and familiar situation. Staff attitudes and perspectives go a long way towards subverting the company's plan.

Cultural impact underestimation is yet another challenge to strategy implementation. The implementation of a strategy often encounters rough going because of deep-rooted cultural biases. It causes resistance to implementation of new strategies especially in organizations with defender cultures. This is because they see change as threatening and tend to favour "continuity" and "security" (Wang, 2000). It is the strategy maker's responsibility to choose a strategy that is compatible with the "sacred" or unchangeable parts *of the* prevailing *corporate culture* (Thomson and Strickland, 1989). Organizational culture helps in nurturing and dissemination of core values. Implementation of new strategy will be concerned with adjustments in the structure, employees, systems and style of doing things in order to accommodate the perceived needs of the strategy (Pearce and Robison, 2007).

Weihrich and Koontz (1993) look at culture as the general pattern of behaviour, shared beliefs and values that members have in common. Culture can be inferred from what people may do and think within an organization setting. It involves the learning and

transmitting of knowledge, beliefs and patterns of behaviour over time. This means organizational culture is fairly stable and does not change fast. It sets the tone for the company and establishes rules on how people should behave. The top managers create a climate for the organizations and their values influence the direction of the firm. Creating an organization culture, which is fully harmonized with strategic plan, offers a strong challenge to the strategy implementer's administrative leadership abilities. Lack of compatibility between strategy and culture can lead to high organizational resistance to change and de-motivation, which can in turn frustrate the strategy implementation.

Resource insufficiency is another common strategy implementation challenge. David (2003) argues that allocating resources to particular divisions and departments does not mean that strategies will be successfully implemented. This is because a number of factors commonly prohibit effective resource allocation. These includes; overprotection of resources, too great emphasis on short-run financial 'Criteria, organizational policies, vague strategy targets, reluctant to take risks, and lack of sufficient knowledge.

According to Thompson et al (2007), effective strategy implementation depends on competent personnel and effective internal organizational systems. No organization can hope to perform the activities required for successful strategy implementation without attracting, motivating and retaining talented managers and employees with suitable skills and intellectual capital. The task of implementing challenging strategic initiatives must be assigned to executives who have the skills and talent to handle and can be counted on to

turn decisions and actions into results to meet established targets. Without a smart, capable result-oriented management team, the implementation process ends up being hampered by missed deadlines, misdirected or wasteful efforts. Building a capable organization is thus a priority in strategy execution. High among organizational building priorities in the strategy implementation is the need to build and strengthen competitive valuable competencies and organizational capabilities. Training therefore becomes important when a company shifts to a strategy that requires different skills, competencies and capabilities. Also, established organizations may experience changes in the business environment that can make a large part of their resource base redundant and unless they are able to dispose of those redundant resources, they may be unable to free up sufficient funds to invest in the new resources that are needed and their cost base will be too high (Johnson and Scholes, 2002).

Changes do not implement themselves and it is only people that make them happen (Bryson, 1995). Selecting people for key positions by putting a strong management team to with the" right personal chemistry and mix of skills is one of the first strategy implementation steps (Thompson & Strickland, 1998). Assembling a capable team, they point out, is one of the first cornerstones of the organization-building task. Strategy implementation must determine the kind of core management team they need to execute the strategy and then find the right people to fill each slot. Staffing issues can involve hiring f new people with new skills (Hunger and Wheelen, 2000). Bryson (1995) observes that people's intellect, creativity, skills, experience and commitment are necessary in creating order, culture, systems, and structures that focuses and channels

efforts towards effective implementation. However, selecting able people for key position remains a challenge to many organizations.

Organizations often find it difficult to carry out the strategies because they have executive compensation systems that measure and reward performance in a way that ignores or even frustrates strategic thinking, planning, and action (McCarthy et al, 1996). Most incentives programmes are designed only for top management and lower levels of management and I; operative employees do not normally participate (Byars, et al, 1996). If strategy accomplishment is to be a really top priority, then the reward structure must be linked explicitly and tightly to actual strategic performance (Thomson & Strickland, 1998). McCarthy *et al.,* (1996) argue that in many companies, much effort has been put into both strategy formulation and resource allocation process as a way to improve implementation and unfortunately, effort have not been wholly effective because the necessary measurement and rewards system that completes the cycle is lacking.

At its simplest, strategy is all about managing change and resistance to change can be considered the single greatest threat to successful strategy implementation. Strategic change is the movement of an organization from its present state towards some desired future state to increase its competitive advantage (Hill and Jones, 1999). The behaviour of individuals ultimately determines the success or failure of organizational endeavors and top management concerned with strategy and its implementation must realize this (McCarthy *et al.,* 1996). Change may result to conflict and resistance. People working in organizations sometimes resist such proposals and make strategy difficult to implement

(Lynch, 2000). This may be due to result of anxiety to fear of economic loss, inconvenience, uncertainty, and a break in normal social patterns (David, 2003).

Organizational politics, unavoidable aspects, remains another key challenge in strategy implementation. Organization politics are tactics that strategic managers engage in to obtain and use power to influence organizational goals and change strategy and structure to further their own interest (Hill and Jones, 1999). Wang (2000), states that it is important to overcome the resistance of powerful groups because they may regard the change caused by new strategy as a threat to their own power. Top-level managers constantly come into conflict over what the correct policy decisions would be, and power struggles and coalition building is a major part of strategic decision making. According to them, the challenge organization face is that the internal structure of power always lags behind changes in the environment because in general, the environment changes faster than the organization can respond. What is clear from existing literature is that the approach to managing strategic change will need to be context dependent. It will not be the same for all situations in all types of organizations. Managers therefore need to balance the circumstances they face. Moreover, managers need to be able to help create the sort of organizational context, which will facilitate change (Johnson and Scholes, 2002).

# CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Research Design

The study was modeled on a case study design. Bell (1989) explained that the case study approach is very appropriate because it gives an opportunity to research in-depth one particular aspect of a problem. It helps researchers in getting quick and immediate results due to the time limit set for the study. It is a method used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic. Whilst it will not answer a question completely, it will give some indications and allow further elaboration and hypothesis creation on a subject. It is argued that a case study provides more realistic responses than a purely statistical survey thus it is valid to conduct case studies but they should be tied in with more general statistical processes.

Case studies are known for their flexibility. Whilst a pure scientist is trying to prove or disprove a hypothesis, a case study might introduce new and unexpected results during its course, and lead to research taking new directions. The study focused on strategy implementation and challenges at UNICEF Kenya, and allowed the researcher to go deeper into the investigation.

## 3.2 Data Collection

Case studies are likely to be much more convincing and accurate if they are based on several different sources of information. The study used both primary and secondary data.

The primary data was collected through in-depth individual interviews using an interview guide: The Individual face to face interviews captured stakeholders' knowledge and perspectives; identified differences and bias, which is an important tool in gathering information. In the evaluation the interviews identified UNICEF's commitment, the strength of working relationships and co-ordination mechanisms, the extent to which concepts and methods are understood, and the quality of information flows when implementing strategy.

The respondents consisted of top country's managers and monitoring and evaluation specialists.

Secondary data was collected through official organization's annual reports, surveys and UNICEF's strategic plans, project and programme end term records.

## 3.3    Data Analysis

The data collected was qualitatively analyzed by use of content analysis techniques. Kothari (2004) described content analysis as a method of analyzing contents of documentary materials such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers and the most importantly contents of verbal material whether spoken or written. The information was analyzed and evaluated to determine their usefulness, consistency, credibility and adequacy. The content analysis technique was used because it assists in making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific messages and then relating them with their occurrence trends.

# CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

## 4.1: Introduction

The research objective was to establish the strategy implementation practices at UNICEF Kenya and also the challenges the organization faces in implementing the same strategies. This chapter presents the analysis and findings with regard to the objective and discussion of the same.

The respondents comprised the senior managers working at the UNICEF offices in Kenya. They held the position of Senior Human Resources Assistant, Programme Officer, Legal Officer and the Finance Officer. The respondents have worked in the organization on average 5 to 15 years. With this solid background, it was felt that they were knowledgeable enough on the research subject matter and thus of help in the realization of the research objective.

## 4.2 Strategy Implementation at UNICEF Kenya

Formulating appropriate strategy is not enough. For effective strategy implementation, the strategy must be supported by decisions regarding the appropriate organization culture, structure, management, leadership, resources and capacity. Just as the strategy of the organization must be matched to the external environment, it must also fit the multiple factors responsible for its implementation. This section of the interview guide aimed at establishing the strategic management practice at the UNICEF Kenya.

The respondents in totality agreed that the strategy development of a firm, among others is concerned with carrying out situation analysis that leads to setting of objectives. The organizations Vision and mission statements will in most cases be the guiding factor in

the development of the strategies. The respondents noted that organizational strategy is very important to an organization as it assists the organization to know what they are supposed to do, at what time and thus helps in achieving its objectives. As a result, a policy guide towards the achievement of this will be important.

In the case of UNICEF (K), the organisation strategies were found to be developed in its head quarters while the implementation is made locally. However the respondents noted that upon the overall strategies being developed, the local office have to localize the strategies to the local set ups. The interviewees therefore pointed out that UNICEF strategy development process adopts a top -down approach. Though the strategy development approach is top down and they noted that their input is not very much incorporated, the process is fast and incorporates a global perspective. However, the respondents also noted that in some cases, their input if requested for especially in cases where the Kenyan context is to be used as case, they will give be invited to give their input. The duration of the period taken on the organizations strategy was mostly medium term covering five years though in some cases mid - term adjustment is made in cases where there is a change in the operating environment that necessitates review of the strategy developed. Indeed, the respondents therefore noted that some strategies that are done within the country offices because they are the ones who know the various projects/programs they are running, hence the country management team is able in some instances to come up with their strategies that would best suit them to accomplish their objectives. They gave the example of working relationships developed with various partners and government units that deal with mandates of UNICEF. They noted that such

relationship is important and is developed over a long term period and for a successful implementation there is need for this group of stakeholders to be involved in the strategic process.

On the question of what cadre of employees is involved in UNICEF for the implementation of strategies, the respondents pointed out that the upper level management who are given the responsibility to ensure the whole strategy is implemented will in normal cases be the one tasked with the responsibility of ensuring the strategies are implemented. In addition, the respondents noted that in some cases the organization has employed random sampling on employees to spearhead the implementation of strategies. This they noted will help in cutting down biases and favoritism among staff since all of them get to acknowledge that they have a chance of being given the opportunity to spearhead the implementation of the organizations strategy.

The implementation of any organizations strategy will only be successful if the employees who are the actual implementers participate fully in the process. This fact was reinforced by four of the respondents, representing 80% of the respondents, who did indicate that one of the ways in which to motivate the employees to work to their best of ability in the strategy implementation process is involve them in the strategy development and implementation process as well as offering a competitive pay package. The respondents observed that in the case of UNICEF (K), employee compensation and job security is documented in the Human Resource Policy Manual (HRPM). In their view,

the salary and benefit scheme of the organization was not among the best in the multinational sector and that in consideration of the amount of work they undertake; they felt they still need much better remuneration.

As an international agency, the respondents observed that UNICEF embraces diversity and formulates strategies that can fit globally and are able to be adapted in different country offices, this enhances uniformity among all country offices and Kenya is no exception. The interviewees pointed out that one of UNICEF policy for international employees is rotation to different countries after a certain period of time with a maximum 4 years. The respondents observed that the international staff is expected to rotate and move to new duty stations and with these global strategies they are able to fit/adopt and work well when they rotate as new international professionals to these various country offices. However, the respondents observed noted that as a result of this movement, there have been cases where the head quarters in New York has not assumed several demographics that are unique to different countries. In such cases, they found out that the HQ has tended to duplicate strategy's globally assuming that each office is the same in the way they handle things and the whole organization activities are the same.

The respondents appreciated the need of an effective feedback between the top management and other strategy implementers on the progress of the strategies. This is because due to the changes in the operating environment, the strategies may not go according to plan and appropriate changes to the strategy will be necessary. They pointed out that often, the HQ has a way through which various means, of communicating to inform the country offices of what is happening and at what stage the process is in for

purposes of letting everybody know and be at the same level. In addition, the respondents did appreciate that there is a constant global staff survey every year that works as a tool for providing feedback to management and after compiling globally the feedback helps to know what is happening and the staff views on various issues. However, the respondents also noted that the organizations feedback mechanism is skewed to one side since only the top management are the ones that pass the communication to the junior staff and not the other way round. This they pointed out might not provide effective and all round analysis of the developments and therefore noted that the change in direction of feedback should be two-way.

## 4.3 Strategy Implementation Challenges at UNICEF

Formulating appropriate strategy is not enough.  For effective strategy implementation, the strategy must be supported by decisions regarding the appropriate organization structure, reward system, organizational culture, resources and leadership.  Just as the strategy of the organization must be matched to the external environment, it must also fit the multiple factors responsible for its implementation.

UNICEF (K) faces a number of challenges in implementing its strategies. All the respondents identified different factors that have hindered effective implementation of the strategy in the organization and how the same factors impacts on strategy implementation in the UN body. The challenges ranged from: Organizational bureaucracy, inadequate leadership during the implementation phase, inadequate rewards and Resources, and organizational structure.

## 4.3.1 Bureaucracy in the Organization Challenge

These findings of the study on whether bureaucracy is factor that affects the implementation of the organizations strategy, the respondents noted that indeed the UN body has in some cases exhibited some level of bureaucracy in its management especially in the process of decision making. They noted that since the headquarters is in New York, most of the decisions are made in NY and the process of getting the necessary guidance from there will in sometimes take long. This delay in decision making is because of the hierarchical structure developed in the organization which requires that certain level of decision has to be made at the head quarters. As a result of the bureaucratic nature of the process the respondents noted that a number of opportunities and programs have not been able to be adopted due to the slow decision making process. They gave an example in the year 2000 when the Kenyan government started the free primary education and technical assistance had been requested on the rolling out of the program, the respondents pointed out that the same assistance came way behind the time due to the long process it took to make a decision.

The interviewees also noted that as a result of the organization not being responsive enough to changes in the environment, they have tended to develop uniform strategies for countries within a region that are assumed to operate within a certain cultural and economic environment instead of tailoring the process to each specific country which has unique needs and challenges. In addition, the respondents noted that some of the managers have been in the same positions for a long period of time and with such a stay there has been a tendency of such staff to become rigid and not embrace new ideas and

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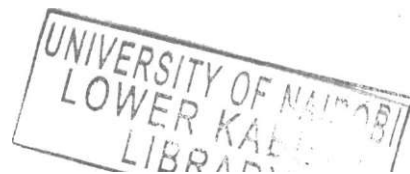
innovational technology. In addition, the interviewees observed that differences in opinion and forced removal of project leadership were pointed out as indicators of the existence of leadership and management problems in the implementation of UNICEF strategies.

The interviewees also noted that the UN agency relies mostly in secondary information whereby the country office implementers are trained in UN headquarters and they will be expected to guide other staff in their local country offices. With this chain of passing the information, the respondents noted that there is always loss of some information which latter turns out to be costly in the implementation of the strategies. Further, the respondents noted that in some cases, the capacity of some of the facilitators in the strategy implementation programs at UNICEF do not have adequate technical and academic competence to carry some exercises they have been entrusted with. The respondents noted that in implementing some strategies some managers have had to outsource in some services from outside consultants which they found leads to an increased cost to the organization.

## 4.3.2 Leadership Challenge

The researcher also wished to establish from the respondents if leadership was a challenge to the process of strategy implementation in the UN agency. To this extent 100% of the respondents were of the opinion that indeed leadership was a big challenge to the process. They supported this by pointing out the various kinds of challenges faced by UNICEF that resulted from the leadership in place. The challenges that the

respondents pointed out to have resulted from the lack of adequate leadership include frequent disagreements between various teams in a project that deals with the implementation of various strategies, uncoordinated transfers of staff mid-implementation of the project and also the management constantly hiring consultants.

On the individual that is mandated to provide leadership in the organization, the respondents pointed out that the country representative is mandated with the task of providing leadership/direction for all strategies to be implemented within the office. The country representative is the one who directs the programmes and comes up also with the minor strategies formulated within the office and not necessarily in New York. They noted that some strategies that might require the board sanction are developed in the headquarters where several regions strategies are developed in tandem in order to avoid conflicting or duplicating strategies in coming years.

The respondents noted that leadership is an important feature of any successful implementation of strategies. They noted that employees need constant leadership since the management cannot assume that they understand the changes that are to take place and the ones reluctant to change also need guidance to be able to accommodate and not pull the whole group backwards. The interviewees also observed that since most of the strategies of UNICEF are developed in New York, the local implementers are not fully involved in the process and as a result of this; they are not enthusiastic in realizing the objectives of the strategies since they don't own the same strategies. They noted that once the HQ comes up with strategic decisions; the role of implementation is transferred to the

country management of respective countries which might not be fully receptive of the strategy initiated.

### 4.3.3 Rewards and Resources Challenge

The respondents agreed unanimously that resource constraints hindered implementation of UNICEF strategies. They pointed out that the Human resource capacity in terms of qualifications, competence and numbers were noted as a major constraint while financial limitations made some of the projects not to be completed in time. The respondents observed that some projects were financed by donors as well as the agency itself and as such inadequate strategy planning and implementation may lead to disillusionment of the partners on strategic decisions who may quit the projects before implementation is complete. Therefore, as far as the resource is concerned the respondents appreciated that setting and communicating deadlines that are workable as well as prioritizing on the strategic policies is fundamental in ensuring the success of the projects within the set timelines.

In addition, the respondents observed that the success of implementing any strategies in an organization will depend on the human resource asset, especially the managers who will undertake the monitoring. This point was appreciated by the respondents who did observe that in order to achieve the desired results in UNICEF; the organizations employees play an important role. They noted that they have to plan, initiate, monitor and evaluate the projects continuously to achieve the realisation of the organizations strategies. In order for human resource to fulfill their important role, the respondents noted that the employees need to be compensated adequately for their time and

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experience gained. However, the respondents noted that the current level of compensation being offered is not adequate and is not comparable with other private sector players and international NGOs in the sector. Further, three of the respondents pointed out that not only should these rewards be developed and extended to the staff, they also need to be aligned to the actions and objectives of individuals with the objectives and needs of the firm's strategy. They suggested that the level of rewards to staff should be measured through level of academic qualification, country reports on your continuous performance and the general living condition in the country of operation.

## 4.3.4 Organizational Structure Challenge

The respondents indicated that the UNICEF's organizations structure in some cases has posed a challenge to strategy implementation. They pointed out that the structure of an organisation is designed to breakdown how work is to be carried out in business units and functional departments and not to be an impediment in the developing or implementing the organizations strategies, As a result, the current vertical structure that has been adopted by UNICEF though good for controlling the activities of the organisation, has impacted its decision making process. Its response structure was found to be slow and in some cases lead to the loss of opportunities to achieve at target result. It is important therefore that in designing the structure and making it operational, key aspects such as staff empowerment and effective communication process are considered.

However, the respondents acknowledged that a number of steps have been initiated to remedy the situation which include, yearly revision of structures in line with country demands. This move is meant to address the growth of staff units and sections and the

designation of clear process flow that is meant to address the inadequacy in the general know how of the key implementation stages. Further when asked about other challenges in strategy implementation which is brought about by the way the structure was organized, the respondents pointed out that some roles /functions were not clearly structured and that they lacked the supporting structure.

## 4.4 Discussions

This study was conducted in relation to the objectives to establish strategy implementation practice at UNICEF Kenya. From the findings, strategies in UNICEF (K) are developed in its Headquarters and the implementation is done locally, however upon the overall strategies being developed, the local office localizes the strategies to the local set up. This is in relation to Burkardt's theory of strategy implementation where by each organization has to develop its own model of strategic planning often by selecting a model and modify it.

In establishing the challenges encountered in implementation of strategy by UNICEF Kenya. The findings established that the strategies to be implemented must be supported by decisions regarding the appropriate organization structure and culture, reward systems, resources and leadership. Successful strategy implementation depends on a large part on how a firm is organized and that strategy and structure need to be matched supportive of each other with adjustments in employees, systems and style of doing things.

# CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, the conclusion and the recommendation for further research with regard to the objectives of the study.

## 5.2 Summary of Findings

In summary, the study shows that the respondents have the knowledge about the operations of the organization as was exhibited by virtue of all the respondents having worked in the organization for more than five years and also due to the fact that all of the respondents were engaged in the day-to-day management and operations of its strategy implementation arm of the institution. In addition, the respondents were found to be well versed with the subject matter of the study and had all good academic background having attained a first degree with some of them having a master's degree. As a result of the above, the researcher felt that the results obtained from the respondents reflect the true position as in the organization.

The results from the study were that the strategies of UNICEF (K) are being developed in its headquarters while the implementation is made locally. However upon the overall strategies being developed, the local office have to localize the strategies to the local set ups.

The organization uses the top-down approach where the top managers outline the strategies to be implemented to by the respective local offices and therefore the input

local office employees are not very much incorporated. Although in some cases, their input if requested for especially in cases where the Kenyan context is to be used as case, they will give be invited to give their input. The duration of the period taken on the organizations strategy was mostly medium term covering five years though in some cases mid - term adjustment is made in cases where there is a change in the operating environment that necessitates review of the strategy developed.

In the organization, the upper level management is the one given the responsibility to ensure the whole strategy is implemented. In some cases however, the organization has employed random sampling on employees to spearhead the implementation of strategies. This will help in cutting down biases and favoritism among staff since all of them get to acknowledge that they have a chance of being given the opportunity to spearhead the implementation of the organizations strategy. For effective strategy implementation, the employees should be involved in the strategy development and implementation process as well as offering a competitive pay package. Though the employee compensation and job security is documented in the Human Resource Policy Manual (HRPM), the salary and benefit scheme of the organization was not among the best in the multinational sector and that in consideration of the amount of work the employees undertake they indicated that they still need much better remuneration.

The study found out that the organization embraces diversity and formulates strategies that can fit globally and are able to be adapted in different country offices; this enhances uniformity among all country offices. The policy of the organization is to rotate its

employees to different countries after a certain period of time with a maximum 4 years. Although feedback is made between the top management and other strategy implementers on the progress of the strategies, there is a way in which communication was being carried out to inform the country offices of what is happening. However, the respondents felt they need to be involved more and not the top management being the only ones who pass the communication to the junior staff and not the other way round. This they pointed out might not provide effective and all round analysis of the developments and therefore noted that the change in direction of feedback should be two-way.

The implementation of the strategies by UNICEF (K) faces a number of challenges which needs the whole organization to give their input in order to ensure successful implementation. The challenges are; bureaucracy in the organization which results from the decisions being made at the headquarters and the process of clarification could take a longer time, leadership challenges which have resulted from the lack of adequate leadership include frequent disagreements between various teams in a project that deals with the implementation of various strategies, uncoordinated transfers of staff mid-implementation of a project and also the management constantly hiring consultants. Rewards and resources challenges was as a result from human resource capacity in terms of qualifications, competence and numbers were noted as a major constraint while financial limitations made some of the projects not to be completed in time. Organizational structure challenges emanate from the response structure being slow and in some cases lead to the loss of opportunities to achieve target results.

## 5.3 Conclusion

From the research findings and the answers to the research questions, some conclusions

can be made about the study:

Strategy formulation and implementation process is very vital for the functioning of any

organization. From the findings, it was established that the strategies which are being

implemented by UNICEF (K) were formulated in their headquarters and the local office

have to localize the strategies to the local set ups. Top-down approach was being used to

formulate the strategies although at times the input of the employees can be sort where

the Kenyan context is to be used as case. Although the upper level management are

normally the ones implementing the strategies, the organization in some cases has

employed random sampling on employees to spearhead the implementation of strategies.


It was also established that feedback between the top management and other strategy

implementers on the progress of the strategies is normally carried out and all these are

geared towards successful implementation of the strategies.

In order for the UNICEF (K) to ensure successful implementation of strategy, the process

of formulation and implementation should be all inclusive for each to feel part and parcel

of the process. The challenges facing the organization in the implementation of its

strategies emanates from bureaucracy in the organization, leadership, rewards and

resources and organizational structure. The challenges was brought by lack of adequate

leadership, uncoordinated transfers of staff mid-implementation of a project and also the

management constantly consultants, lack of human resource capacity in terms of

qualifications, competence and numbers, financial limitations and slowness and in some cases lead to the loss of opportunities to achieve at target result.

## 5.4 Recommendation for Policy and Practice

Strategy implementation should not be viewed as a one-off process; the management should inculcate a practice of regular review and reference making of the strategic plan throughout its lifespan. Foremost, the study found out that the strategies which are being implemented in the UNICEF (K) was formulated in the headquarters and in case a clarification is needed it takes time which results to delay in the implementation of the strategies. It is therefore recommended that the fund should consider allowing each country office to formulate their own strategies and forward to the headquarters for approval as these will result to formulation of strategies which are tailored to the specific country.

Secondly, it was established that leadership was a challenge to the implement of the strategies. It is therefore recommended that the fund should ensure that those who are entrusted with leadership do not cause divisions among the various teams in a project but rather they should encourage them to work as a team in order to ensure successful implementation of strategy and also they should not transfer staff mid-implementation of a project. Lastly, it was established rewards and resources challenges was as a result from human resource capacity in terms of qualifications, competence and numbers were noted as a major constraint while financial limitations made some of the projects not to be completed in time. It is therefore recommended that the country office should be given

enough financial resources to employ more employees and also so that they can be able to complete projects which had stalled due to lack of funds.

## 5.5 Limitations of the Study

The limitations faced during the research was the time set for the study was short, getting to interview the top management of the organization was a challenge since they were on travel due to the Horn of Africa drought crisis that was currently an emergency for the organization to respond to as a humanitarian agency, although interviewing them give a better representation and generalisation of findings.

The interview guide as the only data collection instrument was also a limitation, some respondents complained that the interview sessions took too long with very difficult and technical questions since there was a lot of probing during the interview sessions.

## 5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

The study confined itself to the UNICEF (K). This research therefore should be replicated in other UNICEF country offices so to establish whether there is consistency among the UNICEF country offices on the challenges affecting the implementation of strategies.

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# INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interview guide was to achieve the following objectives;

   i.    Determine the strategy implementation in UNICEF Kenya.

  ii.    Establish the challenges encountered in implementation of strategy by UNICEF Kenya.

## Interview Questions

The following sections provide sample questions to be used in evaluating the strategy implementation and the challenges encountered in implementation of the strategy by UNICEF Kenya.

## Background Information on the interviewees

1. What current position in the organization do you hold?

2. For how long have you been holding the current position?

3. Would you change your current duties if given a chance?

## Strategy implementation in UNICEF Kenya

1. Are the strategies to be implemented by UNICEF Kenya formulated locally or from the headquarters?

2. What duration does the institutions strategy cover?

3. What approach can you categorize the strategy implementation process of the firm to take?

4. What level of involvement of country employees does the strategy implementation take?

5. Does the fund consider different country's demographic when formulating the strategies or it's formulated to be implemented universally?

6. How often is feedback on strategy implementation communicated to the employees?

**Strategy implementation challenges**

1. Did any major problems surface which had not been identified during the strategy implementation?

2.  Was the coordination of the strategy implementation sufficiently effective?

3.  Was the training and instructions given to lower level employees adequate?

4.  Are the capabilities of the employees involved in strategy implementation sufficient?

5.  Does the country representative/departmental manager provide leadership and direction during strategy implementation?

6.  Were the key implementation tasks and activities sufficiently defined?

7.  Are the information systems used to monitor strategy implementation adequate?

8.  Did the advocates and supporters of the strategic decision play an active role in strategy implementation?

9. Were the overall goals sufficiently well understood by the local employees?

10. Did the key formulators of the strategic decision play an active role in implementation?

11. Were the employees measured and rewarded for executing the intended plans?

12. Was there a lack of understanding of the role of organizational structure and design in executing the strategies?

13. Did the implementation of the strategies take more time than originally allocated?